



Reduction of Environmental Impact from Tropical Shrimp Trawling, through the introduction of By-catch Reduction Technologies and Change of Management

<http://www.fao.org/fi/gefshrimp.htm>

Report of the 3rd Meeting of International Project Steering Committee (IPSC)

Homa Hotel, Bandar Abbas, Iran, 25-27 April 2006

I. Introduction

1. The third meeting of the IPSC was hosted by Iran Fisheries Organization from 25-27 April, 2006, at the Homa Hotel, Bandar Abbas, Iran.

2. The meeting was attended by the following appointed members of the IPSC: the Philippines, Mexico, Nigeria, Iran, FAO and SEAFDEC. The representative from Venezuela could not attend due to a medical emergency, but the presentation is available in Appendix C. The project Implementing Agency, UNEP, had been invited, but could not attend.

The list of participants appears in Appendix A.

3. The main objectives of the meeting were to review progress and constraints encountered by the project, the workplan for the remaining duration of the project, and to discuss regional activities.

II. Welcoming by General Director of Iran Fisheries in Hormozgan Province

4. The meeting was inaugurated by Mr. Badiie, the Director General of the Iran Fisheries Organization (Shilat) in Hormozgan Province. He warmly welcomed all the participants, and mentioned the different aspects of fishing and aquaculture activities in the province. He emphasized the importance of bycatch reduction methods, especially in shrimp trawling in the coastal waters of Iran. He hoped that the fishermen in the Persian Gulf and the Oman Sea will use the achievements of the project to conserve and secure economic marine resources, and better performance in their fishing activities.

III. Election of Chairperson

5. Dr. Wilfried Thiele, FAO Project Coordinator, called for the election of a chairperson. Mr. A. Mojahedi, the National Project Coordinator of Iran, was elected for the chairperson of the meeting.

IV. Opening of the meeting

6. Dr. Wilfried Thiele, on behalf of FAO, welcomed the participants to the meeting. He expressed his appreciation and thanks to Shilat for the contribution and effort in supporting the implementation of the project, especially for hosting the IPSC meeting. He stressed that the meeting should discuss how to further improve the interaction between the participating partners. He further emphasized that in the four years the project has been operating, the participating countries have carried out research projects which showed that negative impacts of shrimp trawling can be reduced. These efforts have supported the execution of the project, but also exposed the complexity of the bycatch problem. The nature of it varies considerably from country to country, and there are a wide range of aspects closely associated with it, like biology, ecology, fishing technology, fish utilization and marketing, sociology, economy, management, regulations, legislation, as well as conflicts between shrimp trawlers and artisanal fishermen.

V. Adoption of the meeting agenda

7. The agenda of the workshop, which appears in Appendix B, was adopted, and the Chairperson outlined the agenda and timetable for the meeting.

VI. Opening statements of the participating countries

8. The FAO representative, Dr. Wilfried Thiele, gave a presentation on the project execution, and explained the progress of the project in the four years it has been operating, and described each country's activities and progress. He provided information on the introduction of the devices in the different member countries, and the workshops held on bycatch reduction technologies. He further discussed the current data available in SOFIA on discard for different fishing activities, and bycatch reduction statistics published recently by FAO. He asked member countries to decide on how to continue their activities according to the current workplans, and reminded the meeting that the current closure date of the project is May 2007.

9. The representative from the Philippines, Mr. Jonathan Dickson, gave an account of the training and demonstration activities undertaken to introduce BRDs constructed by SEAFDEC. He strongly recommended the partners to actively engage mass media to raise the awareness of the project and its achievements, not only among fishermen, but equally important to government officials as well as the public in general. He stressed the productive regional collaboration between Indonesia, the Philippines and SEAFDEC.

10. The representative from Nigeria, Mr. James Ogbonna, presented a comprehensive report of history of Nigeria's fishing and shrimp industry plus work plan for 2006/2007 of the project in his country.

11. The representative from Mexico, Ignacio Mendez Gomez-Humaran, presented the past and on-going activities, which will be processed with the aims of using RS-INP-MEX prototypes for three fishing zones of the Mexican Pacific which has already been accomplished, either by government investment or stakeholders' initiative. He stressed the importance of determine the correct technology device in each type of fisheries to achieve a successful outcome.

