

Action 1.1 Fisheries management plan (FMP) for the trawl fishery in BRVT

Goal: Support BRVT authorities for better management of trawl fisheries activities in the province

A. OVERVIEW:

By July 2024, the legal basis and information needed to propose a trawl fishery management plan for Ba Ria - Vung Tau province are complete. The remaining time of the Vung Tau FIP (phase 3, approximately 4 months) will focus on supporting DARD BRVT, through the BRVT Seafood Association, to chair meetings with relevant stakeholders.

Below will provide the main facts that are the legal basis for establishing a general fisheries management plan, and trawling in particular, for Ba Ria - Vung Tau province.

B. NATIONAL LEVEL:

1. Decision 76/QD-TTg issued by the Prime Minister in January 2024. Content on approval of the National Program to protect and develop aquatic resources until 2030.

a. Goals:

- Marine aquatic resource reserves recovered, increasing by over 5% compared to the results of investigation and assessment of aquatic resources in the period 2016 - 2020.
- 100% of marine protected areas and artificial habitat areas for marine aquatic species according to the Planning for the protection and exploitation of aquatic resources are formed, managed and operated in accordance with the provisions of fisheries law.
- 10% of aquatic species in the List of endangered, precious and rare aquatic species have been artificially reproduced and successfully reared; 20% of endangered, precious and rare aquatic species are documented, monitored and evaluated.
- 100% of provinces and centrally run cities organize activities to restock aquatic resources into natural waters every year.

b. Priority schemes and projects (related to the scope of this report):

- Annual monitoring of biodiversity and environment in established marine protected areas.
- Project to implement co-management in protecting aquatic resources.
- Assess the impact of plastic waste and other types of marine pollution on aquatic resources.
- Investigate and assess the level of harm caused by fishing occupations and gears to aquatic resources and aquatic ecosystems.
- Investigate, evaluate and forecast the effects of climate change on aquatic resources and aquatic ecosystems.

2. Decree 37/2024/ND-CP issued by the Government in April 2024 on amending and supplementing a number of articles of Decree No. 26/2019/ND-CP, includes:

- Add on 06 offshore areas.

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- Management and protection of endangered, precious, and rare aquatic species: supplementing procedures for rescuing endangered, precious, and rare aquatic species that are injured or stranded.
 - Regulations on management of fishing vessel monitoring systems: additional requirements for (1) Vessel monitoring device installed on fishing vessels, (2) Fishing vessel monitoring software, (3) Software features Fishing vessel monitoring system at the fishing vessel monitoring data center of the State management agency on fisheries under the MARD, (4) Management of fishing vessel monitoring system, (5) Responsibilities of the unit providing monitoring device for fishing vessels, (6) Data security.
 - Vessels fishing for aquatic resources are allowed to do one side job. They are not allowed to do trawling or logistics for aquatic resources caught. Logistics vessels catching aquatic resources are not allowed to operate concurrently.
 - Conditions for fishing vessels operating in fisheries outside Vietnamese waters.
 - Forms related to: Transfer of offshore fishing license quota; Install vessel monitoring device on fishing vessels; Fishery exploitation license.
- 3. Decision No. 389/QĐ-TTg on 'Approving the planning for protection and exploitation of aquatic resources in the period 2021-2030, with a vision to 2050', signed by the Prime Minister, dated on May 9, 2024**

3.1 Orientation for protection and exploitation of aquatic resources

- a. Protection and development of aquatic resources - Development orientation
- Restoring aquatic resources, especially aquatic species of economic value, endangered, precious, rare and endemic aquatic species; strengthening management, assessment, conservation, protection and regeneration of aquatic resources in all types of water bodies in inland and sea waters.
 - Identify areas where fishing is prohibited for a limited period of time, including areas where are (1) spawning grounds of aquatic species; (2) young aquatic resources live; (3) aquatic resource protection areas; and (4) prohibited fishing occupations and gears that cause harm or destruction to aquatic resources and their habitats.
 - Establish artificial habitats for endangered, precious, rare aquatic species, aquatic species of economic and scientific value, native aquatic species, and endemic aquatic species in sea areas.
 - Preserve and develop the genetic resources of endangered, precious, rare, indigenous, endemic and economically valuable aquatic species. Invest in research and production of breeds to be proactive in regenerating and restoring aquatic resources and developing the economy.
 - Monitor and forecast the living environment of aquatic species; promptly detect and handle pollution and environmental degradation in inland and marine waters.
 - Applying science and technology, digital transformation in the management, conservation, protection of aquatic resources, protection of sea turtles, marine mammals and reduction of unintentional fishing of aquatic species.
 - Mobilize the participation of the community, socio-political organizations, and

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businesses in activities to conserve, protect, regenerate, restore, and develop aquatic resources.

