



Submission to the Independent Review of Aid Effectiveness
Concept paper on expanding aid to build greater capacity in managing
South East Asian wild capture fisheries

Overview/Summary

The concept outlined below highlights emerging strategic opportunities where aid could be directed to improve governance for sustainable fisheries in South East Asia, thereby contributing directly to improved economic and social development and food security in low income coastal communities. The concept is built upon: (a) the importance of wild capture fisheries and seafood production for coastal communities; (b) the on-going work of the *Regional Plan of Action (RPOA) to Promote Responsible Fishing Practices Including Combating Illegal, Unreported and Unregulated (IUU) Fishing in the South East Asia Region* (as agreed by 11 Fisheries Ministers); (c) the opportunity to foster greater capacity building in fisheries management, and (d) the imperative to ensure food security and hence regional stability.

Of the 11 RPOA countries, the concept principally targets the six member countries with the greatest need for capacity building assistance, namely East Timor, Cambodia, Indonesia, Papua New Guinea, the Philippines and Vietnam. It would also give necessary focus to regional hot-spots of illegal and unsustainable activity around Thailand and Malaysia.

If accepted as an aid delivery concept, the next step is to work with relevant Australian Government agencies and overseas posts to develop a strategic aid and implementation plan which specifically targets relevant South East Asian countries and the sustainability of the region's capture fisheries.

Development issues

Food security, economic development and livelihoods

Seafood is the source of protein for millions in the South East Asia region, especially in coastal communities with few other options for food production and livelihoods. Notwithstanding the importance of fisheries, it is widely recognised that current fisheries governance needs improving to meet accepted international standards. Population growth further exacerbates the problem of overexploitation of fish stocks in the region. Furthermore, growth in fish production from aquaculture puts additional pressure on wild fish stock through the demand for fish feed.

Poor fisheries governance continues to be a major threat to the economic development and social stability of many of the region's developing countries. In particular, illegal, unreported and unregulated (IUU) fishing continues to undermine many countries' efforts to support their food, livelihood and economic imperatives, particularly in the coastal communities that rely heavily on capture fisheries.

Most developing countries in our region value fisheries very highly as a key natural resource where, unlike Australia, seafood production is a major component of GDP. Top levels of governments and the general public therefore regard fisheries as a cornerstone to national economic growth, food security and regional security.

A framework for aid implementation

The key fisheries countries in the region are all members of the *Regional Plan of Action (RPOA) to Promote Responsible Fishing Practices Including Combating Illegal, Unreported and Unregulated (IUU) Fishing in the South East Asia Region*. Members are Australia, Brunei Darussalam,

Cambodia, Indonesia, Malaysia, Papua New Guinea, the Philippines, Singapore, Thailand, Timor-Leste and Vietnam. Australia and Indonesia are joint chairs. The RPOA was agreed by all countries' Fisheries Ministers in May 2007.

The Department of Agriculture, Fisheries and Forestry (DAFF) is the lead Australian agency in all RPOA matters.

The RPOA's objectives are to enhance and strengthen the overall level of wild capture fisheries management in the region. Since 2007 the RPOA has conducted a series of implementation workshops and meetings. A high level Coordination Committee meets annually to review progress and agree a forward work program (the 2011 work program is at [Attachment A](#)). Main actions cover conservation of fisheries resources and their environment, managing fishing capacity, and combating IUU fishing in the areas of the South China Sea, Sulu-Sulawesi Seas (Celebes Sea) and the Arafura-Timor Seas.

The RPOA is a voluntary instrument and takes its core principles from already established international fisheries instruments. It is consistent with existing treaties, agreements and arrangements and all other plans and programmes relevant to the sustainable management of the region's living marine resources.

