

Report
Advisory Committee Meeting
“Strategies for Trawl Fisheries By-catch Management”
“GCP/RAS/269/GFF”

KU Home Hotel, Bangkok
25th October 2013

The meeting was held in one day at KU Home on 25th October 2013. Total participants attended the meeting were 35 person comprising stakeholder including fishers 10, DOF officials 14, other government officials 4, organizers 5 and invited speakers 2.

The presentation, objectives of the project, project sites. responsible units of DOF, comment and recommendation from the meeting were summarized as following:.

1. Mr. Manoch Rungratree, the Director of the Marine Fisheries Research and Development Bureau welcomed participants and gave the opening speech. He expressed his pleasure to attend this meeting of the cooperative project among FAO, DOF and SEAFDEC. It is good cooperation among these organisations to cure the marine resources in parallel to utilization. As we all aware that nowadays the responsible fisheries is urged by consumers. Without responsible practices in fisheries, the fisheries exporters might face difficulties of their commodities.

For DOF, we focus the marine resouces mangement into 3 major parts that include: (1) fishing gear aspect, whether their impact the resources at what degrees. For instance, the mesh size of bottom net of crab trap had been enlarged in order to release small size crab, (2) spatial aspect, whether the restrictions of the sensitive areas are established. (3) marine animals aspect, whether they have been threatening by any fishing activities and how to protect them.

For trawlers, until nowadays. there are no limitation of net mesh sizes. It exploits a lot of fish including small sizes of economical fish by using small mesh sizes. In the past, these small sized fishes are not target species but presently, it is caught as target species to compensate the high cost of investment and resource is scarce. So, it relatively impacts to the sustainable fisheries. Therefore, trawler is the target of the gear restriction. In 1987 (B.E. 2530), the mesh size used of trawling net was 4 cm. Higher competition amongst trawlers, they try to catch more and more by reducing cod end mesh sizes. Resulted small size fish get caught more and more including small sizes economic fishes. So, it is the time to appropriately limit the mesh size of trawl net. One of the management measures of DOF fishery policy is to enlarge the codend mesh size for trawlers. DOF has already started by conducting some experiments of trawling by using different mesh sizes for codend meshes. Thus, this meeting will focus and discuss on this issue.

The next issue for this meeting is to consider the area and season which is appropriated to establish for area and season closure in Trad province. Hopefully that the REBYC II Project will facilitate and research oriented to the area concerned.

Lastly, Mr. Manoch expressed that the meeting will be a fruitful results by discussion in a open plenary discussion and meet the objectives of the Thai REBYC II Project.

2. Mr. Isara Chanrachkij, Project Technical Advisor, firstly start with the introduction to Dr. Richard, who in charge of the REBYC II prject. After then, Mr. Isara presented the background of the REBYC I project which was the starting point and continue to the REBYC II Project nowadays. The world catch of marine resources has rapidly increased since 1950 which mostly were the demersal fish. In 1968, the Law of the Sea Convention (LOSC) was issued, and, later on, some agreements reflected the LOSC were issued which, among those, was the 1995 Code of Conduct for Responsible

Fisheries (CCRF). However, the CCRF was not apparently fit to the Southeast Asian region. Consequently, The SEAFDEC had modified and published the modified CCRF for this region.

The FAO awarded the need of the appropriate guideline for the region as well. Then, the REBYC I was carried out by FAO with the expectation to produce the international or regional guideline that would be appropriate to the regional or country contexts. The REBYC I emphasized the decrease of the bycatch, particularly sharks and turtles. The project provided the gear to filter off small fish to the Philippines and supported the SEAFDEC member countries, and the countries that have high effort of shrimp trawl fisheries to reduce bycatch. For Thailand, it was supported by Japan to install Juvenile -Turtle Excluding Device (J-TED). Nevertheless, the J-TED installation for trawlers was unacceptable from fishers. They refused to use J-TED because they believed that it might increase fuel consumption.

Lessons that we had learnt from the REBYC I were the diversity of resources, fishing gear and socioeconomic contexts. The lack of support from fishers was the major obstacle to implementation of the proposed approach. Moreover, fishers in this region are depending on bycatch for their economical reasons.

So REBYC II will be implemented to cope with these issues. The specific objectives of the project are to achieve the sustainable trawl fisheries by decreasing small economic fish, preserve dolphin and turtle, increase demersal fish, conserve and preserve marine environment. In addition, it aims to increase the cooperation amongst agencies, business sectors, stakeholders, fishers in trawl fisheries management.

The REBYC II is the cooperation of RFLP, SEAFDEC and WWF. The project member countries included the Philippines where J-TED has been adopted in the Sama Sea; Papua New Guinea; Thailand, where the big issue is the high fishing effort; Indonesia, where the problem is complex and similar to Vietnam's, where it is neither easy in management of trawl fishery.

