



**The 2<sup>nd</sup> 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**

5<sup>th</sup> – 6<sup>th</sup> November 2019

PULLMAN HOTELS AND RESORTS, MIRI, SARAWAK, MALAYSIA

**Report of the Meeting**  
(Adoption as of 6 Nov. 2019)

## INTRODUCTION

1 The 2<sup>nd</sup> 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 was organized by the Project Coordinating Unit (PCU) in collaboration with the Department of Fisheries of Malaysia in Pullman Hotels and Resorts, Miri City, Sarawak, Malaysia from 5-6 November 2019. The Meeting was attended by all Project National Focal Point and all National Scientific and Technical Focal Point from 5 participating countries: Cambodia, Indonesia, Malaysia, Philippines, and Thailand, including Ms. Isabelle Vanderbeck: the project task manager from UNEP via skype; Ms. Malinee Smithrithee: the SEAFDEC Secretary-General, observers, meeting secretariat from Department of Fisheries Malaysia, the Project Director and staff of the Project Coordinating Unit (PCU).

### 1. OPENING OF THE MEETING

#### 1.1 KEYNOTE ADDRESS BY THE CURRENT PSC CHAIRPERSON (2018-2019)

2 Dr. Ngurah Nyoman Wiadnyana, provided a keynote address as Chairperson of Project Steering Committee for 2018-2019. He welcomed all participants to the meeting and expressed appreciation for supporting and collaborating with him as Chair of the PSC. He stressed that the meeting aimed to provide update on the project progress including addressing project issues and concerns, and hoped that the project would deliver good results to all participating countries. He pointed out the need to select new set of officers for the PSC2 meeting.

#### 1.2 KEYNOTE ADDRESS BY SEAFDEC/SECRETARY-GENERAL

3 Ms. Malinee Smithrithee, the Secretary-General of SEAFDEC provided a keynote address as the project executing organization. She expressed appreciation to be invited to the PSC2 meeting. She noted the importance of coastal ecosystems in Southeast Asia, which are very productive and serves as breeding ground for fisheries resources. She noted that these resources declined over the years due to over fishing, destructive and illegal fishing practices, and environmental degradation. She pointed out the importance of SEAFDEC in the region, and partnership with UNEP to implement the fisheries *refugia* project. Ms. Malinee expressed appreciation to Malaysia for hosting the meeting, and wished the meeting a fruitful discussion. Ms. Malinee statement appears as [Annex 1](#).

#### 1.3 KEYNOTE ADDRESS BY UNEP/TASK MANAGER

4 Ms. Isabelle Vanderbeck, the Project Task Manager of the United Nations Environment Programme delivered her keynote statement. She apologized for her absence in the PSC2 meeting, mainly due to the new UN administrative system which affected the processing of travels. She expressed her appreciation to the documentation put forward by the PCU. She shared the results of the project implementation review which provided a nice summary of the project and noted the increase in the number of fisheries *refugia* from 14 to 15 sites. Ms. Vanderbeck pointed out the upcoming midterm review and would like to discuss the arrangements with the PCU. She expressed her appreciation to Dr. Somboon Siriraksophon who had been championing and showcasing the fisheries *refugia* project in international conferences and noted that countries in other regions are adopting the approach. She thanked all the participants for coming to the meeting, and Malaysia for hosting the meeting.

