

Port State Measures and Port Monitoring in Southeast Asia

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The demand for fish and fishery commodities around the world has been increasing. In order to meet such demand, active fishing vessels have been growing in terms of number and efficiency, resulting in overcapacity in most fishing areas of the world with the fishery resources becoming over-exploited. According to FAO, the world's decreasing fishery production from marine capture fisheries over the last two decades brought about worldwide concern on the effectiveness of fisheries management, enforcement of restrictions and regulations, and long-term sustainability at optimal levels of utilization of fishery products. Illegal, Unreported and Unregulated (IUU) fishing has been recognized as one of the detrimental factors that affect the health of fish stocks and marine ecosystems, as well as the livelihood of legitimate fishers. In this regard, Port State Measures had been considered as an efficient tool to regulate fishing activities at landing ports and combat IUU fishing. This report provides information on the Port State Measures Agreement and the experience of some countries in Southeast Asia, in initiating efforts to adopt the Agreement which the other countries could use as reference in preparing for the eventual implementation of the Port State Measures Agreement in the Southeast Asian region.

A number of key international instruments have been developed and agreed upon globally providing guidance to countries in undertaking measures and in complying with regulations to achieve sustainability in fishery resources utilization. Among the important conventions and other instruments which are binding and non-binding, include the 1982 UN Law of the Sea Convention (UNCLOS 1982), the United Nations Fish Stocks Agreement (UNFSA), FAO Compliance Agreement 1993, and the FAO Code of Conduct for Responsible Fisheries (CCRF). The common element of such instruments emphasized on the need to manage fishing capacity and to ensure that fishing effort does not exceed the available resources while at the same time aim to reduce destructive and illegal fishing. The extent of "Illegal, Unreported and Unregulated (IUU) fishing" has been gradually recognized in many regions, and sustainable fisheries management has been the basis for promoting international efforts to combat IUU fishing.

IUU fishing has been considered as one of the important factors that obstruct all efforts to conserve and maintain the fish stocks. MRAG (2009) estimated that the global economic impact in terms of losses due to IUU fishing is between US\$ 10.0 billion and US\$ 24.0 billion annually

involving about 11 and 26 million metric tons of fish. Specifically, IUU fishing also threatens the sustainability of the fishery resources as expressed by developed countries including large fleets from Eastern Europe. This could be due to the fact that over the last decades, fishing vessels from developing countries including those from Asian countries have significantly increased and many Asian and Southeast Asian countries became the top 10 to 20 fishing nations. Eventually, attention on the need to combat IUU fishing was growing stronger.

As provided for in the CCRF, member countries of FAO have called for ways to combat IUU fishing. Thus, the FAO Committee on Fisheries (COFI) adopted in March 2001 the International Plan of Action to Prevent, Deter and Eliminate IUU Fishing (IPOA-IUU) which was a voluntary instrument. The IPOA-IUU encourages the use of Port State Measures to combat IUU fishing, but the main responsibility to enforce measures to combat IUU fishing rested with the flag States (**Box 1**). In spite of the increasing efforts and global recognition on the need to combat IUU fishing, a concern was focused on existing management efforts for compliance by the flag States. In this regard, the need to strengthen the role and functions of

Box 1. Coastal State, flag State, and port State defined

The term "coastal State" is generally understood to mean a State bordering a marine area. The term "flag State" is generally understood to mean a State in whose territory a vessel is registered and whose flag a vessel is entitled to fly. The term "port State" is generally understood to mean a State in whose port a vessel is seeking or has obtained access, and for the purpose of the IPOA-IUU, ports also include offshore terminals.



Fish landed at Songkhla Fishing Port, Songkhla, Southern Thailand

the port States became apparent through the enforcement of necessary regulations.

Development of the Agreement on Port State Measures to Prevent, Deter and Eliminate Illegal, Unreported and Unregulated Fishing

At the beginning of this millennium, FAO initiated the development of some standards and model of control measures to be implemented in fishing ports. In 2005, COFI endorsed the Model Scheme on Port State Measures (PSM) to Combat IUU Fishing, which came with it the international minimum standards for PSM, and the required appropriate implementation of the PSM at regional or national levels. However, the model scheme was intended to be applied on a voluntary basis. Following the requirements for more stringent measures, COFI endorsed the initiative to develop a binding agreement on port State measures based on the Model Scheme and the IPOA-IUU.

