



**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

ADOPTED REPORT OF THE 1st PSC MEETING

I. Opening of the Meeting

1. *Dr. Somboon Siriraksophon*, Project Director from the SEAFDEC/UNEP/GEF Project, officially conveyed the welcome speech as appears in [Annex 1](#) to the meeting at 09.00 AM on December 4th, 2018 on behalf of Dr. Kom Silapajarn, the Secretary-General of SEAFDEC. He welcomed all participants including representatives from member countries namely Cambodia, Indonesia, the Philippines, Malaysia, and Thailand; the Task Manager of the UN Environment, Mrs. Isabelle Vanderbeck; Project Consultant, Mr. Christopher John Paterson and Mr. Michael Baumann; as well as colleagues from Project Coordinating Unit (PCU) to the first meeting of the Project Steering Committee.
2. *Later*, Mrs. Isabelle Vanderbeck delivered the opening remark, She referred the PCU participation to the International Waters Conference held in Marrakesh, Morocco where all the GEF projects met together as an opportunity to interact, while congratulated that PCU could prepared great materials, posters, series of video, and films. She also encourages Indonesia and Viet Nam to sign the Letter of Agreement (LOA) as soon as possible in order to join force with the sister project “the South China Sea” and move forwards in a single team. Her full remarks appears in [Annex 2](#).
3. As this was the first meeting, the participants were invited to introduce themselves on a “tour de table”. Each participant introduced him/herself, giving a brief outline of their expertise, experiences, and the role in this project. The list of participants appears in [Annex 3](#).
4. *Dr. Somboon* requested the Head of Country Delegation to give country statement in regard to their participation in the Fisheries *Refugia* project.
5. *Dr. Ngurah Nyoman Wiadnyana* presented on behalf of the Indonesian Committee his country statement. He remarked that Indonesia had not yet signed the Letter of Agreement (LOA) with SEAFDEC but an implementation workplan has already been officially approved. To facilitate smooth implementation, Indonesia would like to receive assistance in financial management for both the Ministry of Finance (MoF) and the National Planning Development Agency as they share financial management responsibilities for the project. Indonesia prepared its workplan in line with national needs. While Indonesia approved the content in principle, it would like to invite Dr. Somboon to discuss the LOA in detail.

6. *Mr. Ouk Vibol* presented on behalf of the Cambodian Committee his country statement. He remarked that the Fisheries Administration strongly supports the implementation of the Fisheries *Refugia* project and in the meantime at least five articles related to fisheries *refugia* management be included in the law of fisheries, 10-year strategic plan for fisheries conservation and National Plan of Action (NPOA) on combatting IUU. Until now, one of the fisheries *refugia* sites in Kep province has been proclaimed by the Ministry of Agriculture, Forestry and Fisheries. His full remark appears in [Annex 4](#).
7. *Mr. Hadil bin Rajali* presented on behalf of the Malaysian Committee his country statement. He remarked that Malaysia was very glad to be part of this project as part of our commitment towards achieving UN SDG 14 targets. He thanked SEAFDEC and UNEP/GEF for continued supports and assistances provided to Malaysia on fisheries projects including this Fisheries *Refugia* project. Malaysia has already signed the MOU on June 20th, 2017 and received fund transferred amounting to USD 27,230. The country also provided co-financing as per commitment through the government's management and development budget. Malaysia has identified two (2) Fisheries *Refugia* sites; tiger shrimps in Sarawak and spiny lobsters in Tanjung Leman, Johor. In addition, *Mr. Hadil* informed the meeting that the proposed Fisheries *Refugia* project for tiger shrimp will appear on a national TV on December 4th, 2018.
8. *Mr. Valeriano M. Borja* presented on behalf of the Philippines Committee his country statement. He remarked that the Philippines has been currently implementing and providing support for the past two (2) years since the signing of the LOA. The government also planned to replicate the Fisheries *Refugia* approach / concept to coastal municipalities. With regard to the project implementation, the Philippines would be in touch with Dr. Somboon for further technical and financial support.
9. *Ms. Praulai Nootmorn* presented on behalf of the Thailand Committee her country statement. She remarked that she was delighted to work with the SEAFDEC/UNEP/GEF project on Fisheries *Refugia*. Thailand has signed the LOA in 2016 and established the National Fisheries *Refugia* Committee (NFRC) and held two meetings in August and October 2018. The NFRC discussed the implementing site in Trat Province for Indo-Pacific mackerels covering about 5,000 sq.km. Another site is Surat Thani Province for the study on the blue swimming crab covering 4,900 sq.km. Also, Thailand has made a major progress in term of reform for the fisheries sector, especially for example, the revision of the Royal Ordinance on Fisheries in 2015 and its amendment in 2017, new fisheries management plan, and MCS tool (VMS) as well as institutional reform in the Department of Fisheries. *Ms. Praulai* underscored the importance of having Indonesia and Vietnam on board hence the needs for them to expedite signature of their respective LOAs with SEAFDEC.
10. *Dr. Somboon* thanked the participants on the good progress, commitments and awareness building on Fisheries *Refugia* which could be shared among countries. He suggested to have Vietnam and Indonesia signed their LOAs in 2018 in order to start the project in 2019. He also expressed that many countries are facing big challenges on IUU fishing. Fisheries *Refugia* project could be one of the management tools to support against IUU fishing at national level through the agreed fisheries management policy for controlling fishing pressures. The PCU may consider providing the capacity building to country on how Fisheries *Refugia* project can effectively support fisheries management in country.

