Introduction

In aquaculture and fisheries, the value chain consists of the many processes and activities involved in bringing fish, shellfish, and aquatic plants to market. In some regions it can be an indicator of the economic welfare of poor communities involved in small-scale operations. In order to maximize smallholder participation and benefit in developing countries, it is critical to understand the complexities and intricate linkages of markets and value chains. This understanding provides the foundation for proper value chain management and is a way to increase productivity by improving efficiency, opening access to new markets and value-added products, and tracking consumer preferences.

Researchers in the Aquaculture & Fisheries Collaborative Research Support Program (AquaFish CRSP) in Africa and Asia have been analyzing value chains, helping to provide market access to small-scale fish producers, improve local economies, and create more opportunities for women. The AquaFish CRSP, headquartered at Oregon State University, brings together resources from US and Host Country institutions to promote sustainable solutions in aquaculture and fisheries. This effort is accomplished through integrated, multidisciplinary partnerships, focusing on poverty alleviation in target countries through the improvement of local and sustainable fish production. Within a large research portfolio, the work on value chains reported here represents a key component of the AquaFish CRSP mission.