



**STRATEGIES FOR TRAWL FISHERIES  
BYCATCH MANAGEMENT  
(REBYC-II CTI; GCP /RAS/269/GFF)**

**MISSION REPORT**

**Mr. Nguyen Ba Thong**

**CONDUCTED FROM 25-28 DECEMBER 2013**

## **Introduction**

Currently, even the total catch is not clearly known for the trawl fisheries in Vietnam in general and if the total catches is known but only with uncertainty and there is no bycatch information in term of volume and species composition. There is an almost total lack of any operational-level data on the catches and bycatch for all regions, such that trends in catch rate are unable to be monitored. Although national legal framework has been established to implement a logbook program requiring cooperation of fishing communities, implementation is very weak due to lack of compliance and enforcement. The difficulty of the catch monitoring task is exacerbated by the complex multi-gear nature of the trawl fishery.

Improved trawl fisheries data collection is an important objective of the REBYC-II CTI project at the pilot sites; including Kien Giang. In order to collect trawl fisheries data, a workshop to guide local staff on how to collect trawl fishery bycatch data must be conducted to provide to samplers/enumerators and local staff. Under the letter of Agreement between FAO and DECAFIREP, a workshop to guide local staffs on how to collect trawl fishery bycatch data was foreseen. This is a very good chance for National Technical Officer (NTO) to participate this event so that he can be work together with local consultant for guiding trawl fishery data collection. The detail schedules of the mission are indicated in the **Annex A**.

## **Objectives of the mission**

1. To participate a training workshop for trawl fishery data collection in KienGiang province.
2. To facilitate field activities, and
3. To support other administrative procedures.

## **Meeting locations**

1. Participation on data collection workshop convened by DECAFIREP under technical support by local consultant (Mr. Nguyen Ba Thong) at Ngoc Tram Hotel, RachGia from 26-27 December 2013 (**Annex B**).
2. Meeting with Provincial Department of Agriculture and Rural Development (DARD), KienGiang.
3. Meeting with Sub-Department of Capture Fisheries and Resources Protection.

## **Summaries of workshop outcomes**

Mr. Nguyen TienThang, DECAFIREP's staff presented summaries of activities planned to implement in Vietnam for the first year. During his presentation, he also overviewed brief information of the project as indicated in the project document. He mentioned in the presentation that all of the activities of the project in the first year will be focused in two 4 components.

In his presentation, he also summarized some important information of the trawl fisheries in Vietnam. In 2012, there are total 21.539 units using trawling gears in Vietnam accounting for 16.8% in total vessel numbers. Of those, the total number of vessel with capacity less than 20HP accounted for about 10% in total trawling vessels, 48% accounted for the vessels from 20-150HP and the rest (42%) belong to the vessel higher than 150HP. In general, there was a recent large change on the fishing fleet structure over some years. The total trawl vessel with high capacity is increased over the past few years.

The REBYC-II CTI project will be implemented at KienGiang province as a pilot site for trawl management and bycatch reduction device experiments. In the first year, the project will consider some following main activities such as: review legal and policy frameworks on trawl fisheries management, review trawl fisheries status at KienGiang province, data collection of bycatch and trawl fisheries, development of national legal document to better manage trawl fisheries at the national level...

After that, all participants discussed on possibilities to enhance roles and responsibilities on data collection activities in KienGiang province. DECAFIREP will be a coordination agency at the national level and incorporate to local agencies such as Sub-DECAFIREP and DARD. DECAFIREP will make necessary procedures to resign the existing contract for data collection activities with FAO so that DARD/Sub-DECAFIREP can obtain budget for data collection on trawl fisheries and bycatch in the end of 2013 or early 2014.

Data collection forms/protocols was developed by a consultancy task (Mr. Nguyen Ba Thong). Due to problem on species identification on bycatch samples, the participants proposed that data collection of total landing and bycatch of trawl fisheries will be collected by both local agencies and a research institute. The local authorities will be responsible for landing data to define the percentage of bycatch in total landing and the research institute will collect bycatch samples so that they can clarify which bycatch species and their corresponding proportions in the total landing. The flow chart of data collection system is indicated as in the **Annex C**.