Thus, the Agreement on Port State Measures to Prevent, Deter and Eliminate Illegal, Unreported and Unregulated Fishing (PSM Agreement) was approved during the Thirty-sixth Session of the FAO Conference on 22 November 2009. The Agreement which is binding to all parties, aims



Fishing boats at Songkhla Fishing Port, Songkhla, Southern Thailand

to prevent illegally caught fish from entering international markets through ports and address the role of a port State to prevent IUU fishing at landing sites, in ports and on transshipment vessels (being considered the first “port”). Basically, the PSM Agreement strengthens the roles and functions of the port State by establishing binding requirements for inspections and monitoring of the legal status of catches (by foreign vessels) to be landed (including “landings” at transshipment vessels) in national ports and landing sites by control of catch documentation and other supporting documents (e.g. registration, crew lists). The responsibility of ensuring that all needed documents are available and reliable is placed on the flag State (**Box 2**).

Upon the adoption of the PSM Agreement in November 2009, it was open for signature until 21 November 2010 and supposed to be enforced 30 days after the deposit of the Agreement with the FAO, as an instrument that had been ratified, accepted, approved, and acceded. As of 15 August 2011 however, only 23 states have signed with Indonesia as the only country from the ASEAN. Specifically, one state (Norway) has ratified the PSM Agreement, one state or “regional economic integration organization” (European Union) indicated approval of the PSM Agreement while two states (Myanmar and Sri Lanka) have acceded to the PSM Agreement according to the FAO Legal Office.

Port State Measures Agreement

The PSM Agreement defines the roles of port States and flag States, including the measures to take in connection with landings of catches by fishing vessels. The PSM Agreement highlights on the *role of the port State* in the adoption of effective measures through effective port monitoring and stringent inspections as needed from time to time to control the legality of catches being landed, and

Box 2. Key requirements identified in the PSM Agreement

1. Foreign fishing vessel wishing to enter a port to land its catch (or part of the catch) should notify the desired port in advance to obtain to land the catch. The notification should include information on fishing gear used, fishing area and the species/species groups of fish on-board;
2. Port States should, in designated ports, ensure that regular inspections are undertaken based on (internationally) recognized standards established for the purpose of port inspections;
3. Port State inspectors should control the papers of the vessel (registration, licenses, crew documents, etc), survey of fishing gear on board, examination of catch and the catch documents, and other information and records related to the vessels;
4. States party to the PSM Agreement must ensure that port inspectors are adequately equipped and trained (building upon the “guidelines for training of port inspectors” that is annexed to the PSM Agreement);
5. When a vessel is denied access to a port, the port State should publicize the information and the port State should inform relevant authorities of the flag State of the vessel for the flag State to take appropriate follow-up action;
6. Port State should create an information sharing network to exchange information on IUU associated and listed vessels; and
7. Parties to the convention should provide assistance to developing countries to be able to meet with the obligations and requirement for implementation of the PSM Agreement.

promote the sustainable use and long-term conservation of living marine resources and combat IUU fishing. It has also been recognised that measures to combat illegal, unreported and unregulated fishing should build upon the *primary responsibility of flag States* (SEAFDEC, 2010).

Prior to the adoption and entry into force of the PSM Agreement, some states and/or “regional management organizations”, and/or “regional economic integration organizations” have already developed national laws and regulations based on the principles of the PSM Agreement with a common objective of combating IUU fishing. Subsequently, an important step was taken by the European Union (EU) when on 29 September 2008, the EU adopted the Council Regulation (EC) No 1005/2008 “establishing a community system to prevent, deter and eliminate illegal, unreported and unregulated fishing”. The EC Regulation which came into force on 1 January 2010 is an example of how the principles of the PSM Agreement could be incorporated in national legislations. The EC Regulation specifies that all marine fishery products exported to the EU as well as marine fishery products exported within the EU should have proper catch documents attached which could be used to validate and confirm that the fishery products are not from any IUU fishing activity. Such traceability requirements make it always possible to track the products all the way starting from the actual fishing grounds. Moreover, the Regulation requires that the validity of the catch documents should be verified at fishing ports.

During the 29th Session of COFI on 31 January-4 February 2011, the FAO member countries were encouraged to ratify, accept, approve or accede to the PSM Agreement and to make extra-budgetary contributions to support capacity development for the implementation of the Agreement. While assessing the progress made with regards to measures taken against IUU fishing including the implementation of port State measures and market State measures, COFI also reviewed the performance of flag States as well as the status of the development of “Comprehensive Global Record of Fishing Vessels, Refrigerated Transport Vessels and Supply Vessels”.

