



**The 4th Regional Scientific and Technical Committee Meeting for
the SEAFDEC/UN Environment/GEF Project on Establishment and Operation of
a Regional System of Fisheries *Refugia* in the South China Sea and the Gulf of Thailand**

22 July 2021 (08:30 – 12:00 am, UTC+7)

Zoom platform

<https://us02web.zoom.us/j/81838543705?pwd=d1pzZTBxTjMreWZWbmdVWjlpSXlQZz09>

TERMS OF REFERENCE

Mid-term Review of the SEAFDEC/UNEP/GEF PROJECT: “Establishment and Operation of a Regional System of Fisheries *Refugia* In the South China Sea and Gulf of Thailand” (GEF ID 5401)

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Executive Summary

The purpose of the Mid-Term Review (MTR) is to provide an independent assessment of project performance at mid-term, to analyze whether the project is on track, what problems and challenges the project is encountering, and which corrective actions are required so that the project can achieve its intended outcomes by project completion in the most efficient and sustainable way.

The TOR consists of three sections: 1) Project background and overviews, 2) Objective and scope of the mid-term review, and 3) Mid-term review approach, methods and deliverables. The Mid-term Review will be in-depth evaluations using a participatory approach whereby key stakeholders are kept informed and consulted throughout the evaluation process. Both quantitative and qualitative evaluation methods will be used as appropriate to determine project achievements against the expected outputs, outcomes and impacts of the projects

The Mid-term Review consultant will be selected and recruited by the SEAFDEC under an individual Special Service Agreement (SSA). By signing the service contract with SEAFDEC, the consultant certify that he/she has not been associated with the design and implementation of the FR Project in any way which may jeopardize his or her independence and impartiality towards project achievements and project partner performance. Tentative schedule for the Mid-term Review is finalized soon before official announcement.

ACTIONS BY THE RSTC4 COMMITTEE:

- ❖ Take note on the preparation for TOR for Mid-Term Reviews
- ❖ For consideration, clarification and suggestion on the proposed TOR for Mid-term reviews.

TERMS OF REFERENCE

Mid-term Review of the SEAFDEC/UNEP/GEF PROJECT: “Establishment and Operation of a Regional System of Fisheries *Refugia* In the South China Sea and Gulf of Thailand” (GEF ID 5401)

INTRODUCTION

This Terms of Reference (TOR) is for the Mid-Term Review (MTR) of the UNEP/GEF-SEAFDEC project on “Establishment and Operation of a Regional System of Fisheries *Refugia* in the South China Sea and Gulf of Thailand”, hereafter called “*FR project*”. The purpose of the Mid-Term Review (MTR) is to provide an independent assessment of project performance at mid-term, to analyze whether the project is on track, what problems and challenges the project is encountering, and which corrective actions are required so that the project can achieve its intended outcomes by project completion in the most efficient and sustainable way.

SECTION 1: PROJECT BACKGROUND AND OVERVIEW

1. Project General Information (Table 1)

Table 1: General information of the FR Project

Identification	GEF ID.: 5401	<i>Insert Umoja no.:</i>
Project Number + Project Title	<i>Establishment and Operation of a Regional System of Fisheries Refugia in the South China Sea and Gulf of Thailand</i>	
Duration	<i>Planned</i>	<i>48 months</i>
months	<i>Extension(s)</i>	<i>January 2021</i> <i>December 2022</i>
Division(s) Implementing the project	<i>DEPI GEF International Waters</i>	
Name of co-implementing Agency	<i>UNEP</i>	
Executing Agency(ies)	<i>Southeast Asian Fisheries Development Center (SEAFDEC)</i>	
Names of Other Project Partners	<i>Fisheries Administration (FIA), Cambodia</i>	
	<i>The Agency for Marine and Fisheries Research and Human Resources (MAMFR), MMAF, Republic of Indonesia</i>	
	<i>Department of Fisheries (DOF), Malaysia</i>	
	<i>National Fisheries Research and Development Institute (NFRDI), Department of Agriculture</i>	
	<i>Department of Fisheries (DOF), Thailand</i>	
	<i>Directorate of Fisheries (D-Fish), Ministry of Agriculture and Rural Development, Viet Nam</i>	
Project Type	<i>Full Size Project (FSP)</i>	
Project Scope	<i>Regional: South East Asia</i>	
Region (<i>delete as appropriate</i>)	<i>Asia Pacific</i>	
Names of Beneficiary Countries	<i>Cambodia, Indonesia, Malaysia, Philippines, Thailand and Viet Nam</i>	

Programme of Work	<i>Healthy and productive ecosystems</i>	
GEF Focal Area(s)	<i>International Waters</i>	
UNDAF linkages	<i>Cambodia (2016-2018) – Outcome 1 Indonesia (2016-2020) – Outcome 1& 3 Malaysia - *Eleventh Malaysia Plan 2016-2020 –Strategy 6 Philippines (2012-2018) - Outcome 1& 3 Thailand (2017-2021) – Outcome 1 Vietnam (2017-2021) – Outcome 2</i>	
Link to relevant SDG target(s) and SDG indicator(s)	<i>SDG Target 14: Indicator 14.2, 14.4 and 14.a SDG Target 1: Indicator 1b SDG Target 2: Indicator 2.4 SDG Target 12: Indicator 12.2</i>	
GEF financing amount	<i>US\$3,000,000</i>	
Co-financing amount	<i>US\$12,717,850</i>	
Date of CEO Endorsement	<i>January 12, 2016</i>	
Start of Implementation	<i>March 21, 2016</i>	
Date of first disbursement	<i>August 25, 2016</i>	
Total disbursement as of 31 Dec 20	<i>US\$1,819,035</i>	
Total expenditure as of 31 Dec 20	<i>US\$ 1,613,844</i>	
Expected Mid-Term Date	<i>4th Quarter 2020 – 1st Quarter 2021</i>	
Completion Date	<i>Planned</i>	<i>December 31, 2020</i>
	<i>Revised</i>	<i>December 31, 2022</i>
Expected Terminal Evaluation Date	<i>TBD</i>	
Expected Financial Closure Date	<i>TBD</i>	

