



Final report on the National Consultancy on Community-Based Co-management

to the FAO project GCP/VIE/029/ITA, IMOLA in Thua Thien Hue
(Period: February to June 2008)

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1. Background

The project GCP/VIE/029/ITA, “Integrated Management of Lagoon Activities (IMOLA) in Thua Thien Hue Province with funding assistance from the Italian Government and the Food and Agriculture Organisation (FAO) of the United Nations, assists the Provincial Peoples Committee of the Thua Thien Hue Province to develop a co-management strategy for the management of fishery resources in the lagoon. As per provision made under the project, Truong Van Tuyen, a part time National Consultant on Community-based management is involved to lead Human Resource Unit and task force of IMOLA on community based resource management. In the first contract the consultant undertook the work between March and September 2007. As a followed up, the second contract was from February to June 2008, equivalent to one working month. This is the final report on the consultancy work undertook for the second contract for preparing of the community based co-management pilots in Tam Giang lagoon as the end of June 2008. The TOR for the second contract of the part time National Consultant on Community-based management includes the following job description:

- Assist (with support of IMOLA technical staff) the fisheries associations in the six pilot communes in the preparation of the following documents:
 - 1) Fisheries association management strategy
 - 2) Fisheries association management regulations
 - 3) Financial plans
 - 4) Monitoring, surveillance and control plans;
- Organize training modules concerning the following topics in six pilot communes in order to complement the IMOLA training program.
 - 1) Participatory planning
 - 2) Monitoring, surveillance and control plans;
 - 3) Conflict management
 - 4) Co-management
- Ensure that IMOLA technical staff is capable of following up on the training with the FAs and commune authorities
- Assist the FAO international consultants on coastal and fishery co-management during their mission (i.e. in preparation of and during meeting) and assist the technical staff to follow up on their recommendations.
- Organize and participate in two networking workshop (i.e. Tam Giang and Cau hai) that contribute to the network structure of FAs and their link to province FAs. Recommendations made by international consultants should be taken into account while organizing these workshops.
- Prepare a manual on the steps to take and issues to consider for fisheries associations towards the establishment of a co-management system;

2. Supporting technical staff to follow up on the trainings

- In close collaboration with the APO - Socio-Economist – Fisheries and other IMOLA project officers and the Vietnamese Counterparts at the Provincial Department of Fisheries and local governments, the consultant lead the Human Resources Unit including technical staff of FA and community-based management (CRM) components to carry out the process and workplan for building pilot FAs and community-based co-management establishment under the IMOLA framework. The consultancy is providing on-job training for the technical staff and followed up facilitation during workplan development and carrying out the field activities.
- The consultant prepared human resource and facilitated team building for FA development and comanagement pilot by carrying out orientation supports to the technical staff, building of capacity and consensus on team organization and working approach. Technical supports with on-job training and facilitation to technical staff to carry out field activities in 6 IMOLA-selected pilot communes. These included strengthening of FA organization and capacity, localizing the FA charters, developed participatory planning for lagoon governance that also support the gear rearrangement, specified the resource management regulation, and carried out FA resource development with an improved FA financial plan.
- A training programs concerning community-based management was developed and provided for the IMOLA technical staff and local concerned stakeholders from different levels: province, district, commune, village, people organization and direct resource users. This includes (1) Participatory learning and planning for lagoon management, financial plan development, and (3) workshops on fishing rights allocation and co-management development.
- Working/action plan on participatory development and implementation of community-based co-management plan is developed for each commune of 6 IMOLA selected pilot communes that includes Vinh Hien, Loc Binh, Loc Dien, Loc Tri, Quang Cong, and Hai Duong. The plan includes parallel activities to be started at different points of time for the following key outputs at village and commune level:
 - Improved awareness and capacity of local stakeholders in carrying out learning, establishing FA and community-based comanagement of the lagoon activities
 - Strengthened and developed new FAs with improvement of its capacity with organizational development and legal registration.
 - Participatory learning and development of detail planning for lagoon management at village and commune level
 - Pre-prepared implementation of the planning and action plans such as integration and negotiation for comanagement at commune and district level

3. Strengthening of FAs in 6 IMOLA pilot communes

This was as parts of continuous and followed up activities that started in 2007. In overall planning, number of sub-FAs to be established in one commune varied from 2 to 3. This is to involve most or all lagoon resource users in the FA organization so that it represents to all “lagoon management units” with the commune territory.