Southeast Asia: A Major Trading Partner in Fishery Products

Southeast Asia is one of the major fish producing regions in the world and through the international trading of fishery products the region has been remarkably supporting the fish requirements of the peoples around the world. Fish and fishery products form dominant parts of the food items being exported from (and within) Southeast Asia. From the region’s total fisheries production of about 25 million metric tons in 2007, about 14 million metric tons or about

56% was exported (SEAFDEC, 2010). Moreover, the value of the fishery products exported by the Southeast Asian countries in 2007 was about US\$ 24 billion where the main markets included the U.S.A., EU, East and Southeast Asia, China, and other countries.

The importance of the EU as target market for fishery products from Southeast Asia provides a strong motivation for the countries in the region to improve the management of fishing capacity and combat IUU fishing, establish traceable routines for catch documentation, and improve port monitoring and port inspection. Under such circumstance, the 43rd Meeting of the SEAFDEC Council in April 2011 agreed that routines and standards for fish trade among the ASEAN countries should be upgraded, considering that fishery products from one country might be processed and re-exported to international markets from another country. While eventually implementing such measures, the status and standards of the fishery products from the region should be improved to maintain the reliability of Southeast Asian fisheries. Furthermore, improving trade within the ASEAN and strengthening efforts to combat IUU fishing in the region had also been a top priority in the ASEAN Community building which is envisaged to be completed by 2020, and thus, had been emphasized in the 2011 Resolution and Plan of Action adopted during the ASEAN-SEAFDEC Fish for the People Conference in June 2011 (SEAFDEC, 2011).

Moreover, the significance of implementing the PSM Agreement as means to undertake measures to combat IUU fishing had also been recognized by regional fisheries management organizations (RFMOs) such as the Indian Ocean Tuna Commission (IOTC). During the 14th session of the IOTC in March 2010 in Busan, Korea, the IOTC member countries which include some countries in Southeast Asia, adopted Resolution 10/11 on “Port State Measures to Prevent, Deter and Eliminate Illegal, Unreported and Unregulated Fishing” which came into force on 1 March 2011. The Resolution specified that IOTC member countries and cooperating non-contracting parties (CPCs) are required to provide information relevant to combating IUU fishing to the IOTC Secretariat. Such information should include a list of designated ports, “prior notification periods” established by each CPCs, and the “designated competent authority” appointed in each of the port States among the CPCs.

Port Monitoring in Southeast Asia and Collaboration on Port Monitoring in Sub-regions

In Southeast Asia, fisheries and consequently the trade of fishery products are among the most important sources

of employment and income that improve the region's economies. Even more significant is the fact that countries in the region are among the world's top trading nations of fishery products. Nevertheless, there is still the need to develop the means of verifying the legal status of fishery products being landed in many ports of the region, as well as the practices and procedures for port monitoring and port inspections to be able to comply with international standards. This would also contribute to fulfilling the ambition of the ASEAN Community building and the development of the ASEAN Economic Community by 2015, by which time trading among the ASEAN countries is expected to increase. Thus, the need to have efficient and reliable port monitoring and inspection system to ensure the sustainable utilization and exploitation of the marine resources, and maintain sustainable trade and combat IUU fishing, is well recognized by the Southeast Asian countries.

In a broader sense, "port monitoring" includes monitoring of all activities in the ports and landing sites of each country. The PSM Agreement focuses on monitoring and inspection of landings by foreign vessels, national vessels that fished outside of national EEZs, "domestic" landings by national vessels intended for export, landing through transshipment vessels including landing across boundaries by neighboring states, and other landings across boundaries. This implies that through monitoring and inspection, the data and documentation of fishing activities (gear, fishing ground), information on vessels and crew, catch documentation, current status of fish stocks if available, trade flow and market could be compiled and reviewed. Moreover, this could also enhance monitoring of "domestic" catches from all types of fisheries under national laws as applicable in accordance with the legal requirements of each country. More importantly, the requirements of the PSM Agreement would also be applied for domestic landings especially if the catch is intended for export. Furthermore, in establishing and enhancing port monitoring mechanisms, it is necessary to establish good cooperation among all relevant sectors and institutions, as well as among countries bordering the region and sub-regions. It should be recognized that during port monitoring, local and foreign vessels are also monitored to be able to validate and support the increasing requirements for catch traceability and other documentations.

