



**The 3<sup>rd</sup> 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**

5<sup>th</sup> – 7<sup>th</sup> February 2020  
Classic Hoang Long Hotel, Hai Phong City, Viet Nam

**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 15 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 project, the 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 1<sup>st</sup> Regional Scientific and Technical Committee Meeting (RSTC1) was held in Trat Province, Thailand during 11 to 13 September 2018 and the 2<sup>nd</sup> Meeting was held in Kampot, Cambodia during 21-23 May 2019. The results from both meetings are focused on the following issues as: TOR for the Regional Scientific and Technical Committee; progress of national and regional activities in 2017, 2018 and Q1/2019; baseline survey template; gender mainstreaming; project budgeting, reporting, and evaluation; GIS mapping and ocean modelling system; management of transboundary species such as short mackerel and frigate tuna; development of the regional website; awareness building program; and others relevant matter. The full reports of RSTC1 and RSTC2 can be downloaded from the link as following URL: [https://1drv.ms/u/s!BHtX\\_2ae6\\_25gblicA5uVw1XowSVyw?e=SAyvYT](https://1drv.ms/u/s!BHtX_2ae6_25gblicA5uVw1XowSVyw?e=SAyvYT)

To follow up the progress works and further discussion on the progress works implemented at national and regional programs, SEAFDEC/PCU plans to organize the 3<sup>rd</sup> Regional Scientific and Technical Committee Meeting on 5-7 February 2020 in Hai Phong City as one of the priority Fisheries Refugia Site in Viet Nam.

## II. OBJECTIVES OF THE RSTC3 MEETING

The following issues are aimed to be discussed:

- Progress the report on the national activities from 2017-2019 by NSTC;
- Progress on the Profile of 15 priority Refugia Sites;
- Progress on Regional Action Plan for Management of Transboundary Species: short mackerel, and etc.
- Best Practices from the 15 priority Refugia Sites;
- Mid-term evaluation since project started till 31 Dec.2019;
- Regional web-sites and GIS Mapping;
- Other matters

## III. MEETING VENUE AND DATE

The RSTC3 will be held at Classic Hoang Long Hotel, in Hai Phong City, Viet Nam during a period of 5<sup>th</sup> – 7<sup>th</sup> February 2020. The place and accommodation will be announced soon after consultation with D-Fish, National Lead Agency.

## IV. PARTICIPANTS

- Refers to the adopted TOR for the Regional Scientific and Technical Committee, SEAFDEC will support a Chair of National Scientific and Technical Committee/focal point from 6 relevant Countries namely Cambodia, Indonesia, Malaysia, Philippines, Thailand and Viet Nam;
- Regional Experts from various institutions (Chulalongkorn University, SEAFDEC/TD and SEC, and etc.)

- Other partners from SEAFDEC/Japanese Trust Fund, etc.
- The PCU staffs, senior officer(s) from SEAFDEC and relevant consultants from the SCS project.

**V. AGENDA (TENTATIVE)**

**1. OPENING OF THE MEETING**

- 1.1 WELCOME AND OPENING ADDRESS
- 1.2 INTRODUCTION OF MEMBERS

**2. ORGANISATION OF THE MEETING**

- 2.1 ELECTION OF OFFICERS FOR 2020
- 2.2 DOCUMENTATION AVAILABLE TO THE MEETING
- 2.3 ORGANISATION OF WORK

**3. ADOPTION OF THE MEETING AGENDA**

**4. REPORT OF THE PROJECT DIRECTOR ON PROGRESS WORKS**

**5. PRESENTATIONS BY THE NATIONAL SCIENTIFIC AND TECHNICAL COMMITTEE ON THE WORK OF THE PROJECT ACTIVITIES AT THE NATIONAL LEVEL AS OF 31 DECEMBER 2019**

- 5.1 CAMBODIA
- 5.2 INDONESIA
- 5.3 MALAYSIA
- 5.4 PHILIPPINES
- 5.5 THAILAND
- 5.6 VIET NAM

**6. FISHERIES REFUGIA PROFILES FOR 15 PRIORITY REFUGIA SITES: (USE TEMPLATE AS AGREED)**

- 6.1 CAMBODIA: 3 SITES
- 6.2 INDONESIA: 2 SITES
- 6.3 MALAYSIA: 2 SITES
- 6.4 PHILIPPINES: 3 SITES
- 6.5 THAILAND: 2 SITES
- 6.6 VIET NAM: 3 SITES

**7. DATA AND INFORMATION NEEDS TO SUPPORT ACTIVITIES**

- 7.1 FISHERIES STATISTIC FOR EACH TARGET SPECIES: STATUS AND TRENDS AT COUNTRY LEVEL (FROM 1995 TILL PRESENT) AND BIOLOGICAL PARAMETERS
  - a) ANCHOVY: VIET NAM
  - b) BLUE SWIMMING CRAB: CAMBODIA, THAILAND
  - c) FRIGATE TUNA: PHILIPPINES, VIET NAM
  - d) FUSILLER FISH: PHILIPPINES
  - e) GROUPER: CAMBODIA
  - f) MUD CRAB: PHILIPPINES
  - g) RABBIT FISH: PHILIPPINES

- h) PENAEID SHRIMPS (PLEASE IDENTIFY): INDONESIA
- i) SHORT MACKEREL: CAMBODIA, THAILAND, VIET NAM
- j) SPINY LOBSTER: MALAYSIA
- k) SMALL PELAGIC FISH (PLEASE IDENTIFY): INDONESIA

7.2 REGIONAL WEBSITES/ DATABASE/ PROJECT REPOSITORY

7.3 OTHERS

**8. OTHER BUSINESS**

8.1 MID-TERM EVALUATION

8.2 REGIONAL ACTION PLAN FOR MANAGEMENT OF TRANSBOUNDARY SPECIES: INDO-PACIFIC MACKEREL IN THE GULF OF THAILAND SUB-REGION

8.3 REGIONAL GUIDELINES ON INDICATORS FOR MANAGEMENT OF FISHERIES REFUGIA

8.4 OTHERS

**9. ADOPTION OF THE REPORT OF THE MEETING**

**10. DATE AND PLACE OF THE 3RD REGIONAL SCIENTIFIC & TECHNICAL COMMITTEE MEETING**

**11. CLOSURE OF THE MEETING**

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