II. Organization of the Meeting

11. As per the terms of reference (TOR) for the PSC, one of the first activities during full project implementation will be to reconfirm and/or reconstitute the membership of the PSC, agree on meeting procedures, and finalize the TOR for the PSC. To complete the mentioned task,

Dr. Somboon requested all participants to consider the nominees for the election of a Chairperson, a Vice Chairperson, and a Rapporteur for this PSC meeting.

12. *Dr. Somboon* informed the meeting that *Ms. Praulai* from Thailand and *Mr. Vibol* from Cambodia were elected as the Chairperson and the Vice Chairperson in the Inception Workshop in 2016. In this regard, the Philippines nominated *Dr. Ngurah* from Indonesia and *Mr. Hadil* from Malaysia as the Chairperson and the Vice Chairperson of the PSC respectively for year 2018-2019. One concern expressed by the delegate from Indonesia, *Dr. Ngurah*, was that there was uncertainty from Indonesia side due to the unsigned Letter of Agreement (LOA). Otherwise, he was grateful to be nominated and would like to accept the nomination. *Mr. Paterson* clarified that all countries officially endorsed the project document through their respective national GEF focal points. This means that all countries are formally committed to the project implementation. The LOA is a legal document to be signed between SEAFDEC and each country to facilitate money transfer, govern roles and responsibilities in project execution and reporting aspect.
13. *Dr. Somboon*, based on consensus, confirmed *Dr. Ngurah* from Indonesia as Chairperson, *Mr. Hadil* from Malaysia as Vice Chairperson, and *Mr. Borja* as Rapporteur. He invited the newly elected Chair and Vice Chairperson to chair the meeting.

III. Adoption of the meeting agenda

14. The Chairperson, *Dr. Ngurah*, invited the PSC to review the proposed agenda in [Annex 5](#) and provide comments for revision if any.
15. Under agenda item 9.2 (any other business), it was agreed to discuss the linkages between the Fisheries *Refugia* project and the South China Sea SAP Implementation project, and the endorsement of the PSC meeting timeframe on annual basis.
16. The proposed amended agenda was adopted by the PSC.

IV. Consideration of the terms of reference and rules of procedure for the project steering committee

17. *Dr. Somboon* presented the provisional terms of reference listed below and appeared in [Annex 6](#) and the Rules of Procedure for the Project Steering Committee for review and adoption.
 - Provisional Terms of Reference for the Project Co-ordinating Unit
 - Provisional Terms of Reference for the Project Steering Committee
 - Provisional Terms of Reference for the Regional Scientific and Technical Committee
 - Provisional Terms of Reference for the National Fisheries *Refugia* Committee
 - Provisional Terms of Reference for the National Scientific and Technical Committee
 - Provisional Terms of Reference for the Site-Based Management Board
 - Provisional Terms of Reference for the National Lead Agency
18. He proposed to add “or National Focal Point (NFP)” after the word National Fisheries *Refugia* Committee (NFRC) on paragraph 3.1 under 3. Proposed Membership for the PSC. Indeed, in addition to the two (2) nominated delegates from NFRC and NSTC (National Scientific and Technical Committee), given its role, the NFP should also be invited to participate in PSC meeting organized under this Fisheries *Refugia* project. It is therefore agreed to include the NFP into the PSC amended terms of reference.
19. *The Chairperson* invited all participants to review, comment (if any) and adopt TORs. There was no additional request for revision on the proposed TORs. Therefore, the Chairperson adopted all Terms of Reference and amended TOR for PSC.

