The Workshop on the Project End of Strengthening Regional Cooperation and Enhancing
National Capacities to Eliminate IUU Fishing in Southeast Asia
A-ONE The Royal Cruise, Pattaya, Chonburi Province, Thailand   WP01
20–21 March 2024

Implementation and the Success of the Project Strengthening Regional Cooperation and Enhancing National Capacities to Eliminate IUU Fishing in Southeast Asia

Introduction

The project titled "Promotion of Fishing Licenses, Boats Registration, and Port State Measures (2011-2012)" and "Promotion of Countermeasures to Reduce IUU Fishing (2013-2019)" was implemented by the SEAFDEC Training Department (TD) as a proactive response to the global and regional challenges posed by Illegal, Unreported, and Unregulated (IUU) fishing activities. The project initiative collaborated with engaged international/regional fisheries organizations and SEAFDEC member countries, focusing on important activities such as the development of the Regional Fishing Vessels Record (RFVR), and strengthening regional cooperation for Port State Measures (PSM) implementation.

The effort to combat IUU fishing underscores the critical importance of sustainable fisheries management in conserving marine ecosystems and ensuring food security. Emphasized in various regional agreements and resolutions, including the ASEAN-SEAFDEC Conference and the ASEAN-SEAFDEC Regional Meeting, the commitment to combating IUU fishing remains a basis of regional cooperation efforts. The adoption of the ASEAN Roadmap on Combating IUU Fishing (2021-2025) and the ASEAN-SEAFDEC Resolution and Plan of Action for Food Security for Toward 2023 for the ASEAN Region reflect a collaborative effort to strengthen regulatory frameworks, enhance monitoring and surveillance systems, and promote inter-agency coordination to combat IUU fishing effectively which emphasized on 1) Implement measures to prevent unauthorized fishing and eliminate illegal fishing practices, 2) Strengthen the implementation of measures and activities to combat IUU fishing by ensuring compliance with national laws and regulations, and the provisions of international instruments; encourage the development and implementation of national plans of action to combat IUU fishing; promote inter-agency coordination for effective implementation of laws and regulations; and enhance awareness and understanding of applicable international and regional instruments and agreements through information dissemination campaigns, 3) Establish and strengthen regional, sub-regional, and bi-lateral coordination on fisheries management and efforts to combat IUU fishing, 4) Mobilize regional/sub-regional collaboration frameworks and tools for combating IUU fishing, e.g. Regional Plan of Action to Promote Responsible Fishing Practices including combating Illegal, Unreported and Unregulated Fishing (RPOA-IUU); ASEAN Regional Plan of Action for the Management of Fishing Capacity (RPOA-Capacity); Regional Fishing Vessels Record (RFVR); ASEAN Catch Documentation Scheme (ACDS), and the use of technologies to support monitoring and surveillance of fishing activities, e.g. Vessel Monitoring System (VMS), traceability systems, 5) Improve the capacity of relevant national authorities and strengthen their functions for regional and bilateral/sub-regional cooperation, to effectively implement the requirements of port State measures and flag State responsibilities, and 6) Apply traceability systems with mechanisms as needed to certify or validate the information for the whole supply chain, and establish regulations and enforcement schemes in line with international standards by harmonizing AMSs' inspection systems and strengthen port inspections in the process as a means to improve traceability systems.

Therefore, SEAFDEC's project interventions align closely with these initiatives, representing a commitment to sustainable fisheries practices and regional collaboration. Within the dynamic background of regional fisheries management, the project "Strengthening Regional Cooperation and Enhancing National Capacities to Eliminate IUU Fishing in Southeast Asia" was conducted by SEAFDEC/TD under the JTF 6-II from 2020 to 2024. The project signifies a continued commitment to combat IUU fishing. Building upon previous achievements and guided by the resolutions and plans of action for sustainable fisheries development, the project aims to promote regional partnerships, enhance technological

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capabilities, and empower national authorities to address the complicated challenges posed by IUU fishing activities in the Southeast Asian region. Through sustained collaboration and strategic interventions, the project attempts to advance the sustainable management of fisheries resources and promote the long-term well-being of coastal communities across Southeast Asia. Under the overall objectives "Sustainable utilization and sound management of fisheries resources in Southeast Asia", the project expects four outputs; 1) enhancing RFVR, 2) strengthening national capacities in the implementation of PSM and Monitoring Control and Surveillance (MCS), 3) further promoting electronic ASEAN Catch Documentation Scheme (eACDS), and 4) coordinating and promoting a national/regional/ international network for collaborative activities to combat IUU fishing.

