



## **Study on Underrepresented Populations in Existing Fisheries Associations in the Tam Giang - Cau Hai Lagoon in Thua Thien – Hue Province, Vietnam**



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**Cover Photo:** View of Cau Hai Lagoon from the Mieu Nha Village, Loc Dien Commune, Tam Giang - Cau Hai Lagoon, Vietnam

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## Acronyms

<b>CPC</b>	Commune People’s Committee
<b>EB</b>	Executive Board
<b>FA</b>	Fisheries Association
<b>FAO</b>	Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations
<b>HH</b>	Household
<b>IMOLA</b>	Integrated Management of Lagoon Activities
<b>NFA</b>	Non-members of Fisheries Associations
<b>PFA</b>	Provincial Fisheries Association
<b>PPC</b>	Provincial People’s Committee
<b>SWOT</b>	Strengths, Weaknesses, Opportunities, and Threats
<b>VINAFIS</b>	Viet Nam Fisheries Society
<b>WU</b>	Women’s Union

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# 1. Executive Summary

## 1.1 Background

The Integrated Management of Lagoon Activities (IMOLA) is a project which has been implemented since 2005 in TT Hue province, Vietnam. The main objective is “*developing and implementing an integrated lagoon management plan, built through stakeholder consensus, which balances the sustainable use of the lagoon resources*” (IMOLA Project Progress Report, 2006, p. 1).

One of IMOLA’s main activities is to support the implementation of the Decision 4260/2005/QD-UBND by facilitating the establishment and/or organizational strengthening of Fisheries Associations (FAs) and support the development of lagoon co-management schemes (van Duijn, 2008, p 2-3)<sup>1</sup>. Regarding original description of activity 4.3, the project achieved a general estimation of 75-80% of membership among fisherfolk.

The Decision 4260/2005/QD-UBND states also that “districts will allocate fishing rights to FAs and specific water surface in terms of catch, fishing gear, season and species” (Pomeroy, 2008, p. 8). What needs to be better understood is the incidence of the potential negative/positive impacts of this statement on individuals involved/not involved in FAs in relation to their resources and with respect of their culture.

Despite the measures taken to create and strengthen FAs, there is still an estimated 20% of the fishing and aquaculture population that does not participate in FAs activities. These people, who include several disadvantaged groups, are either underrepresented or unrepresented and often excluded from existing FAs structure. Moreover some of the fisherfolk that are FA members are not actively participating in the FA initiatives. The result of this is that those people are not represented and remains often isolated from communication and information sharing. Others are, on the contrary, totally left behind.

The specific objective of the present study is to locate the areas or groups within the communes where the majority of people were not involved in the FAs and to provide information on these populations. The general objective is to understand the economic and social contextual factors which determine the level and nature of participation of unrepresented or underrepresented population of 4 communes in the current FAs into the lagoon activities/systems, in order to ensure social inclusion in the future and foreseen ad hoc activities within IMOLA Project,

## 1.2 Key Findings

The four communes visited have resulted diversified each of them with specific characteristics both in terms of fisheries activities and social environments. The sometimes inexistent and generally unclear idea of what an FA is and of how it functions is a consequence of the fact that the major constraints to people for not joining FAs lie in the lack of awareness, caused by people not being reached by information.

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<sup>1</sup> It was formulated as follows: Activity 4.3 - Facilitate the establishment and support of pilot co- and/or community-based management schemes in seven communes.

The reasons why those people remain outside of the information is not totally clear. The short field work did not allow the team to clearly understand which are the constraints and the condition of targeted people. From the interviews, the majority of the people unaware about the existence of FAs seemed to be located in isolated places. Often outside the village, some of the people interviewed seemed to be poorer than the others, with basic living conditions. Sampan<sup>2</sup> dwellers, for instance, seemed to be the most disadvantaged in terms of information accessibility due to the fact that they are located on the water surface, often with very little interaction with other people. Some of them have been relocated on land but, although the team had the chance to meet with some of them and information have been collected; time constraints do not allow this paper to identify specific weaknesses in the target population and therefore make assumption of major problems/needs among the fisherfolk community.

### 1.3 Key recommendations

The following recommendations, specified in the recommendations section of this paper, were put forward:

1. Strengthen communication and information sharing through community mobilization and awareness raising activities/actions, specifically through:
  - a) development of a dissemination action plan;
  - b) organization of informative workshops;
  - c) distribution of material; and
  - d) organization of communal events.
2. Reach and inform most disadvantaged people through:
  - a) organization of focal point meetings (e.g. OASIS);
  - b) dissemination of big banners;
  - c) nomination of focal points; and
  - d) assessment and involvement of marine fisherfolk.
3. Strengthen and “stating-led” FA members’ function/position in order to raise awareness on FAs and institutionalize their status.
4. Promote the role of Viet Nam Fisheries Society (VINAFIS) and Provincial Fisheries Association (PFA) in strengthening the status of local FAs.
5. Consolidate FA and Executive Boards (EB) knowledge about (1) their roles/responsibilities, (2) laws and regulations applied to the lagoon.
6. Clarify and define guidelines on disruptive fishing practice in order mitigate conflicts among people and preserve natural resources through:
  - a) provision of guidelines on disruptive fishing activities;

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<sup>2</sup> Recognized as “sampan people” or “sampan dwellers”, the government of Vietnam has emanated a regulation in order to resettle these people and since 2006 a sensitive number of Sampan households have received land. However, many of them are still living on the lagoon. No information is available on these specific communities that for decades have been marginalized. In the past they have been made target of several attempts of integration with the stable population by means of relocation on land and attempts to revert their lifestyle to agriculture, still, they don’t have access to credit or alternative livelihoods (Pomeroy, 2008).

- b) investigation on the use of disruptive fishing activities;
- c) creation of a monitoring system through household listing/registration;
- d) awareness raising on the disruptive use; and
- e) organization of information days.

7. Understand Women's Union (WU) functioning and assess about possible collaboration with FAs through:

- a) understanding potential activities; and
- b) assessment of the possibility to develop small business.

8. Promoting comparative studies on Sampan Community in the context of the lagoon population in order to better target them in the new status of resettled.

9. Invest more time and resources on socio-economic research in order to better assess and target people needs/priorities.

## 2. Introduction

### 2.1 General Information on the Tam Giang - Cau Hai Lagoon

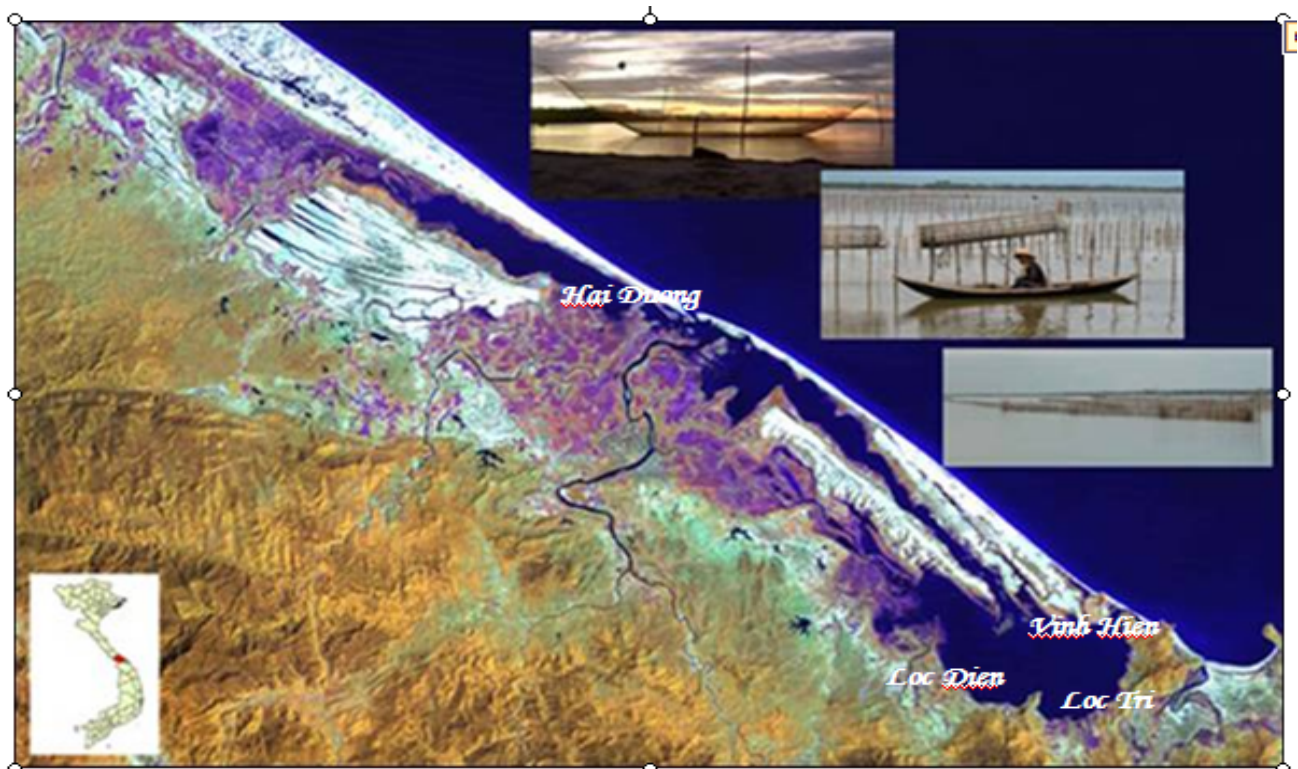


Figure 1. Satellite map of the Tam Giang - Cau Hai Lagoon, Vietnam Hai Duong, Loc Dien, Vinh Hien and Loc Tri Communes

The Tam Giang - Cau Hai Lagoon is located in Thua Thien Hue province in Vietnam and it covers an area of about 22,000 ha with a length of 70 km along the coast. With a population of 300,000 inhabitants and a total 236 villages from 31 communes it provides important ecological and economic resources for the local community's livelihood and the province development. Different groups surrounding the lagoon area are undertake various activities, including fishing, aquaculture, transport and tourism and their livelihoods are provided by directly or indirectly exploiting natural resources in and around the lagoon (Tuyen, 2007, p. 8-12).

This massive human impact significantly affects the lagoon system and the natural resources it offers. Aquatic resources are at risk because of over-exploitation, water pollution and lagoon surface contraction due to encroachment of aquaculture facilities (Fezzardi D. and Lam T.T.S., 2006, p. 23). This has caused the loss of valuable ecosystems and in the 2004, the uncontrolled construction level of shrimp ponds and the establishment of fishing fixed gears made it more difficult to reach all the areas of the lagoon (IMOLA, 2006, p. 3-4). These environmental conditions brought farmers and fishers in competition for access to land and water resources.

