



PROVISIONAL PROSPECTUS

Practical Workshop on Strengthening Fisheries Observer Programs for Effective Combating of IUU Fishing in Southeast Asia

18-20 August 2026

Bangkok, Thailand

Illegal, Unreported, and Unregulated (IUU) fishing remains one of the most severe threats to global marine ecosystems, undermining sustainable fisheries management, jeopardizing food security, and destroying the livelihoods of millions in coastal communities. Within Southeast Asia—a region highly dependent on marine resources yet disproportionately affected by illicit fishing—the implementation of robust Monitoring, Control, and Surveillance (MCS) frameworks is no longer just a regulatory ideal, but an economic and ecological necessity. Among the frontline tools of MCS, independent fisheries observers onboard fishing vessels serve as the eyes and ears of management authorities at sea. Observers provide vital, unvarnished data on catch composition, fishing effort, bycatch of protected species, and real-time compliance with conservation measures.

However, the landscape of maritime surveillance is shifting rapidly, placing unprecedented demands on observer programs such as 1) Expanding Mandates: Modern observers are transitioning from basic data collectors into critical pillars of seafood traceability, compliance verification, and regional data-sharing networks, 2) Operational & Safety Hurdles: Observer programs worldwide, and particularly across Southeast Asian waters, continue to battle low coverage rates, complex cross-border jurisdictions, data quality assurance issues, and acute risks to observer safety and welfare, and 3) The Digital Frontier: The rise of Electronic Monitoring (EM)—including onboard cameras, sensor logs, and AI-driven data analysis—presents a pivotal opportunity. Rather than replacing human observers, the future lies in building integrated, hybrid systems where technology augments human oversight.

Recognizing these evolving realities, the Practical Workshop on Surveillance to Combat IUU Fishing: Focus on Fisheries Observers Onboard offers a timely and collaborative platform for Southeast Asian fisheries officials, observer managers, and maritime enforcement agencies. By blending practical field methodologies with strategic management insights, this workshop will facilitate the exchange of localized best practices, address systemic safety challenges, and chart a path toward integrating emerging technologies. Ultimately, this initiative aims to harmonize regional observer standards, empowering ASEAN Member States to transform raw data collected at sea into decisive, legally robust action against IUU fishing.

OBJECTIVES

- Strengthening fisheries officers' knowledge of the role and functions of onboard fisheries observers within national and regional MCS systems, and their contribution to combat IUU fishing
- Build participants' practical skills in species and fishing gear identification, and in collecting, verifying, and reporting legally defensible observer data
- Familiarize participants with Electronic Monitoring (EM) technologies and hybrid human-EM approaches and examine their complementary role in strengthening observer coverage

- Promote regional exchange of experience and lessons learned among ASEAN Member States to support the harmonization of observer standards and closer regional cooperation against IUU fishing.

EXPECTED OUTPUTS

- Participants are equipped with improved knowledge and practical skills on observer-based surveillance and compliance monitoring for combating IUU fishing.
- Shared understanding among participants of EM technologies and their potential integration into national observer programs.
- Best practices identified for strengthening fisheries observer programs and their integration into national MCS systems.
- Enhanced regional cooperation and networking among fisheries authorities and observer program personnel to support collective efforts against IUU fishing.

DATE AND VENUE

The workshop will be held from 18 to 20 August 2026 Bangkok, Thailand. The venue and participation arrangements are currently being finalized and will be communicated to participants in due course. For virtual participants, the meeting link will be provided prior to the workshop.

PARTICIPANTS

Participants included fisheries officers from eleven ASEAN Member States (AMSs), who are responsible for onboard observer programs and Monitoring, Control and Surveillance (MCS) activities to combat Illegal, Unreported, and Unregulated (IUU) fishing at the practitioner level.

Representatives from the ASEAN Secretariat, SEAFDEC, and GIZ through the Blue Fair Fish Project will be invited to participate in the workshop as co-organizer.

AGENDA AND TIMETABLE

Day1 - 18 August 2026

Time	Activities
08:30–09:00	Registration
09:00–09:30	Welcome and Opening Remarks • Welcome by GIZ • Opening remarks by SEAFDEC • Introduction and objectives of the practical workshop
09:30–09:45	Blue Fair Fish Project Introduction by GIZ-regional team
09:45–10:15	Plenary Discussion and Information Exchange on Implementation of Observer Onboard Activities in ASEAN Member Countries (Facilitation by SEAFDEC/TD)
10:15–10:30	<i>Refreshment and group photo</i>
10:30–12:00	Relevance of RFMOs and Observers Onboard in Combatting High Seas IUU Fishing (by SEAFDEC Secretary-General)
12:00–13:00	<i>Lunch</i>
13:00–14:30	Identification of Commercially Important and Endangered Species in High Sea for Observer Onboard (by Dr. Supapong Pattarapongpan, SEAFDEC/TD)

Time	Activities
14:30 –15:00	<i>Refreshment Break</i>
15:00 –16:30	Identification of Fishing Gears (purse seine, longline, etc.) and Operation (by Dr. Nopporn Manajit, SEAFDEC/TD)
16:30 –17:00	Discussion and Wrap-up of key-take-away from day 1

Day 2 - 19 August 2026

Time	Activities
09:00 –09:05	Recap of day 1
09:05-10:30	Australian Fisheries Management Authority (AFMA) Electronic Monitoring Program for Observer Onboard (by AFMA)
10:30-11:00	<i>Refreshment Break</i>
11:00–12:30	Safety and Emergency Response (by Anurak Loog-on, SEAFDEC/TD) • Personal Safety and Risk Management at Sea • Emergency Procedures and Incident Reporting
12:30 –13:30	<i>Lunch</i>
13:30–14:30	Overviews, Implementation, and Lesson Learnt on Observer Onboard in SIOFA (by TBD, DOF Thailand)
14.30–16.30	Implementation and Best Practice on Observer Onboard (by Resource Person from BFAR) • Overview of Fisheries Observer Programs • Pre-deployment Procedures • Legally Defensible Evidence Gathering • De-briefing Protocols and Final Reporting • Lesson Learnt of observer onboard in Philippine • Others
16:30 –17:00	Discussion and Wrap-up of key-take-away from day 2

Day 3 - 20 August 2026

Time	Activities
09:00 –09:05	Recap of day 2
09:05 –12:00	Implementation and Best Practice on Observer Onboard (Cont'd) (by Resource Person from BFAR) • Overview of Fisheries Observer Programs • Pre-deployment Procedures • Legally Defensible Evidence Gathering • De-briefing Protocols and Final Reporting • Lesson Learnt of observer onboard in Philippine • Others
12.00–13.00	<i>Lunch</i>
13:00 –15:30	Practical Exercise via Scenario (by BFAR)
15:30 –15:40	<i>Refreshment Break</i>

Time	Activities
15:40 –16:00	Country Commitment and Action Planning - Country groups define 1-2 concrete follow-up actions from the workshop - Report back in plenary
16:00 –17:00	Workshop Evaluation, Wrap-up, and Closing - Summary of key takeaways and recommendations - Participant evaluation - Certificate distribution and closing remarks (GIZ/SEAFDEC)

Remark: The subject will be changed depend on the situation.