#### 1.4 OPENING ADDRESS ON BEHALF OF THE GOVERNMENT OF MALAYSIA

5 Dato' Dr. Bah Piyan Tan, Deputy Director General of Fisheries Department of Malaysia and concurrently the National Focal Point of the Fisheries *Refugia* Project delivered the welcome and opening remarks appears as [Annex 2](#). He welcomed all the participants to Malaysia and thanked the PCU for choosing Miri as meeting venue. He stated the Miri is the second largest city of Sarawak, also known as oil city. He hoped that the participants will have the opportunity to see the *refugia* site during technical visit as well as experience the cultural diversity and hospitality of Malaysia. He stated that the tiger shrimp and spiny lobster are the two target species for Malaysia *refugia* sites and recognized the importance of fisheries *refugia* in sustainable fisheries resources, which is aligned with SDG 14. He expressed appreciation to UNEP/GEF and SEAFDEC for the support in setting up of center and awareness program. Dato Dr. Bah Piyan Tan pointed out that Malaysia has provided significant co-finance from the government budget, and looked forward to further expanding the fisheries *refugia* sites as it is essential to fisheries management. He thanked the Department of Fisheries in Sarawak for hosting the meeting, and hoped that the meeting objectives and goals will be achieved.

#### 1.5 INTRODUCTION OF MEMBERS

6 Dr. Ngurah, the current chairperson noted that there were a number of new members from member countries. He invited the participants to introduce themselves on a “tour de table” to the meeting. The list of participants is attached as [Annex 3](#) to this report.

## 2. ORGANISATION OF THE MEETING

### 2.1 DESIGNATION OF OFFICES

7 Dr. Somboon Siriraksophon, the Project Director, as Secretariat of the meeting, informed the meeting of the Rules of Procedure that allow for the election of a Chairperson, Vice-Chairperson, and Rapporteur to serve until the convening of the subsequent regular meeting of the Project Steering Committee. In this regard, the PSC shall elect a Chairperson and a Vice-Chairperson from amongst its members with responsibility for chairing each formal meeting of the Committee and for acting as Chairperson and Vice-Chairperson of any meetings convened during the subsequent inter-sessional period, in accordance with paragraph 3.3 of the TOR for PSC.

8 Dr. Somboon informed the meeting that Dr. Ngurah from Indonesia and Mr. Hadil from Malaysia were elected as Chairperson and Vice Chairperson, respectively with Mr. Borja as Rapporteur for the year 2018-2019. The current chairperson, Dr. Ngurah opened the nomination process, all committee is requested to nominate a new Chairperson, Vice Chairperson and Rapporteur for 2019-2020. In this regard, the Philippines nominated Malaysia as Chairperson being the host country with Thailand nominating the Philippines as Vice-Chairperson, and Indonesia nominating Thailand as rapporteur of the PSC for the year 2019-2020.

9 After election process, Dr. Ngurah, based on the consensus, confirmed Dato Dr. Bah Piyon Tan from Malaysia as new Chairperson, Mr. Valeriano Borja from Philippines as Vice Chairperson, and Ms. Praulai from Thailand as Rapporteur. He invited the newly elected Chair and Vice Chairperson to chair the meeting.

## 2.2 ORGANIZATION OF THE WORK

10 The new Chairperson, Dato Dr. Bah Piyon Tan invited Dr. Somboon, the Project Director to brief the participants on the administrative arrangements for the conduct of the meeting and the proposed organization of work. He informed that the meeting would be conducted in English and in plenary.

11 Dr. Somboon also introduced the documentation available to the meeting by referring to **Annex 4**. He informed the meeting that all of the working documents including information and working papers, and reference papers had been uploaded in advance of the meeting on the website (<https://fisheries-refugia.org/2nd-pscm/2nd-pscm-doc> ).

## 3. ADOPTION OF THE MEETING AGENDA

12 The Chairperson, Dato Dr. Bah Piyon Tan invited the Project Director to introduce the Provisional Agenda prepared by the Project Coordinating Unit (PCU) for the meeting, and invited members to propose any amendments or additional items for consideration by the committee.

13 Dr. Somboon presented the meeting agenda and noted the tight agenda and schedule of the meeting, with a long list of concerns to be discussed. Having no proposals or amendments, the meeting adopted the agenda, as contained in **Annex 5**.

## 4. OPENING STATEMENTS ON BEHALF OF THE PARTICIPATING COUNTRIES

14 The Chairperson invited representative from each country participating in the project to give brief opening statements regarding their participation in the project.

