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Innovation Platform Concept Paper

Piloting inclusive business and entrepreneurial models for smallholder farmers and poor value chain actors in Zambia

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About WorldFish

WorldFish is an international, not-for-profit research organization that works to reduce hunger and poverty by improving fisheries and aquaculture. It collaborates with numerous international, regional and national partners to deliver transformational impacts to millions of people who depend on fish for food, nutrition and income in the developing world. Headquartered in Penang, Malaysia and with regional offices across Africa, Asia and the Pacific, WorldFish is a member of CGIAR, the world's largest global partnership on agriculture research and innovation for a food secure future.

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List of acronyms

IBEMs	Inclusive business and entrepreneurial models
GIZ	Deutsche Gesellschaft für Internationale Zusammenarbeit (GIZ) GmbH

1. Introduction

The ‘Piloting inclusive business and entrepreneurial models for smallholder fish farmers and poor value chain actors in Zambia and Malawi’ project is funded by the Deutsche Gesellschaft für Internationale Zusammenarbeit (GIZ) GmbH. This project is intended to pilot and expand the use of inclusive business models as a mechanism for the FISH CRP to improve access by smallholder fish farmers to productivity-enhancing quality fish seed, fish feed, and innovative training delivering improved incomes, women and youth involvement in aquaculture, and importantly, for improved fish consumption for healthy and nutritious diets at scale. Working with 70 IBEMS in Zambia’s Northern and Luapula provinces and Malawi’s Southern region, the project aims to reach close to 3000 farmers with inputs, services and training.

The project has the following outputs:

- Output 1: Inclusive business and entrepreneurial models (IBEMs) established and functional for piloting to service local smallholder farmers.
- Output 2: Innovation platforms with private and public actors established and functional
- Output 3: Innovative training materials on best management practices, business skills development, entrepreneurship
- Output 4: Assessments the evaluating efficacy of the IBEMs, innovation platforms, and training materials and approaches

This concept note focuses on Output 3 of the project. The GIZ-funded piloting inclusive business models project seeks to set up an innovation platform with private and public actors to determine the various opportunities to support and supply inputs and services to local aquapreneurs and smallholder farmers. This concept, therefore, outlines how we will set up the innovation platform to address the supply of feed and seed and other support services for feed and seed operators in Northern and Luapula provinces—consequently, the sustainable supply of feed, seed and knowledge to the smallholder farmers.

2.Objectives of the innovation platform

The innovation platform to be set up in Northern and Luapula provinces will bring together private, public actors and feed and seed operators and other interested stakeholders to:

1. To determine efficient and sustainable strategies to reach smallholder farmers through the IBEMs and scale their investments.
2. To facilitate dialogue among stakeholders in the aquaculture sector in the Northern and Luapula regions.
3. Identify solutions to common problems that affect seed and feed operators
4. To develop strategies to achieve common goals to improve the sector.
5. To identify and harness opportunities in the sector.

3.Approach

Initially, only the feed and seed operators under the GIZ project and other stakeholders providing services and inputs will be members of the innovation platform. These stakeholders will include feed companies, equipment dealers, financial institutions, extension officers and farmers.

The platform

1. Will be organized around roundtable discussions on thematic topics of seed and feed. The feed and seed operators will meet separately in their thematic groups to discuss issues that affect them.
2. Once every quarter, the feed and seed operators will meet to discuss issues in the aquaculture sector.

As we progress into 2021, we hope that the platform will grow beyond the initial seed and feed operators under the GIZ inclusive business models project to include other seed and feed operators in Zambia's Northern and Luapula provinces.

The GIZ, Zambia, will set up a national aquaculture platform. The local platforms set up in Northern and Luapula provinces will contribute to the national platform when it is set up. Local platform members will register as members in the National platform and contribute to relevant thematic areas.

Currently, we have four female IBEMS, thirty-two male IBEMS, and two cooperatives (one youth-led and one with a majority of women) who will automatically become members of the innovation platform once it is formed. The platform will ensure that all platform members, including men, women, and young people, share their ideas and participate freely and equally in platform activities and meetings.

Consultation

The project carried out wide consultations with different stakeholders, including government representatives, farmers, NGOs, to assess whether there was a need for an aquaculture innovation platform in Zambia. While stakeholders emphasized the need for a national innovation platform, we will focus on the innovation platforms and round table discussions in Zambia's Northern and Luapula provinces within the GIZ project confines. As mentioned before, the GIZ, Zambia, will focus on developing and launching the national innovation stakeholder platform to which the farmer round tables/innovation platforms will contribute.

