

# Promoting sustainable aquaculture practices among Cambodia's farmers to diversify income and improve nutrition and food security

*The CaPFish aquaculture programme aims to build skills and introduce innovative farming methods to grow the sector*





The European Commission and l'Agence Française de Développement (AFD) recognise the importance of sustainable fisheries and aquaculture practices in preserving marine biodiversity, ensuring food security, and promoting economic growth and employment opportunities in coastal communities around the globe. As part of efforts to improve the livelihoods of local fishers and farmers, reduce overfishing and preserve marine ecosystems, the two donors launched the 'Programme for Sustainable and Inclusive Growth in the Fisheries Sector: Aquaculture Component' (CaPFish Aquaculture) in 2018. Working with the Cambodian Ministry of Agriculture, Forestry and Fisheries (MAFF), the goal is to strengthen the country's aquaculture sector through training and capacity building programmes designed for the nation's farmers.

Beyond CapFish Aquaculture is the wider CaPFish Programme, which aims to enhance individual livelihoods, as well as the nation's economy, through food security and socioeconomic development. CaPFish Aquaculture contributes to this goal by ensuring a more sustainable, climate-resilient and inclusive growth in Cambodia's aquaculture sector, which remains relatively underdeveloped compared to neighbouring countries like Thailand and comprised primarily of small-scale and subsistence farmers. CaPFish involves the provision of technical assistance, capacity building, and funding for small-scale farmers and other stakeholders. The programme seeks to improve the productivity and efficiency of aquaculture operations and promote sustainable aquaculture practices.



### Specific objectives of CaPFish Aquaculture

CaPFish Aquaculture is taking a holistic approach in supporting the different components of the aquaculture value chain. The long-term goals of this programme include:

- Scaling up successful aquaculture experiences to ensure the sector's growth, contributing to income diversification and improved food and nutrition security at the rural household level;
- Developing and diffusing more sustainable and efficient practices in the rapidly growing culture of high-input species for export, doing so with particular regard for reduced dependence on the use of 'trash fish' and captured juveniles, as well as for the control of disease and water pollution to minimise the negative impacts of intensive aquaculture practices.

To achieve these key objectives, the NIRAS consortium's role primarily involves rendering support to stakeholders and beneficiaries, which entails building upon current aquaculture studies in higher education and supporting the creation of a new curriculum for universities. In the first year of operation, existing curriculums have been reviewed and a Bachelor-level programme for aquaculture technicians is under development. A programme for vocational training courses in aquaculture for all stakeholders is also underway. The expectation is that trained and skilled aquaculture technicians and researchers will be capable of responding to the demands of the private sector.

The CaPFish team will also strengthen the capacity of fish farmers through training and fully transferring aquaculture technologies to Master Trainers, who will then develop a network of local trainers who are embedded in local private fish farms and introduce new technologies to both female and male fish farmers in the private sector. To date, at least 18 training networks have

been established in various provinces and complementary training has been delivered to 25 Master Trainers in fields such as feed management, water quality management, sustainable aquaculture and production systems. A full training programme to transfer knowledge and skills from the Master Trainers to 20 local trainers is also in development. With support from the NIRAS consortium, these local trainers will provide training to more than 2,000 farmers in ten provinces which will result in the adoption of new and improved aquaculture practices and technology, leading to intensification of sustainable practices.

As the project progresses, the consortium continues to ensure the seamless delivery of services. The CaPFish team is currently developing training networks, assisting local trainers during operations, supporting specific training sessions to enable farmers in adopting good aquaculture practices and helping develop the skills required for environmental monitoring, bio-security control and fish health monitoring.