15 Mr. Ouk Vibol, national focal point from Cambodia thanked Malaysia for the hospitality and hosting of the meeting. He reported that Cambodia plan to establish three fisheries *refugia* sites, and noted the government's approval of two *refugia* sites in Kep province for anchovy and blue swimming crab, and in Koh Kong province for Indo-pacific mackerel, but for the fishery *refugia* site in Kampot for grouper is still under the process due to the challenge with coastal development in the area. He stressed the government strong support to fisheries *refugia*, and noted several proclamations and articles related to fisheries *refugia* management included in the fisheries law. He mentioned that fisheries *refugia* is also included in the 10-year strategic plan for fishery conservation and management, which is one of the approaches in combating IUU. At provincial level, the project worked with governor on the establishment fisheries *refugia* board and management of fishery committees. He noted the commitment of the national and provincial governments to continue even after project completion. He again expressed appreciation to the Government of Malaysia for hosting the meeting and thanked UNEP and GEF for their support to Cambodia.

16 Dr. Joni Haryadi as the national focal point from Indonesia shared the accomplishments of the project after the signing of the Letter of Agreement. He mentioned the several meetings conducted to prepare project implementation such as registration of project under the agency for Marine and Fisheries Research and Human Resource, Ministry of Marine Affairs and Fisheries, preparation of standard operational plan, including coordination and collaboration meeting with different officials and ministries. He mentioned further the inception meeting that was organized to run the project in two sites covering two species, and expert meeting to gather valuable information and possibility to survey for the Bangka Belitung site and West Kalimantan site.

17 Ms. Prulai Nootmorn, national focal point from Thailand thanked the project on behalf of the Department of Fisheries for Thailand. She mentioned the progress made in the selected two sites in Trat for Indo-Pacific mackerel and in Bandon Bay for blue swimming crab. She noted the consultation meeting on Indo-Pacific mackerel will be held in Trat in December. She noted that the blue swimming crab will gather data for the fishery improvement program will include the data on fishing area and distribution, and mapping of protected area site for blue swimming crab. She mentioned the available opportunity from FAO to use the fisheries *refugia* approach for juvenile species.

18 Mr. Joeren S. Yleana, national focal point from Philippines thanked the PCU for continually providing support to the Philippines. He mentioned the three fisheries *refugia* sites are located in Bolinao, Pangasinan for rabbit fish, Masinloc, Zambales for frigate tuna, and Coron, Palawan for fusilier. He stated that the Philippines through the BFAR and NFRDI continually provided co-finance of roughly 10 million pesos from 2017-2019 for the project for fisheries profiling of the 3 sites for the 3 species. He hoped that the 3 sites will be institutionalized in the form of local executive issuances, and that management plans will be formulated based on the fisheries profiles and results from stakeholder consultations. He announced that initial management plans have already been drafted.

19 Mr. Hadil bin Rajali, national scientific and technical focal point from Malaysia reported the progress of the project. He mentioned that by the middle of next year, they would come up with the exact fisheries *refugia* sites, subject to further consultation with stakeholders. He indicated the need to extend the project until 2021 to allow completion of project activities like passing of law to designating the area as fisheries *refugia* sites for tiger shrimps and spiny lobsters.

20 Dr. Somboon informed the meeting on the status of the project in Viet Nam. He stated that Vietnam just signed the Letter of Intents (LOI) in May 2019, and that budget for 3<sup>rd</sup> quarter of 2019 has been transferred for project arrangements and implementation. However, he noted the need to get permission from the Government to approve the project and activity before implementation. He noted that Viet Nam plans to start the project in the 4th quarter of 2019.

## 5. REPORT OF THE CHAIRPERSON OF THE REGIONAL SCIENTIFIC AND TECHNICAL COMMITTEE

21 Mr. Valerianno M. Borja, Chairperson of the RSTC2, reported the results and highlights of the RSTC2 meeting organized in collaboration with the Fisheries Administration (FiA) in Kampot, Cambodia from 21-23 May 2019 as appear in [Annex 6](#).