12. SEAFDEC, through Dr. Bundit Chokesanguan, presented the previous activities regarding demonstration, experiments and the promotion on the use of JTEDs and other by-catch reduction devices (BRDs) in Southeast Asia being implemented by SEAFDEC. He explained the next plan to continue promotion the use of JTEDs, under the cooperation the project, and especially in the Philippines and Indonesia. He also proposed two additional activities to be carried out under the umbrella of the project to be executed in Indonesia and the Philippines.

13. The representative from Iran, Mr. A. Mojahedi presented the fisheries situation and achievements of his country, such as the damage of shrimp in the cod-end and the high amount of discard from shrimp fisheries. In addition, he mentioned that there have been good achievements regarding grids for reduction of By-catch of shrimp in Iranian trawlers which can be a good example for other countries in the region (the Persian Gulf and the Oman Sea).

VII. Financial and budgetary matters

14. The Chairperson requested the Project Operations Coordinator, Mr. J. Fogelgren, to brief the meeting on the project financial and budgetary matters. Mr. Fogelgren explained the preliminary financial status, and the expenditures for each project country. He advised that the Project Implementing Agency, UNEP, has requested information on national project expenditures every 6 months. The current completion date of the project, is May 2007, but an justified extension of the duration within the current budget was likely to be approved, should the meeting decide that the project should be extended, given the unavoidable delays at the start-up phase.

He reminded the meeting that all project countries have committed themselves to provide co-financing to the project at a level equal to the cash funding by GEF. Hence, he advised the importance of keeping updated records all in kind contributions received by the project, both from the governments and the private sector.

UNEP has requested that all equipment exceeding US\$500 should be listed in the 6 monthly Project Progress report, also indicating the Serial numbers.

Each country should provide information on their national project activities, technical reports, progress reports, useful links etc for posting on the project web site.

VIII. Future work program

15. The Chairperson, Mr. A. Mojahedi, requested the Project Coordinator, Mr. W. Thiele to advice on the policy of the implementation of the future work program, and requested the participants to briefly introduce the workplans of activities they will implement in 2006-2007.

16. **FAO:** Mr. W. Thiele informed the meeting that the implementation of the future work program should be considered, and even more focus should be on the benefits of region level cooperation.

17. **Mexico:** Mr. Ignacio Mendez G. mentioned that, for the remaining period of the project, the Mexican project activities will focus on continuation of the main activities in the Gulf of Mexico. He indicated that contacts with other countries of the region to exchange information and experiences, will continue. He reiterated that, on behalf of Latin American countries, there is a necessity of extending the project until the end of 2008.

18. **Iran:** Mr. A. Mojahedi mentioned the necessity for continuation of the project till December 2008 and requested revision of unspent balance of budget in this project. The activities will be continued in Iran by mandatory use of By-catch Reduction Devices in Traditional and Industrial Trawlers working on shrimp fishing in Iranian Waters.

19. **Nigeria:** Mr. James Ogbonna reiterated the need for continuation of the project, at least till December 2008 and invited the next meeting of the International Project Steering Committee to be held in Nigeria. Given the very limited budget allocation for Cameroon, he agreed on financial coordination with Cameroon for funding of needed activities with possible contribution from the Nigerian allocation of the project budget.

20. **The Philippines:** Mr. Jonathan Dickson informed the meeting that the project in the Philippines needs to be continued until December 2008. It will continue its activities on testing and selection of the suitable and appropriate devices to be introduced to the fishermen, in collaboration with government officials and other stakeholders. He reiterated on continued cooperation between BFARs and the local governments, and they will support the utilization of BRDs in the selected areas. The project will also produce VCDs (assisted by SEAFDEC), brochures, scientific documents, proceeding of seminars and workshops, and these promotion materials will be distributed to the people in the industry, and outside countries.