2. Project Rationale

- 1) The South China Sea 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 the South China Sea basin are subject to intense fishing pressure. This situation of high small-scale fishing pressure and declining fisheries resources has contributed to the adoption 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.
- 2) Although action aimed at reducing the rate of loss of coastal habitats has been implemented by countries bordering the South China Sea, the decadal rate of loss of such habitats remains high, e.g., seagrass beds (30 percent), mangroves (16 percent), and coral reefs (16 percent). 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 in partnership with the government agencies responsible for fisheries in the 6 participating countries, the project is comprised of the following 4 project components.

- 3) Component 1 will result in the establishment of operational management at 14 priority fisheries refugia, with community-based refugia management plans being key outputs. Supporting activities include consultative processes to facilitate agreement among stakeholders on the boundaries of fisheries refugia, identification of key threats to refugia sites, recording of fishing community views regarding appropriate fisheries and habitat management measures, and eliciting stakeholder inputs to management plan review. Refugia management plans will provide rules inter alia on operating requirements for the use of particular classes of fishing vessels or fishing gear within refugia, procedures for adjusting management measures over time, and mechanisms for enforcement. Specific direction is given to drafting of regulations and ordinances required in support of plan implementation.
- 4) Component 2 focuses on strengthening the enabling environment for the formal designation and operational management of refugia. Preparatory activities include legal reviews to identify, inter alia: legal terminology for describing refugia; formal procedures for demarcating boundaries of spatial management areas such as refugia, including requirements for assessing the socio-economic impacts of management measures and stakeholder consultation; and provisions for decentralizing refugia management to the community level via development of co-management and rights-based approaches. These national reviews are aimed at informing the drafting of required policy and legislative amendments for adoption by competent authorities. This component will also build the national and site-level science and information base required to inform the monitoring and evaluation of the effectiveness of individual refugia and the regional network of sites.
- 5) 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. Supporting activities involve the development of national knowledge management systems on the use of fisheries refugia in capture fisheries management, and the establishment of a Regional Education and Awareness Centre that will operate as a facility for the production and sharing of information and education materials on fisheries and critical habitat linkages in the South China Sea. Importantly, Component 3 will support the development of indicators to monitor the effectiveness of coastal fisheries management systems established for priority fisheries refugia. A regional program for the compilation of standardized fisheries statistics for use in identifying and managing fisheries refugia will also be developed to support longer-term management.
- 6) At the national-level, 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. Local community action and strengthened

'community to cabinet' linkages will be facilitated via establishment and operation of site-based management boards for fisheries refugia at the 14 priority locations in the South China Sea. Regionally, Component 4 will foster regional cooperation in: the establishment and operation of a regional system of fisheries refugia; and in the integration of scientific knowledge and research outputs with management and policy making. This component also includes project coordination and management activities aimed at: ensuring the timely and cost-effective implementation of regional and national-level activities; and satisfying the reporting requirements of UNEP and the GEF.

- 7) The longer-term goals of this project are to contribute to: improved integration of habitat and biodiversity conservation considerations in the management of fisheries in the South China Sea and Gulf of Thailand; improved national management of the threats to fish stock and critical habitat linkages within fisheries refugia; and enhanced uptake of good practice in integrating fisheries management and biodiversity conservation in the design and implementation of regional and national fisheries management systems. The medium-term objectives align with those of the fisheries component of the Strategic Action Program for the South China Sea which are to: build the resilience of Southeast Asian fisheries to the effects of high and increasing levels of fishing effort; improve the understanding among stakeholders, including fisherfolk, scientists, policy-makers, and fisheries managers, of ecosystem and fishery linkages as a basis for integrated fisheries and ecosystem/habitat management; and build the capacity of fisheries departments/ministries to engage in meaningful dialogue with the environment sector regarding the improvement of fisheries and management of interactions between fisheries and critical marine habitats. Related end of project targets are:
- a. by 2022, to have established a regional system of a minimum of fourteen refugia for the management of priority transboundary, fish stocks and endangered species; and
 - b. by 2022, to have prepared and implemented fisheries management systems in the identified priority refugia based on and consistent with, the ASEAN SEAFDEC Regional Guidelines for Responsible Fisheries in Southeast Asia.
- 8) Given the limited integration of the work of fisheries and environment ministries observed in Southeast Asia and many other parts of the world, the establishment and operation of the regional system of fisheries refugia provides an opportunity to learn from a regional fishery sector led initiative to collaborate with the environment sector on integrating fisheries and coastal habitat management. It is anticipated that the experience gained in the South China Sea region through this project will be suitable for application in other marine areas such as the Yellow Sea where over-fishing and the use of inappropriate fishing gear are significant impediments to more sustainable exploitation of fisheries resources and the use of coastal habitats.

3. Project Results Framework

- 9) The objective of this project is to operate and expand the network of fisheries refugia in the South China Sea and the Gulf of Thailand for the improved management of fisheries and critical marine habitats linkages to achieve the medium and longer-term goals of the fisheries component of the Strategic Action Program for the South China Sea. The project has four components as listed in **Table 2-5** below with associated expected outcomes and outputs.

Table 2: FR Project Results Framework: Component 1.

