



Beyond Regionalizing the Code of Conduct for Responsible Fisheries: ASEAN-SEAFDEC Human Resource Development Initiative

Worawit Wanchana

For almost 40 years since its creation in 1967, SEAFDEC has continued to work towards the development of fisheries in the Southeast Asian region. Several regional programs in support of the development of sustainable fisheries have been carried out using SEAFDEC's technical expertise, including the promotion for the adoption of the global Code of Conduct for Responsible Fisheries (CCRF). During the ASEAN-SEAFDEC Conference on Sustainable Fisheries for Food Security in the New Millennium: „Fish for the People“ organized in 2001, the Resolution and Plan of Action on Sustainable Fisheries for Food Security was adopted based on the CCRF's guiding principles and thematic issues, and have been considered common regional policy frameworks and used as guidelines in promoting sustainable fisheries and in ensuring food security in the ASEAN region.

The Regionalization of the Code of Conduct for Responsible Fisheries

The program on the Regionalization of the Code of Conduct for Responsible Fisheries (RCCRF) which SEAFDEC carried out starting in 1998 consisted of two main components: (I) formulation and dissemination of the regional guidelines on responsible fisheries, and (II) human resources development (HRD) with emphasis on sustainable fisheries management. The regionalization program, which was financially supported by the Government of Japan through its Trust Fund Program from 1998 to 2004 (Component I) and Component II on HRD by the Government of Sweden through the Swedish Board of Fisheries (2003-2006), produced five regional technical guidelines.

Responsible Fishing Operations

The Regional Guidelines for Responsible Fisheries in Southeast Asia: Responsible Fishing Operations was developed to support the implementation of Article 8 (Fishing Operations) of the global CCRF in the ASEAN region, considering current situation of the region's fishing operations and practices. Since the inland fisheries sector

and its activities is of great economic importance for the countries of Southeast Asia, the Guidelines also include issues relevant to the sustainable development of this sub-sector. The development of the Guidelines, through a series of consultations with experts on fishing technology and fishing gears from the SEAFDEC Member Countries, was coordinated by the SEAFDEC Training Department (TD).

Responsible Aquaculture

Recognizing that irresponsible farming practices destroy the ecosystems, decrease biodiversity, and cause social conflicts in pursuit of short-term gains, the Regional Guidelines for Responsible Fisheries in Southeast Asia: Responsible Aquaculture therefore, aims to mitigate such negative effects of aquaculture. The Guidelines provide supplementary guidance to Article 9 of the CCRF, accommodating regional requirements to promote the implementation of responsible aquaculture in marine, brackish, and freshwater environments, e.g., lakes, reservoirs, estuaries, rivers etc. The Guidelines also provide guidance on efficient use of inputs, e.g., fry, broodstock, feeds, etc., to improve production and facilitate responsible culture practices. The first edition of the Guidelines, published in 2001 was updated in 2005 to consider relevant factors resulting from the fast development of aquaculture in the region. The inputs for the Guidelines, collated by the SEAFDEC Aquaculture Department (AQD), took into consideration the outcome of a series of consultations with aquaculture experts from the region.

Responsible Fisheries Management

The Regional Guidelines for Responsible Fisheries in Southeast Asia: Responsible Fisheries Management support the implementation of Article 7 (Fisheries Management) of the CCRF and provide suggestions for the improvement of fisheries management with emphasis on human capacity enhancement for all levels of stakeholders involved in inland, coastal and marine fisheries. The Guidelines also incorporates relevant provisions of the Resolution and Plan of Action for Food Security for the ASEAN Region. Directions for management of fishing capacity are focused and problems on open access fisheries are addressed through the introduction of ecosystem-based, rights-based/ decentralized fisheries management.

Moreover, the Guidelines also promote the understanding of the status and trend of shared stocks, strengthening fishery statistical systems, development of indicators for multi-species, and expansion of fisheries to include under-utilized resources. Consisting of two parts, the guidelines for industrial fisheries were compiled by the SEAFDEC Marine Fisheries Resources Development and Management Department (MFRDMD) and the coastal fisheries by SEAFDEC/TD. The Guidelines was formulated from the

outcomes of consultations as well as relevant technical recommendations including those from Regional Technical Meetings in the promotion of the Resolution and Plan of Action.

