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Artisanal Fishers in the Crayfish Value Chain Within the Oron Business Cluster in the Niger Delta Region of Nigeria

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Abstract

Crayfish, a smoke-dried species of shrimp (*Farfantepenaeus notialis*) is an important condiment in soups and meals of people of the Southern part of Nigeria. Having a high protein content, it is used as an indispensable seasoning of widely consumed soups and porridges, thereby increasing total animal protein intake. One of the major production areas is the Oron Business cluster, with specialisation in different fishery activities. The business cluster is within the volatile Niger Delta region, within the Bakassi peninsular bordering the two West African countries of Nigeria and Cameroon. The locations of these fishing communities in distant off-shore locations, and the presence of Non-State Armed Groups (NSAG) combine to create problems of insecurity for the value chain actors, especially the fishers. The objective of this study was to gain insight of the context in which the fishers operate as participants of the value chain. Specifically, determine the value addition and benefits accruing to the different actors with a view to identifying the least beneficiaries and those that may benefit from increased support or organisation. Data collection included quantitative (questionnaires) and qualitative (key informant interviews (KII) and focus group discussions (FGD)). Four main actors were identified; the Fishers, Processors, Wholesalers and Retailers. The start-up capital was highest for Fishers relative to the different actors. Out of the equivalent of USD5.4 per kg spent by consumers, the share of the total value addition of the four actors were USD2.2 (86.5 %), USD0.22 (8.5 %), USD0.04 (1.5 %) and USD0.09 (3.4 %), while the benefits in terms of net income are USD0.7 (24.5 %), USD0.38 (13.2 %) USD1.07 (37.5 %) and USD0.71 (24.8 %) for the Fishers, Processors, Wholesalers and Retailers respectively. The findings highlight the high entry cost of the primary actor (Fishers), their disproportionate high share of value addition and relatively low benefits from the overall activities within the value chain. The Wholesalers are strongly unionized and provide the governance structure for the chain activities. Interventions that could encourage freer entry into the distribution stages, increased security and lower start-up capital to the fishers could enhance their benefits and increase their opportunities for food security.

Keywords: Crayfish, *Farfantepenaeus notialis*, Niger Delta, Nigeria, Oron Business Cluster, Shrimp, Value Chain

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