

Mtafiti Monthly

KMFRI marks Jamhuri Day with transformative fish seed distribution in Kilifi

By: John Father Small | Edits: Jane Kiguta | Layout: John Small | Photos: John Small & Caleb Korir

Communities in Kibokoni, Kilifi County, welcomed this year's Jamhuri Day with renewed optimism as the Kenya Marine and Fisheries Research Institute (KMFRI) marked the national celebration through a high-impact outreach activity aimed at strengthening coastal aquaculture. Led by KMFRI Director General Dr. Paul S. Orina, senior mariculture researchers traveled to the region to distribute high-quality marine fish seed to local farmers an exercise that demonstrated the growing impact of the fully operational National Marine Hatchery in Shimoni.



Fish ponds



KMFRI CEO Dr Paul S. Orina flanked by Aquaculture Director Dr Jonathan Munguti and Shimoni Centre Director Dr Elisha Mrabu at a press briefing

Since becoming operational, the Shimoni hatchery has achieved several successful spawning cycles, allowing KMFRI to produce and supply farmers with reliable healthy seed. During the Jamhuri Day outreach, Dr. Orina noted that the progress signifies a major shift for coastal communities.



Community member restocking the pond

KMFRI researchers have also continued to work closely with Kibokoni farmers, offering hands-on training, monitoring farm progress, and helping them adopt modern mariculture technologies.

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According to KMFRI mariculture experts, healthy seed forms the backbone of successful fish farming. With declining wild stocks caused by overfishing, pollution, and habitat degradation, hatcheries such as Shimoni play an essential role in conserving marine species, stabilizing production, and supporting the recovery of high-value organisms.

The hatchery's long-term goals include scaling up seed production for commercially important species such as prawns, milkfish, groupers, ornamental fish, and pearl oysters. Current projections indicate that Kenya's annual demand for marine seed will increase from the current 4.5 million to over 34 million in the next five years—an opportunity the Shimoni facility is strategically positioned to meet.



Fish larvae distributed

Farmers in Kibokoni expressed gratitude for the support, noting the significance of receiving high-quality seed from a national research institution. For many, the initiative symbolizes renewed confidence in mariculture as a viable livelihood, especially for women and youth who are increasingly engaging in small-scale coastal aquaculture.

As Kenya commemorates Jamhuri Day—a day that celebrates independence and national growth—



Community members with KMFRI DG & Directors in a jig during the fish larvae distribution in Kibokoni

KMFRI's community outreach stands as a powerful reminder of the role science and innovation play in uplifting coastal livelihoods and advancing the country's Blue Economy agenda.

“Our goal is to ensure that farmers have consistent access to quality seed and technical guidance. Mariculture is a powerful tool for food security, economic growth, and youth empowerment. The operationalization of this hatchery marks a historic turning point for our coastal region.” Dr. Paul Orina, KMFRI CEO

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KMFRI earns UN climate technology network membership, expanding global climate action role

By: John Father Small | Edits: Jane Kiguta

Kenya Marine and Fisheries Research Institute (KMFRI) has achieved a significant international milestone following its official admission as a member of the United Nations Climate Technology Centre & Network (CTCN). This development marks an important step in strengthening KMFRI's global engagement in climate action and reinforces the Institute's growing reputation as a center of excellence in climate science and nature-based solutions.

KMFRI's admission to the CTCN comes on the heels of its recent bid for a United Nations Environment Programme (UNEP)-supported mangrove project in the Republic of Togo, underscoring increasing international recognition of the Institute's technical capacity, scientific rigour, and project implementation experience. As a CTCN member, KMFRI is now eligible to participate in competitive bids for CTCN-supported projects in developing countries, engage in outreach and networking activities coordinated by the Network, and contribute to global information sharing and capacity-building initiatives on climate technologies and policy solutions.

KMFRI has established itself as a global leader in natural climate solutions, particularly in mangrove restoration and blue carbon initiatives. Through science-driven research, policy engagement, and

community-based interventions, the Institute has successfully integrated climate mitigation and adaptation objectives with sustainable livelihood outcomes. This holistic approach has positioned KMFRI as a trusted partner in advancing innovative, evidence-based responses to climate change.



Congratulatory message

In recent years, KMFRI's expertise has increasingly been sought to support the design and implementation of blue carbon and coastal resilience projects across Africa and beyond. Membership in the CTCN network further expands these opportunities, enabling the Institute to share its knowledge, collaborate with international partners, and support developing countries in adopting effective and locally appropriate climate technologies.

KMFRI warmly welcomes this nomination and looks forward to close collaboration with the CTCN community. The membership reinforces the Institute's commitment to advancing innovative, nature-based climate solutions and contributing meaningfully to global efforts to address the climate crisis through science, partnership, and impact-driven action.

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KMFRI showcases research excellence at boat builders event in Mombasa

By: Korir Caleb | Edits: Jane Kiguta | Photos & Layout: John Father Small

The Kenya Marine and Fisheries Research Institute (KMFRI) prominently showcased its research portfolio at the Kenya Boat Builders Exhibition, hosted by the Kenya Fishing Industries Corporation (KFIC) at the Liwatoni Fisheries Complex in Mombasa.

