Department of Agriculture, Forestry and Fisheries (DAFF) and Aquaculture Association of Southern Africa (AASA) are happy to announce their formalized industry-government partnership. The partnership is known as the Aquaculture Value Chain Round Table (AVCRT). The aim of this partnership is to foster collaborative industry-government action that helps to secure an enduring global advantage and it will consider domestic sectoral development activities. The AVCRT involves all role players in the aquaculture value chain.

The benefits of the AVCRT among others will be to (i) Influence policy & strategic development; (ii) develop solutions to frequent dilemmas; (iii) address food safety concerns; (iv) advocate for improved trade and market access conditions; (v) Guiding and directing research; etc.

During the first formal sitting of AVCRT in May 2012 all members agreed to establish a Working Group (WG) on Marketing which will undertake work on the market analysis
and the development of the aquaculture industry. The WG will work on a draft market analysis study commissioned by the Western Cape Department of Economic Development and Tourism (DEDAT) in collaboration with Western Cape Department of Agriculture, Western Cape Aquaculture Development Initiative (WCADI) and South African Agri Academy (SAAA). The programme/strategy will be responding the needs of consumers, suppliers and investors with the long term view of developing new products, markets and attract more investors into the aquaculture sector. The WG shall also address certification issues within the sector.

GOVERNMENT FUNDED AQUACULTURE PROJECTS

Government is funding different aquaculture projects within Eastern Cape, Free State, Western Cape and North West Provinces which are aligned to the Industrial Policy Action Plan (IPAP) and National Aquaculture Strategic Framework. Out of six ongoing projects the most progressing project is the aquaculture demonstration center in Gariep dam, Free State Province. Its first phase is 90% complete and phase two will resume as soon as the Chinese authorities (funder) hand it over to the South African government.

The AVCRT shall also serve as an advisory body for future investment projects and evaluate their relevance and benefit to guard against wrong investment decisions.

AQUACULTURE PROJECTS FUNDING

The Department of Trade and Industry (the DTI) initiated the Aquaculture Development and Enhancement Programme (ADEP) which is a grant aimed at assisting aquaculture projects. The draft document has been developed and will be available for comments by the industry.
RECORDS OF DECISIONS

The following decisions were agreed upon during the meeting of the 29th May 2012:

- The draft Aquaculture market analysis and the development study was handed over to the AVCRT.
- The establishment of a Working Group (WG) for aquaculture market analysis and development.
- The WG shall also focus on certification issues.
- Private sector (e.g. SASSI) should work together with the government on accreditation issues.
- The CEO of Western Cape Aquaculture Development Initiative (WCADI) shall facilitate the WG.
- The composition of the WG will include representatives from AIF, PAIF, DTI, DAFF and the Industry.
- The market analysis study should be expanded to other Provinces.
- The Co-chairs of the AVCRT and the Chair of the WG should meet senior departmental management to brief them regarding progress of the AVCRT and its Program of Action.
- The second sitting of the AVCRT will be on the 21st August 2012.

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