

Capacity development for Department of Fisheries (DoF) extension staff on improved shrimp farming: A joint initiative of the DoF and the Safe Aqua Farming for Economic and Trade Improvement (SAFETI) Project



Practical training session

Bangladesh's shrimp and prawn farmers are benefiting from sound technical advice received from the Department of Fisheries (DoF) extension officers. The network of District and Upazila level DoF staff provides farmers with the main point of contact with the government department and offers the opportunity for knowledgeable DoF staff with

solid technical expertise to support farmers with advice. In conjunction with the work plan being implemented by the DoF and Winrock-SAFETI project following their MoU that was signed in September 2018, SAFETI provided training to further improve the technical capacity of DoF field officers in shrimp and prawn farming good practices. The training was targeted to increase the farm productivity and profitability of thousands of smallholder farmers in Bangladesh, as well as improved postharvest management steps.

A five-day training course was designed and developed jointly by the DoF and the SAFETI technical team and, following approval of the course manual by the Director General of the DoF, the course was delivered to 97 DoF officers during January and February 2020.

The contents of the course were a combination of both theory and practical sessions on improved shrimp and prawn farming. There was also a field visit, through which participants had an opportunity to see the layout and management of both small-scale and large shrimp farms.

Of 100 officers originally nominated, 91 men and six women participated in the program. The course was delivered in four batches and at three locations: in Khulna 12-16 January and 9-13 February 2020; in

Satkhira 26-30 January 2020 and in Cox's Bazar 23-27 February 2020.

The technical sessions were presented by SAFETI technical team members, and several national and international experts, including DoF personnel and professors from Bangladesh universities.

The course incorporated participative training techniques, brainstorming, small group work, group presentations, a field visit, paired work, energizer games and question-and-answer sessions. The participants' knowledge was assessed before and after the course through pre- and post-test questionnaires, and they provided an evaluation of the course through a final feedback questionnaire.

The final evaluations received from the participants were very positive. They judged the training courses to be effective and the course contents relevant to their needs. They also highlighted that the course was well organized and delivered.

Most participants reported that their technical knowledge and confidence was considerably increased through the training, and that the knowledge and skills they gained would be highly relevant and useful to them in their work. They felt that the field visit was the most interesting and useful learning component of the course. Finally, the participants recommended that similar trainings should be repeated annually to continually upgrade the knowledge and capacity of DoF extension staff.

At the end of the course, all presentations and relevant resources were provided to the participants in electronic format on a pen drive. They also received three sets of farmer's guidebooks and printed leaflets that provide guidance on shrimp monoculture, prawn-carp polyculture and shrimp-prawn rotational culture.



Presentation by the training participants



Visiting SAFETI demo ghers



Training session by Dr. Allen Davis

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