PROJECT IDENTIFICATION FORM (PIF)

PROJECT TYPE: Full-sized Project
TYPE OF TRUST FUND:GEF Trust Fund

For more information about GEF, visit TheGEF.org

PART I: PROJECT INFORMATION

Project Title:	Establishment and Operation of a Regional System of Fisheries Refugia in the South China Sea and Gulf of Thailand		
Country(ies):	Cambodia, Indonesia, Philippines, Thailand, Malaysia and Viet Nam	GEF Project ID:[1]	
GEF Agency(ies):	UNEP (select) (select)	GEF Agency Project ID:	00829
Other Executing Partner(s):	Departments of Fisheries in the participating countries; Southeast Asian Fisheries Development Center (SEAFDEC)	Submission Date:	05 April 2013
GEF Focal Area (s):	International Waters	Project Duration (Months)	48
Name of parent program (if applicable): • For SFM/REDD+ ☐ • For SGP ☐	N/A	Agency Fee ($):	285,000

A. INDICATIVE FOCAL AREA STRATEGY FRAMEWORK[2]:

Focal Area Objectives	Trust Fund	Indicative Grant Amount ($)	Indicative Co-financing ($)
IW-2 (select)	GEFTF	1,000,000	4,000,000
IW-2 (select)	GEFTF	1,550,000	6,200,000
IW-3 (select)	GEFTF	300,000	1,200,000
(select) (select)	(select)		
(select) (select)	(select)		
(select) (select)	(select)		
(select) (select)	(select)		
(select) (select)	(select)		
(select) (select) **IW – PM costs**	(select)	150,000	600,000
Total Project Cost		**3,000,000**	**12,000,000**

B. INDICATIVE PROJECT FRAMEWORK

Project Objective: To operate and expand the network of fisheries refugia in the South China Sea and Gulf of Thailand for the improved management of fisheries and critical marine habitats linkages in order to achieve the medium and longer-term goals of the fisheries component of the Strategic Action Programme for the South China Sea.

Project Component	Grant Type[3]	Expected Outcomes	Expected Outputs	Trust Fund	Indicative Grant Amount ($)	Indicative Cofinancing ($)
1. Identification and Management of Fisheries and Critical Habitat Linkages in the South China Sea and Gulf of Thailand	TA	1.1 Effective operation of the regional system of fisheries refugia for the management of priority, transboundary, fish stocks and endangered species, including:	1) Maps and site characterizations for 14 fisheries refugia sites and additional 9 known fish spawning and nursery areas 2) Fisheries	GEFTF	1,150,000	4,600,000

[1] Project ID number will be assigned by GEFSEC.
[2] Refer to the reference attached on the Focal Area Results Framework when completing Table A.
[3] TA includes capacity building, and research and development.

		boundaries for 14 refugia sites delineated 1.2 implementation of fisheries management systems in 14 fisheries refugia that are consistent with the FAO Code of Conduct for Responsible Fisheries and the Regional Guidelines for Responsible Fisheries in Southeast Asia 1.3 fishing communities, particularly artisanal fishermen and women involved in inshore gleaning and processing, empowered to enforce agreed management rules in the fisheries refugia.	management plans for 14 refugia sites 3) Management team and community-based volunteer network at each site 4) 5 national and 1 regional fisheries and biodiversity conservation databases, including: status of priority fish, crustacean, and mollusc species; distribution and abundance of fish eggs and larvae; and location and management status of coastal habitats, fisheries refugia, MPAs, and critical habitats for threatened and endangered species.			
2. Improving the Management of Critical Habitats for Fish Stocks of Transboundary Significance	TA	2.1 Improved integration of habitat and biodiversity conservation considerations in the management of fisheries in the South China Sea and Gulf of Thailand, including: enhanced scientific understanding of fish stock and habitat links; and endorsement by Ministers of Fisheries of policy and regulatory frameworks governing the fisheries sector that incorporate measures for sustainable use of fish habitats and biodiversity 2.2 reduced use of destructive fishing gear and practices in areas of critical fisheries habitats.	1) Regional model of fish egg and larvae distribution 2) Regional and site level models of ecosystem carrying capacity and sustainable fishing effort levels by fishing gear type 3) 5 national reports on legal/institutional aspects of refugia 4) 5 sets of national guidelines for establishing and operating refugia 5) 100 quarterly national reports on fish stocks and habitats 6) 5 national reports on, and	GEFTF	1,200,000	4,800,000

