

**Session title:** Thriving Blue Economy through Sustainable Aquaculture

**Location:** AFRAQ, Hammamet, Tunisia

**Duration, date and time:** 2.5 hours planned, Wednesday November 20<sup>th</sup>, 10:40am to 3:40pm (4 hours slot offered by organizers)

**Room:** Cesar (140)

### Session overview

This session is designed to raise awareness of Asia–Africa BlueTech Superhighway (AABS) among its stakeholders in Africa and to engage participants in a comprehensive discussion on developing and scaling sustainable, nature-positive, and climate-smart coastal and marine aquaculture, particularly Integrated Multi-Trophic Aquaculture (IMTA), one of AABS' key objectives as a pathway to fostering blue economy. The session will delve into themes covering aquatic animal health, feed and nutrition, genetics, scalable IMTA systems, and postharvest challenges and solutions.

It will also provide an opportunity for students to present their research related to aquaculture, IMTA, and postharvest challenges related to food loss and waste, food safety and market access of aquaculture products; with the chance to win prizes based on abstracts submitted to AFRAQ.

Asia–Africa BlueTech Superhighway (AABS) harnesses South–South collaboration to assess, adapt and scale evidence-based innovations and models for delivering nature-positive impact through aquatic food systems. Implemented by WorldFish in collaboration with a host of partners, AABS aims to transform the livelihoods of coastal communities across Asian and African countries, particularly for women and youth, and help restore marine and coastal ecosystems by developing sustainable and resilient aquatic food systems. Funded by UK International Development under the Blue Planet Fund, AABS is being implemented in two phases over seven years (2023–2030).

### Session objectives

1. **Raise awareness of AABS:** Provide project overview with a focus on the goals, activities, and expected outcomes of the project in Africa under its work packages WP2 and WP3, topics aligned with AFRAQ.
2. **Highlight nature-positive and climate-smart aquaculture solutions:** Explore the importance of nature-positive and climate-smart systems, such as IMTA, in addressing aquaculture challenges in Africa.
3. **Foster collaboration and knowledge exchange:** Encourage participants to engage in meaningful dialogue on key challenges in aquaculture while identifying potential solutions. Facilitate connections to promote ongoing collaboration in sustainable coastal and marine aquaculture, particularly IMTA, towards AABS' goals.
4. **Inspire innovation and support youth through student research presentations:** Provide a platform for students and emerging scientists to present innovative

research related to aquaculture, offering an opportunity for feedback, learning, possible collaboration and follow-up support.

5. **Ensure long-term impact through follow-up:** Establish at least a one-year follow-up mechanism to track the progress of student award winners and showcase their contributions to the blue economy through AABS and WorldFish communication channels.

#### **Expected outcomes:**

- **Enhanced awareness of AABS, sustainable aquaculture and IMTA solutions** that address challenges.
- **Practical insights for improving aquaculture productivity**, reducing environmental impacts, and increasing resilience to climate change.
- **New collaborations and partnerships** fostered through discussions and networking.
- **Recognition and support for emerging researchers**, encouraging continued innovation in the field of sustainable aquaculture.
- **Long-term impact through follow-up** on student research contributions, ensuring their ideas lead to meaningful improvements in the blue economy.

#### **Session agenda**

##### **Part 1: AABS project presentation and panel discussion**

**Chair:** Dr Leila Basti, Senior Scientist for Aquatic Farming Practices, Aquatic Food Biosciences, WorldFish Headquarters, Penang, Malaysia

- **Time:** 60 minutes
  - **Introduction to AABS** (15 minutes)
    - Concise overview of AABS goal, objectives, strategy and expected outcomes, with greater focus on WP2 and WP3 in Africa.
    - Highlight the importance of nature-positive and climate-smart aquaculture solutions, specifically Integrated Multi-Trophic Aquaculture (IMTA).

##### **Panel discussion** (30 minutes)

**Moderator:** Dr Leila Basti, Senior Scientist for Aquatic Farming Practices, Aquatic Food Biosciences, WorldFish Headquarters, Penang, Malaysia

- **Panelists:**

1. **Dr David Mirera**, Senior Research Scientist and Assistant Director in charge of Mariculture Research and Development, Kenya Marine and Fisheries Research Institute (KMFRI), Mombasa, Kenya
2. **Dr David Verner-Jeffreys**, Senior Scientist for Aquatic Health, Aquatic Food Biosciences, WorldFish Headquarters, Penang, Malaysia
3. **Dr Yahya Ibrahim Mgawe**, Chair of the Board of Directors of Tanzania Fisheries Research Institute (TFRI) and ex-CEO of the Fisheries Education and Training Agency (FETA), Dar es Salaam, Tanzania

**Topics:**

- Key challenges in improving aquaculture and IMTA, particularly for Africa.
- The role of AABS in addressing these challenges.
- Health management, innovations in sustainable feed, genetics, and addressing postharvest challenges.
- Insights into implementing and scaling nature-positive and climate-smart aquatic farming practices.

**Q&A** (15 minutes)

- Open the floor for questions from the audience to the panelists.

**Breakout session (optional)**

- **Time:** 30 minutes (if included)
  - **Interactive breakout groups**
    - Participants are divided into smaller groups to discuss specific challenges or solutions related to IMTA, drawing from the themes stated in the panel discussion.
    - Each group presents a summary of their discussion at the end of the session.

**Coffee break** (30 minutes)

- A networking opportunity for participants to discuss ideas and connect with panelists and peers.

## Part 2: Student abstract presentations and judging

- **Time:** 60 minutes
  - **Student Presentations** (45 minutes)
    - Selected students and young emerging scientists will present their research, a paper or poster, on topics related to aquaculture, and post-harvest challenges will present to a panel of judges (set up by WorldFish).
    - Each student will have five minutes to present their research and highlight its significance to the judges. There will be up to eight presenters.
  - **Judging and prizes** (15 minutes)
    - A panel of judges will evaluate the presentations based on criteria such as innovation, relevance and the potential impact on coastal communities.
    - Four to five students will be awarded prizes of \$500 USD each, with winners announced and awarded at the end of the session.

## One-year follow-up for student award winners

- Winners of the competition will be regularly contacted to provide updates on their progress
- Their achievements and progress will be shared through WorldFish/AABS channels to highlight the impact of their work on the development of sustainable aquaculture practices.