Key Achievements

Throughout the project implementation from 2020 to 2024, significant developments were made in combating IUU fishing in Southeast Asia. The organization of workshops and teleseminars aimed at mapping out strategies for combating IUU fishing set the attitude for collaborative efforts. Through these platforms, stakeholders exchanged insights and best practices, promoting enhanced regional cooperation and capacity building among international/regional fisheries organizations and ASEAN Member States (AMSs). Notable achievements also include the promotion and utilization of the Regional Fishing Vessels Record (RFVR) database and training initiatives on the electronic ASEAN Catch Documentation Scheme (eACDS) and MCS. The project's impact extended beyond technical capacity building to include gender-inclusive participation, adaptation to the challenges posed by the COVID-19 pandemic, and the regular updating of critical databases for monitoring and surveillance efforts. These achievements underscore the project's critical role in promoting sustainable fisheries management, promoting transparency, and safeguarding marine resources in the Southeast Asian region. Detailed information on year-based key achievements as **Annex 1.**

Impacts of the Project

The impact of the project reflects its significant influence on regional fisheries management and capacity-building efforts. Through collaborative initiatives and strategic interventions, the project has facilitated knowledge transfer, addressed emerging challenges, and laid the foundation for future planning initiatives. Through the activities' implementation, the project has played a pivotal role in advancing national fisheries governance to combat IUU fishing in Southeast Asia. This reflects a transformative impact on regional fisheries programs and its ongoing commitment to eliminate IUU fishing in the region. Furthermore, the project highlights the regional commitment to promoting sustainable practices and fostering inclusivity, evident in its gender-inclusive participation initiatives. Additionally, the project's successful adaptation to challenges posed by the COVID-19 pandemic showcases its resilience and responsiveness in overcoming obstacles while implementing its activities. The significant impacts of the project can be classified as follows:

1) ASEAN Regional Fishing Vessels Record (RFVR)

   - *Regular updating of the RFVR Database*

     The RFVR database, an online system, adopted by the SEAFDEC and ASEAN mechanism, is one of the regional management tools created with an intention to share information on fishing vessels among AMSs on fishing vessels. The RFVR Database is the basic information required for effective tools to support the fishing vessel inspection to reduce the Illegal, Unreported, and Unregulated (IUU) fishing vessels through enhancing transparency, traceability, and support inspection in

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relation to PSM activities. It is expected that RFVR will work as a practical tool for related
authorities such as local inspectors, port state inspectors, high-rank fisheries officers, and technical
fisheries officers of AMSs in checking and taking corrective actions against inappropriate behavior
of its fishing vessels, thereby supporting the elimination of IUU fishing in the Southeast Asian
region.

Currently, information in the RFVR database is available for vessels 24 meters in length and over,
including information on 28 Key Data Elements (KDEs) as agreed by AMSs. From 1 November
2021, the AMSs can update information in the RFVR database by themselves. The updated
information and total number of vessels in the RFVR database as of 29 February 2024, is shown as
follows.

Country	Fishing Vessels	Carrier Vessels/Supporting Boats/Processing Vessels	Total	Data Updated
Brunei Darussalam	9	1	10	2 May 2023
Cambodia	5	-	5	1 Nov 2023
Indonesia	562	6	568	8 Jan 2024
Lao PDR	-	-	-	-
Malaysia	227	-	227	31 Jan 2024
Myanmar	1,232	186	1,418	19 Dec 2023
Philippines	67	100	167	1 Nov 2021
Singapore	-	1	1	1 Nov 2021
Thailand	329	14	343	18 Apr 2023
Viet Nam	2,144	492	2,636	1 Nov 2021
Total	**4,575**	**800**	**5,375**	

- *Agreement on RFVR Database Development*

The participants from AMSs in the "Teleworkshop on Development and Improvement of Regional
Tools for Combating IUU fishing in Southeast Asia" which was organized from 27 to 28 August
2020 agreed that a new dataset of RFVR database for vessels sizes smaller than 24 meters (range
of 18-23.99 meters) should be developed considering effective implementation of activities on
combat IUU fishing.