Logbook data is also collected to cross check with the collected landing data. In addition, the logbook data is also used to map fishing groups of the trawl fisheries and for other purposes.

During implementation of data collection, involvement of other stakeholders will be a key factor to determine its success. Fishers and the processing and fishmeal companies must recognize the importance of data collection and participation on such activities. Therefore, the participants suggested that raising awareness activities are needed in the coming time.

The participants also discussed on application of co-management approaches on data collection can be a good approach in the current situation of Vietnam. Fishing communities will recognize submission and provision of data to assess and manage their resources and hence their central role will clearly be defined.

## **Meeting at DARD and Sub-DECAFIREP:**

### **Discussion on general information of trawl fisheries in the province**

- There are more than 3000 trawlers registered in the province (accounting about nearly 30% of all registered vessels in the province and about 70% of total capacity of all vessels).
- Fishing season is about 9 months with two peak fishing seasons around Northeast and Southwest monsoon seasons.
- The share of the total catch by these trawlers is about 80%.
- On average, the share of the shrimp(s) in the total catch is about 9% and the share of fish is on average about 67%.
- There are regulations in place aiming to reduce the bycatch of juvenile fish in the trawl fisheries.
- There is enforcement and control of the mesh size regulations but it is not clear whether all vessels are complying.
- Near-shore nursery areas (juvenile hot-spots) have been mapped by surveys.
- Fishing areas are divided into three different zones (near shore, buffer zone and offshore area).
- The near shore area is prohibited for all trawling activity except with some smaller vessels using environmentally friendly small-scale fishing gears.
- In Kien Giang, the fishing area is zoned by water depth (*the near shore is considered for waters less than 20 m in depth*), so that the zone nearest shore is only allowed for vessels up to 20 hp, and the vessels with over 90 hp are only allowed in the deeper zone.
- Fishermen who do not comply with the rules risk losing their fishing licence – therefore compliance with regulations in Vietnam is likely higher than in many other countries.
- DARD officers stated that they believe that by reducing the quantity of juvenile fish in the trawl catches, the overall situation would improve, and the main fish stocks would recover.
- It was noted that although there are some obvious benefits, an effective increase of trawl cod-end mesh size is not an easy measure and it may have several unexpected impacts such as:
- There are likely no effective incentives (or very weak incentives) from the individual fisherman point of view to increase the selectivity of his trawl.

- Co-management issues are still relatively poorly known in Vietnam but it was acknowledged that co-management approach could be useful in reducing the conflicts among various fleet segments and also among other stakeholders such as growing aquaculture sector and tourism industry.
- It was stated, however, that the development of effective co-management arrangements would not be an easy process in the province and would need strong support from the government.
- The issue of push-net fishing was not adequately covered but it was stated that it is still a common fishing method in the inshore waters (although there are attempts to phase it out).

### **Discussion on establishing data collection system in the local agencies**

- DARD/Sub-DECAFIREP will arrange sufficient manpower for data collection activities in KienGiang allocate its staffs and local volunteers to collect landing and logsheet data for trawl fisheries.
- Data collection activities of the trawl fisheries may be integrated with existing data collection activities in the province.
- DECAFIREP will communicate to FAO for finalize the signature procedures with FAO. DECAFIREP will make a sub-contract with DARD/Sub-DECAFIREP to implement data collection activities (landing and logsheet data collection) in KienGiang province.

### **Visit Ha Tien landing site**

Ha Tien is a town in KiênGiàng Province, Mekong Delta of Vietnam. The town borders Cambodia to the west. HàTiên is a popular tourist site of the region thanks to its beautiful beaches and landscapes.



- Ha Tien is one of five main fishing ports in the KienGiàng province.
- The port is the base of some of the trawl vessels in the province; not clear how many vessels there are in total (but mainly trawlers, gillnetter).

