



**The 7th Ad-hoc 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**

27 May 2022
(08:00 – 11:30AM, UTC+7)
Virtual Meeting via Zoom Platform

**HIGHLIGHTS OF THE PROJECT'S ACHIEVEMENTS
AS OF 31 MARCH 2022**

I. INTRODUCTION

In the South China Sea and the Gulf of Thailand areas, the integration of habitat and biodiversity conservation into fishery management and practices has been improved through the efforts of concerned communities and governments. This approach is made possible under the Project “Establishment and Operation of a Regional System of Fisheries Refugia in the South China Sea and the Gulf of Thailand,” which received funding support from the Global Environment Facility (GEF) and was implemented by the United Nations Environment Programme (UNEP). With the main focus of establishing a regional system of fisheries management areas (fisheries refugia) in the South China Sea and the Gulf of Thailand, the project is executed by the Southeast Asian Fisheries Development Center (SEAFDEC) in partnership with the Fisheries Departments of the riparian countries of South China Sea, namely: Cambodia, Indonesia, Malaysia, Philippines, Thailand, and Viet Nam. Initially planned for 48 months from January 2017 until December 2020, the Project duration was extended until December 2022 to complete the implementation of the Project activities that had been delayed due to the COVID-19 pandemic situation from January 2020 to March 2022. This paper highlights the achievements of the project implementations by six participating countries as of 30 March 2022.

II. ESTABLISHMENT OF FISHERIES REFUGIA

Even though the project activities had been delayed due to the COVID-19 pandemic impact for more than two years, nevertheless, as of March 2022, the communities in the fisheries refugia sites of participating countries have been working towards enhancing the integration of habitat and biodiversity conservation into fishery management and practices of the identified aquatic species that the respective governments had identified economically significant. The effective management of critical threats to 12 of 14 fisheries refugia sites of about 660,236 ha is expected to be adopted by 2022. Among these, three fisheries refugia are agreed upon among stakeholders and approved by the government, including two in Cambodia at Kep Province for blue swimming crab and Koh Kong Province for indo-pacific mackerel, and another one in Surat Thani provinces Thailand for blue swimming crab. In addition, eight fisheries refugia are receiving the perception and agreement from the stakeholder and will be adopted by the responsible agencies. These include one in Cambodia at Kampot Province for the juvenile grouper, one in Thailand at Trat Province for indo-pacific mackerel, two in Malaysia at Tanjung Leman, Johor State for spiny lobster, and at Miri, Sarawak State for tiger prawn, three in the Philippines at Bolinao for siganids, at Masinloc for one-stripe fusilier, and Coron for redbelly yellowtail fusilier, and one in Indonesia at West Kalimantan for white prawn. Indonesia has another fisheries refugia site for Mitre squid at Bangka Belitung, which is underway to identify the

fisheries refugia boundaries. While, due to delayed initiatives of the project, Viet Nam reduced the project size with the expectation to implement two refugia sites by the end of 2022. **Figure 1** maps the fisheries refugia boundaries and location for each target economically important species identified by respective countries. Table 1 summarizes the progress on establishment of Fisheries refugia by six participating countries.