			regulations/ordinances for, use of responsible fishing gear and practices in priority refugia 7) 1 regional and 5 national action plans for management of priority fisheries refugia and associated biodiversity.			
3. Information Management and Dissemination	TA	3.1 Enhanced uptake of good practices in integrating fisheries management and biodiversity conservation in the design and implementation of regional and national fisheries management systems 3.2 Improved community acceptance and cost-effectiveness of area based approaches to marine management 3.3 Compiled knowledge and experiences about the project shared with other GEF project s and GEF Sec, and available on IW:LEARN [1% of GEF IWs grant]	1) Regional education and awareness centre on links between fisheries, habitats, and biodiversity, and associated regional Information and Education Campaign (IEC) 2) Public awareness and outreach programmes on fish stock – habitat links at 23 sites 3) Report on indicators and standardised methods for information and data collection for refugia management 4) Development of 5 national language web portals on fisheries refugia and maintenance of the regional Fisheries Refugia Information Portal http://refugia.unepscs.org and linked to the International Waters Learn Program (IW: LEARN) 5) Participation at the International Waters conferences; three to four experiences notes and tracked project progress reported	GEFTF	500,000	2,000,000

			using the GEF-V IW tracking tool			
	(select)			(select)		
	(select)			(select)		
	(select)			(select)		
	(select)			(select)		
	(select)			(select)		
	(select)			(select)		
	(select)			(select)		
Subtotal					**2,850,000**	**11,400,000**
Project Management Cost (PMC)[4]				**(select)**	**150,000**	**600,000**
Total Project Cost					**3,000,000**	**12,000,000**

C. INDICATIVE CO-FINANCING FOR THE PROJECT BY SOURCE AND BY NAME IF AVAILABLE, ($)

Sources of Co-financing	Name of Co-financier	Type of Co-financing	Amount ($)
National Government	Departments of Fisheries in the participating countries	In-kind	2,000,000
National Government	Departments of Fisheries in the participating countries	Grant	1,635,000
Local Government	Participating local authorities in FR sites	In-kind	1,000,000
Other Multilateral Agency (ies)	Southeast Asian Fisheries Development Center (SEAFDEC)	Grant	3,150,000
Other Multilateral Agency (ies)	Southeast Asian Fisheries Development Center (SEAFDEC)	In-kind	3,750,000
GEF Agency	UNEP/DEPI	In-kind	200,000
Bilateral Aid Agency	TBD	In-kind	265,000
Total Cofinancing			**12,000,000**

D. INDICATIVE TRUST FUND RESOURCES ($) REQUESTED BY AGENCY, FOCAL AREA AND COUNTRY[1]

GEF Agency	Type of Trust Fund	Focal Area	Country Name/Global	Grant Amount ($) (a)	Agency Fee ($) (b)[2]	Total ($) c=a+b
UNEP	GEFTF	International Waters	Regional - All participating countries	3,000,000	285,000	3,285,000
	(select)	(select)				0
(select)	(select)	(select)				0
(select)	(select)	(select)				0
(select)	(select)	(select)				0
Total Grant Resources				**3,000,000**	**285,000**	**3,285,000**

[1] In case of a single focal area, single country, single GEF Agency project, and single trust fund project, no need to provide information for this table. PMC amount from Table B should be included proportionately to the focal area amount in this table.

[2] Indicate fees related to this project.

[4] To be calculated as percent of subtotal.

E. PROJECT PREPARATION GRANT (PPG)[5]

Please check on the appropriate box for PPG as needed for the project according to the GEF Project Grant:

	Amount Requested ($)	Agency Fee for PPG ($)[6]
• No PPG required.		
• (upto) $50k for projects up to & including $1 million		
• (upto)$100k for projects up to & including $3 million	100,000	9,500
• (upto)$150k for projects up to & including $6 million		
• (upto)$200k for projects up to & including $10 million		
• (upto)$300k for projects above $10 million		

PPG AMOUNT REQUESTED BY AGENCY(IES), FOCAL AREA(S) AND COUNTRY(IES) FOR MFA AND/OR MTF ROJECT ONLY

Trust Fund	GEF Agency	Focal Area	Country Name/ Global	(in $)		
				PPG (a)	**Agency Fee** (b)	**Total** c = a + b
GEF TF	UNEP	International Waters	Regional - All participating countries	100,000	9,500	109,500
(select)	(select)	(select)				0
(select)	(select)	(select)				0
Total PPG Amount				**100,0000**	**9,5000**	**109,500**

MFA: Multi-focal area projects; MTF: Multi-Trust Fund projects.

[5] On an exceptional basis, PPG amount may differ upon detailed discussion and justification with the GEFSEC.

[6] PPG fee percentage follows the percentage of the GEF Project Grant amount requested.

