

Kuddus Ansary's One-stop Aqua Shop (OAS) Guide



What is a One-stop Aqua Shop?

What do we need to do to open an OAS?



One-stop Aqua Shop in Kaipara

What benefit will I get from an OAS?

What benefit will other villages will get from an OAS?

It has been since early 2003 that large numbers of farmers shared their need for "single-point under-one-roof service delivery." Since then nine One-stop Aqua Shops have emerged on a pilot-scale in eastern India.

According to many people, one of the toughest things about fish farming is getting started, with farmers often traveling long distances to find help and information about fish, finance and ways of working. A new idea coming up is to organize everything from a single point under one roof in a local institution.

A One-stop Aqua Shop (OAS) is a service center for farmers and fishers who are interested in aquaculture. It also acts as a local contact point for rural banks, aquaculture suppliers and the Fisheries Department. A network OASs is already supported by the STREAM India Communications Hub.

An OAS can make available information about supplies and prices, Fisheries Department schemes and advice, information and application forms for micro-credit from rural banks.



What benefit will I get from an OAS?

The objective of an OAS is to support people's livelihoods through aquaculture.

It's a great thing to start.

- Benefits:
- Helps to introduce aquaculture through Self-Help Groups.
 - Provides information about government schemes and can assist in establishing linkages with villagers.
 - Provides information about aquaculture activities of different countries and how this information can best be utilized locally.
 - Can organize exposure visits and training programs for interested people who want to do aquaculture.
 - Can provide fisheries materials to people, including fishing nets, pitchers, fingerlings and feed.
 - Can support individuals by providing them with aquaculture knowledge.



In our village in West Bengal a federation of Self-Help Groups opened a One-stop Aqua Shop:

Federation

- In Kaipara village we had Self-Help Groups that were strong enough to have their own savings and to keep good group records; many were conducting small-scale aquaculture.
- We had joined together to form a federation of SHGs. (A federation benefits SHGs in the same way that a SHG benefits its members!)
- There should be a by-law regarding the formation of a federation.
- There should be transparency in all that the federation does.

OAS

- Following a meeting describing the role of an OAS, 20 SHGs agreed to contribute Rs 2,000 each to provide a financial beginning. Two members from each SHG came together to form a Management Committee to run the OAS.
- Decisions are taken by all the members of the federation; clear records are kept.
- Income-generating activities are established to sustain the OAS, including growing and selling fish seed, hiring out services and equipment, providing a venue for meetings or trainings, and providing forms for loans and government support schemes.
- In the Management Committee there is a Manager, Cashier and President, each clearly aware of their responsibilities.
- A manager records all the media that are shared by using a bar-code reader.
- OAS committee members regularly interact with the STREAM India Communications Hub Manager and make use of STREAM's OAS Information Service (OASIS).
- We held a workshop, inviting local service providers, to highlight the OAS, to consider ways in which it could support interactions between farmers and banks, the Department of Fisheries and other service providers, and to solicit offers of help from them.



Useful items to share through an OAS

- Map of the district showing block headquarters, roads and rail connections
- List and locations of hatcheries (government and private) and distance from each of the block headquarters and the OAS
- Chart showing the quantity of seed (species-wise) likely to be available and when from each hatchery with a time schedule (from - to) for different sizes
- List and locations of seed farms (government and private) and distances from block headquarters and the OAS
- Quantity of fingerlings (species- and size -wise) including schedule of availability
- Rate for spawn, fry and fingerlings (species- and size-wise and mixed)
- Address of cooperatives, wholesalers and retailers
- Suppliers for quality lime, oil cakes, rice bran, *mahua* oilcake, organic and inorganic fertilizers (urea and triple superphosphate)
- Current market rates of each of the above
- Technical bulletins in local languages
- Guidelines on aquaculture (Better-Practice Guidelines)
- Chart showing cultivated fishes and predators
- Charts, photographs and paintings showing phytoplankton and zooplankton, especially rotifers and small animals forming the food of spawn and young fry
- Fishing nets
- Aluminum *hundies* (containers for transporting fish seed)

Perhaps what are most required are people who are dedicated, sincere, knowledgeable and experienced, humble and farmer-friendly, ever willing to help and solve farmers' problems.

Useful Contacts

Other Better-Practice Guidelines

There are more Better-Practice Guidelines in this series. These include:

- Information Access Surveys
- Self-Help Groups
- Consensus Building Process
- Buying Fish Seed

You can get more copies of this and other Better-Practice Guidelines from your STREAM Country Office, from the STREAM Regional Office or from the STREAM Website.

We would like your feedback about these Better-Practice Guidelines. You can let us know by phoning, emailing or writing to the Communications Hub Manager at your STREAM Country Office.

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