

# Learning from Warnings

**A recent Consultation Workshop discussed awareness and policy support to protect ecosystems, reduce illegal fishing and promote co-management in the central coastal region of Vietnam**

Vietnam's fisheries sector plays an important role in the economic structure of the country. Marine capture fishery production continues to increase at an average rate of 9.07 per cent annually, whereas aquaculture activities increase at an average rate of 12.77 per cent per year. As reported by the General Directorate of Fisheries (D-Fish), in 2017 the total fish production reached over 7.28 mn tonnes, up by 5.6 per cent compared to 2016. The capture fishery production reached nearly 3.42 mn tonnes, up by 5.7 per cent, and aquaculture output reached over 3.86 mn tonnes, up 5.5 per cent, totalling in a farming area of 1.1 mn ha. Aquaculture production accounted for 53 per cent of total output in 2017, whereas in 2016 it was 54.2 per cent.

Capture fisheries is the primary provider for the food industry and employs more than 4 mn workers. However, capture fisheries in Vietnam continue to experience certain difficulties due to both objective and subjective conditions. On 10 May 2017, Vietnam was officially cautioned by the European Commission (EC) with a 'yellow card' for the effect the Vietnamese fisheries sector has caused on its marine ecosystems. On 23 October 2017, the European Commission issued the yellow card warning to Vietnam.

The Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations (FAO) has developed guidelines for small-scale fisheries in 2014 – the Voluntary Guidelines for Securing Sustainable Small-Scale Fisheries in the Context of Food Security and Poverty Eradication (SSF Guidelines). Accordingly, compliance with the regulations is sought to be made transparent and accountable for the effective implementation of regulations in the fisheries sector, from central to

local levels, in line with international practices and regulations. There are many shortcomings in the policy, organization and monitoring of small-scale fisheries.

On 28 September 2018, the Center for Marinelife Conservation and Community Development (MCD) and the Department of Agriculture and Rural Development of Binh Dinh Province jointly organized a "Policy Consultation, Communication and Sharing Workshop on the Mitigation of Illegal Fishing, Co-management and Protection of Fisheries Resources in the Central Coast". The workshop was supported by

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the International Collective in Support of Fishworkers (ICSF) under a FAO-funded project on the implementation of the SSF Guidelines in nine countries, including Vietnam.

## Reef ecosystems

The objectives of the workshop were to promote communication and awareness amongst stakeholders of illegal, unreported and unregulated (IUU)-related policy and co-management practices to reduce illegal fishing, and co-management of the living resources of the reef ecosystems.

The workshop was attended by 50 representatives from the D-Fish, the Binh Dinh Department of Agriculture and Rural Development, the Departments of Fisheries in the central provinces of Thua Thien Hue, Phu Yen and Binh Dinh, the Binh Dinh Fisheries Association, the

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Quy Nhon City People's Committee and commune council, community organizations of four Locally Managed Marine Area (LMMA) communes in Quy Nhon and representatives of fishing groups in the central areas of Cu Lao Cham and the Ly Son marine protected area (MPA).

**Since the 1980s, many co-management models have been researched and tested...**

The workshop featured policy consultations, communication and sharing of experiences on the mitigation of illegal fishing in the Central Coast to raise awareness of the need for compliance with the implementation of the revised Fisheries Law 2017. The discussions covered co-management of fisheries resources, mitigation of illegal fishery harvest, and action for planning policy in Vietnam. It was decided that the D-Fish would give further support to the localities to improve enforcement.

The main topics of the workshop were: (i) an overview of the central regions and local policies, programming and current action plans; (ii) the need for co-management awareness, minimization of illegal practices, and application of successful practical lessons in the coastal region of central Vietnam; and (iii) how to link policymakers, regulatory agencies, and fisher community organizations in activities to strengthen co-management, regulate exploitation and protect fisheries resources in order to minimize illegal practices.

According to D-Fish, IUU fishing is prohibited, but such activities are still prevalent. Illegal harvest must be prevented to reduce the decline of resources, allow for the advancement of sustainable development, and protect the rights and interests of the community. Co-management is a strategic solution for combating IUU fishing.

Actions against IUU fishing are supported by a range of international institutions and instruments, including

the 1982 United Nations Convention on the Law of the Sea (UNCLOS), the 1995 UN Fish Stocks Agreement (UNFSA), and the 1995 FAO Code of Conduct for Responsible Fisheries (CCRF). Vietnamese law also provides specific provisions on IUU fishing practices under the revised Fisheries Law of 2017, adopted by the National Assembly at its Fourth Session on 21 November (2017 or 2018?).