21. **SEAFDEC:** Dr. Bundit Chokesanguan informed the meeting that SEAFDEC supports the proposal of participating countries in this committee for continuation of the project until December 2008 and will continue to give

technical support on implementation and demonstration of devices in the Philippines and Indonesia as well as other countries. SEAFDEC will continue to produce informative materials like instruction VCDs on the use of BRDs to serve as a manual for preparation, installation and construction of devices, including the operation, which will be distributed widely. He appreciated Nigeria's kind offer to host the next International Project's Steering Committee Meeting in Nigeria, but also proposed that a Global National Coordinators Review Meeting should be organised with the main objectives to present and evaluate the results of activities so far undertaken by the participating countries, and to share experiences on project implementation to determine problems, constraints and possible solutions.

22. A Global NC Meeting was seconded by the Philippines, who also offered to host it. Timing should be October 2006. This was approved by the meeting, which thanked the Philippines.

23. After discussions on extending the duration of the project, the participants approved that a request to extend the project should be prepared and submitted to UNEP.

24. Mr. Vahid Tofighi of Iran Fisheries Organization, proposed at the end of the meeting, the need for building Farsi pages beside current web-pages of the project in FAO website and in this regard, expressed readiness of Website of Iranfisheries.net to help.

IX. Date and venue for the next IPSC meeting

25. In considering the date and venue of the 4th meeting of the IPSC, the representative from Nigeria confirmed its intention to host the next meeting, which was highly appreciated by the meeting. Date and venue will be informed at a later stage.

X. Closure of meeting

26. Dr. Wilfried Thiele expressed his sincere thanks to the Iran Fisheries Organization for being the host of this meeting, and he thanked all participants for attending.

The chairperson declared the meeting closed.

XI. Additional information

27. On the final day of meeting, a field trip was organised to observe a BRD designed for traditional trawlers, and which was tested in a sea-trial. It should be noted that Iran has 8,000 metric tonnes of shrimp catch in marine environment and naturally the ratio of shrimp to other marine aquatics in the catch is 1 to 7, which means that more than 50 thousand tonnes of other aquatics mainly juvenile and small fishes are excluded from the life cycle.

Dr. Wilfried Thiele and the FAO Representative who were on board the two traditional fishing vessels that carried out the test, said to Iranian Radio and Television (IRIB) Reporters: “Of course using BRDs can help decrease the pollution of the sea, and Iran, Australia, Mexico and Nigeria have good experiences in this regard that can be used on regional and international levels by concerned countries.”

List of Participants of the 3rd PISC Meeting

25-27 April 2006, Bandar Abbas, I.R. of Iran

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List of Participants of the 3rd PISC Meeting

25-27 April 2006, Bandar Abbas, I.R. of Iran

Tuesday, 25 April

10:00 hrs

1. Opening of the meeting
 - Election of Chairperson
 - Opening address (FAO, Project Coordinator)
 - Welcome address (Hosting country; Chair)
 - Introduction of members
2. Adoption of the meeting agenda

LUNCH

3. Opening statements of the participating countries
4. Report of the project coordinator on technical activities following the second meeting of the IPSC
5. Reports from regional representatives
6. Financial and budgetary matters
7. Cooperation between participating countries
 - Financial support
 - In kind assistance

Wednesday, 26 April

09:30 hrs

8. Technical and administrative status of the project, needs to achieve project goals
9. Work programme for the remaining project duration
 - Use of project website
 - Dissemination of results

LUNCH

10. "Post" project activities; second phase project
11. Date and place for the next PISC meeting
12. Any Other Business
13. Closure of meeting

Friday, 27 April

09:00 hrs

Field trip to fishing port, including demonstration cruise at sea

Appendix C

The representative from Venezuela, Mr. Jose J. Alio, was unable to attend the PISC meeting held in Iran, April 2006, for health reasons, but sends a report reflecting the situation of the shrimp fisheries and the project in the southern Caribbean Sea region, in particular in Colombia, Venezuela and Trinidad-Tobago.