22 After deliberation, the committee took note and adopted the RSTC2 meeting report

## 6. DISCUSSION ON NATIONAL AND REGIONAL PROGRAM

### 6.1 PROGRESS ON INDICATORS FOR MANAGEMENT OF FISHERIES *REFUGIA*

24 Dr. Somboon presented the progress report on Indicators for management of fisheries *refugia*, resulting from the Regional Meeting organized by the SEAFDEC/PCU on 9-11 September 2019 in Bangkok, Thailand, as appears in [Annex 7](#). He highlighted the needs to design stress reduction and environmental state indicators for management of fisheries *refugia*. He stressed that the list of indicators for *refugia* management including standardized information and data collection procedures in support of longer-term operation of a regional system of fisheries *refugia* had been agreed in principle among the six participating countries, for further development in the Regional Guidebook which is expected to be completed for finalization by the next PSC in 2020.

25 The Chairperson, Dato Dr. Bah Piyon Tan invited the committee to review and comment on the list of indicators and standardized procedures and contents, including the ways forward for further

development of the Regional Guidebook, and encouraged the committee to adopt the report of the Regional Meeting.

26 Participating countries expressed appreciation on the development of the draft guidebook. Some concerns were raised by participating countries such as the need to work and report on the indicators; the inclusion of other areas and mechanisms such as the South China Sea and ASEAN; Inclusion and refinement of figures in terms of percentages; and possibility of having set of indicators specific to countries.

27 Dr. Somboon clarified that the regional guidebook was developed to guide countries how to continue management fisheries *refugia* once project ends. The countries can select and follow as many of the indicators, but no need to report. Dr. Somboon noted that the project intent to bring the guidebook for consideration, support and endorsement under the ASEAN-SEAFDEC mechanism. Dr. Somboon stressed that the countries will be further consulted during the RSTC3 in February 2020 for finalization.

28 Ms. Vanderbeck noted that if the guidebook will be endorsed by ASEAN, it will be a major achievement of the project, especially if elevated into a wider region not only to participating countries but to other SEAFDEC member countries.

29 After deliberation, the committee agreed on the indicators and procedures on *refugia* management including the further development of the Regional Guidebook. The committee also adopted the Regional Meeting report.

## 6.2 REGIONAL PLAN OF ACTION FOR SUSTAINABLE MANAGEMENT OF TRANSBOUNDARY SPECIES: *Rastrelliger brachysoma*, INDO-PACIFIC MACKEREL

30 Dr. Somboon presented the Report of the Regional Consultative Meeting (RCM) on Regional Action Plan (RAP) for Management of Transboundary Species, *Rastrelliger brachysoma* in the Gulf of Thailand Sub-region as appears in [Annex 8](#), and the draft Regional Action Plan for management of *R. brachysoma* as appears in [Annex 9](#), for consideration and adoption by the committee.

31 Participating countries supported the development of the regional action plan. Countries however expressed their concerns such as inclusion of other concerned countries in the action plan; application to other small pelagic species; data collection; the roles and responsibilities of institutions, among others.

32 Dr. Somboon clarified that other country could use and implement using the regional action plan, and noted that the regional action plan will be brought under the ASEAN-SEAFDEC mechanism, and noted that need to prepare the way forward for the finalization of the action plan.

33 After deliberation, the committee adopted the report of the regional consultation meeting and the Regional Action Plan for *R. brachysoma*, subject to consideration of the comments from participating countries.

## 6.3 OCEAN MODELLING

34 Dr. Somboon introduced the output of the regional program on development of the Ocean Modelling in the SCS and GoT regions to provide physical oceanographic conditions in relation to ocean circulation that support the establishment of fisheries refugia in participating countries as appears in [Annex 10](#). He informed the committee that IOC-WESTPAC has developed and updated the ocean modelling and provided such services to public users for almost a decade now.

