



---

## **STUDY ON IMPACTS OF COVID-19 PANDEMIC ON FISHERIES SECTOR OF THE ASEAN-SEAFDEC MEMBER COUNTRIES**

*SEAFDEC Secretariat*

### **I. BACKGROUND**

The coronavirus diseases 2019 (COVID-19) was declared a global pandemic by the World Health Organization (WHO) on 11 March 2020. The COVID-19 causes the human health problem, in particular the respiratory system and causes more than 4.55 millions of deaths around the world (as of 15 September 2021). The ongoing COVID-19 pandemic has affected people's livelihood, food security, social activities, and economies at various levels and scales. Over the year, all nations have been working hard, to stop and prevent the spreading of COVID-19. Several containment measures have been imposed in order to control the infection and spread of the disease (*e.g.* social distancing, curfew, lockdown, mandatory shop closure, etc.) including the COVID-19 vaccines has rolled out since late of 2020. The ongoing COVID-19 pandemic has severely affected people's livelihood, food security, social activities, and economies at various levels and sectors.

Many of the Southeast Asian countries ranked in the top 25 countries and are important on international trade, according to the FAO State of World Fisheries and Aquaculture 2020. In term of employment, in 2018, approximately 59.51 million people were engaged in the primary sector of fisheries and aquaculture, of which 85% of workers were from Asia. The fisheries and aquaculture sector of Southeast Asia region therefore play important role in generating incomes and contributing food supply to the world. As a consequent of the implementation of containment measures by each individual countries in response to the COVID-19 pandemic, it made devastating effects on fisheries activities ranging from capture fisheries, aquaculture, post-harvest processing, and the trade of fish and fishery products.

At the last 43<sup>rd</sup> Meeting of SEAFDEC Program Committee in November 2020 and subsequently, at the 53<sup>rd</sup> Meeting of SEAFDEC Council in 2021, SEAFDEC therefore proposed to conduct a study on the impacts of the COVID-19 pandemic on the fisheries sector of the ASEAN-SEAFDEC Member Countries, with the aims to share information among the ASEAN-SEAFDEC Member Countries on the impacts and mitigation of the impacts of COVID-19 pandemic on the fisheries sector. The expected deliverables would be a synthesis report on the impacts of the COVID-19 pandemic on the fisheries sector of the ASEAN-SEAFDEC Member Countries, an analysis for long-term implications towards sustainable food security and livelihood, and a policy brief on the impacts of the COVID-19 pandemic on the fisheries sector of the ASEAN-SEAFDEC Member Countries.

### **II. Progress**

SEAFDEC in consultation with Technical Departments developed the Questionnaire which was designed to gather information on the impacts of COVID-19 pandemic to the fisheries sectors such as capture fisheries, inland fisheries, aquaculture, fish processing, fish trade, and the mitigation measures of the ASEAN-SEAFDEC Member Countries. In February 2021, SEAFDEC organized the virtual Regional Workshop on the Study on Impacts of COVID-19 Pandemic on the

Fisheries Sector of the ASEAN–SEAFDEC Member Countries to explain and discuss on the questionnaire and the instruction to obtain data and information by the national focal points (NFPs). The questionnaire was sent to NFPs at the end of February 2021 and requested for the submission on 30 May 2021.

However, due to the worsening COVID-19 situation in the Southeast Asian region, it was a challenge for the respective countries to compile the data and information as inputs to the questionnaire. Nevertheless, SEAFDEC is currently drafting the Study Report. The remaining activity of the Study is the Second Regional Workshop on the Study on Impacts of COVID-19 Pandemic on the Fisheries Sector of ASEAN–SEAFDEC Member Countries to finalize the Study Report. It is expected that the Study Report will be finalized by the end of 2021.

**Remaining timelines:**

June	Preparation of the draft Study Report
December 2021	Finalization and editing of the Study Report
February 2022	Second Regional Workshop on the Study on Impacts of COVID-2019 Pandemic on the Fisheries Sector of the ASEAN-SEAFDEC Member Countries
February 2022	Special Meeting on Policy Briefs: COVID-19 Impact Mitigation in Fisheries and Aquaculture of Southeast Asia
April 2022	Submission of the Policy brief

**III. Required Consideration by the DCM**

- To take note of the progress of the Study on Impacts of COVID-19 Pandemic on Fisheries Sector of the ASEAN-SEAFDEC Member Countries.