

Regional Guidelines
for the Promotion of
“One Village, One Fisheries Product”
(FOVOP)
in the ASEAN Region



Southeast Asian Fisheries Development Center (SEAFDEC)

Preparation of the Guidelines

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CHAPTER I

INTRODUCTION

1.1 BACKGROUND AND RATIONALE

While many Southeast Asian countries are still in the process of improving their respective fisheries management systems to alleviate poverty, the region's generally depleting fishery resources has continued to contribute to the deteriorating livelihoods of households in fishing communities. Various factors could be attributed to the non-responsible practice of fisheries management, which in one way or another, have deterred the efforts of many countries in the region in achieving sustainability in fisheries and alleviating poverty in the fishing communities. These include among others, the vicious cycles of resource utilization and over-capacity in fisheries, which is being aggravated by the lack of alternative livelihoods in fishing communities. Although management interventions have been advanced by the countries in the region to try to get out from such vicious cycles, a possible and convenient way out could be by providing the fishers with alternatives to enable them to initiate small business ventures or economic activities, which they are not able to pursue at the present situation due to limited technical and financial capabilities, and particularly insufficient support policies.

Recognizing that poverty prevails in the region's fishing communities and in order to support the ASEAN countries in their efforts towards sustainable development of fisheries for food security, SEAFDEC has launched an initiative that could pave the way for the promotion of alternative livelihoods to mitigate poverty in the fishing communities. This has been facilitated through the implementation of the project on the Promotion of "One Village, One Fisheries Products" System to Improve the Livelihood of the Fisheries Communities in the ASEAN Region or FOVOP. Financially supported by the ASEAN Foundation through the Japan-ASEAN Solidarity Fund, the 30-month project (November 2007-April 2010) was implemented by SEAFDEC in collaboration with the ASEAN Member Countries.

The project aims to improve the livelihoods of the fishers in the region's fishing communities through the introduction and promotion of the FOVOP concept. Following the "One Village, One Product" or OVOP strategy promoted by Japan and considering similar approaches in the Southeast Asian region more particularly the "One Tambon, One Product" or the OTOP initiative of Thailand, FOVOP is being fostered to produce "Only One Product" in order to reduce competition from the fisheries sector. Based on the FOVOP approach, local producers from each particular community are encouraged to identify and advance a unique and differentiated fisheries product and related services/activities, which could be suitable and applicable in local areas considering their respective specific settings and conditions. Considering that currently there is no national policy and strategy to support the establishment and promotion of "One Village, One Fisheries Product" (FOVOP) in the region, the project therefore envisioned that this initiative should be implemented in the respective ASEAN Member Countries through the development of the Regional Guidelines for the Promotion of FOVOP in

the ASEAN Region. The FOVOP Regional Guidelines is envisaged to be used as basis by government agencies for formulating relevant policies and is also meant to provide enabling environment to the countries in the region to enable them to perceive the clear direction and understanding of the promotion and implementation of FOVOP.

1.2 PREPARATION OF THE REGIONAL GUIDELINES FOR THE PROMOTION OF FOVOP

In order to address the abovementioned requirements, SEAFDEC developed and implemented the ASEAN-SEAFDEC Regional Collaborative Program on “Promotion of “One Village, One Fisheries Products (FOVOP)” System to Improve the Livelihood for the Fisheries Communities in ASEAN Region (2007-2010). Under the FOVOP Project, which intends to support the ASEAN Member Countries in initiating and developing the FOVOP movement, a series of activities had been implemented involving the government and private sectors as well as other stakeholders at regional and national levels. Such activities include the conduct of pilot processes in six ASEAN countries, namely: Cambodia, Indonesia, Lao PDR, Myanmar, Philippines and Vietnam. At the end of project, the Regional Guidelines and Strategies for the Promotion of FOVOP in the ASEAN region were concluded as basis for the future promotion of FOVOP in the ASEAN region. Moreover, the FOVOP Regional Guidelines is also envisaged to substantiate the national efforts of addressing the issues related to poverty alleviation and food security. Relevant provisions in the Regional Guidelines for Responsible Fisheries in Southeast Asia: Responsible Fisheries Management; and Responsible Post-harvest Practices and Trade, have also been elaborated on, given focus and form part in the corresponding sub-articles of the FOVOP Regional Guidelines.

