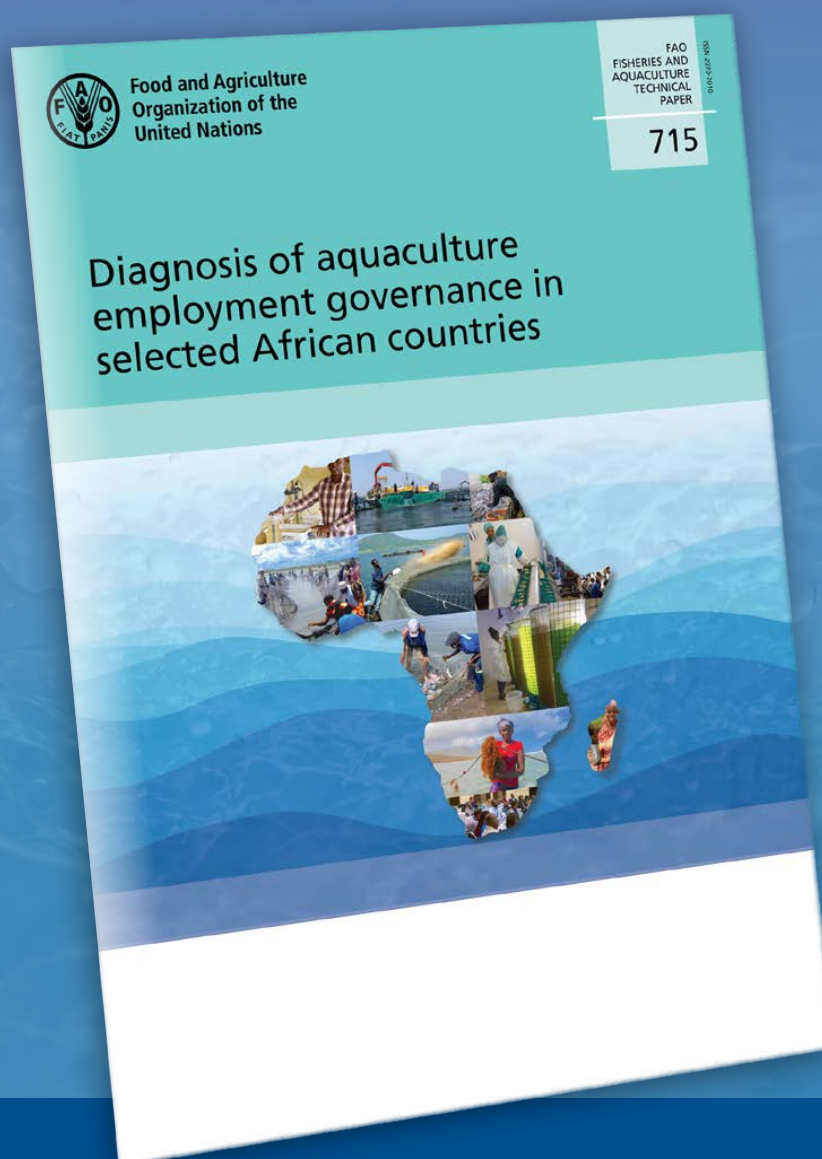




Food and Agriculture
Organization of the
United Nations

Synthesis of the report

Diagnosis of aquaculture employment governance in selected African countries





Governance of aquaculture employment in AFRICA

Key messages of this policy brief

The policy agenda of the aquaculture employment governance is to ensure that the public and private sectors engage in appropriate employment practices and treatment of workers.

The importance of good aquaculture employment governance is essential in worker performance and the enhancement of aquaculture production.

Participatory aquaculture governance associated with good employment governance encourages worker participation and enhances productivity in the aquaculture business.

Good aquaculture employment governance encourages diversity in employment, gender balance, and youth employment, influencing productivity and growth.

Training of workers is key in human capacity development and employment governance that improves workers' performance in the industry.

Aquaculture employment governance encourages good hiring and employment practices that further aquaculture growth and sustainability.

Increase in aquaculture investment is essential for aquaculture growth, but this is encouraged by transparent and good governance.





Background

Aquatic production contributes significant quantities of animal protein to large numbers of African communities. Aquaculture in Africa expanded at a rate of 8.8 percent faster than the average global annual growth rate of 5.0 percent during the period 2000–2021 (FAO, 2022). As in the rest of the world, in Africa, governments aim to improve public and

private governance to enhance the performance of aquaculture administration in facilitating the adoption of practices, leading to new combinations of public and private regulations, codes, and standards of employment, and ultimately improving the public perception of the industry.

