



## **Joint Local Meeting with Chumphon Province on**

### **“Trawl Fisheries and bycatch management”**

REBYC-II CTI; GCP/RAS/269/GFF

28 July 2015

Nana Buri Hotel, Chumphon province, Thailand

#### **Report by**

*Dr. Mala Supongpan and MS. Jinda Petgamnerd*

### **1. Background to REBYC-II CTI Project**

The Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations (“FAO”) and the Department of Fisheries, Thailand has signed a Letter of Agreement (LOA) for the execution of the GEF supported project “Strategies for trawl fisheries bycatch management” (REBYC-II CTI; GCP /RAS/269/GFF). Thailand by the Department of Fisheries, Marine Fisheries Research and Development Bureau is implementing the project at two sites: Prachuab Kiri Khan and Chumphon. At the Chumphon site enlarged codend mesh size for trawl fisheries will be studied and promoted. The Central Gulf Marine Fisheries Research and Development Center (CMDEC), located in Chumphon, is taking the lead on research for enlarged codend mesh size experiments. The second project site is in Trad province where management measures for closed areas and closed seasons will be established to protect fish larvae and spawners. The Eastern Marine Fisheries Research and Development (EMDEC), located in Rayong province, is taking the lead in the research work supporting the development of these measures.

In this connection, the Marine Fisheries Research and Development Division under the DOF would like to make the local fishers know the results of project studies which are related to the local trawl fisheries situation: enlarged trawl cod-end mesh size experiments; fisheries social economics; policy and legal review; the current trawl mesh size measures and their practical implementation for improved trawl and bycatch management.

The results of these studies have already been presented to local stakeholders in Prachuab Kiri Khan and Chumphon provinces. Now, the DOF would like to reach other fishers from outside of these areas in order for them to attain and gain more knowledge about trawl fisheries and bycatch management. This knowledge will be useful background information for them to participate in local trawl fisheries and bycatch management planning and actions, and especially with regards to the enlarged trawl cod-end mesh measures.

#### **Specific objectives of the REBYC-II CTI Project in Thailand under the 2<sup>nd</sup> LOA.**

1. To strengthen local fisher knowledge on trawl fisheries and bycatch management,

2. To introduce to concept of cod-end mesh size of 4.0 cm for trawlers,
3. To consult with local fishers on using other measures for trawl fisheries and bycatch management.

## **2. Summary of Joint Local Meeting with Chumphon Province (28<sup>th</sup> July 2015)**

The results of research work were presented (experiments on trawl mesh size; social economic studies and issues relating to the new Thai Fisheries Act 2015) to the participants of the meeting.

Mr. Suchart Sangchan (researcher) introduced results of the research work on trawl codend mesh size of 4.0 cm for otter board and pair trawlers. It was noted that the neighboring countries applied similar type of measures; 4.0 cm in Brunei, 5.0 cm in Indonesia and 5.0 cm in Myanmar. The meeting gathered ideas and comments from participants and the results of the discussion will be sent further to the DOF Conservation Committee for consideration in formulating mesh size regulations at the next Conservation Committee Meeting in Bangkok.

Mr. Patanapong Choosang (lawyer) explained that the Fisheries Act 1947 did not limit trawl mesh size. It only has a notification issued by the Minister to prohibit trawl fisheries in the coastal zone, and no fishing during area and season closures. In 1986 the DOF brought in controls for the registration of trawler and push netters. Trawl fishers had to register for the year 1986 at their local fishery government agency. Since then there has been no improvement or adaptation of the existed registration, except to transfer, through inheritance, and cancelation in case of non-registration continuation. In 1986 there were in total of 9,772 trawlers registered, in 2014 the number of registered boats were 3,050, and in 2015 the total number is 2,798. Those trawler owners who have already registered their boat, have to request for a fishing gear license by 31 July 2015.

At present **there are two issuances of laws:**

**The Fisheries Acts 2015.** The Fisheries Acts 2015 comes to effective on 27 June 2015. Some related issues are:

Establishment of a National Fisheries Committee comprising the Prime Minister as the President of the committee, with representative members from the fishery sector. The tasks of this committee included the formulation of the fishery policy of the country.

