



EXPANDING MARKET OPPORTUNITIES FOR FRESHWATER FISH

THE ISSUE

Small-scale freshwater aquaculture and inland fisheries producers in North Africa face difficulties accessing local and international markets because the regulatory environment is designed for larger businesses. They lack facilities for landing, handling and storing fresh fish so fish must be sold quickly, before the quality deteriorates, reducing market prices and profitability. There is also a lack of knowledge about the importance of following best practices for fish marketing. Meanwhile, consumers tend to have a bias towards consumption of more familiar marine fish species rather than unfamiliar freshwater fish, with many considering it as less tasty or affected by growing conditions.



Selling Nile tilapia in a fish shop in Ouargla, Algeria.

THE ACTIONS

This programme aims to:

1. **Make it easier for small-scale aquaculture and inland fisheries businesses to access local and international markets.**
2. **Develop facilities for landing, handling and storing freshwater fish and improve freshwater fish market practices.**
3. **Improve consumer perceptions of freshwater fish.**

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1. Market access

Market regulations will be adapted to simplify food safety registration requirements for small-scale producers and devote a share of local public-sector markets to small-scale producers. Standardized contract templates will be developed between the state and small-scale private-sector producers, making it easier for

them to sell to public-sector outlets such as schools and hospitals. Where possible, freshwater fish will be exempted from product taxes such as VAT. The programme will take advantage of new opportunities under the Africa Continental Free Trade Area to harmonize trade regulations between countries in the North Africa region.

2. Market facilities and practices

The programme will carry out baseline studies covering both producers and potential

markets to identify their needs for market facilities, including landing structures at lakes

and reservoirs, chilled storage and insulated transport, as well as best marketing practice trainings. Fishers and small-scale aquaculture producers will be encouraged to form new management structures, such as producer organizations for sustainable management of the facilities. They will be linked with equipment suppliers, through the programme and supplied with equipment, assisted by partial grants or loans. Meanwhile they will receive

comprehensive training on management of new equipment and facilities, as well as fish handling and storage, and capacity-building support for producer organizations. Additional best management practice trainings will be provided for other freshwater fish market actors, such as wholesalers or transporters, accompanied by investment support to upgrade essential equipment and ensure that fish quality is maintained throughout the market chain.

3. Improving consumer perceptions of freshwater fish

The programme will provide support for businesses and professional organizations to influence the perceptions of consumers in North African countries, working primarily with shops, restaurants, producer organizations and relevant government agencies. The programme will help them to organize promotional events, such as advertising campaigns, product tasting opportunities, product placement with chefs and hotels, as well as site visits for key buyers. This may include quality testing and labelling schemes to provide re-assurance to consumers that freshwater fish products are safe and free from contamination. The programme will develop fact-sheets, posters and educational materials for shops and schools, including fish preparation methods, recipes and explaining the nutritional benefits of freshwater fish consumption. The programme will also encourage the development

of value-added products based on freshwater fish, providing business incentives for the establishment of processing businesses.



Value-added products from freshwater fish species in Morocco.

EXPECTED RESULTS

- ▶ Simplified administrative procedures will make it easier for freshwater fish producers to access markets.
- ▶ Investments in, and best practice training on, fish handling, storage and marketing will ensure less wastage and higher quality of fish reaching the market, while providing opportunities for geographical expansion of markets.
- ▶ Promotional activities are expected to increase demand for freshwater fish in local and urban markets, making it more likely that consumers will choose to buy freshwater fish. This should lead to increased prices through the market chain, leading to higher earnings and profits for fishers and aquaculture producers.
- ▶ The development of new market opportunities through exports, government contracts and value-added processing will lead to further expansion of the market, helping to build the value chain and smooth out seasonal variations in supply from farms and other water bodies.
- ▶ Fish processing will provide important employment opportunities for women and youth.
- ▶ The overall programme of market activities will help to strengthen the role of producer organizations to provide coordination and influence for small-scale aquaculture businesses and fishers.



200 percent increase

Supply of freshwater fish doubled in Algeria, Mauritania, Morocco and Tunisia



USD 500 million

Reduction in aquatic food imports



Improved nutrition

Project targets consumers lacking access to nutritious food

IMPLEMENTATION ARRANGEMENTS

The programme will be implemented in Algeria, Mauritania, Morocco and Tunisia, although the specific activities and focus will vary depending on the available opportunities. It will focus on private-sector actors in the small-scale fisheries and aquaculture value chains, including fishers, fish farmers, wholesalers, transporters and retailers. It will be implemented by either government agencies (Ministry of Agriculture or Fisheries, as appropriate) or development Non-governmental Organizations (NGOs). However, to ensure sustainability, the aim is for key activities to be taken on by either producer organizations or private-sector actors at the end of the programme, so activities will gradually be handed onto them as it progresses. Other relevant organizations will include Ministries of Environment, Trade Ministry, food quality and certification bodies, food inspection services and Public Relations agencies.

The programme will unlock the potential of inland, small-scale aquaculture and fisheries production systems, providing increased access to high quality fish and value-added products for consumers.

WHY INVEST?

Freshwater fish is an important resource that is being overlooked in many North African countries. This means that consumers fail to benefit from the nutritional properties of locally produced fish while producers face difficult market conditions and poor incomes. The programme will unlock the potential of inland, small-scale aquaculture and fisheries

production systems, providing increased access to high quality fish and value-added products for consumers. This will increase earnings and profits along the value chains, from input suppliers, to fishers and farmers, through to retailers and processors, resulting in increased employment and improved food security.

The market programme is estimated at USD 5.5 million.



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