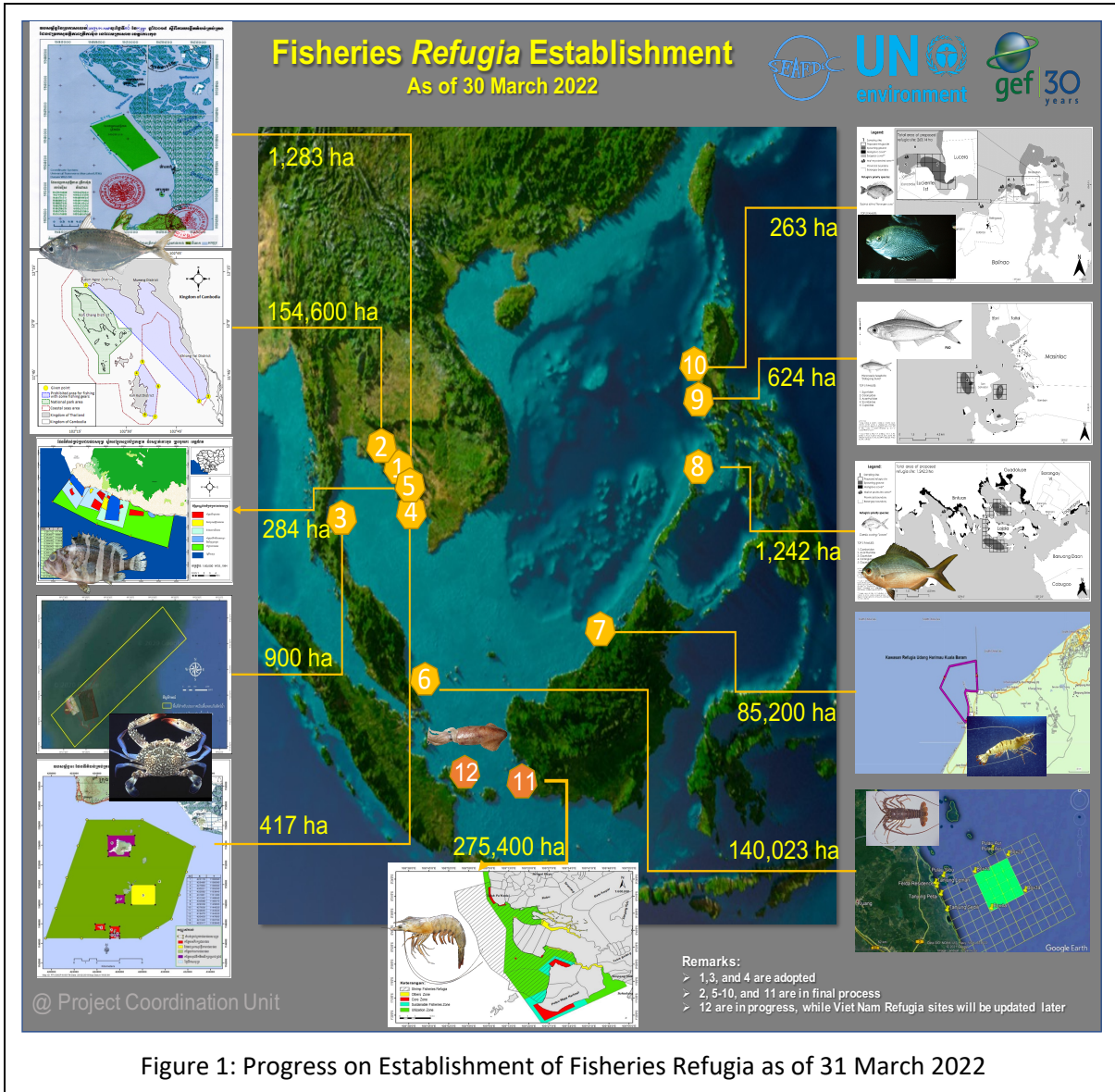


Figure 1: Progress on Establishment of Fisheries Refugia as of 31 March 2022

Table 1. 12 of 14 refugia sites identified by participating countries

	Refugia site	Target species	Area (ha)	Status
1	Koh Po & Koh Tonsay Archipelago, Kep	Blue Swimming Crab	417	Approved
2	Trat	Indo-Pacific Mackerel	154,600	Final process
3	Off Ban Don, Surat Thani	Blue Swimming Crab	900	Approved
4	Peam Krasob, Koh Kong	Indo-Pacific Mackerel	1,283	Approved
5	Prek Thnaot, Kampot	Grouper	284	Final process
6	Tanjung Leman, Johor State	Spiny Lobsters	140,023	Final process
7	MIRI, Sarawak State	Tiger Prawn	85,200	Final process
8	Off Coron Islands, Palawan	Redbelly Yellowtail Fusilier	1,242	Final process
		White-Tipped Scad		underway

