



9th Technical Advisory Committee meeting and 30th anniversary of FFRC

NACA's 9th Technical Advisory Committee (TAC) meeting was hosted by the Regional Lead Centre for China, the Freshwater Fisheries Research Center (FFRC), from 30 October to 1 November 2008. The meeting was attended by 32 participants drawn from member countries and participating research centres, and chaired by Dr Ambekar Eknath. The meeting coincided with the 30th anniversary celebrations for FFRC, which serves as the NACA Regional Lead Centre for China.

The TAC meeting is convened every two years to identify high priority and emerging issues of common interest, and to develop a plan of work for the period 2009-2011 and beyond. The meeting also considered mechanisms for cooperation and funding, including how to increase the participation and ownership of centres in the development and implementation of the work plan.

The Director General (DG) and NACA professional staff made presentations on the major elements of the work program, giving the background and a summary of recent activities, covering coastal aquaculture, inland fisheries and aquaculture, aquatic animal health, genetics and biodiversity, training and education and communication. The DG emphasised the importance of aquaculture as a mechanism for addressing poverty alleviation and rural development in the region, particularly given that the sector was comprised principally of small-scale producers. Selected high priority issues and recommendations of the TAC are summarised below. The full report of the meeting is available for free download from the NACA website at:

<http://www.enaca.org/modules/wfdownloads/singlefile.php?cid=151&lid=969>.



Participants in the 9th Technical Advisory Committee Meeting, Wuxi, China.

Key issues and recommendations

NACA had become involved in climate change through preparation of a review on the impacts on aquaculture for FAO. Based on the consultation a policy brief had been prepared to be submitted, together with those from other agricultural sectors, to a high level policy dialogue of FAO members. Climate change was expected to have a significant impact on aquaculture, particularly in low lying areas such as the delta regions in Vietnam, Bangladesh and Myanmar. The TAC recommended that NACA conduct further work to anticipate the likely impacts and to assist farmers to adapt; and also that NACA establish a new work programme to address emerging global issues.

Food safety has long been a significant trade issue in both domestic and international markets and the long term trend is for increasingly stringent regulatory controls. There is a clear need to help small-scale producers comply with food safety standards and adapt to changing requirements, while maintaining their market competitiveness. The group/cluster-based management approach piloted in India had

proven to be an effective mechanism for improving animal health and environmental management practices amongst small scale farmers. The TAC indicated that cluster approaches would also be an effective mechanism for assisting small-scale producers to meet food safety requirements. The TAC further recommended that NACA establish a new work programme on food safety in aquaculture.

Translocation of germplasm was noted as both a persistent and increasingly problematic issue. The Secretariat frequently received requests for assistance, however the Governing Council had previously instructed the Secretariat not to facilitate such transfers unless an adequate risk assessment had been conducted and the risk deemed acceptable by the authorities, due to the risk of introducing exotic disease agents and the substantial economic losses that had been suffered from such incidents in the past. The TAC recommended that protocols be developed for the responsible transfer of germplasm of species that were already established within the receiving country, and more stringent protocols if a translocation would involve the introduction of an alien species to a new locality. It was noted that the introduction of unknown alien strains

should in principle be treated along similar lines to the introduction of an alien species and that transfers should be consistent with international conventions such as CITES.

TAC noted that there had been a significant amount of costly overlap and duplication in genetic research being undertaken in the region. A survey form would be distributed to institutions active in genetic research, and the information consolidated in an online database, to increase awareness and facilitate collaboration. TAC also suggested that a platform for collaboration in aquaculture genetics be established; this recommendation has already been acted on (see adjacent story on formation of a Consortium on Freshwater Fish Genetics and Breeding).

TAC recommended that the ongoing work on development and promotion of "Better Management Practices", and documentation of "success stories" in aquaculture should be continued and strengthened, to facilitate adoption at farm and policy levels. Similarly, further attention should be given to policy studies and practical guidelines for the improvement of culture-based fisheries, co-management and use of cage culture in inland water bodies to improve production and livelihoods.

The TAC endorsed a proposal to convene a ministerial meeting among emerging aquaculture countries in 2009 or 2010, to raise the profile of the sector and discuss opportunities for collaboration. The TAC also endorsed a second proposal to convene a follow up to the conference on Aquaculture in the Third Millennium in conjunction with FAO.

The final work plan will be made available on the NACA website in the second quarter of 2009, after its consideration at the next NACA Governing Council meeting.

