

Perhaps the broadest opportunity for Canadian services lies in the application of expertise by the Canadian aquaculture biotechnology sector to Indian problems of broodstock development, disease monitoring and treatment, hybridisation and genetics, toxicity services, and water and effluent treatment. Given the underexploited potential of Indian aquaculture and the belated appreciation of the need for scientific management, this may be an appropriate time to market Canadian bio-tech services on a broad front.

6. REGULATORY FRAMEWORK

There are two dimensions of the aquaculture regulatory framework of interest to Canadian aquaculture firms. The first is concerned with the Central and State governments' control on the planning, environmental impact assessment, design, and operation of farms. The second relates to the treatment of foreign investment, and sales of technology and services. In regards to the latter, it is encouraging to note that the continued relaxation of trade and monetary barriers by the Government of India "...substantially eliminates licensing, quantitative restrictions, and other regulatory controls..."³ The Indian aquaculture industry is allowed to import foreign technical investment/collaboration, technology, equipment, chemicals and therapeutics, feeds, etc. with much simplified procedures and exempt from duties. Foreign interests may own 51% of an aquaculture operation. Visas are readily granted and may be renewed in India.

Until quite recently, there was little in the way of a regulatory framework affecting the start-up of traditional to semi-intensive aqua farms. Under the promotional influence of the Central government and with minimal State control, shrimp farms appeared in villages on traditionally rich agriculture land, and in fish-rich mangrove swamps. This situation is now being corrected. The Central Ministries of Environment and Agriculture and the Central and State Pollution Control Boards are co-operating to create and implement the necessary regulations. Environmental impact assessment studies are now a prerequisite for new medium to large farm acreages. Also, effluent treatment is to be made compulsory in critical regions. Other major issues being addressed include salt contamination of the water table and neighbouring agriculture land, and the tapping of fresh water reservoirs for shrimp tanks. Tamil Nadu, one of the States heavily involved in shrimp farming, has passed an Aquaculture Act in order to regulate industry. These guidelines and laws may also create an opportunity for the considerable Canadian expertise in environmental impact assessments.

³"An Exposition on Aquaculture." Kochi: Marine Products Export Development Authority, 1995.