This regional agreement between fisheries ministers provides an ideal framework through which to apply aid to build fisheries governance and capacity in South East Asia. In this context the RPOA is connected with all relevant regional organisations. It is advised by, and has representatives from, the FAO/Asia-Pacific Fishery Commission; the Southeast Asian Fisheries Development Centre; InfoFish and the Worldfish Center. Members work with other regional bodies and initiatives such as the Association of South East Asian Nations (ASEAN); the Asia Pacific Economic Cooperation (APEC) and its Fisheries Working Group (FWG); the Network of Aquaculture Centres in Asia Pacific (NACA); the Coral Triangle Initiative (CTI), and the relevant Regional Fisheries Management Organisations.

In addition to the RPOA, Australia enjoys excellent bi-lateral fisheries relationships with all concerned countries, in particular Indonesia, through the joint Working Group on Marine Affairs and Fisheries, which meets annually.

Proposed activities in a targeted aid package

The RPOA has completed, and has well in-train, several developmental projects with the underpinning objective to raise the level of the region's fisheries management and reduce illegal fishing. However, despite endorsement by the Coordination Committee, the RPOA initiatives are not being fully implemented because many member country fisheries agencies lack both the financial resources and management/science capacity put them into practice (and in a coordinated manner). In addition, the RPOA Secretariat, based in Indonesia, would benefit from capacity building and training.

RPOA initiatives requiring implementation include:

1. Monitoring, Control and Surveillance (MCS) Curriculum and Training Programme (2009)

The objectives of the MCS curriculum and training course are to build capacity of RPOA participating countries to develop and implement effective measures to better control fishing operations and combat IUU fishing. Application of this curriculum across RPOA countries would greatly assist consistency and compatibility between the regional and sub-regional MCS networks – essential mechanisms in the fight against illegal fishing. The curriculum and training course was developed in 2009 but requires implementation, for example, through dedicated training for relevant fisheries officers in RPOA countries.

2. A Framework for Model Fisheries Legislation in South East Asia (2010)

The aim of the report on model fisheries legislation is to foster development and implementation of stronger, more comprehensive, compatible and effective fisheries management legislation in RPOA member countries to facilitate effective legal action against IUU fishing and its associated interests. While countries are to report annually to the RPOA on improvements taken with respect to policy or legislation consistent with the findings of the model legislation report, there is scope for direct assistance for countries to implement the legislative changes in a more coordinated manner consistent with the desire of the RPOA to harmonise legislation in the region where possible.

3. A Framework for Fisheries Development Assistance in South East Asia (2011)

This consultancy will be completed during the first quarter of 2011. The project is developing a framework to guide fisheries agencies and funding bodies to identify, prioritise and strategically deliver financial assistance for capacity building (human and institutional) in capture fisheries management in RPOA countries. It is anticipated that this framework will be a keystone document for aid agencies operating in the region wanting to drive investment in fisheries management/science capacity building (human and institutional) in South East Asia during the remainder of this decade. A country by country strategic implementation plan is required.

4. A public awareness program for fishers and their communities

The RPOA has discussed the merits of extending the successful Australia-Indonesia *Public Information Campaign* which has run in eastern Indonesia since 2007. The objective of an extended program is to raise awareness among fishers of the urgent need to use sustainable fishing practices, and the consequence if they fail to do so – both the legal sanctions and the inevitable failure of their fisheries. The program would have a large capacity building element as it would be delivered primarily by the provincial and district level fisheries managers and officials who are directly responsible for fisheries management. The program would target the region's primary source countries of illegal fishing and destructive fishing practices and also deliver on regional hot-spots of illegal and unsustainable activity.

DAFF considers that a broadened regional program has significant potential but would need to be developed with input from other relevant Australian Government departments and in close consultation with target RPOA countries. Program would be tailored to each target country with the prospect of considerable cash or in-kind support. Delivery of the program will require significant aid assistance.

5. Strengthening the RPOA Secretariat

The RPOA Secretariat would benefit from capacity building and training in the skills of operating a secretariat. This aspect of RPOA capacity building will require input from, and joint participation by, Indonesia. Placement of an appropriately experienced officer for a period of three to six months would be a first step.

6. The RPOA work plan 2011

Even allowing for aspects of the above initiatives that are included in the RPOA work plan (at Attachment A) there is scope for further investment in capacity building activity in implementing the 2011 work plan.