IBEMs and smallholder farmers who attended the consultative meetings mentioned that there was a need for an innovation platform to:

- To improve on fish production
- To improve on inputs and output markets
- To discuss issues of equipment for the aquaculture sector, including importation of equipment such as hapas, scoop nets from China and elsewhere, to see if Zambia can start manufacturing these and involve women and youth in the production of these materials.
- To discuss value addition issues.

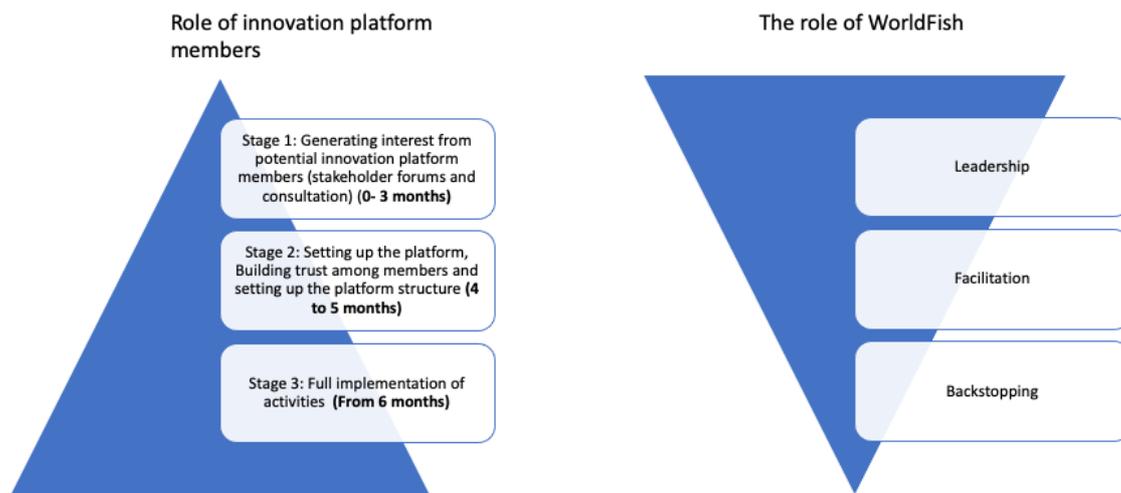
Regarding what the platform could focus on, smallholder aquaculture farmers and IBEMS mentioned that the innovation platform could focus on

- Feed and seed production and distribution
- Improvement of the aquaculture value chain to improve fish production
- Importation of aquaculture equipment
- Extension services
- Business planning and financing/borrowing
- Value addition processing and marketing
- Better management practices in hatchery, feed and general management

While these topics could represent a point of departure, the project acknowledges that the innovation platform members will set the pace and agenda of issues that the platform should address.

4. Setting up the platform

When the platform is set up, WorldFish will initially have a leadership role to bring the stakeholders together but relinquish control to platform members as the platform is set up and fully functional. From that point on, WF will provide technical backstopping while the members of the platform take over the leadership of the platform (See figure 1)



In line with this approach in 2021, WorldFish will host three meetings in the Northern and Luapula regions to follow up on the consultative meeting held in 2020. The meetings will be hosted as follows:

1. The first session to be held in June will focus on the feed thematic area. Feed IBEMS, feed companies, and extension officers.
2. The second session to be held in August/September will focus on the seed thematic area. Seed IBEMS and stakeholders focusing on seed will be invited to this meeting.
3. The third session will be held in December, where both feed and seed stakeholders and IBEMS will be invited. Other stakeholders will including financial institutions, equipment dealers and off-takers, will be invited to this meeting.

The purpose of these meetings will be as follows:

1. The first and second meetings will generate interest among the different stakeholders, identify key areas of focus under each thematic group, and how each thematic area will be administered and meetings held. Relevant stakeholders in the feed and seed industries will be invited as appropriate.
2. The third meeting will be held in November and December to bring the seed and feed thematic area members together, discuss broader issues affecting aquaculture, formulate a single platform where both seed and feed are discussed, and put the management structure in place. The third meeting will be combined with the annual stock-taking of the project under activity 3.3 of the

project. This activity aims to 'facilitate the coming together of selected local aqua-preneurs and fish farmers each year to reflect on project implementation and performance and for knowledge sharing and learning purposes and modifying implementation processes the subsequent year'.

In 2022, we anticipate thematic roundtables meetings once every two months and full platform meetings every quarter. The platform members will define the focus of these meetings.

5. Conclusion

The innovation platform will bring together stakeholders in the aquaculture sector in the Northern and Luapula provinces to determine the various opportunities to support and supply inputs and services to local aquapreneurs and smallholder farmers. We anticipate that this innovation platform will improve access to inputs and services for aquaculture farmers and thereby improve the sector.

About WorldFish

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