



**The 2nd 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**
5th – 6th November 2019
Pullman Miri Waterfront Hotel, MIRI, SARAWAK, MALAYSIA

**REPORT OF THE CHAIRPERSON OF THE
2ND MEETING OF THE REGIONAL SCIENTIFIC AND TECHNICAL COMMITTEE**

I. Executive Summary

The 2nd Meeting of the Regional Scientific and Technical Committee was organized with the support from Fisheries Administration (FiA) of Cambodia at Thansur Sokha Hotel, Kampot Province, Cambodia on 21 – 23 May 2019. Mr. Valerianno M. Borja, a National Scientific and Technical Focal Point from the Philippines was nominated and served as a chairperson of the meeting. The adopted meeting agenda consisted of several issues e.g. the progress works at national and regional programs, project evaluation of the National Activity from 2017 to May 2019 in response to the questionnaires from SEAFDEC/PCU, data and information need to support the project implementation including biological study and management of transboundary species for short mackerel and frigate tunas, best practices fishing gears and methods, GIS mapping and existing ocean modelling, and baseline survey data. The meeting also progressed and shared the lesson learned on information and education program that covered the issues on regional project websites and template for national web portal, the good lesson learned from Malaysia on establishment of the Fisheries Refugia Learning Center, development of the regional fisheries refugia database and awareness building program.

The recommendations from the meeting for consideration at the PSC2 are summarized as follows:

1. Taking into accounts the progress of country's implementation, the meeting noted that the number of proposed fisheries refugia sites for Indonesia and Viet Nam although the project budget was prepared for 3 refugia sites in both countries, however Indonesia confirmed to implement two refugia sites in their country. In this connection, a total of fisheries refugia sites in all six country partners is 15 refugia sites including 3 sites in each for Cambodia, Philippines and Viet Nam, and 2 sites in each for Indonesia, Malaysia, and Thailand.
2. Cambodia informed the meeting on hiring a consultant for development of extension media to support the public awareness using the budget of Q3 and Q4/2019.
3. On the larval fish identification study made by Chulalongkorn University under technical support from the PCU to FiA/Cambodia, the results show the correlation between short mackerel and phytoplankton in Koh Kong Province. In this connection, the PCU was requested to continue support the work study made by Cambodia.
4. On the management of transboundary species particular the short mackerel, the recommendations for future works are as follows:
 - Stock Assessment study in Cambodia, Malaysia and Viet Nam;
 - Monitor the change of tidal Sea Surface Temperature which is affected to migratory pattern of short mackerel;
 - Monitor larvae transportation in relation to the current movement;

- Ocean simulation: chlorophyll A concentration, temperature, salinity, and etc.;
 - Biological and physical study;
 - Conduct the Stock assessment using the existing framework established under the ASEAN Mechanism: Scientific Working Group for Stock Assessment for Neritic tuna and small pelagic fishes;
 - Establishment of database for short mackerel in sub-region or region;
 - Regional cooperation for development of action/management plan;
 - Study of distribution and abundance of zooplankton, diatoms, copepod, etc. In addition;
5. The recommendations for future works on frigate tunas are summarized as follows:
- Conduct the regional assessment of frigate tuna to understanding the migratory route;
 - Seeking the Small Grant Program (SGP) Fund and other sources to support the activities;
 - Identify data needs;
 - Biological study and genetic study.

6. On the best practices fishing gears and methods were addressed by the PCU in collaboration with SEAFDEC/TD with aims to solve problems and challenges on inshore fishing pressures caused by 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 in coral reef areas. The meeting was informed by the PCU on the proposed actions based on the FAO technical guidelines for responsible fisheries volume 4 Suppl.2. In addition, the best practices of fishing gears and methods developed by SEAFDEC are demonstrated. In this connection, the PCU will further communicate with country for demonstration in the refugia sites. This work will address again for consideration and support by the PCS2.

7. On the development of the Ocean modeling system to support information and data for establishment of fisheries refugia by country, the PCU requested a researcher from Thailand-China Joint Laboratory for Climate and Marine Ecosystem, Representative from Department of Marine and Coastal Resources (DMCR) Thailand to introduce the Ocean Forecasting System under the IOC/Westpac framework which provides outputs in five parameters; i.e., wind, wave height, sea level, current and temperature, the last two of which are in 21 layers. Regarding this, one of the regional program of fisheries refugia project is to hire a consultant to develop the Ocean modeling system for the project. However, most of the data and information are public domain provided by the IOC/Westpac, and the modeling system has been developed and updated. The PCU, therefore consulted with RSTC2 to cooperate with the DMCR rather than spend the fund for duplicated work. The meeting supported the proposed from PCU. And This matter will be addressed again for approval by the PSC2.

8. On the Baseline Survey Data which aims to emphasize the importance of baseline study and baseline data to support, monitor, and evaluate the project implementation at national levels. The PCU pointed out that baseline study and baseline data should be designed in alignment with the identified key deliverable and benchmarks for the project as shown in the Appendix 4 of the Project Document. In connection to this, the PCU also pointed out that three issues are needed linked such as data inputs for the website, existing baseline survey data conducted by countries, and the database system within the data menu of the website. The PCU therefore proposes to further discuss this matter at the next RSTC3. In addition, before the RSTC3, the PCU will circulate the questionnaires on data requirements for consideration and inputs.

9. With regard to the Project Website and National Web-portal the meeting agreed that the national webpage for fisheries refugia will be developed by countries themselves. However, each country is requested to link their countries' web portals under the regional website.

10. The meeting discussed types of awareness building and promotional materials of fisheries refugia project such as: extension media for promotion of fisheries refugia; establishment of the

education/information center at sites, public either for private or public institutions including aquarium/museum; documentary filming for target species; series of Cartoon Books for promotion fisheries refugia; stickers for social communication/media; Posters: Radio news and billboard. The meeting also agreed that country could come up with their own way to develop media or promotional materials for promotion and build the awareness to specific stakeholders to understand the Refugia concept. However, the PCU requests country to share those materials or media for consideration where appropriate could be shared to other countries.

11. Before end of the meeting, Viet Nam is requested to host the next RSTC3 as agreed at the 1st RSTC, the PCU will further discuss with D-Fish as a National Lead Agency for finalize the venue and will inform the RSTC at lease 2 months before the meeting.

II. **REQUIRED ACTION BY THE PSC**

- The committee is welcomed to provide comments on the issues discussed at the RSTC2 and advise to PCU on specific issues to be included in the RSTC.
 - The Committee is also requested to adopt the report of the RSTC2;
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