- Strengthen the system of state management agencies for marine conservation, build a team of highly qualified staff; arrange fisheries surveillance forces to patrol and control marine conservation areas.

b. Water surface demand by 2030

- The total natural area of the national sea areas zoned for protection of aquatic resources and biodiversity conservation is about 2.79 million hectares (equivalent to about 2.79% of the sea area).
- Gene retention facilities and commercial varieties are within the spatial scope of marine reserves and research institutes.
- The total land and water surface use demand for the development of fishing port systems and storm shelters is at least 5,504 hectares.

c. Fisheries exploitation - planning to 2030:

- Adjust the number of fishing vessels, change the structure of fishing in accordance with the exploitation capacity of aquatic resources, especially reduce the proportion of trawling at sea.
- The total number of fishing vessels nationwide is approximately 83,600, with the occupational structure according to fishing areas as follows:

Fishing gears	Fisheries structure by fishing area						Total	
	Coastal water (6-<12m)		Inshore water (12-<15m)		Offshore water (≥15m)			
	No. of vessels	%	No. of vessels	%	No. of vessels	%	No. of vessels	%
Trawl	0	0.0%	2,644	15.5%	5,701	20.7%	8,360	10.0%
Purse seine	0	0.0%	1,245	7.3%	3,911	14.2%	5,110	6.1%
Gillnets	22,230	57.0%	4,964	29.1%	6,499	23.6%	33,700	40.3%
Hooks and lines	6,318	16.2%	4,811	28.2%	4,709	17.1%	15,840	18.9%
Stick - held falling net	0	0%	529	3.1%	1,955	7.1%	2,480	3.0%
Pots and traps	858	2.2%	904	5.3%	689	2.5%	2,450	2.9%
Others	9,594	24.6%	1,570	9.2%	2,644	9.6%	13,840	16.6%
Transshipment and fishery service	0	0%	392	2.3%	1,432	5.2%	1,820	2.2%
Total	39,000	100.0%	17,060	100.0%	27,540	100.0%	83,600	100.0%

- According to the roadmap for adjusting the occupational structure, reducing the number of fishing vessels nationwide; provinces and centrally run cities must reduce at least 12% of the total number of fishing vessels compared to 2020 to

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ensure effective and sustainable development of fisheries exploitation.

3.2 Solutions for planning implementation

a. About mechanism and policy

- Review, amend, supplement and develop new legal documents, standards and regulations on protection and exploitation of aquatic resources, ensuring the quality of fishing vessels, restricted areas for fishing vessels allowed to operate at sea, regulations on management of recreational fisheries associated with the development of fishing communities, ensuring compliance with the provisions of the Law on Fisheries, the Law on Biodiversity and international law.
- Research and develop the following policies:
 - + Investing in essential infrastructure for marine reserves; implementing co-management in protecting aquatic resources; supporting fishermen during the temporary ban on fishing; supporting the conversion of fishing occupations that have a major impact on aquatic resources, the environment, and the ecosystem; supporting vocational training for workers who convert occupations.
 - + Encourage and attract organizations and individuals, especially fishing communities, to participate in investing, establishing, managing and developing marine protected areas, aquatic resource protection areas and artificial habitats for aquatic species.
 - + Production by value chain: linking stages in the production process, from exploitation, preservation to processing and consumption; applying scientific and technical advances in exploitation and preservation of products on fishing vessels to reduce post-harvest losses.
 - + Encourage and facilitate organizations and enterprises of all economic sectors to participate in investing in the development and exploitation of fishing ports and fisheries services.
 - + Training captains, chief engineers, and fishing vessel crew; knowledge and skills in natural disaster prevention and control and search and rescue; techniques for exploiting and preserving products using advanced technology on fishing vessels; supporting training for fishermen's children to study at vocational schools, colleges, and universities nationwide on exploiting and protecting aquatic resources.

