



**The 1st Meeting of the Project Steering Committee for
the SEAFDEC/UNEP/GEF Project on Establishment and Operation of a Regional System of
Fisheries *Refugia* in the South China Sea and Gulf of Thailand**

4th – 5th December 2018
Jasmine City Hotel, Bangkok, Thailand

PROVISIONAL PROSPECTUS AND AGENDA

I. INTRODUCTION

The South China Sea and the Gulf of Thailand is a global center of shallow water marine biological diversity that supports significant fisheries that are important to the food security and export income of Southeast Asian countries. These fisheries are characterized by high levels of fishing effort from the small-scale sector. Accordingly, all inshore waters of those areas are subject to intense fishing pressure. This situation of high small-scale fishing pressure and declining fisheries resources has contributed to the implementation of unsustainable fishing methods to maintain catch and increase incomes in the short-term. These include the use of destructive fishing gear and practices, such as the operation of demersal trawls and push nets in seagrass areas, and the detonation of explosives and release of fish poisons in coral reef areas. Small-scale inshore fishing pressure has therefore been identified as a significant cause of the degradation and loss of coastal habitats in the South China Sea.

Although action aimed at reducing the rate of loss of coastal habitats has been implemented by countries bordering the South China Sea and the Gulf of Thailand, the decadal rate of loss of such habitats remains high due to many reasons from not only fishing activities but including other human activities and climate changes. This continued decline in the total area of habitats critical to the life cycles of most aquatic species, combined with the high levels of coastal community dependence on fish, has raised serious concerns for the long-term sustainability of small-scale fisheries in the region. With fish production being intrinsically linked to the quality and area of habitats and the heightened dependence of coastal communities on fish, a need exists to improve the integration of fish habitat considerations and fisheries management in the region. This project entitled “Establishment and Operation of a Regional System of Fisheries *Refugia* in the South China Sea and Gulf of Thailand” has been developed to meet this need via implementation of the fisheries component of the Strategic Action Program for the South China Sea. Executed regionally by the Southeast Asian Fisheries Development Center (SEAFDEC) in partnership with the government agencies responsible for fisheries in the 6 participating countries namely Cambodia, Indonesia, Malaysia, Philippines, Thailand, and Viet Nam, the project is comprised of the following 4 project components:

Component 1 will result in the establishment of operational management at 14 priority fisheries *refugia*, with community-based *refugia* management plans being key outputs;

Component 2 focuses on strengthening the enabling environment for the formal designation and operational management of *refugia*;

Component 3 focuses on strengthening information management and dissemination aimed at enhancing the national uptake of best practices in integrating fisheries management and biodiversity

conservation, and in improving community acceptance of area-based approaches to fisheries and coastal environmental management; and

Component 4 will strengthen cross-sectorial coordination for integrated fisheries and environmental management and will harness the national scientific and technical expertise and knowledge required to inform the policy, legal and institutional reforms for fisheries *refugia* management in the participating countries.

To kick-off implementation of the Project, the Inception Workshop was conducted in Bangkok, Thailand, on 1st – 3rd November 2016 with the aims to introduce the overall project goals, objectives, overview of the Project Framework including monitoring and evaluation, sharing of regional and national initiatives related to fisheries *refugia* project, required Letter of Agreement (LOA), work plan and finance matters, and other business. The project implementation at country level is, therefore, based on the status of LOA submission to the Project Coordinating Unit (PCU), and presently there are 4 relevant countries namely Cambodia, Malaysia, Philippines and Thailand have signed the LOA and started the project implementation since 2017. The PCU, through SEAFDEC channel, has communicated bilaterally with two remaining countries namely Indonesia and Viet Nam for submission of LOA, while the activities was a bit slow down during the 4th Quarter of 2017 till 1st Quarter of 2018 with many internal and external reasons to ensure that overall programs either national or regional activities could move together by 6 member countries as well as the management frameworks be alignment with the recently endorsed UNEP/GEF Project on Implementing of TDA/SAP for the South China Sea, the sister project of Fisheries *Refugia*.

