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Fishing for Expertise — The Role of the Private Partner in Public-private Partnerships in Aquaculture and Fisheries

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Abstract

In the discourse on development, we can find arguments that that collaboration between public agencies, business and civil society in Public-Private Partnerships (PPP) are able to mobilise additional financial resources, capacities and expertise and increase the efficiency and sustainability of development. These arguments are based on the assumption that it is actually the private sector that primarily drives the economic growth. Unfortunately the necessary characteristics of these private actors are often underspecified: Is every private actor equally capable of partnering with the public? In our presentation we will argue that private partners need to be of a certain economic size to create efficient and fruitful partnerships, especially in sectors which require knowledge and capacity.

We will draw our empirical examples from an increasingly important business sector: Aquaculture. While it is a traditional farming sector, it also requires a certain amount of knowledge, capacity and investment. It is a growing business for professionals, and also helps to deliver food security and livelihood for many people in poor countries, particular for small scale farmers. With ongoing development towards intensification and global networking aquaculture creates an increasing demand for infrastructure and supporting public services.

Within a GTZ funded project, our research team reviewed 53 aquaculture and fisheries PPPs in Africa (18%), Asia (73%) as well as some additional cases in South America (8%). We analysed how public and civil institutions and development organisations use PPPs as tools to accommodate the demand for sector specific public service needs. Data and information were obtained through document analysis, semi-structured interviews with key informants, and an email survey.

Keywords: Aquaculture, fishery, infrastructure, public services, public-private partnerships, small scale enterprises