b. About finance, investment

- Mobilizing domestic and foreign resources to invest in infrastructure, fisheries information systems, developing science, technology, and human resources in exploiting and protecting aquatic resources.
- Strengthen socialization, attract non-budgetary capital to regenerate aquatic resources, establish and manage marine protected areas, aquatic resource protection areas, and artificial habitats for aquatic species.
- Increase the State investment budget for the development of marine protected areas, artificial habitats for aquatic species; research, application and technology transfer; fisheries promotion, human resource training; investment in the construction of type I-II fishing ports, storm shelters for fishing vessels.
- Prioritize capital allocation to initiate and complete projects to combat IUU fishing.

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c. About environment, science and technology

- Research and apply information technology, digital technology, and artificial intelligence in managing aquatic resources protection and exploitation activities (management zoning, monitoring fishing vessels, fishing logbooks, traceability, forecasting fishing grounds...).
- Developing digital data infrastructure, digital maps, ensuring integration, and the ability to connect between ministries, sectors and localities to serve the sharing of data related to activities of conservation, protection, exploitation of aquatic resources, and monitoring of the habitat of aquatic species in the seas and inland areas of Vietnam.
- Research, apply and transfer scientific and technological advances in fuel saving and environmentally friendly materials in exploiting and preserving aquatic products; improve fishing gear and technical processes.
- Research and apply scientific and technological advances in preserving gene sources and artificially reproducing indigenous, endemic, endangered, precious, rare aquatic species of scientific and economic value.
- Develop and issue environmental management plans and implement solutions to collect and minimize waste from exploitation activities and protect aquatic resources.
- Applying science and technology, technical advances to ensure efficient use of fuel, natural aquatic resources, and minimizing environmental pollution in aquatic activities.

d. On propaganda and awareness raising

- Propagating, educating and disseminating laws related to the exploitation and protection of aquatic resources, responsibilities and rights of the community, especially fishermen working in aquatic exploitation, youth and students at all levels in localities.
- Mobilize professional social organizations to participate in activities and propaganda, gradually raising awareness among the fishing community in the work of protecting aquatic resources.
- Organize training courses to disseminate regulations on protection and development of aquatic resources for aquatic resource management officers and local communities.
- Integrate propaganda content on protection and exploitation of aquatic resources into the curriculum and extracurricular programs of schools at all levels in the national education system.
- Encourage organizations and individuals, especially businesses operating in the marine economy such as tourism and renewable energy, to participate in the regeneration of aquatic resources and restoration of aquatic habitats.

e. On training and capacity building

- Training, fostering, retraining and developing human resources with expertise in exploiting, protecting and developing aquatic resources to meet practical requirements and international integration.
- Training and improving skills and qualifications for captains, chief engineers and crew members of fishing vessels; transferring new and modern techniques and

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technologies in exploiting and preserving aquatic products; operating and using modern machinery and equipment on fishing vessels.

- Develop high-quality human resources for fisheries protection and exploitation; improve capacity and technical facilities for fisheries research and training facilities, management boards of marine protected areas, fishing ports, and storm shelters for fishing vessels.

f. On international cooperation

- Strengthen international cooperation in investigating and researching aquatic resources (both at sea and inland), managing migratory fish species, managing marine reserves, transnational aquatic resource protection areas, combating illegal fishing; support and provide financial and technical aid for projects related to the exploitation, protection and development of aquatic resources, and funds for the protection and development of aquatic resources.
- Effectively implement international treaties to which Vietnam is a member, especially the Agreement on the Implementation of the Provisions of the United Nations Convention on the Law of the Sea 1982 on the Conservation and Management of Highly Migratory Fish Stocks (UNFSA) and the Agreement on Port State Measures (PSMA), the Convention on Biological Diversity and comply with the Code of Conduct for Responsible Fisheries, combating illegal, unreported and unregulated fishing.
- Attract high-quality foreign investment (ODA, FDI). Actively participate in multilateral and bilateral activities and cooperate with countries, international organizations, and non-governmental organizations to enhance human resource development, fisheries infrastructure, and research and application of modern science and technology in the protection and exploitation of aquatic resources.
- International cooperation on water sharing and transboundary migration management of aquatic species.
- Participate in the global seafood supply chain; harmonize national and international seafood regulations.

