



Gender dimensions in shrimp farming: a case study of shrimp farm workers in Thailand

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Background

WP1: Project Management

WP2: Scoping and systems overview

WP3:

WP4:

WP5: dynam

WP6:

WP7:

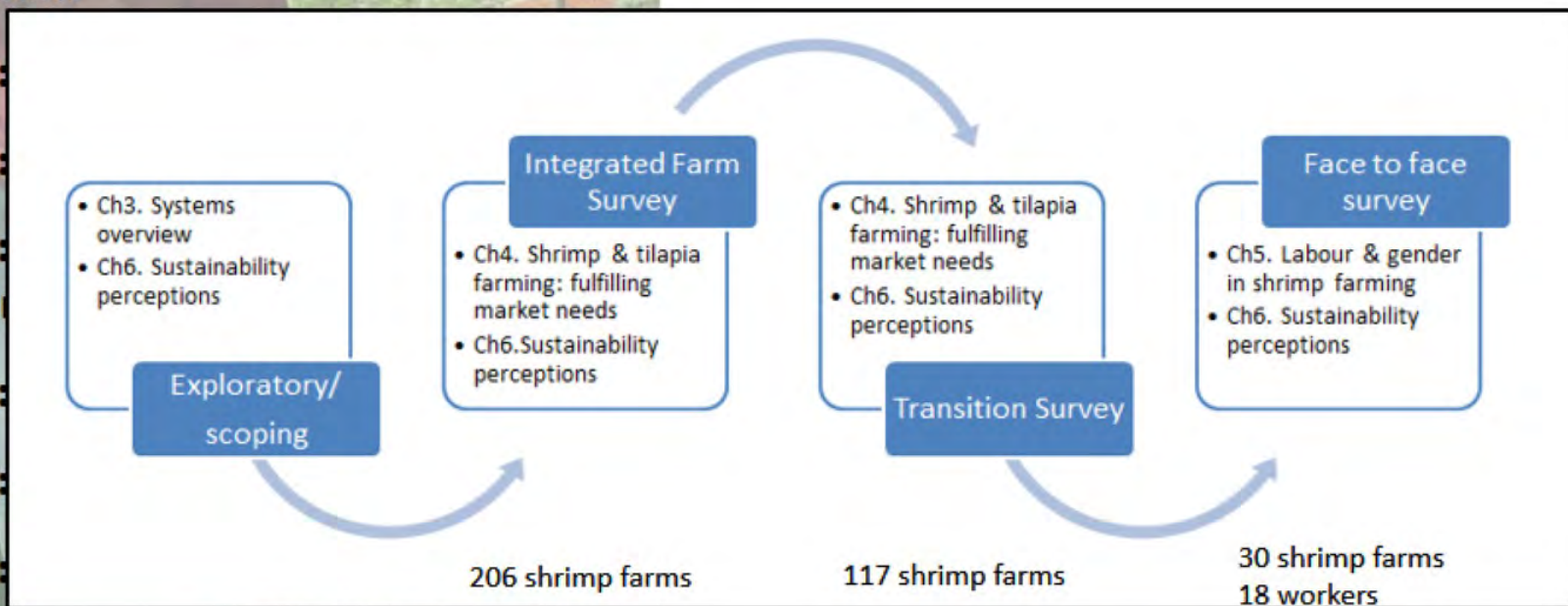
WP8:

