

**Report of SEAFDEC Department Chiefs Meeting
10 November 2018, Langkawi, Malaysia**

I. Introduction

1. The SEAFDEC Department Chiefs Meeting (DCM2018) was organized on 10 November 2018 in Langkawi, Malaysia. The Meeting was attended by the SEAFDEC Secretary-General, Deputy Secretary-General and officers of SEAFDEC Secretariat, as well as the Chiefs, Deputy Chiefs, Special Coordinators, and respective delegations of the SEAFDEC Departments. The List of Participants appears as **Annex 1**. The Agenda of the Meeting appears as **Annex 2**.

II. Follow-up Actions to SEAFDEC Annual Meetings

- **Follow-up actions to the Fiftieth Meeting of the SEAFDEC Council**

2. During the discussion, the SEAFDEC Secretariat requested the Departments to provide updated information on the required follow-up actions to the directives given at the Fiftieth Meeting of SEAFDEC Council (50CM) covering the period from April to December 2018. All inputs should be submitted to the SEAFDEC Secretariat by the end of January 2019, and that the columns on actions undertaken during 1st, 2nd, and 3rd quarters of 2018 should be merged into one and final column.

- **Follow-up actions to the Forty-first Meeting of the SEAFDEC Program Committee**

3. The Departments were requested to accommodate the requests made by the Member Countries during the Forty-first Meeting of SEAFDEC Program Committee (41PCM), if possible and if budget is available, into the existing programs and projects. If not possible, such requests could be considered when the respective Departments formulate their future projects, such as those under collaborative arrangements, *e.g.* JTF-VII.

4. To enable the Departments to provide the actions undertaken with respect to the directives given at the 41PCM, the DCM2018 requested the SEAFDEC Secretariat to circulate the Table on the Required Follow-up Actions to the 41PCM. The respective Departments were asked to provide the information on the actions undertaken, on a quarterly basis.

- **Follow-up actions to the Twenty-first Meeting of the ASEAN-SEAFDEC FCG/ASSP**

5. The DCM2018 noted the required follow-up actions to the directives given at the 21FCG/ASSP. The SEAFDEC Secretariat would subsequently circulate the Table on the Required Follow-up Actions to the 21FCG/ASSP, for the respective Departments to provide information on the actions undertaken, on a quarterly basis.

III. Way Forward: 2011 Resolution and Plan of Action

6. With regards to the proposed Updating of the 2011 Resolution and Plan of Action as raised by the 50CM, and the proposed timeline presented by the SEAFDEC Secretariat to the 41PCM, the DCM2018 provided suggestions on the timeline as follows:

- **Meeting on the Way Forward of the Res&POA** to be convened in **February 2019**
- Results of February 2019 Meeting for submission to **51CM** in **March 2019**
- After the **52CM** in **2020**: Output document to be circulated *ad referendum* for endorsement of FCG/ASSP to the ASEAN mechanism

IV. Revision of SEAFDEC Program Documents

7. The DCM2018 was notified by the SEAFDEC Secretariat that upon the approval of the SEAFDEC Gender Strategy, some revisions will have to be made in the format of the program document to be submitted to the next PCM. The changes could include short descriptions on gender analysis (*e.g.* rationale indicating gender sensitivity of each project), and monitoring the number of male and female participants attending in the project events.

V. SEAFDEC Gender Strategy

8. The DCM2018 was informed that the final draft SEAFDEC Gender Strategy which was developed through the Inter-Departmental Meeting on the Development of SEAFDEC Gender Strategy (3-4 September 2018, Thailand), would be submitted to the 51CM in 2019 for consideration and approval. The DCM2018 then agreed that upon the approval of the SEAFDEC Gender Strategy by the SEAFDEC Council, the respective Departments should consider incorporating the gender aspects in their operations as well as in the planning and programming of programs and projects.

9. In this connection, the DCM2018 also approved the Terms of Reference of the SEAFDEC Gender Focal Point. The Departments were therefore requested to confirm the nomination of their respective staff who would serve as Gender Focal Points by 23 November 2018.

VI. Information-related Matters

10. While noting the results of the Nineteenth Information Staff Program Meeting (19ISP) organized on 9-11 October 2018 in Thailand, the DCM2018 focused on the issues that require cooperation and support from the SEAFDEC Departments.

