

Action brief

Safeguarding nutrition security through increased local fish production in Eswatini

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Country: Eswatini

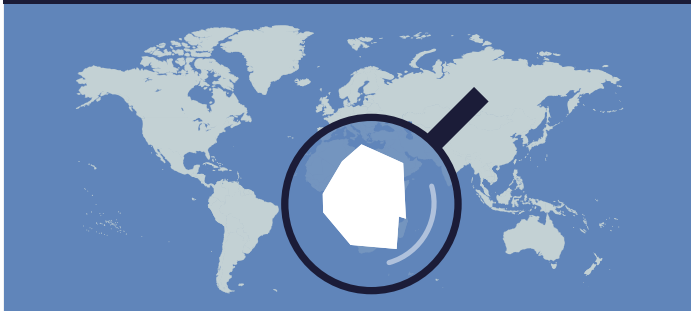
Themes: Nutrition-sensitive interventions

Sub-themes: Food security

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Overview



The Kingdom of Eswatini is landlocked in southern Africa, bordered by Mozambique to its northeast and South Africa to its north, west, south and southeast. Eswatini has close economic ties to South Africa; about 85% of Eswatini's imports and about 60% of its exports depend on this large neighboring country.

The global food crisis, the residual effects of the COVID-19 pandemic and the unstable political climate have resulted in an exponential increase in food prices in Eswatini. This increase has made many food commodities inaccessible and unaffordable to most Eswatini households, particularly poor ones. Taking advantage of local resources, including its many large bodies of water, Eswatini has worked to increase the availability of an affordable and accessible healthy source of protein and essential fats. This has been



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instrumental in safeguarding the people of Eswatini from food and nutrition insecurity.

Investing in local fish production is a good practice, as it will ensure the availability of fish and fish products at reduced costs, thus making them accessible to the population.



Objectives of the action brief

The objective of this brief is to highlight actions taken in Eswatini to safeguard food and nutrition security amid the global food crisis. Further, the brief will share efforts undertaken to encourage healthy eating through the promotion of aquaculture.



Period covered

Fish farming started in 2008 on a small-scale basis. In 2019, the Government provided more support to strengthen this sector by increasing the number of ponds allocated to fish farming. The support will continue until Eswatini is self-sufficient in aquaculture production, meeting both local consumption and export needs.



What action was taken?

The fisheries sector is important, as Eswatini is promoting the consumption of healthy foods, including fish as an important source of protein and healthy fats. Eswatini boasts abundant river resources. The Eswatini Government, therefore, has resolved to improve domestic food production by utilizing its resources to increase fish production for both domestic consumption and export. In 2019, Eswatini sent 20 officers and farmers to Taiwan for training on fish farming. This training was followed by the launch of an aquaculture production programme in the country that aimed to increase local fish production and consumption.

To support this increased production and expand the country's aquaculture industry, the Ministry of Agriculture and Cooperatives has a department dedicated to

fisheries, alongside key officers working at the district level closely with communities. Common fish farmed in Eswatini are *Oreochromis mossambicus* (tilapia) and *Clarias gaiepinus* (catfish).

Further, the Eswatini Ministry of Agriculture and Cooperatives is developing reproduction techniques for fry, a life stage of hatched fish, to stabilize the market demand for fry and help fish farmers improve techniques, increase incomes and stabilize domestic prices, thereby laying a firm foundation for Eswatini's aquaculture industry.

The expansion of the aquaculture industry is supported by increased demand for locally produced fish and fish products spurred by extensive promotion of their consumption in the country.





What would the country do differently?

- Advocate for more fish farming in the country to see the impact of this intervention, which would ensure the mass production of fish and fish products.
- Increase engagement and benchmarking from other countries successfully implementing this intervention.
- Allocate more resources for this intervention to ensure more success stories.
- Comprehensively address the local production of seafood, not fish alone.
- Target more research and funds at food security interventions to prevent malnutrition, including undernutrition and diet-related non-communicable diseases.



Adaptation and applicability

- **A dedicated governance structure at the ministry and department levels is essential to improve local fish production and boost the aquaculture industry.**
- **Strengthening the local production of food assists in improving accessibility to nutritious food for the population.**
- **Every country needs to ensure some level of self-sufficiency to ensure food security in emergencies.**
- **The effects of climate change and the unstable political climate require more innovative approaches to ensure food and nutrition security.**



Further information

Eswatini Aquaculture Project:



<https://www.icdf.org.tw/wSite/ct?xItem=64744&ctNode=31547&mp=2>

Eswatini Zero Hunger Strategic Review:



<https://docs.wfp.org/api/documents/WFP-0000111397/download/>

Ministry Of Health Environmental and Social Management Framework:



<https://www.gov.sz/images/CORONA/ESMF-and-Labour-Management-Plan-May-2020-Cleared.pdf>



Next steps

The country aims to conduct a study to evaluate the local supply and demand for fish and fish products in Eswatini. Additionally, increased promotional interventions for local fish farming and fish consumption will be conducted.



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