



Aquaculture Value Chain Project (AVCP) Malawi:

AQUACULTURE ROUND TABLE (AquaRT)

Newsletter, December 2020

The newsletter is compiled with an aim to summarize and provide highlights for the activities, milestones and accomplishments of Aquaculture Roundtable (AquaRT) that took place every six months of the calendar year.

1. INTRODUCTION

Aquaculture Roundtable (AquaRT) is a multi-stakeholder grouping whose aim is to advance the aquaculture subsector in Malawi. The grouping which was formed in 2019 comprises of players in fish farming, research, feed and fingerling production, Non-governmental Organisations and Government. AquaRT is chaired by the Director of Fisheries in the Ministry of Forestry and Natural Resources. The platform was formed to work towards meeting the challenges and emerging issues and to provide linkages with the emerging cross-cutting policies, plans and activities of national bodies. The platform further provides support for a sustainable aquaculture development for economic growth in Malawi among others.

Vision

More farmed fish for everyone in Malawi

Mission

Create and enhance the enabling environment for the implementation of sustainable aquaculture

Objectives

The AquaRT was specifically established to achieve the following objectives

- Support aquaculture policy and strategy review, development and implementation
- Create strategic and practical ways of sharing information that can impact positively on opportunities and growth of aquaculture
- Provide and monitor standards and certification of hatcheries, brood stock and fish feed, so that these meet the needs of fish farmers
- Provide a platform for discussion so that key issues that impact on aquaculture sector growth can be resolved collectively and means to deliver them agreed
- Harmonize and monitor research by DoF, NAC, FRU, NGOs and development agencies

QUICKLINKS

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- ✚ [Phindu mu Ulimi wa Nsomba Radio Programme](#)
- ✚ [Coordinated Efforts in combating Epizootic Ulcerative Syndrome](#)
- ✚ [Review of Feed and Hatchery Operations Guidelines](#)
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2. PHINDU MU ULIMI WA NSOMBA RADIO PROGRAMME

Phindu mu Ulimi wa Nsomba, a radio program was designed by the Outreach Working Group with support from GIZ through Aquaculture Value Chain Project (AVCP) to cover the communication gap that has been existing between fish farmers and experts. The program has been rolled out since mid-August 2020. Zodiak Broadcasting Station (ZBS) is the official broadcaster of this programme. To bring expert knowledge closer to the end users, the programme strive to seek expert opinion and advise from relevant experts from Government, private sector as well as academia. It also interacts on regular basis with the farmers on the ground. The content development committee of this radio programme design it in such a way that the radio episodes follow the aquaculture production calendar in Malawi as well as taking on board other cross cutting issues like youth empowerment, gender etc.

ZODIAK
BROADCASTING STATION LTD
97.0fm • 95.1fm • 95.4fm • 92.8fm

Mverani pologalamu ya
PHINDU MU ULIMI
WA NSOMBA

Lolembe - 6:30 Madzulo
Lachinayi - 3:10 Masana

Bangula: 91.3MHZ, Chikangawa: 107.0MHZ, Chitipa: 89.5MHZ, Dedza: 89.0MHZ, Dowa: 92.9MHZ, Karonga: 93.7MHZ, Kasungu: 104.9MHZ, Lilongwe: 92.7MHZ, Livingstonia: 95.0MHZ, Mangochi: 94.9MHZ, Mchinji: 87.6MHZ, Mpingwe: 97.0MHZ, Mtengowaung'ono: 106.7MHZ, Mzuzu: 95.1MHZ, Namwera: 103.3MHZ, Ntcheu: 107.1MHZ, Ntchisi: 88.7MHZ, Zomba: 88.3MHZ.

AQUACULTURE VALUE CHAIN PROJECT (AVCP)

Implemented by
german Cooperation **giz** Deutsche Gesellschaft für Internationale Zusammenarbeit (GIZ) GmbH

IFFNT, Aquaculture Round Table (ART) Malawi, LUANSE

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ONLINE RADIO
97.0fm • 95.1fm • 95.4fm • 92.8fm

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Fig 1. Stickers depicting the time schedules for the radio programme and the frequencies across Malawi

The role of mass media, radio to be specific in disseminating information to the public can not be overemphasized. To this date, this radio programme has made it possible to bring farmers voices and exeperiences to the public. It has again given a platform to different experts in the aquaculture sub sector to share their technical insights with the fish farmers. In time of COVID-19 pandemic where movements and large gatherings are greatly discouraged, radio programme is a right tool of disseminating the much needed information to fish farmers.





Fig 2: Phindu mu Ulimi wa Nsomba radio presenter, Winnie Luwembe interacting with fingerling production expert Mr. David Mbamba of Mzuzu Aquaculture Centre

COORDINATED EFFORTS IN COMBATING EPIZOOTIC ULCERATIVE SYNDROME (EUS)

With 20 per cent of Malawi's surface area composed of water, the fisheries sector plays a role in contributing towards food and nutritional security. In addition, the country has potential areas for aquaculture. Over 64,000 fishers and nearly 2 million including women depend on fishing for their livelihood.

Around mid-July, it was reported that fish in Bua, Mtete, Lusa, Luwelezi and Nalilolo rivers and some fish ponds in Traditional Authority Mkanda in Mchinji District were mysteriously dying, a situation which caused panic among fishers, fish farmers and the community at large. As such, the

Departments of Fisheries and Animal Health & Livestock, the fish farming community and other partners like Innovative Fish Farmers Network (IFFNT), Lilongwe University of Agriculture and Natural Resources (LUANAR) and the public have been equally concerned with the situation.

