

**FARMER-TO-FARMER EXTENSION approach for freshwater AQUACULTURE
development in the southern BENIN**

Arsene D'Almeida*, Masanori Doi**

*MAEP

**PROVAC

Abstract

Farmer-to-farmer extension approach was introduced for small-scale freshwater aquaculture development in the seven provinces of the southern Benin in the course of a technical cooperation project of Japan. Firstly, some relatively active and capable fish farmers were selected and trained together with extension officers of the government to be "core farmers" who accomplish seed production ability as well as improved aquaculture techniques of tilapia and African catfish. Secondly thus trained core farmers were encouraged to hold 3-4 days training program at their own facilities for ordinary farmers who applied for the training. Until May 2012 or 2 years after start of the project, a total of 16 core farmers were fostered and 963 ordinary farmers were trained in this approach. Among those, 270 new fish farmers including 134 box culture operators started operation and 219 existing fish farmers re-started improved aquaculture by using seed and feed produced or provided by core farmers. Those ordinary farmers are expected to be regular customers of core farmer. This would be an incentive of core farmers to participate in this program. The farmer-to-farmer extension approach, which is not dependent on the public training facilities, was confirmed effective to expand aquaculture activities, and to support a profit-oriented network of farmers.