



BUILDING FOOD SAFETY SKILLS FOR SHRIMP FARMERS IN BANGLADESH

The safe trade gap

Coastal communities in Bangladesh depend on shrimp and prawn farming as a vital source of employment, income and food security. Over 200,000 small-scale farmers are involved in shrimp aquaculture and shrimps are the second most important export commodity in Bangladesh after textiles. However, in recent years, shrimp and prawn products from Bangladesh have faced rejections at international borders due to the detection of contamination and residues. Grassroots problems linked to food safety and sanitary contamination at the farm level meant that the livelihoods of large numbers of farmers were under threat and that aquaculture exports were at risk.

Partnership approach

The FAO and local partners - the Department of Fisheries, WorldFish, and the Bangladesh Shrimp and Fish Foundation - mobilized 1,000 small-scale shrimp and prawn farmers supporting them to adopt Better Management Practices and Good Aquaculture Practices. The farmers, many of them women, were organized into 40 clusters, each made up of 25 farmers, with an average farm size of 0.54 hectares. This, in turn, created economies of scale. Working together, the farmers increased their bargaining power, purchasing feed directly from manufacturers which cut out their reliance on middlemen. They developed local support networks with the knowledge, skills and support to upgrade the safety and quality of shrimp production, and provide a steady supply to processors.

Results

- Total income from shrimp and prawn ponds increased by 70% in 2015, compared with the baseline in 2013. Data from future harvests is expected to show even greater gains.
- Increase in harvest yields of 60-70% thanks to knowledge transfer. This included how to stock ponds with tested shrimp seed, reduce the number of times ponds are stocked and harvested, and how to increase pond depths.
- A basic traceability system at the farm level was set up by mapping out the shrimp and prawn value chain.

Sustaining impact

- Based on the project's results, FAO and the Ministry of Fisheries and Livestock plan to scale-up the project's approach to reach 20,000 small-scale farmers. This will make sure there is sufficient volume for processors to segregate the clean shrimp, and help the clusters to establish a direct line of exports.
- Scaling up the project will also help to refine and improve the existing traceability system, so that farmers can guarantee the safety and quality of produce. The target is to secure up to US\$10 million to up-scale the cluster approach so that many more shrimp farmers can benefit.

"After joining this project I am getting profits every year. I don't have to wait for long to sell out at the market because my shrimps are bigger and look healthier. Now it makes me proud that people come to me for advice".

Chompa Debnath,
shrimp farmer,
Bangladesh

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PG-321



Beneficiary

Small-scale shrimp and prawn farmers in Bangladesh

Led by

FAO, with the Department of Fisheries, WorldFish, and the Bangladesh Shrimp and Fish Foundation

Time-frame

April 2012 – June 2016

STDF funding

US\$637,000 (total project value US\$823,800)