Responsible Post-harvest Practices and Trade

The Regional Guidelines for Responsible Fisheries in Southeast Asia: Responsible Post-Harvest Practices and Trade, serves as reference in identifying directions and priority actions for the implementation of Article 11 (Post-harvest Practices and Trade) of the CCRF. Considering that traditional fish products in the ASEAN region still represent a significantly high amount of total fish utilization, the Guidelines also aimed to address this concern under its three main topics: responsible fish utilization, responsible international trade, and laws and regulations related to fish trade. The Guidelines also incorporated relevant provisions of the Resolution and Plan of Action for Food Security for the ASEAN Region. Coordinated by the SEAFDEC Marine Fisheries Department (MFRD), the Guidelines was prepared after a series of consultations with core experts from SEAFDEC and ASEAN Member Countries. It aims to achieve food security and promote trade in domestic, intra-regional and international markets, considering that only few countries in the region have the capability to develop food safety and quality assurance in their fish products especially those intended for the foreign markets.

Supplementary Guidelines for Responsible Fisheries in Southeast Asia

In order to substantiate the Regional Guidelines for Responsible Fisheries: Responsible Fisheries Management, Supplementary Guidelines was published comprising four parts: (1) Co-management Using Group User Rights for Small-scale Fisheries in Southeast Asia; (2) Fishery Statistics for Capture Fisheries in Southeast Asia; (3) Use of Indicators for Sustainable Development and Management of Capture Fisheries in Southeast Asia; and (4) Use of Fisheries *Refugia* for Capture Fisheries Management in Southeast Asia.

Beyond Production of the Regional Guidelines

After the production of the Regional Guidelines, follow-up actions have been made by SEAFDEC and ASEAN especially at the national level to secure that the Guidelines would be fully understood and implemented by the Member Countries, and eventually developing their respective national frameworks for the implementation of the global CCRF. SEAFDEC with financial support from the Swedish International Development and Cooperation Agency (Sida) through technical cooperation with the Swedish Board of Fisheries launched a four-year project on Human Resource

Development (HRD) for Fisheries Management in the ASEAN Region (2003-2006). The project, which comprised Component II of the RCCRF focused on human resource development to specifically support the implementation in the ASEAN region of the CCRF: Fisheries Management. This project aimed to support the implementation of the CCRF through awareness building and training activities, specifically with respect to the priority issues contained in the Regional Guidelines for Responsible Fisheries in Southeast Asia: Fisheries Management as well as on the issues related to the reduction of „fishing capacity%” to achieve sustainable fisheries in the region. In order to set directions and priorities, a process-oriented (step-by-step) approach is being adopted, seeking consensus and recommendations from the Member Countries through a series of regional consultations and meetings as well as other related initiatives.

Recognizing that „HRD in fisheries is specific to the national situation%”, the development of a „pilot process%” in a representative set of ASEAN member countries is necessary to enhance the management of fishery resources through effective implementation and regional application of the CCRF and the RCCRF. Thus, the pilot process was implemented in representative countries, i.e., Cambodia, Indonesia, Thailand and Vietnam that were chosen during a series of meetings, workshops and on-site training sessions conducted to address fisheries management and fishing capacity issues. At these fora, the discussions highlighted on the fact that in the ASEAN region *the major issue regarding fisheries management relates to management of fishing capacity and reduction of over-capacity*. Based on the need to integrate social, legal and environmental aspects, three „thematic%” priorities for HRD were developed and are being promoted: (1) management of over fishing capacity; (2) strengthening of local fisheries management; and (3) integrating fisheries management into habitat management.

HRD strategy for fisheries

Consonant with the implementation of the CCRF and the RCCRF, the Strategy for HRD in Fisheries in the ASEAN Region promotes the packaging of outputs from the capacity building and HRD programs with the aim of improving planning and management capabilities in coastal fisheries.

Box 1: Fisheries *refugia* in Southeast Asia

In Southeast Asia, fisheries *refugia* is the “spatially and geographically defined marine or coastal areas in which specific management measures are applied to sustain important species (fisheries resources) during the critical stages of their lifecycle, for their sustainable use”.