g. About production organizing

- Strengthening the management of fishing vessels, management of fishing intensity, fisheries structure (number of fishing vessels operating by occupation, length, target species), fishing seasons and fishing grounds in accordance with the exploitation capacity of aquatic resources.
- Develop and effectively implement the Project on Fisheries, Fishermen and Fishing Grounds by 2030.
- Unify the organizational structure and apparatus for marine protected areas and fishing port management boards.
- Reorganize production by value chain, manage quality, and fully trace product origin.
- Develop a mechanism for linkage and coordination between localities and economic sectors to effectively use and share rights and responsibilities in protecting and exploiting aquatic resources.
- Developing co-management in aquatic resources protection.

h. On organization and supervision of planning implementation

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- Announcement of Planning according to the provisions of law.
- Develop and complete a set of criteria for evaluating, action plans and monitoring planning implementation.
- Develop capital allocation plans, mobilize resources to implement priority programs and projects..
- Annually and every five (05) years, review, analyze and evaluate the situation and results of planning implementation; propose solutions to improve efficiency during the planning period; recommend planning adjustments (if any) to suit the actual situation.
- Strengthen inspection, supervision and evaluation of planning implementation, promptly resolve recommendations related to planning content and laws on protection and exploitation of aquatic resources.

3.3 Priority investment projects

- (1) Project group to adjust the boundaries and area of marine protected areas.
- (2) Project group to establish new marine protected areas.
- (3) Infrastructure investment project group for marine protected areas.
- (4) Investment project group to form artificial habitats for aquatic species in Vietnam's seas.

C. PROVINCIAL LEVEL:

1. The Prime Minister issued **Decision 1629/QD-TTg** on December 16, 2023 about Approving the Planning of Ba Ria - Vung Tau (BRVT) province for the period 2021-2030, vision to 2050. Accordingly, BRVT province will focus on (1) improving the quality of fisheries products; (2) prioritizing the development of offshore fishing vessels; (3) establishing a Southeast region fisheries logistics service center according to national planning.
2. On May 9, 2024, the Prime Minister signed **Decision No. 389/QD-TTg** on '*Approving the planning for protection and exploitation of aquatic resources in the period 2021-2030, with a vision to 2050*'. Accordingly, BRVT province was approved to establish a new Con Dao Marine Protected Area (MPA). The MPA is under Con Dao National Park with a sea area of 34,500 hectares. In addition, the decision also approved 2 artificial habitat areas for aquatic species in the waters of BRVT including: 1,013 hectares in the Xuyen Moc coastal area (in Xuyen Moc district) and 1,050 hectares in the coastal area of Southeast of Nghinh Phong cape (in Vung Tau city)

The Committee People of BRVT province has also issued several crucial decisions as legal basis on restructuring and managing the fisheries sector sustainably and responsibly. These decisions are:

3. The **Decision 2388/QD-UBND**, dated on August 18, 2022, with main contents related to:
 - i. Reducing the number of fishing vessels by 2030 to 5,000 units (maintain 3,100 units of offshore fishing fleet; reduce to 750 units of inshore fishing vessels and 1,150 units of coastal fishing vessels).
 - ii. Restructure fisheries: 1,350 trawlers; increase purse seine and hook and lines to 1,400 units; maintain gillnet vessels at 550 units and fishery logistics services at 250 units; other occupations at 1,450 units.
4. The **Decision 3694/QD-UBND**, dated on December 22, 2023, key points are:

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- Based on the results of the investigation and assessment of coastal and inshore aquatic resources, re-define the quota of fishing vessels in coastal and inshore areas.
- 100% of fishing vessels operating in offshore areas install VMS.
- Deploying a digital governance model in fishing activities: electronic fishing logs, integrated fishing port management system, tracking system for fishing vessels entering and leaving the port.
- Effectively deploy schemes, projects and programs on investigation and assessment of aquatic resources in coastal and inshore waters. Periodically conduct surveys of commercial fisheries.
- Develop supplement regulations on banning fishing, temporary suspension of fishing for a certain period of time, prohibited fishing zones, and banning occupations in some sea areas, spawning areas, and living areas of aquatic juveniles and habitat of aquatic species.

