

# SPECIAL REPORT

## An Option for ASEAN Member States in Coping with IUU Fishing: “Establishment of Regional Fishing Vessels Record”

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In the Southeast Asian region, issues on IUU fishing have been seriously discussed in many events at national, regional and international levels and thus, attempts to reduce IUU fishing activities have been initiated. Established in 2008 with SEAFDEC as one of its advisory bodies, the RPOA-IUU or “Regional Plan of Action to Promote Responsible Fishing Practices including Combating IUU Fishing in the Southeast Asia Region” plays an important role in addressing the issues brought about by IUU fishing. Considering similar mandates of promoting responsible fisheries for sustainability and secure food safety in the region, SEAFDEC, RPOA-IUU and the ASEAN have been collaborating in the aspects of promoting sustainable fisheries and combating IUU fishing in the region.

Specifically, SEAFDEC supports both regional and international approaches to prevent, deter and eliminate IUU fishing in the Southeast Asian region. Thus, under the ASEAN-SEAFDEC Collaborative Programs of the Fisheries Consultative Group of the ASEAN-SEAFDEC Strategic Partnership (FCG/ASSP), SEAFDEC considers it as its first priority, the need to address the concerns of the ASEAN Member States with regards to IUU fishing as well as the direct and indirect impacts of IUU fishing to small-scale fisheries.

### Occurrence of IUU Fishing in the ASEAN Region

The rapid growth of the fisheries industry in Southeast Asia since late 1970s has led to increased fishing capacity, especially with the use of highly efficient fishing gear such as trawls and later purse seines, and increased capacities of processing plants. Moreover, fishing areas have been largely expanded covering international waters particularly the South China Sea, and offshore areas within the Southeast Asian region where the EEZs used to be only 12 nm. The adoption of 200 nm EEZs after 1982 created significant impacts in many ASEAN Member States including the increasing requirements for more raw fish materials to supply their respective processing industries.

The expansion of EEZs to 200 nm without effective MCS and fisheries management schemes was also seen as a primary reason that drives the fishing industry to perform illegal fishing or known later as IUU fishing. There could be many types of IUU fishing, but among the major forms are: unlicensed

fishing, landing of fish in neighboring states, using double flags, and illegal fishing and practices. Figure 1 shows the occurrence of IUU fishing activities in the Southeast Asian region.

As the world’s largest archipelago, Indonesia has been monitoring its waters and in the process, has observed that illegal fishing in its territory is still happening quite often. For instance, from 2008 to 2012, the country’s record indicated that most of illegal fishing boats that come to the country’s Natuna Sea spreading to the Strait of Karimata and the Java Sea, were from Vietnam, Thailand, and Malaysia, and a very large one from China. These boats were apprehended and the crew arrested by Indonesia authorities.

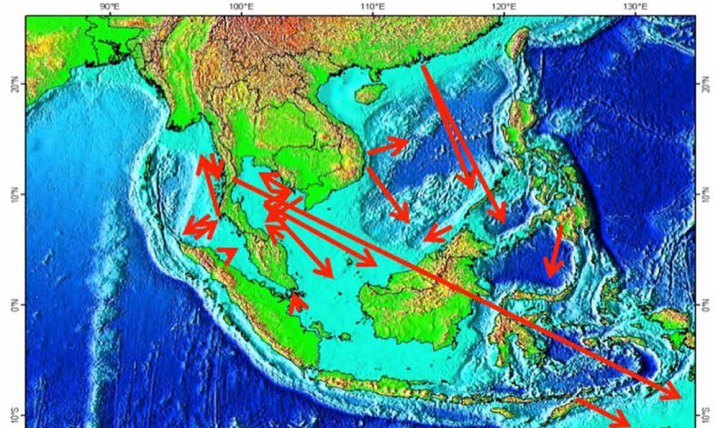


Figure 1. The occurrence of IUU fishing activities in the Southeast Asian region

### Impacts of IUU Fishing

The annual production from IUU fishing activities is believed to be from 11 to 26 million MT, accounting for about 10% to 22% of the world’s total fisheries production, and valued at about US\$ 9.0 to US\$ 24.0 billion per year (MRAG, 2009). Nonetheless, some studies estimated that the value of IUU fishing in the Asia-Pacific region (including South Asian countries) could be around US\$5.8 billion annually (Lungren, R. *et al.* 2006, FAO). The impacts of IUU fishing is not only in terms of losses in revenues and resources but also in the aspects of economic, social and environmental concerns. For example, IUU fishing could result in decreasing contributions from EEZ fisheries to the national economies, reducing the potential employment opportunities that local and



locally-based fleets usually create, decreasing local landings and potential export earnings, needing additional budget for MCS/fisheries management, limiting the accuracy of stock assessment models, and reducing species richness and diversity, among others.

It has been reported that in Indonesia, their traditional fisherfolks are often left on their own to deal with illegal fishers. This is usually the case in border areas such as in East Kalimantan and North Sumatra where Indonesian fisherfolks often encounters fishing trawlers owned by foreigners, including those from the Philippines and Malaysia (Pontianak Post (Part 1 of 4), 2012).

### Regional approaches to Prevent IUU Fishing/ Illegal Fishing

In practical ways, many ASEAN Member States considered that the implementation of Monitoring, Control and Surveillance (MCS) scheme plays a key role to prevent IUU fishing, particularly illegal fishing. However, under such circumstance, the implementation of MCS should cover the following issues:

- Joint marine patrol by the Navy, police and department of fisheries, of which the vessels should be equipped with new engine technology and should be fast,
- Need to enhance awareness of the use of advance technology such as coastal radar that could be installed in the vicinities to track illegal vessels,
- Installation of VMS (Vessel Monitoring System) on fishing vessels (either local or foreign) that already have licensed,
- Enhancing human resources in order to effectively and efficiently carry out their duties, properly, and professionally in their fields to avoid any breach or things that deviate from laws and regulations.

In order to support the implementation of MCS, SEAFDEC and the ASEAN, through the technical/expert consultations

with ASEAN Member States have agreed in principle to establish a Regional Fishing Vessels Record (hereinafter called the “Regional Record”) as a tool to combat IUU fishing in the Southeast Asian region. The proposed Regional Record was endorsed at the 45<sup>th</sup> Meeting of the SEAFDEC Council Directors in April 2013, while still waiting for endorsement by the ASWGF in late July 2013 and to SOM/AMAF for policy advises and adoption in September 2013. Nonetheless, the Regional Record that has been initially developed is initially limited to fishing vessels 24 meters in length and over, of which the basic requirements for the Regional Record as suggested by the Experts are shown as follows:

• Name of vessel	• Serial number of engine
• Type of fishing method/ gear	• Hull material
• Port of registry	• Date of registration
• Gross tonnage (G.T.)	• Area (country) of fishing operation
• Length (L)	• National of vessel (flag)
• Breadth (B)	• Previous name (if any)
• Depth (D)	• Previous flag (if any)
• Engine Power	• Name of captain/master
• Shipyard	• Nationality of captain/ master
• Date of launching	• Number of crew (maximum/minimum))
• International Radio Call Sign	• Nationality of crew
• Engine Brand	

SEAFDEC and the ASEAN Member States recognized the ongoing development of the Global Record of Fishing Vessels, Refrigerated Transport Vessels, & Supply Vessels initiated by FAO. For this reason, the Regional Record is developed along line with the Global Record to ensure that sharing of information could be promoted in the future as and when requested.

