

Managing Social Innovation in the Blue Economy: A Case Study of Blue Crab Ice Cream Processing by a Community Enterprise in Eastern Thailand

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Abstract

Blue Economy is a concept of economic and social development based on the sustainable use of marine and coastal resources alongside ecosystem preservation. It is often used to describe the overall macroeconomic and global systems. However, no studies have applied this concept to the development of social innovation aimed at improving the economy and society at the grassroots level. This study aims to describe social innovation management under the Blue Economy concept by selecting a specific case study of a community enterprise in Eastern Thailand, which has best practices in developing social innovation aligned with Blue Economy principles. Qualitative data were collected from 15 individuals, including community enterprise leaders, community enterprise members, consumers, and social innovation experts. The study found that the social innovation development process of the community enterprise consists of six steps: 1) identifying community assets and understanding the problems and needs of stakeholders; 2) using creative ideas to design a blue crab ice cream product innovation; 3) collaborating with networks and funding sources to support the development of the product prototype; 4) validating the product concept and conducting market testing; 5) launching the product for sale and gathering consumer feedback; and 6) creating positive impacts on the social, economic, and environmental dimensions of the community. This study provides valuable guidelines for community enterprises and related organizations to promote and develop social innovations that drive economic, social, and environmental changes, ensuring long-term sustainability for local communities and society.

Keywords: economic sociology, grassroots economy, product innovation, local community, sustainability