



Report

A Conference for Fisheries Knowledge Provision to Local Fishers and Private Sectors in the Gulf of Thailand (REBYC-II CTI; GCP/RAS/269/GFF)

Haad Thong Hotel

Prachuap Kiri Khan Province

22-24 June 2016

Reported by

Dr. Mala Supongpan and Mr. Akanit Peakaue

Summary

As the project “Strategies for trawl fisheries by-catch management” (REBYC-II CTI; GCP/RAS/269/GFF) was concluding, it was found necessary that more primary stakeholder consultations need to be organised to disseminate results of the project and the knowledge about the status of small scale fisheries. The new laws concerning to small scale fishers, especially Royal Fisheries Ordinance 2559 (2015) which is concerned to small scale fisheries and fishers was also disseminated. It is also important that the fisheries management measures in Thailand are also in tune with global guidelines and demands. So for the benefit of the fishers and other stakeholders from the Gulf of Thailand side this conference was organized on 22-24 June 2016 at Haad Thong Hotel Prachuap Kiri Khan Province. Total participants were 150 comprising of, 5 experts, 40 government officials, 100 stakeholders (fishers, Fisheries Societies of provinces, Cooperative Saving Society, Fish processors, fish landing site representatives, and representatives from Thai Union Company), secretariat and 5 organizers.

On the Gulf of Thailand the first site of the project was in Prachuab Kiri Khan and Chumphon provinces where the enlarged mesh size codend for trawl fisheries was tried out and implemented. The second site was in Trat province, where the management measures for closed area and closed season was established to protect fish larvae and spawners. In Trat Province, DOF had conducted survey for fish larvae and spawner distribution in Ao Trat. In Prachup Kiri Khan – Chumphon

provinces, CMDEC had conducted a survey of trawl fisheries baseline, present trawl fisheries status, experiment to enlarge codend mesh for trawlers as well as socio-economic study of fishers along the sea coast of Prachuap Kiri Khan – Chumphon provinces. In Rayong and Chantaburi waters, the capture of small sized economic fish from trawler was over 60%. The size composition of small sized economic fish was below their first maturity sizes except for shellfish which was incidental catch, in Trat. The increase in mesh size is found to help release of juveniles of commercially important fish. Though the quantity of catch came down, the long-term economic benefit was shown to be better. As a next step for fisheries in Thailand, the government should develop the fisheries through effective co-management, stakeholder participation at all levels with the local and central government as well as other relevant agencies. Control or limit on fishing efforts, fishing zone establishment, increase fish habitats by increasing Artificial Reefs project, resource enhancement, sea farming, VMS and MCS system should be implemented with the cooperation of the local stakeholders or fishers.

Regarding the status of fisheries, it could be concluded that the internal problems were a) decreasing trend of the resources and environment deterioration, b) less fishing ground, and limited catches, c) too many numbers of fishing boats, gear and diversification, d) poor integration and management among agencies e.g. boat license is under Harbor Department and fishing boat and gear license is under the Department of Fisheries, e) conflict on fishing ground between large scale and small scale fisheries. The external requirements were a) combating IUU fishing is a serious issue for Thailand also to address the EU requirement, b) norms of IOTC for tuna catch quota, WCPFC, ILO for decent work and labour rights etc.

The Royal Fisheries Ordinance B.E.2558 (2015) has focused specifications on small scale fishers. The zonations for fishing, gear specifications and prohibited gears in different sections were described. The importance of the national committee, provincial committee and local small scale fisheries committee were described. The ordinance puts all efforts to combat IUU fishing. Marine Fisheries Plan (2015-2019), has focus on marine fisheries both commercial and small scale fisheries in Thai waters including in the EEZs of neighboring countries and in the High Sea.