Between 2014 and 2018, Vietnam seized over 917 illegal fishing vessels in the waters bordering China and ASEAN and non-ASEAN countries. China, Indonesia and Cambodia are the three countries with the highest rate of detention of fishing vessels in Vietnam. The following are the efforts being made by Vietnam to combat IUU:

### **Co-management models**

Role of co-management in the protection of fishery resources: Co-management is a management approach in which the state shares its rights and responsibilities with community organizations involved in the management of fisheries resources. The community organization is an organization in which members participate voluntarily, jointly manage, share the benefits and protect fishery resources in a distinct geographic area.

Since the 1980s, many co-management models have been researched and tested in the field of fisheries and aquaculture use and practice, and in different localities throughout the country, with the support and funding of international organizations, in collaboration with local governments. Co-management models have been implemented in the following localities: (1) Buon Triet, Easoup, Lak lake (Dak Lak), Tra O Lagoon (Binh Dinh), Son La, and Bung Binh Thien (An Giang); and (2) Quang Ninh, Hai Phong, Thanh Hoa, Nghe An, Ha Tinh, Quang Nam, Thua Thien Hue, Binh Dinh, Phu Yen, Khanh Hoa, Binh Thuan, Ben Tre, Soc Trang, and Ca Mau. The results of applying the co-management model of aquatic resources in some provinces resulted in D-Fish issuing Decision No. 67/QĐ-TCTS-KTBVN on 7 June 2010.

The Fisheries Law of 2017, an important milestone in institutionalizing co-management, formally defined co-

**Table 1: Action plan for combating IUU**

EC recommended actions in Vietnam	Actions to take place in Vietnam
a) Revise the legal framework	a) Develop and improve legal documents, including two Decrees of the Government, one Decision of the Prime Minister and nine guiding circulars of the Ministry of Agriculture and Rural Development (MARD)
b) Ensure implementation and enforcement	b) Strengthen direction, management and effectiveness in management of fisheries and IUU fishing
c) Ensure that full sanctions are enforced and monitored	c) Implement solutions that create practical changes
d) Overcome deficiencies in monitoring, control and surveillance (MCS)	d) Improve law enforcement capacity, requiring fishing vessels of length 15m or more to install cruise control equipment. From 1 January 2019, fishing vessels sailing on the sea must install 100 per cent cruise control equipment
e) Improve the registration and licensing system	e) Build a national database on management of fishing vessel registration and synchronous fishing permits at central and local levels.
f) Introduce a fishing vessel development policy	f) Announce the reserve of marine resources in order to reorganize fishing fleets in accordance with capacity, planning for offshore fishing up to year 2020 and a vision plan to 2030.
g) Ensure traceability of fishery products	g) Regulate and organize the control of raw materials originating from IUU, exploiting commercial ports for re-export, or for domestic sale; the MARD issued Circular No. 02/2018 / TT, dated 31 January 2018, which stipulates identification of the source of the fishery.
h) Aim for co-operation with other countries	h) Promote bilateral co-operation to prevent IUU fishing and illegal trade through establishment of hotlines, and through dialogue with other countries in the region for the sustainable use of marine resources. The government has ratified Vietnam's accession to the FAO Agreement on Port State Measures (PSA) and the UNFSA. Vietnam has also become a party to the Western Central Pacific Fisheries Commission (WCPFC).
i) Engage in data collection and reporting for RFMOs	i) Implement regulations on collection and reporting of fishery data by WCPFC and the Southeast Asian Fisheries Development Center (SEAFCEC)

management in Article 10. The efforts of D-Fish and other concerned parties such as MCD have included initiatives such as issuing regulations for the recognition and assignment of management rights to community organizations, in the following manner:

1. Through application for recognition and transfer of management rights to community organizations;
2. By issuing orders for recognition and transfer of management rights to community organizations;
3. By disseminating the contents of the appraisal dossier on community management;
4. By preparing dossiers of proposals for amending and assigning management rights to community organizations;
5. By issuing orders for amending and transferring management rights to community organizations; and
6. By making model decisions on recognizing and empowering

community organizations to implement co-management of fisheries resources, and in recognizing and transferring management rights to community organizations.

Regulations on community collaborators are meant to recognize them as individuals who voluntarily participate in the activities of community organizations.

The community needs to be organized periodically, based on reports on the results of the implementation of co-management in the protection of fisheries resources, and the main contents of the community organization report should be widely disseminated.