Component 1:	Outcomes	Targets End of Project
1. Identification and management	1. Reduced stress on fish stocks and coastal habitats via improved national	Effective management of key threats to 14 fisheries refugia sites [269,500 ha],

of fisheries and critical habitat linkages at priority fisheries <i>refugia</i> in the South China Sea and Gulf of Thailand	<i>management of key anthropogenic threats to fisheries and critical habitat linkages in the South China Sea and Gulf of Thailand</i>	<i>including ~50 percent reduction in fishing pressure within sites at times critical to the life-cycles of fished species of transboundary significance</i>
	1.1 Fisheries and critical habitat linkages at 14 priority sites in the South China Sea and Gulf of Thailand safeguarded via the delineation of fisheries <i>refugia</i> boundaries and the setting of priorities for <i>refugia</i> management	Agreement among stakeholders on the boundaries of fisheries <i>refugia</i> , key threats to <i>refugia</i> , and priority management interventions for 14 sites in the South China Sea and Gulf of Thailand
	1.2 Amelioration of key threats to fish stock and critical habitat linkages via the adoption and implementation of community-based <i>refugia</i> management plans at 14 sites	Community-based <i>refugia</i> management plans that are consistent with the FAO and ASEAN-SEAFDEC Guidelines for Responsible Fisheries developed, adopted, and under implementation at 14 fisheries <i>refugia</i> sites
	1.3 Catalysed community action for fisheries <i>refugia</i> management at 14 sites	Networks of management boards and community-based fisheries and habitat management volunteers for <i>refugia</i> management established at 14 fisheries <i>refugia</i> sites
	1.4 Empowered fishing communities, particularly artisanal fishermen and women involved in inshore gleaning and processing, for enforcement of agreed management rules at 14 priority <i>refugia</i> sites in the South China Sea and Gulf of Thailand	Enforcement programmes at 14 fisheries <i>refugia</i> sites, including participatory activities for monitoring, control and surveillance
	1.5 Strengthened civil society and community organisation participation in fisheries <i>refugia</i> management	Operational partnership with the GEF Small Grants Programme to strengthen civil society and community organisation participation in the management of fisheries <i>refugia</i> at 14 sites

10) The component 1 aligns with the GEF theory of change framework via implementing strategies, i.e., application of fisheries refugia to significantly reduce stress on fish stocks and coastal habitats. Specifically, component 1 will result in 269,500 ha of fish refugia habitat will be conserved/effectively managed as well as a 50% reduction in fishing pressure within sites at times critical to the life-cycles of fished species of transboundary significance.

Table 3: FR Project Results Framework: Component 2.

Component 2:	Outcomes	Targets End of Project
2. Improving the management of critical habitats for fish stocks of transboundary significance via national and regional actions to strengthen the enabling environment and knowledgebase for fisheries <i>refugia</i>	2. Increased institutional capacity in the 6 participating countries for the designation and operational management of fisheries <i>refugia</i> via the transformation of enabling environments and the generation of knowledge for planning	National and regional policy, legal and planning frameworks for demarcating boundaries and managing fisheries <i>refugia</i> , resulting in, inter alia, a 20 percent increase in small-scale fishing vessels using fishing gear and practices designed to safeguard fish stock and critical habitat linkages at priority sites
	2.1 Strengthened enabling environments for the effective management of the effects of fishing on fisheries and critical habitat linkages in the South China Sea and Gulf of Thailand	Measures for the fisheries sector's sustainable use of fish habitats and biodiversity, and based on site-level models of ecosystem carrying capacity,

management in the South China Sea and Gulf of Thailand		incorporated in the fisheries policies of participating countries
	2.2 Cross-sectorial agreement on national guidelines for the use of fisheries <i>refugia</i> for integrated fisheries and habitat management	National guidelines on the use of fisheries <i>refugia</i> in integrating fisheries and habitat management developed and endorsed by heads of national government departments responsible for fisheries and environment in the participating countries
	2.3 Endorsed policy, legal, and planning frameworks, both at national and regional levels, for the establishment and management of fisheries <i>refugia</i> , including the reduced use of destructive fishing gear and practices in areas of critical habitats	National policy, legal and planning frameworks for demarcating boundaries and managing <i>refugia</i> assessed and required reforms endorsed in the participating countries and reflected in an updated regional action plan
	2.4 Enhanced access to information relating to status and trends in fish stocks and their habitats in waters of the SCS	Annual synthesis reports of new and additional information and data relating to the stocks of priority fish, crustaceans and molluscs and their habitats published in each country and disseminated at national and regional levels
	2.5 Improved national and regional-level management and sharing of information and data on fish early life history in the waters of the SCS	Establishment and population of 6 online national databases, and 1 regional database, of fish egg and larvae distribution and abundance in national waters and the SCS basin
	2.6 Enhanced access to information relating to the locations and status of coastal habitats and management areas in the SCS and GoT	National and regional online Geographical Information Systems on fisheries and marine biodiversity featuring information on locations and management status of coastal habitats, fisheries <i>refugia</i> , MPAs, and critical habitats for threatened and endangered species
	2.7 Strengthened information base for the planning, monitoring and evaluation of management at priority fisheries <i>refugia</i> sites in the South China Sea and GoT.	Fisheries and habitat data collection programmes operational to characterise 14 priority <i>refugia</i> sites in the South China Sea and Gulf of Thailand
	2.8 Improved basin-wide understanding of linkages between ocean circulation patterns, nutrient/chlorophyll concentrations, and sources and sinks of fish larvae in the South China Sea	Modelling system linking oceanographic, biochemical, and fish early life history information developed applied to improve regional understanding of fish early life history and links to critical habitats
	2.9 Regionally and locally appropriate best practices generated to address the effects of trawl and motorised push net ¹ fishing on seagrass habitat, and the capture of juveniles, pre-recruits and fish in spawning condition	Best practice fishing methods and practices to address key threats to fish stock and critical habitat linkages demonstrated at priority <i>refugia</i>

11) The component 2 aligns with the GEF theory of change framework through strengthening institutional capacity via reform of policy, regulatory and planning frameworks aimed at enabling improved integration of fisheries and environmental management. Additionally, the component will lead to considerable stress reduction. Specifically, the demonstrations of best practice fishing

methods and practices aimed at addressing key threats to fish stock and critical habitat linkages, and the adoption of supporting laws, will result in a 20% increase in vessels applying improved gear/techniques to safeguard fish stock and critical habitat linkages.

