From Paper to Ponds: Closing Africa's Aquaculture Adoption Gap

Conference:	World Aquaculture 2026 (AFRAQ26), Dar es Salaam, Tanzania
Date:	December 1–4, 2026 (specific day to be confirmed)
Duration:	2 hours
Proposed by:	CGIAR Sustainable Animal and Aquatic Foods (SAAF) Program
Session chair:	Rodrigue Yossa | Geoffrey Njenga
Target audience:	Aquaculture researchers, development practitioners, national policymakers, industry actors, and students

Background

Aquaculture in Africa has attracted significant research investment over the past decade. I mproved fish strains, cost-efficient feed systems, and production techniques for small-scale f armers have all advanced. The sector is growing. At 8 percent annually since 2000, it is expanding faster than any other region in the world. But that growth is not reaching the smallholder farmers who make up most of Africa's aquaculture producers.

High input costs, gaps in fingerling supply, weak extension services, and limited market access keep the benefits concentrated among larger operators. Aquatic foods provide around 19 percent of animal protein across the continent, and in some countries more than h alf, yet Africa's per capita availability remains less than half the global average. The gap between what research has produced and what a smallholder farmer can access remains o ne of the sector's defining challenges.

This session is organized by the Sustainable Animal and Aquatic Foods (SAAF) Program, a CGIAR research program that brings together seven CGIAR centers to sustainably transform animal and aquatic food systems in low- and middle-income countries. It works alongside governments, research institutions, producer networks, and industry actors in the countries w here it operates. The session is built around one question: what will it take to engage more producers, scale through the systems that connect research to farms, and grow at the pace that food security and inclusive employment require.

What the session offers

For development partners, funders, and policymakers, the session offers a structured look at w hat research has produced in the region and what it will take to move those findings

further. Researchers present specific findings and the numbers behind them. The roundtable puts them in the same room as practitioners, government partners, and industry actors whose decisions determine how far research actually travels.

For researchers, the session is a test of whether findings are landing. What does government need before it can act? What is industry still waiting for? The session closes with two student researchers presenting work drawn from AFRAQ26 abstracts.

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https://was.org/meeting/code/AFRAQ26

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Format

The session runs two hours. The first hour opens with a frame on the adoption gap, followed by presentations from research teams in Ghana (cage farming in reservoirs), Nigeria (fish genetics and hatchery dissemination), and Tanzania (inclusive market access for small- scale producers), and a perspective from a WorldFish country representative on w hat

sector-wide adoption requires.

The second hour is a structured roundtable with four panelists: the SAAF scientist, a government partner from Tanzania or the wider region, an industry or producer actor, and a development partner working on aquaculture scaling. The chair facilitates questions, including one from the floor. The session closes with two student flash presentations drawn from AFRAQ26 abstracts.

The case for this session

AFRAQ26's theme positions aquaculture as a driver of Blue Transformation, the FAO's flagship initiative for sustainable aquaculture growth. The evidence for that exists. Research across the region has generated findings on feed systems, cage farming, hatchery dissemination, and inclusive market access. Africa's food security, nutrition, and employment goals depend on that research reaching the farmers who need it. This session brings together the researchers, practitioners, policymakers, and industry actors who can

determine what it will take to

close that gap. **Student**

involvement and exhibition

presence

Two student researchers will be selected from AFRAQ26 submitted abstracts that match the session theme. Both present at the close, after the roundtable, so they enter with the full conversation already behind them. CGIAR SAAF will also have a dedicated exhibition booth at AFRAQ26 throughout the conference. Delegates are welcome to visit the team at the booth at any point.

Date & Location: December 4, Dar Es Salaam, Tanzania

Target audience: Farmers, agricultural extension agents, researchers, policy makers and industry experts.

Session Chair: Dr. Mahmoud Haidar

Venue and Time: TBA (See Program Grid)

Session Outline

Sustainable aquaculture growth depends on improving production efficiency and profitability while making responsible use of feed resources. This session highlights applied research in fish, focusing on improved nutrient utilization, alternative protein sources, and circular feed ingredients. The studies demonstrate how nutritional innovation can support productive, resource-efficient, and economically sustainable aquaculture.

Please visit the Skretting team at booths **54 and 55**.

Session Agenda

- A MULTICOMPONENT PROTEASE IMPROVES GROWTH PERFORMANCE AND WHOLE-BODY COMPOSITION ON NILE TILAPIA (*OREOCHROMIS NILOTICUS*) REARED UNDER COMMERCIAL CAGE-CULTURE CONDITIONS
- GROWTH RESPONSE, PROXIMATE COMPOSITION, DIGESTIBILITY, AND SURVIVAL OF *Clarias gariepinus* FINGERLINGS FED DIETS CONTAINING BIOFLOC RESIDUE
- EFFECTS OF REPLACING SOYBEAN MEAL WITH COWPEA MEAL ON WATER QUALITY PARAMETERSAND GROWTH PERFORMANCE OF NILE TILAPIA (*Oreochromis niloticus*) CULTURED IN CONCRETE TANKS.
- FISH VISCERAL OFFAL MEAL AS A SUSTAINABLE ALTERNATIVE TO FISH MEAL IN THE CULTURE OF *Clarias gariepinus* IN CIRCULAR CONCRETE TANK.
- THE USE OF GLYCEROL ESTERS OF BUTYRIC ACID IN DIETS FED TO *Oreochromis* SPECIES AND THEIR EFFECTS ON PRODUCTION PARAMETERS AND GUT MORPHOLOGY.

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