The Binh Dinh Department of Fisheries presented the results of its review and plans to minimize IUU fishing, including proposals and recommendations for action.

Binh Dinh has set up a representative office and three standing groups at the

fishing port to inspect fishing vessels that dock and enter the wharf. Weekly inspection teams that control the fishing on coastal and lagoon areas have dealt with 102 cases of fisheries violations, and imposed fines totalling approximately 121 million Vietnamese dong (VND) (1USD=23,290 VND). 566 numbers of MCS equipment were installed on board fishing vessels (511 on board vessels of under 24 m in length and 55 on board vessels of 24 m or over).

In Binh Dinh, 13 vessels and 107 fishermen were arrested in the first eight months of 2018, up from four vessels and 13 crew members in 2017. These vessels and fishermen have had their fishing rights temporarily suspended and their fishing licences cancelled for six months, under Decision No. 48/2010 / QD-TTg. A constant review of fishermen and foreign fishing vessels is underway. The Provincial People's Committee has directed the provincial police, and the provincial Border Guard Commands to co-ordinate with the localities in verifying and handling cases of violation.

With a coastline of over 134 km, this geographical area includes the bay, seaports, and natural creeks such as Quy Nhon, De Gi and Tam Quan. The province has 6,245 fishing vessels, with a total capacity of 1,786,631 horsepower (HP). The total number of employees engaged in fishing activities is 44,350 (in offshore fishing: 29,512; in coastal fishing: 14,838).

The total seafood catch in 2017 reached 223,000 tonnes, of which tuna made up 47,000 tonnes (big-eye, yellow-fin tuna from the Atlantic: 9,700 tonnes; squid: 22,000 tonnes; shrimp: 1,200 tonnes; and other marine fish of all kinds: 143,100 tonnes).

Fishing vessels operating without fishing permits, or with expired fishing permits, account for 46 per cent of fishing vessels in the whole province. The number of fishing boats is quite large (1,358 under 20 HP, accounting for 21.7 per cent of the total number of registered boats), and this abundance affects the coastal fishery resources.

The operation of fishing vessels in areas that are not regulated – often on a complicated basis (especially for trawlers) – has impacts on the resources. Some forms of fishing are prohibited,

such as using explosives, electric pulse fishing, cages, etc. To curb these practices, the province has reviewed the statistics of fishing vessels (MEANING?).

Binh Dinh will continue to carry out its plan to review registration and licensing. Quarterly, the fisheries stations will record the number of vessels in the area to synchronise data between local and grass-roots statistical offices. Strengthening co-ordination among the authorities responsible for handling fishing vessels is needed. Raising awareness about the law, and training staff to improve the management capacity of vessels are being undertaken. Besides implementing various measures to reduce IUU fishing in offshore areas, Binh Dinh is working to ensure strict control of unregistered trawlers to prevent depletion of fishery resources; enforce a ban on fixed net fishing; and control unlicensed diving.

### Illegal fishing

Thua Thien Hue is known as the province that has implemented sustainable small-scale fisheries co-management to minimize illegal fishing in Tam Giang lagoon. Thua Thien Hue's Department of Fisheries has shifted the focus to management based on fishers rather than just fish. The regulation for management of lagoon fisheries has been issued as Article 5 (Decision No. 84/2016 / QD-UBND) and has achieved some successes, notably: Thua Thien Hue has implemented three parallel processes in its waters: a pilot model, institutional development and a management plan, and close community organization through formal fisheries associations at the grass-roots level, and development of sustainable fisheries co-management schemes at the provincial level. The synchronous implementation of the model has helped to rapidly develop the overall management plan, consistent with ecosystem and fishery considerations.

As a result, Thua Thien Hue has 7,000 members, and 65 official associations of the lagoon fisheries in 86 districts. The Fisheries Associations (FAs) have been granted 52 fishing rights. Fifty FAs in specific lagoon water bodies, in an area of over 16,000 ha, account for 74 per cent of the lagoon

area. Seven coastal fishing areas were chosen for pilot FAs. The whole province has 22 FAs, and fishing rights are allocated to the FAs by the provincial People's Committee. There are now 23 small-scale community-based marine conservation zones. The total protection area is 614.2 ha, accounting for 2.8 per cent of the Tam Giang-Cau Hai lagoon area. Assistance has been given by the state for the purchase of 20 community-based fishing boats for inspection and monitoring. A community fund of 3.25 bn VND was set up for the Loc Binh Fisheries Association in 2017. Clearly, emphasizing community-based management is the only way to streamline management activities, save costs and manage the fisheries for the sustainable development of aquatic resources, fishing communities and fisheries societies.

