

**ATTEMPTS TO FORM AQUACULTURE NETWORKS
FOR AFRICA**

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1.0 Introduction

Fisheries worldwide are facing overexploitation and despite concerns over declining fish stocks, government actions and national laws to protect fish stocks are rarely successful. In recent years there has been a growing campaign to increase aquaculture production in nearly all the African countries with significant increase in levels of support to appropriate technologies in Marine, Estuarine and Freshwaters systems.

East Africa region has a high potential for fish farming in these environments, thanks to the relatively suitable temperatures, comparatively low pollution levels and a fast growing market. The region currently produces one million metric tons of fish annually with over 80% of that coming from inland fisheries and over 10% from Aquaculture. In addition the Fisheries sector provides nearly three million jobs both direct and indirect along the entire value chain. With the introduction of cage fish farming in our inland lakes, Aquaculture is set to grow at over 5% annually and likely to contribute more than 40% of total fish production in the region in the near future.

With a growing fish market and production challenges, Aquaculture in this region require, information exchange within set networks. It is true that the aquaculture sector across Africa share much of a common history and a common set of challenges. It is also true that Aquaculture has been promoted across the Region the same way and so requires a platform where similar issues are shared or addressed. In the early 1990s for example, there were concerted efforts to form Fish Africa, (first meeting was held at UNEP offices in Nairobi). Others include, SARNISSA, ANAF and the WAS Africa chapter recently launched during the World Aquaculture Society meeting in cape Town in June 2017.

2.0 Efforts to Form Regional Aquaculture Networks

In recognizing that Information exchange is a major factor in many areas of aquaculture and Fisheries development, FAO in 1993, through the Working Party on Aquaculture of the Committee for Inland Fisheries for Africa (CIFA) met to review the aquaculture development and research needs in sub-Saharan Africa (reported in CIFA Technical Paper 23). The CIFA paper

stated that "An improved information flow throughout Africa should be created" and "direct access to past and up-to-date information be stressed". To this end, improved aquaculture information exchange was given the highest priority.

Consequently, in October 1997 the Inland Water Resources and Aquaculture Service of the FAO Fisheries Department organized an identification mission to Burkina Faso, Ghana, Mali, Zambia and Zimbabwe to assess the possibilities of establishing an African Network. The mission recommended the organization of a workshop as a first step for the establishment of this network. Following this Workshop there was increased efforts by individual countries and organizations to form Networks in various Countries of Africa. This happened across the continent but with limited success. In most countries these networks were annexed under donor funded projects and remained strong as long as the projects were running but waned and eventually failed to take off after these projects ended.

2.1 Formation of SARNISSA

The EC funded FP7 SARNISSA network (project) began in February 2008 aiming to address one of the key recognized constraints holding back the development of aquaculture in Sub-Saharan Africa (SSA), namely the lack of access to relevant focused information and communication in order to significantly increase aquaculture production for the wide range of stakeholders involved across the continent and further afield. The project consortium was set up with a balance of African, European, American and Asian interdisciplinary expertise and experience that throughout the 39-month duration jelled together to develop a unique online-based network.

In order to raise awareness of SARNISSA, bi-lingual project website <http://www.sarnissa.org> was set up in April 2008 which then began, through partners/stakeholder interactions, both online and by personal contact, meetings, workshops, conferences etc. It steadily increased its content to be a comprehensive repository of information, links, publications, video links, news, and opportunities related to African aquaculture research and development. The average monthly hits for the site increased from 247 in April 2008 to 1 290 per month by January 2009 and by May 2012 over 3 400 per month. By May 2012 the SARNISSA membership had 1282 (64%) English, 701 (35%) French, and 20 (1%) others including, Portuguese and Spanish speaking countries.

The SARNISSA a platform maintained and updated by William Leschen of Stirling University is an online Aquaculture Development Platform and Network relying heavily on developing its websites and increasing their appeal and benefits to a wider African and international audience.