V. Discussion of the agreed result management frameworks and proposed national workplan and timeline adjustment from 2018 to 2020

20. *Dr. Somboon* presented Agenda 5 a project management framework and a revised timeframe of the workplan (year 2018-2020) as agreed by the Regional Scientific and Technical Committee (RSTC) meeting in September 2018. He informed that the RSTC reviewed and adjusted the overall workplan according to their requirements with the aim to guide member countries for effective implementation. Referring to the M&E requirements, participating countries need to follow UNEP standards and, at the same time, must be consistent with GEF evaluation policy. The project results management framework in [Annex 7](#) was developed and can be used as guidance. To facilitate an immediate implementation, the revised workplan was proposed to the PSC for consideration and adoption.
21. In addition, *Dr. Somboon* explained that SEAFDEC also signed a Project Cooperation Agreement (PCA) with UNEP/GEF in 2016 to support the South China Sea SAP Implementation project as a sister project collaborating in term of required impact delivery, information sharing, and dual implementation of certain activities. Such collaboration has already been reflected in the revised workplan.
22. *The Chairperson* invited all participants to review the project framework and the revised workplan including timeframe, provide comments (if any) and adoption.
23. *Dr. Ngurah* requested for further clarification on different reporting requirements. *Dr. Somboon* clarified that these reports are for different levels. The quarterly report including technical progress and financial expenditure report must be submitted by each country under the terms of their respective LOA. Annual report summarizes and consolidates all progresses made by countries including finance for submission to UNEP/GEF. All reports must be cleared by the national focal point and sent to the PCU by email.
24. *Mr. Paterson* commented that in addition to focusing on the delivery of outputs, the project constituency should not loose track of the impact (outcome) generated by the delivery of those outputs.
25. *The PCU* takes notes of the Pacific project's best practices in reporting and agreed to design simplified reporting template for member countries as to roll up national inputs into regional report.
26. Recognizing (1) the slow project delivery due in part to currency situation and the need to be prudent with project disbursement, (2) the need to expedite the signature of LOA by Viet Nam and Indonesia, (3) the need for synergy with the South China Sea SAP Implementation project, it was agreed that the project extension would be deemed necessary.
27. Agreement in principle to a project extension was approved subject to further qualification of its duration pending initiation of the South China Sea SAP Implementation Project and approval at the next Project Steering Committee Meeting in 2019.
28. After deliberation, *The Chairperson* endorsed the proposed national management frameworks and the timeline including action points.

VI. Report of the chairperson of the regional scientific and technical committee

29. *Mr. Borja* reported the highlights from the 1st Regional Scientific and Technical Committee meeting (RSTC1) as appear in [Annex 8](#). *The Chairperson* invited all participants to review, comment (if any) and adopt the report. The report was adopted with no objection from PSC.

30. *Mr. Vibol* asked whether we can update the progress as currently stated in the RSTC1 meeting report. Given the annual periodicity for the project implementation review (PIR), *Dr. Somboon* clarified that the PCU will prepare another UNEP/GEF report in June 2019 and will capitalize content from the 2nd Regional Scientific and Technical Committee meeting (RSTC2) scheduled in May 2019. The PCU will gather information on country progress and updates around that time for reporting to UNEP/GEF.
31. *The Chairperson* adopted the RSTC1 meeting report.