- **Preparation of SEAFDEC Calendar 2020.**

11. Having been provided the provisional themes for the SEAFDEC Calendar 2020 as proposed during the 19ISP, the Departments were requested to consider the said provisional themes or suggest other relevant themes for the SEAFDEC Calendar 2020 (together with short description and examples of issues to be included in the Calendar) to the SEAFDEC Secretariat by 23 November 2018. Subsequently, the SEAFDEC Secretariat will circulate the list of suggested themes for votation (1 vote only for each Department and the Secretariat).

- **Sustaining Article Contributions for the SEAFDEC Special Publication “Fish for the People”**

12. The SEAFDEC Secretariat encouraged the Departments to write and submit “popular” articles for the future issues of the SEAFDEC Special Publication “Fish for the People,” particularly on the results of projects implemented by the respective Departments. In this regard, the Chief of MFRD assured the SEAFDEC Secretariat that MFRD would come up with an article in 2019, on cold chain management for seafood. Similarly, AQD also committed that articles could be contributed in 2019 provided that ample time is given to the staff for the preparation of the articles.

13. The DCM2018 requested the SEAFDEC Secretariat to inform to Departments on the themes and timeline for “Fish for the People” Volume 17 (2019) in order to give time for the Departments to prepare their respective articles. In response, the themes and timelines are appended in the DCM2018 Report.

- **Notes for Writing and Editing SEAFDEC Documents**

14. The DCM2018 was informed on the “Notes for Writing and Editing SEAFDEC Documents,” which was developed through a series of meetings under ISP forum and intended for use by authors and editors of documents issued by the SEAFDEC Secretariat and Departments to ensure the uniformity in such documents and publications. The Departments were requested to consider the Notes and confirm their approval (or provide comments, if any) to the Secretariat by 23 November 2018. The Notes accommodating the comments would then be considered approved. Subsequently, the Secretariat would circulate the approved Notes to be used by the staff of the Secretariat and Departments in preparing the SEAFDEC documents.

- **SEAFDEC Standards for Official Documents and Stationeries**

15. The DCM2018 was informed on the development of “SEAFDEC Standards for Official Documents and Stationeries” which was also arranged through the ISP forum to serve as written reference to harmonize the appearance and preserve the identity of SEAFDEC. The Departments were requested to consider the document and confirm their approval (or provide comments, if any) to the Secretariat by 23 November 2018. The document accommodating the comments would then be considered approved. Subsequently, the Secretariat would circulate the approved SEAFDEC Standards to be used by the staff of the Secretariat and Departments in preparing the SEAFDEC documents.

VII. Preparations for the Fifty-first Meeting of the SEAFDEC Council

16. The DCM2018 was informed that the Government of Indonesia had already proposed the date of the Fifty-first Meeting of the SEAFDEC Council, which is on **18-22 March 2019** in Bali, Indonesia.

17. While noting the draft agenda of the Fifty-first Meeting of the SEAFDEC Council as proposed by the SEAFDEC Secretariat, the DCM2018 suggested some revisions, *e.g.* remove Agenda 13: Excursion, and include additional sub-agenda as follows:

Under Agenda 6:

- Guidelines on Cold Chain Management for Seafood
- Revision of the Resolution and Plan of Action after 2020

Under Agenda 9 (closed session):

- SEAFDEC Gender Strategy
- Procedures for Inviting Other Organizations and Non-member Governments to Attend the SEAFDEC Council Meeting
- Formation of Singapore Food Agency
- Procedures for Endorsement of Policy Documents to the ASEAN Mechanism
- Future of RFPN after 2019
- Maintenance of Assets of MFRDMD

18. The DCM2018 also took note of the timelines for preparation of working papers for the 51CM, considering that all working documents should be sent to the Council Directors at least one month in advance prior to the CM (*i.e.* for 51 CM, by mid of February 2019).