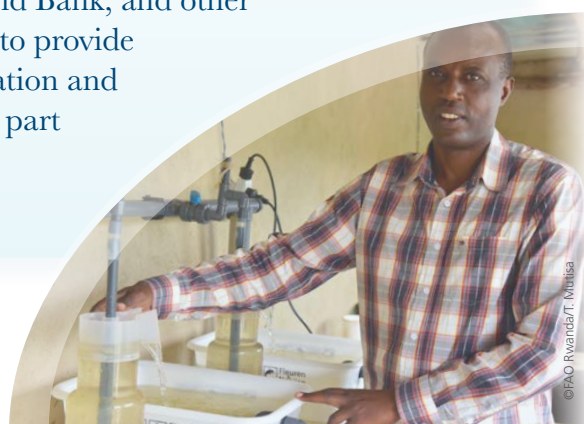
Most African countries are willing to advance their industry goals through domestic and foreign direct investment. However, there is a need for coherent strategies for the governance of employment. While these are aimed at improving aquaculture development, there is inadequate evidence to ascertain the equitable and fair treatment of aquaculture workers; hence, the need to establish social sustainability, which is one determinant of the present and future health and growth of the sector.

Purpose and objective of the policy brief

This study evaluates the nature of existing governance of employment from ten case studies of major and emerging aquaculture countries in Africa, namely, Egypt, Ghana, Kenya, Malawi, Nigeria, Rwanda, Senegal, South Africa, Uganda, and Zambia. The evaluation provides an in-depth analysis of gender equity and equality, occupation types, education, and training, among other topics, through direct interviews with the managers, farmers, and owners of 84 small, medium, and large enterprises; the study examined both freshwater and marine environments. The purpose was to assess existing employment governance in the aquaculture industry and to use the acquired knowledge to inform policymakers and industry leaders on the status of governance in employment and its implications for the continent.

This policy brief highlights the key issues to ensure that decision-makers in the public and private sectors are aware of and understand the importance of governance of aquaculture employment and the fair treatment of aquaculture workers in improving aquaculture development and sustainability.

The first part of the study involved an intensive literature review of national government documents, scientific papers, FAO, World Bank, and other related industry papers on aquaculture governance to provide background information on aquaculture administration and development in the selected countries. The second part included a survey of selected FAO-commissioned case studies from the selected countries.



Findings

All countries that participated in the survey have ratified and adopted the International Labour Organization employment policies. The types of governance vary by country, with hierarchical governance predominating at the public level and participatory governance at the private sector level. The age profile showed that the group of individuals employed in the aquaculture labor force is young, with 75.4 percent of workers between the ages of 20 and 39 years. A large proportion of individuals surveyed had some high school education or completed high school. As regards job classifications, except for administrative support, where women are predominant, men dominate in all other job classifications, especially at the managerial level. Expatriates employed are either part of the foreign investor's organization or employed as chief executive officers who are part of the managing team. Most farms complied with the equal job-equal pay policy, and there was no discrimination between men and women or between domestic employees and employees from other regions.

All companies reported no discrimination in wages and salaries offered to employees, as compensation depended on the position and job description (equal job, equal pay principle). The salaries and wages applied in the sector were comparable to those in the livestock and crop subsectors. Companies offered several other benefits and incentives to employees, including food basket gifts, overtime pay, free accommodation, free meals, and, in a few cases, invitations to become part of the organization by purchasing stock options. The survey results reported that not all the companies surveyed were willing to cover employee health costs. Additionally, not all countries have formulated policies regarding the administration of pension schemes; where such policies exist, there is a weak or lack of enforcement of the Pension Scheme Act in aquaculture. Most of the firms have adopted policies of annual leave and overtime pay.

Major constraints

Most countries have multiple ministries, departments, and agencies that direct the governance of the aquaculture sector, but each operates independently; thus, no consolidated groups assist the ministry responsible for the cointegration of planning and decision-making. Although laws and codes of conduct exist at various governmental administrations (ministries, agencies, and departments), no critical examinations have been performed to verify whether they are appropriate for aquaculture. Employers face numerous constraints in hiring staff, when the need for basic education may be a step in the right direction to achieving good governance in aquaculture employment. Investors in the industry have reported that the processing of requirements to develop an aquaculture venture took an exceedingly long time and involved multiple visits to numerous offices. Furthermore, unionization is not universally encouraged.



Recommendations and summary



The study revealed a total absence of uniform documents for the employment of workers in the countries studied. Employment practices were based on labour laws from the International Labour Organization and other documents in existence at government ministries. Employment governance is likely to assist in attracting investments to the industry, improving workers' participation, and contributing to aquaculture sustainability.

FAO encourages members to develop specific guidelines on labour employment in aquaculture.

- ▶ Governance in aquaculture employment in Africa requires restructuring, especially in terms of upgrading employer/employee relationships, skills, and education of workers of the entire aquaculture industry.
- ▶ Countries should produce a guide that enables employers to adopt transparent hiring and employment practices to encourage worker performance.
- ▶ A national drive should be implemented to prepare workers and high school and college graduates with specialized, practical training – taking gender balance and sensitivity into account – to service fish farms.
- ▶ Training to improve employment governance should place accountability, transparency, and equity at the forefront; increasing the capacity of institutions and business enterprises to respond to gender-specific needs is also necessary.
- ▶ Governments should encourage best employment practices, which result in transparent hiring and good treatment of workers; participatory governance should be encouraged.
- ▶ Affirmative action should be taken to ensure employment equity and diversity in the workplace.
- ▶ Employment regulations in aquaculture should be formulated and enforced based on the specificities and needs of the sector.

References

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