ADAPTING EXTENSION APPROACHES TO AQUACULTURE ENVIRONMENTS IN INDONESIA: LESSONS FOR THOSE WORKING IN FISHERIES.

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ABSTRACT

This paper describes our experience with adapting extension approaches to aquaculture projects in different environments in Indonesia. These experiences include designing, implementing and evaluating government extension programs for shrimp aquaculture and alternative commodities. Funded by the Australian Centre for International Agricultural Research (ACIAR), the work involves (i) researching effective ways to work with shrimp farmers to trial recommended disease control practices in Central Java and South Sulawesi, (ii) conducting and evaluating extension training of staff, and (iii) designing culturally appropriate extension systems for shrimp production and alternative commodities. Key lessons are that adapting extension approaches in Indonesia requires (i) sensitivity to cultural norms and farming household aspirations, (ii) close and intensive mentoring of district and provincial extension staff using an action learning process and (iii) embedding understanding of extension theory and practice throughout institutions to ensure commitment.

Keywords: shrimp farmers, extension, cultural norms, farming household aspirations