PART II: PROJECT JUSTIFICATION[7]

A. PROJECT OVERVIEW

A.1. Project Description. *Briefly describe the project, including ; 1) the global environmental problems, root causes and barriers that need to be addressed; 2) the baseline scenario and any associated baseline projects, 3) the proposed alternative scenario, with a brief description of expected outcomes and components of the project, 4) incremental cost reasoning and expected contributions from the baseline , the GEFTF, LDCF/SCCF and co-financing; 5) global environmental benefits (GEFTF, NPIF) and adaptation benefits (LDCF/SCCF); 6) innovativeness, sustainability and potential for scaling up.*

A.1.1 Global environmental problems root causes and barriers that need to be addressed:

The South China Sea and Gulf of Thailand are located at a global centre of shallow water marine biological diversity. The marine habitats of this area support fisheries that are significant in terms of food security, export income for riparian countries. Critical habitats, such as mangrove swamps, coral reefs, seagrass beds, and estuaries act as nursery areas, spawning grounds, and feeding sites for transboundary species during critical phases of their life-cycles.

The decadal rates of decline in total area of critical habitats such as seagrass, coral reefs, and mangroves in the South China Sea and Gulf of Thailand are currently estimated at 30%, 16%, and 16% respectively.

Fishing has been identified by the UNEP/GEF Regional Working Groups for the Habitat Sub-Components of the South China Sea Project as a factor contributing to the continued loss of marine habitats and biodiversity in the South China Sea. Southeast Asian fisheries are characterized by high levels of coastal community dependence on fish for food and income, excessive and increasing levels of fishing effort, and diminishing availability of fisheries resources. The small size of vessels which are largely owner operated, and the multitude of landing points and land-based distribution networks poses problems of regulation and control that differ significantly from temperate fleets.

The effects of intensive inshore fishing include: declining availability and biomass of fish species of global and transboundary significance; changes in community structure due to direct reductions of populations representing specific trophic levels of the community (e.g. predator or prey); capture mortality of rare and endangered species; large catches of juvenile fish; and the degradation and loss of habitats and associated non-target biodiversity. The widespread use of inappropriate and destructive fishing gear and practices, such as the use of demersal trawls and push nets in seagrass areas, and the use of poisons and explosives to catch fish in coral reef areas, is of increasing concern with respect to the degradation and loss of habitats and biodiversity as a result of fishing. This situation has led to an urgent need for new and innovative fisheries management approaches in the region, particularly those aimed at limiting the loss of habitats and biodiversity, and ensuring the sustainable use of biodiversity by the fisheries sector.

A.1.2: The baseline scenario and any associated baseline projects

The fisheries refugia initiative was established under the UNEP/GEF project entitled “Reversing Environmental Degradation in the South China Sea and Gulf of Thailand” and is unique in that it represents the first attempt to establish a regional network of integrated fisheries and habitat management areas in Southeast Asia supported by national habitat action plans (NAPs) and fisheries policies. Furthermore, regional fisheries organizations, including the Southeast Asian Fisheries Development Center (SEAFDEC) and FAO’s Asia-Pacific Fisheries Commission (APFIC) have acknowledged the unique role of the multi-lateral, intergovernmental Project “Reversing Environmental Degradation Trends in the South China Sea and Gulf of Thailand” in building partnerships and enhancing communication between fisheries and environment sectors in the region for the improved management

[7] Part II should not be longer than 5 pages.

of the environmental aspects of fisheries. Fisheries refugia in this context are defined as "spatially and geographically defined, marine or coastal areas in which specific management measures are applied to sustain important species during critical stages of their life cycle, for their sustainable use", and it is also compatible with FAO's Ecosystem Approach to Fisheries (EAF).

This project aims to expand the network of fisheries refugia in the South China Sea and Gulf of Thailand for the improved management of fisheries and critical marine habitats. Based on the draft SAP and NAPs developed under the South China Sea Project, six (6) participating countries have included establishment and management of fisheries refugia in national fisheries policies and plans (Cambodia, Indonesia, Philippines, Thailand, Malaysia and Viet Nam). All countries have expressed the need for further scientific research, cross sectoral co-ordination, guidelines regarding the process of establishing and managing fisheries refugia, and establishment of mechanisms for regional exchange of information and lessons learnt. Key activities described in the Establishment and Operation of a Regional System of Fisheries Refugia in the South China Sea and Gulf of Thailand project will focus on ensuring adequate cross sectoral consultation between fisheries and environment departments in the designation and management of fisheries refugia. This is particularly important in relation to the designation of Marine Protected Areas by concerned Ministries in each participating country to ensure that such areas are congruent with habitat areas of critical significance to fish stocks. The project will also involve the establishment of institutional mechanisms to effect the integration of habitat and marine biodiversity conservation considerations into fisheries management.