35 In this connection and to avoid duplicating similar efforts, Dr. Somboon informed the committee on the cancellation of the project's development of Ocean Modelling activity, and instead focus on strengthening cooperation and partnership with IOC-WESTPAC. He requested the committee to reallocate the budget for Ocean Modelling to other regional activities.

36 Discussions focused on the possibility of using the budget and resources to complete the guidebook indicators; the circulation model of the species; and the development of regional action plan for other species, among others. Dr. Somboon noted and considered the suggested possible uses of the resources. He informed the meeting that countries will be invited in the next RSTC3, and will invite experts to discuss this.

37 After deliberation, the committee adopted the request from SEAFDEC/PCU for reallocation of Ocean Modelling budget to other regional activities which will be identified later.

#### 6.4 WORKPLAN FOR REGIONAL WORKS ON BEST PRACTICES OF FISHING GEARS AND METHODS

38 Dr. Somboon presented the workplan for the promotion and demonstration of the best practice fishing gears and methods to reduce the impacts and challenges on inshore fishing pressures caused by the use of destructive fishing gear and practices. He pointed out that this issue has been raised by the PCU at the RSTC2 in Kampot, Cambodia where the RSTC for Cambodia requested the PCU to study the impacts of elongated collapsible Trap fishery in Kep on fisheries resources and habitats that link to the fisheries *refugia* site. Dr. Somboon stated that the results from the study would support and benefit the local government in the management of fisheries and habitat resources. He invited the committee to provide comments and endorse the tentative workplan.

39 After deliberation, the committee endorsed and adopted the revised workplan as appears in [Annex 11](#).

#### 6.5 KNOWLEDGE ATTITUDE AND PRACTICES

40 Dr. Somboon briefed on the introduction and objectives of the concept on Knowledge Attitude and Practices (KAP) as appears in [Annex 12](#). He pointed out the suggestions of participating countries of the need to promote for better understanding of the general public of the achievements of the *refugia* project at regional and national levels through development of media presentations or short films which is aligned with KAP concept.

41 Participating countries informed the meeting of the various means to promote the project such as development of documentation films; organizing special events and lecture series, national and local consultations, among others. Dr. Somboon, noting the many activities implemented at country level, suggested to compile all documentations for showcasing in international forum.

42 Ms. Vanderbeck stressed the importance of documenting the KAP of communities on fisheries *refugia* approach, at the beginning, half way through execution and at the end of the project implementation, as to document through videos and other forms of communications change in attitude and practice as a result of project execution. She noted that documenting change of attitude and working relationship between the environment and fisheries ministries would be key too. She informed the meeting that the fisheries *refugia* approach in this region has already influenced fisheries practices in Africa and America, thanks to the leadership of project and SEAFDEC.

43 The committee took note and considered the application of KAP concept to show the results/achievements of the project in the form of presentation/film. The committee requested the participating countries to document and share all KAP information and materials to PCU for showcasing during international conferences.

#### 6.6 OTHER MATTER

44 Mr. Ouk Vibol inquired and requested the PCU on the possibility of having an activity for information and lessons learned sharing of best practices for transboundary management among the country or project partners using the national activity budget. Dr. Somboon noted and would look into the request of country on this matter.



## 7. FINANCIAL AND BUDGETARY MATTERS

### 7.1 EXPENDITURE REPORT AS OF 30 SEPTEMBER 2019

45 Dr. Somboon informed the committee on the total cumulative expenditures as of 30 September 2019 which was USD 997,620.67 as appears in [Annex 13](#). He also informed that the cumulative unspent balance was about two third of a total GEF Fund.

46 The Committee took note on the expenditures as of 30 September 2019 and the overspent amount in budget line 5300 on sundry. After discussion, the committee endorsed the expenditure report.