Facilitating strengthening and capacity building for FA & local officers included training for the project technical staff and facilitating activities in the communities. The national consultant on CRM provided substantial training and technical supports to the project team. As subsequent outputs, the FA and CRM team carried out the activities in the field by applying the participatory approaches, in which the local people and officers were facilitated to learnt current situation, make assessment and come up with their informed participation in the FA establishment and strengthening process. The knowledge and skills delivered included:

- Planning process and methods
- Organizational development
- Community based and comanagement of natural resources
- Facilitation skills and participatory approaches

In 2008, the technical staff facilitated an awareness campaign in all 6 IMOLA pilot commune in combination with traditional activities such as Fishing Festival (Le hoi cau ngu) or annual Boat race. A participatory community education program has been also developed for awareness building at village, commune and district levels. The awareness building made use of the following methods: (1) A 5-leaflet folder of Introductory FA, Capture fishery FA, Aquaculture FA, Co-management, and Updated lagoon resource situation; (2) A local broadcast program using the loud speaker system; (3) Bans and poster at village and commune public place; and (4) A series of traditional games supporting community learning of FA & comanagement. For some Sub-FAs that have been established and active before start IMOLA project in the commune, this was combined with the FA assembly meeting.

The building Sub-FAs in the IMOLA pilot communes was carried in similar process. However, a single sub-FA was established at different time and it may take different duration for the whole strengthening process. Therefore, the sub-FAs in the communes have different stage of development progress. The process of establishment and strengthening of FAs included following stages/events:

- 1) Commune stakeholder planning for overall FA development based on zoning for lagoon management units
- 2) Promotion of single sub-FAs: Temporary Executive Board and >20 members
- 3) Legalization process: Approval by Province VINAFIS and FA launching/ introductory meeting
- 4) Organizational strengthening: improved user groups and membership
- 5) Specify and Finalize the FA charter/ bylaw with approval by whole FA meeting
- 6) FA assembly meeting after one year establishment: Voted formal executive board and Monitoring body
- 7) FA operations with its identified plans and activities (participatory planning/ management strategies; management regulation; financial plan)

Table 1. Stage of progress of FA development in IMOLA pilot communes as June 2008

Commune	#Sub-FAs planed	#Sub-FAs active as June 2008	Stage of progress at commune level
Loc Binh	3	3	-Two FAs at stage of 7: management strategies; regulation; and financial plan have been developed -One was established and at stage of introductory meeting and organizational development
Vinh Hien	3	2	-Two FAs at stage of 7: management strategies; regulation; and financial plan have been developed -One FA planed for the marine fisher group is not yet established
Loc Tri	2	2	-Two FAs at stage of 7: management strategies; regulation; and financial plan have been developed -One was established and at stage of introductory meeting and organizational development
Loc Dien	3	3	-Two FAs at stage of 7: management strategies; regulation; and financial plan have been developed -One was established and at stage of introductory meeting and organizational development
Hai Duong	2	2	-Two FAs at stage of 7: management strategies; regulation; and financial plan have been developed
Quang Cong	2	3	-Two FAs at stage of 7: management strategies; regulation; and financial plan have been developed -One was established (revised plan by the commune) and at introductory meeting
Total	15	15	

4. Participatory zoning plan for resource governance

This activity was carried out in two level: (1) at the commune, the zoning was conducted by the stakeholders to determine the number of “lagoon management units” and identified them boundaries. These provided base for planning of FA development; (2) at FA level the zoning plan was carried out within the identified “lagoon management unit” by the respective Sub-FA and concerned commune stakeholder. The zoning plan within the “lagoon management unit” was to define the management objectives, management strategies, and planning for management actions/activities.

The participatory zoning plan was facilitated in a participatory training program developed by the consultant. The training was provided to the IMOLA staff. It then provided to the FA officers and representatives of communes and districts. The trainees took followed up activities on doing/practicing participatory planning within their lagoon management units and commune. Three training courses on participatory planning were organized:

- At Quang Cong commune on 8 April, 2008: for participants from Quang Cong and Hai Duong communes
- At Loc Tri commune on 9 April, 2008 for participants from Loc Tri and Loc Dien communes
- At Loc Binh Commune on 10 April, 2008 for participants from Loc Binh and Vinh Hien communes

The outputs of the training included (see training report and evaluation in annex)

- 1) Reviewed and analysed current zoning and planning on the lagoon management units by respective FAs and commune stakeholders
- 2) Further zoning development in the respective lagoon management units.
- 3) Mapping and description of the zoning plan.
- 4) Discussion on integration of FA zoning plan in the commune planning
- 5) The FAs at 6 IMOLA pilot communes have initiated their zoning plan that serve as base for development of the management plan

5. Development of the FA financial plan

Financial resource was identified as the most important factor that sustains the FA function. This is not only to cover the operation costs of FA but also relate to the expectation of the FA members in access to financial resource for their income generation activities. As a response, the CRM team focused on development of financial plan for the FA level. This activity carried out three objectives: (1) identify measures on FA budget mobilization; (2) determine appropriate costs that support the FA operation; and (3) improve financial management of the FA executive board.