To facilitate the achievement of the goals and objectives of the SEAFDEC/ UNEP/GEF project entitled “Establishment and Operation of a Regional System of Fisheries *Refugia* in the South China Sea and Gulf of Thailand”, the national and regional institutions have been established to facilitate the implementation of the Fisheries *Refugia*. To support the regional management frameworks, two institutions: Regional Project Steering Committee (PSC); and Regional Scientific and Technical Committee shall play an important role to ensuring effective implementation of activities undertaken during project execution; and providing sound scientific and technical advice for further policy decision made by the Project Steering Committee. In this connection, the 1st Regional Scientific and Technical Committee Meeting (RSTC1) for the SEAFDEC/UNEP/GEF Project on Establishment and Operation of a Regional System of Fisheries *Refugia* in the South China Sea and Gulf of Thailand was held in Trat Provinces, Thailand from 11th to 13th September 2018. The Results of RSTC1 also supported the PCU to organize the 1st Annual Meeting of the Regional Project Steering Committee in Bangkok, Thailand on 4th – 5th December this year.

II. OBJECTIVES OF THE MEETING

- To learn and share the countries statements on behalf of their government on the supports for implementation of the Establishment and Operation of a Regional System of Fisheries *Refugia* in the SCS and Gulf of Thailand;
- To discuss and adoption of the terms of reference and rules of procedure for the project steering committee;
- To introduce and discuss on the agreed national results framework and proposed workplan adjustment for 2019 and onward;
- To adopt the Report of the Chairperson of the 1st Meeting of the Regional Scientific and Technical Committee
- To discuss on the financial arrangements for national and regional programs including the expenditures in 2017 till September 2018;

- Site Technical Visit to the PCU at SEAFDEC/Training Department and marine habitats in the vicinity of Prasamutjadee, Samut Prakarn Province.
- Other business related to the project.

III. MEETING VENUE

The meeting will be held at Jasmine City Hotel, Bangkok, Thailand during a period of 4th - 5th December 2018

IV. PARTICIPANTS

- Refers to the proposed TOR for the Project Steering Committee, SEAFDEC will support two persons from each member country namely:
 1. A Chair of the National Fisheries *Refugia* Committee; and
 2. A Chair of National Scientific and Technical Committee;
- A Project Task Manager and/or a representative of the UN Environment;
- Secretary-General of SEAFDEC or a representative of the SEAFDEC;
- The PCU staffs and relevant consultants to the project.

V. TENTATIVE AGENDA

1. **OPENING OF THE MEETING**
 - 1.1 WELCOME ADDRESS
 - 1.2 INTRODUCTION OF MEMBERS
 - 1.3 COUNTRY STATEMENTS ON BEHALF OF THEIR GOVERNMENTS
2. **ORGANISATION OF THE MEETING**
 - 2.1 DESIGNATION OF OFFICES
 - 2.2 ORGANIZATION OF THE WORK
3. **ADOPTION OF THE MEETING AGENDA**
4. **CONSIDERATION OF THE TERMS OF REFERENCE AND RULES OF PROCEDURE FOR THE PROJECT STEERING COMMITTEE**
5. **DISCUSSION OF THE AGREED NATIONAL RESULTS FRAMEWORK AND PROPOSED WORKPLAN ADJUSTMENT FROM 2018 TO 2020**
6. **REPORT OF THE CHAIRPERSON OF THE REGIONAL SCIENTIFIC AND TECHNICAL COMMITTEE**
7. **DISCUSSION ON THE REGIONAL WORKPLAN FOR 2019**
8. **FINANCIAL ARRANGEMENTS**
 - 8.1 FINANCIAL REPORT OF EXPENDITURES
 - 8.2 BUDGET ALLOCATION BY THE PROJECT COMPONENT 2016-2020
 - 8.3 PROPOSED DSA RATE FOR CALCULATION OF IN-KIND CO-FINANCING AND RESULTS ON ACTIVITIES-BASED CO-FINANCE
9. **ANY OTHER BUSINESS**
 - 9.1 RESULTS OF THE 9TH GEF INTERNATIONAL WATERS CONFERENCE (IWC9)
 - 9.2 OTHER
10. **DATE AND PLACE OF THE NEXT MEETING OF THE PROJECT STEERING COMMITTEE**
11. **TECHNICAL SITE VISITS**
12. **ADOPTION OF THE REPORT OF THE MEETING CLOSURE OF THE MEETING**