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Regional Inception Workshop for the
SEAFDEC/UNEP/GEF Project:
*“Establishment and Operation of a Regional System of Fisheries Refugia
in the South China Sea and Gulf of Thailand”*

Bangkok, Thailand, 1st – 3rd November 2016

**Developing a Communications and Knowledge Management Strategy for the
Fisheries *Refugia* Project**

1 DEVELOPING A PROJECT COMMUNICATIONS AND KNOWLEDGE MANAGEMENT STRATEGY

1.1 Introduction

Experience from efforts in integrated natural resource management in the South China Sea indicates that efforts in integration are initially vulnerable fledglings when introduced at national and provincial units of government, and as such, at the mercy of the bureaucratic pecking order. In order for efforts to survive and grow, national and local level leaders of such processes need to be able to effectively communicate the benefits of such integrated approaches across a broad range of government agencies, local institutions, and resource users in order to convince stakeholders that it is in their best interest to voluntarily coordinate across areas such as: (1) policy development and planning; (2) investment in efforts to reduce stress on fisheries resources and habitats; and (3) strengthening community engagement in management.

All components of the project involve activities centred on public awareness and the communication and exchange of data and information both within and beyond the network partners. A wide range of public awareness materials (posters, brochures, video shorts and other materials) have already been produced in the seven national languages and copies are lodged on the South China Sea project website from which they can be downloaded and reproduced or edited and altered as required. It is intended in one component at least to build a network of local journalists interested in environmental issues and stories and to provide them with scientifically sound materials that can be adapted to various forms of mass communication. Central to the communication strategy will be the continued operation of the project website as a valuable resource and repository of data, information and tools relating to environmental management and sustainable use of coastal resources. This website will allow network partners to up-load scientific data and information directly to the regional databases and up-load information from ongoing activities at the national level to dedicated pages.

A majority of the outputs of the SCS project were used as inputs to the development of Strategic Action Programme (SAP) goals, targets, and activities and will be important references for individuals and organisations involved in SAP implementation and in gauging the efficacy of SAP interventions. From the perspective of regional co-ordination and execution of SAP activities, the project website will act as a platform for ensuring ease of access to and downloading of SCS project outputs. The large number and wide range of outputs generated through the operation of large multi-lateral, intergovernmental projects creates a need for the maintenance of repositories that provide for the efficient online storage, searching, and download of outputs. Increasingly, ensuring ease of accessibility to outputs is becoming an expectation of donors, and certainly the experience of the SCS project suggests that it may assist in increasing the accountability, transparency, and legitimacy of project work. The repositories of projects documents, training materials, multi-media outputs, and public communication materials developed as part of the SCS project will be built on by the present project. The present project will also revitalise the SCS partnership with Google Earth to facilitate effective global outreach. Table 1 summarises the objectives, features, required inputs, and technical needs for the project website identified during project preparation to best ensure the use of online technologies in support of project implementation and communications.

Additionally, the project communications strategy to be elaborated during project Year 1 will reflect the project's alignment with the achievement of the SAP targets, Aichi targets and Sustainable Development Goals. This document will give strategic direction to communications activities of the project in areas relating to: (1) the development and conduct of a baseline assessment and audit of communications needs and priorities; (2) the development of appropriate communications and knowledge management platforms for the project website and operation of an online Community of Practice; (3) the project's branding and style brief; (4) media relations, including the establishment of public relations protocols and development of partnerships with regional and national media outlets; (5) representation of the project at key global, regional and national political and scientific events; (6) the use of social media in syndicating project news and information and creating awareness of SAP implementation and priority issues; (7) costed plans for the development of multi-media communications products and knowledge exchange tools; and the (8) capacity development of national stakeholders on effective use of the media in support of the achievement of project and SAP targets. The strategy will also contain a comprehensive project FAQs section and listing, including contacts, of all priority media outlets.

