Expansion and diversification of production and management systems for sea cucumbers in the Philippines, Vietnam and northern Australia

Key details

Location
Philippines, Vietnam

Duration
Start Mar 2013   **End** Mar 2018

Budget   AUD 1,747,282

Commissioned organisation
University of the Sunshine Coast

Partners
Department of Resources; Guiuan Development Foundation Incorporated; Mindanao State University at Naawan; Research Institute for Aquaculture No. 3; Southeast Asian Fisheries Development Centre; University of the Philippines; WorldFish Center

Project Leader
Paul Southgate - University of Sunshine Coast

Program   Fisheries

Project code   FIS/2010/042

Overview

This project aimed to develop commercial-scale hatchery and grow- out technologies for sandfish, recognising that adapting systems to participating communities' social, institutional and bio-physical settings was critical.

Sea cucumbers are a highly valued commodity consumed as food or medicine in China and elsewhere in Asia. Their harvest has for many years supported livelihoods in coastal communities throughout Asia and the Pacific. Sea cucumber culture could also be an alternative to shrimp farming. Sea cucumber ranching offers a culturally engaging activity for socially and economically disadvantaged Aboriginal people in the Northern Territory, with good potential for positive economic and social outcomes.

Overharvesting has led to widespread and precipitous depletion of wild resources.

Simple low-technology approaches to culturing sandfish (Holothuria scabra), a high-value tropical sea cucumber species, could restore coastal livelihoods and ecological function. Previous ACIAR funded projects and national programs in the Philippines and Vietnam demonstrated that sandfish culture technology could have significant effect if systems and technologies applicable across different social, institutional and bio-physical settings were developed.

This project developed tools to determine where these technologies are unlikely to succeed.