1.3 STRUCTURE, PURPOSE AND POTENTIAL USAGE OF THE REGIONAL GUIDELINES

Based on the outcomes of the pilot processes in the ASEAN Countries, it could be gleaned that the readiness and enabling environment of the countries in the region to facilitate the creation, development and promotion of FOVOP, varied to certain extent. These have been specifically observed in the available relevant government policies, administrative structures, existing institutions and available human resources, technical and financial support, among others. However, considering the nature of the Regional Guidelines that contain generalized issues in broader contexts rather than on specific national situation, in the actual application of the Guidelines, appropriate adjustments could be made as deemed necessary in order to fit into the national or local specifics in terms of geo-political, social, economic and legal situations.

The Guidelines consist of the following 12 sections:

- I. Objectives
- II. Target Beneficiaries
- III. General Principles
- IV. Policy and Institutional Framework
- V. Prioritization of the FOVOP Communities and their Products and Services

- VI. Institutional Building and Group Organization
- VII. Products and Services Development and Improvement
- VIII. Credit and Financial Services and Facilities
- IX. Marketing Development and Products and Services Promotion
- X. Human Resources and Entrepreneurial Capacity Development
- XI. Collaboration among ASEAN Countries and Regional/ International Organizations
- XII. Follow-up Actions to Promote the Implementation of the Regional Guidelines

CHAPTER II

REGIONAL GUIDELINES FOR THE PROMOTION OF “ONE VILLAGE, ONE FISHERIES PRODUCT” (FOVOP) IN THE ASEAN REGION

I. OBJECTIVES

1. The Regional Guidelines for the Promotion of FOVOP in the ASEAN Region has the overall objective of providing a common framework for the countries in the region to promote and bring about One Village, One Fisheries Product (FOVOP). The FOVOP project has been considered as a means of creating economic activities in the rural communities for them to carry out alternative and supplemental livelihoods to alleviate poverty and attain sustainable fisheries development and management as well as food security. Subsequently, through the promotion of the FOVOP approach in the respective ASEAN countries, the FOVOP project also envisaged to enhance regional cooperation between SEAFDEC and the ASEAN countries.

2. The Regional Guidelines is also contemplated to be used by concerned government agencies in providing the enabling support for the rural people to adopt the FOVOP approach in their respective communities. The Guidelines could also be used as reference for other international and regional organizations working towards poverty alleviation, in the promotion of their relevant programs in the ASEAN region.

II. TARGET BENEFICIARIES

3. The FOVOP initiative targets the small-scale fisheries which can be generally characterized as a dynamic and evolving sector employing labor intensive harvesting, processing and distribution technologies to exploit the marine and freshwater fishery resources. The activities of this sub-sector, conducted full-time or part-time or just seasonally, either individually or as a group, often involve supplying fish and fish products to local and domestic markets.

4. Based on the abovementioned objectives, the Regional Guidelines aims to address the various issues and support the following beneficiary groups as entities, in conducting the identified activities under FOVOP:

- i. Fishers who operate fishery activities individually¹; or as family business; and
- ii. Group of fishers considered as eligible entities and beneficiaries of any financial support from appropriate government programs.

¹ “Fishers”

III. GENERAL PRINCIPLES

5. As a matter of policy, FOVOP should be able to address the concerns on sustainable fisheries development through the:

- Implementation of FOVOP as part of national packages of fisheries management and sustainable aquaculture programs;
- Promotion of FOVOP in accordance with the Regional Guidelines for Responsible Fisheries in the Southeast Asian Region; and
- Conservation of the habitats, biodiversity, environment, among others.

IV. POLICY AND INSTITUTIONAL FRAMEWORK

6. An appropriate national policy relevant to the promotion of FOVOP should be formulated or made part of national fisheries policy frameworks. The national policy should clarify the responsible institutions and the delegation of the functions/responsibilities from the national to local levels.