In July 2024, the Department of Agriculture and Rural Development (DARD) of BRVT province shared the Draft 'Planning for protection and exploitation of aquatic resources for the period 2021 - 2030, vision to 2050 in BRVT province' with the BRVT Seafood Association for consultation. Notable points of the draft include:

- Develop a plan to adjust the number of fishing vessels and restructure fisheries.
- Invest in and improve capacity in scientific and technological research and training, develop human resources with good expertise in the field of aquatic resources protection and development for relevant research institutes and training schools.

Also in July 2024, the DARD of BRVT province also shared and consulted on the Draft Report 'Developing a project to convert occupations for fishing vessels operating in coastal areas and occupations that destroy aquatic resources in Ba Ria-Vung Tau province'. The notable points of the summary report are as follows:

- There are significant changes in the fisheries structure in 2030, current and target according to the national plan in Decision 389, details as follows:

Fishing gears	Fisheries structure (%) by fishing area								
	Coastal water (6-<12m)			Inshore water (12-<15m)			Offshore water (≥15m)		
	BRVT 2023	BRVT by 2030	National goals by 2030	BRVT 2023	BRVT by 2030	National goals by 2030	BRVT 2023	BRVT by 2030	National goals by 2030
Trawl	1.80%	0.00%	0.0%	9.91%	0.00%	15.5%	46.67%	11.67%	20.7%
Purse seine	0.00%	0.00%	0.0%	2.36%	2.36%	7.3%	7.74%	14.31%	14.2%
Gillnets	84.99%	84.99%	57.0%	49.84%	49.84%	29.1%	18.29%	20.57%	23.6%
Hooks and lines	10.99%	8.53%	16.2%	29.56%	29.56%	28.2%	10.92%	17.97%	17.1%
Stick - held falling net	0.00%	0.00%	0%	1.57%	1.57%	3.1%	2.78%	8.82%	7.1%
Pots and traps	2.21%	2.21%	2.2%	6.45%	6.45%	5.3%	5.71%	12.11%	2.5%

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Transshipment and fishery service and tourism	0.00%	4.27%	0%	0.31%	10.22%	2.3%	7.88%	14.55%	5.2%
Total	100.00%	100.00%	75.40%	100.00%	100.00%	90.80%	100.00%	100.00%	90.40%

- Note: The implementation team only focuses on key occupational groups, while the national target includes other occupational groups.
- Regarding the age of fishing vessels in Ba Ria-Vung Tau province, it shows that most of the province's fishing vessels are old, the group of vessels with an age of <10 years accounts for 18.2%, the group of vessels with an age of 10-<15 years accounts for 15.3%, the group of vessels with an age of 15-<20 years accounts for 14.3%, the group of vessels with an age of ≥20 years accounts for 52.2%. For trawl fishing, fishing vessels with an age of ≥20 years account for 61.9%.
- Trawling has the highest proportion of trash fish in the total output of the trip, up to 65.5%. The implementation team concluded that trawling seriously affects resources but catches products with very low economic value and poor operational efficiency.
- A remarkable recommendation of the implementation team is '*Reviewing of reference information on exploitation pressure, resource invasive rate (exploitation of juveniles, immature fish), ecological risk level, exploited species and water layers shows: It is necessary to reduce (towards eliminating) bottom trawling and pots and traps; Limit and reduce purse seine fishing; It is possible to increase the number (limited) of gillnet and hooks and lines in coastal and inshore waters of BRVT province*'.

On July 20, 2024, the FIP Vung Tau coordinator, on behalf of the Fishmeal sub-Association, gave comments to DARD BRVT, relevant feedbacks are:

- 'The work done here provides a solid basis for the other tasks regarding policy, mechanism and plan career change for fishing vessels operating in the coastal area. We are not entirely sure why inshore fishery is also included in the report because it is not in the title. Perhaps because of the potential and actual risk for destruction of aquatic resources? However we do think it is wise to include inshore fishery as well.
- Trawl fishery offshore also enters into the report, probably because of its destructive nature, but it would be better if there was a clear separation of coastal, inshore and offshore fishery'.