### 7.2 CONSIDERATION OF THE CO-FINANCING AS OF 30 JUNE 2019

47 Dr. Somboon presented the Co-finance from participating countries and SEAFDEC as of 30 June 2019 as appears in the [Annex 14](#). He reported that SEAFDEC has provided about 1.5 million USD co-finance, while all four participating countries namely Cambodia, Malaysia, Philippines and Thailand provided 2.2 million USD co-finance. He noted that Indonesia and Viet Nam joined the project implementation in the 3<sup>rd</sup> Quarter of 2019.

48 Malaysia inquired if there is a ruling in terms of co-finance ratio among GEF and participating countries including SEAFDEC. Dr. Somboon clarified that there is a rule on co-finance ratio of 1:4 that is being followed by the project.

49 After clarification, the committee endorsed the co-finance report as of 30 June 2019.

### 7.3 COSTED IMPLEMENTATION PLAN FOR 2020

50 Dr. Somboon presented the estimation of costed implementation plan for 2020 that was provided by participating countries and the PCU as appears in [Annex 15](#). He pointed out and referred to the proposed budget for 2020 where the estimated total expenditures by 2020 will be about 55-60% of the total GEF Fund, taking into account the project end by 2020.

51 Participating countries indicated on the need to revise/amend their estimated costed implementation plan for 2020 to include additional activities such as research and data gathering. Dr. Somboon clarified that project funds is not enough to support such activities, and instead suggested using the country co-finance contribution.

52 After discussion, the committee noted and endorsed in principle the estimation costed implementation plan for 2020, taking into consideration the estimation cost for Indonesia and Vietnam

### 7.4 CONSIDERATION OF THE PROPOSED PROJECT EXTENSION WITH NO COST

53 Dr. Somboon informed the meeting on proposed project extension with no additional cost from donor. He noted the 14 months remaining before the project ends on 31 December 2020, and the reasons and issues for the no-cost extension such as late project implementation in Indonesia and Vietnam which started only in the 3<sup>rd</sup> and 4<sup>th</sup> quarter of 2019, and the estimated expenditures by end of 2020 is about 55-60% of a total GEF Fund. Dr. Somboon stated that the overall budget remaining as of 30 Sept is about two third of the total budget approved.

54 Dato Dr. Bah Piyan Tan invited the committee to provide their opinion and comments on the proposed project extension with no cost. Participating countries expressed the need to extend the project for 1-2 years, considering the various delays experienced by most of the countries such as local elections, changes of leaderships, completion of ongoing activities, and late project start up in some countries, among others.

55 Ms. Vanderbeck stressed that the proposed project extension has to be cleared and validated by the Project Steering Committee, clearly stating the use of available resources and the extension period, otherwise the proposed extension has no value for UNEP. She further suggested to perhaps over extend to ensure adequate synchrony between the national activities under extension and the regional components and to allow the project to complete all its tasks including reporting and capturing of best practices and project learning.

56 After discussion, the Committee agreed in principle for a project extension for 1-2 years subject to recalculation of project budget, and requested the PCU to recalculate the budget especially for the regional component and PCU, for circulation to participating countries.

#### 7.5 PROPOSED BUDGET REVISION

57 Dr. Somboon informed the Committee on the urgent need for budget revisions due to the overspent amounts under Budget Lines 4100 (Expendable Equipment), BL 4300 (Premise), BL 5100 (Operation and Maintenance), and BL 5400 (Sundry) as appears in [Annex 16](#). He noted that the Fund Manager of UNEP/GEF in Nairobi suggested to revise to budget to cover all overspent amounts plus anticipated additional expenses. He stressed that before additional funds could be released, the overspent should be cleared first. Dr. Somboon requested the committee to take note and endorse the first revision of project budget.

Malaysia requested the committee to consider the second budget revision. Dr. Somboon noted the request and suggested to merge their second budget revision to the overall extension budget revision.

58 After discussion, the Committee endorsed the 1<sup>st</sup> budget revision for consideration and approval by UNEP, taking into account the proposed project extension.