In December 2005, the Provincial People's Committee (PPC) of Thua Thien Hue Province issued the Decision 4260/2005/QD-UBND promulgating the provincial regulations in the management of lagoon fisheries. According to the Decision 4260/2005/QD-UBND, individuals and households carrying out fisheries activities in the lagoon must form FAs at village, inter-village or communal

level (Albisini S., 2006, p. 9-12). It created a new legal situation in the province and the FAs have been recognized to play an important role in the co-management of the lagoon fishing activities (Siriwardena, S. N. 2007, p. 3).

FAO intervention with IMOLA Project started in 2005 and it arises from the need to integrate the local management of the lagoon resources with the immediate objective of “*developing and implementing an integrated lagoon management plan, built through stakeholder consensus, which balances the sustainable use of the lagoon resources*” (IMOLA, 2006, p. 1).

The project addresses also other major problems of exploitation of natural resources as well as encroachment into the lagoon, excessive waste water, mismanagement and disease outbreaks, which have led to a decreasing production in aquaculture and fisheries, and therefore to negative effects to local economy and environment (Siriwardena S. N., 2007, p. 3-6).

## **2.2 Problem Statement**

One of the IMOLA main activities is to support the implementation of the Decision 4260/2005/QD-UBND by facilitating the establishment and/or organizational strengthening of FAs and support the development of lagoon co-management schemes (van Duijn, 2008). It was formulated as follow: Activity 4.3 - Facilitate the establishment and support of pilot co- and/or community-based management schemes in seven communes. As of April 2008, currently there are 33 existing FAs and 15 of these meet regularly once a week “*to discuss situation in the lagoon and strategies for management*” (Pomeroy, 2008, p. 3 and 11). With regards to original description of the Activity 4.3, the project achieved a general estimation of 75-80% of fisherfolk in the FAs in relation to the total fisherfolk population of the lagoon.

Despite of the measures undertaken to create and strengthen FAs, there is still a portion of the lagoon population that actually does not participate in the FAs activities and that is reported as a 20% on average. This 20% of the population, especially socially disadvantaged groups is underrepresented or unrepresented and is often excluded from existing FAs structure. Part of them are families included but not represented in the existing FAs, fisherfolk who became members of FAs but that, for different reasons, are not actively participating in the initiatives / activities organized.

A consistent number of fisherfolk who have been interviewed during the field work belong are nomad dwellers living in boats on the lagoon, depending almost totally on small-scale capture fisheries (Fezzardi & Thu Suu, 2006, p. 5). They are recognized as “*sampan people*” or “*sampan dwellers,*” but there is still not enough information on these specific communities that have been marginalized for decades. It is important to mention them as they have been a good source of information during the field work, making accessible understanding of village social life and people’s culture.

The Decision 4260/2005/QD-UBND states that “*districts will allocate fishing rights to FAs and specific water surface in terms of catch, fishing gear, season and species*” (Pomeroy, 2008, p. 11-12) meaning that those involved in fisheries activities must be FA members in order to be included in the allocation of fishing rights. Hence fisherfolk who shall not join FAs will be excluded from an equal distribution of fishing rights. It means that very soon the fishing water surface will be practically divided by zones with the scope to allow fisherfolk to have a proper area to fish which will be clearly defined.

At the time of the fishing rights allocation, the water surface area will be divided and then allocated to a group of fisherfolk, i.e., FA. This will happen both for the aquaculturists and for the lagoon fishermen. The study will show that one of the most important reasons why the entire fisherfolk's community should join FA, lies in the fact that those people will be excluded by the allocation of fishing rights.

### **2.3 Scope of the Study**

Each of four target communes has one or more FAs depending on the existing fishing activities, and for example there are FAs that manage capture fishing rather than aquaculture activities. Although FAs need to be strengthened for different reasons, their importance for an integrated management of the lagoon has been recognized and some communes have come to know about lagoon management activities through FAs (Pomeroy, 2008).

Although the project has achieved good representation rates of 80% for most of the FAs supported, the identity of the remaining 20% and their possible association with any particular group of people (usually disadvantaged groups as the Sampan dwellers) needs to be assessed and, when possible, the negative/positive impacts of fishing rights allocation on those people should be established. In the past, part of these groups, especially Sampan dwellers, have been made target of several attempts of integration with the stable population by means of relocation on land and attempts to revert their lifestyle to agricultural but still, they don't have access to credit or alternative livelihoods (Pomeroy, 2008).

Furthermore, the study will be a supplementary activity to IMOLA's support to FAs and lagoon co-management by understanding a targeted portion of underrepresented/unrepresented population in existing FA structure, especially socially disadvantaged groups.

The study will contribute in the way of providing information on underrepresented and unrepresented population of Tam Giang, in order to foresee social inclusion and developing intervention with respect of culture and tradition. This is a critical study that should be carried out before actually proceeding with fishing rights allocation, which the project is expecting to happen within 2009-2010.

As IMOLA project is predominantly focused on the management of the lagoon fisheries, a part of fisherfolk that are solely involved in marine activities are not intended to be mobilized by the project. They are therefore only marginally mentioned in this report.

### **2.4 Objective of the study**

The general objective of the study is to understand the economic and social contextual factors which determine the level and nature of participation of unrepresented or underrepresented population of four communes in the current FAs into the lagoon activities/systems, in order to ensure social inclusion in the future and foreseen ad hoc activities within IMOLA Project.

The specific objectives are:

1. to understand the social status/structure of unrepresented or underrepresented populations/groups;

2. to evaluate the livelihood status of unrepresented or underrepresented populations/groups including their economic and financial status;
3. to assess the local people's perspectives of the FAs functions; and
4. to investigate negative/positive impacts of fishing rights allocation on unrepresented or underrepresented populations/groups in the lagoon.

The expected outcome is to foresee and develop possible interventions in view of the forthcoming fishing rights allocation.

**Table 1. Representation Rates (Coverage) of Local FAs (IMOLA, 2009)<sup>3</sup>**

No.	Commune	FA name	# Members	# Potential Members	%
1	Quang Cong	Thanh Tien	54	61	88.5%
2	Quang Cong	Thanh Dat	64	75	85.3%
3	Quang Cong	Thanh Nhat	67	76	88.2%
4	Quang Cong	High Tide	68	74	91.9%
5	Hai Duong	Huong Giang	55	66	83.3%
6	Hai Duong	Thuong Tay	76	86	88.4%
7	Hai Duong	Vinh Tri	52	64	81.3%
8	Vinh Hien	Lagoon	183	253	72.3%
9	Vinh Hien	Aquaculture	174	186	93.5%
10	Loc Binh	Loc Binh 1	82	60	136.7%
11	Loc Binh	Loc Binh 2	95	93	102.2%
12	Loc Binh	Loc Binh 3	32	32	100.0%
13	Loc Dien	Mieu Nha	86	116	74.1%
14	Loc Dien	Trung Luong	174	246	70.7%
15	Loc Dien	Thach Son	68	102	66.7%
16	Loc Dien	Luong Chanh	48	50	96.0%
17	Loc Tri	Lagoon I	74		#DIV/0!
18	Loc Tri	Lagoon II	91		#DIV/0!
19	Loc Tri	Aquaculture	40	74	54.1%
20	Phu Loc Town	Phu Loc Town	0	184	0.0%

The representation rates of FAs showed in Table 1 was the key document on which the team started to assess and verifying data.

## 2.5 Methodology

The field work has been carried out for 12 days in total including two-day field work in each target commune as follows:

- Vinh Hien Commune;
- Loc Dien Commune;
- Hai Duong Commune; and
- Loc Tri Commune.

For each commune the team was composed by an international consultant (the author), an interpreter, and a field technical staff provided by IMOLA. To have an overview on the communes, semi-structured interviews, both through individual and group discussions, were carried out with representatives of the CPCs, WUs, and FAs respectively. Group discussion with non-members of FAs (NFA) was organized by CPC and FA in the CPC building while non-structured group discussions took place in the villages.

Information on the percentage of the underrepresented population in the FAs has been provided by interviews with FA and CPC.

<sup>3</sup> The representation rates in some communes are more than 100% showing that there a participation of people from other FA areas or communes.

In order to accomplish the objective of the study, findings will be summarised following specific criteria in order to better describe key findings. The following framework has been thought and developed in order to provide a consolidated description of the key findings. The criteria are here explained;

**Willingness:** Readiness and receptiveness to commit themselves to learn more about FAs functioning and to participate in their activities. It depends on the motivation of people to be mobilized and informed but it can be influenced by the environment in which people grow;

**Feasibility:** Capable of being accomplished about participating in FA activities. This is very much related to living and financial conditions, level of education, environment rather than motivation / interest.

**Awareness:** Awareness implies knowledge gained through one's own perceptions or by means of information. Whether there is low awareness of FA existence / functioning it is not possible to categorize people in the other two criteria as it excludes the other two. The lack of awareness limits the analysis of understanding what the reasons are, beyond the lack of consciousness, that take people outside the FAs.

For each criterion a number of indicators have been provided in the table below:

**Table 2. Criteria and Indicators for Evaluation**

<b>Criteria</b>	<b>Indicators</b>
<b>Willingness</b>	Level of: motivation, interest, mobilization, education, perception on incentives
<b>Feasibility</b>	Poverty level (e.g. education, income), location (e.g. remote, unknown or unreachable areas), physical constraints (e.g., disabilities)
<b>Awareness</b>	Being informed/conscious, information access, level of education, literacy

### 3. Findings

After 12 days of field work, the four communes visited appeared to be very different between each other, with specific characteristics in terms of fisheries activities and social environments. The villages visited in the communes showed a certain number of NFAs which has been reported in this document. However, it must be clarified that (i) the number of NFAs reported is approximate and not officially confirmed and that (ii) the number of NFAs villages may be not exhaustive as some of the interviewed reported NFAs belonging to different villages which have been not visited by the team.

The sometimes inexistent and generally unclear idea of what an FA is and of how it functions is a consequence of the fact that the major constraints to people for not joining FAs lie in the lack of awareness, caused by not being reached by information. The reasons why those people remain outside of the information is not totally cleared. The short field work did not allow the team to clearly understand which are the constraints and the condition of targeted people. From the interviews, the majority of the people not aware about the existence of FAs seemed to be located in isolated places.

Often outside the village, some of the people interviewed seemed to be poorer than the others, with very basic living conditions. Sampan dwellers, for instance, seemed to be the most disadvantaged in terms of information accessibility due to the fact that they are located on the water surface, often with very little interaction with other people. Some of them have been relocated on land but, although the team had the chance to meet with some of them and information have been collected; time constraints do not allow this paper to identify specific weaknesses in the target population and therefore make assumption of major problems/needs among the fisherfolk community.

Awareness rising should not only target NFAs but the community as a whole in order to guarantee and strengthen the co-management activities within the lagoon.