Background

The Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations (FAO) and the Department of Fisheries, Thailand have signed the Letter of Agreement (LOA) for the execution of the GEF supported project “Strategies for trawl fisheries by-catch management” (REBYC-II CTI; GCP/RAS/269/GFF). The project has funding from Global Environment Facility (GEF). The Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations and the Southeast Asian Fisheries Development Center (SEAFDEC) have joined in the implementation of the project. In the second phase of the project (REBYC-II CTI; GCP/RAS/269/GFF), Thailand is one of the five member countries (Indonesia, Papua New Guinea, Philippines, Thailand and Vietnam) and the project is implemented by the Thailand Department of Fisheries (DOF). The Marine Fisheries Research and Development Bureau implements the project at two sites. Prachuap Kiri Khan and Chumphon is the first site where the enlarged mesh size codend for trawl fisheries was tried out. The Central Gulf Marine Fisheries Research and Development Center (CMDEC), located in Chumphon has taken the lead in research on trawl fisheries and enlarged codend mesh size experiments. The second site is in Trat province, where the management measures for closed area

and closed season are established to protect fish larvae and spawners. The Eastern Marine Fisheries Research and Development (EMDEC), located in Rayong province takes the lead for research works here. Research in both project sites will be discussed with the the stakeholders, and DOF seeks cooperation among official and stakeholders in data sharing, analysis and to present results for better understanding among each other. The project has four components which are being implemented at the same time. The four components are: 1. Policy, legal and institutional frameworks; 2. Resource management and fishing operations; 3. Information management and communication; and 4. Awareness and knowledge.

The Marine Fisheries Management Master Plan of the Department of Fisheries coincided with the Strategies for Trawl Fisheries By-catch Management. Therefore, the Department of Fisheries intended to hold a meeting to consult on the Marine Fisheries Management and Fisheries Acts 2015 in relation to trawl fisheries and By-catch Management. Furthermore, it was also to seek policy recommendations for on-going management of trawl fisheries and by-catch management.

Results of these findings will lead to more sustainable fisheries and conserved marine ecosystem in the Coral Triangle region of Southeast Asia, reduction of by-catch from trawl fisheries and reduced impact to environment is foreseen.

In this regard, the Department of Fisheries wanted to provide knowledge on REBYC II CTI results and on some key laws and regulations under the Royal Fisheries Ordinance B.E 2558 (2015) for the benefit of better understanding for local fishers and private sectors in Gulf of Thailand.

The specific objectives:

1. Provide knowledge for local fishers and private sector about the results of the projects (REBYC-II CTI; GCP/RAS/269/GFF). Mesh size enlargement for trawlers and area and season closure outputs,
2. Awareness building for fishers about the present marine fisheries status,
3. Provide knowledge for local fishers and private sector about Royal Fisheries Ordinance 2015,
4. Discuss on the practical implementation Thai fisheries management corresponding to global situation.

Participants: Total participants were 150 comprising of 5 experts, 40 government officials, 100 stakeholders (fishers, Fisheries Societies of provinces, Cooperative Saving Society, Fish processors, fish landing site representatives, and representatives from Thai Union Company) and secretariat and 5 organizers.

Presentations and discussions

Mr. Manoon Tantikul, Fisheries Provincial Officer of Prachuap Kiri Khan Province presided the opening of the conference at 09.00 hr on 23 June 2016 at Haad Thong Hotel, Prachuap Kiri Khan Province. He welcomed the participants and hoped the conference would be a success and will meet the objectives.

The conference has scoped on 6 sections as follows:

1. **The announcement to use codend mesh size 5.0 cm** for trawlers which was publicized and enforced since 4 November 2015 and later revised to use 4.0 cm.

Mr. Suchart Sangchan, the Director of Marine Fisheries Development in Andaman Sea Center summarized the background of the project "Strategies of Trawl fisheries and By-catch Management" (REBYC-II CTI; GCP/RAS/269/GFF). The objectives of the project are to reduce capture of small sized economic fish and by-catch including sea turtles and mammals. It was also to find out the fishing gear, fishing method and accessories which can reduce by-catch and reduce the effect on environment.

He has explained more about the research experiments of enlarged mesh size of trawl codend to 4.0 cm from 2.5 cm for otter board and pair trawlers. Stakeholders who participated included fishers and boat owners.

From the research results in otter board trawl experiment which used 4.0 cm, it was apparent that 43% of fish could escape; and of this escaped fish 60% was true trash fish and 40% was small sized economic fish. Fishers could earn 8% of their income of the total capture from by catch. If they let the escaped small economic fish grow further until it reached their mature sizes, it was estimated that the income would be additionally 523 Baht per haul.