VII. Discussion and adoption of the regional workplan for 2019

32. Using the GEF endorsed project workplan ([Annex 9](#)) and in consultation with the RSTC, the PCU will propose a detailed 2019 costed workplan for the entire project on the basis of national inputs. The programming of the 2019 regional activities will look closely at GIS mapping, fisheries and marine biodiversity, and modeling system. The PCU will reach out to countries for inputs on data and information sharing protocol and procedure needs.
33. *Ms. Praulai* asked for further clarification on (indicator) 50% reduction target on fishing pressure within Fisheries *Refugia* ([appears in Annex 7, Appendix 1.](#)) to enable her to communicate adequately with her national lead agency and relevant stakeholders. *Mr. Paterson* explained that the 50% reduction target in fishing pressure was within sites at times critical to the life cycles of fish species of transboundary significance. He further explained that such target had to be understood as being a cumulative measure at the project level.
34. Regarding the national web portal development, the PCU with inputs from the RSTC, will create a content template, design and share among member countries for translation into their respective national languages.
35. *The PCU* will work with SEAFDEC in organizing the necessary budget formulation and financial reporting training to meet countries' needs.
36. *Mr. Vibol* requested for technical assistance on fish larvae identification and gonad development stage. *Dr. Somboon* plans to discuss this matter with the country and its partners.
37. *Ms. Praulai* requested the PCU to consider further dialogue including consolidation of existing data on the migration of Indo-Pacific mackerels across countries in the region. *Dr. Somboon* replied that as good regional management practices, we could start from the transboundary areas in Trat and Koh Kong province, and later expand to other areas. He informed the meeting that SEAFDEC Sweden project as partner who will hold a meeting in December 2018 on how we cooperate on genetic study. For the Gulf of Thailand, we need to work with Malaysia and Indonesia. Malaysia and Indonesia did not select Indo-Pacific mackerels. We can raise this issue for adoption and/or support from the RSTC meeting.

VIII. Financial arrangements

8.1 Financial report of expenditures

38. *Dr. Somboon* presented the financial report of expenditures ([Annex 10](#)).
39. In addition, he stressed the needs for annual financial audit as per the terms of the LOA. Each country was requested to hire an external audit company to conduct annual professional financial audits and submit their certified audit reports to the PCU latest by March 2019.
40. The financial report (2016 - September 2018) was endorsed by the PSC.

41. *Ms. Praulai* requested for an advice to utilize the Fisheries *Refugia* project's external budget on this financial audit, in-kind and co-financing contribution. *Dr. Somboon* replied that each country could propose budget required for the external audit cost for consideration by the PCU. For the co-financing contribution, Thailand could update figures for co-financing, both in cash and in kind, and share with the PCU for further consideration and approval. Thailand might want to submit budget related to any activity conducted in relation to Indo-Pacific mackerels for inclusion in the co-financing.

8.2 Budget allocation by the project component 2016-2020

42. *Dr. Somboon* presented Budget allocation by the project component from 2016-2020 as appears in [Annex 11](#).
43. *Mr. Vibol* requested clarification on how to request further cash transfer should there be some remaining unspent balance from the previous quarterly allocation of funds. *Dr. Somboon* clarified that one can continue using unspent resources pending receipt of the next cash transfer in support of planned activities.

8.3 Proposed DSA rate for calculation of in-kind co-financing and results on activities-based co-finance

44. *Dr. Somboon* presented the overall required co-financing from participating countries and SEAFDEC as well as the co-financing calculation methodology including the proposed DSA rate for calculating in-kind co-financing as appears in [Annex 12](#). The PSC agreed to use 80% of the average UN Travelling Allowance (TA) rate that is USD 160.
45. *The PCU* to work with member countries to add activities under co-financing category and put relevant activities number into the 2018 activities-based co-financing table.
46. The co-financing methodology was approved.

IX. Any other businesses

9.1 Results of the 9th GEF International Waters Conference (IWC9)

47. *Dr. Somboon* presented the summary results of the 9th GEF International Waters Conference (IWC9) Details of his presentation can be found in working paper 6.1. ([Annex 13](#))
48. *The PCU* to send illustrator file (*.ai) of the Fisheries *Refugia* Poster used at the IWC9 to each country for translation into local language and further production for national use to promote the concept of fisheries *refugia*.

9.2 linkages between the Fisheries Refugia project and the South China Sea SAP

Implementation project

49. Mr. Christopher Patterson briefed on the linkages between the Fisheries Refugia project and the South China Sea SAP Implementation project.

X. Date and place of the next meeting of the project steering committee

50. *The meeting* agreed to hold the next PSC meeting in Malaysia (proposed to be in Miri or later suggested by Malaysia) and alternative option in the Philippines. Regarding this, the PCU will further communicate with Malaysia on the final decision on the date and venue before informed to all committee.

XI. Technical Site Visit