#### 3.1 Lack of information and awareness among villages

During the interviews, it seemed that targeted people involved in the FAs were mainly the core villagers, local officers and community representatives. People from isolated villages, as for example Hien Hoa 2 Village in Vinh Hien Commune, which are more isolated as they are a *sampan* community (to be resettled on land), seemed to be less informed and aware not only about FA existence and functioning, but also about any other regulations applied to the lagoon and/or excluded from other events.

While CPC communication and presence did not seem to be very effective within the villages, people interviewed showed very strong linkages among themselves and a shared social life. Some people, especially young women, seem to have great knowledge of village social and cultural mechanisms having also a recognized admiration and credibility from other people. Although very poor, some of these women contribute to the family income not only participating in the fisheries activities but also running other business themselves (little restaurants, cafes, markets). These people can be key vehicles for the expression and dissemination of information among targeted people.

### 3.2 Low level of motivation and incentives from FA members, in particular from the EBs

The study showed that although FA members and EB members in particular are aware of the importance of their key role in persuading and disseminating information among people, they often do not take action. Some of the interviewees from EB correctly explained that FA and EB have the capacity to inform and persuade people. For several reasons they consider important to persuade NFAs to join FAs, in particular because it will bring positive impact to the FA in terms of co-management system functioning and in terms of sustainable management of the lagoon. On the other side, face-to-face interviews (FA members vs. NFAs) showed their low commitment in disseminating information among NFAs as they consider (i) carrying out extra job activities beyond the role they cover within the FA; (ii) they feel not to have incentives to work as EB because although their commitment to cover this position, they do not receive money. This attitude has been pointed out by EB members that considered themselves obliged to carry out fisheries activities and at the same time to cover a position within FA as a second job without compensation. They also reported not to have enough financial and human resources to promote new activities. For instance, their attitude in not making effort to disseminate information about FA among villagers is reasonable.

### 3.3 The active role of Women Union



Figure 2. Group discussion with a WU and FA members in Loc Tri Commune

WU is a so-called a “state-led” mass organization with financial backup from the government and this is the major difference between FA and WU. It is one of the most well organized groups in the area of the lagoon and it has a proven experience and know how in providing support to women. It informs women about regulations and legal issues with the aim of avoiding gender discrimination. The WU also disseminates information about alternative livelihoods and on possibility to develop small business as its members can apply for bank loans and special allowances. They also organize monthly events in the villages. In the 4 communes visited, WU members interviewed in Loc Tri, informally reported that the percentage of women belonging to WU is very high with an average of about 90% of the population. Even in remote areas, poor HHs were informed and/or participated in WU activities.

WU has deep knowledge of social and cultural life in the villages and it represent a bridge filling gaps within the community, mobilizing people through information campaigns with the adoption of different communication strategies provided by the National Women Union Association and developed at local level every year. The understanding of potential activities that women can implement in order to empower FA economic development in the area of the lagoon is strongly recommended.

### 3.4 Brief overview of the findings reported on the four visited communes

The following sections summarise the findings by commune showing the number of people that are not affiliated to the existing FAs summarised for each village interviewed. The reported number must be considered not as official data but as information provided by the interviewees. The findings will be analysed in more details later in this report.

#### 3.4.1. Vinh Hien

Table 3. Finding details of Vinh Hien Commune

Group Names	Number of NFAs
<b>Hien Hoa 2 Village</b>	<b>250</b>
- Lagoon fisherfolk (mainly mobile fishing)	249
- Aquaculturists	1
<b>Hien Van 1, Hien An 1, Hien An 2 Villages</b>	<b>130</b>
- Lagoon fisherfolk (mainly mobile fishing)	30
- Aquaculturists	100
<b>Total NFA</b>	<b>380</b>
<b>(Sampan)</b>	<b>80-130</b>

As showed in Table 3, the majority of NFAs use mobile fishing gears and are mainly located in Hien Hoa 2 Village (*sampan* village). The number of households (HHs) in Vinh Hien is 1,917 distributed in seven villages. One third depends on lagoon related activities. Another major portion of the population is involved in marine actives. *“The remaining households live on agriculture and various activities (e.g. masonry, business, livestock), including those of migrant members. Lagoon dependent households are facing great bundle of adversity since their livelihoods are conditioned by natural events, and their income is not stable. The majority of children over 14 years of age are forced to migrate to Saigon to earn a living”* (Bui Duc Be, Nguyen Thi Kim Loan, 2007, p.2).

#### Overview on underrepresented population within FAs in Vinh Hien Commune

An unexpected percentage of people in the commune that joined the FAs are underrepresented or are non active members. FA and CPC reported that around 30% of members in the aquaculture and 20% in the lagoon FAs are non active members. They usually do not participate in the activities organized within the FA or have stopped to pay the fee. Others stayed as members but try to persuade people (NFA and FA members) not to join FA activities. The main reasons for people to be less active are personal conflicts, physical problems and no immediate benefits from participation.

FA give the responsibility is of this behaviour to the local authorities. Their management has not provided fisherfolk with a good understanding of the FAs mission, and have not tried to mitigate

conflicts that can have negative impacts on co-management activities and future regulations within the lagoon.

### 3.4.2 Loc Dien

**Table 4. Finding details of Loc Dien Commune**

<b>Group Names</b>	<b>Number of NFAs</b>
<b>Trung Chanh Village</b>	<b>45</b>
- Lagoon fisherfolk (mainly mobile fishing)	30
- Aquaculturists	10
<b>Mieu Nha Village</b>	<b>34</b>
- Lagoon fisherfolk (mainly mobile fishing)	30
- Aquaculturists	15
<b>Sampan</b>	<b>30</b>
<b>Total NFA</b>	<b>120</b>

The majority of fisherfolk not involved in FAs are aquaculturists and small scale fisherfolk that use mobile fishing gears. Percentages of NFA are here summarized:

- In Trung Chanh village, 10% of fisherfolk are not members and the majority of them are Lagoon Fisherfolks.
- In Mieu Nha 20% NFA. Many of them are small scale fisherfolk.

### 3.4.3 Hai Duong

**Table 5. Finding details of Hai Duong Commune**

<b>Group Names</b>	<b>Number of NFAs</b>
<b>Thai Duong Ha Nam</b>	<b>12</b>
- Lagoon fisherfolk	10
- Aquaculturists <sup>4</sup>	2
<b>Thuong Tay Village</b>	<b>45</b>
- Lagoon fisherfolk (mainly mobile fishing)	15
- Aquaculturists	0
- Sampan (officially reported)	30
<b>Total NFA</b>	<b>57</b>
<b>Fisherfolk coming from other villages</b>	<b>unknown</b>
- Mobile fishing gears	30%
- Fix fishing gears	70%

Hai Duong has a population of 8,199 people, mostly employed in fisheries only. From the IMOLA project Progress Report completed in 2007 farmers practicing aquaculture accounted for 27% of the whole population. People involved in capture fisheries (in the lagoon and in the sea) were mainly

<sup>4</sup> This data comes from the Head of the aquaculture FA and refers to have refused 2 HHs that wanted to join the FA because the aquaculture FA covers three villages but is concentrated only in one village. He reported to have refused fisherfolk coming from the other two villages to join the FA in order to avoid conflicts. Those people that have been refused practice fish cage but there are others practicing bottom net and lift net. As they are far from the village where the Aquaculture FA is based, they reported difficulties in managing those people.

from the villages of Thai Duong Ha Nam, Thai Duong Thuong Tay, Vinh Tri and Thai Duong Ha Trung while in Thai Duong Ha Bac village people were mainly involved in marine capture fisheries. Households involving in agriculture accounted for 16% of the whole population (Hai Duong, 2007).

### **Constraints and limitations**

The team encountered difficulties in trying to get a clear idea of the current situation as accessibility of information and timeframe was not exhaustive. Visits to the villages were organized during the first day of interviews. The number of people interviewed did not provide a good representation and a clear collection of information and data was limited.

For these reasons, it has not been possible to classify the people's perspectives into categories but only descriptive data reported in the following paragraph.

### **Overview of unrepresented population in Hai Duong Commune**

FAs are relatively new in Hai Duong and they cover capture fishing and aquaculture. CPC reported 196 members in 3 FAs with the 90% of total membership in commune. The majority of fisherfolk not involved in the FAs in Hai Doung come from other communes.

A small percentage of NFA practicing mobile fishing activities come from Thuong Tay Village while a consistent number of Sampan (resettled and not) living in this area did not join FAs. Small number of people practicing mobile fishing activities showed low awareness and knowledge of FA functioning being almost all of them elderly people that thought that joining FA would be useless for them.

Resettled Sampan people from the village were interviewed. They confirmed to have been never approached by FA or CPC members to join FAs. They confirmed that the majority of Sampan people in the village have been never approached and that there is a quite consistent number of them still living on boats. They represent the most marginalized portion of population as they are still excluded from any village initiative. They showed their interest in knowing more about FA as they would like to develop their skills in other to achieve alternative livelihoods.

### **Overview on underrepresented population within FAs in Hai Duong Commune**

It has been reported by CPC and FA members that a percentage of people going from 20 to 30% is not active and that a small percentage of 2% expressed their desire to withdraw from membership. However these data have not been confirmed with evidence and the limitation that the team encountered in the discussion time, couldn't develop a good baseline data that confirms this percentage. It is recommended a second field discussion especially with CPC and heads of the villages within the communes.

### 3.4.4 Loc Tri

Table 6. Finding details of Loc tri Commune

Group Names	Number of NFAs
<b>Dong Hai Village</b>	<b>0</b>
- Lagoon fisherfolk	0
- Aquaculturists	0
<b>Le Thai Thien Village</b>	<b>100</b>
- Lagoon fisherfolk	20
- Aquaculturists	80
<b>Total NFA</b>	<b>100</b>
<b>(Sampan)</b>	<b>20-80</b>

#### Difficulties and Limitations

The team encountered difficulties in trying to get a clear idea of the current situation as accessibility of information and timeframe was not exhaustive. Village visits to interview lagoon and aquaculture NFA were not carried out as EB members were busy with other activities. Interviewees did not show a good representation and this limited a clear collection of information and data.

#### Overview of unrepresented population in Loc Tri Commune

In Loc Tri commune, the Le Thai Thien FA was established officially on 21 September 2009 as a result of separation of the Loc Tri Lagoon FA (established on 7 August 2007) into two. One of which was Le Thai Thien FA, and the other was Dong Hai FA. As showed in Table 6, the majority of fisherfolk not involved with FAs are located in Le Thai Tien Village and almost all of them are aquaculturists. Some of them live in isolated area, never approached by FA or CPC members.

As for Hai Duong Commune, also Loc Tri FAs reported that there is a number of fisherfolk coming from other communes like Vinh Hien, Loc Dien and Phu Loc Town. They mainly use mobile fishing gears and people from Loc Tri have never had contacts with those people.