The results from the discussion during the Teleworkshop on this matter were submitted and
discussed in the 43rd PCM (November 2020) and subsequently at the 53rd Council Meeting (April
2021). The 53rd Council Meeting suggested that this matter should be discussed clearly further at
the technical level. Report of The Fifty‑Third Meeting of The Council of the Southeast Asian
Fisheries Development Center in the part of Implementation of Regional Management Initiatives
for Combating IUU Fishing as shown in **Annex 2.**

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2) Electronic ASEAN Catch Documentation Scheme (eACDS)

- *Successful Implementation of eACDS Application*

  Following the online training on the preparation and installation of the eACDS application, Malaysia successfully installed the application on its server. This achievement demonstrated the practical application of training outcomes and contributed to the effective implementation of electronic catch documentation systems.

- *Capacity Building through Online Training*

  Participants in the online training sessions on the eACDS application could serve as trainers and transfer their knowledge and understanding to relevant stakeholders in their countries. This effect promoted the widespread adoption and utilization of electronic catch documentation systems across Southeast Asia. This enhanced their capacity to effectively adopt electronic catch documentation systems.

3) Capacity-building Programs in Supporting AMSs in Eliminating IUU Fishing

- *Knowledge Application from Training Courses and Workshop*

  Participants who attended the regional training courses and workshops such as Port State Measures (PSM) inspection, the United Nations Convention on the Law of the Sea 1982 (UNCLOS 1982) in fisheries perspective, Monitoring Control and Surveillance (MCS) for combating IUU fishing in Southeast Asia, Port State Measures inspection in focus of shipping container for fish and fisheries products, and exchange information on Catch Documentation Scheme and traceability of fish and fishery products were equipped to apply their knowledge and understanding to their respective roles and responsibilities.

4) Other Relevant Issues

- *Emerging Issues Planning*

  The project identified emerging issues and planned future activities to address them effectively. These included training on risk assessment for national VMS programs and technical workshops on the application of new technologies to support the implementation of national MCS programs.

- *Gender-Inclusive Participation*

  The project ensured that participation in all activities was open to men, women, and others, fostering diversity and inclusivity in capacity-building initiatives. Gender issues were not specifically encountered during the implementation of project activities.

- *Adaptation to the COVID-19 Pandemic*

  The COVID-19 pandemic from 2020-2021 required the adjustment and rescheduling of planned activities to teleworkshops or online training sessions. Despite challenges, the project adapted and adjusted to the circumstances, ensuring continuity in capacity-building efforts while acknowledging the limitations of online meetings and training. However, the outcomes of online meetings and training were not always as expected compared to traditional face-to-face interactions.

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Publications and Information Materials

The project has generated several publications and information materials aimed at assisting stakeholders in addressing IUU fishing in Southeast Asia. These resources comprise a brochure supporting the utilization of the RFVR, and a report consolidating discussions from a Teleseminar on combatting IUU fishing in the region. Additionally, ongoing efforts include the development of a report from workshops organized under the project focused on improving regional tools for combating IUU fishing. Furthermore, ongoing initiatives include the introduction of an electronic ASEAN Catch Documentation Scheme (eACDS) application, accompanied by a corresponding manual detailing its implementation. These publications and information materials serve as invaluable regional references. Publications and information materials generated during the project implementation include:

Publications

No.	Title	Download
1	Report on Teleseminar on Way Forward for Combating IUU Fishing in Southeast Asia	https://repository.seafdec.or.th/handle/20.500.12067/1564
2	Report on Teleworkshop on Development and Implement of Regional Tools (RFVR and PSM) for Combating IUU Fishing in Southeast Asia	https://repository.seafdec.or.th/handle/20.500.12067/1566
3	User's Manual of the electronic ASEAN Catch Documentation Scheme (Part 1-5)	https://repository.seafdec.or.th/handle/20.500.12067/1743
4	Report of Teleworkshop on Development and Improvement of Regional Fishing Vessels Record (RFVR) for Combating IUU Fishing in the Southeast Asia	https://repository.seafdec.or.th/handle/20.500.12067/1744
5	User's Manual of the electronic ASEAN Catch Documentation Scheme, Part 6: System Administrator	https://repository.seafdec.or.th/handle/20.500.12067/1748
6	User's Manual Regional Fishing Vessels Record (RFVR) Database System	https://repository.seafdec.or.th/handle/20.500.12067/1785
7	Report of the Regional Workshop on Monitoring Control and Surveillance for Combating IUU Fishing in Southeast Asia	https://repository.seafdec.or.th/handle/20.500.12067/1842
8	Report of the Regional Workshop to Exchange Information on Catch Documentation Scheme and Traceability of Fish and Fishery Products	https://repository.seafdec.or.th/handle/20.500.12067/1843