1.2 Public Awareness

Public awareness and the effective use of the media are critical elements of efforts to raise awareness, to stimulate support for necessary policy and legal reforms, and for outreach with development partners and donors. It has also been identified as being essential in ensuring that best practices generated through projects and national policy development processes are captured, shared and effectively communicated to guide the longer-term sustainability of investments. The latter is particularly relevant to national level activities of the fisheries *refugia* project in the South China Sea which aims to bridge the divide between fisheries and environment sectors. Given the global and regional experience of limited cross-sectorial coordination and collaboration between these sectors, the fisheries *refugia* project will rely significantly on targeted messaging and coordination with national and municipal media outlets to raise awareness about project activities aimed at: establishing and managing fisheries *refugia* sites for improved management of fish stock and critical habitat linkages; strengthening enabling environments via necessary policy, legal and institutional reforms; and improving the environmental performance of the fisheries sector.

Activities of Component 1 will address this need via the production of awareness and training materials in support of project efforts to increase the capacity of target community members, particularly artisanal fishermen and women, to participate in *refugia* management. Activities of component 2 include the publication and dissemination of national guidelines on the establishment and management of fisheries *refugia* in support of efforts to strengthen the policy enabling environment for the designation and management of *refugia* sites in national waters. Component 2 will also develop national and regional online Geographical Information Systems on fisheries and marine biodiversity to assist with raising stakeholder awareness of the locations and management status of coastal habitats, fisheries *refugia*, MPAs, and critical habitats for threatened and endangered species. Additionally, public awareness and outreach programme to promote local social, economic and environmental benefits of fisheries *refugia* will be implemented at the 14 priority *refugia*. To add value to these awareness activities, a Regional Education and Awareness Centre on fisheries and critical habitats will be established and operating through Component 3 as a facility for the production and sharing of information and education materials for *refugia* management.

1.3 Communications Activities

Specific communications activities will include the national level communication of best practice approaches and measures aimed at enhancing national uptake of best practices in integrating fisheries management and biodiversity conservation in the design and implementation of fisheries management systems. Component 1 will produce fisheries *refugia* profile reports, including GIS maps and detailed site characterisations, for the 14 priority sites which will be used to inform consultative processes to delineate *refugia* boundaries and to secure their formal designation for management. Activities of component 2 involve the publication of national reviews and recommendations for reforms of national, provincial and municipal regulations/ordinances for responsible fishing practices at priority *refugia* for use in facilitating consultations with fisheries industry and competent authorities on policy reforms for responsible fishing gear and practices in the participating countries.

Similarly, Component 2 will prepare national reports on policy, legal and institutional aspects of *refugia* establishment and management for use as a communication tool in consultations with relevant national authorities on required legal, policy and planning reforms. Component 2 will also produce communication products relating to the status of fish stocks and habitats in the South China Sea to inform monitoring and evaluation of the effectiveness of individual *refugia* and the regional system of sites. To assist with ensuring ease of access and syndication of communication products, Component 3 will facilitate the establishment and update of six national and one regional interlinked web portals on fisheries *refugia*. Opportunities for public-private partnerships with national media providers and outlets will be explored to support targeted television and radio broadcasting of nationally and regionally generated media products. Liaison with national and provincial media outlets will also be undertaken to ensure broad syndication of media products to increase the scope and reach of communications.

2 KNOWLEDGE MANAGEMENT TO GUIDE REPLICATION, SCALING-UP AND MAINSTREAMING

2.1 Replication and Scaling-up

The concepts of “replication” and “scaling-up” are being increasingly promoted as important elements of environment and natural resource development projects. Interpretation of the meaning of these concepts is often blurred however, by inconsistent application of their use in mostly “supply driven” guidelines and planning documents of donors and development organisations. Similarly, adequate consideration of what the terms mean with respect to initiatives aimed at fostering integrated approaches to fisheries and environmental management, have the potential to lead to confusion amongst national and local beneficiaries about expectations.