Field visit to Don Hai confirmed that all fisherfolk in the village are FA members.

## 4. Analysis of the visited communes

The following analysis will describe the information found in details. For each commune an overview on unrepresented people specified within FA will be summarised following these categories: Awareness about FA functioning, Willingness of NFAs to join FA, Feasibility of NFAs to join FA. It will try to give a picture of major constraints and most disadvantaged targeted people within the communes. A second section for each commune will report on the perception of interviewees on fishing rights allocation and existing conflicts among people.

As only in Vinh Hien and Loc Tri communes an existing percentage of not-active FA members (underrepresented population) have been reported, this aspect will be described only for these two communes. Data comes from different sources that were checked during the interviews and it must be considered as unofficial information provided by different people. It is reported as an attempt to provide a general picture of people's perspectives perceived in a relatively short period of time and conditioned by external bias.

### 4.1 Vinh Hien Comune

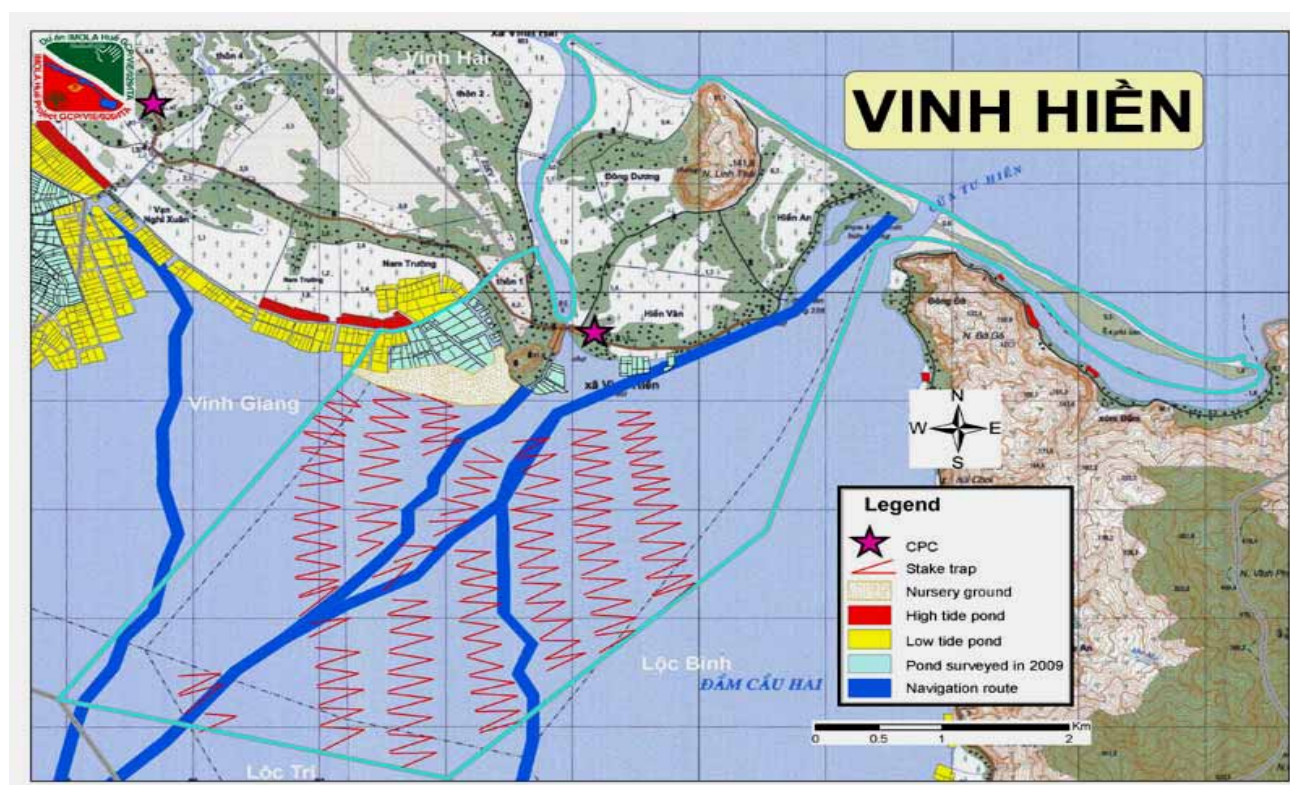


Figure 3. Map of Vinh Hien Commune, Tam Giang - Cau Hai Lagoon. Source: IMOLA Project

Vinh Hien is a coastal commune located at the south end of the sand stripe near the lagoon.

#### 4.1.1 Awareness about FA functioning

All NFAs interviewed were totally unaware or only partially informed about the existence of FAs. Their perspective about FAs can be described through the followings:

- Interviewees had no knowledge about any existing regulations about lagoon management and preservation.
- They were overwhelmed by the functioning of FAs (the majority of them thought that only aquaculturists can join FA)<sup>5</sup> and lacked awareness on co-management procedures.
- 90% of HHs interviewed although members of other associations such as WU and Farmers Union do not join FAs. This shows that although these people are “potential” members and understand the benefits of association, they are halted by the lack of information.



Figure 4. Women’s group discussion during interviews in Vinh Hien commune

#### 4.1.2 Awareness of NFAs to join FA

All people interviewed were un-aware or only partially informed about the existence of FAs. Their perspective about FAs can be described through the following points:

1. Interviewees had poor knowledge about existing regulations on the lagoon management and preservation;
2. they were overwhelmed by the functioning of FAs (the majority of them thought that only aquaculture fishermen can join FA) and they showed poor awareness of co-management procedures;
3. 90% of HHs interviewed although members of other associations such as WU and Farmers Union do not join FAs. This shows that although these people are “potential” members and understand the benefits of association, they are halted by the lack of information.

#### 4.1.3 Willingness of NFAs to join FA

All interviewees showed willingness to spend time knowing more about FAs; the majority of them do not expect money/loans from FAs but they expect to receive training and to be involved in meetings; some of them expect training on how to preserve the environment of the lagoon; a small portion expects immediate practical results and/or financial support; the majority of interviewees are convinced that joining the FAs is a chance to improve production.

<sup>5</sup> It shows that Aquaculture FA is better known among villagers.

#### 4.1.4 Feasibility of NFAs to join FA

Although the majority interviewees live in poverty conditions with low or no education, no one declared not to be able to pay monthly fee to join the FAs; although willing to pay the monthly fee to participate in FA activities, some of these people live in poverty conditions in remote areas and often do not own either a house or a boat thus making it difficult to persuade them to invest their time in FA activities; some of them receive a poverty card when: they have extremely low income, are over 60 years old or have physical problems. These people seem marginalized and not able to support the livelihoods of their families.



Figure 5. Sampan houses in Vinh Hien commune

#### 4.1.5 Sampan dwellers

This minority needs special attention as they seemed to be the most disadvantaged and excluded portion of the population within the commune. There is very little information on their living conditions, habits and whereabouts. Families are large and live in small boats, sometimes in remote areas. The majority of them are known to perform small scale mobile fishing activities with low income and their productivity often depends on the weather conditions. Nevertheless, also the Sampan people are interested in knowing more about the functioning and the activities of FAs not ever having been properly informed.

#### 4.1.6 Marine fisherfolk

Reports show that almost one third of people involved in fisheries activities are marine fisherfolk. Being their income very low, the majority of them carry out marine capture as well as aquaculture and capture fisheries in the lagoon. None of them are FA members and remain isolated, having never been approached by CPC and/or FAs partly because of the uncertainty of their location. The WU reported to have tried to approach women that carry out marine fishing but because of their isolation this has not been possible. The majority of these people are also involved in other jobs (agriculture and other small businesses) and do not have time or possibility to join and understand FA activities.

#### 4.1.7 Communication and flows of information among people

FA members reported that the majority of fisherfolk currently not involved in FAs were informed by EB and CPC about FA existence/activities and that they were aware about fishing rights allocation

and possible consequences of their exclusion from water surface. On the contrary, CPC members stated that NFAs at village level were not mobilized and/or involved as they still have not been approached. The CPC perceives that even if those people were informed of the existence of FAs they would not be aware of their functioning.

#### **4.1.8 Awareness about fishing rights allocation**

Both the CPC and the FAs in Vinh Hien seem to be aware about the fishing rights allocation and its impacts on lagoon population. From various people interviewed, it is quite common the unawareness about the new fishing rights allocation regulations. Many people confirmed that they just heard about that while others are not informed at all. Given the fact that the lagoon surface belongs to the commune and considering that the number of people that use fishing gears is high, it is possible that the people that will not join the FA will eventually be excluded from the allocation of fishing rights. CPC will bear the responsibility of the people that will remain excluded after fishing rights allocation and will maintain a limited free area for them to continue fishing to sustain them.

#### **4.1.9 Reasons for inactiveness in undertaking FA activities**

Although both CPC and FA members have a clear idea of positive and negative impacts coming from the fishing rights allocation, they do not seem to take responsibility or action in order to inform and mobilize people. The reasons for this are the following:

1. CPC recognizes the importance to intervene but they believe that EB and/or FA members must be responsible as they have a deeper knowledge of the villages. On the other hand FAs think the opposite.
2. FAs declare to be too busy with both fisheries activities to find time to go around and mobilize people.
3. EB has low motivation and no incentives and considers raising awareness as an “extra job”.

#### **4.1.10 Existing conflicts between FA and NFAs**

There are no signs of severe conflicts within the commune except for the use and unconditional spread of the so called “*lu* practice”<sup>6</sup>. This is considered to be very disruptive but the CPC cannot ban it as the government has not declared it an illegal activity. To date, there are 900 *lu* traps in Vinh Hien, also placed in stake traps areas, causing various problems among the fisherfolk. Although both FA and NFA practice *lu*, some fisherfolk use it as their only fishing method.

FA members do not have interest in stop *lu* because:

- 1) there is no law to ban it;
- 2) other people practice it; and
- 3) there are family needs (low income).

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<sup>6</sup> Lu is a very common Chinese fishing practice disseminated among fishermen and considered as a “fast food fisheries activities” without selection, as it has no labour costs and it can catch lot of different fishes, also very small, modifying the lagoon ecosystem.

Currently there are around 140 stake traps in Vinh Hien water and the government has foreseen a 50% reduction within 2009. This means that a consistent portion of fisherfolk HHs should receive compensation for their losses and as a mean to find alternative income. This will cause difficulties to the implementation of the co-management activities and those fisherfolk who still will not have joined the FA will encounter further constrains to continue practicing their fisheries activities.