WP9: Action research

WP10: Improving transparency of trade

WP11: Policy development

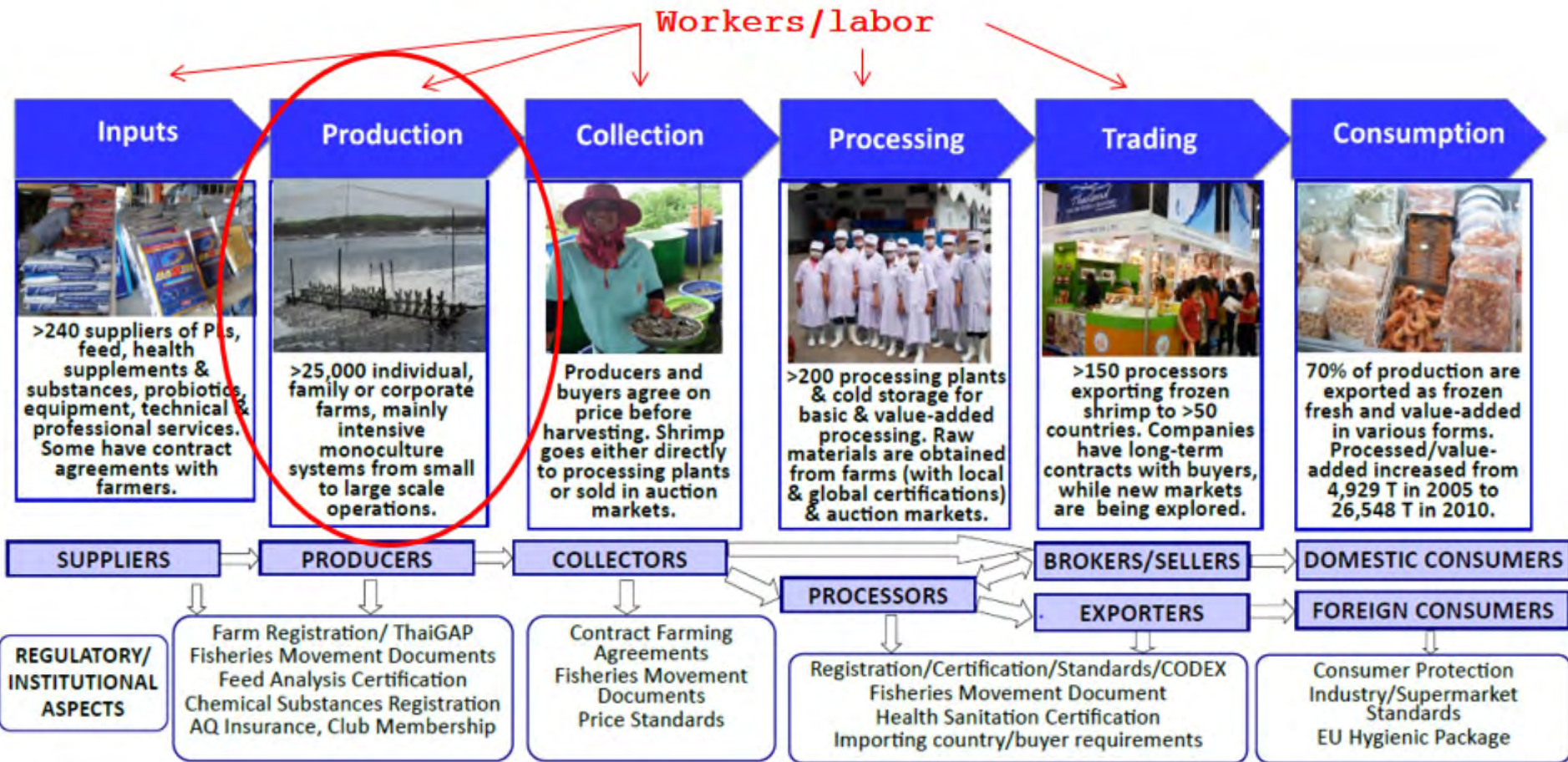
WP12: Dissemination



Shrimp farm workers in Thailand

- Important actors in the shrimp value chain
- Relationship between the shrimp farm owner/operator/manager and the shrimp farm worker is both business-like and familial
- In constant interaction with each other:
 - operation and management of the ponds
 - related to family and social activities within the shrimp farm setting
- Certification schemes include worker welfare in farms - considered at the same level as environmental management, animal welfare, and food safety for sustainable and ethical production of seafood

The Shrimp Value Chain in Thailand



Men and women are involved all throughout the chain, with varying roles and interactions between and among them*

* No detailed data on numbers of ♂ ♀ in each node

Relationships/interactions



**Wife owner/manager,
husband assists**



Couple caretaker



**Male owner/
manager, wife has
own business**

Some existing issues

- Insufficient or lack of:
 - Gender disaggregated data
 - Valuation of some aquaculture work, including indirect contribution & benefits
 - Understanding of relations & differences among actors
 - Gender sensitivity in projects, policies, certifications, other activities
- Trend – emerging emphasis on gender mainstreaming and integration in aquaculture initiatives

Global certification schemes

- Best Aquaculture Practices or BAP (Global Aquaculture Alliance)-BAP/GAA
- GlobalGAP
- The main areas covered re: farm workers:
 - workers' safety and occupation health
 - worker welfare and living conditions
 - legal aspects and documentation
 - knowledge and training
- Not covered:
 - Quality of life
 - Workers' perceptions with a gender perspective
 - Family of workers who are living with them or helping out with farm work

Questions:

What is the status of men and women shrimp farm workers in relation to the following gender dimensions?

