**VIE 004**

**Narrative Report by MCD Vietnam**

**FAO - ICSF's project on supporting the social, economic, and environmental transformation of the small-scale fisheries sector to better contribute to food security and poverty eradication as a result of improved policies, strategies, and initiatives**

**Background**

Since the National Assembly of the Socialist Republic of Vietnam passed the Fisheries Law on November 21, 2017, in effect since January 1, 2019, and issued Decree No. 26/2019/ND-CP dated March 8, 2019, in effect since April 25, 2019, Vietnam’s Ministry of Agriculture and Rural Development (MARD) has been promoting co-management and an ecosystem approach to fisheries management (EAFM) to strengthen and protect Vietnam’s fishery resources and reduce illegal, unreported, and unregulated (IUU) fishing activities throughout the country. Article 10, Section 1, Chapter II of the Decree has regulations for co-management in the protection of fishery resources.

IUU fishing is detrimental to Vietnam’s small-scale fishers as well as the health of marine environments for reasons such as destructive fishing methods (e.g. trawling) and overfishing that destroy or deplete fish stocks and other coastal marine resources (e.g. coral reefs). While these activities are prohibited by law, IUU fishing is still prevalent. Co-management is a strategic solution that will reduce the decline of coastal marine resources, promote sustainable development, protect the interests and rights of communities, and move toward removal of the European Commission’s “yellow-card” on fish from Vietnam through the sharing of governing power and responsibilities of a specified geographical area between state and community.

EAFM strengthens the co-management approach by integrating management of ecological wellbeing, human wellbeing, and good governance into decision-making processes to promote conservation and sustainable use of natural resources. As a result, human development activities can continue in a way that ensures the protection of ecosystem stability and integrity. By protecting fishery resources with co-management and EAFM, these resources will be able to grow and flourish, rather than deplete from overexploitation.

**Objective**

The objective of this project’s activities was to ensure that small-scale fishing communities are better informed about co-managing local aquatic and coastal ecosystems and the benefits of community-based management control systems (MCS) to deter, prevent, and eliminate IUU fishing practices.

**Activities**

*Awareness-Raising Workshop in the central coastal region for local government and small scale fishing communities on co- management and combating IUU fishing in light of the Amended Fisheries Law of Viet Nam*

The awareness-raising workshop took place in Quy Nhon City, Binh Dinh Province on September 28, 2018, co-organised by MCD and Sub-Department of Fisheries in Binh Dinh, was an opportunity for the local government and small-scale fishing communities to learn about and discuss co-management and combatting IUU fishing in light of the Amended Fisheries Law, as well as propose recommendations for improvements.

*National Policy Workshop to develop an action plan on combating IUU fishing in small-scale fisheries through co- management*

The National Consultation on the Development of an Action Plan for the Co-Management and Protection of Fishery Resources and Reduction of Illegal Fishing, organized by the Vietnam Directorate of Fisheries (D-Fish) and MCD, took place on May 31, 2019. Representatives from stakeholder groups gathered to create a draft action planto promote the protection of fishery resources and reduce IUU fishing in small-scale fisheries through co-management.

**Changes in Implementation**

A change in the project timeline of the national workshop on the co-management action plan took place to accommodate updates to Decree No. 26 made in April 2019. The national policy workshop was thus moved to the end of May 2019, in the partnership with D-fish.

**Summary of Results**

***Results of Awareness-Raising Workshop***

47 participants (39 men and 8 women); 2 national speakers/policy makers from D-Fish; and 4 local speakers from Binh Dinh, Thua Thien Hue, Quang Nam, Quang Ngai provinces were engaged in workshop discussions. Their discussions produced 4 recommendations to combat IUU and strengthen co-management in protection of fisheries resources in small-scale fisheries in Binh Dinh. The recommendations are as follows: (i) awareness raising about IUU reduction, (ii) livelihood development and alternative employment for fishers, (iii) enforcement of co-management regulations, strengthening capacity of community groups in sustainable fishery practices, and (iv) monitoring improvements by strengthening the surveillance system, traceability, and certification of products – all in accordance to regulations.

***Results of National Policy Workshop***

57 representatives (31 men and 26 women) from the national government (D-Fish), MARD, Departments of Fisheries from 12 provinces throughout the country, fisheries associations, national and international organizations, research institutes, and fisheries experts participated in the workshop. 2 national fisheries managers, 1 professional expert, and 3 stakeholders from including Binh Dinh, Binh Thuan, and Cu Lao Cham MPA/ Quang Nam provinces shared their technical expertise and/or experience with co-management.

Participants collaborated to draft the Co-Management Action Plan for the Protection of Fishery Resources and Reduction of Illegal Fishing with the general objectives to strengthen management capacity, mobilize participation of stakeholders in management, and use and protect fishery resources. The draft also outlines specific objectives before the year 2030 such as 70% of the coastal having access to information about fishery resource co-management and 50% of coastal provinces having plans for fishery resources that include co-management programs.

**Moving Forward**

Participants at the workshops proposed many recommendations for the continued improvement of co-management efforts and the Co-Management Action Plan. These recommendations included: mobilization of human resources (increase participation and develop capacity of community members); provision of viable livelihood alternatives for fishermen; specific, actionable objectives with timelines and budgets; comprehensive solutions that focus on fisheries science and technology; implementing policies that encourage fishermen to use selective environmentally friendly fishing techniques; encouraging private companies and businesses to join in co-management; strengthen national and international collaboration; improved monitoring and investigations; and development of localized action plans by community organizations.