Table 4: FR Project Results Framework: Component 3.

Component 3:	Outcomes	Targets End of Project
3. Information Management and Dissemination in support of national and regional-level implementation of the fisheries <i>refugia</i> concept in the South China Sea and Gulf of Thailand	3. Strengthened knowledge management and information sharing and access for enhanced uptake of good practice in integrating fisheries management and biodiversity conservation in the design and implementation of fisheries and environmental management systems, including Marine Spatial Planning	<i>National and regional systems for knowledge management and sharing, including the development of indicator sets and standardized statistics to guide the replication, scaling-up and mainstreaming of good practices in the use of fisheries refugia as a spatial planning tool</i>
	3.1 Enhanced uptake of best practices in integrating fisheries management and biodiversity conservation, in the design and implementation of fisheries management systems	Best practice approaches and measures for integrated fisheries and habitat management captured, documented and communicated nationally and regionally
	3.2 Improved community acceptance of area based approaches to fisheries and coastal environmental management	Public awareness and outreach programme to promote local social, economic and environmental benefits of fisheries <i>refugia</i> implemented at 14 priority locations in the South China Sea and Gulf of Thailand
	3.3 Knowledge generated and experiences from establishing and operating fisheries <i>refugia</i> , captured and shared nationally, regionally, and globally	National knowledge management systems on the use of fisheries <i>refugia</i> in capture fisheries management established and operational
	3.4 Information and Education Campaigns for small-scale fisherfolk on the links between fisheries, habitats and biodiversity coordinated regionally through a Regional Education and Awareness Centre	Regional Education and Awareness Centre on fisheries and critical habitats established and operating as a facility for the production and sharing of information and education materials for <i>refugia</i> management
	3.5 Standardised methods for collection and analysis of information and data, for use in assessing the impacts of <i>refugia</i> and in the design appropriate indicators for the longer-term operation of the regional system of fisheries <i>refugia</i>	Regional agreement on standardised information and data collection procedures in support of longer-term operation of a regional system of fisheries <i>refugia</i> , including design of stress reduction and environmental state indicators for managed <i>refugia</i>

12) The component 3 aligns with the GEF theory of change framework through knowledge and information activities aimed at improving information sharing and access, awareness raising, skills building, and monitoring and evaluation.

Table 5: FR Project Results Framework: Component 4

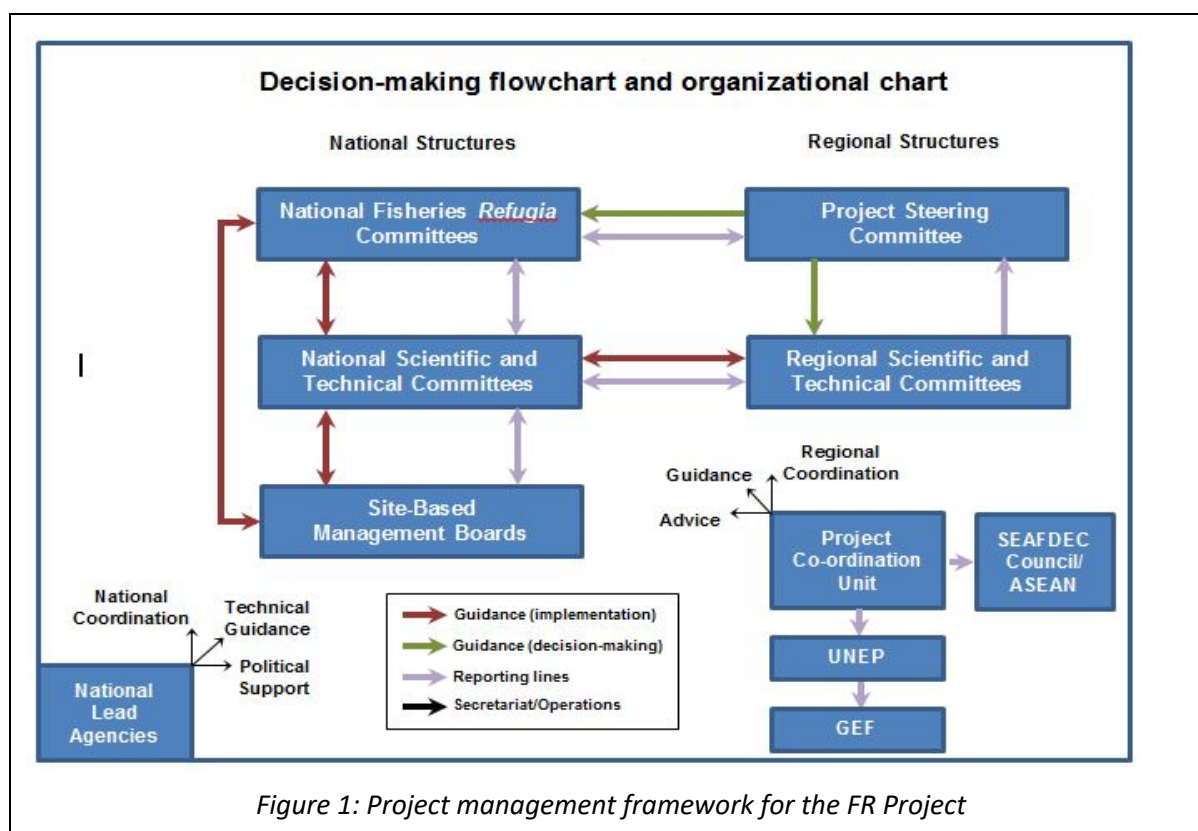
Component 4:	Outcomes	Targets End of Project
4. National and regional cooperation and coordination for	Cost-effective and efficient coordination of national and regional level cooperation for integrated fisheries and environmental management	<i>Effective multi-lateral and intergovernmental communication and joint decision-making, including the use of a consensual knowledge-</i>