A.1.3: The proposed alternative scenario, with a brief description of expected outcomes and components of the project:

There is consensus amongst the fisheries and habitat specialists of the SCS Project that the refugia concept represents an innovative approach for building fishing community support for area-based approaches to fisheries and habitat management, through which fish stock and habitat conservation objectives can be achieved simultaneously. The project focuses on establishing operational management at 14 priority fisheries refugia sites which will enable the efficient timing of site level activities required to ensure the transfer of lessons-learned between and amongst sites, and evaluation of the effectiveness of project interventions in achieving the medium and longer term resource and institutional objectives of the refugia system.

As described in Table B, the project is composed of three main components namely: (1) the establishment and management of 14 fisheries refugia, (2) enhancement of the scientific understanding of the linkages between fish stock and habitat and, policy and regulatory frameworks governing the fisheries sector as well as (3) through information management and dissemination to ensure the uptake of the good practices in integrating fisheries management and biodiversity conservation in the design and implementation of regional and national fisheries management systems.

Fishing is a contributing factor to the loss and degradation of particularly seagrass and coral reef habitats and the expected outcome of this project of global significance are the reduction in the rates of loss of globally significant habitats and biodiversity in priority fisheries refugia due to fishing.

A.1.4 Incremental Cost Reasoning:

There is considerable global concern for the ecosystem effects of fishing, particularly the loss of habitats and coastal and marine biodiversity as a result of fishing. In Southeast Asia this concern is intensified by the fact that most stocks of economically important fish species are considered to be fully fished or overexploited. Increasing global demands for fisheries products; and the dependence of coastal communities on fish for food and income result in a continued increase in fishing effort. This has caused fishing down of the marine food chain in the region, coupled with an increasing dependence of the

artisanal sector on small pelagic species due to declining availability of demersal species. Declining fish availability, coupled with over-capacity and the dependence of the small-scale sector on coastal fisheries for income generation has led to the use of destructive fishing practices by some fishermen in order to maintain incomes and food production in the short-term.

An emerging theme from the South China Sea Project is the need for improved management of the key threats to fish stocks and habitats from fishing. The main barriers in reducing the levels of the threats include:

A. low level understanding amongst stakeholders, including fisherfolk, scientists, policy makers, and fisheries and habitat managers of ecosystem and fishery linkages,

B. existing low level community acceptance of "protected" area-based approaches to marine management – several past conservation initiatives in the region, particularly those associated with Marine Protected Areas, have promoted the complete closure of areas to fishing which is a futile if not impossible task in Southeast Asia. Such closures have been promoted in terms of potential fisheries benefits, however have often not included fishing communities and managers in the selection and management of areas,

C. limited information regarding fish life-cycle and critical habitat linkages, and the role marine habitats play in sustaining fisheries, and,

D. low level experience in national fisheries/environment departments and ministries in development of integrated approaches to fisheries and habitat management

By addressing these issues and expanding the use of the fisheries refugia approach through the establishment and operational management of a network of fisheries refugia sites, the project will result in significant incremental benefit compared to the 'no action' option. Anticipated incremental benefits include: demonstration of sustainable use of fish stocks and habitats at fisheries refugia sites; improved community acceptance and cost-effectiveness of area based approaches to marine management; establishment of policy and regulatory frameworks governing the fisheries sector that incorporate measures for the sustainable use of fish habitats and biodiversity; and multi-lateral political commitments to enhance co-operation on fish stock and habitat management. It is anticipated that the experiences gained in this region will be suitable for application in other large marine ecosystems such as the Yellow Sea where over-fishing and the use of inappropriate fishing gear are significant impediments to more sustainable exploitation of fish stocks, their habitats, and associated biodiversity.

The project intends to build on existing investments and the policy and scientific basis for the regional system of fisheries refugia established through UNEP/GEF South China Sea Project. The development of the fisheries refugia concept as a tool for integrating fish stock and habitat management was undertaken by the UNEP/GEF Regional Working Group on Fisheries in close collaboration with SEAFDEC, FAO, IUCN, and World Fish Center during the period 2003-2008.

The concept was elaborated and refined, and priority refugia sites identified, based on: the outcomes of regional and national level expert and fishing community consultations; national reports on fisheries, mangroves, coral reefs, seagrass, and wetlands from the seven participating countries of the South China Sea project; 135 habitat site characterizations prepared during the SCS Project; the SCS meta-database and GIS; and information contributed directly by fisheries and habitat focal points. This has been supported by three regional training courses and 12 national training seminars on the scientific and management aspects of operating the regional refugia system.