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No.	Title	Download
9	Manual of eACDS in the part of Catch Declaration (Thai version)	https://repository.seafdec.or.th/handle/20.500.12067/1930
10	Manual of eACDS in the part of Administrative (Thai version)	https://repository.seafdec.or.th/handle/20.500.12067/1931

Information Materials

No.	Title	Download
1	Brochure: Regional Fishing Vessels Record: a Primary Tool to Reduce the IUU Fishing in Southeast Asian Region	https://repository.seafdec.or.th/handle/20.500.12067/1565
2	VDO: Fisheries Management Tool for Traceability from Sea to Plate (eACDS Application)	https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=6zQED6V_DqQ
3	VDO: Apply eACDS Application in the Part Catch Declaration for Small-scale Fisheries	https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=i1RczCdHGBo
4	Website: The Teleseminar on Way Forward for Combating IUU Fishing in Southeast Asia, 24-26 August 2020	http://www.seafdec.or.th/teleseminar-iuu
5	Website: The Teleworkshop on Development and Improvement of Regional Tools (RFVR and PSM) for Combating IUU Fishing in Southeast Asia, 26–29 October 2021	http://www.seafdec.or.th/psm/psm-inspector-2021
6	Website: The Regional Workshop on Monitoring Control and Surveillance for Combating IUU Fishing in Southeast Asia, 23-24 August 2022	http://www.seafdec.or.th/mcs/mcs-workshop-2022
7	Website: The Regional Training on Port State Measures Inspection in Focus of Shipping Container for Fish and Fisheries Product, 29 August – 2 September 2022	http://www.seafdec.or.th/psm/psm-container-2022
8	Website: The Regional Workshop to Exchange Information on Catch Documentation Scheme and Traceability of Fish and Fishery Products, 29-30 November 2022	http://www.seafdec.or.th/traceability/traceability-workshop-2022

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No.	Title	Download
9	Website: The Regional Training Course on the United Nations Convention on the Law of the Sea 1982 (UNCLOS 1982) in Fisheries Perspective, 6-9 November 2023	http://www.seafdec.or.th/unclos-training
10	Website: The Workshop on the Project End of Strengthening Regional Cooperation and Enhancing National Capacities to Eliminate IUU Fishing in Southeast Asia, 20 - 21 March 2024	http://www.seafdec.or.th/iuu-projectend-2024

Possible Follow-up Actions

Based on learning from implementing activities, possible follow-up actions required from the project implemented from 2020 to 2024, include:

1) Continued Capacity Building

The findings underscore the importance of capacity-building initiatives to address IUU fishing effectively. Follow-up actions may include conducting regular training sessions and workshops aimed at enhancing the competencies and understanding of stakeholders, with a particular focus on Monitoring Control and Surveillance (MCS), electronic catch documentation schemes and traceability of fish and fisheries products, and risk assessment for national VMS programs, *etc*.

2) Sustaining Regional Partnerships

To ensure the sustainability of efforts to combat IUU fishing, continued collaboration among international/regional fisheries organizations, SEAFDEC member countries, and relevant stakeholders is essential. Follow-up actions may involve establishing formal mechanisms for ongoing dialogue and information exchange, facilitating joint initiatives, and promoting shared best practices in combating IUU fishing.

3) Adapting to Emerging Challenges

The findings also underscore the need for adaptive strategies to address emerging challenges, such as the COVID-19 pandemic and technological advancements. Follow-up actions may include developing contingency plans and protocols for responding to future emergencies and developing technological innovations to enhance Monitoring Control and Surveillance capabilities.

4) Dissemination of Knowledge and Best Practices

To maximize the impact of project outcomes, it is essential to disseminate knowledge and best practices widely among stakeholders. Follow-up actions may include publishing reports, guidelines, and technical manuals, organizing knowledge-sharing events and workshops, and leveraging digital platforms to reach a broader audience.