## 4.2 Loc Dien Commune

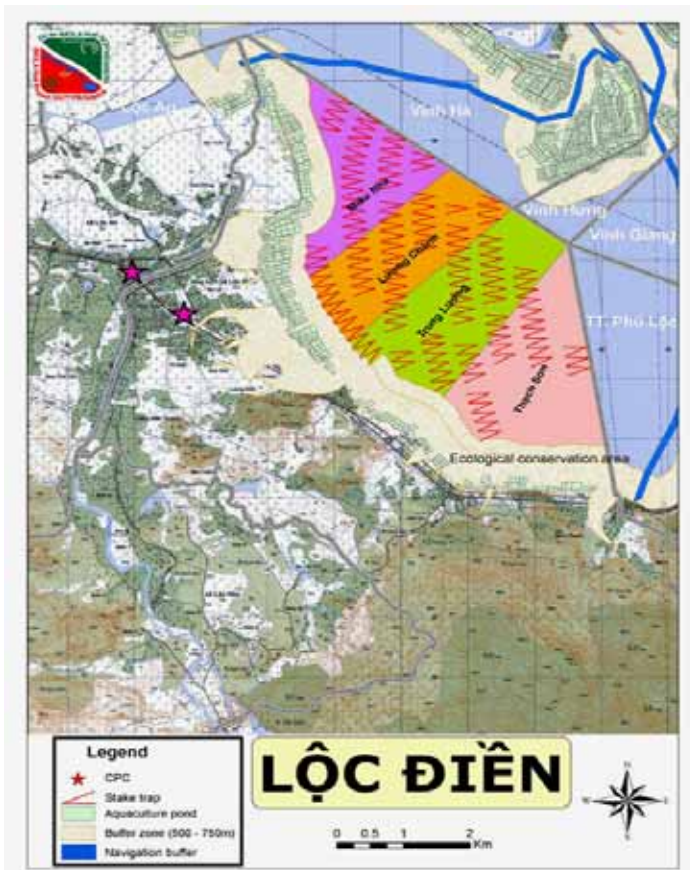


Figure 6. Map of Loc Dien Commune, Tam Giang - Cau Hai Lagoon.

Loc Dien is the biggest commune in Phu Loc district with a total area of 115.6 square km. The communal population occupies 3,263 households with 16,389 people and is divided into different villages. Loc Dien occupies a key strategic position in politics, economics and national security in the area and has its assets on forestry, lagoon, land and labour force. Local people mainly earn their living with agricultural, fisheries and forestry practices (Bui Duc Be; Ha Thi Xuan Tan; Nguyen Thi Kim Loan, Tran Chau Cam Anh, 2007). The majority of people practice small scale capture fisheries, other aquaculture and others combine agriculture and aquaculture activities. Being the commune's economy relatively diversified it is not easy to draft a clear picture of the situation. The commune needs a second assessment as a follow up of the findings reported with this first study session. In Loc Dien commune there are four FAs.

### 4.2.1 Trung Chanh village

#### Awareness about FA functioning

The majority of NFAs interviewed heard about FA. However, the main reason why they did not join the FA is because they have not be informed properly about FA functioning. Although EB has approached them, they believed there was no benefit in joining FAs, meaning there is a confused perception of benefit and impacts; some of them consider that part of the FA and EB members are not aware about FA functioning hence they do not trust those people and decided not to follow their instructions. They also believe they were not well informed about FAs as they realized to have an unclear idea about their functioning (the majority of them thought that only aquaculturists could join FA); some of the people did not receive information at all and being small scale fisherfolk they feel excluded from the society. Some people reported that they had not become FA members as they got information of very expensive fee; interviewees had no knowledge about fishing rights allocation or other regulations but they heard about stake trap reallocation. Non FA members usually get info only

during village meetings; as in Vinh Hien, also in Loc Dien people join the WU and they feel aware about WU activities

### **Willingness of NFAs to join FA**

Interviewees reported to be willing to participate to FA meetings in order to receive information and clarifications about its functioning and be free to decide to join or not; they do not have perception of the benefits for an FA member. Some of them expect to receive more information, some trainings or knowledge, others loans.

Some of people express the desire to receive technical assistance in order to be able to develop alternative livelihoods as they consider themselves to be very poor and socially excluded; some of them were former FA members and they are not willing to participate again as they did not see any benefit.

### **Feasibility of NFAs to join FA**

All the interviewed can afford to pay the monthly fee; lack of information makes people in this village difficult to be persuaded to join FAs.

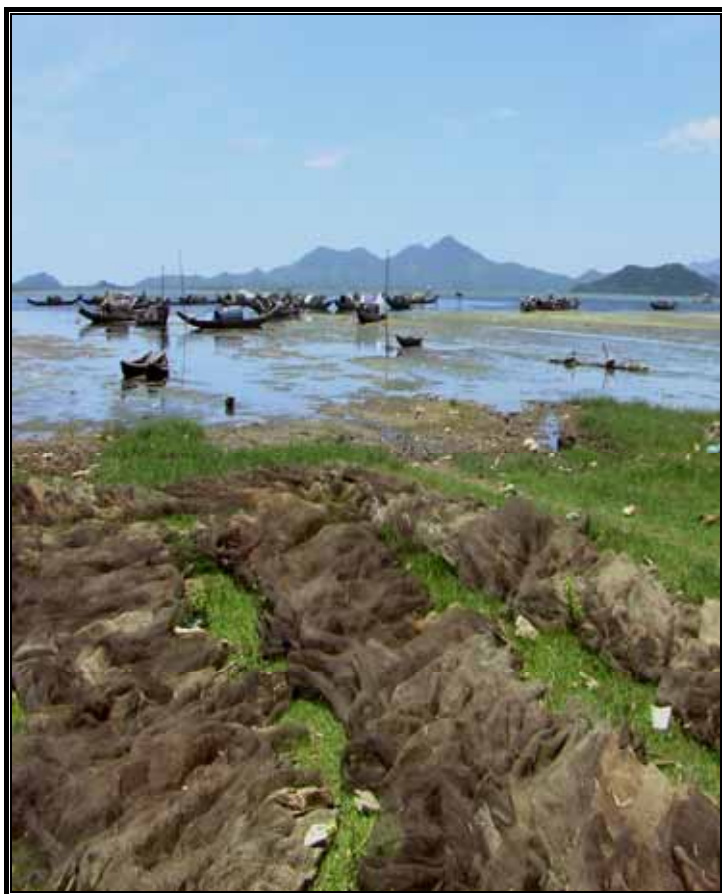


Figure 7. Fishing nets drying near the lagoon in Mieu Nha village, Loc Dien commune

#### **4.2.2 Mieu Nha village**

##### **Awareness about FA functioning**

All the people interviewed in this village were small scale capture fisherfolk. Some of them heard about FA but none of them knows what an FA is. They reported to have never been approached or invited to join meetings. Especially old people are confused whether to join FA or not as they have no information about it; they have never heard of fishing rights allocations and they do not understand regulations existing in the lagoon. They also believe that only FA members are informed about regulation within the lagoon. They think of not been informed of FAs as they are small scale fisherfolk and do not have the right to participate in the FAs.

### **Willingness of NFAs to join FA**

All of them showed willingness to spend their time in knowing more about FA but they feel to not have access to the information; they do not have perception of the benefits for an FA member. Some

of them expects to receive more information, some trainings or knowledge, others loans. Old people are not willing to participate as they think there is no utility for them to become members as they are quite old; others reported to be very busy to find time to join meetings and activities.

### **Feasibility of NFAs to join FA**

All the interviewed can afford to pay the monthly fee; lack of information makes people in this village difficult to be persuaded to join FAs.

### **4.2.3 Sampan dwellers**

There are around 50 HHs in the commune but the majority of Sampan dwellers of the commune live in Mieu Nha village and some of them have been resettled. They received support from the government but in many cases do not have enough resources to provide for their basic needs. The majority of them are NFA as it seems that they have never been approached. Some of them practice illegal fishing activities but methods are not reported.



**Figure 8. Lagoon fishermen NFAs from a focus group in Loc Dien commune**

### **4.2.4 Communication and flows of information among people**

Members from FAs reported that the majority of fisherfolk currently not involved in FAs were informed by EB members and CPC about FA existence/activities and that they were aware about fishing rights allocation and possible consequences of their exclusion from membership. The majority of interviewees reported the opposite perception.

CPC members stated instead, that NFAs at village level were not mobilized and/or involved for three main reasons:

1. FAs are a quite new system within the commune.
2. CPC wants to have a clear regulation to show and present to people.
3. CPC reported that people engaging in double jobs as aquaculture and agriculture have been not approached yet.

#### **4.2.5 Awareness about Fishing Rights Allocation**

Both CPC and FA in Loc Dien did not seem to be aware about fishing rights allocation and its impacts on lagoon population. CPC reported also that the “demarcation of the area” will be the major issue once fishing rights will be allocated. Some consider that there will be no difficulties in mobilizing people and ensure equal rights in distribution if the fishing rights will be not allocated.

#### **4.2.6 Perception about conflicts after Fishing Rights will be allocated**

CPC, FA and NFAs do not have a clear perception about Fishing Rights allocation and positive/negative impacts among the population.

#### **4.2.7 Existing conflicts between FA and NFA**

Major conflicts arise from neighbouring communes that enter communal waters to practice illegal fishing. The majority of these people are land based people not experienced in fishing and unaware of the effects of their practices on the sustainability of the lagoon. It is not clear where do they come from. FA and NFA practice *lu* and it is not considered as a disruptive fishing practice. They would prefer to have it regularized in order to have control over it without actually stopping it.

