



Strategies for Trawl Fisheries By catch Management
REBYC-II CTI; GCP /RAS/269/GFF

2nd Stakeholder Consultation Meeting

Trawl Mesh Size Enlargement Experiments

23 September 2014

Nana Buri, Chumphon province, Thailand

Summary

Consultants associated with the REBYC-II CTI project presented papers supporting the case for increasing Gulf of Thailand trawl cod end mesh size to 4cm. These presentations included the on-going fish larval study; the socio economics of trawl fishing in the GOT, results from experiments using 4cm mesh size in the GOT, the GOT trawl landings study and Thailand's legal and policy frameworks for trawl fisheries. During the meeting a SEAFDEC video was presented by Mr Isara Chanrachkij, that showed fish escaping from 4cm mesh, apparently without harm.

Following the presentations the stakeholders formed three groups, (pair trawls, Otter Board Trawls and Beam Trawls) to discuss the issues presented and to give their opinions on the proposed measure. None of the groups accepted the proposal, listing many reasons why such a measure was unacceptable to them. Their arguments against the measure were mainly focused on the short-term loss of incomes that such an arrangement would result in, and their mistrust of each others compliance as well as the Government's capacity to enforce such a measure, if introduced.

Feedback on the group findings was provided by Mr. Pirochana Saikliang, Marine Fisheries Expert & Mr. Bancha Sookkaew, Chantaburi Provincial Fisheries officer. Mr. Manoch Roongratri, Director Marine Fisheries Research and Development Bureau concluded the meeting. From the stakeholders reaction it is clear that it will be very difficult to persuade them to adopt an increase to 4cm mesh size, even when a reasonable scientific base for the introduction of such a measure can be made.

1. Background.

The Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations ("FAO") and the Department of Fisheries, Thailand has 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). Under the first LOA with the DoF , a first stakeholder consultation meeting in Chumphon, was held on 7 November 2013. This allowed for stakeholders from the project sites (Prachuab Kiri Khan and Chumphon provinces) to understand more about the sea trial experiments to enlarge mesh size cod-end of trawler both otter board and pair trawlers. The mesh size enlargement experiments were completed during 2 – 9 July 2014 as planned.

In this connection, the Second Local Stakeholder Consultation Meeting was planned for the 23 September 2014. At this meeting, the initial findings from the data collection exercises and experiments were presented. Results from the research will be distributed to fishers at the meeting and their continued cooperation for trawl fishery management will be sought.

The participation and consultation from trawl fishers/stakeholders was important to the DOF, which is promoting a policy of increasing trawl cod end mesh size to at least 4 cm. The acceptance of fishers/stakeholders and their cooperatives to change to this mesh size is an ultimate goal.

The findings from the workshop were discussed two days later at the Project Advisory meeting in Bangkok.

2. Venue and Organisation

The one-day meeting was held on 23 September 2014 at Hotel Nanaburi hotel, Chumphon province. The Central Gulf Marine Fisheries Research and Development Center (CMDEC), located in Chumphon province, will be responsible for hosting the meeting.

3. Objectives of the meeting

- To present findings from the larval and trawl landings studies.
- To share and discussion on the results from the trawl mesh size experiments
- To consult with stakeholders on their ideas on trawl mesh size enlargement.
- To present the social economic situation of the stakeholders and understand their attitudes towards mesh size limitations
- To explore any other options for mesh size limitation and enforcement

4. Participants

Total participants numbered around 110 persons made up of:

- 80 Representative from trawl fishers/stakeholders,
- 20 Government officials, 2 Invited speakers,
- 6 Organizers
- and two persons from Rebyc-II CTI RFU.

5. Presentations

Consultants associated with the REBYC-II CTI project gave presentations. These were:

- Catch and landing site data from Chumphon and Trat; Dr. Pavarot,
- The 4cm cod-end mesh size experiment; Miss Ratanawalee,
- Policy and legal framework for Thai trawl fisheries; Miss Chintana
- Socio-economics of GOT trawl fisheries Dr. Sirisuda REBYC Consultant
- GOT Fish Larvae study ; Dr Apichart.

6. The order of the meeting sessions was as follows

1. Opening remarks (Mr. Manoch Roongratri – Director Marine Fisheries Research and Development Bureau)
2. Presentation 1. Dr. Pavarot, REBYC Consultant
3. Presentation 2: Miss Ratanawalee, REBYC Consultant
4. Presentation 3: Miss Chintana REBYC Consultant
5. Presentation 4: Dr. Sirisuda REBYC Consultant
6. Presentation 5: Dr Apichart REBYC Consultant
7. Open discussion of the presentations
8. Groups Discussions on Formulation of mesh size measures
9. Feedback on group findings by Mr. Pirochana Saikliang, Marine Fisheries Expert & Mr. Bancha Sookkaew, Chantaburi officer
10. Conclusion and close of the meeting: Mr. Manoch Roongratri – Director Marine Fisheries Research and Development Bureau)

7. Discussion.

Following the presentations the stakeholders formed three groups, (pair trawls, Indian trawls and Anchovy Trawls) to discuss the issues presented, in particular the impact of a 4cm mesh size limit for trawl cod end nets..