#### 7.6 CONSIDERATION OF THE FINANCIAL AUDIT REPORT FOR 2016-2018

59 Dr. Somboon requested Mr. Reynaldo Molina of the Project Coordinating Unit to present the status of financial audit report submission for 2016-2018. Mr. Molina noted that participating countries submitted audit reports of their financial statements for 2017-2018 while SEAFDEC submitted the audit report of consolidated financial statements for 2016-2018 that combines all countries including the Project Coordinating Unit as appears in [Annex 17](#). He informed the meeting that most of the participating countries including SEAFDEC combined and submitted their audit reports beyond due date, i.e. by 31 March. Mr. Molina requested all participating countries and SEAFDEC to take note of the audit report submission date as per Letter of Agreement, and advised them to take the necessary action to avoid delays in the submission of financial audit reports in the future.

60 The committee took note of the audit report status and requested participating countries to take the necessary action to submit audit reports on time.

#### 7.7 REQUEST FOR THE FINANCIAL AUDIT OF 2019

61 Dr. Somboon informed the meeting and reminded all participating countries for the submission of annual audited financial report for the year 2019 to the PCU by 31 March 2020, which will be consolidated into one audited financial report, and submitted to UNEP before 30 June 2020.

62 He noted that some of the submitted audited financial reports did not include the required template of financial statements. Dr. Somboon informed the participating countries to include the templates in the 2019 audit report as appears in [Annex 18](#).

63 The committee noted the need for the financial statement templates and encouraged participating countries to use and include the templates in the 2019 audit reports.



## 7.8 NON-EXPENDABLE EQUIPMENT

64 Dr. Somboon informed the meeting on list and expenditures for non-expandable equipment since the project started in 2016 to date as of 30 September 2019 as appears in [Annex 19](#). He requested the committee to consider and endorse the list of non-expendable equipment including the 2020 proposed budget by countries and PCU.

65 Ms. Vanderbeck clarified that the list and inventory has to be prepared and submitted by end of year annually. She stated that since the end of year is near, countries have to do their inventory and submit to PCU before the year ends.

66 The committee noted and endorsed the list and expenditures of non-expendable equipment including 2020 proposed budget, subject to the inputs from countries and PCU, and encouraged participating countries to submit their inventory listing before the year ends.

## 8. ANY OTHER BUSINESS

### 8.1 GCF PROJECT ON IMPROVING HEALTHY OCEAN ECOSYSTEMS THROUGH BEST PRACTICES IN TRAWL FISHERIES

67 Dr. Somboon on behalf of SEAFDEC and UNEP presented the draft concept proposal entitled “Improving Healthy Ocean Ecosystems through Best Practices in Trawl Fisheries” appears as [Annex 20](#) for consideration and comments by the committee. He pointed out the draft concept proposal was developed under the Small Scale Funding Agreement (SSFA) between the UN Environment Programme and the Southeast Asian Fisheries Development Center (SEAFDEC), in consultation with all relevant countries, to address the problem of fish trawling in the South China Sea, for submission to the either Green Climate Fund (GCF) or Global Environment Facility (GEF) for funding. He invited the committee to give comments and directions in the further development of the concept proposal.

68 Ms. Vanderbeck clarified that the concept proposal aims to address fishery trawling as well as climate issues in the region. She stressed that for the project to proceed, participating countries have to agree and provide their comments on the draft concept proposal, which would then be revised and placed in the GCF format. She stated that each country through their National Designated Authority would have to endorse and make formal request to UNEP, who could intervene on behalf of the participating countries. She further stated that GCF now looks into regional intervention and could consider the South China Sea and Gulf of Thailand as possible areas, with some advantage due to the presence of the Strategic Action Programme.

69 Most of the participating countries including SEAFDEC supported the concept and provided their comments to PCU. However, Indonesia informed that current regulation on prohibition of trawl fisheries is still enforced, and suggested to include new references about the impact of trawl fisheries in the project concept. SEAFDEC saw the proposal manageable and useful to member countries, subject to adjustments of components/activities. They stressed the need to have more involvement and discussion in the formulation of the concept especially if it will follow and fall under the ASEAN-SEAFDEC mechanism. The Philippines supported the concept particularly the first three components as it will support the country’s program on sustainable demersal fisheries. Thailand suggested to conduct gap analysis.