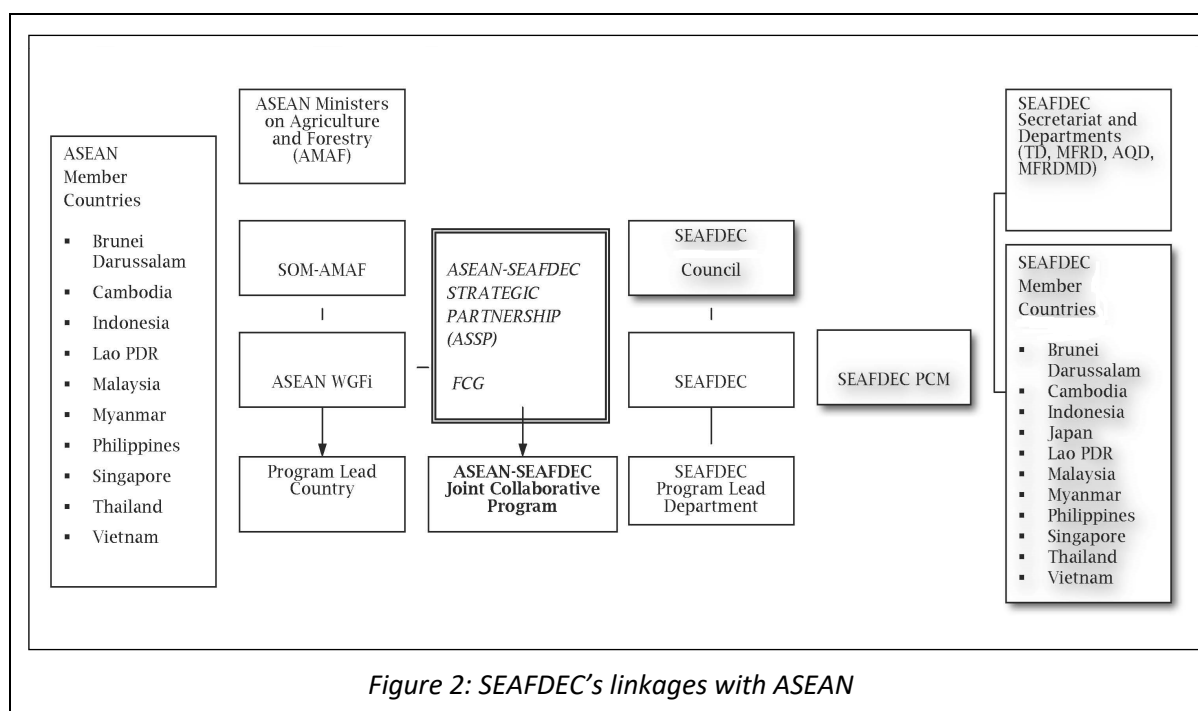
integrated fish stock and critical habitat management in the South China Sea and Gulf of Thailand		<i>base in planning ecologically and cost-effective management actions</i>
	4.1 Strengthened cross-sectorial coordination in the establishment and operation of fisheries <i>refugia</i> in the participating countries	National Fisheries <i>Refugia</i> Committees (NFRC) established in 6 countries, functional and advising national decision-makers and regional <i>fora</i>
	4.2 National scientific and technical expertise and knowledge harnessed to inform policy, legal and institutional reforms for fisheries <i>refugia</i> management in the participating countries	National Technical and Scientific Committees (NTSC) established in 6 countries, functional and advising site-level management boards, the NFRC and the Regional Scientific and Technical Committee
	4.3 Community-led planning of fisheries <i>refugia</i> management at priority locations in the South China Sea and Gulf of Thailand	Local community action catalysed via establishment and operation of site-based management boards for fisheries <i>refugia</i> at 14 locations in the South China Sea and Gulf of Thailand
	4.4 Regional cooperation in the integration of scientific knowledge and research outputs with management and policy making	Regional Scientific and Technical Committee (RSTC) established and functioning as a bridge between the scientific community and decision-makers for operation of a regional system of fisheries <i>refugia</i> [biannual meetings]
	4.5 Regional cooperation in the establishment and operation of a regional system of fisheries <i>refugia</i>	Project Steering Committee established and functioning to oversee and act as a principal decision-making body for the project
4.6 Effective coordination of regional and national-level activities and reporting requirements of UNEP and GEF satisfied	Functioning regional Project Coordinating Unit (PCU) supporting the coordination of regional and national level activities associated with the establishment and operation of regional system of fisheries <i>refugia</i> and meeting reporting requirements of UNEP and the GEF	

4. FR Project Executing Arrangements

- 13) UN Environment is the GEF Implementing Agency for the FR project. The project is executed regionally by the Southeast Asian Fisheries Development Center (SEAFDEC) in partnership with the government agencies responsible for fisheries in the six participating countries, namely Cambodia, Indonesia, Malaysia, Philippines, Thailand, and Viet Nam.
- 14) The Project Coordinating Unit (PCU) locates within the Training Department of SEAFDEC in Samut Prakan Province, Thailand.
- 15) The national lead partners are as follows:
- I. Administration of Fisheries (FiA), CAMBODIA
 - II. Directorate General of Capture Fisheries, Ministry of Marine Affairs and Fisheries (MMAF), REPUBLIC OF INDONESIA
 - III. Department of Fisheries (DOF), MALAYSIA