Apart from the fishing gear, area and resource aspects mentioned by Mr. Manoch, in the near future the requirement of the incentives from the project or government sides will be essentially provided. The stakeholders' provision to achieve the responsible fisheries, the rational fishing for trawl fisheries, establish the co-management, the cooperation of working member groups among stakeholders, fishers and officials, fish size limitation and appropriately control for fishing boat mobility. For data collection and research document publication, we hope that the project will assist to produce more accurate data of the region. We also require method of social-economic impacts assessment and the stakeholder analysis is necessary as well.

The outcomes of the project are expected in particular the long term benefits to resources and fishers, good will and good face of trawl fishers in the region, food safety and the development of the data collection procedure.

3. Mr. Bundhit Chokesa-nguan (from SEAFDEC) commented that there were some definition of bycatch differences by regions, for example in countries between the western region's and Southeast Asian regions. For SEA region, bycatch particularly refers to the small or juvenile economic fish in the trawl catches. Further he expressed his definitely support to the enlargement of the mesh size of the trawl net in order to reduce these bycatches.

For establishment of the restriction area, we sometime did not design the pilot project and disregard to fishers' opinions. The establishment of the large area rather than concentrate in some small areas may be not efficient criteria. So, to concentrate to specific small area would be efficiently for efforts to put in.

4. Mr. Suchart Sangchan (The Director of Central Gulf Marine Fisheries Development Center, CMDEC-located in Chumphon and the national coordinator of the project) introduced the background of REBYC in Thailand that the REBYC I was carried out during 2008-2012. However, he has just participated since 2012, REBYC II when he has been appointed to be the director of CMDEC. He

particularly participated the project plan development until it was agreed to be signed by the two parties FAO and DOF Thailand.

The project plan was developed in accordance with the Thailand Marine Master Plan. Thus, the technology of trawl fishing was emphasized and led to the enlargement of the mesh size of trawling net. Additionally, the criteria of restricted area is also included in the plan. The project sites include Trad, Prachaup Khirikhan and Chumpon provinces.

In Trad province, the main activities of the project are launching data collection and research to support the establishment of restricted area for trawl fishery and other fisheries. So, the sub-activities for that include the building of the network, the reviewing of the legal framework, the institutional building, data collection, public relation and public awareness.

The project year 1 and 2 will be the activities to mainly support enlargement of mesh size codend for trawl fisheries and establishment of the closed area and closed season in order to reduce bycatch from trawl fisheries and to protect spawning area and nursing ground. Thailand has faced difficulties of aqua feed product trading due to the using of fishmeal as fish meal sources to feed the aquaculture fish.

So, the overview of project components included the project partners which are RFU (Regional Fisheries Unit of SEAFDEC), FAO and the Marine Fisheries Research and Development Bureau (MFRDB) were shown. The CMDEC (Central Gulf Marine Fisheries Development Center-located in Chumpon) is the organizer under the MFRDB and the director is responsible as the National Project Coordinator (NPC). The time period of the project time frame is 4 years. The first year implementation is concerned on the enlarge mesh size codend in Prachaup Khirikhan and Chumpon site and propose area and season closure in Trad site. The sub-activities to achieve the objectives orderly include

1. Conduct the Stakeholder Consultation Meeting in Prachuab Kiri Khan and Chumpon provinces before data collection is started. The objectives of meetings are to introduce the project and plan for data collection, analysis and seek for cooperation from fishers and stakeholders in data collection and primary analysis. Consultation to the fishers and stakeholder for the drafted plan of DOF for their discussion and final agree for DOF plan to implement the project.

2. Experiment of the enlargement of the codend mesh size of trawl boats in order to find out the impact of the proposed mesh size net to the resources and social economic issues. The present trawling net will be replaced by the 4.0 cod-end net which technically designed and supported by the experts from FAO/RFU. In addition, the fuel consumption will be examined by installation of fuel consumption checking instrument to the vessel. The proposed fishing boats are otter board trawlers and pair trawlers. The catch from the experiments will be identified into fish consumption, juvenile economic fish and true trash fish components. Overall catches will be weighted and take percentage between fish consumption and trash fish (include juvenile fish). All sample fish will be identified into species or group of species as well as length will be measured. Fuel consumption record will be used to compare between trawlers which enlarge mesh size and not enlarge mesh size. The trawl fisheries background of the project sites, Chumpon and Prachaup provinces, will be compiled and integrated with the result of the trawl net experiments.

3. The results of the experiments will be analysed and shown to stakeholders in the next consultation meeting. The next stakeholder consultation meeting will be held to seek comments and recommendations from the stakeholders and fishers including officials to obtain best criteria or methods for trawl fisheries management to reduce bycatch.