The Bai Huong Island sub-MPA, part of the Cu Lao Cham MPA, is a co-management model for marine resources protection and livelihood development of the local communities established in 2011, based on Decision No. 2614 /QD-UBND. The key management role lies with the community of Bai Huong village.

The sub-MPA has organized training courses to educate the community about the conservation and sustainable use of fisheries resources. Among the main activities of the co-management group is monitoring and patrolling in the Bai Huong sub-MPA. In addition to preserving livelihoods, the MPA has collaborated with MCD on livelihood improvement and regulating fishing activities under the co-management plan. MCD supports bottom-glass coral viewing tours as an alternate source of livelihood. Tourism has allowed the local community to reap benefits during lean fishing seasons. MCD registers legal fishing gear in order to reduce overfishing and to manage the fisheries resources. Local fishers reported an increase in species diversity in 2018, compared to 2017. Further livelihood opportunities have arisen from associated activities like cooking classes and hospitality home stay services.

Illegal fishing, however, continues through the exploitative activities of trawlers and seines, at great cost to

coastal fisheries resources. In 2017, Cu Lao Cham handled 12 infringement cases, resulting in more than 20 mn VND in sanctions. Cham shows us that co-management will succeed only if there is consensus within the community for the conservation and sustainable use of fishery resources. Patrol supervisors should handle cases of illegal fishing resolutely, but with caution.

### Assigning rights

An amendment in 2017 introduced the IUU issue into Section 6, Article 7 of the Fisheries Law 2017. Article 10 of the Law grants the district the prerogative to recognize and assign the right to manage fisheries resources in the area under co-management.

The co-management community organization is responsible for: (i) properly implementing the management plan; (ii) complying with the law on fishery activities, and inspection and examination by competent state agencies; (iii) co-ordinating with relevant authorities to

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patrol, inspect, investigate, prevent and deal with violations in the assigned area; and (iv) reporting to competent state agencies on the operation of community organizations, according to regulations.

The following recommendations can mitigate IUU fishing and strengthen co-management in fisheries:

1. *Raise awareness about IUU fishing:* Use mass media information and communication systems to change the perception of target groups to comply with laws and regulations on sustainable use; organize media campaigns and advocacy through co-ordination between government and social organizations (including FAs); develop and implement communication programmes to reduce IUU fishing, at the provincial/district/commune level in line with national action plans.



MCD



Participants at the workshop in Quy Nhon, Binh Dinh province. The workshop was attended by 50 representatives and the discussions covered co-management of fisheries resources, mitigation of illegal fishery harvest, and action for planning policy in Vietnam

2. *Support efforts for livelihood development and employment for fishermen groups:* Fishery resources have been significantly reduced due to unsustainable capture fisheries and hence, developing activities for livelihoods and alternative income for fishermen should be accorded a high priority; impart technical training by experts for fisheries groups on sustainable harvesting techniques and post-harvest preservation; develop coastal tourism and vocational training for youth to reduce the pressure on natural resources; and provide access to necessary resources for livelihood enhancement (including information technology and marketing skills).
3. *Support the implementation of co-management regulations and capacity building of community groups in sustainable fishery practices:* Ensure capacity building/strengthening of community organizations involved in co-management, training support, and strengthening of facilitators' skills; support planning for the conservation and sustainable use of fishery resources and management of community organizations; and promote co-ordination at the central and local levels, by creating mechanisms for monitoring and evaluating, and effectively enforcing co-management regulations for sustainable fisheries.
4. *Strengthen surveillance systems, and traceability and product certification in accordance with regulations:* Strengthen the capacity of fisher groups to improve responsible fishing practices, and use of fishing gear and legal fishing grounds; enhance co-operation with the business sector to improve traceability, improve recording/reporting practices in fishing ports and fishing areas, and comply with market regulations and requirements; and provide technical assistance to improve local and national monitoring and reporting systems. 3

#### For more



<http://mcdvietnam.org/en/>  
**Centre for Marinelif e Conservation  
 and Community Development (MCD)**

<https://sites.google.com/site/smallscalefisheries/events/myanmar>  
**National consultation workshop for  
 Small-scale fisheries in Myanmar:  
 Developing of Voluntary Guidelines  
 Towards Securing Sustainable  
 Small-scale Fisheries, 12-14 October  
 2012, Yangon, Myanmar**

<http://mcdvietnam.org/en/>  
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