In order to facilitate the process that could support the countries in transforming an existing well-managed port into a model for the country, protocols on how to manage fishing ports in support of efforts to combat IUU fishing should be established in accordance with the laws and regulations of each country. In addition, as indicated in the PSM Agreement landings by vessels in neighboring ports require special consideration especially in the process of

validation of the legal status of landed catches, especially with regards to artisanal fisheries. Such effort could already be initiated considering the cross-boundary relationships that had been established among concerned countries such as those bordering the Gulf of Thailand, namely: Cambodia and Vietnam, Cambodia and Thailand and in the area between Malaysia and Thailand. Similar efforts could also be undertaken for countries bordering the Andaman Sea such as Myanmar and Thailand and Indonesia, Malaysia and Thailand in the southern area of the Andaman Sea.

During the Expert Consultation on Managing Fishing Capacity to Combat IUU Fishing in Southeast Asia convened by SEAFDEC in September 2010, the need to develop relevant training programs was emphasized, by building upon the "guidelines for training of port inspectors (inspectors, information collection on resource evaluation)" stipulated in the PSM Agreement. Such training programs should aim to improve the capacity of personnel including port inspectors working at key fishing ports in the region, such efforts are also in line with the provisions in the PSM Agreement and in the EC Regulation on the need to assist developing countries in enhancing their capacities. Moreover, in order to strengthen institutional capacity, a mechanism or set of regional standards for port inspection and port monitoring should be developed to clarify the measures that port States should undertake, and on how such measures would relate to the functions that the flag States of the region have to carry out in order to combat IUU fishing (SEAFDEC, 2010).

Sub-regional Collaboration on Port Monitoring: Gulf of Thailand and the Andaman Sea Sub-regions

The need to establish closer cooperation among countries in the Southeast Asian region and around sub-regional seas such as the Gulf of Thailand and the Andaman Sea where bordering countries share common interest in sustaining the benefits derived from productive fisheries, is necessary to effectively combat IUU fishing in the region. In the sub-regions, the bordering countries recognize the need to address similar problems such as illegal and destructive fishing, and over-fishing capacity. Thus, the implementation of cooperative efforts to combat IUU fishing could be effectively pursued. Through similar initiatives, cooperation to combat IUU fishing could also be established for the other sub-regions such as in the Sulu-Sulawesi Seas and Arafura-Timor Seas, taking into consideration the established Model Scheme in the region and sub-regions of the Gulf of Thailand and Andaman Sea.

Likewise, countries bordering the sub-regions should develop systems of sharing information in a more systematic

way. It is also equally important that the knowledge and capacity of officers and personnel in agencies responsible for management of fishing capacity (e.g. registration, licensing) as well as other relevant institutions, on port monitoring and inspection are enhanced to meet higher expectations including the ability to cooperate with other institutions and across boundaries. SEAFDEC has continued to play an important role in supporting such capacity building through regional training courses, regional consultations and on-site events in countries around the identified sub-regions.

With support from the SEAFDEC-Sida Project, SEAFDEC initiated in 2008 a process of promoting sub-regional cooperation in the sub-regional seas of the Gulf of Thailand and the Andaman Sea by organizing a sequence of sub-regional Meetings that brought together countries bordering these two sub-regions. These events aimed to allow the countries to discuss matters of mutual concern in relevant fields of interest, like the integration of fisheries and habitat management and the need to manage fishing capacity to combat IUU fishing. In such sub-regional meetings, the participants put emphasis on the development of port monitoring. More particularly, the countries bordering the Gulf of Thailand and Andaman Sea indicated that the common practice of landing catches in fishing ports in neighboring countries should be given special attention and appropriately addressed by countries around the sub-regions.

Meetings of Gulf of Thailand Sub-region

The first meeting was convened in Bangkok on 28-29 March 2008 and the second also in Bangkok on 24-26 February 2009. Attended by representatives from Vietnam, Cambodia, Thailand and Malaysia together with resource persons from international organizations and the UNEP/GEF South China Sea Project, in both meetings emphasis was made on the “need to have good port monitoring”. Furthermore, while it was considered that cooperation mechanism for port monitoring among the countries around the Gulf of Thailand should be established, such mechanism should also aim to monitor and address landings of “neighbouring country vessels” and landings across boundaries. The initiative of establishing a reliable port monitoring based on meaningful sub-regional cooperation, aims to prepare the countries in complying with increasing demands on traceability, catch documentation, and to combat IUU fishing in Southeast Asia.

