Fish is a popular food and the most important source of animal protein in Malawi. However, the country’s future supply of fish products is uncertain, as the fish stocks in Lake Malawi are nearly exhausted. The availability of affordable fish in rural areas is diminishing while at the same time, the high population growth is increasing the demand for fish products – a demand that today’s fisheries and aquaculture are less and less able to meet. In addition to the extreme poverty suffered by the people, the shortage of fish is a reason for the widespread malnutrition, which affects families and children in particular.

Fish from sustainable aquaculture offers a way to furnish the population with high-quality food and counteract malnutrition. The greatest obstacle to stepping up fish production is the lack of production inputs and management skills on the part of fish farmers, which would enable them to practise aquaculture in an environmentally compatible yet profitable manner that conserves resources. This deprives the local population of income and employment opportunities and the possibility of consuming affordable, nutritious fish products.

Our objective
The food insecure population of Malawi has access to more fish products and a higher income from sustainable and resource-conserving aquaculture in pond farming.

Activities in Malawi
- **Promoting know-how exchange:** A platform, the Aquaculture Round Table, is being established which brings together the different stakeholders and interests of the aquaculture sector, enabling them to work together to develop practical approaches for further improvements in the sector.
- **Strengthening the value chain:** The project assists 100 economic groups so that small producers can increase the value gained from sustainable aquaculture.
- **Enhance fish production:** 3,500 fish farmers are trained with the aim of increasing their pond production by 50% in an environmentally, socially and economically sound manner.
- **Improving conditions for sustainable and resource-conserving aquaculture:** Policy advice and support is provided to the Department of Fisheries in regard to enforcement of existing legislation.
Region
North: Rumphi, Mzimba and Nkhatabay District
Central: Kasungu, Mchinji, Dedza, Dowa and Lilongwe District
South: Blantyre, Zomba, Phalombe, Mulanje and Thyolo District

Term
January 2018 to June 2023

Budget
More than EUR 8,000,000

Implementing partners
Department of Fisheries (DoF), Lilongwe University of Agriculture and Natural Resources (LUANAR), Innovative Fish Farmers Network Trust (IFFNT), WorldFish Center (WFC), National Aquaculture Centre (NAC), Malawi College of Fisheries (MCF), Consortium COFAD/GOPA/UMODZI

Lead executing agency
Malawi Ministry of Industry, Trade and Tourism (MoITT)

Target group
Producers working in pond aquaculture
Small and medium-sized enterprises in the value chain
Food-insecure population

A real-life example

Mr. John Thawani lives in a village in Phalombe district. He is a husband and father of seven children. For most of his life he worked primarily as a vehicle mechanic, but after facing some financial challenges due to low salary earnings, he decided to venture into pond fish farming. In his course of exploring this idea, Mr. Thawani learnt that dwindling fish stocks in the lake and the corresponding rise in demand posed a lucrative opportunity for a good business venture with high chances of profit return. Eventually, Mr. Thawani started pond fish farming in 2018. Now he is rearing Malawi’s favourite fish Chambo (*Oreochromis karongae*) in a single pond. However, the potential for further growth is limited due to the lack of high-quality fingerlings and feed, which will be addressed in the training of 3,500 fish farmers provided by the project.

Mr. Odoi Mwangonde lives in Mzuzu and is a husband and father of five children. He developed a passion for fish farming and decided to make a living out of it.

In 2014, Mr. Mwangonde started fish farming, rearing the local aquaculture species Makumba (*Oreochromis shiranus*) and Chilunguni (*Tilapia rendalli*) and has managed to increase the number of his ponds from 1 to 13. The aim of activities in Malawi is to stabilize these enterprises by an increase in production by 50% in order to enable more farmers to get a higher income from pond farming and to provide the population with high-quality food to counteract malnutrition. Both, Mr. Thawani and Mr. Mwangonde, have partnered with other fish farmers. However, these groups are rather opportunistic and not well organised. The aim is to improve the organisation of farmers, creating operational economic groups and enabling members to receive services and inputs.

Even though these farmers have been successful, they also face challenges. Malawian farmers are constantly worried about lack of quality fingerlings and feed, which hinders production increase. The farmers believe that initiatives, such as the Aquaculture Round Table, are the long-awaited platform to bring these challenges to the attention of all stakeholders, in order to finally tackle them.

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Registered offices: Bonn and Eschborn, Germany
Division G500 - Rural Development and Agriculture
Friedrich-Ebert-Allee 32 + 36
53113 Bonn
Germany

T +49 228 44 60-0
F +49 228 4460-17 66
www.giz.de

Contact
Ladislao.di@giz.de
GVFisch@giz.de

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