For pair trawlers, using the mesh size of codend 4.0 cm, the experiment has shown that the escaped fish was 34%; 65% of this escaped fish was economic small sized fish. Fisher income from by catch was about 9% of the total capture. If they let the escaped small economic fish grow further until it reached their mature sizes, it could be estimated the income would be 2,364 Baht per haul.

2. Management measures in Trat province

Mr. Krisada Thongsila, researcher of the Eastern Marine Fisheries Research and Development Center presented about the declining resource problems and that the catch rate has decreased from 41 kg/hr in 1979 to 13.4 kg/hr in 2015 in the eastern Gulf areas. It has resulted from catching small sized fish which comprised of small sized economic fish and true trash fish. In Rayong and Chantaburi waters, the capture of small sized economic fish from trawler was over 60%. The size composition of small sized economic fish was below their maturity sizes except for shellfish which was incidental catch, in Trat Province. All fishing gears also threatened resources of dugong, dolphin, sea turtle etc. In this area, there are several management measures established e.g. no fishing by trawlers, push net, and short-necked clam dredge with motorized boat from 3 to 5.4 km of shoreline.

Under the Master Plan for Marine Fisheries Management, for the years 2014 to 2015, the Eastern Gulf Marine Fisheries Research and Development Center has implemented a number of sea enhancement measures e.g. artificial reef and fish house using cement and concrete including artificial sea grass for fish hiding, and related awareness and enforcement. In Koh Chang, Trat, the volunteer team for resource conservation has been established to protect and conserve marine resources. In this area, it is effective in marine resources conservation, in eco-touring spots, and nursery grounds of fish with full participation from stakeholders, the strong local communities, having a positive thinking.

The management measures in Trat have been formulated e.g. no fishing by trawler, purse seine with purse line, gillnet with mesh less than 4.5 cm in the area 1 to 3 in Ao Trat during March to May annually, but this is not yet successful. During the project meeting held in 29 October 2013, most of the participants had accepted measures for responsible fisheries and they scoped these 3 issues: 1) good ecosystem, 2) practical and effective enforcement and 3) socio-economic well-being of the local people.

3. Present status of Marine Fisheries

Mr. Pirochana Saiklieng, Marine Fisheries Consultant of DOF, presented the present status of marine fisheries. The fishing gears used in the Southeast Asian countries were 50% trawlers, and lesser numbers of purse seine and gillnet. Trawl production was about 20% of the world fish production in 2009. The major production of the region came from Indonesia which was 34%. . In Thailand, production has decreased since Thailand has ratified her EEZ area. Hence the fishing areas also decreased. Earlier, Thailand was fishing in foreign countries, such as India, Somalia and Africa but now no more contracts. Now Thailand is fishing only in her EEZ areas and they fish in some neighboring countries' waters with agreements.

Under the Thailand Fisheries Ordinance 2015, license can be issued for trawlers for up to two years. In 2014, there were 11, 217 trawlers which was 34% of total number of fishing boats.

In 2013 production from trawlers accounted to 48% of the total. Thai fisheries faced problems mainly from family operated companies, especially because there is no single authority to control fishing outside Thai waters. Some fishing boats breached the agreement or were not following what they had agreed to. Some were caught for illegal fishing. Anyhow, Thai fishing fleet was still within global standards. Policy and conditions to issue license to sea fishing boats should be revised based on economic viability. It was also needed to develop infrastructure to facilitate the fisheries e.g. fishing pier, freezers etc.

Thai fisheries are showing a downward trend, such as the fish production comprising of more small sized fish, no selective fishing gear for size selection, over exploitation, too many fishing boats and gears destroying resources and ecosystem, loss of biodiversity of resources, no full participation of stakeholders, conflict among commercial and small scale fishing gear. Thai fisheries are open access, labor deficient, and high fuel price is also affecting the same. All these problems can be solved grouped into 3 issues:

- a) Problems within the country can be solved by: An integrated approach to address all problems at the same time by inter and intra government agencies concerned, e.g. boat license by Navy while fishing license by the DOF; zonation for different types of fishing and different fishing method etc.
- b) Problems from outside of the country can be solved by revising institutional framework to match the international and regional agreements and norms e.g. IUU fishing, EU measures, RFMOs, IOTC, WCPFC, IOL 188 etc. For fishery outside of the country, it should be fished under agreements.