Box 2: Human Capacity Building in Support of the Establishment of Fisheries *Refugia* in Southeast Asia

Establishment of fisheries *refugia* in the Thailand-Cambodia-Vietnam areas, include three main concerns:

- Processes for the establishment of fisheries *refugia*
 - Establish criteria for selection/establishment of fisheries *refugia*
 - Motivate people to establish fisheries *refugia*
 - Establish the fisheries *refugia*
 - Manage the fisheries *refugia*
- Activities for other countries to establish and manage fisheries *refugia*
 - Cooperation between Cambodia-Thailand (Koh Kong and Trad Provinces)
 - Cooperation between Cambodia-Vietnam (Kampot and Kien Giang Provinces)
- Mechanisms for the establishment of fisheries *refugia*
 - Establishment of provincial working groups
 - Establishment of technical working groups

The outputs could include policy and technical advice as well as awareness building in fisheries management including management of fishing capacity for the policy makers/high level officials. The process of awareness building and human resource development includes a key set of thematic indicators on the integration of social, environmental, and legal aspects. Moreover, collaboration with the UNEP/GEF South China Sea Project (fisheries component) was forged to introduce the concept of *refugia* (Box 1) and HRD for fisheries *refugia* for commercially-important fish stocks and endangered species in the ASEAN region.

In response to the recommendation to integrate fisheries management into habitat management, consultations to promote management and conservation of habitat and transboundary resources were initiated. The concept of establishing „fisheries *refugia*” as a marine protected area with regulated fishing was therefore considered. Thus, human capacity building in support of the establishment of fisheries *refugia* in Southeast Asia (Box 2) is being carried out in collaboration with concerned institutions, i.e. the Ministry of Fisheries (Vietnam), Department of Fisheries (Cambodia), Ministry of Environment (Cambodia), UNEP/GEF South China Sea Program, and IUCN/MPA (Vietnam). Consultations with the local/provincial offices on management of the coastal habitats and fisheries were deemed necessary to promote the concept and design for the „Fisheries *Refugia*” while the link of „Fisheries *Refugia*” with coastal resource management was clarified, and the capacity building needs and activities including HRD materials in support of the „Fisheries *Refugia*”, have been identified.

Box 3: HRD materials and regional database developed for this project

1. HRD “packages” based on the information and materials used during training workshops and on-site training
2. “*Regional Inventory, Database and Network for Information Collection on Human Resource Development in Fisheries*” (RIDNIC-HRD), which could also be accessed through the internet
3. A description and implementation approach to representative types of management situations:
 - Development of local organizations and fisheries management in three areas (Lombok in Indonesia, Satun in Thailand and Koh Kong in Cambodia)
 - Management of anchovy fishery in two locations (Thailand and Vietnam)
 - Establishment of MPA and marine fisheries resources protection areas in Vietnam



The ASEAN-SEAFDEC Member Countries at the Regional Technical Consultation on Management of Fishing Capacity and HRD in Support of Fisheries Management held in Phuket in 2006, recommended the establishment of “Regional Fisheries Management Body”

fisheries management, addressing fisheries management would lead to addressing also fishing capacity.

Direct results from the pilot processes and on-site training

Monitoring the impacts, effects and activities as well as assessing direct or indirect results from the implementation of the activities are closely followed up. Based on the report of the review mission (March 2007) and the reports provided by counterparts from the four pilot countries, the project has already achieved direct results (Box 4).

HRD Materials

A common pool of learning experiences from various sources was used to develop a series of „packages%, documenting the knowledge and information shared during the pilot process and on-site training. Four sets of „packages%, one each for Cambodia, Indonesia, Thailand and Vietnam have been developed, while the HRD materials and regional reference database were established (Box 3).

HRD for fisheries management and management of fishing capacity

Recognizing that HRD only on „technical issues are not sufficient%, HRD in fisheries management and management of fishing capacity should be developed at all levels taking into consideration three important aspects:

- *Legislations, laws and regulations* – implication of international initiatives and conventions, structure/rules of local management, co-management approaches, functions of rights-based fisheries and rights of resource users, institutional role and responsibility;
 - *Socio-economics* – implications of limiting access, reducing and managing fishing capacity, facilitating exits from fisheries, supplementary/alternative livelihoods, co-management concepts, survey/research techniques including consultation and participations; and
 - *Environment* – habitats and reproduction areas, migratory routes and interconnectivity, supplementary/alternative livelihoods, necessity to maintain coastal features.
- For this project, „isolated% process in developing human resources for management of fishing capacity has been avoided. Thus, HRD for the management of fishing capacity is incorporated within the context of fishery management otherwise having another parallel process would not put the project funds to optimal use. From the point of view of