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5) Resource Mobilization

Sustainable funding mechanisms are fundamental for the long-term success of initiatives aimed at combating IUU fishing. Follow-up actions may include exploring diverse funding sources, engaging with donor agencies and international partners, and advocating for increased investment in fisheries management and surveillance efforts at the regional and national levels.

6) Monitoring and Evaluation

Effective monitoring and evaluation mechanisms are critical for assessing the impact and effectiveness of interventions aimed at combating IUU fishing. Follow-up actions may include establishing appropriate monitoring and evaluation frameworks, conducting regular assessments of project outcomes and impacts, and incorporating feedback from stakeholders to inform future project activities and strategic planning.

Key Achievements of the Project Strengthening Regional Cooperation and Enhancing National Capacities to Eliminate IUU Fishing in Southeast Asia from 2020-2024

Year	Titles (Date, Venue)	No. of Participants														Gender	
		SEAFDEC	Brunei Darussalam	Cambodia	Indonesia	Japan	Lao PDR	Malaysia	Myanmar	Philippines	Singapore	Thailand	Viet Nam	Others	TOTAL	Female	Male
2020	Promotion on utilization of RFVR database for Ranong province, Thailand, 17-20 March 2020	4										3			7	1	6
	Promotion on utilization of RFVR database for Trat province, Thailand, 5-7 August 2020	3										3			6	1	5
	Promotion on utilization of RFVR database for Thai Maritime Enforcement Command Center (Thai-MECC), 16 September 2020	3										7			10	2	8
	Teleseminar on Way Forward for Combating IUU Fishing in Southeast Asia through the Zoom Webinar, 24-26 August 2020, SEAFDEC/TD, Samut Prakam, Thailand	31	6	7	14	7	2	8	3	118	3	26	4	55	284	140	144
	Teleworkshop on Development and Improvement of Regional Tools for Combating IUU fishing in the Southeast Asia through the Zoom Webinar, 27-28 August 2020, SEAFDEC/TD, Samut Prakan, Thailand	21	2	3	3		3	3	6	7	4	4	3		59	25	34
	The Meeting on Introduction on Electronic ASEAN Catch Documentation Scheme (eACDS) in Cambodia, 17-19 February 2020, Cambodia	3		24											27	4	23
	Online Training on the Use of Electronic ASEAN Catch Documentation Schemes (eACDS) Application Version 2 for Viet Nam through the Skype, 13-14 August 2020, SEAFDEC/TD, Samut Prakan, Thailand												13		13	2	11
	Online Training on the Use of Electronic ASEAN Catch Documentation System (eACDS) Application for Brunei Darussalam through the Google Meet, 2-3 September 2020, SEAFDEC/TD, Samut Prakan, Thailand		10												10	0	10

Year	Titles (Date, Venue)	No. of Participants													TOTAL	Gender	
		SEAFDEC	Brunei Darussalam	Cambodia	Indonesia	Japan	Lao PDR	Malaysia	Myanmar	Philippines	Singapore	Thailand	Viet Nam	Others		Female	Male
	Online Training on the Use of Electronic ASEAN Catch Documentation System (eACDS) Application for Malaysia through the Google Meet, 10-11 September 2020, SEAFDEC/TD, Samut Prakan, Thailand							8							**8**	5	3
	Total	**65**	**18**	**34**	**17**	**7**	**5**	**19**	**9**	**125**	**7**	**43**	**20**	**55**	**424**	**180**	**244**
2021	Teleworkshop on Development and Improvement of Regional Fishing Vessels Record (RFVR) for Combating IUU Fishing in Southeast Asia (28-30 September 2021, SEAFDEC/TD)	12	2	2	1		2	2	2	2	2	2	3		**32**	14	18
	The Online Regional Training Course on Implementation of Port State Measures for Inspection (26-29 October 2021, SEAFDEC/TD)		7	3	10		3	3	3	3	1	3	6	2	**44**	6	38
	The Online Practical Workshop on the Use of electronic ASEAN Catch Documentation Schemes (eACDS) Application Version 2 in the Part of Catch Declaration for Myanmar (21-22 January 2021, SEAFDEC/TD)								13						**13**	10	3
	Online Practical Workshop on the Use of eACDS Application Version 2 for Malaysia (24-25 February 2021, SEAFDEC/TD)							10							**10**	5	5
	Online Practical Workshop on the Use of eACDS Application Version 2 for Brunei Darussalam (30 March-1 April 2021, SEAFDEC/TD)		8												**8**	5	3
	Online Practical Workshop on the Use of eACDS Application Version 2 for Viet Nam (7-9 April 2021, SEAFDEC/TD)												20		**20**	3	17
	Total	**12**	**17**	**5**	**11**	**0**	**5**	**15**	**18**	**5**	**3**	**5**	**29**	**2**	**127**	**43**	**84**
2022	The Regional Workshop on Monitoring Control and Surveillance (MCS) for Combating IUU Fishing in Southeast Asia (23-25 August 2022, Chonburi province)	10	2	2	2		2	2	2	1		2	2	10	**37**	8	29