- c) Problems with regard to Thai Fisheries Acts can be solved by the Government of Thailand, which has now issued Fisheries Ordinance 2015. Laws and regulations have been revised to address and define the small scale fisheries, large scale fisheries, fishing capacity, control of fishing efforts and potential yield, zone for fishing, MSY as a reference point, establishment of National Fisheries Committee, Provincial Fisheries Committee, promotion of community fishery management or co-management, rehabilitation, resource enhancement, sea farming etc.

Next important step in Thai marine fisheries is to develop effective stakeholder participation in policy, planning and implementation, strengthening Monitoring, Control and Surveillance (MCS), Vessel Monitoring Systems (VMS) to map fishing activity, and enhance Port State Measures (PSM).

Questions and Answers:

Q: Mr. Somsak Chullasorn point out that all problems in Thai fisheries have to be informed to the senior officers to help solve the problems. The introduction to the new fishing ground would be promoted and research survey would also be taken up. Vietnamese fishing invasion in the Gulf of Thailand has to be solved.

A: Mr. Pirochana explained an example in Phang Nga Bay where they changed to fish in the responsible manner. They quit push net and started to use shrimp gillnet, they established fisher groups and a central market to sell their product for a fair price. This has resulted in good benefits to fishers and the ecosystem in Phang-Nga Bay.

Q: Miss Pochanee Noiphol, Representative from Fisheries Cooperative Samuth Prakarn Province, stated that they have quit push net and government was to introduce license for Sergestid shrimp. It was unfortunate that there is hardly any Sergestid shrimp to fish. Fishers are suffering and in the near future Sergestid shrimp will occur only in a short period on particular season. Government could seriously consider solving this problem?

A: Mr. Pirochana replied that, now there is not any issue to solve the problem. There were 341 Push nets. They were considering and doing research on this issue. At first, it was to be changed and registered as Sergestid shimp net, otter board trawl and to be sold to the government. In case of changing to Sergestid shimp net which use small size boats, it may be classified as small scale fisheries. From the surveys it was found that of the Sergestid shimp fishing boats, 145 number were commercial boats and 5 to 6 boats were having capacity more than 60 gross tonnes. This problem has to be considered.

Q: Mr. Prayut Chiamjerm, representative from Fisheries Society of Klong Warn, Prachaup Kiri Khan Province: Was the MSY estimated correctly, and used to manage the purse seine fisheries? We hope the researchers would take more serious research by experiment with video record and in collaboration with the purse seiners.

A: Mr. Pirochana: The reference point using MSY have been estimated for several groups of species in Thailand e.g. group of pelagic fish, group of demersal fish, anchovy. The results of these have been published in the regional and global fisheries documents. Time series data were collected for each group which takes some time. Key species and parameters were also precise and concise enough to use for management purposes. The reference point using MSY has to be frequently estimated for about every 5 years to investigate change in fisheries.

4. Royal Fisheries Ordinance 2015

Mr. Bancha Sookkiew, Fisheries Provincial of Chonburi Province presented that before we entered to core of the meeting, the participants should know how to access the data sources related to Royal Fisheries Ordinance 2015: by going to DOF website and then to Laws and Regulation Division and search for Royal Fisheries Ordinance 2015. The website contains laws and regulations in detail, including Royal Notification, Ministry Notification, and Provincial Notification that fishers can access. He also explained how Thailand would combat IUU fishing as per the following details:

The combating for IUU Fishing in Thailand

IUU fishing is a global problem that threatens ocean ecosystems and sustainable fisheries. IUU products often come from fisheries lacking strong and effective conservation and management measures. IUU fishing most often violates conservation and management measures, established under international agreements. By adversely impacting fisheries, marine ecosystems, food security and coastal communities around the world, IUU fishing undermines domestic and international conservation and management efforts.