The definitions of “replicate” contained in the Cambridge and Oxford dictionaries are “to make or do something again in exactly the same way” and “to copy something exactly”, respectively. Interpretation of these definitions in the context of this project may include for example the application of a copy of a successful fisheries management model, approach, strategy, technology, or communications tool within a particular refugia site or at another location. Accordingly, replication is defined in the context of national activities of the fisheries refugia project as “The activity of copying the specific features of a fisheries and/or habitat management approach that made it successful in one setting and re-applying these as part of the process of establishing and operating fisheries refugia in the same or another setting”. Examples may include, inter alia, using the structure and Terms of Reference for a local refugia management board at one site and applying it to another, or using a fishing practice or gear type that was successful in reducing the capture of juvenile fish at one refugia site and applying at another site.

Regarding scaling-up, definitions of “scale” contained in the Cambridge and Oxford dictionaries are “the size or level of something” and “the size or extent of something, especially when compared with something else”, respectively. Interpretation of these definitions in the context of this project, may include for example increasing the institutional scale of fisheries refugia by applying an activity involving a small subset of community at the whole community level, or increasing the geographical scale of activities by applying a best practice in integrated fish stock and habitat management generated at one refugia site to all known refugia in a municipality, province or region. Accordingly, scaling-up is defined for the purpose of this project as “The activity of increasing the impacts of successful approaches to integrated fisheries and habitat management via their application at broader geographic and institutional scales as part of the process of establishing and operating a network of fisheries refugia in the South China Sea”.

The above definitions of replication and scaling-up lend themselves to ease of application in the establishment and operation of a network of fisheries refugia in the participating countries. The high levels of dependence on fish for food and income, coupled with the threats to fish stocks and their habitats, creates a high need for the generation of best practices that can be replicated and scaled-up. Communicated effectively, it is anticipated that success stories can create a demand driven approach whereby communities actively seek opportunities to apply proven technologies and management models in their communities. The high profile of fisheries overexploitation and nutritional security issues in many coastal communities, coupled with the limited policy and legal frameworks for the integration of fisheries and coastal habitat management, creates significant opportunities for the successful uptake of best practices and lessons learned.

Specific areas of learning and best practices identified for replication and scaling-up as part of fisheries refugia activities in participating countries include: stakeholder engagement; cross-sectorial coordination; evidence-based planning; application of management models and strategies; use of responsible fishing gears and practices; communications and awareness; and political commitment. Lessons learned and best practices in these areas will be tracked on an annual basis and used to prepare a replication and scaling-up plan. Matrices for the planning of replication and scaling-up strategies were prepared as part of project preparation and are included in Table 2 of this document.

2.2 Mainstreaming

The definitions of “mainstream” contained in the Cambridge and Oxford dictionaries are “considered normal, and having or using ideas, beliefs, etc which are accepted by most people” and “the ideas and opinions that are thought to be normal because they are shared by most people; the people whose ideas and opinions are most accepted”, respectively. Interpretation of these definitions in the context of this project, may include for example the fisheries refugia concept being considered “normal” or “mainstream” by individuals, agencies, and organisations responsible for the planning and financing fisheries and coastal habitat management. Accordingly, mainstreaming is defined in the context of the fisheries refugia project as “A service function of the process of establishing and operating fisheries refugia which involves making the refugia concept central to the work of fisheries and environment agencies and fishing communities in efforts to integrate fish stock and habitat management”. National level mainstreaming efforts will be supported through targeted communications, awareness raising, and networking via the operation of national and local level coordinating bodies for fisheries refugia. The extent of national level mainstreaming generated will be benchmarked and tracked according to: (1) the extent of harmonisation of sectorial policies and legislation relating to fisheries habitat management; and (2) the streamlining of government agency expenditure on fisheries and habitat management at priority sites. This information will be used to guide the longer-term replication and scaling-up of fisheries refugia initiatives at the national level.