DAFF considers there is significant potential in an aid package built from the above RPOA initiatives and the appropriate aspects of the 2011 work program. While the aid concept is sound, it would require further development as an integrated and coordinated package.

Strategic Policy Alignment

By intervening at the source of much of the illegal fishing in South East Asia, the proposed aid concept outlined in this paper aligns with Australia's regional policies on sustainable fisheries management, poverty reduction and food security. Through the RPOA, Australia is leading the 10 other member countries in the development and implementation of improved fisheries governance and management skills. Australia should continue investing in relationships with key partners in the region.

Appropriateness

Illegal fishing in South East Asia is largely the result of inadequate human and institutional capacity in fisheries management and enforcement. Australian engagement in the region on fisheries management/compliance and fisher community awareness targets the factors causing unsustainable and illegal fishing. The problem leads to the displacement of legal and self-sustaining fisheries, encouraging fishers to fish illegally or to other forms of illegal activity. As this ultimately impacts on Australia, it is appropriate that Australia steps up efforts to eliminate unsustainable fishing practices in South East Asia.

Effectiveness

The proposal will build on the favourable relationships DAFF has built through fisheries with South East Asian countries. Australia's relationship with the region will be further enhanced through extension activities in provincial centres and practical training in fisheries management skills. Feedback through the RPOA is that capacity building and fisher awareness is the best way for Australia to contribute to regional efforts to stop illegal fishing.

Efficiency

Building operational capacity of fisheries managers/scientists and their respective institutions is one of the most direct and cost efficient measures available for application in fisheries based aid programs. Likewise, information programs and workshops for fishers and fishing communities have proven very effective in raising awareness about the importance of marine resource sustainability, the impacts and consequences of illegal fishing, and the importance of capacity building for fisheries officers at the provincial/local level.

RPOA Forward Work Program – 2011

The Coordination Committee agreed the following work plan:

1. Strengthening legal, administrative and policy frameworks

- 1.1. Countries to review the country specific reports under the model fisheries legislation study and provide comment, by 28 February 2011, on inaccuracies or concerns and indicate their position on endorsement of the report. Pending endorsement by countries, the outcomes of the study are to be placed on the RPOA website.
- 1.2. Countries to report to the 2011 RPOA Coordination Committee meeting on improvements taken with respect to policy or legislation consistent with the findings of the model legislation, noting the desire of the RPOA to harmonise legislation in the region where possible.
- 1.3. Australia to finalise the framework for human and institutional capacity development and provide it to the Secretariat for circulation to the Coordination Committee for endorsement.
- 1.4. Countries to review the framework for human and institutional capacity development, and to identify priority programs/projects and potential donor agencies/regional organisations in order to support progress.
- 1.5. Secretariat to circulate the RPOA terms of reference and a draft covering letter to the Coordination Committee with a view to it being provided to fisheries regional bodies and to seek their advice and close cooperation on areas of mutual interest. The Secretariat will advise participating countries of timeframes for comment.

2. Strengthening regional/international cooperation

- 2.1. Countries to consult internally on the implementation of the FAO Port State Measures Agreement and to report to the Coordination Committee on action taken.
- 2.2. Secretariat to coordinate arrangements for a capacity building workshop to help implement the FAO Port State Measures.
- 2.3. Secretariat to include website links to RFMO IUU Vessel Lists on the RPOA website. Countries to continue to share information on experiences, regulations and IUU listed vessels (surveillance, inspection reports) on the RPOA website.
- 2.4. Consistent with the FAO Port State Measures Agreement, countries to designate and publicise on their national websites the ports to which vessels may request entry.
- 2.5. Australia/Indonesia to review the Australia-Indonesia Joint Public Information Campaign and identify lessons learnt. The review will include comments on extending the Campaign into other RPOA countries, including engaging relevant stakeholders.
- 2.6. Vietnam to organise a workshop to assess the impacts of EC Regulation 1005/2008 on small scale fisheries.