70 After discussion, the committee agreed to support the concept subject to further improvement/adjustment taking into consideration the comments of countries and SEAFDEC.

### 8.2 RESULTS OF THE 21ST LMEs FOR SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT IN SUPPORT OF THE AGENDA 2030

71 Dr. Somboon introduced the results of the LME21 meeting for sustainable development in support of the Agenda 2013, which aimed to build the LME partnership and arrangement where partners agree to cooperate and collaborate to advance their mutual interests by sharing ownership, as well as the responsibility for managing LME, and engage in defining and solving respective problems, and exploring sustainable development opportunities. He stressed that the South China Sea is one of the 66 Large Marine Ecosystems (LMEs) identified around the world, and is also one of seventeen LMEs participating in GEF/LMEs Projects.

72 The meeting noted the LME21 results as appears in [Annex 21](#) including the progress in the implementation of the Strategic Action Program for the South China Sea LMEs and its contribution to the SDG-14 target as presented by Dr. Somboon.

### 8.3 RESULTS OF THE TWENTY-FOURTH INTERGOVERNMENTAL MEETING OF THE COORDINATING BODY ON THE SEAS OF EAST ASIA (COBSEA)

73 Dr. Somboon presented on behalf of UNEP on the results of the 24<sup>th</sup> Intergovernmental Meeting of the Coordinating Body on the Seas of East Asia (COBSEA) as appears in [Annex 22](#). He introduced COBSEA and presented the link and involvement of COBSEA with the Fisheries *Refugia* and South China Sea projects.

74 The meeting noted the results of the 24IGM particularly the revision and adoption of the revised COBSEA Regional Action Plan on Marine Litter (RAP MALI) including discussion on activities carried out in the context of the action plan, and the establishment of a COBSEA Regional Activity Centre, to be hosted by the Republic of Indonesia.

### 8.4 ASEAN-SEAFDEC FORUMS IN 2019-2020

75 Dr. Somboon presented the list of the ASEAN-SEAFDEC forum and required actions during the last quarter of 2019 to end of 2020 as appears in [Annex 23](#). He stated that since the Fisheries *Refugia* project was involved in the development of the Regional Action Plan on management of transboundary species, the committee should be informed with of the ASEAN-SEAFDEC activities.

76 After the presentation, the committee endorsed the list and required actions as presented by Dr. Somboon.

### 8.5 POSTPONEMENT OF THE 3RD RSTC TO FEBRUARY 2020

77 Dr. Somboon informed the meeting of the postponement of the 3<sup>rd</sup> RSTC meeting from Spetmber 2019 to February 2020, as agreed in principle by the Regional Scientific and Technical Committee. The committee endorsed the postponement of the 3<sup>rd</sup> RSTC meeting.

## 9. DATE AND PLACE OF THE NEXT MEETING OF THE PROJECT STEERING COMMITTEE

78 Dr. Somboon informed the meeting that the next 3<sup>rd</sup> PSC meeting will have to be tentatively in late November or early December 2020. The participating countries recommended and agreed to have the next meeting in Coron, Palawan, Philippines. The PCU will consult with the host country on the schedule of the meeting and inform all committee members via e-mail, at least three months before the meeting.

## 10. TECHNICAL SITE VISITS

79 All participants visited and observed the fisheries *refugia* sites for tiger prawn (*Penaeus monodon*) in Kuala Baram, Miri. The Location for juvenile and post-larvae of P. monodon has been identified in the Pasu river. The live cycle of P. Monodon in this area is shown as factsheet in [Annex 24](#). In addition, all participants also sightseeing to the Niah National Park and Niah Cave until 14:30.