Table 1 Objectives, features, required inputs, and technical needs for the fisheries *refugia* project website identified during project preparation with respect to the appropriate use of online technologies in support of project implementation and communications

Requirements	Website Objectives	Features to Maintain and Develop	Required Inputs (Content)	Technical Needs (Regional)
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Ease of access to and downloading of outputs from project formulation and implementation (e.g. documents and publications; data; lessons learned; training; multi-media/awareness materials). Online database of contact details for individuals and organisations involved in project implementation. Online network of information resources (e.g. donor, implementing/executing orgs, partner orgs., environment agreement websites). Information web pages on project implementation (e.g. funding, background, co-ordination, committees, interventions). Results-based management portal (training and results dashboarding) Online calendar of project events (regional/national). Repositories for project outputs. Project databases accessible and updateable online (GIS, meta-data, projects, economic values databases). Web pages for regional, national, and site level project news and mechanisms for syndication of project news. Tools for dissemination of project information and outputs (outreach). User-friendly tools for the on-site sharing of information. Tools and mechanisms for resource mobilisation/financing (e.g. PayPal donations). 	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> Ensure that all regional level and key national level outputs of project formulation and implementation continue to be accessible online, and be easily searched and downloaded; Maintain and continuously update the database of contact details for all individuals and organisations involved in project implementation; Maintain and expand the online network of institutional websites relevant to project implementation; Establish and regularly update information pages about project implementation, related projects, and interventions; Use online technologies to build capacity on a results-based approach to project implementation Provide timely information to project partners about upcoming project events and meetings; Create and regularly update repositories of outputs from project implementation activities; Extend and ensure syndication of regional, national, and site level news to project partners; Increase the online sharing of information between/among project network members; Enhance the online visibility of project activities and outputs (inc. links to IW:LEARN); and to Attract donations and contributions of information/data. 	<p>Information/Data</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Project information pages Document Repository Meta-Database Google Earth SCS GIS Online database of managed areas Online database of fish egg and larvae info SCS circulation model Multi-Media Section Online Results-Based Mgmt. Training Course Dashboard Feature for Presentation of Results Repository of Training & Awareness Materials Lessons learned <p>Project News</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Newsflash section Project "Blog" Project E-Newsletter Project RSS Feeds <p>Online Communication</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Partner network contacts database Fish refugia social media platforms Online "helpdesk" <p>Outreach</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Search engine friendly URLs SCS Google Earth layer <p>Online Donations</p>	<p>Regional Co-ordination</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Optimisation/uploading of documentation and other project outputs Regional news and screening of national news contributions Periodic update (monthly) of partner contacts database and e-mailing lists Update of project events calendar Publish and e-mail e-newsletter (monthly) Periodic (monthly) update of regional information repositories (documents, multi-media, training, awareness) Stimulation of e-fora discussions <p>National Execution</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Establish and maintain links from websites of national orgs to project website Contributions of project news, information, outputs direct to website <p>Individual Focal Points</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Upload of new data (GIS, meta-data, projects, early life-history data, and results reporting) directly to website Upload of national outputs (publications etc) to site 	<p>Web-Hosting and Domain Name Registration</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Commercial high capacity web-hosting in secure data centre with technical support. PHP5, CGI, SSI capabilities. Approx. 30 GB disk space. Min. 200GB data transfer/month. <p>Maintenance of the Website - Content Management System</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Upgrades of the Joomla content management system and supporting software modules as required (~15 upgrades/yr). <p>Data Management and Security</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Full daily back-up on server (automated). Back-up downloaded weekly and stored on hard disk and DVD (DVD checked with MD5 hash to ensure no data loss). Back-up deployed/maintained on test server (monthly) to ensure no data corruption. <p>Development of User-Friendly Information Management Tools</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Design and development of databases etc. as required. Increase focus on results reporting and geospatial presentation of the impacts of SAP implementation <p>Support/Capacity Building</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Update user manuals and conduct training as required. Assist web users online.

Table 2 Matrix for the Planning of Replication and Scaling-up Strategies

Lesson/Best Practice	Audience(s)	Scale	Applicability of Lesson	Replication/Scaling-up Tool(s)	Timeframes	Cost
<i>Stakeholder Engagement</i>						
<i>Cross-sectoral Coordination</i>						
<i>Evidence-based Planning</i>						
<i>Application of management models and strategies</i>						
<i>Use of responsible fishing gears and practices</i>						
<i>Communications and awareness raising</i>						
<i>Political Commitment</i>						