- IV. National Fisheries Research and Development Institute (NFRDi) in collaboration with Bureau of Fisheries and Aquatic Resources (BFAR), Department of Agriculture (DA), the PHILIPPINES
 - V. Department of Fisheries (DOF), THAILAND
 - VI. Directorate of Fisheries (D-Fish), Ministry of Agriculture and Rural Department (MARD), VIET NAM
- 16) A Project Steering Committee was established and operated to oversee and act as a principal decision-making body for the project. The PSC's role is to provide managerial and governance advice to the project, and to guide the Project Coordination Unit (PCU) of the Southeast Asian Fisheries Development Centre (SEAFDEC) in the implementation and monitoring of the overall regional project.
- 17) At national level, National Fisheries Refugia Committees (NFRCs) was established and operated to strengthen cross-sectorial coordination in the establishment and management of fisheries refugia. The NFRC's will assume overarching responsibility for the execution of national level activities of the project and will, inter alia: receive, review, and approve reports from the management boards of refugia sites; consider advice from the National Scientific and Technical Committees in decision-making.
- 18) A regional Project Co-ordinating Unit (PCU) was established within SEAFDEC and will be led by a Project Director with support from SEAFDEC'S policy, technical and financial units. The PCU will be responsible for: overall leadership, management and technical oversight of the fisheries refugia project; regional project governance, monitoring and reporting; policy/technical advice and advocacy; regional and national coordination, including the establishment of partnerships and networking; and external communications.
- 19) The management framework for this project is depicted in Figure 1. SEAFDEC's linkages with ASEAN through the ASEAN-SEAFDEC Strategic Partnership is depicted in Figure 2.





5. Project Cost and Financing

20) The total cost of the FR project planned at \$15,717,850 with co-financing of \$12,717,850 and cost to the GEF Trust Fund of \$3,000,000. Table 6 provides an overview of sources of co-financing and Table 7 of cost per project component.

Table 6: an overview of sources of co-financing

Sources of Co-financing	Name of Co-financier (source)	Type of Co-financing	Cofinancing Amount (\$)
National Governments	Ministries responsible for fisheries in Cambodia, Indonesia, Malaysia, Philippines, Malaysia, Thailand, and Vietnam	Cash	1,148,644
National Governments	Ministries responsible for fisheries in Cambodia, Indonesia, Malaysia, Philippines, Malaysia, Thailand, and Vietnam	In-kind	5,036,806
Multilateral Agencies	Southeast Asian Fisheries Development Centre	Cash	3,876,400
Multilateral Agencies	Southeast Asian Fisheries Development Centre	In-kind	2,456,000
GEF Agency	UNEP	In-kind	200,000
Total Co-financing			12,717,850

Table 7: Cost per Project Component

Project Component	Indicative Grant Amount (\$)	Indicative Co Financing (\$)
1. Identification and management of fisheries and critical habitat linkages at priority fisheries <i>refugia</i> in the South China Sea and Gulf of Thailand	1,304,900	3,989,523
2. Improving the management of critical habitats for fish stocks of transboundary significance via national and regional actions to strengthen the enabling environment and knowledgebase for fisheries <i>refugia</i> management in the South China Sea and Gulf of Thailand	746,000	5,313,217
3. Information Management and Dissemination in support of national and regional-level implementation of the fisheries <i>refugia</i> concept in the South China Sea and Gulf of Thailand	299,600	1,792,055
4. National and regional cooperation and coordination for integrated fish stock and critical habitat management in the South China Sea and Gulf of Thailand	499,500	1,423,055
Sub-Total	2,850,000	12,517,850
Project Management Cost (PMC)	150,000	200,000
Total	3,000,000	12,717,850

6. Project Implementation Issues

- 21) Changing of the key government officers create problems on delay submission for work progress and financing report.
- 22) Delay of the project implementation due to the government policy changes in two participating countries affected on achieving the Mid-term evaluation and End of Project Targets. All participating countries, therefore, requested two years of project extension without an extra budget. The Mid-term evaluation and the end of project evaluation will be conducted by the end of 2020 and 2022, respectively.

SECTION 2: OBJECTIVE AND SCOPE OF THE MID-TERM REVIEW

7. Objective of the Mid-Term Review

- 23) Objective of the Mid-term Review is to determine the progress, performance, and achievement of objectives and outcomes of the project following five years of implementation from 2016-2020.

8. Scope of the Mid-Term Review

- 24) The scope of the mid-term evaluation will cover all activities undertaken in the framework of the project. The evaluator will compare planned outputs of the project to actual outcomes and assess the actual results to determine their contribution to attaining the project objectives. The evaluation will diagnose problems and suggest any necessary corrections and adjustments. It will evaluate the efficiency of project management, including the delivery of outputs and activities in terms of quality, quantity, timeliness, and cost-efficiency. The evaluation will also determine the project's likely outcomes and impact concerning the project's specified goals and objectives.

SECTION 3: MID-TERM REVIEW APPROACH, METHODS AND DELIVERABLES

9. Approach and Methods

- 25) The Mid-term Review of the FR projects will be in-depth evaluations using a participatory approach whereby key stakeholders are kept informed and consulted throughout the evaluation process. Both quantitative and qualitative evaluation methods will be used as appropriate to determine project achievements against the expected outputs, outcomes and impacts of the projects. It is highly recommended that the consultant maintains close communication with the project teams and promotes information exchange throughout the evaluation implementation phase in order to increase their (and other stakeholder) ownership of the evaluation findings.
- 26) The findings of the evaluation will be based on the following:
- i. Desk review of the project document, outputs, monitoring reports (such as quarterly progress reports, mission reports, and the GEF annual Project Implementation Review reports, minutes of meetings, and relevant correspondences.
 - ii. Review of specific products including datasets, management, and action plans, publications, and other material and reports.
 - iii. Interviews with the Project Director, the Project Task Manager, the Project Participating Countries, the Project Collaborative Partners (if required), and other project staff.
 - iv. Consultations with relevant SEAFDEC/SEC and SEAFDEC/TD staff.
 - v. Consultations and interviews with relevant stakeholders involved, including government representatives, local communities, NGOs, private sector, donors, and other UN agencies and international /regional organizations.
 - vi. Survey, as deemed appropriate of associated agencies of the FR Project
 - vii. Country partner and project sites visits, are not deemed likely due to Covid-19 related travel restrictions, but if appropriated.