2.2 Formation of ANAF

The Aquaculture Network for Africa (ANAF), which currently brings together 14 African countries (namely: *the Republic of Cameroon, the Republic of Chad, the Republic of Ghana, the Republic of Kenya, the Republic of Mali, the Republic of Mozambique, the Republic of Namibia, the Federal Republic of Nigeria, the Republic of Senegal, the Republic of South Africa, the United Republic of Tanzania, the Republic of Uganda and Zambia*) was established during the 14th Session of the Committee for Inland Fisheries and Aquaculture of Africa (CIFAA) held in Accra, the Republic of Ghana, in November 2006, on the basis of a working group tasked with consolidating its establishment. It consists of focal points in the different member countries and is the only specialized network in the field of aquaculture in Africa.

In July 2008 FAO Africa Regional Office regional representative Dr. John Moehl organized a meeting in Jinja, Uganda, to discuss and see whether SARNISSA and ANAF could merge into one overall network. This was a follow up of efforts that have been made in the past to form an Africa Fisheries and Aquaculture network. After a fairly lively discussion we came to an agreement that ANAF and SARNISSA should try to merge into one overall network - During the negotiations on this we both agreed that SARNISSA should keep its own identity and brand - with - in terms of IT, information sharing, the websites, the discussion fora – with cross over between French and English speaking SSA aquaculture etc. SARNISSA would retain all of these roles - Whilst ANAF would work more within a policy level role whilst also going on to develop a training education based programme.

More Specifically ANAF would focus on prioritized areas addressing the greatest perceived needs within SSA development such as fish farm management, training, outreach, seed production and hatchery management, collaboration with local institution in developing university and college

curricula in order to give students more of the skills required for working in commercial or sustainable aquaculture – rather than going on to work for the government in research or administration. In the same vein assist in developing on farm internship programmes, and identifying and strengthening in SSA context “Centres of Excellence” for specific areas e.g. fish genetics, fish propagation, reproduction, nutrition, aquatic animal health etc.

The main objective of the Aquaculture Network for Africa (ANAF) would hence be to optimize the utilization of available resources and strengthen the capacity of Member states in order to foster sustainable aquaculture development in Africa as a means to fight poverty, ensure food and nutritional security, create wealth, income and provide youth employment.

The specific objectives include to:

- Increase national fish productions in order to reduce fish imports and save on foreign exchange.
- Generate, disseminate and facilitate access to aquaculture information in the region for the development of the sector.
- Facilitate access to quality inputs and adoption of appropriate and sustainable technologies for quality seed production, feed formulation and development.
- Stimulate private sector investment as well as public-private partnerships in aquaculture.
- Establish institutional linkages and stronger collaborations among Member states.
- Increase rural income and employment, gender and youth equity.
- Increase and diversify aquaculture production and enhance productivity and profitability.
- Harmonize policies and strengthening regulatory framework and standards.
- Strengthening technical capacities and promote collaborative research and development in aquaculture.
- Develop and promote best management practices to ensure healthy environment and ecosystems in all aquaculture practices.
- Reduce post-harvest losses and ensure quality and safety of aquaculture products.
- Facilitate regional trade and access to markets for aquaculture products

Measures to be addressed included:

- Identifying prospective host governments and developing a proposed schedule of mandatory contribution (or annual membership fee) of governments
- Developing a three-year ANAF work programme
- Developing the ANAF Agreement and the other legal instruments, including rules of procedure, financial regulations, staff regulations and terms of employment.

2.3 Formation of SANSAFA

A consultative workshop for the establishment of a Regional Platform for Non-State Actors (SANSAFA) involved in the fisheries and aquaculture sector within Southern Africa, was organized by African Union Inter-African Bureau for Animal Resources (AU-IBAR) in collaboration with the New Partnership for Africa's Development (NEPAD Agency (NPCA) and Southern African Development Community (SADC) in Nairobi, the Republic of Kenya from the 17th to 19th April, 2018.

The main objective of the workshop was to establish and formalize a regional platform for non-state actors actively involved in fisheries and aquaculture in the SADC region that will provide strategic leadership and coordination of all national and sub-national level NSAs at regional level.