7. The policy and institutional framework for the promotion of FOVOP could include the following aspects:

- a. Integration of the FOVOP approach into national fisheries poverty alleviation programs (e.g. integrating FOVOP into National Policy on Poverty Alleviation Program), which could be done through the:
 - Creation of appropriate ambience among government institutions concerned with fisheries development to enable them to develop poverty alleviation programs including regulatory arrangements;
 - Cooperation with government relevant agencies that mainly promote poverty alleviation programs;
 - Accommodation of poverty alleviation programs into the high priority fisheries policy/agenda/development plan;
 - Creation of enabling environment for fisheries-related agencies including the legislative framework, to initiate poverty alleviation programs; and
 - Intensified campaign for the promotion of the FOVOP program through the mass media.
- b. Promotion of FOVOP under the overall framework of OVOP or other relevant initiatives by initiating economic activities in the fishing communities through the identification of potential products and services as alternative and supplemental livelihoods, taking into consideration sustainable fisheries development and management specifically aimed at mitigating over-capacity problems and advocating resistance from illegal fishing practices.

- c. Promotion of FOVOP products and services targeting the domestic and intra-regional markets, by complying/adjusting with market requirements through the application of minimum quality and safety standards in respective countries.
- d. Promotion of FOVOP by adopting consultative process taking into consideration the communities' needs, through the:
 - Identification of the potential resources;
 - Conduct of needs assessment studies for community development; and
 - Implementation, monitoring and evaluation of relevant activities to activate the economic activities of the fisheries communities.

Enabling Support

8. Governments are encouraged to mainstream the promotion of FOVOP in their respective poverty alleviation programs, by providing policy and enabling support for the promotion of the FOVOP mechanism, inter-agency coordination, the development of technical and financial packages.

9. Regulatory and institutional support with multi-agency/multi-disciplinary cooperation at national/provincial/district/community levels should be provided.

10. The development process of FOVOP could follow the “bottom-up” approach (with strong interest, ownership and commitment from the communities in taking the initiatives, including mobilization of available resources), with the government providing the necessary enabling support and implementing relevant activities through consultative processes.

11. For the promotion of FOVOP in the ASEAN Region, special marketing policy and strategy would be required. Considering the nature of the ASEAN countries as fish consuming, diversifying the peoples' habit and getting them to accept the various types of fisheries products, could lead to regional directions in promoting the intra-regional trade, as part of the ASEAN Economic Integration Policy and Roadmap for Fisheries Integration.

Inter-agency Coordination

12. For most of the countries in the ASEAN Region, poverty alleviation and livelihood programs are not directly under the responsibility of the fisheries line agencies. Each country has their respective inter-agency players (e.g. Rural/Community Development Department/Ministry; Ministries of Health, Industry, Agriculture; Fisheries Department/Agencies, etc.) but the private sector must play the main role in conducting the program and in marketing the FOVOP products. It is therefore crucial that in-country coordination within the fisheries line agencies at various levels and among agencies concerned, should be established and promoted in the respective countries, particularly on the following aspects:

- a. Coordination among government agencies involved in product development and improvement, regulatory services, and marketing system should be strengthened to provide a holistic approach for the promotion of FOVOP;
- b. Coordination among agencies involved in the development of database of the communities and products/services based on certain criteria (e.g. environment, social, material, uniqueness of the product) for marketing to reduce the middlemen's intervention; and
- c. Coordination among relevant government agencies to provide the venue for networking and sharing of experiences gained and lessons learned between and among the various FOVOP communities.

V. PRIORITIZATION OF THE FOVOP COMMUNITIES AND THEIR PRODUCTS AND SERVICES

13. In the identification of the priority communities for the promotion of FOVOP in the ASEAN countries, the following criteria should be taken into consideration:

- Community willingness;
- Availability of traditional products and services;
- Availability of resources and ability to obtain/secure raw materials;
- Economic status of communities (*i.e.* inability to create stable income);
- Availability of potential community groups;
- Availability of capable community leaders interested to promote FOVOP;
- Support from local government authorities (in terms of policy, financial, technical, etc.); and
- Social and environmental impacts (*i.e.* contribution to gender and development, peace and order situation, etc.).