The EU is using its market weight to tackle illegal fishing activity

The European Commission in 21 April 2015 put Thailand on formal notice for not taking sufficient measures to tackle illegal, unreported, and unregulated (IUU) fishing. This was accompanied by yellow card. The move comes as part of the EU's effort to wipe out illicitly caught fish from its fish imports. The EU is the world's largest fish importer. Brussels will enter into dialogue with Bangkok on steps needed to address its IUU challenge. Thailand will be given six months to implement a tailor-made action plan. A "yellow card" handed out by the Commission represents a first step in a process that could eventually result in a fisheries import ban if Thailand fails to clean up its act. The move kicks off a formal process where fish and fish products from Thailand added up to about three percent of the 28-nation's bloc overall fish imports in 2013. Thailand's global fish exports weighed in at around US\$6.2 billion in 2009, the world's third largest exporter by value, equal to seven percent of the global total exported value.

Trade tools to tackle illegal fishing

The EU's IUU regulation entered into force in 2010, putting in place a system to identify countries where illegal marine activity is rife, with the ability to resort to trade bans to prevent illegally caught products from entering its market. The regulation also put in place a system of catch certification whereby fish imports are accompanied by a document indicating that it was caught in accordance with applicable laws, regulations, and international measures.

IUU fishing is broadly recognized by experts as a key driver of global overfishing, a threat to marine ecosystems, and food security. Illegal fishing activity involves boats operating in violation of the laws of the fishery and international obligations.

The United States on 18 March 2014 released an action plan to tackle IUU fishing. Steps identified for the coming two years include addressing the challenge at landing point and ports, including relevant provisions in international trade agreements, and improving traceability across the supply chain.

The Royal Thai Government acknowledges the statement made in 21 April 2016 by Mr. Karmenu Vella, European Commissioner for Environment, Maritime Affairs and Fisheries, concerning Thailand's efforts to combat illegal, unregulated and unreported (IUU) fishing. The Thai Government welcomed the European Commission's confirmation of the next round of dialogue with Thailand in May 2016 in Brussels. The Thai Government was expeditiously addressing the issues concerned and will convey the latest results to the Commission accordingly.

The Thai Government values the dialogue with the European Commission. The dialogue provided useful advice and bolsters cooperation in tackling IUU fishing and labor abuses in the fisheries sector, in line with international standards. The Thai Government attached high priority in advancing the comprehensive fisheries reform. Tangible progress has been achieved over the past year, especially in the overhaul of legal and policy frameworks on the Thai fisheries. However, there remained a number of issues that need to be promptly tackled.

The Thai Government is firmly committed to taking on the challenges of resolving these deep-seated problems in the fisheries sector, by enforcing the law, building capacity and strengthening cooperation with all partners and other countries in the region. The Center for Combating Illegal Fishing (CCCIF) and all relevant government agencies spare no effort to expedite and improve the implementation of the Royal Ordinance on Fisheries 2015, the fisheries management plan and the control measures.

In the spirit of enduring friendship and cooperation between Thailand and the European Union, the Thai Government is committed to sustaining the constructive IUU dialogue with the European Commission in order to realize the shared goal of promoting sustainable fisheries.

A New National Fisheries Law

The Royal Ordinance on Fisheries B.E. 2558 (2015) as approved by the Thai cabinet on the 3rd November 2015 came into force on 14th November 2015. This new law replaced the Fisheries Act B.E.2490 (1947). The new law will trigger major changes to help prevent IUU fishing, preserve animal resources, protect the welfare of seamen, and also prevent all forms of forced labour in the fisheries sector.

The new law also provided 2 levels of Local Fisheries Committee and Provincial Fisheries Committee. The Local Fisheries Committee came from Section 25 of the new law, which the Department of Fisheries has to promote to establish and take part in the policy planning and formulation; and using

MSY as an indicator to manage the resources for sustainability. DOF has to promote fisher capacity, conservation of the resources, rehabilitation, enhancement etc. to local community.

