

At the invitation of the government of Rwanda, the Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations (FAO) organized and conducted a hybrid workshop on Aquaculture Co-management from 8-10 June in Rwanda's capital Kigali. The workshop brought together various national and international experts and aquaculture sector actors to chart a way forward in deploying a co-management approach to revitalize aquatic food systems.

"Aquaculture Co-management could contribute to unleashing the potential of Rwandan farmers by providing the incentive for larger and more comprehensive investments along the value chain. This means more gainful employment, better incomes, and thereby increased purchasing power for our population," said Ms Chantal Ingabire, Director General of Planning in the Ministry of Agriculture and Animal Resources, while officially opening the workshop.

Ms Ingabire also urged FAO experts and all participants to chart the way forward to leveraging already existing aquaculture management approaches and partnerships to address some of the challenges farmers still face.

"I would like to ask you to employ a co-management approach and develop recommendations that will help Rwanda and other countries tackle problems that prevent farmers from moving from subsistence to market-oriented aquaculture. I believe that if we effectively tap on all opportunities embedded in Aquaculture co-management, we will undoubtedly sustainably transform the Aquaculture sector," she added.

Highlighting FAO's commitment to developing the aquaculture sector, Mr Orlando Sosa, Officer-in-Charge of Rwanda FAO Representation, stressed the industry is a vital element of the UN's food systems transformation drive.

"Aquaculture is one of the most important priorities of the Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations, FAO and the entire United Nations. For example, the UN General Assembly declared 2022 a year of the International Year of Artisanal Fisheries and Aquaculture. This is because small-scale fishers, fish farmers, and fish workers play a paramount role in food security and nutrition, poverty eradication, and achieving the Sustainable Development Goals." said Mr Sosa.

Korea FAO Sustainable and Innovative Fisheries and Aquaculture Programme in Rwanda

In 2020, FAO, with the support of the Ministry of the Oceans and Fisheries of the Republic of Korea and the Korea Maritime Institute, launched a project ([Smart Fisheries Co-management](#)) focusing on the design and implementation of contextualized fisheries co-management systems at the national and local level. Recognizing the relevance of co-management as a mechanism for power-sharing, institution building, trust and social capital enhancing, problem-solving, knowledge-sharing, social learning, and encouraging collaborative opportunities and collective action, the intent now is to strengthen Rwandan aquaculture systems through this approach.

Aquaculture co-management (ACM)

ACM is a new concept explored through the just concluded FAO expert workshop in Kigali. If implemented well, ACM can consolidate cohesively a range of existing approaches that are either already in practice or being developed. ACM is a central principle of the Ecosystem-Based Approach to Aquaculture. ACM may also offer a bridge to the growing range of private-sector attempts to guide beyond farm sustainability, including jurisdictional approaches that bring producers together with buyers, financiers and states to promote regional scale sustainability improvements. By defining goals, models, and practices of implementation, and monitoring and evaluation for ACM, FAO can guide member states on collaborative aquaculture management to support future production, conservation, and social equity conditions in the aquaculture sector.