Establishment of Fisheries Province Committees comprising the Governor as the President of the Committee, with representative members from the fishery sector. Representatives shall be members of local communities. The tasks of the Committees are to propose the management schemes for local resources.

Definitions of the three fisheries zones; Freshwater Fisheries Zone; Coastal Fisheries Zone (3 nautical miles to 12 nautical miles). The Fisheries Provincial Committee can extend the local fishing zone from 3 nm up to 12 nm; and the Offshore Fisheries Zone.

**Order Number 10/2015.** Ordering from the National Council for Peace and Order "To solve the Illegal, Unrecorded and Unregulated fishing issues"

Establish "A Command Center to solve the Illegal, Unrecorded and Unregulated fishing issues" (So Po Mo Po = Center for enforcement of illegal fisheries). The major tasks are to collect data on the number of operational fishing boats, not registered boats. The Center has started a census survey the operating boats that will end on 31 July 2015.

The aim of the Center is to manage both small scale fishing boat and commercial scale fishing boat groups. The Center will work on making sure that the types of fishing boat/gear used, match the present resources. If any fishing boat/gear is over the allowed number, it shall be removed from the record system. The ousted fishing boats shall have some alternatives from the Government. It is expected to have a meeting to further consider these issues soon.

Coastal zonation and fishing boat data collection of the Center can be divided into 4 groups:

- Small scale fishing boat group (capacity < 5 GT & 5 - 10 GT) can operate in the coastal zone.
- Commercial fishing boat group (capacity 10 - 20 GT and > 20 GT) can operate in the offshore area. Researchers have to consider the type of fishing gear to be used.
- High Sea fishing boat group (capacity > 60 GT) can operate outside Thai water.
- Fish trans-shipment boat.

**Mr. Bancha Sookkaew** (Chantaburi Fisheries Official) pointed out that previously there was little participation from fisher stakeholders in resource management and policy formulation. Now, the Fisheries Act 2015 allows fishers to participate in local resource management. Local Fisheries Community Groups can register through the Fisheries Province Committee in their province. The Fisheries Province Committee will assign a representative from the Local Fisheries Community Group as a member. Local Fisheries Community Groups can be either groups, cooperatives or organizations, and can request for registration.

It is emphasized that any fisheries management measure issuance should be based on:

- Rationale and research results.
- Resolving local problems.
- Balancing public benefits and personal benefits.
- Local persons responsible for informing on illegal fishing or government official corruption.

**Mr. Kamolsak Lerdpaibul** (Representative from the Thailand Fisheries Association) introduced and suggested the following:

- When issuing the fishing gear license, it should include conditions for implementation.
- Other destructive fishing gear (than bottom trawls) should be also managed, e.g. small purse seine using small mesh and or small fishing boat with too many fishing gears.
- Fishing boat capacity (GT) and fishing power should be considered.
- Fisheries resource management methods should be implemented for the sustainability and balance of benefits for all.
- Control of Thai flagging is necessary to manage foreign fishing boat intrusion into Thai water.
- Management measures should not effect economic, social and environment issues.
- Purse seine fisheries should be managed by a combination of mesh size limitations and a quota system.
- If mesh size enlargement is effectively enforced, it is a good opportunity to allow small fish to grow up, resulting in less trash fish (and higher price). Valuable fish and trash fish will become bigger.
- The Thailand Tuna Association in cooperation with the Thailand Fisheries Association have established a project "Doing Good, Getting Good". The processor buys small tuna with a price of 2 Baht per kilogram higher than usual price. This will be applied for small

tuna fishing boats that install VMS so that the fishing boats also can be monitored, have a good contract, and fish in a responsible manner.