9	Masinloc coastal area, Zambales	One-Stripe Fusilier	624	Final process
		Frigate Tuna	underway	
		Fringe Scale Sardine	underway	
10	Bolinao coastal area, Pangasinan	Siganids	263	Final process
11	West Kalimantan	Indian White Shrimp	275,400	Final process
12	Bangka Belitung (islands)	Mitre Squid	underway	

III. REFORMS FOR FISHERIES REFUGIA MANAGEMENT IN PARTICIPATING COUNTRIES

In order to strengthen the enabling environment for the formal designation and operational management of refugia in the riparian countries of the South China Sea area through the GEF/UNEP/SEAFDEC Project, review of the relevant laws and regulations of the participating countries was carried out to harmonize and understand the legal terminologies describing fisheries refugia; formal procedures for demarcating boundaries of spatial management areas such as refugia were developed while the requirements for assessing the socio-economic impacts of the management measures were identified; and the provisions for decentralizing refugia management to the community level were established via the development of co-management and rights-based approaches. Results of such efforts had been used as inputs in drafting the required amendments of the countries' policies and regulations for adoption by competent authorities.

In terms of legislative reforms and development of the fisheries management plans, Cambodia and Thailand have committed their support toward the establishment and operation of a refugia system (SEAFDEC, 2022). Cambodia had issued the Proclamation of Fisheries Refugia in Kep Province and Proclamation of Fisheries Refugia in Koh Kong Province. In addition, Cambodia had also developed its Strategic Plan for Fisheries Conservation Management (2020-2029) and Five-Year Action Plan in Kep (2019-2023). As for Thailand, the country has developed under its Fisheries Law, the Fisheries Management Plan for Fisheries Refugia in Thailand and also issued the Notification Order for Fisheries Refugia for Blue Swimming in Surat Thani, Thailand. For the Philippines, Malaysia, and Viet Nam, the development of their respective fisheries legislations and management plans is underway, while Indonesia continues to conduct internal discussions for the possible inclusion of Fisheries Refugia in the country's regulations on Marine Protected Areas.

IV. REGIONAL GUIDELINES ON INDICATORS FOR SUSTAINABLE MANAGEMENT OF FISHERIES REFUGIA

Referring to the outputs of the Project's component 3 on strengthening information management and dissemination for enhancing the national uptake of best practices in integrating fisheries management and biodiversity conservation and improving community acceptance of area-based approaches to fisheries and coastal environmental management at the national level. More specifically, Component 3 also focuses on developing indicators to monitor the effectiveness of coastal fisheries management systems established for priority fisheries refugia. During the implementation of the Project, the riparian countries of the South China Sea, as the Project participating countries, had defined the structural frameworks together with criteria and indicators to enhance the effective management of fisheries refugia leading to the development of the Regional Guidelines on Indicators for Sustainable Management of Fisheries Refugia. The structural framework for enhancing the effective, sustainable management of fisheries refugia, which included four dimensions comprising twelve targets, is defined as shown in Figure 2. The 1st draft of this Regional guideline was proposed for consideration by the Fifth Meeting of the Regional Scientific and Technical Committee (RSTC5). The PCU will address the final draft for finalizing and adoption at the Seventh Ad-hoc Meeting of the Project Steering Committee (PSC7 Ad-hoc).

