

SPECIAL REPORT

Fifth SEAFDEC Department, the Inland Fishery Resources Development and Management Department (IFRDMD) in Palembang, Indonesia was inaugurated and set into motion

Being aware of the importance of inland fisheries for food security, livelihood and well-being of peoples not only in Indonesia but also in the whole Southeast Asian region, the Government of Indonesia expressed its intention to host a regional center for inland fisheries through a statement put forward by His Excellency Dr. Fadel Muhammad, the former Minister of Marine Affairs and Fisheries during the ASEAN-SEAFDEC Conference held in June 2011. The proposal which was unanimously supported by the SEAFDEC Council of Directors in the subsequent year, came into fruition two years later when the Government of Indonesia represented by Prof. Syarief Widjaja, the Secretary-General of the Ministry of Marine Affairs and Fisheries (MMAF) and SEAFDEC Council Director for Indonesia, signed the National Legitimacy Document on 2 September 2014 to officially launch the establishment of the Inland Fishery Resources Development and Management Department (IFRDMD) as the fifth Department of SEAFDEC.

The signing of the Legitimacy Document therefore gives due recognition to IFRDMD as an inter-governmental organization under the SEAFDEC framework and accordingly confirms the necessary privileges for IFRDMD. This development also gives the assurance that more focus of SEAFDEC activities would be given on inland fisheries, as well as on inland fishery resource conservation and management.

Although it is expected that the new Department would only be operational by 2015 considering that the construction of buildings, laboratories, and other facilities is still ongoing, the activities of IFRDMD could be initiated sooner and even before the end of 2014, at its temporary site in the compound of Indonesia's Research Institute for Inland Fisheries also based in Palembang. This would enable the IFRDMD to promptly address regionally important and relevant issues at the soonest time possible.

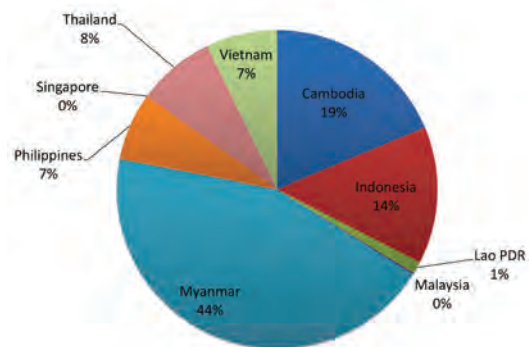
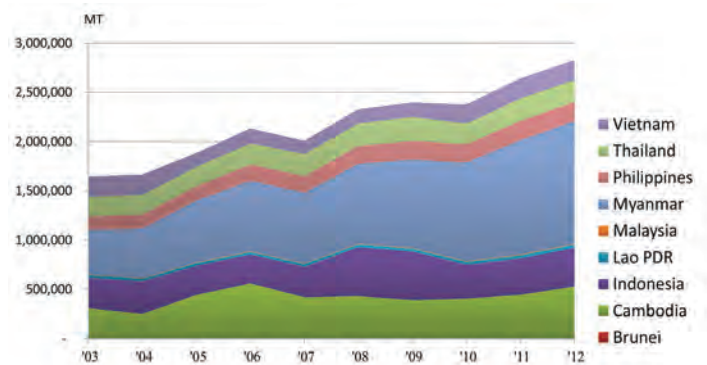
Inland Capture Fisheries in the Southeast Asian Region at a Glance

The total production from inland capture fisheries of the Southeast Asian region as of 2012 was reported to be approximately 2.8 million metric tons, accounting for more than 7% of the region's total fisheries production (from all sectors) or more than 15% of the total production from capture fisheries. The top-producing Southeast Asian country is Myanmar, followed by Cambodia and Indonesia. Other countries are also closing in, such as the Philippines, Thailand



The signing of the Legitimacy Document for IFRDMD was made during the International Conference on Inland Capture Fisheries held in Palembang, Indonesia. Present during the signing ceremony were the representative of the Governor of South Sumatra, the Secretary-General and senior officials of SEAFDEC, and delegates from the SEAFDEC Member Countries attending the International Conference

and Vietnam which have also been reported to consistently produce considerable amount of inland fisheries products during the past decade. For the region's only landlocked country Lao PDR, its production may not be very high but this is derived mainly from inland fisheries. The establishment of





After the signing ceremony and with Prof. Widjaja leading, the SEAFDEC Secretary-General, senior officials of SEAFDEC and delegates from the Member Countries, and the representative of the Governor of South Sumatra visited the construction site of the IFRDMD premises and facilities

IFRDMD therefore signifies the importance and significance of developing the inland fisheries in the Southeast Asian region for food security of the peoples.

Characteristics of the Region's Inland Capture Fisheries

The most common characteristics of inland capture fisheries in Southeast Asia, include the following:

- Inland capture fisheries comprises large number of small-scale fishers, mostly subsistent and engaged in only part-time fishing activities
- Activities related to inland capture fisheries are highly seasonal, with the highest peak during flood receding periods or at the end of the rainy season
- Production from inland capture fisheries is highly diversified, where catch could be large in number and quantity, but small in size with high species diversity
- Inland fishery resources could be freely accessed at any time, and production could be landed anywhere without proper recording
- Inland fisheries production goes to various channels, for direct household consumption, sold in local markets, or exported to markets within the region

Challenges Confronting Inland Fisheries Development and the Ways Forward

Addressing the low priority that planners and policy makers give to inland fisheries

- Improving the methodologies for collecting statistics on production from inland capture fisheries to address the concerns on inadequacy of data and other relevant information
- Boosting the development of non-conventional data collection and model for inland ecosystem valuation using existing data and information to advocate the importance of inland fisheries
- Synthesizing and packaging meaningful information for policy makers and public by integrating data available from

various sources, *e.g.* censuses and statistics, research studies, local/traditional knowledge

Applying the ecosystem approach to fisheries in inland fisheries management

- Promoting the “catchment approach” to ensure consistency in management levels (local, national or regional levels) and ecosystem boundary
- Strengthening the “holistic approach” by taking into consideration the activities of other sectors involved and sharing the same inland resources/ecosystems

Securing ecosystem functions and improving R&D on mitigation measures

- Raising the awareness of other sectors as well as planners/policy makers on the importance of inland fisheries and its ecosystem functions, by generating and disseminating relevant and credible information
- Establishing and advocating measures to mitigate the impacts of development projects, *e.g.* incorporation of fish passage in cross-river barrier construction, stock enhancement programs, integration of underpasses in road construction and development

Maximizing the utilization of inland fishery resources

- Developing and upholding responsible fishing gears/practices that promote species selectivity
- Enhancing preservation and post-harvest technologies to ensure that fish is utilized for year-round consumption, improve safety and quality of traditional fish products for local consumption, and generate value-added products

Developing appropriate resources enhancement programs

- Enhancing the yield from inland capture fisheries by stocking hatchery-bred seeds (focusing on low trophic and indigenous species) in closed ecosystem
- Strengthening conservation measures through the use of indigenous species with seeds produced specifically for stock enhancement purposes
- Promoting habitat conservation and improvement by making the habitats favorable for enhancing natural reproduction of aquatic species
- Developing indicators for evaluating the successes of resource enhancement programs
- Promoting culture-based fisheries

Improving the capacity of inland fisheries to adapt to climate change

- Promoting the “precautionary approach” by acting decisively in the absence of certainty
- Enhancing the preparedness of inland fisheries communities in responding to anticipated changes and variability of the climate

