



**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 Gulf of Thailand**

11<sup>th</sup> – 13<sup>th</sup> September 2018  
Trat Province (Fisheries Refugia Site), Thailand

**PROVISIONAL PROSPECTUS**

**I. INTRODUCTION**

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

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

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

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

Component 3 focuses on strengthening information management and dissemination aimed at enhancing the national uptake of best practices in integrating fisheries management and biodiversity conservation, and in improving community acceptance of area-based approaches to fisheries and coastal environmental management; and

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

To kick-off implementation of the Project, the Inception Workshop was conducted in Bangkok, Thailand, on 1<sup>st</sup> – 3<sup>rd</sup> November 2016 with the aims to introduce the overall project goals, objectives, overview of the Project Management Framework including monitoring and evaluation, sharing of regional and national

initiatives related to fisheries *refugia* project, Letter of Agreement (LOA), work plan and finance matters, and other business. The project implementation at country level is based on the status of LOA submission to the Project Coordinating Unit (PCU) at SEAFDEC/ Training Department, and presently there are 4 countries namely Cambodia, Malaysia, Philippines and Thailand have signed the LOA and starting the project implementation in 2017.

To facilitate the achievement of the goals and objectives of the SEAFDEC/ UN Environment/GEF project entitled “Establishment and Operation of a Regional System of Fisheries Refugia in the South China Sea and Gulf of Thailand”, a Regional Scientific and Technical Committee (RSTC) was established with responsibility for: overseeing the scientific and technical elements of the project; ensuring effective implementation of activities undertaken during project execution; and providing sound scientific and technical advice to the Project Steering Committee. In this connection, the 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 Gulf of Thailand will be held in Trat Provinces, Thailand from 11 to 13 September 2018.

## II. OBJECTIVES OF THE RSTC MEETING

- To inform on TOR for the Regional Scientific and Technical Committee;
- To progress the report on the national activities from 2017 till June 2018 by NSTC;
- To discuss on the proposed national activities from 2018 Q-3 to Q4 and 2019 Q1-Q4;
- To share the experience on the implementation of fisheries refugia for sustainable fisheries;
- To discuss on the baseline survey template to support national and regional analysis;
- To discuss on Gender Mainstreaming to the project implementation;
- To inform on the project budgeting and reporting;
- Other matters

## III. TENTATIVE AGENDA

Day	Provisional Agenda
Day 0 (10/09/18)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- <b>Morning:</b> Arrival of all participants to Thailand</li> <li>- <b>Afternoon:</b> Moving from Bangkok/ Suvarnabhumi International Airport to Trat Province</li> <li>- <b>Evening:</b> Check-in the Hotel</li> </ul>
Day 1 (11/09/18)	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Opening of the Meeting</li> <li>2. Organization of the Meeting</li> <li>3. Adoption of the Meeting</li> <li>4. Terms of Reference for Establishment of the Insitutions</li> <li>5. Report of the Project Director on Activities During Nov. 2016 – Jun. 2018</li> <li>6. Presentations by the National Scientific and Technical Committee on the Work of Project Activities at the National Level During Jan. 2017 – Jun. 2018</li> </ol>
Day 2 (12/09/18)	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>7. Discussion and Adoption of the National Work Plan and Selected Fisheries Refugia Sites From 2017-2020</li> <li>8. Data and Information Needs to Support Activities               <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>8.1. Baseline Survey Data</li> <li>8.2. Gender Mainstreaming to the Project Implementation</li> </ol> </li> </ol>

	<p>8.3. Networking and Regional Cooperation</p> <p>8.4. Sharing Experiences on Implementation of Fisheries Refugia For Sustainable Fisheries Management in Thailand (Dof/Thailand)</p> <p>9. Other Business</p>
Day 3 (13/09/18)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- <b>Morning Session:</b> Field Trip to the Fisheries Refugia Sites and Vicinity of Trat Landing Site</li> <li>- <b>Afternoon Session:</b></li> </ul> <p>10. Date and Place of the Next Meeting of the Regional Scientific &amp; Technical Committee</p> <p>11. Adoption of the Report of the Meeting</p> <p>12. Closure of the Meeting</p>
Day 4 (14/09/18)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Morning session: Moving back to Bangkok/ Suvarnabhumi International Airport (by airplane and SEAFDEC Bus)</li> <li>- Afternoon session: Departure to Home Country by airplane</li> </ul>