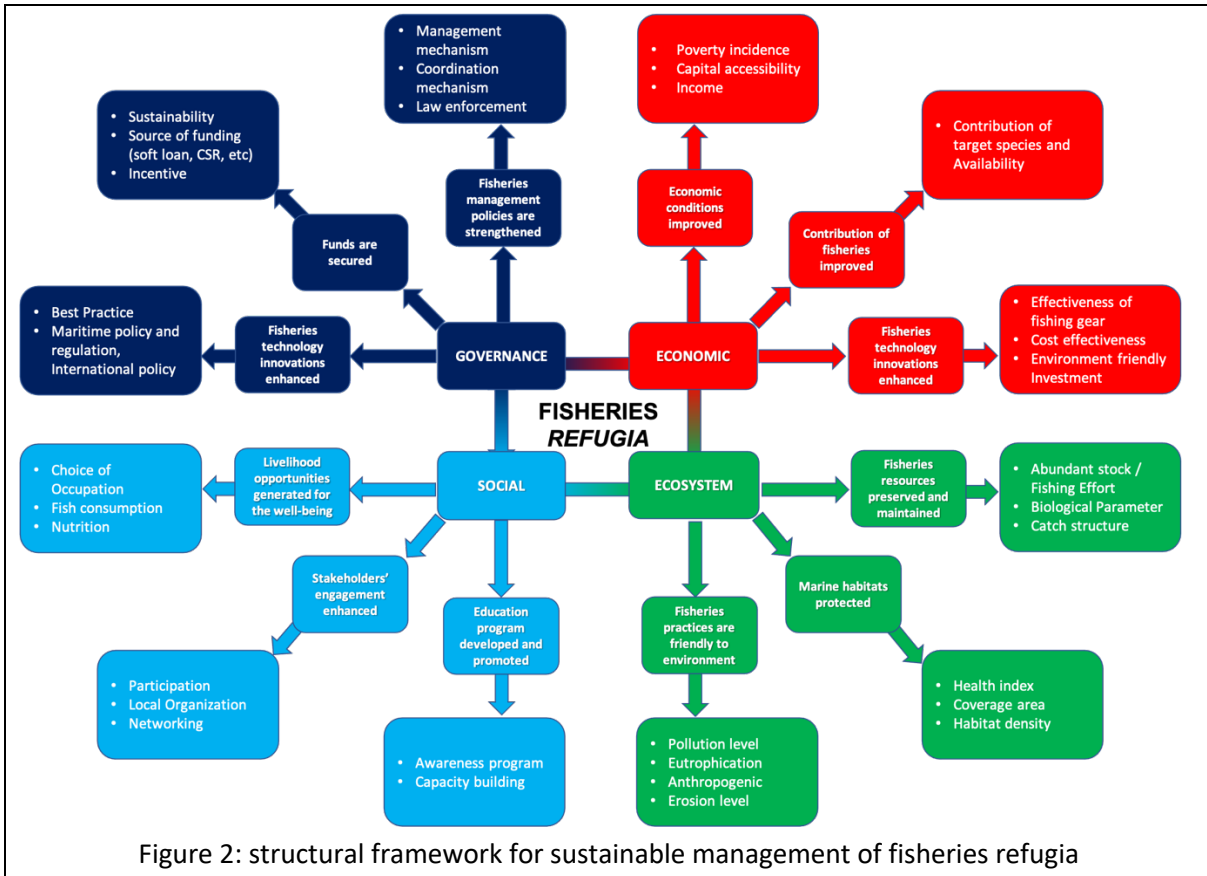


Figure 2: structural framework for sustainable management of fisheries refugia

V. EXPENDITURES AS OF 31 MARCH 2022

Table 2. shows a total of expenditures since project started in 2016 till the present, as of 31 March 2022. The cumulative expenditures is US\$ 1,976,537.52. The balance as of 31 March 2022 is US\$ 1,023,462.48.