- Main target species are fishes, squid and shrimp.
- Data collection system in the port is not sufficient:
  - The catch is not separated by species.
  - No catch per unit of effort (CPUE) data is collected.
  - The purpose is to collect landing fee in proportion to amount of fish landed.
- Establishing data collection system at the port should consider following matters:
  - At the moment, there are some transshipment the catch at sea, some vessel shorted fish before landing, and larger vessels may stay at sea for several months.
  - A Logbook system in place for vessels > 90 hp (collected by DARD/Sub-DECAFIREP, but not linked/crosschecked with the landing data).
    - Catch is recorded in the logbooks only by functional species groups (not by species).
  - Vessels may land at any port, apparently also in other provinces; depending on the season.

## **Conclusion**

- DARD/Sub-DECAFIREP will coordinate landing data collection activities once the subcontract for trawl landing data collection signed by DECAFIREP and DARD/Sub-DECAFIREP.
- RIMF will involve in sampling the bycatch species composition and biological data.
- The catches of both large and small-scale vessels, and otter-trawlers and pair-trawlers, have to be sampled.
- Larger vessels have to be sampled at sea because the catches are sorted at sea (when landed, no sampling is useful).

### Annex A: Mission Schedules from 25-28 December 2013

<b>Date</b>	<b>Time</b>	<b>Details</b>	<b>Remarks</b>
25 Dec 2013	18.10-20.10	Leave Ha Noi for Ho Chi Minh (HCM) City	Stay overnight on HCM city
26 Dec 2013	06.00-07.00	Travel from HCM to KienGiang	By air plane
26 Dec 2013	08.00-17.00	Participation on training workshop on the data collection	
27 Dec 2013	08.00-12.00	Continue to participate the training workshop on the data collection	
27 Dec 2013	14.00-15.00	Meeting with DARD/Sub-DECAFIREP - KienGiang to discussion on how to set up data collection system on trawl fisheries including bycatch sampling	
	15.00-20.00	Visit Ha Tien landing site	
28 Dec 2013	07.30-11.30	Leave KienGiang for Ha Noi	By air

## Annex B: Agenda for workshop to train for local staffs on data collection

Time	Content	Facilitator/presenter
<b>Day 1: 26/12/2013</b>		
08:00 - 08:15	Registration	DECAFIREP
08:15 - 08:25	Introduction of participant	DECAFIREP
08:25 - 08:35	Opening remark	Leader of DECAFIREP
08:35 - 08:45	Welcome remark	Leader of DARD KienGiang
08:45 - 09:15	Introduction on project's activities in the first year	DECAFIREP
09:15 - 09:45	Introduction on roles and importance of fisheries data collection in the trawl fisheries management	Consultant
09:45 - 10:15	Tea break	All participant
10:15 - 12:00	Introduction of indicators and parameters on fisheries statistical task	Consultant
12:00 - 14:00	Lunch break	All participant
14.00 - 15.00	Collecting basic information/data in fisheries management	Consultant
15.00 - 15.30	Discussion	All participant
15.30 - 15.45	Tea break	All participant
15.45 - 16.45	Continued the discussion section	All participant
<b>Day 2: 27/12/2013</b>		
08:00 - 09:00	Basic fisheries data collection methodologies in fisheries management	Consultant
09:00 - 09:45	How to define sampling scope and number of samples in fisheries data collection	Consultant
09:45 - 10:15	Tea break	All participant
10:15 - 11:15	Introduction some data collection forms on trawl fisheries data collection (including bycatch data collection form)	Consultant
11:15 - 12:00	Introduction on how to develop sampling strategies	Consultant
12:00 - 14:00	Lunch break	All participant
11:15 - 12:00	Using collected trawl fisheries data in trawl fisheries management	Consultant
14:00 - 15:00	General discussion and course evaluation	Consultant
15.00 - 15.30	Break	All participant
15.30 - 16.00	Closing the meeting	DARD KienGiang and DECAFIREP leaders



**Annex C: Flow chart of trawl fisheries data collection system proposed for the project**

