

PROVISIONAL PROSPECTUS

THE REGIONAL TECHNICAL CONSULTATION ON REGIONAL FISHING VESSELS RECORD (RFVR) AND INFORMATION SHARING TO SUPPORT THE ELIMINATION OF IUU FISHING

INTRODUCTION

Illegal, Unreported, and Unregulated (IUU) fishing is a major international issue affecting the sustainability of fisheries resources, both within national jurisdictions and on the high seas. According to the Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations (FAO) report, this illegal practice undermines sustainable fisheries management by operating outside legal frameworks, leading to the depletion of fish stocks and hindering sustainability efforts. Estimates suggest yearly global losses of between 11 million and 26 million tons of catch, valued at USD 10–23.5 billion, while the broader economic ramifications, including income losses and tax revenue declines, can range from USD 34 billion to USD 67 billion¹. Southeast Asian countries face increasing pressure on their fisheries resources due to IUU fishing, the consequences of illegal fishing practices threaten the economic stability and sustainability of the region. Addressing combating IUU fishing in the ASEAN Region requires multifaceted approaches, including strengthening regional cooperation, enhancing enforcement mechanisms, and promoting sustainable fishing practices. By working together, ASEAN member states can protect their marine resources, safeguard economic interests, and ensure a sustainable future for their fisheries and coastal communities.

Since 2015, ASEAN, through the technical support of SEAFDEC, adopted the ASEAN Guidelines for preventing the entry of IUU fish and fisheries products into the supply chain. The Regional Fishing Vessels Record for 24 meters in length and over (RFVR-24m) database was developed and established through a series of Regional Expert Meetings and Regional Technical Consultations. The Regional Fishing Vessels Record (RFVR) as a Management Tool toward Combating IUU Fishing in ASEAN for monitoring, control, and surveillance (MCS) and facilitates the efficient sharing of critical information regarding vessel registration, fishing licenses, and related activities among AMSs. By providing a standardized template/format for uploading KDEs using CSV/Excel files, the database ensures that all member states have access to consistent and accurate data. This updated information exchange fosters greater transparency and enables coordinated efforts to identify and mitigate IUU fishing activities across the region.

In other words, establishing and maintaining the RFVR-24m demonstrates a shared commitment among AMSs to protect marine resources and promote sustainable fishing practices. This collaborative effort has built trust among member states, encouraging them to collaborate more closely on other aspects of fishery management. Many ASEAN Member States have significantly improved their monitoring and enforcement capabilities, protected marine resources, and ensured coastal communities' economic and social well-being.

Nonetheless, the number of IUU fishing practices from large vessels has significantly decreased due to leveraging technological advancements to improve monitoring and enforcement; the challenges focus more on vessels less than 24m in length. The issues of less than 24m in length fishing vessels have been discussed several times to be included in the RFVR database, especially the carrier vessels modified from various-sized fishing vessels. In 2018, the SEAFDEC Training Department updated the number of carrier vessels less than 24m in length to 2,704 vessels; among these, 47.5% are less than 15m in length². In addition, the Workshop on the Project End of Strengthening Regional Cooperation and Enhancing National Capacities to Eliminate IUU Fishing in Southeast Asia held by SEAFDEC/TD on 20–21 March 2024, the discussion came up with recommendations and suggestions for 9 key priority area, actions and ways forward to combat IUU fishing in Southeast Asia, one of which will address the

¹ Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations (FAO). The State of World Fisheries and Aquaculture 2024. Rome: FAO, 2024.

² SEAFDEC Training Department. The Questionnaires on RFVR and Fishing Vessel Information submitted by AMSs in 2018

issue of improving and updating the RFVR database to cover fishing vessels less than 24 meters in length and more focus on carrier vessels operated within the EEZ and across the border. The movement of small carrier vessels across borders can affect regional security. Unregulated vessels can be used for illicit activities. For this reason, effective monitoring and regulations can help authorities detect and prevent these activities, enhancing regional security. The results from the Workshop, including the RFVR for fishing vessels less than 24m and carrier issues, were raised for consideration and recommendations at the 56th Meeting of the SEAFDEC Council in the Philippines held in March of 2024: in response to these, the Council supported TD to take further action on updating information of the RFVR database and supporting AMSs in combating IUU fishing.

Therefore, strengthen and share information on the RFVR Database system to become a more effective tool for monitoring and regulating IUU fishing. The Regional Technical Consultation on the Regional Fishing Vessel Record (RFVR) Database and Sharing Information to Support Eliminating IUU Fishing will be conducted.

OBJECTIVES

1. To share and update information of the RFVR 24 meters in length and over database
2. To discuss on the RFVR Database less than 24 meters which appropriate range of vessel length to reduce IUU fishing in the region

PARTICIPANTS

1. RFVR National Focal Point from AMSs
2. Representative in policy level from AMSs
3. Representatives from the SEAFDEC Secretariat and Training Department
4. Members of the Regional Fisheries Policy Network (RFPN)

DATE AND VENUE

The regional technical consultation will be held on 23-24 April 2025 (2 days) at Best Western Plus Wanda Grand Hotel, Nonthaburi, Thailand

EXPECTED OUTPUTS

1. Updated information of the RFVR 24 meters in length and over database
2. Agree on the appropriate range of vessels less than 24 meters in length
3. Suggestion on development of the RFVR Database less than 24 meters in focus carrier vessel

AGENDA AND TIMETABLE

23 April 2025 (Tuesday)

0830 - 0900	Registration
0900 - 0930	Agenda 1: Opening of the Consultation
0930 - 0950	Agenda 2: Introduction of the Consultation
0950 - 1000	Agenda 3: Adoption of the Agenda and Arrangements of the Consultation

1000 - 1030	<i>Refreshment and Group Photo</i>
1030 - 1115	Agenda 4: Introduction and Updating of the RFVR Database 24 Meters in Length and Over (RFVR-24m) • Currently and Progress Situation of RFVR Database • Problem and Issue with Data/Information Uploading to the RFVR-24m Database
1115 - 1200	Agenda 5: Summary of Questionnaire on the Regional Fishing Vessels Record (RFVR) by AMSs
1200 - 1330	<i>Lunch</i>
1330 - 1600	Agenda 6: Discussion on RFVR Less than 24 Meters • RFVR Database Less than 24 Meters which Appropriate Range of Vessel Length to Reduce IUU Fishing in the Region
1700 -2000	<i>Reception Dinner</i>

24 April 2025 (Wednesday)

0900 - 1200	Agenda 6: Discussion on RFVR Less than 24 Meters • RFVR Database Less than 24 Meters which Appropriate Range of Vessel Length to Reduce IUU Fishing in the Region (<i>continue</i>)
1200 - 1330	<i>Lunch</i>
1330 - 1630	Agenda 7: Conclusion and Way Forward
1630 - 1700	Agenda 8: Closing of the Consultation