- Access to resources and information
- Knowledge, beliefs, perceptions
- Practices and participation
- Laws, legal rights, policies, institutions

Methodology

- Eighteen workers (6 female, 12 male), both Thai and migrants
- Working in various shrimp farm scales
- Face to face interviews
- Questions designed based on the gender dimensions framework to obtain gender-disaggregated data



Shrimp farm scales

Criteria	Small	Medium	Large
No. of ponds	Up to 2	3 and above	N.A.
Business ownership	Household/ extended family	Household/e xtended family/ external owner	Company/corporate
Farm management	Household/ extended family	Household/ extended family/ external owner /hired manager	Hired manager
Labour relations	Up to 2 hired full- time labour	3 and above hired full-time labour	Hired employees/ full-time labour

Farm organizational structure

Small-scale

Owner/Operator/
Manager*

Hired worker (male)
together with wife

*may also work with his
wife instead of hiring
Others, but may hire part-
time worker for specific
jobs

Medium

Owner/Operator/Manager

Hired Manager
(mainly male)

Technician (male)

1 worker (male)/1-2 ponds
wife assists in some pond
work

Large

Owner/Shareholder

Hired Manager

Admin & Lab
(female mainly)

Technician (male)

1 worker (male)/1-2 ponds
Wife assists in some pond
work or find jobs elsewhere
Or both husband and wife are
hired

Faces in Farms

Owner-manager



Co-owner & co-manager

Co-owner

Owner / teacher



Manager

Worker

Couple workers

Male worker/
Couple workers?

Legal aspects

International Labour Organization (ILO)