### 4.3 Hai Duong Commune

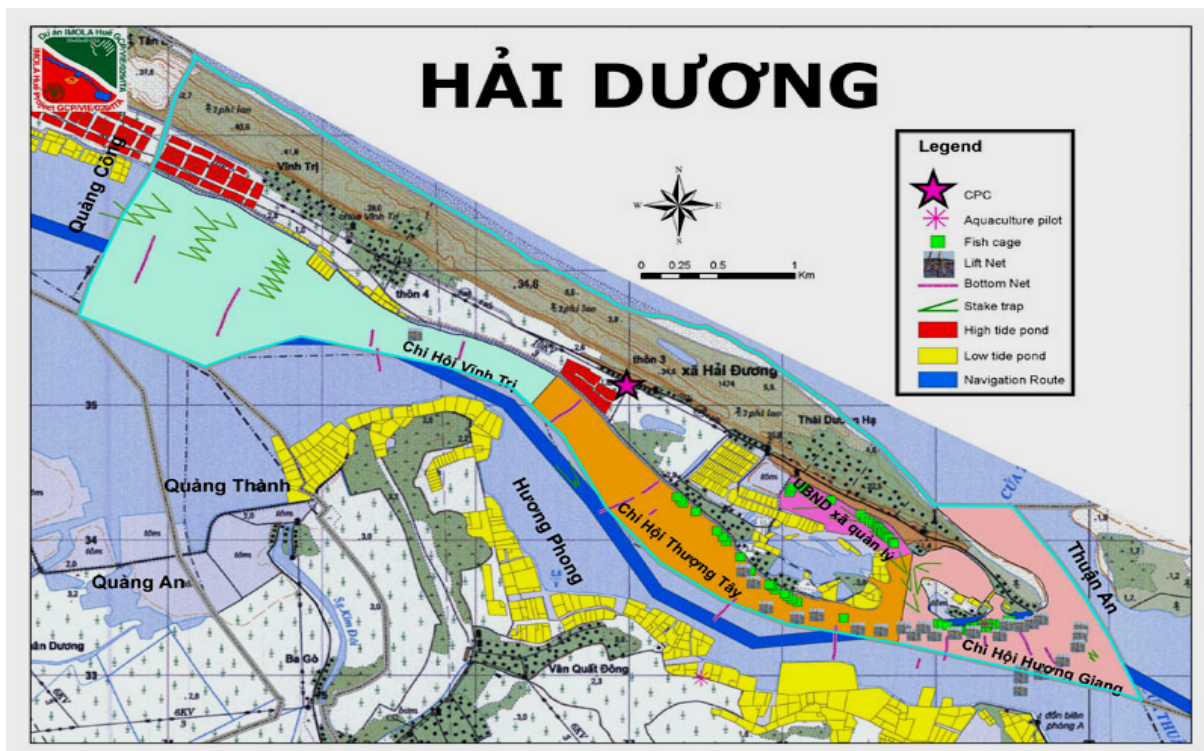


Figure 9. Map of Hai Duong Commune, Tam Giang - Cau Hai Lagoon (Source: IMOLA Project)

Hai Duong commune has favourable conditions for fisheries development, especially capture fisheries and aquaculture. These conditions brought the commune to stand as an example for the development of fisheries professional groups (capture fisheries in the lagoon and in the sea) which are regarded as key mean of employment for the whole commune. Moreover, there are still some groups engaged in agriculture although this is regarded as secondary profession for extra food supply in fisheries households and not for economic gain (Hai Duong Commune, 2007). Fisheries practices carry out in the commune are: *lu*, set lift net, bottom net, gill net, and marine fishing activities.

FAs explained their idea to involve in the FAs all the people practicing fixed fishing activities coming from other communes. They are not willing to involve people practicing mobile fishing activities because:

- FA members have no idea of their location and they feel it will be difficult to monitor them;
- until regulation within the lagoon will not be better defined, they think those people will cause conflicts among FA members as they are not aware about roles and demarcation areas; and
- consistent number of fisherfolk comes to Hai Duong to practice banned fishing activities like electric fishing.

A big number of fisherfolk practice marine fishing. In 2005 the commune started a project with the aim to involve them in joint activities but the lack of resources forced them to close the project. This population is very active within the commune and both CPC and FA are would like to develop new strategies in order to create a marine FA.

### 4.3.1 Communication and flows of information among people

Communication among FA and CPC seemed to be strong and well coordinated. Both showed to be aware about problems within the commune and about the importance of involving people in FAs. The study showed a strong communication among WU and CPC. The interviews took place at the same time as they wanted to share views and perspectives. They would like to share communication strategies and they have started to join activities in order to disseminate information about FA initiatives.



Figure 10. Fishing traps in Hai Duong commune

### 4.3.2 Awareness about Fishing Rights Allocation

Fisherfolk coming from other communes shall be involved as it would be important to have them under the co-management activities. However, people interviewed feel that until fishing rights will be not allocated they will face difficulties in approaching those people with a lack of legal bases. In fact, they believe that once fishing rights allocation will take place they will have a legislative basis to establish a proper regulation.

### 4.3.3 Existing conflicts and perception about conflicts after Fishing Rights will be allocated

Conflicts between FA members and fisherfolk coming from outside are frequent especially because these people (1) use banned practices as electric fishing and (2) are not aware about demarcation of fishing areas. People interviewed believe that activities will become straightforward and conflicts between insiders and outsiders will disappear once guidelines will be in place.

## 4.4 Loc Tri Commune

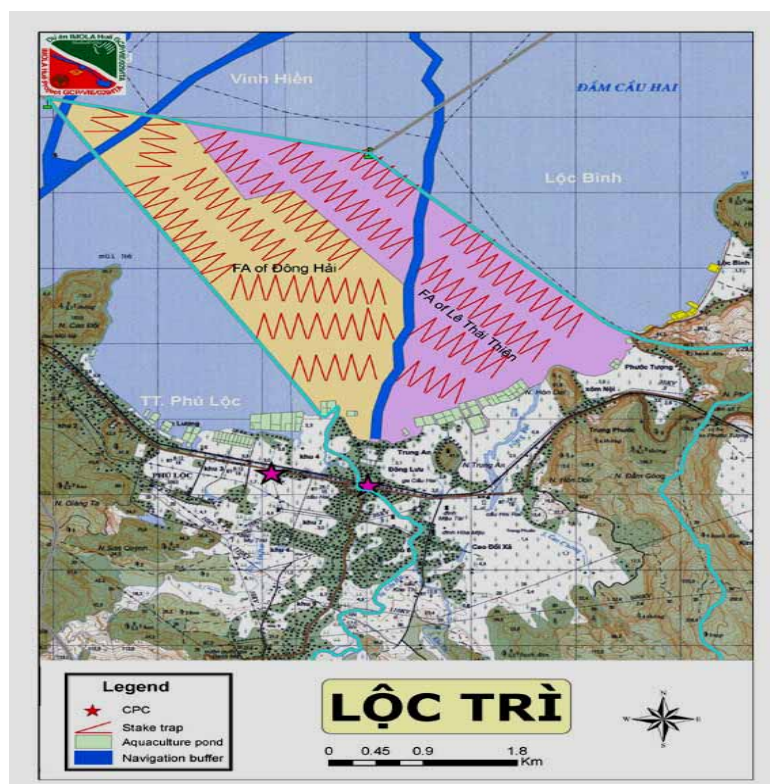


Figure 11. Map of Loc Tri Commune, Tam Giang - Cau Hai Lagoon (Source: IMOLA Project)

Loc Tri is a commune located to the southern part of Phu Loc District. Loc Tri is a commune diversified in livelihood activities with nine villages and the number of households not equally distributed between each village; the most densely populated village being Dong Luu with 401 households accounting for 24% of the commune's households, the least populated village being Khe Su with 51 households accounting for 3.1% (Loc Tri Commune, 2007).

Villages show diversified economic activities: two pure fisheries villages (Dong Hai and Le Thai Thien), six pure agriculture villages and one agro-fisheries village. Fisheries activities consist of marine capture, lagoon capture and aquaculture.

### 4.4.1 Awareness about FA functioning

NFA interviewed reported that not only them, but also a consistent percentage of people within the commune (20%) were totally not informed about FA existence. All of them are small scale mobile fisherfolk or part time fisherfolk and they think to have no rights to join FAs; a new EB member reported that he thinks there is a small percentage of people that carry out both fishing and agriculture activities that have been not registered as NFA as they fish only in specific periods of the year; aquaculturists interviewed showed their disappointment in not getting informed about FA. Their location is quite isolated and not directly on the lagoon as they carry out domestic aquaculture.

### 4.4.2 Willingness of NFAs to join FA

People interviewed showed willingness to spend their time in knowing more about FA; people practicing part-time fishing activities believe it is important for them to join FA.

### 4.4.3 Feasibility of NFAs to join FA

Although the majority of interviewees reported that the village is quite poor, they would be able to pay monthly fee to join FA.

#### 4.4.4 Sampan dwellers

Around 100 Sampan live in Loc Tri commune and among them, 20 HHs have been resettled in the 2 villages. 80 HHs have not been resettled yet and do not know how many people are not members.



Figure 12. Poor marine fishermen household in Loc Tri commune

#### 4.4.5 Marine fisherfolk

It has been reported that a big number of people that carry out fisheries activities are marine fisherfolk. Marine capture is practiced by 70 HHs, out of which 67 live in Dong Hai village, counting for a 34.9% of the village HHs. In addition to local sea capture, combined lagoon capture during time free from marine capture, this activity expands as far as the coastal areas of Quang Ninh and Hai Phong (42 HHs) (Loc Tri Commune, 2007). The majority of them carry out marine activities on a full time basis and it has been reported that their income is very low. All of them are NFA and they remain isolated.

#### 4.4.6 Communication and flows of information among people

EB member from Aquaculture FA reported that more than 50% of fisherfolk are NFA. EB also published a leaflet in order to disseminate information about FA.

#### 4.4.7 Awareness about Fishing Rights Allocation

NFA interviewed are not aware about fishing rights allocation or any other regulations within the lagoon. Both CPC and FA in Vinh Hien seemed to be aware about fishing rights allocation and their impacts on the lagoon population. CPC will bear the responsibility of the people that will remain excluded after fishing rights allocation and will maintain a limited free area for them to continue fishing for their livelihoods.

#### 4.4.8 Existing conflicts and perception about conflicts after Fishing Rights will be allocated

No conflicts have been reported by FAs and CPC members. Nevertheless, in order to avoid treats it is important to mobilize and raise awareness among people, especially those coming from outside, as the most isolated and Sampan dwellers. It is interesting to mention the case of the Head of WU in Loc Tri. The lady organized interviews collecting NFA from different villages and she gave hospitality in her house. She seemed to be well known among people and she showed not only

strong commitment in her job, but also profound understanding of FA and IMOLA functioning<sup>5</sup>.  
Conclusions

The study developed under the IMOLA Project had the specific objective of locating the areas within the communes where the majority of people were not involved in FAs and to provide information on which these people are.

The general objective of the study was to understand the incidence of the impact that this portion of people have to the co-management activities carry out by IMOLA. Despite the measures taken to create and strengthen FAs, there is still an estimated 20% of the lagoon population that does not participate in FA activities. These people, who count disadvantaged groups, are either underrepresented or unrepresented and often excluded from existing FAs structure.

The four communes visited appeared to be very different between each other, with specific characteristics in terms of fisheries activities and social environments. Most disadvantaged people are among isolated or socially excluded and, in general those people are excluded from information channels accessibility.

Although a consistent portion of them has been resettled, Sampan culture need to be better explored and understood in the contest of the whole lagoon community. From an anthropological point of view, very little knowledge we have of those people who's can be better analysed promoting the study of their culture and their difference with other communities in the lagoon.

In some interviews Sampan people talked about their life as a different one if compared to the people living on land. They recognize to have different knowledge of the lagoon and to have developed a special relation with the water. Some described it by telling stories of years spent on the boat, sometimes within numerous families. This lifestyle seemed to give them a stronger attitude to struggle for a living especially now that they have a land with more space to stay. Although resettled people showed a recognized improvement of their standard living condition, in Hai Duong Commune for instance, Sampan people interviewed reported their limits and needs in struggling with their new life.

