

HAFL Master's Thesis Abstract

Year: 2022

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English Title: **Assessing the potential of the mud crab value chain as a sustainable livelihood option in the Gulf of Mottama, Myanmar**

English Summary: In the coastal areas of Myanmar's Gulf of Mottama, it has been estimated that mud crabs constitute the second most important fisheries catch and provide an important source of income for thousands of small-scale fishers and traders due to their high marketability. Nevertheless, this abundant natural resource has remained understudied by researchers and undervalued by the authorities as well as development actors. The present applied research was client-sponsored and carried out in the framework of the Gulf of Mottama Project, implemented by a consortium led by the non-governmental organization Helvetas Swiss Intercooperation. It aimed at assessing the potential of the mud crab fisheries and trade as a sustainable livelihood option for the region's vulnerable communities, identifying possible upgrading options for small-scale fishing households to increase their incomes, and outlining measures to mitigate the critical environmental impact of and on the value chain. Based on a non-experimental and descriptive research design, a structured interview survey was conducted in six villages of the Gulf of Mottama with 95 mud crab fishers and eleven traders and complemented with information from two semi-structured key informant interviews with fisheries sector experts. It found that the mud crab fishery is an accessible and seasonally important income source for the most marginal segment of the population with a potential for pro-poor development interventions. Constraints include the overreliance on one established market channel, a lack of market information, inadequate infrastructure, a weak extension system, and the increasing signs of overfishing. The study came to the conclusion that a) solutions to address losses during storage and transportation, b) the development of small-scale fattening or grow-out operations, and c) the establishment of effective co-management mechanisms such as no-take nursery areas or crab banks to protect the resource stocks would be promising options to develop the potential of the mud crab value chain to support the livelihoods of the market actors in the Gulf of Mottama while also preserving the coastal environment.

Original Title: N/A

Summary in original language: N/A

Keywords: Crab fisheries; market research; co-management; Myanmar

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