Meetings of Andaman Sea Sub-region

The first meeting was convened in Phuket, Thailand on 20-22 October 2009 attended by representatives from

Thailand, Malaysia, Indonesia, Myanmar, and India through a collaborative arrangement with the Bay of Bengal Large Marine Ecosystem (BOBLME) project. While referring to the sub-regional meetings of the Gulf of Thailand which promoted sub-regional management arrangements, the Meeting agreed on the need to establish suitable fisheries management for the Andaman Sea Sub-region. In so-doing, focus would be given to key issues of regional concern such as fisheries/habitat management, fishing capacity, IUU fisheries, vessel registration, port monitoring, among others, thus building upon opportunities to implement an “ecosystems approach to fisheries (EAF)”. The countries around the Andaman Sea Sub-region had a common understanding on the need to consider “port monitoring” with increasing priority in accordance with the “final” version of the requirements of the PSM Agreement and the EU requirements for catch documentation, and in the local scene, the practice of fish landings in “neighbouring countries”.

Ideally, all fishing ports and landing sites whether district or provincial, should be included in the port monitoring considering that the places where catches are landed are important and critical control points. Good port monitoring and port inspection for that matter is therefore important not only to combat IUU fishing but also needed for controlling the quality of fishery products that pass through such ports. It has also become necessary that the environmental standards of the ports be given more emphasis as it is at these ports and landing sites where appropriate authorities, through the catch and landing documents, can assess the amount of taxes and other revenues that could be derived for the country’s coffers. Presently, port monitoring in the region is basically or primarily done with the objective of monitoring the management of the ports and landing sites. As such, it does not focus on systematic monitoring and validation of catch documents and documents linked to the operation of the fishing vessels (e.g. registration, licenses, crew, and documents) as required under the PSM Agreement.

Nevertheless, validating the legal status of catches from traditional small-scale fisheries is one special challenge while verifying the origin of landings at border fishing ports for the small-scale fishing boats with limited monitoring and no records of their catch is even more challenging. However, one possible solution could be by exploring the application of “cluster arrangements” whereby the authorities at a landing site can verify and validate the combined landings from a “cluster” of small boats, as having been fished in accordance with national laws and in a sustainable manner. As a matter of fact, cluster arrangement could also be an option to certify products from small-scale aquaculture, as also suggested as by

Box 3. Port Inspection Procedures (Annex B of PSM Agreement)

Inspector shall:

- a) Verify, to the extent possible, that the vessel identification documentation onboard and information relating to the owner of the vessel is true, complete and correct, including through appropriate contacts with the flag State or international records of vessels if necessary;
- b) Verify that the vessel's flag and markings (e.g. name, external registration number, International Maritime Organization (IMO) ship identification number, international radio call sign and other markings, main dimensions) are consistent with information contained in the documentation;
- c) Verify, to the extent possible, that the authorizations for fishing and fishing related activities are true, complete, correct and consistent with the information provided in accordance with Annex A;
- d) Review all other relevant documentation and records held onboard, including, to the extent possible, those in electronic format and vessel monitoring system (VMS) data from the flag State or relevant regional fisheries management organizations (RFMOs). Relevant documentation may include logbooks, catch, transshipment and trade documents, crew lists, stowage plans and drawings, descriptions of fish holds, and documents required pursuant to the Convention on International Trade in Endangered Species of Wild Fauna and Flora;
- e) Examine, to the extent possible, all relevant fishing gear onboard, including any gear stowed out of sight as well as related devices, and to the extent possible, verify that they are in conformity with the conditions of the authorizations. The fishing gear shall, to the extent possible, also be checked to ensure that features such as the mesh and twine size, devices and attachments, dimensions and configurations of nets, pots, dredges, hook sizes and numbers are in conformity with applicable regulations and that the marking correspond to those authorized;
- f) Determine, to the extent possible, whether the fish on board was harvested in accordance with the applicable authorizations;
- g) Examine the fish, including by sampling, to determine its quantity and composition. In doing so, inspectors may open containers where the fish has been pre-packed and move the catch or containers to ascertain the integrity of fish holds. Such examination may include inspections of product type and determination of nominal weight;
- h) Evaluate whether there is clear evidence for believing that a vessel has engaged in IUU fishing or fishing related activities in support of such fishing;
- i) Provide the master of the vessel with the report containing the result of the inspection, including possible measures that could be taken, to be signed by the inspector and the master. The master's signature on the report shall serve only as acknowledgment of the receipt of a copy of the report. The master shall be given the opportunity to add any comments or objection to the report, and, as appropriate, to contact the relevant authorities of the flag State in particular where the master has serious difficulties in understanding the content of the report. A copy of the report shall be provided to the master; and
- j) Arrange, where necessary and possible, for translation of relevant documentation.