Cost effectiveness was a key criterion for development of the refugia initiative. The concept aims to improve the use of area-based approaches to fish stock and habitat management, whilst overcoming the problems associated with the emphasis on no-take Marine Protected Areas in the region. The latter include low fishing community acceptance, and high costs in terms of displacement of fishermen and enforcement. The fisheries refugia initiative addresses the present problems by drawing on fisheries

management concepts that are easily understood at the fishing community level and emphasize the sustainable use of fisheries resources and their habitats rather than the prohibition of fishing.

There is consensus amongst the fisheries and habitat specialists of the SCS Project that the refugia concept represents an innovative approach for building fishing community support for area-based approaches to fisheries and habitat management, through which fish stock and habitat conservation objectives can be achieved simultaneously. The focus of the project on establishing operational management at 14 priority fisheries refugia sites will enable the efficient timing of site level activities required to ensure the transfer of lessons-learned between and amongst sites, and evaluation of the effectiveness of project interventions in achieving the medium and longer term resource and institutional objectives of the refugia system.

A.1.5: Global Environmental Benefits:

This initiative is considered of significance because of the potential fisheries and biodiversity conservation benefits associated with effect fisheries and habitat management at the local level. Fisheries management leading to sustainable levels of exploitation in the region, due to the importance of fisheries to food security, and maintenance of livelihoods. The management approaches developed and fostered through this project may also assist in curbing the trends in regional fisheries towards over-capacity and over-exploitation; the use of destructive fishing gear and practices; habitat destruction and pollution; and illegal fishing. The project implementation will also promote transparent and participatory approaches to gender interventions, particularly through gender awareness in all training and capacity building, as well as promotion of gender balanced staff profiles.

A.1.6. Innovativeness, sustainability and potential for scaling up.

Innovativeness

The fishing mode in the South China Sea has been identified as one of the main factors contributing to the continued loss of marine habitats and biodiversity in the South China Sea. This situation has led to an urgent need for new and innovative fisheries management approaches in the region, particularly those aimed at limiting the loss of habitats and biodiversity, and ensuring the sustainable use of biodiversity by the fisheries sector.

The fisheries refugia initiative established under the UNEP/GEF project entitled "Reversing Environmental Degradation in the South China Sea and Gulf of Thailand" is unique in that it represents the first attempt to establish a regional network of integrated fisheries and habitat management areas in Southeast Asia supported by national habitat action plans (NAPs) and fisheries policies.

The *refugia* concept represents an innovative approach for building fishing community support for area-based approaches to fisheries and habitat management, through which fish stock and habitat conservation objectives can be achieved simultaneously.

Sustainability

The project will focus on ensuring adequate cross sectoral consultation between fisheries and environment departments in the designation and management of fisheries refugia. This is particularly important in relation to the designation of Marine Protected Areas by concerned Ministries in each participating country to ensure that such areas are congruent with habitat areas of critical significance to fish stocks. The project will also involve the establishment of institutional mechanisms to effect the integration of habitat and marine biodiversity conservation considerations into fisheries management.
This unique concept of fisheries refugia also gets the full support of regional fisheries organizations, including the Southeast Asian Fisheries Development Center (SEAFDEC) and FAO's Asia-Pacific Fisheries Commission (APFIC) and it is also compatible with FAO's Ecosystem Approach to Fisheries (EAF).

Potential for scaling up

This project aims to expand the network of fisheries refugia in the South China Sea and Gulf of Thailand for the improved management of fisheries and critical marine habitats. Based on the draft SAP and NAPs developed under the South China Sea Project, five (5) participating countries have included establishment and management of fisheries refugia in national fisheries policies and plans (Cambodia, Indonesia, Philippines, Thailand, and Viet Nam). All countries have expressed the need for further scientific research, cross sectoral co-ordination, guidelines regarding the process of establishing and managing fisheries refugia, and establishment of mechanisms for regional exchange of information and lessons learnt. While the South China Seas project identified 52 locations in the South China Sea known as critical spawning and nursery habitats for fish species of transboundary significance, the project focuses on establishing operational management at 14 priority fisheries refugia sites along with production of a regional fisheries refugia information base. It is expected that the experience and lessons-learned between and amongst sites will be further expanded within the participating countries as well as throughout the South China Sea member states.

It is also anticipated that the experiences gained in this region will be suitable for application in other countries large marine ecosystems such as the Yellow Sea where over-fishing and the use of inappropriate fishing gear are significant impediments to more sustainable exploitation of fish stocks, their habitats, and associated biodiversity.