14. Moreover, in order to identify the FOVOP products and services, the following criteria should be taken into consideration:

- Uniqueness and advantages of the traditional products and services that are specific to each locality;
- Availability of raw materials;
- Marketability and income-generating ability of the products and services; and
- Complying with the minimum sanitary and hygiene requirements.

VI. INSTITUTIONAL BUILDING AND GROUP ORGANIZATION

15. In order to support the success and sustain the promotion and implementation of FOVOP in the respective countries, institutional set up could be promoted in terms of groups or organizations comprising the fishers in the communities/villages as members. In addition, in order to strengthen the capacity of the groups, institutional building should also be conducted by:

- Initiating social preparation and gender responsive activities for FOVOP community leaders and members as well as the youth and elderly groups, in areas that include values formation, community organization, paralegal issues and environmental awareness;
- Ensuring that local mechanisms are established to strengthen the capability of the institutions in sustaining the FOVOP movement;
- Convening regular meetings and consultations in each country to exchange information on the current developments and innovations as well as address the effects of certain emerging issues, and establishing common and regional standard measures for the quality of the FOVOP products; and
- Ensuring that the experiences gained in the promotion of the FOVOP approach in active countries are exchanged among the other countries in the ASEAN region.

VII. PRODUCTS AND SERVICES DEVELOPMENT AND IMPROVEMENT

16. For products and services development and improvement highlighting on products and services value-adding, the following activities should be conducted:

- Promotion of efficient value chains for FOVOP products considering that agricultural marketing activities remain largely local, while linkages among the producers, traders, and consumers may not be well developed, and introduction of safety standards and assurance on the hygienic status of the products in order to generate more quality value added products from various commodities starting from the producers to the consumers;
- Processing and promotion of less economic important aquatic species through value-adding to ensure that utilization of fish catch is maximized;
- Promotion of the uniqueness of FOVOP products with unique product recipes and services emphasizing on local traditions, culture and arts, of each country to be compiled and broadly fostered at national and regional levels;
- Compilation of minimum quality and safety product standards;
- Upholding improved compliance of products and services with the environmental requirements in order to maintain the uniqueness and comparative advantages of the products and services being promoted by individual groups;
- Continued improvement of the products and services in terms of quality and safety as well as in packaging and labeling utilizing low-cost and environment-friendly materials; and
- Development of a roadmap of FOVOP products and services in order to sustain their uniqueness and catering to the demand and needs of consumers.

17. In addition to compliance by respective countries to safety standards and requirements, establishment of unique product labeling as part of the promotion of FOVOP products/services should also be considered.

VIII. CREDIT AND FINANCIAL SERVICES AND FACILITIES

18. As the development and implementation of FOVOP would require certain amount of capital and investment cost in carrying out even the small economic activities, the following activities could be implemented in order to create potential sources of funds as well as facilitate access to public financial institutions and establishment of micro-credit financing systems. Such activities could include:

- Establishment of community or group savings and other self-help initiatives as potential sources of funds that could provide loans at reasonable interest rates, for the economic activities in fishing communities, and also as source of counterpart funds or as form of collateral for soft loans with commercial banks or as counterpart funds for grants or financial assistance from government, non-government and international organizations;
- Setting up of co-funding sources among the existing groups, organizations or associations to strengthen the financial status and position of the communities in obtaining as a group, soft loans, grants and other financial assistance; and
- Exploring the possibility of sourcing technical and financial assistance for the local groups in the fishing communities, and supporting the communities in their efforts to source financial assistance from donor organizations and agencies.

19. The regular preparation of financial reports and generally accepted auditing system on the economic activities should be facilitated to show transparency in the financial operations and also as reference documents during the application of loans and grants as well as for financial assistance.

20. Establishment of reward system as a form of incentive should be initiated in order to improve the business operations and encourage the local people to support the economic activities of the communities specifically the products and services being promoted under FOVOP.