8. Reportback and summing up.

The organisers of the workshop chose to not allow each group to present their findings. Instead each group submitted written comments that summarized the group's discussions. These comments were responded to by a two-man panel (Mr. Pirochana Saikliang, Marine Fisheries Expert & Mr. Bancha Sookkaew, Chantaburi Provincial Fisheries officer). Mr. Manoch Roongratri, Director Marine Fisheries Research and Development Bureau concluded the meeting.

8.1. Group A. Pair trawler: Comments

Advantage	Disadvantage	Research work	Solution
Resource conservation	long run loss high cost fuel consumption cannot decrease labor No fish price guarantee	Experimental results are not practical, statistic record is also scarce and unclear in the project site and the area experiments are	DOF should issue MS enlargement for all fishing gears Could be applied in addition to area and season closure, DOF should enforce effectively MS should be less than 4.0 cm No import of trash fish

	No legal basis No guarantee of fish price Unfair to trawlers because not apply to all fishing gear Less resource and less benefit when use 4.0 cm DOF should have by back boat program to make artificial reef	in the straddling zone of conservation area of 3,000 m near shore	Compensate for loss for fuel, labor, boat rent Buy back program Guarantee fish price if enlarge MS Provide for alternative jobs Equally management for all gear Find the way to compensate for loss of trash fish Provide MS 4.0 cm nets to fishers to test before practice Suggest widen the trawl mouth opening and net length.
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8.2. Group B: Beam Trawler Comments

The results of the discussion from beam trawler group are as the following:

- Capture fish may decrease,
- Increased costs
- Larger fish caught but unfair price,
- Need for DOF to provide alternative job,
- It will reduce labor and affect to social welfare,
- Small fish problem is not the effect from small mesh size, it comes from overall fishing, illegal fishing e.g. anchovy light luring fishing,
- DOF should provide for fisheries sustainability,

8.3. Group C: Otter Board Trawler Comments

The otter board trawlers concluded that:

Problems

- Decreased benefit because of less capture from small shrimp and trash fish components
- Who would bear the cost for net changing

Solution

- Reduce fuel the to 20 baht/lit and fuel transportation boats should land near shore,
- Guarantee for fish price,
- DOF should have public hearing process,
- Control number of labor by applying whole life license,
- DOF should bear cost for changing net,

8.4. Other Comments

- The enlargement of the mesh size is not an issue for beam trawlers because this kind of fishing already using 4.0 cm (1.5 inch) at cod-end. Beam trawlers are affected by extending coastal non fishing area to 5,400 m.
- Results from the 4cm mesh size experiment have not yet matched our fisher feeling,
- The experiment should be trialed outside of the 5,400 m. coastal fishing limit
- Some fishers Agree to have MS enlargement program which will have more resource in the future,
- Effective enforcement for resources in the long run. Trawlers will have an advantage too,
- DOF should take care fisheries resources as a whole and for all and the whole fishers will support DOF,
- DOF should promote trawl fisheries to cooperate in a group to solve short and long term problems.
- Shrimp trawlers use small sized boat, 2.2-2.4 knot, engine 150 hp, and use small mesh about 2.0 cm.

9. Major and Recommendations

The meeting was successful in engaging with trawler operators on the critical issues facing the GOT fisheries but unsuccessful in persuading the stakeholders of the merits of considering an increase in cod end mesh space size to 4cm, even though a fairly thorough scientific and economic argument was made. The lack of specific laws focused on trawl fisheries compounds the problem.

The Project has helped the DoF collect information to support the move to 4cm cod-end mesh size. However, the way that the information was presented as well as the way the meeting was conducted did not make the best use of this information.

The following actions are recommended:

1. A more thorough analysis of the data collected by the Project, be carried out. To date, the analyses carried out are rudimentary. This could result in a more convincing argument in future events of this type. It is desirable to have an outside expert recruited for this purpose.
2. Awareness raising materials and presentations should be prepared that make a more convincing argument in favour of the proposed 4 cm measure. The five studies can be integrated to make a strong case for action.
3. Reports from earlier and similar work carried out by the DoF should be located and acquired so that the results obtained can be compared with REBYCs work. Dr Mala has been asked to look into this.
4. Engagement with the DoF on this issue should be ramped up and key personnel be made aware of the work that has been done, the findings and the implications.