The key outcomes of the meeting were:

- The establishment of SANSAFA (Southern African Regional Non-State Actors Platform in Fisheries and Aquaculture) as a regional platform of representative national NSAs of the SADC whose goals were to coordinate from the grassroots, the NSA voice and contribute to the national and regional fisheries and aquaculture development agenda. In this regard, among its key overall goals were ensuring the effective implementation of the SADC Fisheries Protocol and programme activities, PFRS, SSF guidelines and other programmatic activities of relevance, especially grassroots level.
- The adoption of SANSAFA's Statutes and Rules of Procedure.
- The setting up and operationalization of the inaugural RCC and ECC.

- The development and adoption of SANSFAFA's three-year action plan. The actions within the plan focused at ensuring SANSFAFA became legally recognized regional NSAs within the SADC region and raise public awareness on its existence and purpose.
- Sharing experiences and networking among the delegate national NSA's of SADC and with EARFISH.

2.4 Formation of WAS -Africa Chapter

During the World Aquaculture Conference and Exhibition meeting in Cape Town, South Africa, in June 2017 attendees of the World Aquaculture Conference in Cape Town, South Africa witnessed the launched of the WAS-Africa Chapter at the conference. It was exciting to see Africa join the United States, Korea, Asia-Pacific and Latin-American-Caribbean as fully affiliated chapters of the WAS.

To form a chapter, 50 active members from Africa were needed to submit a petition to the Affiliations Committee requesting to be recognized as a chapter, citing the number of the interested people. The Board then approved work on the formation of the chapter. Thereafter, the chapter will need to submit a draft set of By-Laws to the Affiliations Committee. After all this is done the Board approves the actual chapter formation and the papers are signed.

The Chapter would raise funds and use these funds, plus any other funds that might be generated, for projects that would benefit the chapter and African aquaculture. The hope is that the Africa chapter would serve as a focal point for further development of the technical and scientific community of aquaculture professionals. Although this happened a year ago, there has been a slow take of and most members have not received further communication with regards to their membership and chapter workplan.

2.5 Formation of ANEA

Twenty people from Tanzania, Kenya and Uganda met in September 2015 at Arusha, Tanzania and agreed to form the Aquaculture Network of East Africa (ANEA). The following year (in September 2016) a team of 8 people met in Dar es Salaam to prepare the constitution. The aim of the network is to all aquaculture professionals in East Africa,

provide information on current development in aquaculture and establish link and collaboration with regional and international organizations such as the WAS and the African Chapter for WAS.

The interim leadership include: Sebastian Chenyambuga -Tanzania (Chairperson), Nazael Madalla - Tanzania (Vice-chairperson), Julius Manyala - Kenya (Secretary), Charles Masembe -Uganda (treasurer), Charles Ngugi - Kenya (member of the secretariat), Matthew Mwanja - Uganda (member of the secretariat) and Enock Mlaponi - Tanzania (member of the secretariat). We have a final draft constitution that needs to be discussed and ratified by members. Thereafter set on recruiting members from Kenya, Uganda and Tanzania, Rwanda, Burundi and other countries of the region.

3.0 Lessons Learned

- The examples listed above depicts several attempts made to form a continental or regional platform for sharing ideas geared towards fisheries and Aquaculture development in Africa.
- We realize that transformation period can be lengthy and like those networks mentioned, there is no shortcut to the development an aquaculture network such as ANEA to full operation.
- Cost and budget implication is difficult to assess but it should be based on the Work Programme. It took NACA (Network of Aquaculture Centres in Asia-Pacific) three years from 1987 to 1989 to consolidate the achievements of the first two phases (1980–3; 1984–6) during which time all the legal instruments, management and administrative instruments, the formulation of and negotiations on the government contributions, and the adoption of all these in a Plenipotentiary meeting were carried out.
- It has taken Aquaculture Network for Africa (ANAF) more than ten years to be in full operation and there are still major challenges to be addressed.
- These are good examples with lessons that ANEA can learn from looking at the challenges and trying to navigate through as we endeavour to build a sustainable regional network - ANEA.