

ADOPTED
TERMS OF REFERENCE FOR THE REGIONAL SCIENTIFIC AND TECHNICAL COMMITTEE

1. RATIONALE AND PURPOSE OF A REGIONAL SCIENTIFIC AND TECHNICAL COMMITTEE

1.1 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) will be 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.

1.2 The RSTC will also be responsible for ensuring that scientific and technical aspects of the fisheries *refugia* project meet International standards. Specifically, it will review the substantive activities of the project to: (1) identify and manage fisheries and critical habitat linkages at priority fisheries *refugia* in the South China Sea and Gulf of Thailand; (2) improve the management of critical habitats for fish stocks of transboundary significance via national and regional actions to strengthen the enabling environment and knowledge-base for fisheries *refugia* management; (3) enhance information management and dissemination in support of national and regional-level implementation of the fisheries *refugia* concept; and (4) strengthen national and regional cooperation and coordination in the operation of a regional system of fisheries *refugia*.

2. ROLE AND FUNCTION

2.1 As the over-riding scientific and technical body for the project, the RSTC shall provide sound scientific and technical advice to the Project Steering Committee regarding matters requiring decision and shall provide direction and strategic guidance to the national level activities of the fisheries *refugia* initiative as required.

3. THE REGIONAL SCIENTIFIC AND TECHNICAL COMMITTEE SHALL:

3.1 Regional Activities

3.1.1 Review and co-ordinate regional scientific and technical activities of the fisheries *refugia* project;

3.1.2 Review and evaluate, from a scientific and technical perspective, progress in implementation of the fisheries *refugia* project, and provide guidance for improvement when necessary;

3.1.3 Provide the Project Steering Committee with recommendations on proposed regional activities, work plans, and budgets;

3.1.4 Provide the Project Steering Committee with technical guidance and suggestions to improve project activities where necessary, including reforms of national and regional policy and planning frameworks for integrated approaches to fisheries and environmental management;

3.1.5 Facilitate co-operation with relevant international, regional, and national organisations and projects to enhance the effectiveness and efficiency of the fisheries *refugia* initiative;

3.1.6 Monitor the progress of the project’s regional activities and ensure the quality of outputs.

3.2 National Activities

3.2.1 Review and evaluate, from a scientific and technical perspective, progress in implementation of the national activities of the fisheries *refugia* project, and provide guidance for improvement when necessary;

3.2.2 Receive, and review reports, data and information from national level activities of the project and oversee the regional syntheses of this information to identify overall needs and priorities for strengthening scientific and technical support to the operation of a regional system of *refugia*;

3.2.3 Receive, review, and comment on drafts of national policies and/or action frameworks; and

3.2.4 Advise the regional Project Coordinating Unit and National Focal Points of the need for public awareness and information materials concerning integrated approaches to fisheries resource and environmental management in the South China Sea and Gulf of Thailand.

4. PROPOSED MEMBERSHIP FOR THE REGIONAL SCIENTIFIC AND TECHNICAL COMMITTEE

4.1 The Regional Scientific and Technical Committee shall consist of: the Chairpersons of the National Technical and Scientific Committees (NTSC); a representative of SEAFDEC; up to 5 selected regional experts; and the Project Director of SEAFDEC's PCU.

4.2 SEAFDEC's PCU, in consultation with National Focal Points, shall nominate no more than 5 regional experts to ensure a balance of expertise and specialisation consistent with the mandate of the Committee. The membership of the RSTC shall be formally established at the first meeting, of the committee.

4.3 At the commencement of each meeting the committee shall elect a Chairperson and a Vice-Chair from amongst the members. The Vice-Chair shall act as Chairperson of meetings in the absence of the Chairperson. The Chairperson and Vice-Chair shall participate in the annual meetings of the Regional Project Steering Committee at which they shall present the reports and recommendations of the RSTC.

5. SECRETARIAT

5.1 The regional Project Co-ordinating Unit shall act as Secretariat to the RSTC and shall ensure that reports of the meetings are circulated to all members of the regional Project Steering Committee.

6. MEETINGS OF THE REGIONAL SCIENTIFIC AND TECHNICAL COMMITTEE

6.1 The regional Project Coordinating Unit in consultation with the Chairperson shall convene meetings of the RSTC according to an agreed schedule, which will form part of the agreed work plan and timetable for the work of the Committee.

6.2 The first meeting of the RSTC will be convened during project inception to: agree on the detailed activities, work plan and timetable for the twenty-four months leading to the project's mid-term evaluation: and to provide guidance to the project's emerging scientific and technical needs.

7. CONDUCT OF REGIONAL SCIENTIFIC AND TECHNICAL COMMITTEE BUSINESS

7.1 The Committee shall operate and take decisions on the basis of consensus, regarding any matter relating to project execution that has regional significance. Where full consensus cannot be achieved in reaching agreement during a meeting of the Committee, the Chair, Vice Chair and Project Director shall decide on the least contentious course of action to be adopted.

8. PARTICIPATION OF OBSERVERS IN REGIONAL SCIENTIFIC AND TECHNICAL COMMITTEE MEETINGS

8.1 The RSTC may invite observers to participate in its meetings;

8.2 Upon the invitation of the Chairperson, observers may participate in the discussion of issues within their competence or scope of activities, without the right to participate in decision-making; and

8.3 Observers may, upon invitation of the Chairperson, submit written statements that shall be circulated by the Project Coordinating Unit to the members of the RSTC.