Year	Titles (Date, Venue)	SEAFDEC	Brunei Darussalam	Cambodia	Indonesia	Japan	Lao PDR	Malaysia	Myanmar	Philippines	Singapore	Thailand	Viet Nam	Others	TOTAL	Female	Male
															No. of Participants ↔	**Gender**	
	The Regional Training Course on Port State Measures Inspection in Focus of Shipping Container for Fish and Fisheries Product (13-15 September 2022, Training Department)		2	2			2	2			2	2	2		**14**	3	11
	Online Training on the Use of eACDS Application in the Part of Movement Document (MD), Statement of Catch (SC) and Catch Certification (CC) for Myanmar (26-28 January 2022, Virtual)								11						**11**	8	3
	Online Training on Preparation and Installation of the eACDS Application to Server for Brunei Darussalam (26-27 May 2022, Virtual)		4												**4**	2	2
	Online Training on Preparation and Installation of the eACDS Application to Server for Malaysia (9-10 June 2022, Virtual)							4							**4**	0	4
	Online Training on Preparation and Installation of the eACDS Application to Server for Viet Nam (16-17 August 2022, Virtual)												4		**4**	0	4
	The Regional Workshop to Exchange Information on Catch Documentation Scheme and Traceability of Fish and Fishery Products (29-30 November 2022, SEAFDEC/TD)	12	2	2	4	0	2	1	2	2	2	4	2	5	**40**	16	24
	Total	**22**	**10**	**6**	**6**	**0**	**6**	**9**	**15**	**3**	**4**	**8**	**10**	**15**	**114**	**37**	**77**
2023	Online Practical Workshop on Preparation and Installation of the eACDS Application to Server for Myanmar (21-22 February 2023, Virtual)								5						**5**	2	3
	The Regional Training Course on the United Nations Convention on the Law of the Sea 1982 (UNCLOS 1982) in Fisheries Perspective (6-9 November 2023, Bangkok, Thailand)	20		3	3		3	3	3	3	1	5	3		**47**	30	17

Year	Titles (Date, Venue)	No. of Participants													TOTAL	Gender	
		SEAFDEC	Brunei Darussalam	Cambodia	Indonesia	Japan	Lao PDR	Malaysia	Myanmar	Philippines	Singapore	Thailand	Viet Nam	Others		Female	Male
	Training on the Use of eACDS Application in the Part of Catch Declaration (CD) (21-22 June 2023, Cambodia)			8											**8**	0	8
	The Training Course on the Use of eACDS Application for IT Administrative (11-14 September 2023, Putrajaya, Malaysia)							13							**13**	9	4
	Training on the Use of eACDS Application for Fisheries Officer from West Coast, Malaysia (24-29 September 2023, Kuala Terengganu, Malaysia							29							**29**	10	19
	Training on the Use of eACDS Application for Fisheries Officer from East Coast, Malaysia (22-27 October 2023, Kota Kinabalu, Malaysia)							27							**27**	8	19
	Training on eACDS Application for Fisheries Officer from East Coast, Malaysia (20-23 November 2023, Kuala Perlis, Malaysia)							33							**33**	8	25
	Total	**20**	**0**	**11**	**3**	**0**	**3**	**105**	**8**	**3**	**1**	**5**	**3**	**0**	**162**	**67**	**95**
	Tatal from 2020-2024	**119**	**45**	**56**	**37**	**7**	**19**	**148**	**50**	**136**	**15**	**61**	**62**	**72**	**827**	**327**	**500**

Report of
The Fifty-Third Meeting of
The Council of the Southeast Asian Fisheries Development Center
27–28 April 2021 and 11 May 2021

