

Concept Note

World Bank Africa Aquaculture Finance and Investment Workshop

Title ‘Unlocking Sustainable Growth in Africa’s Aquaculture Sector’

Hosted at:

World Aquaculture Society (WAS) Conference – Africa Region, Entebbe (Uganda), June 24-27, 2025.

Date: June 24, 2025. **Duration:**

Full-day event (8:30 AM – 5:00 PM)

1. Background and Rationale

Aquaculture is the fastest-growing food production sector globally and holds immense potential to contribute to food security, nutrition, employment, and economic growth in Africa. However, the pace of aquaculture expansion in the region remains constrained by limited access to finance, insufficient investment readiness, and weak linkages between financial institutions, governments, and the private sector. This workshop will build on the key takeaways and recommendations generated at previous regional finance and investment workshops held at AFRAQ2023, AFRAQ2024, and High-Level Regional Workshop organized by the WBG, FAO and IFAD in Dar es Salaam in April 2025. Main recommendations derived from this, and previous workshops will be translated into a ‘call for action for enhance regional investment in aquaculture’ that will be shared at a Ministerial Meeting at the forthcoming COP30 in Brazil in November 2025. This workshop aims to address these challenges by fostering dialogue, sharing tools and best practices, and strengthening partnerships between the public and private sectors to accelerate sustainable and inclusive aquaculture investment across the continent.

2. Objective

To strengthen the enabling environment for aquaculture finance and investment in Africa by convening key stakeholders to:

- Share investment models, innovations, and case studies.
- Explore strategies for de-risking investments and improving access to finance.
- Promote public-private partnerships and blended finance mechanisms.
- Build technical capacity on aquaculture business planning and project structuring.
- Launch the joint ‘World Bank WWF Global Aquaculture Report’.

3. Expected Outcomes

By the end of the workshop, participants will:

- Understand the landscape of aquaculture investment and financing instruments available in Africa.
- Gain insights into bankable aquaculture business models and investor expectations.
- Identify policy and institutional reforms needed to attract and sustain investment.
- Foster regional networks between governments, financiers, producers, and development partners.
- Explore opportunities for blended finance and co-investment between public and private actors.

4. Technical Description and Format

- **Type of Event:** In-person technical workshop with plenaries, breakout sessions, and panel discussions.
- **Duration:** Full day (June 24, 2025, from 8:15 AM to 5:00 PM)
- **Format:**
 - High-level keynotes
 - Thematic plenary sessions
 - Interactive Q&A and group discussions

5. Target Audience

- Government officials and policymakers
- Commercial and small-scale aquaculture producers
- Banks, investors, and microfinance institutions
- Development finance institutions (DFIs)
- Donor agencies and technical partners
- Aquaculture service providers and business incubators
- NGOs, researchers, and youth innovators

6. Scope and Themes

- **Investment Landscape and Trends** in African aquaculture
- **Access to Finance** for small and medium aquaculture enterprises (SMEs)
- **Public-Private Partnerships (PPPs)** and **blended finance mechanisms**
- **De-risking strategies** and financial instruments for aquaculture
- **Business planning** and investment-readiness support
- **Policy, regulation, and governance** to unlock investment
- **Women and youth inclusion** in aquaculture finance
- **Climate and environmental risk management** for sustainable investment

7. Proposed Agenda

Time	Session
08:30 – 09:00	Registration
09:00 – 09:20	Welcoming Remarks – Dr John Walakira (Immediate Past President, World Aquaculture Society-Africa Chapter) and Mr. Joseph Bwanika (Commissioner of Aquaculture)
09:20 – 09:30	Opening Remarks – Dr Harrison Charo-Karisa (WBG)
09:30 – 09:50	Keynote Speech: Transforming African Aquaculture – Regional perspective Dr Winnie Nkalubo - Director, National Fisheries Resources Research Institute (NAFIRRI)
09:50 – 10:45	Plenary Session 1: Aquaculture Finance Landscape in Africa: 09:50 – 10:00 Presentation on WB initiatives (Harrison Charo-Karisa) 10:00 – 10:10 Presentation on IFC (Anita Louise/Stephen John Mcgoldrick) 10:10 – 10:20 Presentation on Regional Policies by AUDA-NEPAD (Bernice McLean) 10:20 – 10:45 Q&A session
10:45 – 11:00	Coffee Break and Networking
11:00 – 12:30	Plenary Session 2: De-risking Aquaculture Investments – Tools and Innovations: Presentation by key countries: 11:00 – 11:15 Zambia aquaculture investment innovations: Martin Mwale (Aquaculture Manager, Ministry of Fisheries) 11:15 – 11:30 South Africa investment landscape and trends: Belemane Semoli (Fisheries Branch of Department of Forestry, Fisheries and the Environment; Chief Director: Aquaculture Development and Freshwater Fisheries) 11:15 – 11:30 Uganda investment environment: Daniel Ojiambo (Kilimo Trust) 11:30 – 12:00 Tanzania SMEs innovative initiatives: Nazael Madalla (Aquaculture Director, Ministry of Fisheries) 12:00 – 12:30 Q&A session
12:30 – 13:30	Lunch
13:30 – 15:15	Expert panel on Private Sector Finance Access ‘Investing in Aquaculture: Strategies to Accelerate Private Sector Engagement’ Moderator: Anita Louise (IFC) Private sector representatives from Uganda, Tanzania, Zambia and Kenya.
15:15 – 15:30	Coffee Break
15:30 – 16:30	Regional Roundtable: Business Planning and Investment-Readiness Support, what can be done at regional level? 15:30 – 15:40 Presentation by SADC (Alexander Kefi) 15:40 – 15:50 Presentation by IGAD (Eshete Dejen) 15:50 – 16:00 IFAD Investing in Aquaculture in Africa (Richard Abila) 16:00 – 16:45 Q&A session
16:45 – 17:00	Closing Reflections and Next Steps – WBG