

MANAGEMENT OPTIONS FOR OPTIMIZING THE POTENTIALS OF OGUTA INDOOR FISH HATCHERY AND ABUKWA UMUOBOM FISH HATCHERY: COLLABORATION OR PRIVATISATION

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The Oguta Indoor Fish Hatchery was established in 1974 by the former East Central State of Nigeria Government. The fish hatchery was established to produce fish fingerlings for sale to fish farmers and for stocking the Oguta Lake. Owing to financial constraints the hatchery could not take off till 1985, when the former Kainji Lake Research Institute now National Institute for Freshwater Fisheries Research (NIFFR) New Bussa, entered into a collaborative arrangement with the Imo State Government. The collaborative arrangement lasted for 9 years. During the period, fish fingerlings were produced and sold to fish farmers in Imo State and neighbouring States.

With the withdrawal of NIFFR from the collaborative arrangement, the fortunes of the fish hatchery nose-dived and finally grounded to a halt in 1997. The situation remained until in the year 2002 when the Nigeria Agip Oil Company, rehabilitated and reconstructed the fish hatchery. The fish hatchery was commissioned in March 11th 2003 and is capable of producing 600,000 fish fingerlings per annum. The facilities available in the modernized fish hatchery are listed in Appendix

1. Abukwa-Umuobom

The Abukwa-Umuobom fish hatchery was founded in 1981, and is fully owned by the Imo State Government. It was partially developed as an outpost of the NIFFR concept, of the erstwhile Babangida regime. Fish fingerlings were first produced in the fish hatchery in 1989. The facilities available in the fish hatchery are listed in Appendix

II. Since the two fish hatcheries were established, informed opinions have consistently made suggestions for the efficient management of the two projects. Consistent among the suggestions is that;

Imo State Government could optimize productivity from the two fish hatcheries through entering into collaborative arrangements with Fisheries Research Institutes in this country. This suggestion is based on the facet that Oguta Indoor fish hatchery was made operational in the first instance through collaboration with the Nigerian Institute for Freshwater Fisheries Research, New Bussa (1985 1994).

In pursuance of this suggestion, the Imo State Government has already signed a Memorandum of understanding (MOU) with the National Institute for Freshwater Fisheries Research New Bussa on the 17th of June 2002. Through the collaborative effort it is expected that fish fingerlings will be massively produced at the Abukwa-Umuobom fish hatchery project. A resident fish breeder has already been posted to the Abukwa-Umuobom State.

From experience, the collaborative Fisheries Research Institute provides the following services:

- (a) Technical know how and upgrade the skill of the staff in the fish hatchery station, and also upgrade the skill of fish farmers and fish hatchery operators in the host state.

- (b) The Institute, as need arises provides hormones and sometimes fish breeders for fish fingerling production.(a) And (b) are very essential elements of an MOU but other details are often worked out between the collaborating bodies.Privatization has two

facets; Partial privatization may take the form of leasing out the fish hatchery facility for a period negotiable with the private entrepreneur. During the period, the entrepreneur pays an agreed amount to the government. Depending on performance, the

DISCUSSION

If the infrastructure is in a good condition and inputs are available, the conditions are favorable for collaboration with an Institute. The advantages include:

- (a) Massive production of fish fingerlings is assured considering the technical know-how possessed by Institute staff.
- (b) Revenue is generated for government.
- (c) Staff employment is assured.
- (d) The skill of staff is upgraded if the infrastructure is in a good condition but where there is no fund to make it operational, the lease option is feasible. The problems normally encountered during a lease period are:
 - (a) Failure to meet the revenue target agreed on between the government and the entrepreneur.
 - (b) Misuse and abuse of the infrastructure. Sometimes the infrastructure is left in a worse

condition after the lease.

- (c) The fate of staff already on ground will be negotiated.

The second facet of privatization is where the government hands off the project and transfers ownership to the private entrepreneur. This option is normally chosen when (a) there is lack of fund to invest the project and or (b) where there is no commensurate return on investment.

- (a) The option of full privatization is recommended if fund is a constraint
- (b) There is poor management
- (c) Profit motivation is the cardinal objective of the government, especially in a distressed economy.

Finally, this paper has highlighted options for the management of the Oguta Indoor fish hatchery and Abukwa-Umuobom fish hatchery and is meant to generate discussions on the way forward for the two projects

APPENDIX 1 OGUTA INDOOR FISH HATCHERY

1. An Indoor Fish Hatchery with 12 No troughs modernized.
2. Office Block
3. 9 Outdoor concrete tanks
4. 2No water pumps
5. 4 No Semi-Concrete Production ponds
6. Overhead Water Tanks
7. Guest House
8. Intermediate Staff Quarters
9. Raceways some lined with polyester
10. Conference Hall.

APPENDIX II

FISH HATCHERY PROJECT, ABUKWA UMUOBOM

This project belongs to the Livestock/Fisheries Department of the State Ministry of Agriculture and Environment and was established in 1981. The project is located in three major sites covering a total of 3.8 hectares of landmass. Two of the sites have been developed (i.e. (1) Hatchery, Admin

Block and Guest House complex (2) Production Ponds Unit). Work is yet to start on the third site. This project is one of the functional fish hatcheries/fish farms in the state and was full of activities at the time of this visit.

Facilities and Present Status

- Indoor hatchery with 12 breeding/spawning tanks and raceways. All the tanks are functional
- (Raceways 8 Nos 2m x 0.5m each Spawning Tanks = 4 Nos 2m x 1m)
- 7 Concrete Nursery Tanks (Outdoor)
- (3 Nos = 4.5m and 4.5)
- (4 Nos = 4.5m x 2.8m)
- All the tanks are in good form but not fully utilized as at the time of the visit.
- 7 Earthen Nursery Ponds with the following dimensions.
- 2 Nos (23m x 13m)
- 3 Nos (14m x 12m)
- 2 Nos (15m x 13m)

The ponds were used for various purposes including: -

- Management of spent brooders
- Rearing of fry to fingerlings
- Management of broodstock
- Tilapia production
- Production Ponds Unit (6 Nos) with the following dimensions;
- 3 Nos (46m x 25m)
- 3 Nos (30 x 17m)

Only tilapia species (about 5,000) was stocked in all the ponds.

- Water Pump House and Plant of 7.5 KVA (Functional)

- Electricity Generating House with electricity generating set (Plant) of 12.5 KVA. The plant has minor faults.
- The Feed Mill Block with three compartments
 - * Feed Milling Unit
 - * Pelleting Machine Unit
 - * Gas Drier Section
- The feed mill block has not been equipped with the appropriate machine and is, therefore, not yet functional.
- The building is, however, in good shape.
- The Administrative Block with 3 rooms for project officer, store and
- Technical staff office.
- The block is in good shape and the offices are furnished.
- The Guest House consisting of two bedrooms, one sitting room, a kitchen and a toilet. The guest house is furnished.
- Staff strength: 6 skilled staff and 8 casual labourers.