30th FFRC anniversary

A tree planting ceremony was held to mark the 30th anniversary of FFRC. The centre has played a key role in NACA, providing strong technical support to other members over the past two decades. The centre has notably provided intensive training in integrated rice-fish culture, sponsored by the Government of China. NACA would like to thank FFRC for many years of support, and looks forward to ongoing collaboration in the years ahead.

Training Workshop on the Use of Molecular Genetics in Conservation held at USM, Malaysia



Participants in the genetics workshop, USM.

The Universiti Sains Malaysia (USM) in conjunction with Ministry of Science and Innovation Malaysia (MOSTI) and NACA co-organised the Training Workshop on the Use of Molecular Genetics in Conservation at the School of Biological Sciences, Universiti Sains Malaysia, Penang from 17 – 22 November 2008. The workshop was anchored by Dr Thuy Nguyen from NACA and two facilitators, Dr Siti Azizah Mohd Nor and Dr Latiffah Zakaria from the School of Biological Sciences, Universiti Sains Malaysia. The workshop was specially designed for post-graduate students, academicians and scientists who are working in the field of biodiversity and conservation with the objective to build capacity for Malaysian scientists and policy makers.

Twenty participants from various universities and research institutions in Malaysia and Brunei participated in the six-day workshop. These included participants from Universiti Putra Malaysia, Universiti Malaysia Terengganu, Universiti Brunei Darussalam, Forest Research Institute of Malaysia, Fisheries Research Institute, Malaysian Agricultural Research and Development Institute and Department of Chemistry, Malaysia.

During the training workshop, a series of lectures on molecular markers, phylogenetics and conservation were conducted. In addition to the main facilitators a guest speaker, Dr Geoffrey Chambers from the Victoria University of Wellington, New Zealand also shared his considerable experience and knowledge on conservation genetics. Hands-on training in PCR-based methods including polymerase chain reaction (PCR), direct sequencing, and microsatellites were also conducted as well as hands-on data analysis using software packages of MEGA, GENEPOP, STRUCTURE and ARLEQUIN.

The workshop was officially ended with a closing ceremony, officiated by the Chairman of the Organising Committee, Dr Siti Azizah. During the closing ceremony, all participants received a certificate of attendance presented by Dr Thuy Nguyen. Certificates were also given to facilitators and students helper who assisted in making the workshop a successful event.

Japan International Award for NACA Staff

Dr. Thuy T.T. Nguyen, the Coordinator of NACA's Genetics and Biodiversity Programme was one of the three recipients of the Japan International Award 2008 for Young Agricultural Researchers. The award, from the Ministry of Agriculture, Forestry and Fisheries (MAFF) in Japan is administered by the Japan International Research Centre for Agricultural Sciences (JIRCAS). The award was presented to Dr. Nguyen by Dr. Eitaro Miwa, Chairman of the Agriculture, Forestry and Fisheries Research Council and Dr. Kenji Iiyama, President, Japan International Research Centre for Agricultural Sciences (JIRCAS), at a ceremony held at the United Nations University Auditorium, Tokyo, on the 11th of November. The ceremony was attended by over 150 dignitaries.

The award is intended to recognise and reward the contributions of young agricultural researchers to technological developments that improve food security and the environment in developing countries. Dr. Nguyen has been working with NACA on the application of molecular genetic tools in aquaculture aiming to minimise the impacts of aquaculture on local biodiversity.

Amongst the dignitaries present at the awards ceremony were agricultural researchers from Japan, accompanied persons of the award winners and representatives from the respective embassies of the award winners. From the Vietnam Embassy in Japan, Mr. Le Anh Thu, Second Secretary, attended on behalf of the Ambassador.

At the ceremony, Dr Nguyen was requested to make a 15 minute presentation on her work. She highlighted her recent contribution on the development of broodstock management plans for mahseer species in Sarawak, Malaysia and that of the critically endangered Mekong giant catfish, and their implications for conservation of biodiversity.

Other award winners were Dr Xiaoyuan Yan, from Institute of Soil Science, Chinese Academy of Sciences People's Republic of China on his research Developing greenhouse gasses emission inventories for croplands and evaluating their environmental impacts; and Ms. Maryam Ambundo Imbuni,



Dr Nguyen receiving award from Dr Eitaro Miwa (centre), Chairman of the Agriculture, Forestry and Fisheries Research Council and Dr Kenji Iiyama (right), President, Japan International Research Center for Agricultural Sciences.

Kenya Resource Centre for Indigenous Knowledge (KENRIK), Republic of Kenya on Promotion and research on African leafy vegetables for improved nutrition, health and incomes.