VIII. Administrative and Finance Related Matters

- **Administrative Order on DSA for Officers from SEAFDEC Departments Attending SEAFDEC Meetings and Workshops Organized by Secretariat and TD**

19. The DCM2018 took note of the “Administrative Order on DSA for Officers from SEAFDEC Departments Attending SEAFDEC Meetings and Workshops Organized by the Secretariat and TD” issued in July 2018 that provides 1-day additional DSA for officers from SEAFDEC Departments who have been nominated to participate in SEAFDEC meetings and workshops. This is meant to provide some allowance to compensate for the officers’ expenditures during their traveling days. During the discussion, the other Departments also agreed to follow the said practice when inviting officers of the other Departments and Secretariat to attend their respective meetings and workshops in the future. However, it was also clarified that this would not be applied to other participants (*e.g.* from the countries), who shall continue to receive DSA only for the actual meeting days.

- **Transfer of Assets of MFRDMD**

20. The DCM2018 was informed that the Government of Malaysia recently issued a new regulation indicating that its Government Budget could only be used for maintenance of assets that are registered under the Government Database. In this connection, the Chief of MFRDMD proposed two options to address the issue as regards the assets at MFRDMD: 1) SEAFDEC assets at MFRDMD to be registered as government assets in the Government Database; and 2) SEAFDEC to provide for the annual maintenance costs of such assets.

21. The DCM2018 recalled that in 2010, the Council Director for Singapore also requested to transfer the assets of MFRD to the Agri-Food and Veterinary Authority (AVA) of Singapore to allow the AVA to absorb the repair and maintenance costs as well as the required accessories. Nevertheless, the DCM2018 recognized that this is the fundamental principle in the establishment of MFRD. Specifically, as stipulated in the Agreement Establishing the MFRD, 1/3 of MFRD’s operating cost would be provided by the Government of Singapore while 2/3 would be provided by the Government of Japan. As Japan could no longer sustain the operation costs for MFRD at one time, Singapore also indicated its inability to allocate operation costs to MFRD. For such reason, the SEAFDEC Council agreed to transfer the assets of MFRD to AVA. However, for the case of MFRDMD, the Plan of Operation of MFRDMD stated clearly that “*the Government of Malaysia provides the MFRDMD ...; and appropriate funds towards the operational expenses of the MFRDMD.*” Such provision should therefore be considered in making the final decision on the fate of the assets of MFRDMD.

22. Nevertheless, the DCM2018 also noted that as most of the SEAFDEC assets at MFRDMD were purchased under the JTF budget, this matter should be discussed between MFRDMD and the JTF Team whether the assets could be disposed and transferred to MFRDMD, or whether the JTF could provide the necessary maintenance costs as requested. The JTF Manager clarified that if the equipment is recently purchased within few years, it may not be possible to dispose them. He therefore requested that this matter should be discussed again between MFRDMD and the JTF Team. The DCM2018 then agreed that the Council Director for Malaysia would be requested to raise this matter for consideration by the SEAFDEC Council at its next meeting in 2019.

23. For the equipment purchased using the budget of the SEAFDEC-Sweden Project, the Program Manager for the Project informed the DCM2018 that the Project could not provide the maintenance costs, and that the equipment could not be transferred to the Government of Malaysia based on the prescribed regulations of the Swedish Embassy. She therefore requested **that such equipment should be kept at MFRDMD (for the time being) with stickers indicating that such asset is supported by the SEAFDEC-Sweden Project, as this could be monitored by the Auditor at any time if required. MFRDMD will cooperate and assist SEAFDEC/Swedish Embassy or Auditor to visit the location and inspect such equipment, records.**

24. The DCM2018 was also informed that similar situation would be encountered by IFRDMD in the very near future. Nevertheless, it was emphasized that in the document on “Privileges Accorded by the Government of the Republic of Indonesia to the IFRDMD,” it is clearly stated that “*the Government of the Republic of Indonesia, as part of its contributions, shall provide the utilization of an office space along with its operational expenses in Palembang, South Sumatera for the Fifth Department of SEAFDEC.*” Such provision should therefore be considered in future discussions about the maintenance of the Department assets.

IX. Other Matters

- **Issues raised by IFRDMD**

25. Considering the overlapping of eel activities between the projects supported by the JTF and JAIF, the Chief of IFRDMD requested that in 2019, outputs from these two projects should be clearly separated.