10. Deliverables

- 26) Under the overall supervision of the Project Task Manager and the TOR's Committee, SEAFDEC Secretary-General, relevant SEAFDEC/TD Division, and the overall guidance of the Project Director of the SEAFDEC Project Coordinating Unit, the evaluator shall undertake a MTR of the FR project during the period July 15th to October 15th, 2021.
- 27) The evaluation will comprise the following elements.
- 27.1 A summary evaluation of the project and its major components are undertaken to date and determine progress towards achieving its overall objectives.
 - 27.2 Evaluate project performance with the indicators, assumptions, and risks specified in the logical framework matrix and the Project Document. Determine the usefulness of the indicators defined.
 - 27.3 An assessment of the scope, quality, and significance of the project outputs produced to date with expected results.
 - 27.4 Analysis of the extent of cooperation engendered and synergy created by the project in each of its component activities, between national and regional level activities, and the nature and extent of commitment among the countries involved.

- 27.5 An assessment of the functionality of the institutional structure established and the role of the Steering Committee, the Regional Scientific and Technical Committee, and national committees and working groups.
- 27.6 Identification and, to the extent possible, quantification of any additional outputs and outcomes beyond those specified in the Project Document.
- 27.7 An evaluation of the timetable of activities and allocating financial resources to project activities, and determining their consistency with the Project Document. Where activities or outputs have been delayed, the cause of the delay should be identified, and where appropriate remedial actions proposed.
- 27.8 Identification of the programmatic, financial variance, and adjustments made during the first five years (2016-2020) project and assessing their conformity with decisions of the Steering Committee Group and their appropriateness in terms of the overall objectives of the project.
- 27.9 An evaluation of project coordination, management, and administration provided by the Project Coordinating Unit. This evaluation should include specific reference to:
- i. Organizational/institutional arrangements for collaboration among the various agencies and institutions involved in project arrangements and execution;
 - ii. Project management effectiveness in terms of assignment and execution of project activities, and flexibility of management in terms of responsiveness to the need for changes in financial allocations, the timing of activities, or mode of operation;
 - iii. The effectiveness of the monitoring mechanisms currently employed by the Project Coordinating Unit in monitoring on a day to day basis, progress in project execution;
 - iv. Administrative, operational, or technical problems and constraints that influenced the effective implementation of the project and present recommendations for any necessary functional changes; and
 - v. Financial management of the project in relation to those on the achievement of substantive outputs.
- 27.10 A qualified assessment of the extent to which project outputs to date have scientific credibility.
- 27.11 Assessment of the extent to which scientific and technical information and knowledge have influenced the execution of the project activities.
- 27.12 An evaluation of the strategy and approaches adopted by the Project Steering Committee and PCU regarding the raising of co-financing support to ensure financial sustainability.
- 27.13 Specification of any deficiencies in project performance, administration, and management that warrant correction with associated recommendations.
- 27.14 Prognosis of the degree to which the project's overall objectives and expected outcomes are likely to be met (see **Annex 1L** Rating project success).
- 27.15 Lessons learned during project implementation and Recommendations regarding any necessary corrections and adjustments to the overall project work plan and timetable to enhance project objectives and outcomes.

11 Consultant for Conduct of the Mid-term Review

- 28) Consultant shall undertake the evaluation working concurrently and in consultation from July 15th to October 15th, 2021 for three months.

- 29) Selected consultant will conduct the Mid-term Review.
- 30) Consultant shall, at the commencement of the work, agree with SEAFDEC Committee responsible for the conduct of mid-term review, hereafter "TOR's Committee". Members of the Committee shall include the Project Director serve as the Secretary of the TOR's Committee and the Project Task Manager as a member of the TOR's Committee. The procedure for establishment of the TOR's Committee shall follow the SEAFDEC's Guidelines on Procurement of Products and Services including procedure and method of operating to complete all sections of the report. Work plan of the mid-term review will include:
- i. Tentative proposals for the attendance of consultant at parts or all of the meetings convened during the period of the mid-term review.
 - ii. Proposals for any country visits that shall be deemed appropriate.
 - iii. A delivery schedule for a draft report for comment by the SEAFDEC TOR's Committee, the Project Task Manager, Secretary-General or representatives and the Project Director; and
 - iv. a timetable of the periods each Consultant will work from the Project Co-ordinating Unit for Fisheries Refugia Project at SEAFDEC/TD in Samut Prakan Province, Thailand.
- 31) Regarding the last of these requirements, the SEAFDEC/PCU undertakes to provide office space and internet access to the Consultant (s) during the said period.
- 32) Consultant shall create Workplan constitutes the basis of the agreement between the SEAFDEC and the Consultant.
- 33) The consultant shall attend, if practical, the Regional Scientific and Technical Committee Meeting and/or Project Steering Committee Meeting to be convened during the conduct of evaluation.
- 34) Consultant's responsibility to arrange for their visas and immunizations.

12 Reporting Format

- 35) The Mid-Term Review report shall comprise:
- i. A concise summary, prepared by consultant, not exceeding five pages, including findings and recommendations
 - ii. A detailed mid-term review report covers items 27.1 - 27.15 of the Terms of Reference above with attention to lessons learned and recommendations. The detailed report without annexes should not exceed 35 pages.
 - iii. Annexes prepared by the consultant on specific topics deemed appropriate by the consultant. The annexes should correspond to and amplify the contents of the sections of the main report.
- 36) The report together with the annexes, shall be written in English and presented electronically in MS Word format (see **Annex 2: Tools, Templates and Guidance Notes** for use in the Mid-Term Review).