5. Mrs. Rattana Manprasit (Director of the Eastern Gulf Marine Fisheries Development Center-located in Rayong) presented the progress of establishment of the restriction area in Trad province. The geographical area of Trad has several small islands, coral reef and sea grasses which induce plentiful of marine resources. Due to these factors, Trad has been selected as a pilot project of the REBYC II. As previously mentioned by Mr. Suchart, the sub-activities to achieve the objectives orderly include:

1. Conduct the Stakeholder consultation meeting to introduce the project and plan for establish closed area and closed season in Trad province.
2. Collecting data of juvenile resources and socioeconomic aspects. The compilation of fisheries laws and related legislations and report.
3. After collection of necessary data for juvenile and spawning seasons in sometime. The next stakeholder consultation meeting will be held to show the results of the analysis and share ideas among the fishers, stakeholder and officials to establish the closed area and closed season in Trad province.
4. Seek for the most appropriate management measures including legal measures and propose for further implement by the provincial governor and DOF to make the area and season closure effective.

The first meeting of stakeholder consultation in Trad province will be held in 29th October, 2013. The participants will be approximately 100 persons of fishers whom come from 4 coastal districts of the province, fisheries associations, anchovy purse seine fishers and representatives of fisheries agencies in the area. The main agenda of the meeting are the introduction to the project and the expectation of stakeholders participation in the process of establishment of the restriction area.

After the year of collecting data, this first year, the derived data will be shared to the participants. For instance, the distribution of juvenile fish to acknowledge participants the high abundance coastal area; the proportion of juvenile in the catch and socioeconomic aspect. This requires the cooperation from DOF experts, freelancescholars and experts, and FAO expert.

Next year will be the introduction of the result to stakeholders . The weakness, strength, gaps in legal issues will be found out, afterwards the efficient strategies will be proposed.

6. Mr. Pirochana Saikliang, the marine fisheries expert, contributed opinions on the experiment of the enlargement of trawling net mesh size that there are some factors should be controlled such as catch preservation method, and the size of cover net. If not so, the calculated revenue from the control and the experiment will not be able to compare. Moreover, the trawling in different time period, the wind and water current will influence the trawling experiment and will be the factor of the variation of data. So, repeated experiments will reduce error. Lastly, installation of fuel gauge which designed by the Ministry of Energy will facilitate the experiment.

7. Mr. Somsak Chullasorn (Expert) agreed that it is good intention to reduce bycatch of juvenile as, presently, the catch composition from unsustainable fisheries will be denied from the markets both in and outside of the country. However, in his opinion, the FADs fisheries significantly impact the juvenile fish as well. The temporal and spatial measures are also the issues that we should take into account. Thus, to select particular area of nursery ground is a crucial factor. The enlargement of net mesh size should be supported by the energy saving and less carbon footprint projects. These issues should be put into the discussion with stakeholders. For J-TED, it had been introduced to Thailand but it did not accept by fishers. So, Thailand, presently, is in a blacklist of the United States markets. If the bycatch reduction device (BRD) is the criteria that will take Thailand out from blacklist, it will be the incentive of fishers to participate in the management of trawl fisheries. Thus, this should also be brought into the discussion panel of stakeholders.

8. Mr. Manoch added the information that this activity directly impacts fishers and fishmeal factories. DOF indeed started in 2012 but it was disagreed by fishers. Nevertheless, we cannot deny the world driven of sustainable fisheries. The REBYC II activities are harmoniously to the present activities of DOF. So, this meeting requires comments from participants especially how to increase fishers understanding the situation and find out the most appropriate way for the trawl fisheries management. Otherwise, we have to return to the starting point again and again.

9. Mr. Pongsakorn (representative from Fisheries Association) commented that the time of trawling experiment is too short. It should be long term experiments such as repeat in several time

periods within 1 year. Apart from that, if we can prove that the released fish will be survived in the sea, it can easily convince fishers to agree with. Otherwise, fishers will see useless to enlarge the mesh size. Lastly, he requested DOF to consider the anchovy fishing boats. This fishing type apply to used small mesh size as it operated only at night. Thus, they may can not maintain their fishings if they were replaced by using 4 cm mesh size.

10. Mr. Pirochana informed the meeting that new anchovy fishing boat will not allow to register by DOF after year 2004. It catches shrimp by accident with the percentage of 10-15% bycatch. Presently it used to catch both fish and shrimp. So, these issues have to be concerned. He also agreed that long term experiment for enlarge mesh is necessary and mentioned that the incentives are also needed for trawling boats if they are cooperated.

11. Mr. Pongsakorn mentioned that the market price is not the appropriate indicator. It is depending on the demand- supply.

