



## Leading the way in cage fish farming: The story of SAMEKI LTD

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**S**AMEKI LTD, based in Mwanza, has transformed from humble beginnings into a leader in cage fish farming in Tanzania, and possibly in Eastern Africa. Officially established in 2019, the company has achieved remarkable growth and expansion within just eight years. From increasing production exponentially to significantly expanding its workforce, SAMEKI's journey is one of hope, resilience, and seizing opportunities amid challenges.

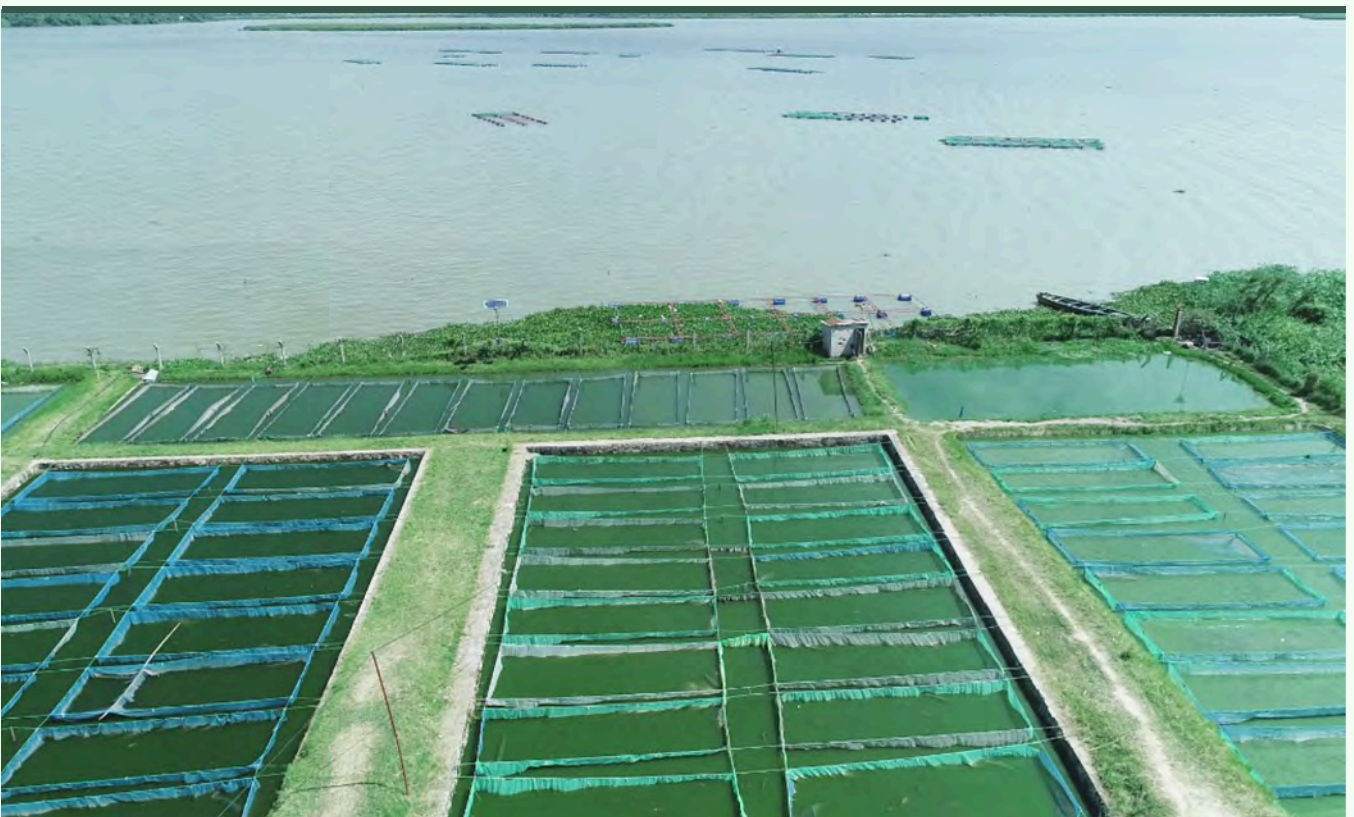
### **Birth of SAMEKI**

SAMEKI LTD started in 2016 with a focus on growing tilapia in earthen ponds. As demand and ambition grew, the company upgraded to durable concrete

ponds, which boosted production. In 2018, the company ventured into cage fish farming with four iron square cages. These grow-out ponds were converted into tilapia broodstock ponds to supply seeds for cages installed on the shores of Lake Victoria close to the company premises in Kamanga. Officially registered in 2019, SAMEKI LTD is the pioneer of cage fish farming and tilapia seed production in Tanzania, offering a scalable solution to ease the pressure on Tanzania's struggling wild-capture fisheries sector.

### **Challenges encountered**

SAMEKI's journey was not without obstacles. The company faced numerous challenges, especially in its early days. Obtaining the necessary permits for cage



SAMEKI Fish Farm at Kamanga site depicting Nile tilapia broodstock ponds, nursery and growout cages. ©SAMEKI LTD

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fish farming was a lengthy and costly process involving multiple governmental bodies. Sourcing quality fingerlings initially required importing from Uganda, leading to high mortality rates and logistical issues. The limited availability of quality fish feed in Tanzania caused delays and increased costs, impacting fish growth and health. Market instability, driven by consumer skepticism about farmed fish, resulted in inconsistent pricing and sales methods. Additionally, the unavailability of materials for cage construction locally necessitated expensive imports from Kenya. The company also had to navigate conflicts with local fishermen for fishing territories near the cages.

### Accomplishments

Despite these challenges, SAMEKI has made substantial strides. The farm has created over 30 jobs for both skilled and unskilled workers in aquaculture. It has become a hub for field practical training, welcoming students from various institutions for hands-on learning experiences. SAMEKI has diversified into selling fish feed, producing high-quality fingerlings, and offering out-grower services to new aquaculture ventures. The company supports aspiring fish farmers by providing technological know-how, operational guidance, and permitting assistance.

### Role of financial and academic institutions

Financial support and academic partnerships have been pivotal to SAMEKI's success. Tanzania Agricultural Development Bank (TADB) and Equity Bank provided crucial loans for establishment and expansion of fish farming activities. The company has been working with researchers from different academic and research institutions, such as Tanzania Fisheries Research Institute (TAFIRI), SoAF of the University of Dar es Salaam (UDSM), and the Sokoine University of Agriculture, who have helped in the breeding programs, disease control, and biosecurity measures.

### Looking ahead

SAMEKI LTD believes in the immense growth potential of the aquaculture industry in Tanzania and the broader region. Continued collaboration among industry players, government, financial institutions, research and academic institutions is essential to overcoming existing challenges and driving the sector forward.

Join us in celebrating SAMEKI's journey and envisioning a vibrant future for aquaculture in Tanzania ■



SAMEKI LTD hatching facility for Nile tilapia eggs at Kamanga site. ©SAMEKI LTD