Studying and analysing these people's culture can give a value added for a more comprehensive picture of the lagoon population. This need is very much constrained by the time as, most probably, in few years the old generation of this group will disappear and, with them, an interesting part of the historical memories.

The number of Marine fisherfolk in Hai Duong and Vinh Hien Communes is around one third of the population. These people are often forced to practice both lagoon and marine activities as their income is very low. They remain still isolated and no specific information is available on them at the moment.

The study showed that CPC and FAs are often the first limitation against an effective communication within the villages, mostly because they lack awareness about fisheries regulation or reality in the communes. The result is a consistent percentage of people (around 20-30%) that is a member but either underrepresented or not active. These people are part of FAs but do not participate to activities, and are a possible deterrent for other members or NFA that can take them as an example.

The sometimes inexistent and generally unclear idea of what an FA is and of how it functions is a consequence of the fact that the major constraints to people for not joining FAs lie in the lack of

awareness, caused by people not being reached by information. The reasons why those people remain outside of the information is not totally cleared. The field work did not allow the team to clearly understand which are the constraints and the condition of targeted people. From the interviews, the majority of the people not aware about the existence of FAs seemed to be located in isolated places. Often outside the village, some of the people interviewed seemed to be poorer than the others, with very basic living conditions. Sampan dwellers, for instance, seemed to be the most disadvantaged in terms of information accessibility due to the fact that they are located on the water surface, often with very little interaction with other people. Some of them have been relocated on land but, although the team had the chance to meet with some of them and information have been collected; time constraints do not allow this paper to identify specific weaknesses in the target population and therefore make assumption of major problems/needs among the fisherfolk community.

Identifying potential activities that women can implement in order to empower FA development in the area of the lagoon was one of the main reasons why the Women's Union was approached by the study. Women play a key role in the daily activities not only participating in fisheries but also dealing with family livelihood and sometimes engaging in other businesses (little markets, shops, coffee shops).

Loc Dien and Loc Tri have active and committed groups of women working with fisherfolk during the implementation of FA activities. They reported to attend monthly FA meetings to refer activities to the WU with the aim of raising awareness and disseminating information among the WU members in the commune.

The study showed that one source of confusion among fisherfolk and people interviewed in general was the lack of clear guidelines on fishing rights allocation from the government. It has been not very easy to understand whether there is an upcoming regulation or official communication on how and when the fishing rights allocation will start. Modalities of how the allocation will be organized is not clear as it is not even clear for some people interviewed from CPC and / EB which positive / negative impacts it will bring into the current living. The lack of awareness and the confusing idea of fishing rights allocation's functioning may represent an important limit to the persuasive dissemination and promotion of FA among the fisherfolk. Nevertheless, as the dissemination of information will be thought and organized by EB together with CPC at commune level, it is extremely vital that they have an exhaustive knowledge of the above.

Raise their knowledge on the above mentioned in order for them to be able to disseminate correct information among villages. An informal informative session can be organised for them before other events are organised at village level.

Making people aware about benefits and/or positive impacts of FA activities is a process that should involve different factors, like their social environment and, their interaction with other villagers. The study showed that a number of interviewers answered to be willing to become FA members if other villagers would have started to join FA activities as an "assurance" of the FA functioning.

In order to have a contrast with NFA who have not been informed of the existence of the FA, it would be interesting to know how current FA members got to know the FA and this can be a challenge that in the future may be wanted to understood.

Key findings<sup>7</sup> can be recapitulated in Table 7, which shows findings summarized in major constraints stressed out for each communes compared to the most common fishing activities carried out.

**Table 7. Summary of findings divided into communes**

<b>Commune</b>	<b>Villages with % of NFA</b>	<b>Highest % per activities</b>	<b>Major constraints</b>
<b>Vinh Hien</b>	Hien Hoa 2	Lagoon fisherfolk (mobile gears)	Low awareness / Lack of feasibility
<b>Loc Dien</b>	Trung Chanh / Mieu Nha	Lagoon fisherfolk (small scale mobile gears)	Low awareness
<b>Hai Duong</b>	Thuong Tay	Sampan dwellers / outsiders (fix & mobile gears)	Low awareness
<b>Loc Tri</b>	Le Thai Thien	Aquaculturists	Low awareness / lack of willingness

The following table shows a SWOT analysis that identifies the internal and external factors that are supportive or opposed to the achievement of the objective of the study. Findings are summarized for each commune.

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<sup>7</sup> Data comes from different sources that were checked during the interviews. It must be considered as unofficial. They are reported as an attempt to provide a general picture of people's perspectives perceived it in a relatively short period of time and conditioned by external bias.

**Table 8. Result of the SWOT analysis**

<b>Commune</b>	<b>Strengths</b>	<b>Weaknesses</b>	<b>Opportunities</b>	<b>Threats</b>
<b>Vinh Hien</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- High understanding of commune's reality;</li> <li>- Good understanding of fishing rights allocation's impacts</li> <li>- People consider the importance of IMOLA fieldwork as important is easing relationship within the commune;</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Low awareness of regulation;</li> <li>- Low communication strategy;</li> <li>- Low resources both human and financial;</li> <li>- High % of non active FA member;</li> <li>- FA and NFA are violators practicing disruptive fishing activities</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Willingness of NFA to participate in FA activities;</li> <li>- NFA are localized;</li> <li>- Use of communication tools to inform people;</li> <li>- Expectation from NFA to receive information and training by becoming FA member</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Low people awareness;</li> <li>- Poverty condition/isolation;</li> <li>- Most vulnerable people excluded from communication channels' accessibility;</li> <li>- <i>lu</i> seen as potential conflict among people.</li> <li>- Difficulties to stop people use disruptive fishing activities</li> </ul>
<b>Loc Dien</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Good understanding of commune's reality from WU and FA;</li> <li>- FA active and well structured;</li> <li>- WU are experienced and knowledgeable of fishing communities;</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- CPC's low awareness about co-management priorities;</li> <li>- Low initiatives at CPC level;</li> <li>- Low info sharing between CPC and FA;</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Willingness of NFA to participate in FA activities;</li> <li>- WU very active within the commune to use as source of communication channel;</li> <li>- High % of Sampan resettled.</li> <li>- Use of communication tools to inform people</li> <li>- Expectation from NFA to receive information and training by becoming FA</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Low people awareness;</li> <li>- Low interest in involving NFA</li> <li>- Poor communication among CPC, FA and WU</li> <li>- Most vulnerable people are excluded from comm. channels' access;</li> <li>- High poverty condition/ isolation;</li> <li>- Increase sense of make justice by themselves due to lack of institutional enforcement</li> </ul>
<b>Hai Duong</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- High awareness about regulation within the lagoon;</li> <li>- Commitment of CPC, WU, FA;</li> <li>- Good communication among FAs;</li> <li>- Good understanding of fishing rights allocation's impacts;</li> <li>- Reported high % of FA active members;</li> <li>- People consider the importance of IMOLA fieldwork as important is easing relationship within the commune;</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- FA's low awareness about co-management priorities;</li> <li>- Low communication among FA and WU</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Good communication and info sharing among CPC, WU, FA;</li> <li>- Willingness/feasibility of NFA to participate in FA activities;</li> <li>- High % of Sampan resettled.</li> <li>- Use of communication tools to inform people</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Low people awareness;</li> <li>- Most NFA are delocalised;</li> <li>- Most of them use mobile fishing ;</li> <li>- Low interest in joining FA;</li> <li>- Illegal fishing rights used by outsiders;</li> <li>- Disruptive fishing activities might be potential conflicts;</li> <li>- Increase sense of make justice by themselves due to lack of institutional enforcement</li> </ul>
<b>Loc Tri</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Commitment &amp; good common strategies;</li> <li>- Good initiatives undertaken;</li> <li>- Good understanding of communes' reality;</li> <li>- People consider IMOLA's fieldwork as important is easing relationship within the commune;</li> <li>- CPC,FA,WU experienced and Knowledgeable of fishing communities.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Poor assessment about NFAs;</li> <li>- Low awareness about regulation within the lagoon;</li> <li>- Low communication among FA, CPC</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- WU active to use as source of communication channel;</li> <li>- Willingness/feasibility of NFA to participate in FA activities;</li> <li>- Awareness on communication's strategies;</li> <li>- Existing info sharing among people.</li> <li>- Use of communication tools.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Low people awareness;</li> <li>- Disruptive fishing activities might be potential conflicts;</li> <li>- Certain isolated people remain excluded (especially aquaculturists)</li> </ul>

## 6. Recommendations

### 1. Strengthen communication and information sharing through community mobilization and awareness raising activities/actions. Specifically through the following:

**a) Develop a dissemination action plan per each FA** to address specific issues related to ensuring that dissemination efforts produce utilization and generate inclusive information. The strategy should also be exhaustive enough to frame certain requirements for implementation, taking into account timeframe and resources' availability. The action plan may be discussed and developed together with FA and CPC people and implemented and monitored by them in order to share responsibilities. IMOLA could be supervisor of the activities assisting in the development of the plan.

After the Action Plan has been discussed, it should be translated by the members into concrete short/medium/long term action lines. Activities related to fisheries and trainings will be discussed in monthly meetings and included as well as operational activities like fund raising, needs assessment, administration, communication, marketing, etc. Although the idea to develop an action plan can be an opportunity to give people structured and defined guidelines forcing them to develop and practice regular action points, the risk to be used only as a place to discuss and share information should be taken into account. It must be understood that its intention is to plan and design instructions prioritising actions and put into practice what it is discussed.

**b) Organize informative workshops** to spread information within the village. If the number of people in the village is high it will be important to perform the workshop in the village. The presence of CPC, FA members, EB and heads of the villages during the workshop must be active as they will represent the voice of the community. The study showed that n/FA interviewees prefer to face problems directly with CPC or with heads of villages as their consideration among people, even among the most disadvantaged people, is very high. During workshops an FA registration desk shall be made available.

**c) Develop and distribute material** (i.e. leaflets) explaining FA functions (not only during the workshop). This tool has already been used by some FAs in the lagoon and it needs simple and immediate explanation of what is an FA and why it should be an advantage to join such organization. Following the same principle, it should be interesting to disseminate same information in relation to regulations within the lagoon. Leaflets should include pictures to facilitate illiterate users (the majority of the interviewees).

**e) Organise communal events**, as previously done, to get people to know about existence of FAs and their role. This can be traditional boat racing, sport events (football and volleyball), involving commune authority, FAs, and local populations (including non-members). It is an easy and effective way to attract people directly doing things rather than listening to others.