A.2. Stakeholders: Identify key stakeholders (including civil society organizations, indigenous people, gender groups, and others as relevant) and describe how they will be engaged in project preparation:

Identification and management of fisheries and critical habitat linkages in the South China Sea and Gulf of Thailand are part of the project design in which investigation of the existing basic information and research works in identifying the critical fishing grounds as well as spawning and nursery grounds known also as “Fishery Refugia” for commercial fishes including bottom and pelagic species, will be conducted. These project activities will be developed based on consultation and recommendations during the organized regional workshops. Local people’s indigenous knowledge and participation will be major factors to bring about and sustain an active fisheries habitat rehabilitation and management program. Scientific data and information will be supported by the views of the local people who will choose the right means or methods to strengthen their activities.

This project is also linked to the network, institutions (governmental, non-governmental, and private sector) and individual experts of the UNEP administered Regional Seas Programme and the Action Plan for the Protection and Development of the Marine and Coastal Areas of the East Asian Region. Involvement of SEAFDEC as an Executing Agency aims to establish greater political support and enhanced mainstreaming of fisheries habitat and ecosystem considerations with broader fisheries management initiatives in Southeast Asia. Such broader initiatives also include ASEAN, SEAFDEC, Sustainable Fisheries Partnership (SFP), and APFIC programmes on the use of subsidies in fisheries, overcapacity, illegal and unregulated fishing, co-management, and rights-based approaches to fisheries management.

A.3 Risk. Indicate risks, including climate change, potential social and environmental risks that might prevent the project objectives from being achieved, and, if possible, propose measures that address these risks to be further developed during the project design (table format acceptable):

Successful cross-sectorial co-ordination of activities between the fisheries and environment sectors in the participating countries is a key assumption. Many past marine protected areas in the region have been promoted in terms of their potential to improve the state of fisheries and their habitats, but have rarely included mechanisms to ensure the effective integration of fisheries considerations into

management. In contrast, fisheries departments and ministries largely focus on achieving sustainable yields from fish stocks in the light of high community dependence on, and participation in small-scale fisheries. Experience in the South China Sea Project suggests that the risks that this assumption will not be met seems small as the fisheries refugia concept has provided an adequate platform for building the partnerships and enhancing communication between the environment and fisheries sectors to date. The refugia concept was used successfully in 2006 to resolve a long running conflict between the fisheries and environment sectors in the Philippines regarding the utilization of fish stocks in areas of critical habitats in the Visayan Sea. Past experiences suggest therefore that this assumption will be met.

A second assumption is that small-scale fishing communities will support the initiatives and interventions proposed. At present many small-scale fishing communities, fisheries managers, and local government officials in the region equate area-based (zoning) approaches to fisheries management as the equivalent of no-take Marine Protected Areas. The latter are often viewed as unacceptable at the community level since they are rarely designed in locations of importance to the life-cycle of important fish species and neither improves fish stocks, nor the community's income. The net result of such activities has been the loss of fishing areas for small-scale fishers and non-compliance with fisheries management measures in the "protected" areas. The outcomes of extensive community and stakeholder consultations in the participating countries during 2005 and 2006 suggest that the refugia concept is well accepted by small-scale fishing communities and local officials. To date fishing communities in Cambodia, Indonesia, Philippines, Thailand, and Viet Nam have expressed their strong support for the establishment and management of fisheries refugia in areas of critical fisheries habitats. Achievements at pilot fisheries refugia sites in the Philippines, Thailand, and Viet Nam to date indicate that this assumption will be met.

A further assumption is that the national governments will take action to implement management plans for critical habitat areas of specific fisheries refugia, taking into consideration the vulnerability to climate change impacts and the need for adaptation response options. It is likely that this assumption will be met since all governments adopted habitat specific National Action Plans in support of the regional Strategic Action Programme and the further development of the system of fisheries refugia is part of the agreed SAP.

A.4. Coordination. Outline the coordination with other relevant GEF financed and other initiatives:

This project is designed to build on achievements of the fisheries component of the UNEP/GEF Project Entitled "Reversing Environmental Degradation Trends in the South China Sea and Gulf of Thailand" (South China Sea Project) in establishing a regional system of fisheries refugia. The achievements include inter alia: the publication of UNEP/GEF Regional Working Group on Fisheries' Guidelines on the Use of Fisheries Refugia for Sustainable Capture Fisheries Management in Southeast Asia as part of the ASEAN-SEAFDEC Regional Guidelines for Responsible Fisheries in Southeast Asia; identification of 52 locations in the South China Sea known as critical spawning and nursery habitats for fish species of transboundary significance; regional agreement on the inclusion of 14 sites in an initial system of fisheries refugia; production of a regional fisheries refugia information base; and prioritization of an additional nine sites from the remaining 38 sites for which further information is required. The project represents the implementation phase of the fisheries component of the revised regional Strategic Action Programme.

