



Divron  
Bioventures

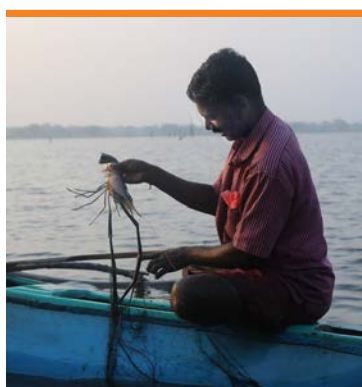
## Taking Giant Prawns to the Market: How a Freshwater Delicacy Contributes to Rural Livelihoods

MDF supported aquaculture business Divron Bioventures to strengthen its supply chain, provide extension advice to fisher communities, and expand supply and export capacity.



### The Company

Divron Bioventures is an innovative, Sri Lanka-based business producing and harvesting a variety of seafood including Giant Freshwater Prawn (GFWP), tropical oysters and tilapia. GFWP is its key product and export. The giant prawn is in high demand in the export market. Divron also supplies to select high-end restaurants in Sri Lanka.



### The Context

Inland aquaculture is a growing sector in Sri Lanka. Connected to the island's vast network of inland water bodies, inland aquaculture accounts for around 13% of total annual fish production, with close to 49,000 households estimated to depend on inland fishing. Sri Lanka's network of reservoirs present an ideal environment for the healthy growth of GFWP; given the opportunity, the prawn can grow up to 500g and commands a significantly higher price than fish. It is, therefore, a lucrative product for fishers as well as the business. The National Aquaculture Development Authority (NAQDA) is the governing body for the industry and has several hatcheries in which GFWP are bred, with the prawn larvae then sold commercially.



### The Challenge

Despite high demand, particularly from Thailand, Divron was unable to expand capacity to meet the requirement. In addition to prawn larvae from its own nurseries, Divron was also purchasing from NAQDA. Divron was then depositing these in select reservoirs and buying back full-grown prawns from inland fishers. However, Divron did not have a streamlined supply network from the reservoirs - the fishers' harvesting was ad-hoc. The company was also unable to effectively store and transport harvested prawns in a way that would not compromise export-level quality standards. As a result, the business was performing below capacity and in an ad-hoc manner.

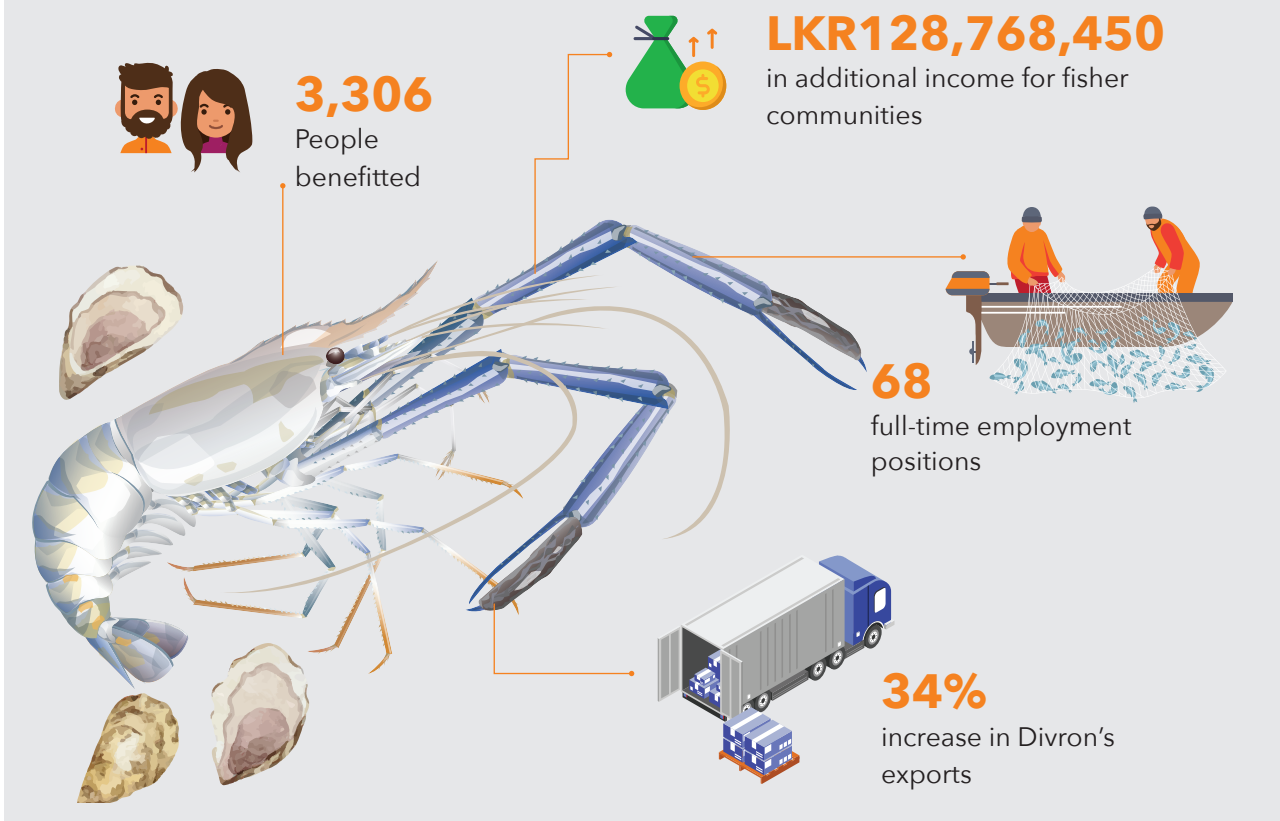


## The Solution

MDF took on a multi-pronged approach to supporting Divron, working with the business on its internal processes, as well as helping it improve fishers' knowledge and practices:

- Supported Divron to hire a consultant to develop a supply chain management plan, from reservoir to point of export.
- Assisted in strengthening Divron's transport network through the purchase of reefer trucks (with in-built refrigeration).
- Improved Divron's storage capacity and quality management through using crates for storing the prawn in ice and setting up a cold-storage facility.
- Supported Divron to provide extension advice to fishers and collectors (who collect, weigh and grade the prawns) on improved catching and handling practices, as well as sourcing requirements for premium markets.

## The Results



## Quote from the field

Vijayan, a fisher in Vavuniya, shared:

“

*If I catch 3 prawns, I get 1000 rupees. That is significant for me! I focus on catching prawns. The prawns bring me at least 500 rupees a day, helping my family survive. How can I explain the gain? It's like feeding a starving man.*

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