26. The Chief of IFRDMD also informed the DCM2018 that in 2019, a fish passage project would be implemented by IFRDMD. In this regard, he requested the support from TD staff by participating in the project. In response, the Chief of TD agreed to cooperate in the implementation of such project, provided that the participation cost of the TD staff could be supported by IFRDMD.

27. The Chief of IFRDMD also sought clarification on the process for inviting other organizations to attend in the PCM, *e.g.* the Australian Centre for International Agricultural Research (ACIAR). In response, the representative from the SEAFDEC Secretariat clarified that as the ACIAR has not attended any PCM before, the consensus of the Member Countries regarding its future attendance in the PCM has to be sought prior to extending the invitation.

- **Capacity Building Opportunities for SEAFDEC Staff in Japan**

28. The Deputy Secretary-General of SEAFDEC informed the DCM2018 on capacity building opportunities in Japan in 2019 through various channels, such as the following:

- Coordination with the National Research Institute on Aquaculture (NRIA) of the Fisheries Research and Education Agency (FREA) formerly FRA of Japan: In September 2018, a meeting was convened at NRIA and attended by representatives from AQD and research agencies and institutions in Japan, to strengthen coordination for future cooperation, and in 2019, this initiative would be continued for IFRDMD
- Staff training in Japan (supported by JTF) through the Marino Forum 21
- Training of officers from the Member Countries in Japan (supported by Gifu Prefecture): in 2018 training was provided to staff from Member Countries and IFRDMD, but in 2019, the training will only accept representatives from the Member Countries
- Formal graduate programs in Japanese universities: fellowship program and post-doctoral program
- Japan Society for the Promotion of Science (JSPS) program (generally known as “sandwich program” or the JSPS RONPAKU (Ph.D. Dissertation Program) in Japan) where tutorial and financial support are provided to promising researchers wishing to obtain their Ph.D. degrees from Japanese universities through the submission of dissertations without matriculating a doctoral course
- JICA training program: JICA has requested SEAFDEC Departments to support the conduct of JICA training courses, where staff from the Departments and member Countries could also participate

29. In this connection, Deputy Secretary-General of SEAFDEC added that he will communicate with the respective Departments to provide further details on the abovementioned opportunities.

30. Furthermore, the Deputy Secretary-General of SEAFDEC also informed the DCM2018 that the MOU between SEAFDEC and FRA would be renewed in January 2019, and that the Deputy Department Chiefs would be invited to attend the signing ceremony in Bangkok.

- **Training on Project Cycle Management**

31. The DCM2018 was informed by the representative from the SEAFDEC Secretariat that the training on project cycle management, particularly on the development of result-based matrix, had been conducted for TD and AQD staff in 2018, with support from the JTF. In this connection, the Chiefs of MFRDMD and IFRDMD also requested that the training could also be organized for their respective Departments. In response, the representative from the SEAFDEC Secretariat indicated that arrangements could be made for similar training of the staff from MFRDMD and IFRDMD.

- **Special Symposium/Lecture**

32. The DCM2018 was also informed that the SEAFDEC Secretariat had been organizing special symposia/lectures to enhance the knowledge of SEAFDEC staff as well as interested audience on various fisheries-related subjects when prospective persons with expertise in the various fields of fisheries visit Bangkok, Thailand. The Departments were therefore requested that when particular Department experts pass by Bangkok, the details of their presence in Bangkok could be relayed to the SEAFDEC Secretariat so that special symposium/lecture could be arranged based on their expertise.

X. Conclusion and Follow-up Actions

33. The DCM2018 took note of the follow-up actions that should be undertaken by the respective Departments, especially the suggestions raised during the Meeting and most especially, the timelines for the required actions that were agreed upon.

XI. Closing of the Meeting

34. The Secretary-General of SEAFDEC thanked the officers and staff of MFRDMD for the arrangements of the Department Chiefs Meeting, as well as the officers and staff of the SEAFDEC Secretariat and Departments for their active participation in the Meeting. He also encouraged the Departments to take heed of the recommendations made during the 41PCM and 21FCG/ASSP for the sustainability of fisheries in the Southeast Asian region. After wishing the participants the best in their undertakings, he declared the DCM2018 closed.