The Establishment of Fisheries Province Committee comprise of the Governor as the President of the Committee, with 13 representative members from the Ministry of Natural Resources, Harbor, provincial lawyer, Commerce, Amphoe official, Administrative of Ao Bo Jo, President of Agriculture Committee, Navy, and the fisheries provincial officer as a secretary. The committee has 2 years implementation period, the tasks are to introduce management scheme, preserve and conserve natural resources, resource utilization rehabilitation, conflict resolution and finally report the results to Minister/committee/DOF.

The Fisheries Province Committees can issue the Provincial Notification to protect their natural resources by Sections 56, 71, and 77. The Notification will be implemented temporarily within 60 days and will practically be implemented after the Minister has signed the Notification.

Definition of the coastal zone is 3 nm from shoreline and can extend to be 12 nm or not less than 1.5 nm for management purpose, licensed for fishing boats of capacity less than 10 gross ton (or not more than 15 gross ton) to fish.

The offshore zone is defined from coastal zone extending to EEZ zone. Fishing boat holding license, with capacity more than 10 gross ton or 280 hp, can fish in this area.

For area and season closure measure, it has to be based on research, developing understanding, public hearing, consultation with the public, consultation with the stakeholders, local community, Provincial Fisheries Committee and DOF, finally to be approved by the Minister. When the measure is approved, the announcement should be conducted promptly.

Question and Answer:

Q: Mr. Prasert Tagchor, President of Fisheries Society of Prachuap Kiri Khan province.

The Provincial Fisheries Committees have been established in several provinces but there were no meetings held. How can they solve the problem?

A: Mr. Bancha Sookkiew:

The meeting has to include one third of the total members, then they can propose to the Governor to convene the meeting. The difficulties had occurred, in some large provinces, several of them have no seashore and they have to join as a member as well as having lot of budget in holding meeting.

Now to reduce conflicts, every province has to consider about fishing boundary in conservation area and propose to the Minister for approval.

Q: Mr. Veerachat Jelaem, representative of fishers in Nakorn Sri Thammarat province.

Now the commercial fisheries can request for license but no request for small scale fisheries resulted in several problems, no one can help due to no license, request someone can solve the problem.

A: Mr. Bancha Sookkiew

Normally the licensed small scale fishing gear can fish in the coastal zone (section 32). Some small scale fishers requested to fish offshore which was not allowed (section 34) then they requested to further revise the law section 34 which was not possible. As a result of the meeting with DOF, all fishing licenses of small scale fisheries were cancelled. This time the small scale fisheries can fish freely whether they have a license or not. During this time period, the DOF is considering to find out the way to address the problems of small scale fisheries.

In the case of a disaster, small scale fishers can request for help as an emergency case to DOF. The documents needed are 1) boat registration document; 2) license to use boat; and 3) fishing license or fishing permit. Now small scale fishers have no licenses, anyhow they can request for help in case of disaster.

5. Marine Fisheries Management Plan of Thailand: A National Policy for Marine Fisheries Management 2015-2019 presented by Mrs. Prulai Nootmorn, Expert on Marine Fisheries, DOF.

Mrs. Prulai Nootmorn presented that the plan will be used for all kinds of fisheries: small scale and large scale fisheries fishing in the Thai EEZ areas and in neighboring countries' EEZ, and in the high sea areas.

Fishing areas of Thailand are divided into the Gulf of Thailand and the Andaman Sea which have difference in management, fish stock, migratory tuna, rare, endangered and threatened species etc. For tuna the management is under Regional Fisheries Management Organization (RFMO).

In July 2015, the number of registered boats was 20,000, it was 70% of small scale fishing boats, and the less 30% was commercial fishing boats.

The concept of the plan is to sustain fisheries and make balance between good ecosystem and welfare of people. Institutional framework for effective fisheries management, participatory approach and collaboration in all levels, precautionary approach and risk assessment to estimate Maximum Sustainable Yield (MSY) etc., is part of the plan

As a matter of priority, the plan aims to reduce the fishing capacity and fishing effort within 3 years especially for commercial scale. Trawlers will be reduced by 40% in the Gulf of Thailand and 20% in the Andaman Sea. Purse seiners will be reduced by 30% in the Gulf and 20% in Andaman Sea. Planned is also rehabilitation of fishery resources by establishing artificial reef and fish house in 10 sites in a year. Other objectives are to combat IUU fishing by strengthening the MCS system, reduce small sized economic fish from trawler by 50% of the present level within 5 years using mesh size limitation measure as well as other gear regulations. Increasing the area and season to protect and conserve areas of nourishment and spawning ground based on research results is part of the plan. Conflict among small scale and large scale will be resolved. Data collection, data management and sharing system will be improved for better access by interested person.

