

ASC introduces improver programme for Bangladesh

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Roy van Daatselaar, Head of the Aquaculture Stewardship Council (ASC) Improver Programme, attended the first-ever Bangladesh International Aquaculture & Seafood Show (BIASS) in July. Along with LENK Frozen Foods, he presented how the Improver Programme by ASC benefits both farms and communities. The Improver Programme supports farms that are not ready or eligible for ASC certification but are committed to improving their farming practices.

In September 2023, ASC, in partnership with LENK Frozen Foods and Luna Shrimp Farms, launched its first Aquaculture Improvement Project (AIP) under the Improver Programme in Bangladesh. The AIP with Luna Shrimp Farms currently involves 125 farmers across five clusters, producing up to 400 kilograms of shrimp per hectare a year. LENK is also initiating a second AIP, which is expected to cover approximately another 275 farmers.

During the expo, the audience enjoyed a special viewing of an evocative short film, shot by ASC in the beautiful Bangladesh landscape. The film features local farmers from the Satkhira region, who are taking part in the AIP supported by ASC. The farmers describe the improvements they have been able to make following training in applying better practices and the benefits this brings to the local environment, economy, and society.

Roy and LENK Frozen Foods's Managing Director Heiko Lenk spent a few days visiting the farmer clusters involved in the AIP. They discussed progress and any challenges the farmers were facing and were also able to see firsthand the community-building and social engagement benefits the Improver Programme brings.

As fisheries and seafood farming sectors make an important contribution to Bangladesh's economy, harnessing aquaculture opportunities is a top priority for the country. ASC is committed to supporting this goal and improving the seafood farming sector in Bangladesh, focusing on the traditional, extensive cultivation of black tiger shrimp and pangasius.