

# TCP/CKI/3201(D)

## Aquaculture development project in Cook Islands

Masanami Izumi

FAO Sub-Regional Office for the Pacific Islands (SAP)  
masanami.izumi@fao.org

The project TCP/CKI/3201(D) “Aquaculture Development Project in Cook Islands” was approved in May 2008 to provide technical assistance in aquaculture to Cook Islands, with a total project budget of USD72,973. The project is designed to assist the Ministry of Marine Resources in Cook Islands in developing appropriate framework of project implementation in aquaculture, to enhance the capacity of the Ministry and potential farmers to sustainably develop, monitor and document aquaculture activities, and to practically implement the recommendations from various consultancies carried out in the past.

The first mission of the FAO project team, conducted in July 2009, was carried out to review past and current national fisheries policies, management, development and strategic plans, for sustainable aquaculture development, and to assess the impact of aquaculture in Cook Islands, including technical, economic, social, environmental and institutional aspects through collection of necessary information and data from concerned government agencies and the private sector involved in the culture of tilapia (*Oreochromis niloticus*), freshwater prawn (*Macrobrachium rosenbergii*) and milkfish (*Chanos chanos*), as well as other potential aquaculture commodities.

The mission recommended measures as to how aquaculture development, activities and projects should be designed to further improve its effectiveness, development impact and sustainability, and appropriate technology packages and preliminary outline designs for pilot-scale farming in Cook Islands as follows.

A structured R&D programme should be formulated for the species and farming systems. The outline of the structured R & D programmes for milkfish, tilapia and freshwater prawn was provided including economic, social and environmental justifications for projects and priority technical areas of each commodities.

A choice between focusing on specific stand-alone projects and going for a programmatic approach has to be made with the justifications for either option.

A framework for a R & D programme for aquaculture development was recommended, which includes the technology components of the aquaculture production system, such as production, marketing, production technology (comprising broodstock, larviculture, nursery, grow-out and post harvest technologies), marketing, socio-economics and livelihoods, fish health, environment, certification for food safety and quality, and training and extension.

The elements and basic information, including expertise required and indicative costs of some inputs, were provided to design pilot projects for specific production systems of milkfish, tilapia and freshwater prawn culture in identified sites. The potential objectives and outputs of the pilot projects were indicated.

Based on the above recommendations of the first mission, the project second mission was conducted in August 2009 to provide technical assistance in the field. Further, the project third mission has been planned early 2010 to provide practical or on-the-job training and mentoring to government counterparts and potential farmers.