12. Representative from Department of Marine and Coastal Resources(Mr. Kittisak) commented that the project should require the acceptance of fishers. The fully participation of fishers will lead to have their commitments.

13. Mr. Manoch commented that the freely changing fishing methods by fishers for their survive are also the cause of marine resources depletion. . He expected that lacking of some information will not be the condition of fishers to deny their cooperation.

14. Representative from Fishmeal Association expressed that fishmeal association truly accepts the situation .The fishmeal factory will buy only grade 1 fresh and large trashfish to stop juvenile economic species to be get caught.

15. Dr. Mala Supongpan (NTO of the project) clarify that stakeholder consultation meeting that will be held in Trad, on 29th October 2013, the drafted of 3 selected areas should be presented to the meeting for group discussion guidance. After the discussion and agreement, the only one area will be concluded as the pilot site. In the agreed area, necessary data should be collected in cooperative with fishers. These data as well as the existing data will be used to decide for establishing area and season closure in Trad province.

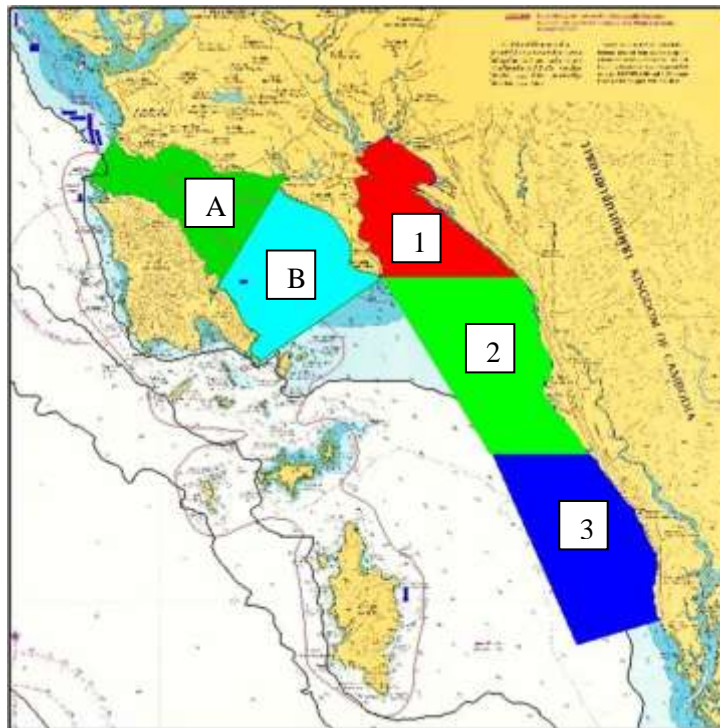
16. Mr. Sayan Chaianan (Trad Fisheries Official) introduced the map of Trad province and emphasized sea area and gave detail of the three proposed areas. The participants included some commentators discuss on the three proposed areas about size of the proposed closed area, the geographical aspect, the existing marine resources , the existing fishing gear in the area and other required data. The meeting agreed to to put these comments into the consultation panel on 29th October 2013.(See draft map attached)

17. Dr. Wantana Janekitkoson (researcher of DOF) commented that this meeting has discussed only 2 sub-activities of the project included enlargement of mesh size and establishment of the closed area and closed season. In spite of the fact that the component of the REBYC II project is broader. Thus, in her opinion, some expectation of information is lacking from this meeting.

18. Dr. Mala Supongpan agreed to Dr. Wantana and informed the meeting that there are 4 components of the REBYC II project. Apart from fishing gear (enlarge mesh size) and areas (area and season closure) which fully discussed, another two parts are the legislation component, and awareness and knowledge component are also be implemented at the same time. The legislation component will be in charged by Mrs. Jintana Nettasana, the freelance law scholar, the legislation framework will be reviewed and compiled together with the recommendation and presentation. The socioeconomic aspects concerning trawl fisheries and, area and season closure will be in charged by Dr. Sirisuda Jumnongsong, lecturer of the Kasetsart University. The socioeconomic aspects and the impacts from the establishment of area and season closure will be analyzed and reported. In addition,

the knowledge and awareness component, the meeting will be appropriately held throughout the project to open for stakeholder participation and internet linking to RFU and DOF will be established which is opened for all. Lastly, after the completion of the project, the results and recommendation will be placed and initiated to DOF for further implement until active in law and legal management.

19. Mr. Manoch accepted that there are some limitation of information. However, the fruitful comments from today meeting will be beneficial to overall project. He expressed his grateful to all participants and then closed the meeting.



Trad Province: Draft area mapping for discussion:
red = area 1, green = area 2 and blue = area 3.

A and B are already conserved