In carrying out the activities, the technical staff was guided to work with the different FA executive to identify the lessons and generate ideas on resource mobilisation and financial management. The team then worked in a series of workshops to develop a guideline of financial planning and management for FA executive boards (see guideline on development of FA financial plan). The technical staff conducted training with single FA on plan development and followed the FA

practices. As a result, the FAs at the operation stage already had their financial plan (for 12 months) that included identified measures for budget promotion and appropriate costs for FA operation.

The measures for FA budget promotion included:

- 1) Membership fee
- 2) Undertake contract for tax collection with the commune government
- 3) Contribution from the FA activity services for fishery production
- 4) Contract for use of FA properties (such as land/water areas allocated to FA)
- 5) Undertake resource protection activities
- 6) External supports and others

The appropriate costs for FA operation included:

- 1) Regular and periodic FA meetings
- 2) Allowance to the FA members and officers based on specific activities
- 3) Purchase of FA equipment and materials for operation
- 4) Surveillance and resource protection
- 5) Training of FA members on identified topics
- 6) Award upon contribution and/or performance
- 7) Gifts to members in special circumstance

6. FA network workshop in Phu Loc district

In order to highlight and share lessons from IMOLA activities in Phu Loc district toward Community-based co-management of the lagoon resource, the CRM team organized FA workshop at district level. This involved participation of DARD; DONRE; PFA; DPC; DARD section; DONRE section; CPCs of lagoon communes; FAs of lagoon communes; aquaculture cooperatives and farmer unions. The specific objectives of the workshop included:

- Improve information exchange on lagoon management issues among different communes and FAs and between local governments and departments (communes, districts and province)
- Identify issues and activities for next development

The presentations shared at the workshop included:

- IMOLA activities on development of Fisheries Associations around Cau Hai Lagoon
- IMOLA activities on stake trap rearrangement in Cau Hai Lagoon
- Phu Loc district plan for lagoon management and fishing rights allocation
- FA lessons on FA status, current practice, success, difficulties and suggestions by FAs from Loc Binh, Vinh Hien and Loc Dien

Small group discussions were carried out on three topics:

- How do we restrict who has access to the fishery resource in the lagoon?
- How much fishing effort each participant is allowed?
- What are the most important problems for the sustainability of FAs and how should they be addressed?

Workshop outputs:

It is clear that Government and Fisheries Associations can benefit from joining together to manage lagoon fisheries. Progress is made towards the preparation of guidelines so FA members can clearly understand what they need to do before fishing rights can be allocated. Three important questions still need to be considered: (1) What is the 'best' set of fishing rights? (2) What is the 'best' form of co-management? And (3) Do management rights include the authority to decide who can go fishing?

Co-management of fisheries in Cat Hai lagoon may take the following form:

- Together commune authorities and FAs have full control in actions within the constraints set by higher level government
- Constraints are set by higher level government after consultation/cooperation with commune authorities and FAs
- Higher level government monitors and retains the right to take back control if constraints are not respected

The IMOLA contribution to the stake trap arrangement in Phu Loc district was appreciated. The arrangement is important for further improved management of the lagoon resources. GIS data on the stake trap arrangement provided good management tool and facilitated on consensus on decisions on management approaches and right allocation. The arrangement was also important for resolution of conflicts among the lagoon resources users.

How do we restrict who has access to the fishery resource in the lagoon?

- Consensus on users prioritized to access fishery resources. This included the FA members. Other users (non-FA members and from other communes) should be allocated rights with conditions (respected to FA management regulation, pay fees and tax, with district permission)
- Rights to be allocated to FAs
- Effective management at the commune level with increasing role of FAs
- Sustainable operations and practical action plans by FAs

How much fishing effort each participant is allowed?

- Detail zoning plan developed for FAs specifies types of rights and activities within the FA management units
- Right arrangement within the FA members takes account/ respects of the traditional access and rights, household resources and the communal benefits.
- Priority be given to FA members, those who make higher contribution to FA and communal benefits, then other users who followed the regulation.
- Rights arrangement should involve the roles of user groups within FAs

What are the most important problems for the sustainability of FAs and how should they be addressed?

- Problems: lack of budget; low awareness of members on benefits; low capacity of executive board due to lack of training; poverty of members making them difficult to participate in FA activities.
- Measures: budget promotion with more attentions from the governments and departments; Supports to continuous awareness and capacity building; supports to livelihood improvement for poverty alleviation.

