

## SPC and EU-IACT assist commercial tilapia farmer with floating-feed mini-mill in PNG

*The Pacific Community is assisting Agro Business Consultant Ltd (ABCL), a commercial tilapia farming enterprise based in Goroka, Papua New Guinea (PNG), in purchasing and installing a feed mini-mill. This will enable the company to locally produce floating-feed pellets for farmed tilapia fish. This assistance is funded by the European Union's Increasing Agricultural Commodity Trade (EU-IACT) project. SPC provided part of the feed machinery, including a hammer mill, an extruder and a drier, while ABCL purchased a mixer and paid for installation costs. It is expected that the machinery will allow ABCL to produce 1,000 kg of feed per day.*

Feed is one of the major costs in a tilapia farming business, and the regular supply of feed is critical to the growth of this business. ABCL plans to utilise locally available ingredients such as cassava and corn to make floating feed for tilapia cage culture. The company intends to use the feed for its own farm, but also to produce a surplus of feed for sale to other tilapia farmers, giving them access to a resource that is currently hard to acquire in PNG.

The advantage of floating feed is that the pellets can remain intact for several hours on the water's surface, giving fish ample time to find the feed, while also allowing the farmer to see how much feed the fish actually consume. At present, sinking feeds are the most commonly used feed in PNG and these can become buried in the mud of earthen ponds or washed out of cages, causing significant losses to farmers. Floating feed will result in greater efficiency for fish farmers and reduce waste.

Although floating feed is available on the international market, the cost associated with purchasing feed, shipping, duty and clearances — especially considering the geographical isolation of many farmers in PNG — does not make it accessible to most PNG farmers. In addition, many small-scale farmers would find the cost of purchasing in bulk to be a major financial burden. Having access to a local supply of feed will allow farmers to purchase just what they need from the feed mill in Goroka. There are many hundreds of tilapia farmers within the Eastern Highlands Province alone, and more than 50,000 in PNG as a whole.

The EU-IACT project, along with PNG's National Fisheries

Authority, has been assisting ABCL since 2014 to develop its tilapia business through targeted actions such as training in hatchery and cage grow-out techniques, constructing a small-scale hatchery and nursery system to overcome seed supply constraints, and providing material and techniques to make local feeds. By encouraging production of tilapia feed and seed, the project also aims to support business growth through the provision of similar services to other farmers, thereby contributing to the development of the whole tilapia aquaculture industry in PNG.

### For more information:

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*Agro Business Consultant Ltd Director, Steven Pupune, stands next to the newly installed feed extruder machine (image: Avinash Singh).*