The UNEP/GEF Regional Working Group on Fisheries and SEAFDEC has noted the importance of close coordination with the proposed FAO/GEF Project on "Strategies for Fisheries Bycatch Management". Similarly there is regional agreement that testing the refugia system in the South China Sea where significant preparatory work has been undertaken will provide a sound basis for the transfer of knowledge and experience on the use of refugia to fisheries habitat initiatives of the Western and Central Pacific Fisheries Commission and the Sulu-Sulawesi Marine Eco-Region programme in the

adjacent coral triangle area. The project will also be implemented in close collaboration with the proposed coastal fisheries management project of the SEAFDEC-SIDA mechanism for the same time period (2012-2016). The latter project has been designed to link closely with actions of the fisheries component of the revised Strategic Action Programme for the South China Sea and Gulf of Thailand which this project aims to implement.

The project will actively engage in global knowledge sharing through IW:LEARN and set aside one percent (1%) of the GEF project budget from Component 3 (Information Management and Dissemination) to support IW:LEARN activities, such as setting up and running a project website consistent with IW:LEARN guidance; participation of project staff in IW Conferences and relevant regional conferences; and production of at least three IW Experience Notes.

B. DESCRIPTION OF THE CONSISTENCY OF THE PROJECT WITH:

B.1 National strategies and plans or reports and assessments under relevant conventions, if applicable, i.e. NAPAS, NAPs, NBSAPs, national communications, TNAs, NCSAs, NIPs, PRSPs, NPFE, Biennial Update Reports, etc.:

The FAO Code of Conduct for Responsible Fisheries recognizes that fisheries have the potential to alter the structure, biodiversity, and productivity of marine ecosystems, and recommends that innovative ecosystem-based approaches to fisheries management should be incorporated into existing regional and national fisheries management frameworks where possible. ASEAN and SEAFDEC adopted the "UNEP/GEF Regional Guidelines on the Use of Fisheries Refugia for Sustainable Capture Fisheries Management in Southeast Asia" in April 2006, which were published in May 2006, as part of the ASEAN-SEAFDEC Regional Guidelines for Responsible Fisheries in Southeast Asia for the implementation of the FAO Code of Conduct for Responsible Fisheries. In this connection, the 2008 Intergovernmental meeting of the SEAFDEC Council urged SEAFDEC member country governments to develop projects and initiatives aimed at ensuring more ecosystem-based approaches to fisheries management in the region.

During the period 2007-2008, the concept of fisheries refugia has been included in the following fisheries policies and plans of partner member countries as a priority tool for improved fisheries habitat management: Fisheries Law of Cambodia; South China Sea Fisheries Management Zone Plan in Indonesia; the Comprehensive National Fisheries Industry Development Plan in the Philippines; Thailand's Marine Fisheries Policy; and the National Plan for the Management of Aquatic Species and Habitats in Viet Nam. This represents the first time regional consensus has been reached on how to build the resilience of Southeast Asian fisheries to the effects of high and increasing levels of fishing effort by enhancing the knowledge and capacity amongst stakeholders of ecosystem and fishery linkages, as a basis for integrated fisheries and ecosystem/habitat management.

B.2. GEF focal area and/or fund(s) strategies, eligibility criteria and priorities:

This proposal is aligned with the GEF-5 International Waters Strategic Priority 2: Catalyze multi-state cooperation to rebuild marine fisheries in the South China Sea and Gulf of Thailand Large marine ecosystems, and specifically outcome 2.1 in implementing the fisheries component of the approved South China Sea Strategic Action Programme (SCS SAP). As outlined in the SCS SAP, the fish *refugia* concept is an innovative approach to reconciling the demands of marine biodiversity with the often conflicting demands for enhanced fisheries products, and therefore the project will contribute significantly to Outcome 2.3. Since this is the first attempt to involve fisheries and environmental managers in jointly managing demersal fish stocks and the marine and coastal habitats upon which these stocks depend, the project will contribute significantly to IW Strategic Priority 3 by focusing on local pilot demonstrations and portfolio learning/shared visions of action and commitments among the SCS countries and agencies. The project will play a catalytic role in addressing transboundary water

concerns by assisting countries to restore and sustain coastal and marine fish stocks and associated biodiversity and support policy, legal and institutional reforms and multiagency partnerships that contribute to WSSD targets for sustaining fish stocks.