IX. MARKETING DEVELOPMENT AND PRODUCTS AND SERVICES PROMOTION

21. The other important components that could support the success in promoting FOVOP in the region involve effective marketing and distribution of the FOVOP products. Strengthening the marketing and promotion of FOVOP could be achieved through the intensification of marketing and distribution of the products and services. The following suggestions could therefore be considered:

- Setting up of marketing centers, mobile outlets and permanent showrooms in strategic locations such as airports, ports, big shopping centers and district/provincial offices for the distribution and marketing of the FOVOP products;
- Linking local outlets with Departments of Tourism or Tourism Boards as well as with travel agencies and also with NGOs in neighboring provinces to expand the marketing channels;
- Regular participation in events, festivals, trade fairs and the like at community, district, provincial and national levels for the marketing of the products;
- Setting up of e-shopping systems and availing of the services of domestic public facilities (e.g., postal offices, courier services) for transporting and shipping the products;
- Installation of display centers for promotional and advertisement purposes;
- Compilation of information concerning the types of products and the services being promoted including the names and addresses of producers, communities and areas for easy access by consumers;
- Advertising the products in local and national mass media (e.g., radio, television, newspapers) and with local IT-servers to foster marketing efforts;
- Strengthening and enhancing FOVOP markets including modernization of domestic marketing system as well as incorporating the markets into broader value-chains. Market strengthening should initially focus on local markets and their potentials could be gradually expanded throughout the value-chain;
- Development of marketing strategies which could include creation of market networks in respective areas; and
- Establishment of the Network of FOVOP Promotion at sub-national, national and regional levels.

X. HUMAN RESOURCES AND ENTREPRENEURIAL CAPACITY DEVELOPMENT

22. One of the most important factors that could ensure the success in the promotion and implementation of FOVOP is human capacity building for the target beneficiaries. Each ASEAN country is encouraged to develop the mechanism for human capacity building starting from the assessment of the human capacity building needs, develop capacity building development plans, and conduct capacity building as well as monitoring and evaluation activities.

23. To promote and implement FOVOP, orientation and familiarization of the Regional Guidelines by all stakeholders is necessary to enable them to adopt the essence of the Guidelines with respect to their interests and skills.

24. With respect to the overall management scheme to promote FOVOP, the need for capacity building on rural leadership is considered high priority.

25. To sustain the promotion of FOVOP, special attention should also be made for the capacity building of the leaders and the youth as potential leaders of FOVOP, through training, exchange of experiences and conduct of appropriate study tours.

26. Capacity building aspects for the community fishers/groups for FOVOP promotion should therefore take into consideration the following issues:

- New technologies and innovations;
- Management and organizational skills including basic accounting and bookkeeping;
- Gender and development;
- Identification of potential products;
- Products and services development and promotion including value-adding;
- Processing, packaging, good hygienic practices and food safety standards and requirements;
- Sustainable ecotourism development;
- Marketing and product distribution directed towards local and domestic markets including product price set up; and
- Credit and financial management.

XI. COLLABORATION AMONG ASEAN COUNTRIES AND REGIONAL/ INTERNATIONAL ORGANIZATIONS

27. In the promotion of FOVOP in the ASEAN region, preferential arrangement should be given to the new members of the ASEAN, namely: Cambodia, Lao PDR, Myanmar and Vietnam to reduce the disparities among the countries in the region.

28. Cooperation mechanism among the countries in the region as well as relevant regional/international organizations such as the ASEAN Secretariat, APRACA, SEAFDEC and relevant regional/international fisheries organization should be established to support the promotion and implementation of FOVOP in the ASEAN region.

29. Networking within and among the countries as well as between countries and regional/international organizations to explore the establishment of sharing mechanism for expertise, experience and lessons learned as well as collaboration towards issues of common concerns should be promoted in order to develop or improve the FOVOP system. This could be achieved by:

- Developing a coordination mechanism within the fisheries agencies at various levels as well as inter-agency coordination mechanism among agencies concerned to develop or improve the adaption of the FOVOP system;
- Strengthening the communication channels and cooperation among

countries, SEAFDEC and the ASEAN Secretariat; and

- Enhancing collaboration among countries, SEAFDEC and other regional/international organizations to enhance and speed up the development and eventual adoption of the FOVOP approach.