Results from combating IUU may affect fishers who are likely to suffer by fishing restrictions or no fishing. The DOF will assist by 2 methods: 1) plan to buy fishing boat, 2) plan to compensate, DOF will evaluate for every two years.

6. Plan of Action to Combat IUU Fishing (2015-2019):

Mrs. Praulai Nootmorn, Expert on Marine Fisheries DOF, presented

IUU Fishing in Thailand in the past has been due to the essential open access fisheries. Although there are some rules and regulations to limit capacity and fishing effort these have not been complied with or enforced. IUU fishing is a major problem in both Thai waters and outside of Thai waters. These IUU fishing challenges which have been understood from previous incidents, which are being addressed by this National Plan of Action, are summarized below:

- 1) Unauthorized fishing by Thai vessels in Thai waters;
- 2) Encroachment into prohibited areas and seasons;
- 3) Unauthorized and unlicensed use of fishing gear in Thai waters;
- 4) Unauthorized fishing and transshipment of fish outside of Thai waters;
- 5) Fishing by Thai vessels without a valid licence, authorisation or permit issued by Thailand or coastal States;
- 6) Fishing by Thai vessels without Vessel Monitoring System (VMS) equipment onboard in the high seas and in coastal States where VMS is a requirement for all foreign flagged vessels;
- 7) Falsification by Thai vessel operators of information regarding fishing areas to obtain validation of catch certificates from the Thai authorities and importation of the products into the EU;
- 8) Falsification or concealing their markings, identity or registration by Thai fishing vessels;
- 9) Obstruction of the work of coastal State officials in the exercise of their duties in inspecting for compliance with the applicable conservation and management measures;
- 10) Failure by Thai vessel operators to fulfil their obligations to record and report entry, exit and catch data to the coastal states authorities;
- 11) Inaccurate use by operators of national documentation schemes developed by the authorities for the purpose of traceability; thus exposing the system to potential abuse by allowing operators to over declare;
- 12) Sub-standard sanitary and labour conditions on Thai fishing vessels;

Many of these issues lead to IUU fishing problems which arise from a combination of factors, including:

- a) Ineffective monitoring, control and surveillance (MCS) measures;
- b) Weak law enforcement;
- c) Weak collaboration among relevant agencies;
- d) Unclear rules governing registration of vessels and licencing;
- e) Lack of control of imported tuna by the Customs authorities;

- f) The absence of VMS coverage in the majority of the fleet; demonstrating the inability to monitor fishing operations at sea to effectively enforce rules applicable to the different sea areas concerned.

All these IUU fishing issues have been compounded by the excessive fishing capacity and fishing effort of the Thai fishing fleet. The Fisheries Management Plan of Thailand (2015-2019) provides a comprehensive response to address the overfishing and excessive fishing capacity issues in Thailand.

The framework and scope of the NPOA-IUU

Thailand's NPOA-IUU structure is based on the FAO IPOA-IUU. The NPOA-IUU fishing of Thailand provides the guidelines on 5 areas:

- (i) all State responsibilities,
- (ii) Thailand's Coastal State Responsibilities,
- (iii) Thailand's Responsibilities as a Flag State,
- (iv) Thailand Measures as a Port State and
- (v) Internationally-agreed Market Related Measures.

The NPOA-IUU covers all marine fishing activities in Thai waters and outside Thai waters (EEZ of other Coastal States and in the high seas) by complying with acceptable fishing laws, policies, and regulations as agreed by internal law and agreed international legal instrument and/or binding conventions.

Thailand has also prepared a detailed NPOA-IUU Implementation Work Plan that specifies (i) key performance indicators (KPIs), (ii) the procedure for implementation, (iii) the obligations, laws, and relevant policies, (iv) responsible organizations, and (iv) timelines for each management action and measure.