Box 4: Direct results from the implementation of project activities

- Fishermen in Trad Province, Thailand, organized themselves using the experience gained from on-site training in Satun Province, including improved management of crab fisheries
- Plans were developed for the establishment of a fisheries resources conservation area/MPA in Quang Binh Province, Vietnam, based on lessons learnt from on-site training in Phu Quoc
- In Indonesia, the MAFF planned to build up on the “district models” based on traditional practices, such as the *Awig-Awig* model that was used as a reference during the project event in Lombok
- In Koh Kong Province, Cambodia, cooperation across the border with Thailand on fisheries and habitat management has been confirmed as a priority by the Director-General of the Fisheries Administration of Cambodia, as a cooperative effort between Vietnam and Kampot Province
- A senior official of the Department of Fisheries of Thailand, after recognizing the need for Provincial Fishery Officers improve their skills in conflict resolution, facilitation and planning, in addition to technical subjects, and made provision in the next year’s departmental (national) budget for such skills training

Box 5: Major collaboration fostered among the countries

1. Moving towards a regional fisheries management mechanism

The recommendation of the ASEAN-SEAFDEC Member Countries during the 2006 Consultation in Phuket, Thailand on the establishment of a “Regional Fisheries Management Body” as a major long-term policy issue or area for collaboration, gained impetus upon its approval by the 39th Meeting of the Council Meeting in 2007 Siem Reap, Cambodia.

2. Willingness to cooperate in bordering (or trans-boundary) water areas

A consensus to promote cooperation between neighbouring countries on the integration of habitat and fisheries management (*Refugia*) was reached under a common management mechanism. The areas recommended include the Gulf of Thailand, Andaman Sea, South China Sea and Sulu/Sulawesi Sea. With the cooperation of Cambodia, Vietnam and Thailand, the project successfully initiated the process in two locations:

- Trad - Koh Kong (Thailand - Cambodia)
- Kampot - Phu Quoc (Cambodia - Vietnam)

3. Management of Fishing Capacity in Southeast Asia

Since management of fishing capacity is considered *the* fisheries management issue and considering the regional nature of fishing operation and migration of fish workers, regional cooperation could be attained upon addressing the following issues:

- As there is no aggregate data on fishing capacity at national or regional level and that available information is more site-specific and relates to projects rather than statistical information, the lack of “statistics” with respect to fishing capacity especially at small-scale level remains a critical problem
- Fishing capacity of large-scale fisheries to be addressed in parallel with small-scale fisheries
- The need for alternative, supplementary income opportunities to facilitate exit from fishery
- Transboundary and regional aspects of Illegal, Unregistered and Unreported fishing (IUU)
- Social aspects of reduction and management of fishing capacity

4. Successful promotion of cooperation and innovative approaches to management

Establishing cooperation with other institutions and projects is crucial to seek broad cooperation even beyond the sphere of fisheries agencies for long-term results. Such cooperation is important in addressing the social, environmental, economical and legal aspects in order to develop innovative approaches for improved regional cooperation. Thus, the project has been instrumental in:

- Promoting integration of fisheries management into habitat management
- Initiating activities on providing incentives to fishermen that are fishing in a sustainable way (eco-labelling)
- Improving coordination between fisheries, environmental and other agencies, including involvement of NGO’s at various levels
- Introducing adaptive management through dialogue among projects and institutions

Promotion of regional cooperation in fisheries management and management of fishing capacity

It will take time for the objective of „aiming for a drastic change in the course of action% together with the philosophy of building consensus among ASEAN-SEAFDEC member

countries in close collaboration with and among ASEAN countries to be realized. But after such time, the countries in the region shall have already built up their means and mechanisms for cooperation. Nevertheless, the project’s „process oriented results% helped pave the way for regional cooperation (**Box 5**) in terms of fisheries management and the management of fishing capacity.

Thus, the pro-active interaction with other projects and programs has been a useful mechanism not only in getting inputs to the project process but also in disseminating information and recommendation based on project results.



A sequence of activities to promote the cooperation in bordering waters included the Training/Workshop on Development of Community-based Fisheries Management in Coastal Areas of Cambodia, held in Kampot, Cambodia in 2005

About The Author

Worawit Wanchana, Ph.D. is currently the SEAFDEC-Sida Project Manager and also works with the SEAFDEC Secretariat Policy and Program Coordination Office as Program Manager. Before joining the Secretariat in 2004, he served as Instructor in Fishing Gear Technology at SEAFDEC Training Department for 14 years.