As immediate actions, the Government of Malawi through the Department of Fisheries (DoF) and Department of Animal Health & Livestock Development included setting up a joint research team



that visited Mchinji to verify existence of the EUS in the rivers and fish ponds. The report from the first sampling during a field trip to the area on 17th of July 2020 in Mtete River in Guwende village and Chikondi fish farm club in Kawere village, TA Kawere, indicated that fish of different species were dying and had lesions on the skin. This raised suspicion of a case of *Aphanomyces invadans* that causes Epizootic Ulcerative Syndrome (EUS). This suspected disease is very prevalent in cold seasons. One of the affected districts, Mchinji, borders Zambia, which is a hotspot for the virulent fungal infection. As such, there is a probability that transboundary transmission has occurred. The research team further made preliminary laboratory tests, which pointed to the fact that EUS existed in the area. As a follow-up, the Government asked FAO-Malawi that responded positively and supported further analysis of the fish samples in Zambia, which also verified the EUS infections in Mchinji.

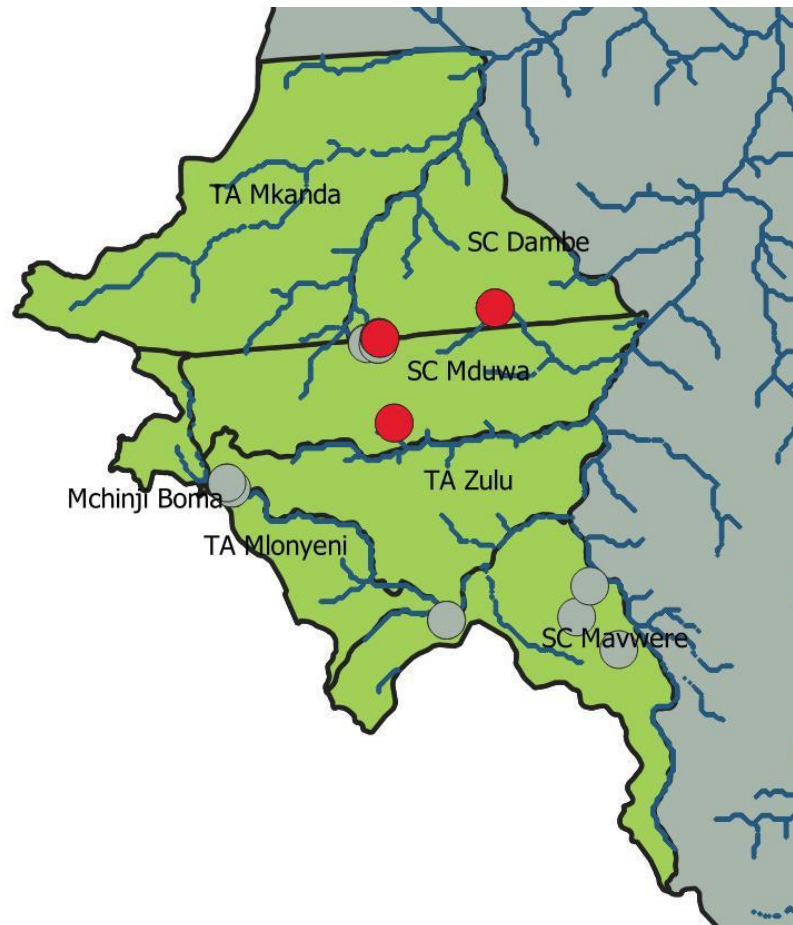


Fig 3: Map of the Infected areas in Mchinji

Through the Donor working Group of the Aquaculture Roundtable, a meeting to update stakeholders on the outbreak of Epizootic Ulcerative Syndrome (EUS) and chart the way forward as implementing agencies was conducted on 4th August, 2020. The draft strategy developed by the Department of Fisheries was discussed and adopted. Different implementing agencies in the aquaculture sub sector shared different roles and responsibilities in responding to the strategy. Sharing of the roles reduced duplication of activities among different stakeholders and thereby maximizing the use of the available resources in curbing the outbreak. Some of the implementing



agencies who immediately responded to the developed include but not limited GIZ through the Aquaculture Value chain Project, DFID through the CASA project, WorldFish, LUANAR just to mention but a few.



Fig. The research team collecting sample in the field

REVIEW OF FEED AND HATCHERY OPERATIONS GUIDELINES

A two-day workshop (29 and 30th October 2020) was organized for the Research Expert Working Group to review feed and fingerling guidelines. The workshop among others aimed at achieving the following objectives;

Feed and fish seed (Fingerling) are key elements in fish production hence supply of quality fingerlings is a key factor for greater operations in Aquaculture sector. In the second half of the year 2020, the research expert group met to review guidelines for hatchery operations in the country. During the meeting, the chairperson of the fingerling working group Mr. Mbamba, emphasized the need for high quality fish seed for Aquaculture production.

Uncoordinated approach, lack of guidelines and uncertified hatchery operators are some of the factors that are hindering the supply of quality fingerlings in the country. One way of mitigating this problem is to develop guidelines that will help hatchery operators in their daily fingerling production. Not only that, but also certification of hatchery operators may help in the production of quality seed because there will be assurance that only high quality seed producers are the ones to be certified. The team agreed that the hatchery guidelines should be finalized and operationalized in in the year 2021.





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