### 2. Reach and inform most disadvantaged people, through:

**a) Nominate a focal point meeting (e.g. OASIS)** in the village (it can be a shop, a café as e.g. a fisherfolk café), as a place to exchange information. A similar method named OASIS has already been experimented for aquaculture activities, in other projects in Vietnam. An OASIS is a "*business oriented point, run by a private HH or by an Aquaculture/Fisheries Association or Fishery Society. Income comes from commission on aquaculture/fisheries input sales and essential goods while providing extension material and other information to farmers*" (SUMA, 2006, p. 24). This

statement describes the OASIS as a “business oriented point” like a small shop that sells fisheries tools/materials. In other cases, and in this specific one in a second phase, the OASIS can be a shop, as stated above, where a space could be reserved for a library collection dedicated to practical and theoretical fisheries practices feed on a voluntary basis. For instance, to give a suggestion, in Hien Hoa 2 Village in Vinh Hien Commune, there is a café owned by a young active lady that may offer this opportunity. The café may become a place where activities, events, discussion meeting can be organized, with the aim to become a strategic place to advertise FA or where EB can published CPC’s announcements. IMOLA can provide small subsidies and/or visibility as an incentive for the café’s owner to give collaboration.

**b) Disseminate big banners** located in the main roads of the villages. The banners (or signs) should include written and pictorial sensitive information about FA activities in order for all people to be able to get informed. The visibility of the banners will pass information that will reach big numbers of people in an effective and costless manner.

**c) Nominate focal points** selected among non FA members to persuade others on knowing more about FA activities and eventually, become a member. The project could provide incentives to those people, (e.g. free fee for the first few months to become FA member) as they are actually doing extra job favourable to FA functioning. The study showed that during group discussion there often was a person with clear persuasive skills. Often it seemed that these people were both young active or quite old and experienced. Most of the old people interviewed as non FA members were informed about FA but convinced about the non-utility to become FA members because too old. Those people can be involved in persuasive actions may support FA activities as their credibility among villagers seemed to be very high. For similar reasons, very active young people showed good persuasive attitude although they have also big strong beliefs about FA activities as the majority of them where informed about FA functioning. Those people can be helpful in approaching young families and keep them informed.

**d) Assess and involve Marine Fisherfolk** as a big portion of them are also lagoon fisherfolk. This may prove useful to (1) develop a Marine FA; (2) incorporate them in a sub-group FA within the capture fishing FA, as previously done with domestic pond aquaculturists (fish cage) with the aquaculture FAs. Even if marine fisherfolk are not target community of IMOLA, an inclusion and a more careful understanding of the marine fisherfolk and of their knowledge of the lagoon may be useful to strengthen the integrated management of the natural resources. Needs and target assessments and comparisons between different groups could be organized in order to understand how they live and what their interconnection with other communities in the lagoon is.

### **3. Strengthen FA members’ function/position in order to raise awareness on FAs and institutionalize their status**

There is an institutional difference among WU and FAs as WU is so-called a “state-led” mass organization with financial backup from the government while FA is not. The issue of outreach should be discussed from this structural and institutional perspective. For state-led mass organizations like WU, there is some budget allocation from upper levels to the lower levels but this not seems to be the case for FAs.

### **4. Promote the role of VINAFIS and PFA in strengthening the status of local FAs**

Major issue institutionally is lack of finance for those FAs and this weak financial and organizational background of FAs are partly affecting the publicity of local FAs in communes and villages. Provide a small salary would compensate them for this activity and would motivate them to provide more

effective support in and outside FAs. In this sense, the role of government is vital in order to support local FAs as well as that of VINAFIS (national fisheries association) and PFA (provincial fisheries association). Mr. Takahashi, operations Coordinator of the IMOLA Project, reported in an interview given to the team in June 2009, that more important is trying to promote the roles of VINAFIS and PFA in promoting and strengthening local FAs, particularly financially, as they are umbrella organizations for local FAs.

#### **5. Consolidate FA and EB knowledge about (1) their roles/responsibilities, and (2) laws and regulations applied to the lagoon**

The study showed that a source of confusion among fisherfolk and people interviewed was the lack of clear guidelines on fishing rights allocation from the government. It has been not very easy to understand whether there is an upcoming regulation or official communication on how and when the fishing rights allocation will start. Modalities of how the allocation will be organized is not cleared as it is not even clear for some people interviewed from CPC and / EB which positive / negative impacts it will bring into the current living. The lack of awareness and the confused idea of fishing rights allocation's functioning may represent an important limit to the persuasive dissemination and promotion of FA among the fisherfolk. Nevertheless, as the dissemination of information will be thought and organized by EB together with CPC at commune level, it is extremely vital that they have an exhaustive knowledge of the above. Raise their knowledge on the above mentioned in order for them to be able to disseminate correct information among villages. An informal informative session can be organised for them before other events are organised at village level.

#### **6. Clarify and define guidelines on disruptive fishing practice in order mitigate conflicts among people and preserve natural resources**

The study showed that disruptive fishing activities are not always reported as such because they are not considered disruptive by law. For instance, *lu* (already mentioned in this report) is still not considered disruptive by law, although fisherfolk who are practicing *lu* consider it as a disruptive fishing activity. In Vinh Hien commune, the CPC showed their interest in moving forward to ban this practice or, at least, to regulate its practice identifying specific areas where it can be allowed, give guidelines on the net measures, often too small. In fact, the practice practically keep fishes inside the net but it do not allow them to go out, catching even the smallest ones.

**a) Give guidelines** of disruptive fishing activities such as *lu*, managing and mainstreaming information and awareness about the consequences of bad practices. Disseminating guidelines on the correct use of this very common practice can have the advantage of preserving the ecosystem and of reducing potential conflict among people that practice *lu* and people that do not do it;

**b) Investigate** where, who and how *lu* is used in the lagoon through surveys especially in the communes where the practice is more popular such as Vinh Hien and Loc Dien Communes;

**c) Create a data-monitoring** of fisheries resources with HHs listing/registration;

**d) Raise awareness** of the disruptive use of *lu* informing CPC, EB members through specific informative sessions in order to make provide them with knowledge about this fishing practice;

**e) Organize informative days** in fisherfolk to discuss together about disruptive activities within the lagoon and their potential consequences on the lagoon ecosystem and among people. It can be organized directly in the villages and it can include some informal discussion followed by the

organization of a specific day where fisherfolk will be provided with specific and reliable information.

## **7. Understand WU functioning and assess about possible collaboration with FAs**

**a) Understand potential activities** that women can implement in order to empower FA economic development in the area of the lagoon is strongly recommended. From interviews with WU, the team assessed that there are already activities in place by WU at communal level. As one of the tasks and measures of this organization in the 2007-2012 periods is “assisting women in economic development, job creation and income generation” (VWU website, <http://www.vwu.vn/newsdetail.asp?CatId=66&NewsId=819&lang=EN>) and they are trying to get funds from the international community in order to build and develop and organizational network, it may be interested to approach them with concrete proposals of collaboration.

**b) Assess the possibility to develop small business** using what the lagoon offers in terms of natural and human resources like ecotourism activities, food processing, marketing, handicrafts and other alternative livelihoods to agriculture and fisheries. In Loc Dien, for instance, WU activated small business of handcraft and marketing for the production of cassava powder (Su Lo and Dong An Villages).

It may be interesting, for example, to design a joint programming among IMOLA, FA and WU using technical knowledge of the FA and WU’s organizational and communicational once. Those joint programming should include women participations in the activities and ensure WU as the first actor in providing training to FA members about communication/marketing strategies they use to inform people.

## **8. Promoting comparative studies on *sampan* community in the context of the lagoon population in order to better target them in the new status of resettled**

Although a consistent portion of them has been resettled, Sampan culture need to be better explored and understood in the contest of the whole lagoon community. From an anthropological point of view, very little knowledge we have of those people who’s can be better analysed promoting the study of their culture and their difference with other communities in the lagoon. Also, in the perspective of guarantee to the resettled Sampan a better life it would be an important to understand what the challenges they face with their new life are.

In some interviews Sampan people talked about their life as a different one if compared to the people living on land. They recognize to have different knowledge of the lagoon and to have developed a special relation with the water. Some described it by telling stories of years spent on the boat, sometimes within numerous families. This lifestyle seemed to give them a stronger attitude to struggle for a living especially now that they have a land with more space to stay. Although resettled people showed a recognized improvement of their standard living condition, in Hai Duong Commune for instance, Sampan people interviewed reported their limits and needs in struggling with their new life.

Studying and analysing these people’s culture can give a value added for a more comprehensive picture of the lagoon population. This need is very much constrained by the time as, most probably, in few years the old generation of this group will disappear and, with them, an interesting part of the historical memories.

## **9. Invest more time and resources on socio-economic research in order to better assess and target people needs/priorities**

This last recommendation advises and encourages on the use of specific technical tools useful whether a technical analysis on the field is requested. Socio-economic analysis emphasises the socio-cultural, economic, demographic, political, institutional and environmental factors that affect the outcome of development initiatives (Bryman, 2001, p. 97). Livelihoods and Analysis Toolkits, for instance, can be an example of how assessing people's daily activities and better targeting activities through exercises performed with the participation of the people in the villages. Furthermore, it can be useful to spend more time to examine the linkages among these factors at three levels - macro (programmes and policies), intermediate (institutions) and field (communities, households and individuals) (FAO website, [www.fao.org](http://www.fao.org)).

It can have the comparative advantage of:

- understanding the existent socio-economic factors within the villages;
- identifying the linkages among different stakeholder groups;
- using bottom-up approaches to prioritise initiatives;
- promoting a participatory process in planning and implementing development activities and policies; and
- facilitating network building among development workers and encouraging the exchange of views and experiences (Bryman, 2001, p. 45 and FAO website, [www.fao.org](http://www.fao.org)).

## **7. Follow-up requirements**

The timeframe used to develop the present study allowed to develop a general description of the situation running within the 4 targeted communes. The results attained have however not been satisfactory to give a complete picture of the situation in relation to the general and specific objectives outlined at the beginning of this report.

In order to make clear understanding on how to perform the expected outcome (to foresee and develop possible interventions in view of the forthcoming fishing rights allocation) and guarantee social inclusion for underrepresented and unrepresented population within existing FAs, is important that a second study will be carried out including social and environmental variability.

Better understanding of WU communication function as a tool in order to reach a bigger number of people together with the implementation of possible strategies to mainstream communication and raise awareness can be included in second phase of follow-up of the present study.

Better understanding of NFA in different villages not visited by the team may be wanted to be explored as well as the reason why and how, to have a contrast with NFA who have not been informed of the existence of the FA, current FA members got to know the FA.

As reported in the conclusion and in the recommendations sessions it would be interesting to research on the Sampan people.

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### **Web Sites (consulted in June 2009)**

<http://www.fao.org/>

<http://www.vmu.vn/>

<http://www.imolahue.org/>

### **People Interviewed (June 2009)**

Mr. Baku Takahashi, Operations Coordinator of the IMOLA Project

Mr. Massimo Sarti, Chief Technical Advisor of the IMOLA Project