Several discussions from the participants were convened. The followings are the results from open discussions:

- Fishers requested the DOF to gradually implement a stepwise increase of trawl cod-end mesh size from 2.5 cm to 4.0 cm.
- To solve IUU problems the government should use other measure such as quota system instead of cancelling trawlers.
- The Thailand Fisheries Association needs a strategy for approaching the problem of licensing for illegal trawlers.
- The DOF should extend their gear licenses in case of out of date licenses and changing license to other gear, during the fuel crisis of several years ago.
- The DOF should have some compensation options for registered boat owners (about 3,000 trawlers at present) when the 4.0 cm mesh size for trawlers is implemented.
- The DOF should prove that escaped fish are still alive (conduct experiments).
- In case of issuing mesh size regulation, DOF should also include other types of fishing boats.
- Fishers and processors should have a chance to participate in law and regulation formulation.
- Small-scale fisheries will be affected by the enlargement of the mesh size due to their fishing grounds being in the coastal area where they catch small fish. Further Area Fishing is defined in the Fisheries Act 2015 and small boats are not permitted from fishing in the offshore areas.
- DOF should consider defining gear mesh size to suit the size of boat.
- The management of horse power should be considered in addition to boat size (GT)
- Enforcement should be stricter during the area and season closures so that resources can be rehabilitated.
- The MSY of demersal fish resources should be re-estimated from the end of 31 July 2015. The results may show how many boats can be increased or decreased.
- For the enlargement of mesh size, different types of trawlers should be assessed; shrimp trawler, fish trawler, big trawler, pair trawler and otter-board trawler.
- Time is required for fishers to prepare for changes in mesh size, net cutting and changing to a new net, before the law can become effective (money issue).
- Big trawlers and octopus traps should not be allowed because they use a wide area.
- If the mesh is enlarged, trash fish will be caught less and trash fish shall have a chance to grow up resulting in bigger size and good quality which will give higher price.

#### **Conclusions: Joint Local Meeting with Chumphon Province (28 July 2015)**

The meeting accepted the enlargement of mesh size to 4.0 cm for trawlers with some special conditions such as the need for time to change the mesh - a stepwise increase from 2.5 to 4.0 cm is recommended.

The meeting recommended that purse seine fishing should be controlled by quota.

## **Annex 1: : Supporting Information**

### **1. Number of Participants**

Fishers (Gulf of Thailand and Andaman Sea) 188; Government officials 50; invited experts 4  
Secretariat staff and organizers 8.

### **2. Venue**

28 July 2015 at Nana Buri Hotel in Chumphon province.

### **3. Responsible unit**

Central Gulf Marine Fisheries Research and Development Center and Chumphon Fisheries Office.

### **4. Expected output**

- Local fishers and government understand more about trawl fisheries and by-catch management,
- Local fishers will be informed that mesh size cod-end 4.0 cm for trawl fisheries will be enforced.
- Local fishers will understand how to practice for trawl fisheries and by-catch management.

## **Annex 2: Agenda**

### **Joint Local Meeting with Chumphon Province on “Trawl Fisheries and by-catch management”**

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#### **27 July 2015**

16.00 – 18.30      Arrival and registration

#### **28 July 2015**

08.00 – 09.00      Registration

09.00 – 10.30      Discussion: Trawl fisheries and by-catch Management and legal issues.

Chairperson: Chantaburi Fisheries Official (Mr. Bancha Sookkiew)

Panelists:

Secretary of Thailand Fisheries Association (Mr. Kamolsak Lerdpaiboon)

Fishery lawyer (Mr. Patanapong Choosang)

Director, Andaman Sea Fish. Res. and Dev. Center Mr. Suchart Sangchan

Secretary staff: Mrs. Jinda Petchkamnerd; Mrs. Patcharee Puntuleng

Ms. Sasina Tochuea

10.30 - 10.45      Refreshment

10.45 – 12.00      Discussion: Suitable mesh size for trawl cod-end, social economic  
and Thai Fisheries Acts 2015 (continued).

12.00 – 13.00      Lunch

13.00 – 15.30      Practical Implement for trawl and by-catch Management.

15.30                  Conclusion and close the meeting

The Chanta Buri Fisheries Province Official (Mr. Bancha Sookkiew)

**Annex 3: Figures.**