30. To exchange and share information as well as experiences on FOVOP, the following issues should be considered:

- Development of regional information, education, and communication (IEC) programs/initiatives to compile and disseminate information on best practices, success cases, experiences and lessons learned, as well as manuals and guidelines to support the promotion of FOVOP through various media such as audio-visual, print, internet and other medium of expressions; and
- Establishment of regional/international collaborative programs in the areas of IEC, training and research related to credit and financial services.

XII. FOLLOW-UP ACTIONS TO PROMOTE THE IMPLEMENTATION OF THE REGIONAL GUIDELINES

31. After the completion of the FOVOP project, the Regional Guidelines and Strategy could be used as basis by the ASEAN countries in adopting and further promoting the FOVOP approach in the region.

32. In the adoption of the FOVOP approach in the ASEAN region, the ASEAN countries should investigate the applicability of the Regional Guidelines and should be responsible for the implementation of the Regional Guidelines for the Promotion of FOVOP. Where appropriate, the ASEAN countries could make adjustments in the Regional Guidelines as deemed necessary in order to fit the nature and requirements as well as the locality and specificity of the respective countries.

33. To facilitate regional cooperation on the promotion of FOVOP in the ASEAN region, SEAFDEC for its part would find ways and means to continue providing the necessary technical support as well as coordinate the activities in order to assure the sustainability of the promotion of FOVOP in the region.

APPENDIX I

GLOSSARY

As basis for the common understanding of the key terminologies used in these Guidelines, explanation on the various terminologies used is provided below. Regional understanding of the terminologies taken from other sources will indicate otherwise.

APRACA refers to the Asia-Pacific Rural and Agricultural Credit Association, an association of financial intermediaries involved directly in rural finance and institutions and bodies working indirectly for the development of rural finance schemes and banking systems in the Asia and Pacific Region, and registered as an autonomous body with its head office based in Bangkok, Thailand.

Consultative process refers to the process of striving for broad agreement among the various stakeholders on the promotion of “One Village, One Fisheries Product”.

Ecotourism refers to the responsible travel to fragile, pristine, and usually protected areas that strives to create very minimal impact and (often) done in small scale, with the main purpose of educating the travelers, collecting funds to compensate efforts for conservation, directly benefiting the economic development and political empowerment of local communities, and fostering respect of the different cultures and human rights.

Fishers refer to an individual who takes part in fisheries activities in marine and inland waters including capture, aquaculture, processing, and marketing.

Food Security exists when all people, at all times, have physical and economic access to sufficient, safe and nutritious food that meets their dietary needs and food preferences for an active and healthy life.

FOVOP refers to “One Village, One Fisheries Product” which is the approach developed and promoted specifically for the fisheries sector in the ASEAN Region, to create economic activities as alternative livelihood and source of income in the fishing communities, mobilizing the OVOP (One Village, One Product) concept and experiences successfully developed at the local/community level in Japan and few countries in the ASEAN region.

Household refers to a basic unit for socio-cultural and economic analysis, which includes all persons, kin and non-kin, who live in the same dwelling and share income, expenses and daily subsistence tasks.

Roadmap refers to a detailed plan or explanation to guide people in setting standards or determining a course of action.

Stakeholders refer to any individual or groups of individual who are involved or have interests in the “One Village, One Fisheries Product”.

Value chain refers to a model of how businesses receive raw materials as inputs, adding value to the raw materials through various processes, and selling the finished products to customers.

APPENDIX II

LIST OF PARTICIPANTS OF THE SECOND ASEAN-SEAFDEC REGIONAL TECHNICAL CONSULTATION ON THE PROMOTION OF “ONE VILLAGE, ONE FISHERIES PRODUCT” (FOVOP) IN THE ASEAN REGION

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