Thai Ministry of Labor

- Department of Employment
- Department of Labour Protection and Welfare

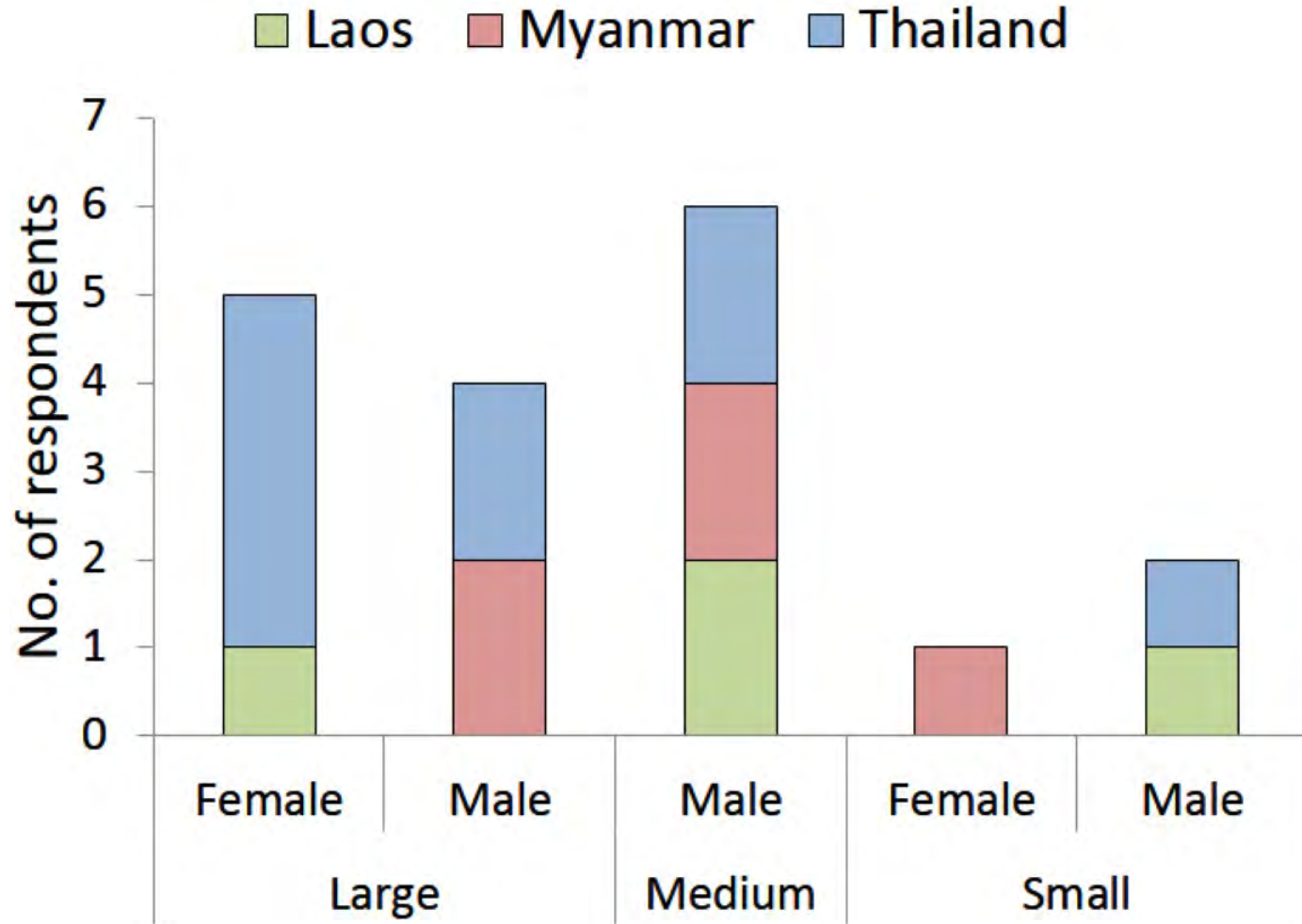
Subdistrict Administrative Organization

- Labor Code: only for work within the system (industry)
- Shrimp farm work:
 - considered outside the industry system (together with agriculture, domestic work, home-based businesses)



“Shrimp farmers are doing more than what the law requires re: providing compensation and benefits for the well-being of their workers” – key informant from the Department of Labor Protection and Welfare