13 Schedule of the Mid-term Review

- 37) The table below presents the tentative schedule for the Mid-term Review.

Table 8. Tentative schedule for the mid-term review

Milestone	Tentative Dates
Mid-term Review Initiation Meeting	Starting from 15 th July 2021
Inception Report	July 2021
Attend the RSTC4 Meeting	22 nd July 2021
Attend the PSC5 Meeting	August-September 2021
E-based interviews, surveys etc.	August-September 2021
PowerPoint/presentation on preliminary findings and recommendations	TBD
Draft reports to SEAFDEC TOR's Committee, Project Task Manager, SEAFDEC Sec-Gen, the Project Director, and other concerned Partners	15 September 2021
Subject to the receipt by the consultant of comments on the draft report from SEAFDEC TOR's Committee, Project Task Manager, SEAFDEC Sec-Gen, the Project Director, and other concerned Partners	30 September 2021
Final Mid-term Review Report	15 October 2021

14 Contractual Arrangements

38) The Mid-term Review consultant will be selected and recruited by the SEAFDEC under an individual Special Service Agreement (SSA) on a “fees only” basis (see below). By signing the service contract with SEAFDEC, the consultant certify that he/she has not been associated with the design and implementation of the FR Project in any way which may jeopardize his or her independence and impartiality towards project achievements and project partner performance. In addition, the consultant will not have any future interests (within six months after completion of the contract) with the projects’ executing or implementing units.

39) Fees will be paid on an instalment basis, paid on acceptance by the SEAFDEC and Project Task Manager of expected key deliverables. The schedule of payment is as follows:

Schedule of Payment for the Mid-term Review Consultant:

Deliverable	Percentage Payment
Approved FR Inception Report (as per annex 2)	20%
Approved FR Draft Main MTR Report (as per annex 2)	40%
Approved FR Final Main MTR Report	40%

40) Fees only contracts: Note that during the COVID-19 pandemic travel remains unlikely and therefore purchase of air tickets and Daily Subsistence Allowance for authorized travel mission are not applied

41) In case the consultant is not able to provide the deliverables in accordance with these guidelines, and in line with the expected quality standards by the SEAFDEC and acceptance by Project Task Manager, payment may be withheld at the discretion of the SEAFDEC until the consultant has improved the deliverables to meet UNEP’s quality standards.

Annex 1: Rating Project Success

- For this rating, the Consultant, may consider the level of implementation of the activity, such as regional and national levels, and the number of countries involved in each component, action, or output.
- The Consultant may also consider the form of the rating used in the International Waters Program Monitoring Questionnaire prepared by the GEF Monitoring and Evaluation Unit.
- The evaluation will rate the project's success on a scale from 1 to 5, with 1 being the highest (most successful) rating and 5 being the lowest. The following items should be considered for rating purposes:
 - Achievement of objectives and planned results
 - Attainment of outputs and activities
 - Cost-effectiveness
 - Impact
 - Sustainability
 - Stakeholders participation
 - Country ownership
 - Implementation approach
 - Financial planning
 - Replicability
 - Monitoring and evaluation
- Each item should be rated separately with comments and then an overall rating is given. The following rating system is to be applied:

1=Excellent	>>>	90%-100% achievement
2=Very Good	>>>	75%-89%
3=Good	>>>	60%-74%)
4=Satisfactory	>>>	50%-59%)
5=Unsatisfactory	>>>	49 % and below

Annex 2: Tools, Templates and Guidance Notes for use in the Mid-Term Review

The tools, templates and guidance notes listed in the table below, and available from the SEAFDEC, are intended to help Consultant to produce evaluation products that are consistent with each other, and which can be compiled into a biennial Evaluation Synthesis Report. The biennial summary is used to provide an overview of progress to UN Environment and the UN Environmental Assembly.

This suite of documents is also intended to make the evaluation process as transparent as possible so that all those involved in the process can participate on an informed basis. It is recognized that the evaluation needs of projects and portfolio vary and adjustments may be necessary so that the purpose of the evaluation process (broadly, accountability and lesson learning), can be met. Such adjustments should be decided between the SEAFDEC Committee and the Consultant in order to produce mid-term review reports that are both useful to project implementers and that produce credible findings.

ADVICE TO CONSULTANTS: As our tools, templates and guidance notes are updated on a continuous basis, kindly download documents from the link in SharePoint will be shared by the SEAFDEC/PCU during the Inception Phase and use those versions throughout the evaluation.

List of tools, templates and guidance notes available:

Document	Name
1	Evaluation Process Guidelines for Consultants
2	Evaluation Consultants Team Roles (Principal Evaluator and Evaluation Specialist)
3	List of documents required in the evaluation process
4	Evaluation Criteria (summary of descriptions, as in these terms of reference)
5	Evaluation Ratings Table (only)
6	Matrix Describing Ratings by Criteria
7	Weighting of Ratings (excel)
8	Project Identification Tables
9	Structure and Contents of the Inception Report
10a	Template for the Assessment of the Quality of Project Design (Word template)
10b	Template for the Assessment of the Quality of Project Design (Excel tool)
11	Guidance on Stakeholder Analysis
12	Gender Note for Evaluation Consultants
13	Use of Theory of Change in Project Evaluations
14	Assessment of the Likelihood of Impact Decision Tree (Excel)
15	Possible Evaluation Questions
16	Structure and Contents of the Main Evaluation Report
17	Cover Page, Prelims and Style Sheet for Main Evaluation Report
18	Financial Tables
19	Template for the Assessment of the Quality of the Evaluation Report