The exhibition brought together key stakeholders from the maritime and fisheries sectors, including



KMFRI CEO Dr Paul S. Orina delivers his remarks at the event

boat builders, fishing vessel operators, financial institutions such as Absa Bank Group, and various State agencies operating within the Blue Economy and fisheries value chain. The forum provided a critical platform for knowledge exchange, innovation, and dialogue aimed at enhancing productivity, improving livelihoods for small-scale fishers, and

accelerating the growth of Kenya's Blue Economy.

While addressing participants, KMFRI Chief Executive Officer, Dr. Paul Orina, commended KFIC Acting CEO Dr. Micah Nyaberi for convening a purpose-driven,



KFIC Board members touring KMFRI booth

multi-stakeholder platform that promotes collective action across the fisheries sector.

Dr. Orina reaffirmed KMFRI's mandate to provide science-based research, reliable data, and technical expertise to support accurate mapping, sustainable utilization, and conservation of marine and fisheries resources. He further reiterated KMFRI's commitment to continued collaboration with KFIC and other stakeholders in creating opportunities that empower small-scale fishers and strengthen Kenya's Blue Economy agenda.

The exhibition also served as a vibrant marketplace for innovation, where stakeholders showcased modern equipment, emerging technologies, and ongoing research initiatives. Boat builders displayed advanced deep-sea fishing vessels and technologies, while financial institutions highlighted financing and investment solutions tailored to the fisheries and maritime sector.

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IPAF project brings new hope to fishers in Kakuma and Kalobeyei

By: Olilo Casianes, Omire Nicanor, Obiero Maurice, Malala John and John Small.
Edits: Jane Kiguta

The Kenya Marine and Fisheries Research Institute (KMFRI), Turkana Station, is implementing an innovative project aimed at transforming the livelihoods of fishing communities in Kakuma and Kalobeyei, Turkana County.

The project, titled *"Enhanced Fishing Efficiency and Fish Quality: An Innovation for Economic Change in Kenya,"* is supported by the Indigenous Peoples Assistance Facility (IPAF), funded by the International Fund for Agricultural Development (IFAD), and coordinated by the Samburu Women Trust (SWT).

The 2025/2026 IPAF project focuses on improving fishing efficiency, reducing post-harvest losses, and enhancing fish quality along the Lake Turkana value chain. KMFRI, as the executing agency in Kenya, is working closely with local Beach Management Units (BMUs) to address the long-standing challenges



Dried fish

faced by fisherfolk in this hot and arid region.

Addressing post-harvest losses and market

Challenges Fish traders and fishers in Kakuma and Kalobeyei have for years struggled with high post-harvest losses, mainly due to inadequate cold chain infrastructure, poor transport systems, and traditional processing methods. Fresh fish transported from Lake Turkana through Kalokol and Lodwar often spoils, especially during night deliveries, forcing traders to sell at throwaway prices to avoid total losses.



Community member following up training process on fish drying

To address these challenges, the IPAF project is introducing five key interventions: Provision of modern fishing boats and gear to improve catch efficiency; establishment of first-mile and last-mile cold storage facilities; introduction of improved, hygienic fish drying racks; support with motorcycles for faster transport and market distribution, and development of harmonized policies to ensure equitable economic benefits and sustainable fisheries

These interventions aim to reduce post-harvest losses from an estimated 30 to 20 per cent, improve fish quality, and increase incomes for fisherfolk and traders in Kakuma and Kalobeyei.

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Improved fish drying technology boosts livelihoods



KMFRI staff engaging stakeholders

A major milestone under the project is the distribution of modern raised fish drying racks to Kanamkuny Beach Management Unit (BMU). The racks were inspected by SWT Finance Officer Alice Mwangi alongside KMFRI staff before being handed over to the fisher communities.

Traditionally, fishers dried fish on cut acacia branches, leaves, or stones methods that exposed fish to dust, pests, and contamination. The new raised racks provide a hygienic, efficient alternative that significantly improves fish quality, extends shelf life, and enhances market value.



Unhygienic fish drying method

Community sensitization sessions were conducted to train fishers on proper use of the dryers, hygiene practices, and the nutritional and economic benefits of improved fish processing. The technology is inclusive, empowering women, youth, men, and persons living with disabilities.

"I can now take better care of my family because the business has changed from bad to good. The high racks also prevent constant bending, which used to cause back pain." Mzee Logario, a village elder from Lokuprat.

The new drying racks have also reduced drying time from three days to just twelve hours. This not only improves efficiency but also supports environmental conservation by reducing the need to cut tree branches, contributing to climate change adaptation.

Building skills for a sustainable future

Through IPAFA support and SWT coordination, KMFRI continues to provide training in fish handling, processing, hygiene, business management, market linkages, and savings. These efforts ensure that improvements in technology are matched with skills development, leading to lasting economic and social benefits.

Looking ahead

The IPAFA project demonstrates how integrated interventions combining infrastructure, technology, capacity building, and policy support can transform fisheries in Turkana County. By strengthening the cold chain, improving processing methods, and empowering local institutions, the project is paving the way for sustainable fisheries management and inclusive economic growth in Kakuma and Kalobeyei.

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By: John Father Small

Mtafiti Pictorials



KMFRI exhibition booth during Boat Builders event at KIFC



KMFRI DG Dr Paul S. Orina with senior staff arrive at Kibokoni



KMFRI Director Dr. Munguti expounds on restocking process



KFIC Board members touring KMFRI stand



Kibokoni community members follow meeting proceedings