Annex 13 - QUARTERLY EXPENDITURE STATEMENT and UNLIQUIDATED OBLIGATIONS REPORT (US\$)											
Project title:		Establishment and Operation of a Regional System of Fisheries Refugia in the South China Sea and Gulf of Thailand									
Project number:											
Project implementing agency/organization:		Southeast Asian Fisheries Development Center (SEAFDEC)									
Project implementation period:		From: August 2016			To: Dec. 2022						
Reporting period:		From: 01-Jan-22			To: 31-Mar-22						
UNEP Budget Line		UNEP approved budget			Actual expenditures incurred**						
		Total project budget	Current YEAR budget (in 2022)	Cumulative expenditures for current YEAR	Disbursements for current QUARTER	Unliquidated obligations for current QUARTER	Total expenditures for current QUARTER	Total expenditures for current YEAR	Cumulative expenditures for previous YEARS	Total cumulative expenditures to date	Cumulative unspent balance to-date
		A	B	C	D	E	F=D	G=C+F	H	I=G+H	J=A-I
1100	Project personnel	243,101.50	61,734.12		10,048.42		10,048.42	10,048.42	171,318.96	181,367.38	61,734.12
1200	Consultants	1,252,756.95	312,011.69		17,914.93		17,914.93	17,914.93	922,830.33	940,745.26	312,011.69
1300	Administrative support	-	-		-		-	-	-	-	-
1600	Travel on official business	278,545.64	41,140.15		517.60		517.60	517.60	236,887.89	237,405.49	41,140.15
2100	Sub-contracts (UN entities)	-	-		-		-	-	-	-	-
2200	Sub-contracts (supporting organizations)	294,785.36	155,306.54		900.00		900.00	900.00	138,578.82	139,478.82	155,306.54
2300	Sub-contracts (for commercial purposes)	80,888.46	26,013.30		-		-	-	54,875.16	54,875.16	26,013.30
3200	Group training	279,203.79	130,409.66		5,492.17		5,492.17	5,492.17	143,301.96	148,794.13	130,409.66
3300	Meetings/Conferences	374,251.43	193,183.57		3,710.36		3,710.36	3,710.36	177,357.50	181,067.86	193,183.57
4100	Expendable equipment	8,638.50	4,591.04		366.02		366.02	366.02	3,478.68	3,844.70	4,793.80
4200	Non-expendable equipment	43,883.83	-		377.00		377.00	377.00	43,709.59	44,086.59	(202.76)
4300	Premises	18,585.27	4,819.28		-		-	-	13,766.00	13,766.00	4,819.27
5100	Operation and maintenance of equipment	3,332.27	2,270.86		284.68		284.68	284.68	776.73	1,061.41	2,270.86
5200	Reporting costs	34,081.35	22,801.59		1,150.18		1,150.18	1,150.18	10,129.58	11,279.76	22,801.59
5300	Sundry	9,945.65	1,980.69		436.93		436.93	436.93	7,528.03	7,964.96	1,980.69
5400	Hospitality and entertainment	-	-		-		-	-	-	-	-
5500	Evaluation	78,000.00	67,200.00		7,200.00		7,200.00	7,200.00	3,600.00	10,800.00	67,200.00
99	GRAND TOTAL	3,000,000	1,023,462.49	-	48,398.29	-	48,398.29	48,398.29	1,928,139.23	1,976,537.52	1,023,462.48

Figure 3 shows the progress in percent by activities in each project component, as of 31 March 2022. The figure indicates the progress in % of the project component 1, 2, 3 and 4 as 67%, 62%, 69%, and 73%, respectively.

