

STRATEGY AND CHALLENGES OF SEAFDEC/TD-DOF COLLABORATION: LOCALLY BASED COASTAL RESOURCE MANAGEMENT, PATHEW DISTRICT, CHUMPORN PROVINCE (LBCRM-PD)

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1 Objectives of this Paper

This paper describes the on-going process of the SEAFDEC/Training Department (TD) and Department of Fisheries in Thailand (DOF) collaborative project, which is entitled “Locally Based Coastal Resource Management, Pathew District, Chumporn Province (LBCRM-PD)”. Under the title of this paper are three main headings.

Firstly, the background of this collaborative project will be discussed. The LBCRM-PD has been implemented under a SEAFDEC’s strategic plan scheme of the so-called Fishing Consultative Group (FCG). Whereas, the DOF has reached a turning point at which its strategic approach toward community-based fisheries management (CBFM) should be extended over the whole country. Secondly, the outlines and content of the project proposal will be described. The last part of the paper will discuss a future direction of coastal fisheries resource management in Thailand, focusing on how to establish an effective decentralized system of coastal fisheries resource management.

2 Background of The Project

FCG Scheme and Collaborative Project

The FCG scheme is a strategy for finding a solution to common problems that occur widely in the SEAFDEC member countries. SEAFDEC has developed the regionalization of the Code of Conduct for Responsible Fisheries, an activity that has four phases, namely fisheries operations, aquaculture development, fisheries management, and fisheries post-harvesting. Under the FCG scheme, a lead department of SEAFDEC has also implemented a particular type of pilot project in collaboration with host countries.

With reference to coastal resource management, Thailand (DOF) acts as the lead country among the SEAFDEC member countries and TD will be the lead implementing department of SEAFDEC. The DOF and TD agreed to put together a collaborative pilot project in this field. Technologies, knowledge and lessons learned through the implementation of this project will be transferred to other SEAFDEC member countries through the information mechanism. This may be useful to help the member countries to review their own policies and steer new directions in coastal fisheries resource management. Establishing sustainable coastal resource management is an urgent need in the ASEAN region. It is also expected that the member countries that have experience in the field of coastal resource management projects will give practical and appropriate advice to the TD-DOF collaborative project.

A Further Development of the Community-based Approach in Thailand

The DOF has made great effort to make community development and community-based fisheries management successful. The DOF has completed a series of fishing community development programs, “Small-scale Fisheries Development Scheme (SFDS)”. The DOF provided fishing communities with financial subsidies with such purposes as investment in small-scale landing places and other land-based facilities, supply of fishing and aquaculture equipment, and the installation of artificial reefs. Encouraging the target people to organize groups is regarded as a very important activity, not only providing revolving funds for the operation of micro credit activities, but also changing the groups into a unit of coastal fisheries management. The SFDS ended in 2001 and has generated a number of successful pilot projects in both fields of community development and community-based management.

In November 2001, TD and DOF came to agreement on the five-year plan for the project activities. Before the TD-DOF collaborative project started, the DOF planned a coastal resource management project, as a Royal Project on behalf of His Majesty the King. It drew up a flexible five-year plan with a budget allocation. The project site selected was in Tambol Pakklong, Pathew District, Chumporn Province. The DOF placed a greater emphasis on promoting the sustainable use of coastal resources at the project site. Achieving consensus among local fishers at the project site, the DOF decided to proclaim the demarcation of coastal fishing grounds preserved for small-scale fisheries. At present, the project is expected to include the management of the demarcated zone by fishers and resource users, where particular types of fishing operations including trawl and push nets are prohibited.

In Thailand, the local government administrative system has been in the process of decentralization, in which the sub-district administrative organizations (Ao.Bo.To) increasingly enhances its capacity in planning and implementing the matters of community development and people’s welfare. Although the amendment of the present fisheries law is still under consideration, the introduction of the CBFM approach and the stepping up of local government responsibility for coastal fisheries management are taken into account.

Both the DOF and TD recognize that through having passed a stage of experimental pilot projects, Thai coastal fisheries have reached a turning point at which the successful lessons and experiences of CBFM should be extended over the country and formulated into a well-mechanized and legal system of coastal fisheries resource management. The DOF has begun to organize a new type of project, whose major purpose is to search for workable locally-based systems that can afford to manage coastal fisheries within a certain defined area by achieving consensus between resource users and local governments

3 Outlines of The Project

Framework and Objectives

The project purpose is to establish a viable model and workable framework of locally based management through encouraging active participation of fishers and resource users, supported by the creation of alternative job opportunities in coastal fishing

communities. The LBCRM-PD is modeled on the concept of CBFM and CM, but more specifying how to establish networks of primary management units at sub-district level.

The project has three overall objectives: first is the establishment of sustainable coastal resource management at local level; second is the rehabilitation of coastal resources; and third is the alleviation of poverty in coastal fishing communities. At least four results will be expected from the implementation of this project: 1) locally based management in Pathew works, 2) people's production and living conditions improve, 3) local people and organizations enhance their capability in community development, 4) practices are converted into the DOF's coastal resource management. The DOF and the TD recognize that an integrated approach should be prepared to for the LBCRM-PD, because the creation of alternative job opportunities inside and outside fishing communities helps to reduce fishing catch effort and pressure on resources.