Consortium on freshwater finfish genetics and breeding

In recognition of the growing body of genetics research pertaining to aquaculture, within the region, NACA together with NACEE (the Network of Aquaculture Centres in Central and Eastern Europe) convened a consultation to discuss the formation of a consortium on fish genetics and breeding. The objective of the consortium would be to encourage collaboration and sharing of resources, and to identify and prioritise key researchable issues/projects on fish breeding and genetic resources management. The consultation was hosted by the Research Institute for Aquaculture No. 2, Vietnam.

The welcome addresses were delivered by Dr. Nguyen Van Hao, Director of RIA2; Prof. Sena De Silva, Director General of NACA; and Dr. Laszlo

Varadi, Director of HAKI on behalf of NACEE. The meeting was attended by representatives of institutions throughout the NACA and NACEE networks, including from Bangladesh, China, Czech Republic, Hungary, India, Indonesia, Poland, Russia and Vietnam, as well as from the FAO and the WorldFish Centre.

Participants delivered a series of presentations on the status and research needs in common carp genetics and breeding, including:

- Country perceptions/needs in research and development for common carp genetics and breeding in Bangladesh.

- Common carp genetics and breeding in China.
- Overview of common carp genetics resources in the Czech Republic.
- Carp genetics and breeding in Hungary.
- Some experiences in common carp breeding and genetics research, India.
- Present status of common carp genetics and breeding at MCFAD, Sukabumi, Indonesia.
- Carp farming in Poland.
- Carp breeds cultivation in the Russian Federation.
- Complex of breeds and cross-breeding hybrids (F1) of the Cherepet carps intended for industrial warm-water aquaculture.
- Improving performance of common carp in Vietnam by selective breeding and molecular markers.
- Common carp breeding and genetics - involvement and contribution of WorldFish and partners.

The presentations are available for download from the NACA website at:

<http://www.enaca.org/modules/news/article.php?storyid=1789>.



Participants at the consultation, which was hosted by the Research Institute for Aquaculture No. 2), Ho Chi Minh City, Vietnam 3-4 December 2008.

Participating institutions expressed strong support for the establishment of a consortium on freshwater fish genetics and breeding. It was agreed that the collaborative activities of the consortium would initially focus on common carp, as it is of considerable interest to most countries in Asia and Central and Eastern Europe, and also due to the economic and cultural significance of this species. Proposed initial collaborative activities include:

- Preparation of a review on previous/current R&D activities.
- Inventory and documentation of common carp strains.

- Establishing a catalogue on common carp strains in Asia, in conjunction with an existing catalogue in development for Central and Eastern Europe.
- Facilitate exchange of expertise, including through inter-regional meetings.

Funding is now being sought to support formation of the consortium and initial collaborative activities. For more information, including expressions of interest in participation, contact thuy.nguyen@enaca.org or jenez@haki.hu.

Shrimp Farming eNews

NACA's Shrimp farming eNews, an electronic newsletter service, has restarted publication.

The newsletter provides the latest information on shrimp farming, trade, environment, market prices, and technology and industry development, obtained from NACA partners and media monitoring services.

Contents for the December issue includes:

- Revival of abandoned shrimp farms in Krishna District of Andhra Pradesh, India
- *Litopenaeus vannamei* in India: Challenges and opportunities for Indian small scale farmers and the role of BMP Programs
- Implementation of BMPs for Traditional Shrimp Farming in Bireuen and Aceh Utara Indonesia
- Progress on the IFC/NACA Aceh Shrimp Project
- WWF-Indonesia's Shrimp Aquaculture Program
- Application of PCR for improved shrimp health management in the Asian region
- "Shrimp Network" facilitating small scale farmer to access market through online database
- Improving capability for shrimp virus PCR testing laboratories in Vietnam
- Supporting Small scale farmer group in Thailand to Access EU market
- Market Information
- Upcoming Events

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<http://www.enaca.org/cgi-bin/mojo.cgi>.

Seventh Meeting of the Asia Regional Advisory Group on Aquatic Animal Health

The seventh meeting of the Asia Regional Advisory Group (AG) on Aquatic Animal Health (AGM-7) was held on 15-17 December 2008 at NACA Secretariat in Bangkok, Thailand. The meeting, attended by 10 Advisory Group members and two additional co-opted members, addressed key aquatic animal health issues in Asia, including:

- Emerging crustacean, fish and mollusc diseases in the region.
- Outcomes from the OIE General Session (May 2008) and the Aquatic Animal Health Standards Commission meeting (October 2008).
- Global issues of relevance to aquatic animal health.
- Import requirements for the European Union.
- Regional Quarterly Aquatic Animal Disease Reporting System (QAAD).
- New OIE disease list for 2008 and proposed list for 2009.
- List of diseases for 2009 QAAD reporting.
- Implementation of the Asia Regional Technical Guidelines on Health Management and the Responsible Movement of Live Aquatic Animals.