Objectives:

1. Thailand to develop and implement National Plan of Action to Prevent, Deter and Eliminate illegal, Unreported and Unregulated Fishing (NPOA-IUU) to assist in combating IUU.
2. To specify actions and measures to assist in addressing the challenge of degradation of the fish resources caused by overcapacity and overfishing;
3. Fishing capacity and fishing effort reduction measures, including controls on fishing licenses need to be backed up with compliance with the laws, policies, and regulations as agreed by internal Thai law and international legal instrument and/or binding conventions to prevent, deter and eliminate illegal, unreported and unregulated fishing both inside and outside Thai waters (EEZ of other coastal States and in the high seas).

Main conclusions

The summary of the knowledge disseminated is given below.

On the Gulf of Thailand the first site of the project was in Prachuab Kiri Khan and Chumphon provinces where the enlarged mesh size codend for trawl fisheries was tried out and implemented. The second site was in Trat Province, where the management measures for closed area and closed season were established to protect fish larvae and spawners. In Trat Province, DOF had conducted survey for fish larvae and spawner distribution in Ao Trat. In Prachup Kiri Khan – Chumphon provinces, CMDEC had conducted a survey of trawl fisheries baseline, present trawl fisheries status, experiment to enlarge codend mesh for trawlers as well as socio-economic study of fishers along the sea coast of Prachaup Kiri Khan – Chumphon provinces. In Rayong and Chantaburi waters, the capture of small sized economic fish from trawler was over 60%. The size composition of small sized economic fish was below their maturity sizes except for shellfish which was incidental catch, in Trat Province. The increase in mesh size is found to help release of juveniles of commercially important fish. Though the quantity of catch came down, the long term economic benefit was shown to be better. As a next step for fisheries in Thailand, the government should develop the fisheries through effective co-management, stakeholder participation at all levels with the local and central government as well as with other relevant agencies. Control or limit fishing efforts, fishing zone establishment, increase fish habitats by increasing Artificial Reefs project, resource enhancement, sea farming, VMS and MCS system should be implemented with the cooperation of the local stakeholders or fishers.

Regarding the status of fisheries, it could be concluded that the internal problems were a) decreasing trend of the resources and environment deterioration, b) less fishing ground and limited catches, c) too many fishing boats, gears and diversification, d) poor integration and management among agencies e.g. boat license is under Harbor Department and fishing boat and gear license is under the Department of Fisheries, e) conflict on fishing ground between large scale and small scale fisheries. The external requirements were, a) combating IUU fishing is serious issue for Thailand also to address the EU requirement, b) norms of IOTC for tuna catch quota, WCPFC, ILO for labour issues etc.

The Royal Fisheries Ordinance B.E.2558 (2015) has focused specifications on small scale fishers. The zonations for fishing, gear specifications and prohibited gears in different sections were described. The importance of the national committee, provincial committee and local small scale fisheries committee were described. The ordinance puts all efforts to combat IUU fishing. Marine Fisheries Plan (2015-2019), focus on marine fisheries both commercial and small scale fisheries in Thai waters including in the EEZs of neighboring countries and in the High Sea.

Agenda

22 June 2016

16:00-18:30 hr Registration

23 June 2016

08:00-09:00 Registration

09:00-09:30 Mr. Manoon Tantikul, Fisheries Provincial Officer of Prachuap Kiri Khan Province presided the conference

09:30-10:00 Background of the project briefly, fisheries and social economic status in Prachuab Kiri Khan, Chumphon Province

Enlarged codend mesh size of trawl fisheries in focus

10:00-10:30 Refreshment

10:30-11:00 Fisheries and social economic status in Trat Province and Closed area and closed season in focus in Ao Trat

11:00-12:00 Open Discussion

12:00-13:00 Lunch

13:00-14:00 New Fisheries Acts

14:00-15:00 Practical implement for Thai fisheries corresponding to global situation

15:00-15:30 Refreshment

15:30-16:45 Marine Fisheries Management Plan and NPOA –IUU

16:45-17:00 Conclusions and Closure of the meeting

24 June 2016

Travelling back home