About the workers



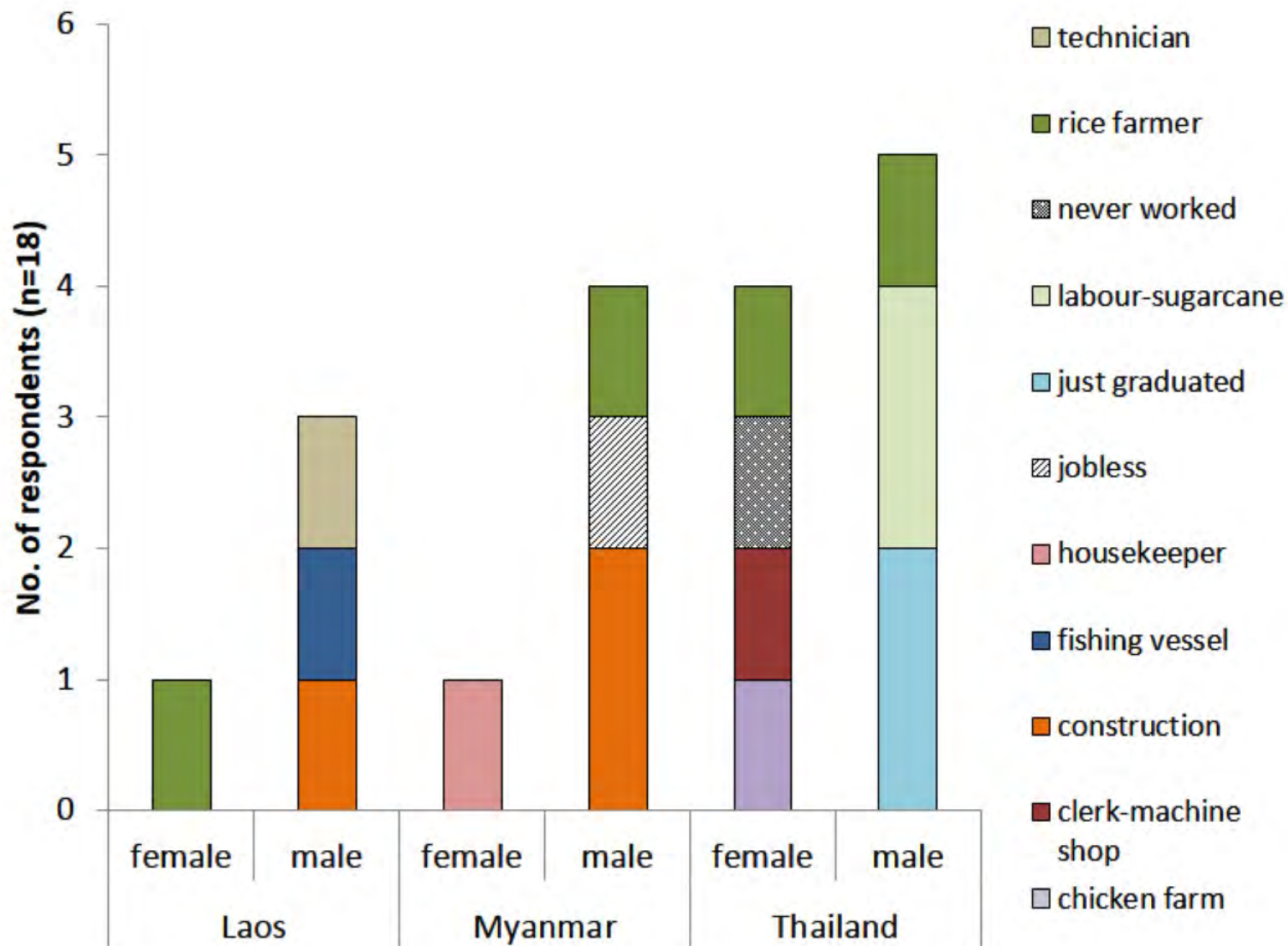
Previous occupations



A word cloud of previous occupations. The words are arranged in three rows. The top row features 'construction' in the largest font, with 'chickenfarm clerk' to its left and 'fishingvessel housekeeper' to its right. The middle row features 'justgraduated' in the largest font, with 'jobless' to its left and 'neverworked' to its right. The bottom row features 'ricefarmer' in the largest font, with 'sugarcane' to its right and 'technician' to its left.

chickenfarm clerk **construction** fishingvessel housekeeper
jobless **justgraduated** neverworked
ricefarmer sugarcane
technician

Previous occupations



Profile of shrimp farm workers

Farm Scale	Designation	Gender	Nationality	Tasks	Remarks
Small	Farm worker	Female	Myanmar	Take care of ponds (liming, cleaning, feeding, checking) keeping record	Husband is also working in the farm. Both of them take care of the whole farm.
	Farm worker	Male	Lao	Take care of ponds (cleaning, feeding, check water)	Wife (Thai) and children stay with him in the farm but only he works in the farm.
	Farm worker	Male	Thai	Take care of ponds (cleaning, feeding, check water)	Wife and children stay with him in the farm but only he works in the farm.

Profile of shrimp farm workers

Farm Scale	Designation	Gender	Nationality	Tasks	Remarks
Medium	Pond worker and equipment maintenance	Male	Lao	Take care of 2 ponds, maintenance & repair of all farm equipment	Wife stays with him in the farm, children in Laos
	Farm worker	Male	Lao	Take care of 3 ponds, put feed in autofeeder, cleaning, check feed, shrimp & water, record keeping	Single
	Farm worker	Male	Myanmar	Take care of 2 ponds, put feed in autofeeder, check feeding, liming	Single

Profile of shrimp farm workers

Farm Scale	Designation	Gender	Nationality	Tasks	Remarks
Large	Farm worker	Male	Myanmar	Take care of 2 ponds, feeding, machine maintenance, check screens, nets, cleaning area	Wife is staying with him and also working in the farm in the inventory/ inputs section. Children in home country.
	Farm worker	Female	Thai	'Female' tasks (her term): measure pH, check water, give feed, turn off aerators, clean area	Husband is also working in the farm. She gets her own salary. Their children are not staying with them.
	Head worker (11 workers + 1 pond.	Female	Thai	Check water quality, manage feed	Husband also working in farm. Children in Ubon.