The Asian Regional Advisory Group on Aquatic Animal Health.

- Functioning of the three tier regional resource base.
- Ways to further strengthen regional and international cooperation in Asian aquatic animal health management.

The AG constituted by NACA governing council in 2001, has been providing advice to Asian governments and NACA on aquatic animal health management matters in the region. Members are experts from government and the private sector with representatives from FAO, the Aquatic Animal Health Standards Commission of the OIE, the OIE Regional Representation for Asia and the Pacific, SEAFDEC and NACA. The final report is available for free download from the NACA website at:

<http://www.enaca.org/modules/wfdownloads/singlefile.php?cid=132&lid=968>.

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Sri Lankans learn pisciculture at CIFA

The Central Institute of Freshwater Aquaculture, India, will host a group of 21 fish farmers and three government officers from Sri Lanka, who are visiting to learn fish culture techniques at the institute. The trainees will be exposed to recent advances in fish breeding, fingerling rearing and pond culture.

CIFA has been engaged in capacity building of the officers of Department of Fisheries of Indian states and also of neighbouring countries, as a contribution to regional cooperation, brotherhood and friendship. The visiting group is headed by Sh. H.A.M. Kulatilaka, the Assistant Manager of

Reservoir Fisheries Management under the Sri Lankan Ministry of Fisheries and Aquatic Resources. The trainees will visit the institute for eight days.

The training will be imparted through "seeing is believing" and "learning by doing". Participants will gain firsthand experience in key aspects of hatchery management, selection of broodstock, hormone injection, spawn collection and nursery pond management. To overcome language barriers, interpreters will be provided. The training will be coordinated by Dr J.K. Jena, Head of Division and Dr Kuldeep Kumar, Senior Scientist of the Institute.



Incoming Sri Lankan trainees.

India's Central Institute for Freshwater Aquaculture observes 33rd Foundation day

The Central Institute of Freshwater Aquaculture, Bhubaneswar, Orissa, observed its 33rd foundation day on 3 January 2009. Retired directors, scientists and other staff members of the Institute assembled to celebrate the occasion. Speakers included Dr Ambekar Eknath, the present Director; Dr. R. K. Jana and Dr. N. Sarangi, retired directors; Dr. S.D. Gupta, Dr. R.K. Dey and Dr. D.R. Kanaujia, retired principal scientists of the institute. Recalling the early days of the institute, the founders expressed their happiness that the seed sown some three decades ago has flourished into a world-class research institute. Participants lauded the contribution made by the institute towards the growth of the aquaculture sector and the well being of the fishing community.

The institute began its journey in 1977 as the Freshwater Aquaculture Research and Training Centre. Subsequently, it became a constituent of the Indian Council of Agricultural Research (an autonomous body under Ministry of Agriculture, Government of India). During the last three decades, the Institute developed and disseminated several key technologies for freshwater aquaculture production. Dr Ambekar Eknath, the present Director indicated

that the R&D backup provided by the institute has contributed to a significant increase in inland fish production, which has touched 3.8 million tonnes during 2006-7. Notable recent accomplishments of the institute include the cloning and characterization of GnRH and GtRH of rohu; off-season breeding of Indian major carps; commercialization of some of the institute's technologies; training and capacity building of over 3,000 farmers and entrepreneurs including many foreign nationals; popularisation of aquaculture technologies in Orissa and in north eastern states. Dr Eknath called upon the staff to continue working towards scientific research that will underpin the sustainable growth of the freshwater aquaculture sector.

A scientist-farmer interaction was held as a part of the celebrations, during which a large number of farmers solicited advice to solve production problems and increase productivity. A CIFA helpline (0674-2111849) has also been established to extend advisory services to farmers in local language. Sri Murali Dhar Bhoi (age 74) of Nakhaur Patna Village in Khurda District, one of the participants of the first ever year long training on aquaculture held during 1977-78 said that CIFA had shown him and many others "a way of life".



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NACA is a network composed of
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With his able leadership in the community, the whole village has now come to be regarded as a model fisheries village.