7. Recommendations on steps and issues to be taken towards the establishment of a co-management system

- The current process indicates that the project support and facilitation for learning involved mainly the core villages, local officers or some community representatives. This should reach as much as possible to the direct resource users as conditions for right allocation. It means a large number of villagers should be facilitated to participate in whole process of FA establishment, strengthening, building management plan and implementation.
- The comanagement emphasizes on community based decision making and actions this process takes time and going through step by step. Hurry workplan may result in the less informed decisions and un-practical planning. Therefore it is necessary to lower down expectation of concerned parties and stakeholders on the initial stage of comanagement development. This is to assure incentives in participation in the development of the comanagement. This also includes participation of all stakeholders and of all resource users of the community in concern. Moreover the involvement of local stakeholders as district and provincial levels is also very important to promote legal support and power delegation to the comanagement
- Capacity building of FAs can be seen as the central in supporting the community based actions at different levels. It is recommended that the methods for capacity building be improved. The project should provide opportunity and condition for follow up after the training and promote learning by doing.

The workshops among the parties including the CRM team, IMOLA human resource unit, and the international consultants (Bob Parmeroy, and Becky Guieb) together inputs from other stakeholders from province, district, and commune level highlighted the following steps and issues to be undertaken toward the establishment of co-management mechanism in the lagoon.

Overall process toward establishment of a comanagement body will take the FAs as the centre of decision making and actions. This include:

1. ***FA and commune capacity building***: Further training and facilitation of FAs and commune government to carry out on: (a) awareness of fishing rights

benefits and roles, responsibilities and duties; (b) preparing a management plan and zoning plan; (c) developing management regulations; (d) promoted fund and financial resources;

2. ***Fishing allocation***: includes (1) specify bundles of rights to be allocated to FAs taking account of balancing between incentive and control of exploitation; (2) Guidelines for districts to issue fishing rights; (3) Guidelines for FAs and communes on fishing rights management; (4) Technical assistance to FAs and communes on preparing application to the district to issuance of fishing rights (5) Training on communication and negotiation between and among FAs, communes and districts in issuance and management of fishing rights.
3. ***Negotiation and operation of co-management***: Training and facilitate negotiation on (1) determination of a comanagement mechanism with central roles of FA; (2) roles arrangement and allocation among the parties on operation of a co-management body; (3) conflict management; (4) surveillance and enforcement; (5) collaboration among FAs and between levels of management (FA, commune, district).

Issues and priority in taking steps toward establishment of comanagement in the lagoon include the followings:

**** Support capacity building, especially at the FA and commune level***

- There is a lack of capacity at the commune level to manage and enforce management and to deal with destructive activities
- Communes recognize need to manage and more local authority but need help to develop capacity
- Management regulations have been developed by the FAs but there is insufficient funds and human resources; leaders have limited understanding and skills on resource management and planning, and information about the work of the FAs was mainly concentrated on a few people as information dissemination work is limited
- FA needs capacity to operate – empowerment; need to understand benefits, do not have operation fees, members offer free contribution so it is a loose operation; need training in how to manage
- FA is ready to take over fishing rights but still needs more capacity development and communication between executive board and members
- Executive board will make initial decisions and prepare draft and get approval from members
- The FA should show to the district that it has a plan for the area, it can develop regulations, and that is has agreement and support from members and commune PC before asking for issuance of fishing rights
- Will need help in monitoring and surveillance

**** Arrangement of roles and responsibilities in a co-management unit***

- There is a general interest among the FAs to coordinate with other FAs but the overriding concern is on how to strengthen their own organizations, including disseminating information about the draft management rules and by-laws.

- The CPC is very willing to lead in conflict management and work out solutions with the FAs. There is general agreement that conflicts should be solved at commune level and coordination with higher level institutions will be made only if needed.
- Community information dissemination on the law should be mainly led by the FAs and CPC but a legal document that allocates fishing rights to the FAs seems to be a pre-requisite for them.
- FAs and CPC, with support from provincial and district authorities are willing to take a lead in conservation and protection because of persistent fish disease outbreaks. Protection measures are viewed to be linked with livelihoods.

*** *Promote coordination and networking between the levels of management***

- The collaboration and coordination among parties and levels will be carried out in networking between province, district, commune and FA
- There are no established ways of working among the FAs, commune, province and district representatives; people wait for each other in initiating a task or an activity. In general, community/village awareness of the mandate and responsibilities of FAs is also limited. There appears to be good working relationships among the commune officials and the FA leaders. There is general knowledge that their FAs are part of the provincial FA but they were unsure about how these are connected.
- The Provincial Fisheries Association can serve a stronger role in coordinating the local FAs. But more resources need to be provided to the PFA and the Provincial DOFI to make this happen.

LIST OF ANNEX

- 1) Training module descriptions on participatory planning (english)
- 2) Training materials: Guideline on participatory planning (Vietnamese)
- 3) Report on participatory training for IMOLA pilot communes (Vietnamese)
- 4) Guideline on development of FA financial plan (Vietnamese)
- 5) Report on FA network workshop in Phu Loc district (Vietnamese)