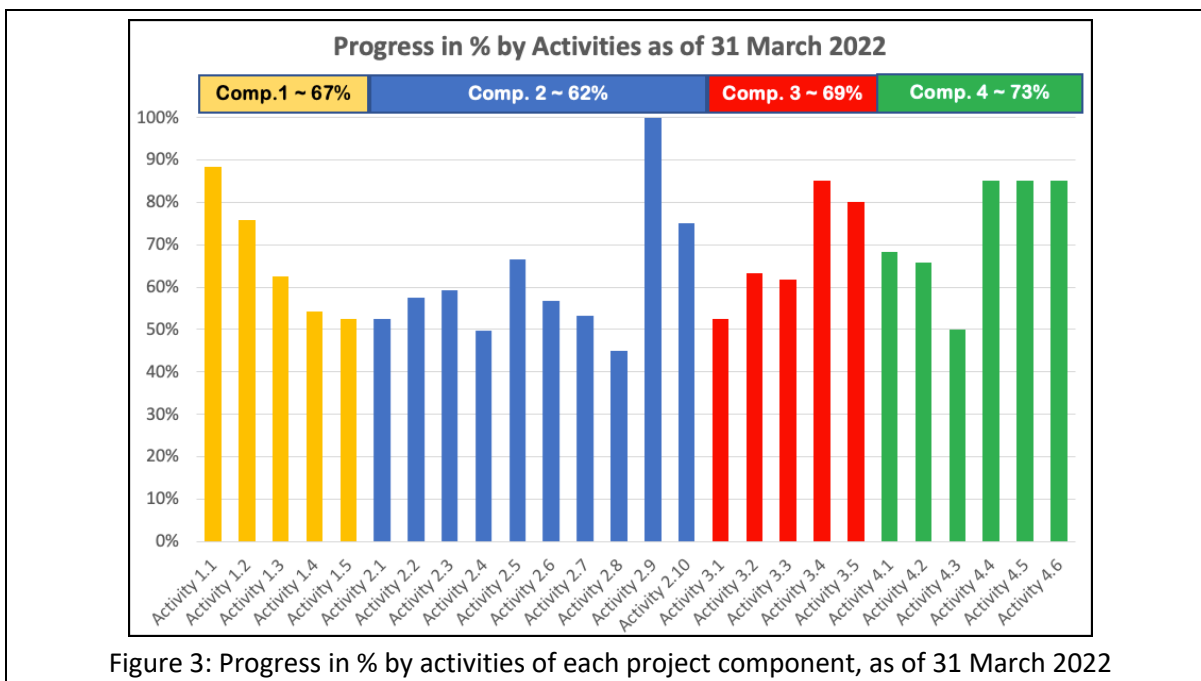


Figure 3: Progress in % by activities of each project component, as of 31 March 2022

Figure 4 shows the progress and spent budget in % by partners as of 31 March 2022. The ratios between spent budget and progress in % are 0.91 for Cambodia, 1.63 for Indonesia, 0.73 for Malaysia, 1.28 for Philippines, 0.84 for Thailand, 0 for Viet Nam, and 0.88 for Regional Program.