The project will also indirectly contribute to two GEF-5 Biodiversity Strategic Objectives, namely: Strategic Objective 1 to improve sustainability of Protected Area Systems through improvement of fishing community's livelihoods and revenue using sustainable use approaches to managing fish stocks and critical habitats; and Strategic Objective 2 on Mainstreaming Biodiversity in Production Landscapes/Seascapes and Sectors. By using the innovative concept of fish refugia, the project will demonstrate the potential of biodiversity conservation and sustainably managed seascapes for marine fishery production sector. The project will enhance the understanding of the effectiveness of different forms of marine biodiversity protection and how to combine conservation goals with generation of local benefits in the fisheries sector at both the national and regional levels.

B.3 The GEF Agency's comparative advantage for implementing this project:

Resolutions of the UN General Assembly and the decisions of the UNEP Governing Council that establish the mandate for the work of UNEP include sustainable fisheries; promoting the conservation and sustainable use of the marine and coastal environment, building partnerships and establishing linkages with multilateral environmental agreements; intergovernmental science-policy platform on biodiversity and ecosystem Services; promotion of sustainable consumption and production patterns; and Intensified environmental education for achieving sustainable development (Annex A, Legislative Mandates, UNEP/GC.26/13).

UNEP has been recognized by regional and international fisheries organizations as the appropriate agency to implement initiatives in Southeast Asia that focus on the integration of fisheries and environment considerations. This is due mainly to it being the only United Nations programme whose core business is the environment. UNEP is also placed well to facilitate the multi-stakeholder, intergovernmental consultations required to ensure the close cross-sectorial consultation between fisheries and environment departments in the designation and management of fisheries refugia. This is particularly important in relation to the designation by Ministries of Environment and of Marine Protected Areas to ensure that such areas are congruent with habitat areas of critical significance to fish stocks. This will involve the establishment of institutional mechanisms to effect the integration of habitat and marine biodiversity conservation considerations into fisheries management. UNEP has demonstrated its ability to achieve this goal and is evidenced by the intergovernmental regional guidelines on fisheries refugia adopted by ASEAN and SEAFDEC.

The project represents implementation of one component of the Strategic Action Programme for the South China Sea that was developed through the UNEP/GEF project entitled "Reversing environmental degradation trends in the South China Sea and Gulf of Thailand" and will build on the network of institutions, organizations and individuals responsible for the development of the refugia concept during execution of that project. SEAFDEC as the regional executing agency has collaborated with UNEP in the development and dissemination of the concept of the fisheries refugia and is the only regional fisheries body encompassing the South China Sea and Gulf of Thailand.

PART III: APPROVAL/ENDORSEMENT BY GEF OPERATIONAL FOCAL POINT(S) AND GEF AGENCY(IES)

A. RECORD OF ENDORSEMENT OF GEF OPERATIONAL FOCAL POINT (S) ON BEHALF OF THE GOVERNMENT(S): (Please attach the Operational Focal Point endorsement letter(s) with this template. For SGP, use this OFP endorsement letter).

NAME	POSITION	MINISTRY	DATE *(MM/dd/yyyy)*
Dr. Van Tai NGUYEN	Director General, Institute for Strategic Policy of Natural Resources and Environment	MINISTRY OF NATURAL RESOURCES AND ENVIRONMENT, VIETNAM	
Mr. Dana A. KARTAKUSUMA	Special Advisor to the Minister on Economic and Sustainable Development Affairs	MINISTRY OF ENVIRONMENT, INDONESIA	28 MARCH 2013
Ms. Analiza Rebuelta TEH	Assistant Secretary, Department of Environment and Natural Resources, Foreign Assisted and Special Projects Office	DEPARTMENT OF ENVIRONMENT AND NATURAL RESOURCES, PHILIPPINES	24 OCTOBER 2012
Mr. Chote Trachu	Permanent Secretary, Office of the Permanent Secretary	MINISTRY OF THE NATURAL RESOURCES AND ENVIRONMENT, THAILAND	
Mr. Lonh HEAL	Technical Director General	MINISTRY OF ENVIRONMENT, CAMBODIA	21 NOVEMBER 2012
Dr. Lian KOK FEI	Undersecretary, Environmental Management and Climate Change Division	MINISTRY OF NATURAL RESOURCES AND ENVIRONMENT OF MALAYSIA	05 MARCH 2013

B. GEF AGENCY(IES) CERTIFICATION

This request has been prepared in accordance with GEF/LDCF/SCCF/NPIF policies and procedures and meets the GEF/LDCF/SCCF/NPIF criteria for project identification and preparation.					
Agency Coordinator, Agency name	**Signature**	**DATE** *(MM/dd/yyyy)*	**Project Contact Person**	**Telephone**	**Email Address**
Ms. Maryam Niamir-Fuller, Director, GEF Coordination Office, UNEP, Nairobi		04/05/2013	Isabelle Van der Beck	+1-202-974-1314	Isabelle.vanderbeck@unep.org