The Planned Project's Activities

The project consists of six main activities, as follows:

1) Base line survey (Activity I).

The project conducts surveys to obtain the necessary information and data for the establishment of sustainable coastal resource management and community development, with the participation of resource users and stakeholders. Survey fields are mainly the oceanography and environmental aspects, fishing techniques, and socio-economic aspects.

2) Encourage and extend locally based coastal resource management (Activity II).

The project encourages responsible fishing and aquaculture operations and participation in the management of the demarcated coastal zones. It enhances the managerial ability of community-based management groups, their networks and Pakklong Ao.Bo.To.

3) Encourage local businesses (Activity III).

The project assists the people to increase their income by improving technologies of handling, marketing and processing fisheries products, and by creating job opportunities outside capture fisheries. The project can support the "One Village, One Product" scheme promoted by Ao.Bo.To and other government agencies.

4) Enhance human resource capability and participation (Activity IV)

Participatory training and educational courses will be planned and prepared.

Preparation of the courses should be considered on the purpose and practice of Activities II and III.

5) Develop extension methodologies and strengthen the extension system (Activity V).

Extension services are required to develop their technologies and methodologies.

Text, manuals and any visual methods through experiments on extension and training activities should be prepared and developed.

6) Rehabilitate and enhance coastal resource (Activity VI)

Through consultation with resource users, the DOF will deploy artificial reefs around the demarcated zones, and release fingerings.

Core activities are the second and third ones.

The project has two development phases. The first phase focuses mainly on the activities of a base line survey and training matters with a campaign for enhancing awareness building. Rehabilitation activities will be started in the first phase with a plan for the installation of artificial reefs. During the second phase, the project concentrates on the establishment and functioning of a management framework and the promotion of alternative job opportunities.

There are several government agencies and groups joining this project, besides Ao.Bo.To and the people at the project site. The Chumporn Marine Fisheries Development Center, the DOF's provincial and district office, Coastal Aquaculture Center and TD are core agencies, sharing responsibility and coordinate among them. TD is supposed to undertake functions like training, text & manual development, research and advice.

Sequence Plan for LBCRM

The project has a sequence plan for extending the LBCRM framework. Three development stages are prepared. In the first stage, the main activities are the expansion of the comprehensive coastal management campaign and providing programs of education and training. In the second stage, resource users and stakeholders are encouraged to develop their own regulating activities within the legal framework currently prevailing. Ao.Bo.To and community-based management units (CBMUs) will achieve a consensus on self-regulatory resource utilization. Institutional arrangements should be strengthened at this stage. A further development of self-regulatory activities with a monitoring function will be in the third stage. By the end of the project, LBCRM should work well.

Given different geographical, resource environment, and socio-economic surroundings, there will be many variations of LBCRM framework through the country. At present, the project proposal does not describe any adequate model of locally based management, which will be created through experiments in this project. This is still a tentative plan for LBCRM. It consists of several CBMUs, their networks and Ao.Bo.To. The CBMUs are primary groups established by fishers and stakeholders in communities (Moobaans), whose membership the majority participate in.

One highlight of this project is that fishers, stakeholders and local government agencies will cooperate together to organize and manage CBMUs and their networks. The CBMUs are expected to function as representative, consensus, suggestion, implementation, enforcement and adjustment. This, of course, should be a long process. Focus will be on the roles of representative and consensus at an earlier stage of the project. The local NGOs presently existing may enhance the people's concern on coastal resource management and stimulate cooperative activities, prior to establishing CBMUs. Their networks will arrange and conduct self-regulating activities, while resolving conflicts between communities at sub-district level. Such a network is a core institution built into the Ao.Bo.To system, and acts as a representative of coastal resource users.

4 Development of Policy for Coastal Fisheries Resource Management

Coastal fisheries management should build a well-mechanized institutional framework throughout the country. It is time to change from the earlier stages of implementing pilot projects and evolve into a full-scale development of locally based and participatory coastal management. The government begins to push forward with decentralization and devolution as a complete entity; it vests more and more responsibility for social and economic development at local levels in provincial and district offices. The focal point on the rebuilding of local administrations is on the strengthening of the Ao.Bo.To with regard to development and people's welfare. Consonant with new trends of such local administration, new fisheries laws are under consideration in the Parliament.

Considering the past experiences on pilot projects on CBFM and CM approaches, much effort has been put into setting up a comprehensive strategy for coastal fisheries resource management and community development by the DOF. Prior to the amendment of the laws, the DOF has taken up the challenge of building a new institutional framework at the project site through consultation with the people and their organizations. Although the role and nature of LBCRM-PD are seen as a pilot project, the success of this project may not only bring about a viable model(s) but also hint at a mechanism of sharing responsibility between local governments (provinces and districts), Ao.Bo.To and the people. The lessons and experiences gained through the project's activities will provide a profound insight into a direction of development of policy for coastal fisheries resource management.

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