Box 4. Guidelines for Training of Inspectors (Annex E of PSM Agreement)

Annex E of the PSM Agreement states the "Each Party shall ensure that its inspectors are properly trained taking into account the **guidelines for the training of inspectors in Annex E**. Parties shall seek to cooperate in this regard". The elements of a training programme for port State inspectors should include at least the following areas:

1. Ethics;
2. Health, safety and security issues;
3. Applicable national laws and regulations, areas of competence and conservation and management measures of relevant RFMOs, and applicable international law;
4. Collection, evaluation and preservation of evidence;
5. General inspection procedures such as report writing and interview techniques;
6. Analysis of information, such as logbooks, electronic documentation and vessel history (name, ownership and flag State), required for the validation of information given by the master of the vessel;
7. Vessel boarding and inspection, including hold inspections and calculation of vessel hold volumes;
8. Verification and validation of information related to landings, transshipments, processing and fish remaining onboard, including utilizing conversion factors for the various species and products;
9. Identification of fish species, and the measurement of length/weight, stock status and other necessary biological parameters;
10. Identification of vessels and gear, and supporting facilities or fishing techniques for the inspection and measurement of gear;
11. Equipment and operation of VMS and other electronic tracking systems; and
12. Actions to be taken following an inspection.

representatives from the EU during the 2008 Meeting in Bangkok. As for artisanal landings across boundaries, the PSM Agreement provides some guidance, particularly in Article 3, Paragraph Part b which states that "Each Party shall, in its capacity as a port State, apply this Agreement in respect of vessels not entitled to fly its flag that are seeking entry to its ports or are in one of its ports, except for (a) vessels of a neighbouring State that are engaged in artisanal fishing for subsistence, provided that the port State and the flag State cooperate to ensure that such vessels do not engage in IUU fishing or related activities that support IUU fishing". Moreover, validating the legality of catches in areas where fishing vessels have two flags and double registration to enable them to operate in two countries could be another challenging task as no record of their production is provided or only the catches conveniently recorded for the day (best price) are provided. Nonetheless, institutional structures actually obstruct all attempts to implement good port monitoring. The number of agencies involved with fish landing and the lack of cooperation in sharing information among agencies involved hinder any attempts to adequately carry out enforcements.

Since the adoption of the PSM Agreement in November 2009, only Myanmar among the ASEAN countries had acceded to the PSM Agreement on 22 November 2010. Meanwhile, Indonesia had signed the PSM Agreement on 22 November 2009, and also indicated its intention to ratify the PSM Agreement. During the discussions in regional and sub-regional events organized since 2008, the need to develop a mechanism or set of standards for port inspection and port monitoring that would clarify the measures for port States to undertake, had been repeatedly emphasized, including how such measures should relate to the measures of flag States to combat IUU fishing, in accordance with the “Port inspections procedures” specified in the PSM Agreement (**Box 3**). The development of regional guidelines on port monitoring/port inspection was also considered.

Inadequate training and skills of personnel is one of the problems that led to the deficiency in the national capacity to improve port management including port inspections. Thus, the need to develop relevant training programs based on the “guidelines for training of port inspectors” in the PSM Agreement has been emphasized (**Box 4**), as this could contribute to improving the capacity of personnel including port inspectors, working at key fishing ports in the region.

Way Forward

At present, the implementation on port State measures in some countries of the region is slowly progressing, in spite of the fact that the PSM Agreement is still not in full force. Nonetheless, the Southeast Asian region still lacks control of the fishing ports especially at the border areas, where catches are landed from small-scale fishing boats and at borders where owners of fishing boats are not identified. For the long-term sustainability and utilization of marine resources, it would be crucial for the countries in the region to ratify the PSM Agreement. During the 2nd Meeting of the Gulf of Thailand, the participating countries agreed to share information on port State measures and flag State measures, as well as on market State measures. It has also become imperative that a system and mechanism for sharing information is immediately established in the region to facilitate monitoring and control, and eventually prevent IUU fishing considering the presence of many illegal fishing boats. Training programs should also be developed and implemented at all levels, following the indications provided in the guidelines for training of port inspectors of the PSM Agreement, to help countries in building up their capacity to follow and implement the requirements of the PSM Agreement. Furthermore, efforts should be made to strengthen regional and sub-regional cooperation in order to combat IUU in the whole region and sub-regions more efficiently.

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