

ANNEX 15: GENDER MAINSTREAMING IN FISHERIES REFUGIA PROJECT

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

The Project “Establishment and Operation of a Regional System of Fisheries Refugia in the South China Sea and Gulf of Thailand” (Fisheries Refugia Project) implemented by the United Nations Environment Programme (UNEP) from 2016 to 2022 with financial support from the Global Environment Facility (GEF), has successfully mainstreamed gender into its development as well as implementation. As a result, the Project which was executed in the South China Sea area 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, was able to improve the involvement of women in the Project activities. Focused mainly on establishing a regional system of fisheries management areas (fisheries refugia) in the South China Sea and Gulf of Thailand, the Project comprises four components, namely: (1) establishment of operational management at 15 priority fisheries refugia, with community-based refugia management plans being the key outputs; (2) strengthening of the enabling environment for the formal designation and operational management of refugia; (3) strengthening of information management and dissemination for 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 at the national level, (4) strengthening the cross-sectorial coordination for integrated fisheries and environmental management while harnessing national scientific and technical expertise, and knowledge required to promote policy, legal and institutional reforms for fisheries refugia management in the participating countries. Specifically, Component 1 encompasses five expected outcomes, one of which is to bring about “Empowered fishing communities, particularly artisanal fishermen and women involved in inshore gleaning and processing, for enforcement of agreed management rules at 15 priority refugia sites in the South China Sea and Gulf of Thailand.” This outcome has been realized by mainstreaming gender not only in the Project development but also in the implementation, having been pursued through capacity building activities at the community level with the specific objective of enhancing the capabilities of target community members, particularly artisanal fishermen and women, while participating in refugia management at the 15 fisheries refugia sites. Having empowered the fishing communities at the 15 sites, the Project has catalysed community action for fisheries refugia management and strengthened the participation of civil society and community organisations in fisheries refugia management. Indeed, such feat which had been attained mainly through gender mainstreaming and promoting gender dimension in the Project execution, has resulted in the improved role of women in fisheries management and balanced benefits obtained by the fishermen and fisherwomen in the established refugia sites bringing about gender equality and gender equity, and contributed to the pool of projects in the Southeast Asian region where gender had been successfully mainstreamed not only in the project development but also in the implementation, monitoring and evaluation.

The sex ratio (in percent) between females and males in each target activity is calculated as the number of women per hundred men engaged in the project activities by year and entered project from 2017-2021. The PCU divided 225 activities into three main activities, as shown in Figure 1. The results of sex ratios per activity of the entire project are summarized in Figure 2.



Figure 1: The sex ratios are calculated based on three groups of activities

Cambodia	Participants	Male	Female	Gender Ratio
Overall Total	1,893	1,517	376	24.79
Act.1	453	401	52	12.97
Act. 2	768	532	236	44.36
Act. 3	151	123	28	22.76
Indonesia	Participants	Male	Female	Gender Ratio
Overall Total	539	337	202	59.94
Act.1	241	134	107	79.85
Act. 2	298	203	65	32.02
Act. 3	7	6	1	16.67
Malaysia	Participants	Male	Female	Gender Ratio
Overall Total	662.0	488.0	174.0	35.66
Act.1	271.0	150.0	121.0	80.67
Act. 2	451.0	379.0	72.0	19.00
Act. 3	10.0	3.0	7.0	233.33
Philippines	Participants	Male	Female	Gender Ratio
Overall Total	1,284	953	331	34.73
Act.1	326	216	110	50.93
Act. 2	851	674	177	26.26
Act. 3	107	63	44	69.84
Thailand	Participants	Male	Female	Gender Ratio
Overall Total	1,650	1,066	584	54.78
Act.1	410	269	141	52.42
Act. 2	1,219	793	426	53.72
Act. 3	21	4	17	425.00
ALL COUNTRY	Participants	Male	Female	Gender Ratio
Overall Total	6,028	4,361	1,667	38.23
Act.1	1,701	1,170	531	45.38
Act. 2	3,587	2,581	976	37.81
Act. 3	296	199	97	48.74

Figure 2: Gender Ratio in Percent Between Women and Men Engaged in Fisheries Refugia Per Activity

Conclusion

Therefore, having empowered the fishing communities at the 15 sites, the Project has catalyzed community action for fisheries refugia management and strengthened the participation of civil society and community organizations in fisheries refugia management. Indeed, such feat, which had been attained mainly through gender mainstreaming and promoting gender dimension in the Project execution, has resulted in the improved role of women in fisheries management and balanced benefits obtained by the fishermen and fisherwomen in the established refugia sites bringing about gender

equality and gender equity and contributing to the pool of projects in the Southeast Asian region where gender had been successfully mainstreamed not only in the project development but also in the implementation, monitoring, and evaluation.

It should be noted, however, that the overall gender ratio in some countries is still not high as gender mainstreaming is a continuing process. Based on the initiatives of the Fisheries Refugia Project, however, other similar projects that mainstream gender in their development and implementation could attain a much-improved overall ratio. Also, some countries encountered various constraints in implementing specific activities amidst the onslaught of the COVID-19 pandemic in 2020-2021. Nonetheless, the targets of the Project were still pursued by the participating countries by pooling the implementation of some specific activities.