In part of: Implementation of Regional Management Initiatives for Combating IUU Fishing on
Regional Fishing Vessels Record (RFVR)

V. POLICY CONSIDERATION ON IMPORTANT ISSUES

5.1 Implementation of Regional Management Initiatives for Combating IUU Fishing

24.   The Council took note of the progress made by SEAFDEC in the Implementation of Regional Management Initiatives for Combating IUU Fishing (**Annex 7**), as presented by the representative from the SEAFDEC Secretariat. These include the ongoing regional initiatives on Regional Fishing Vessel Record (RFVR) Database, regional cooperation to support the implementation of port State measures (PSM) in the ASEAN, and development and promotion of the electronic ASEAN Catch Documentation Scheme (eACDS). The Council also noted the set of recommendations on the way forward for combating IUU fishing as a result of the Teleseminar on Way Forward for Combating IUU Fishing in Southeast Asia organized on 24–26 August 2020, as well as the recommendations of the Teleworkshop on Development and Improvement of Regional Tools for Combating IUU Fishing in Southeast Asia conducted on 27–28 August 2020.

Regional Fishing Vessels Record (RFVR)

25.   While appreciating the efforts of SEAFDEC in working with the AMSs to define the Key Data Elements (KDEs) for the RFVR Database for vessels 24 meters in length and over, the Council Director for Viet Nam expressed the concern on the linkage between the RFVR Database and the FAO Global Record of Fishing Vessels, Refrigerated Transports and Supply Vessels (Global Record) considering that an important criteria for inclusion of vessels' information in the Global Record is the IMO number. In response, the representative from SEAFDEC/TD informed the Council that, in principle, only information on vessels with IMO number in the RFVR Database should be linked with the Global Record. He added that TD is now in the process of communicating with FAO on the development of the clear protocol for linking the two databases in consultation with AMSs.

26.   With regard to the development of the RFVR Database for vessels less than 24 meters in length, the Council Director for Viet Nam reiterated the need to have a clear purpose on how such database could be used to support the countries in combating IUU fishing, and suggested that this should be thoroughly discussed at the technical level. Furthermore, she informed the Council that information on the category of vessels that Viet Nam could provide would be for those vessels measuring 15–24 meters in length, and not for 18–24 meters in length.

27.   With respect to data keying in by respective countries for vessels 24 meters in length and over as proposed by TD, the Council Director for Indonesia expressed interest in supporting the initiative and suggested that this issue should be further discussed. On the development of the database of RFVR less than 24 meters in length, Indonesia was of the view that at this stage focus should be made on the utilization of the existing RFVR database rather than developing such new database. This is because most of the vessels less than 24 meters in length operate in the respective countries' territorial waters to support the livelihoods of people. Therefore, Indonesia believes that the AMSs should not be given an extra burden as the existing one has yet to be implemented and proven beneficial.

28.   While appreciating the efforts of SEAFDEC in developing the RFVR Database, the Council Director for Cambodia expressed the technical difficulties of the existing database for vessels 24 meters in length and over. He also expressed the concern on how to link the regional and international databases. In response, the Secretary-General of SEAFDEC assured the Council Director for Cambodia that TD would communicate with the RFVR focal point of Cambodia after this Meeting to address the country's detailed concerns on this aspect.

29.   The Council Director for Thailand expressed the gratitude to SEAFDEC for improving the RFVR Database into a more functional platform, including the development of a dashboard and others. He acknowledged the recommendation for allowing the countries to key in their respective data in order for the data to be frequently updated and become more reliable. With regards to the RFVR for vessels less than 24 meters in length, he was of the view that most IUU fishing vessels are not larger than 24 meters. Nevertheless, the KDEs for such vessels should be less than those for vessels 24 meters in length and over, *i.e.* only five KDEs similar to the Global Record, and should include the IMO number. However, this matter should be discussed further at the technical level.

30.   While supporting the regional initiatives of SEAFDEC and the recommended Way Forward for Combating IUU Fishing in Southeast Asia, the Council Director for Malaysia, expressed the view on transferring the responsibility to the respective countries to key in their respective data that this issue should be discussed thoroughly among the AMSs. He added that the expansion of the RFVR Database to cover vessels less than 24 meters in length and the appropriate KDEs should also be further discussed.

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