The participation of artisanal fishers in the shrimp landings in South and Central America is very important, and sometimes, like in Venezuela, artisanal landings overpass those from the industrial sector by a factor of two. The by-catch issue on shrimp fisheries has worsen progressively in the region, as more non selective trawl nets are used not only in the industrial sector, but with an increasing trend among artisanal fishers as well. The bycatch accounts for a variable amount, from 20 to 80%, of the total captures, depending on the fishery. After evaluating the different gear used by fishers in the three participating countries, the project has focus on three strategies:

1. Modifying the gear amenable to be structurally altered to increased selectivity while maintaining its efficiency of fishing from shrimp (and fish);
2. When modifications of the current gear used in artisanal fisheries does not seem possible, replacing it for other more environmentally friendly one used in other regions of the world;
3. Evaluating current management strategies of the Fisheries Administration Offices in each country and suggesting changes that would decrease environmental impacts on the shrimp and marine bottom fisheries.

Pertaining to modification of industrial gear, the fish eye has been tested in the coasts of Colombia and Venezuela. In Colombia reductions of general bycatch reached 26-35%, and 30% those of non-commercial bycatch. In Venezuela reductions of bycatch reached 63% of both general and non-commercial bycatch. Since fish landings represent an important income for shrimp trawl fleets in the region, and losses of fish with commercial size are significant with the fish eye, skippers may feel that the use of this BRD is unsatisfactory. Tests of the square mesh are programmed for 2006 in the Venezuelan trawl fleet. In 1990 tests of the square mesh lead to reductions of 40% of non-commercial bycatch in Venezuelan trawlers, with a 20% increase of commercial fish catch. The Mexican prototype trawl (with steeper design and knotless net) was tested in Colombia, where reductions of 16% in general bycatch, and 29% of the non-commercial bycatch component were observed. Furthermore, a 29% reduction in fuel consumption was observed.

This gear has not been tested in Venezuela due to the high cost of the nets, and to the fact that reduction in fuel consumption does not represent a major incentive for fleets because of the low cost of gasoil in this country. Two workshops were organized in each coast of Colombia, Pacific and Atlantic, to transfer the results of the use of BRD technology to skippers, fishers and fishery administrators. There are confronted issues among skippers, since some consider important the reduction of fuel consumption and other the losses of commercial catch when using BRDs. Economic analyses

of these issues are currently being evaluated in Colombia. Finally, the use of the double chain in the industrial trawl has proved to be a simple and efficient way to reduce by-catch in Mexico and Cuba, and it is programmed to be tested in Venezuela and eventually in Colombia and Trinidad-Tobago.

With respect to the use of BRDs in artisanal gear, the fish eye was tested in the Orinoco delta with a reduction of 54% of bycatch in experimental trawls, and the validation of this BRD in the artisanal trawl fleet is being done in 2006. This BRD is also being tested in other areas of Venezuela. Other BRD, like the Nørdmore grid, tested unsuccessful in the Orinoco delta trawl fleet due to the amount of debris in the water that clogged the grid. The most commonly used gear among artisanal shrimp fishers is the beach seine. Chances to optimize its use by promoting its selectivity are low, so artisanal gear from other fisheries in the world are to be tested in 2006 with the aid of Mexican consultants. Among the possibilities are the use of the Suripera net and the bottom tangling net.

With respect to changes in management, discussions are under way with the Fisheries Administrations in the three countries to evaluate maximum effort levels that should be permitted in the different shrimp fisheries, as well as seasons and closure of areas to fishing.

Résumé of project activities proposed for 2006-2007 in the southern Caribbean Region:

- * Tests of the square mesh in the Venezuelan industrial trawl fleet.
- * Test of the double chain in the industrial trawl, with the aid of Mexican consultants.
- * Test of the Fish eye in artisanal shrimp fisheries in the southern Caribbean Sea coast of Venezuela
- * Validation of the fish eye in the artisanal trawl fleet in the Orinoco river delta .
- * Tests of Suripera net and bottom tangling net, as viable alternatives in artisanal fisheries currently using beach seines in Venezuela (and eventually in Trinidad-Tobago), with the aid of Mexican consultants.
- * Workshops with artisanal fishers in western and eastern Venezuela to promote the use of alternative gear to the beach seines.
- * Workshops with skippers and net tailors to discuss improvements to the use of the TED (in Venezuela, Colombia and T-T), as a result of the TED Workshop at Hirtshals, Feb 2006.