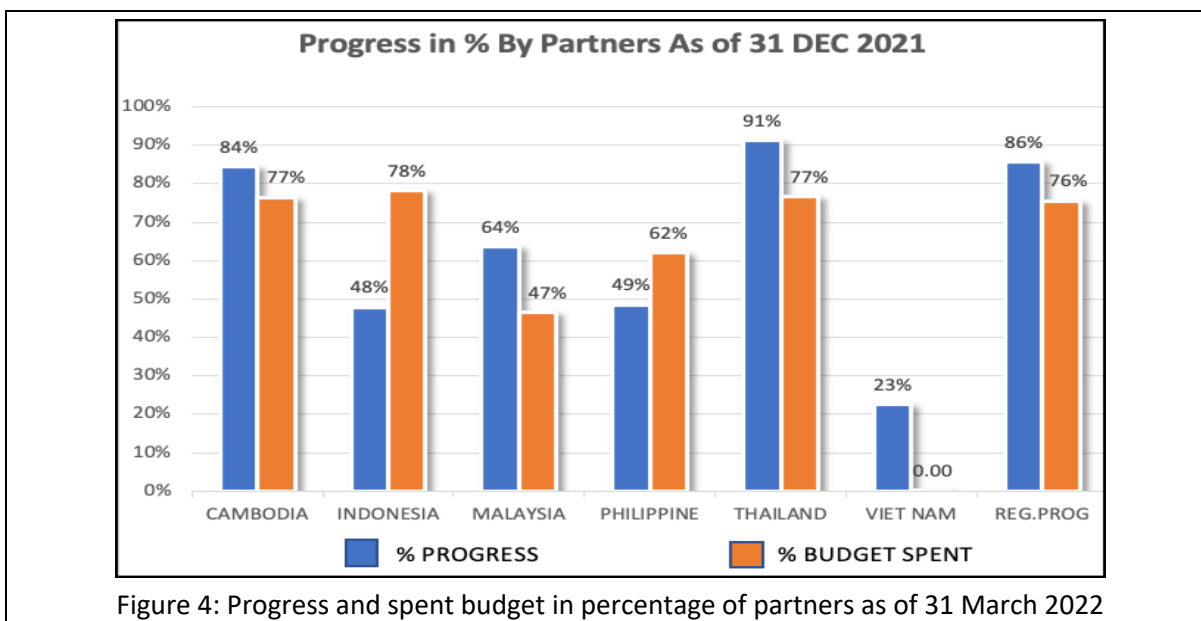
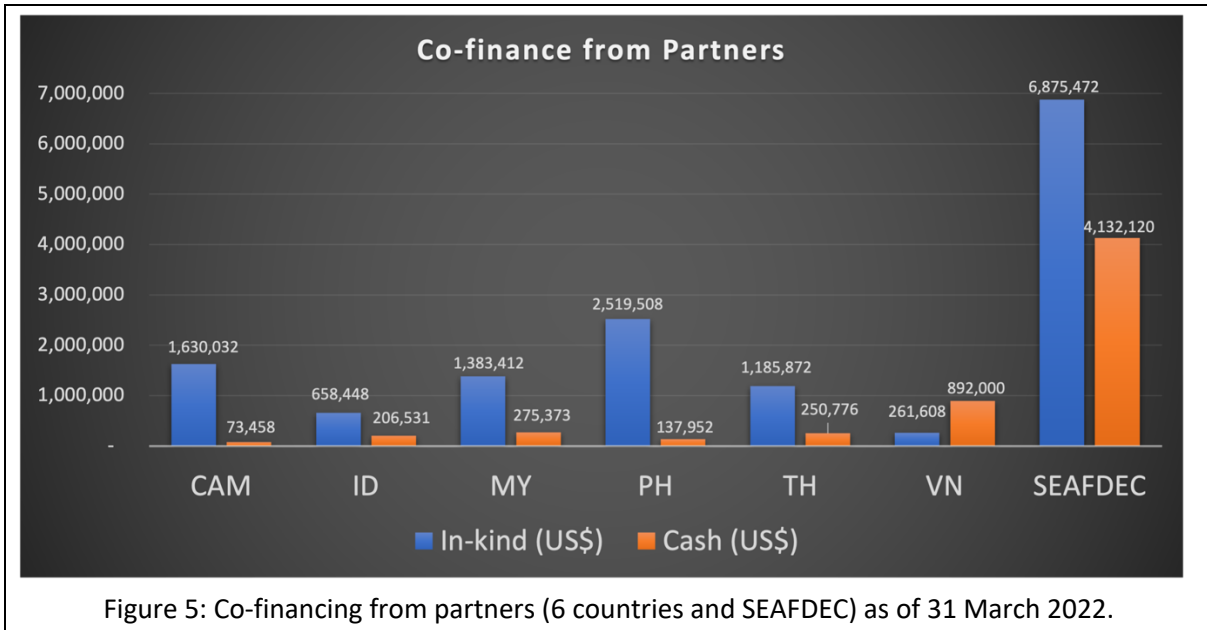


Figure 4: Progress and spent budget in percentage of partners as of 31 March 2022

VI. CO-FINANCING AS OF 31 MARCH 2022

The Co-financing from country partners and SEAFDEC as of 31 March 2022 is summarized as shown in Figure 5. The overall co-financing from 6 country partners is about 9.47 million USD consisted of 7.64 million USD In-kind and 1.83 million USD cash co-financing. The Co-financing from SEAFDEC as of 31 December 2021 is about 11.01 million USD representing of 6.88 million USD In-kind and 4.13 million USD cash co-financing.



VII. ACTIONS BY THE PROJECT STEERING COMMITTEE

- The committee is welcomed to provide comments on the highlights of project achievements as of 31 March 2022.