Perceptions on Quality of Life

Farm Scale	Country of origin	Gender	Much better-off	Better-off	OK
Small	Thai	Male			1
	Lao	Male		1	
Medium	Myanmar	Female	1		
	Thai	Male		2	
	Lao	Male	1	1	
Large	Myanmar	Male		2	
	Thai	Female	2	2	
	Lao	Female		1	
	Myanmar	Male	1	1	
Total			5	10	1

Reasons for QOL perceptions

Emotional (12x)	Economic (7x)	Social (7x)	Physical (4x)
<ul style="list-style-type: none">• No pressure, less stressful, happiness factor• Can live together with spouse• More freedom, independence• More comfortable life• Makes a person more mature and responsible• No problems faced• Peaceful	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Spend less money, more to save & send back home• Additional income such as bonus, benefits• Non-monetary benefits such as housing, water, electricity, meals• Fully paid for effort made	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Owners are kind• Enjoyable working with employers & other workers• Respect among each other in the farm• Familial atmosphere living in the farm	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Mechanisation reduced workload• Work is easier• On-going production• Better living conditions• Closer to nature

Salaries & wages

Farm Scale	Salary range ¹ (Baht)	Bonus (Baht/kg produced)	About the Workers	Remarks
Small	3,000 to 9,000/ month	1 to 2	Female, Myanmar: 5,000 Bt/mo	Based on no. of ponds and no. of years worked
Medium	5,000 to 8,000/ month	1 to 3	Male, Myanmar: 4,000 Bt/mo, 1 pond; 2 Bt/kg bonus <i>Male, Laos: 6,000 Bt/mo, 1 pond; 2 Bt/kg bonus</i>	Based on no. of ponds; couples are assigned 2-3 ponds
Large	300/day, paid monthly	0.75	Male, Myanmar	1-2 ponds/ worker depending on performance

Salary issue

Most small scale farms:

- couple is hired by the farm owner
- to manage the whole farm by themselves (< 5 ponds)
- paid as a couple, wherein the payment is given on a monthly basis
- either paid for the whole farm or per pond
- For example: 5,000 Baht (US\$156)/month if 1 pond only
- >2 or more ponds: 9,000 to 10,000 Baht (US\$281-312)/month
- + bonus commission

Sources of information and knowledge

- **Hands-on training from employers, managers, experienced co-workers**
- Technical meetings and discussions with the team on-farm
- Company technicians and salespersons who come to the farms
- Consultation and discussions with other shrimp farm workers, face to face or by phone
- Watching television (technical as well as Thai language)

*Reading materials limited for non-Thais

No learning for wives accompanying husbands

Access to information

- Limited for migrant workers due to language
- Workers learn on farm, be trained by owners/ managers but not wives even if they help
- Mobile phones help to contact other workers for sharing information



Gender issues in farms

	Owner and or Manager	Worker	Couple Workers	Worker's family on farm
Gender	M, F	M, F	M, F	Wife, kids
Thai/migrant	Thai	Thai, migrant	Thai, migrant	Thai, migrant
Access to opportunities e.g. training, learning	Yes Few hired ♀ managers	Some, mainly on farm	Some, mainly on farm	Kids' education Wife can work outside but limited if migrant
Salary from farm	Income from farm	Yes	Individual or couple	Wife no even if helping in work
Benefits (bonus, housing, water, medical, legal)		yes	yes	yes if staying in farm
Quality of life based on needs		Better off	Better off	Better off
Social protection		Needs more esp for migrant workers		

Other issues need to be addressed

- couple payments
- legal documentation/status of migrant workers
- access to opportunities and skills development
- freedom of association/representation

Perceptions & decisions

- **Male manager's perception:**
 - a single woman could not work in the shrimp farm setting, as it is a male-dominated workplace
 - single women or women who are alone will also not want to come as the farm is far from the town and they do not feel safe
- **Decision making and control of assets:**
 - women entrusted with salaries that husbands earn
 - workers consult their spouses when purchasing large items
 - wives are responsible for marketing, transactions to remit cash back to their own countries
 - most financial decisions made by wives as they are entrusted with the money to keep and save

Thank you.