



Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations

“A brief introduction to trawl fishery and management issues in Vietnam” (Nguyen Ba Thong) presented at the APFIC Regional Expert Workshop on Tropical Trawl Fishery Management, 30th September - 4th October 2013, Phuket, Thailand

A brief introduction to trawl fishery and management issues in Vietnam

Nguyen Ba Thong (Directorate of Fisheries (D-Fish), Ministry of Agriculture and Rural Development, MARD)

Trawl fisheries play an important role in Vietnam marine capture fishery, not only in terms of total number of fishing effort, but also in catch volume. According to DECAFIREP¹ (2013), currently, there are about 19,700 trawlers which were categorized by different fishing fleets based on engine capacity (HP), namely below 20 CV, 20- <50CV, 50- <90CV, 90- < 150CV, 150- < 250CV, 250- < 400CV and above 400CV. Trawlers occur in all 28 coastal provinces but dominant in the certain provinces, such as the northern cluster: Quang Ninh (1,257 units), Thanh Hoa (1,296 units); the southern cluster including Binh Thuan (1,227 units), Ba Ria – Vung Tau (1,980 units), Ben Tre (2,878 units) and Kien Giang (3,156 units). The small trawlers (below 90 CV) normally fish shrimp, prawn while big trawlers focus on fish including small pelagic fishes (anchovy, sardine, scads...) and others. Mainly, shrimp trawlers concentrate in Kien Giang, Ben Tre, Ca Mau and Bac Lieu provinces. Below 90 CV trawlers account for about 46 % total number of trawlers in the country.

A case study implemented in 2010 in Ha Tien district (Kien Giang province) shown that small trawler (shrimp trawlers) have 2 – 4 crew on boat, fishing during the night time, fishing trip of 2 – 5 days, 2-4 hauls taken per night, towing speed of 1.8 – 2.5 knots. Average CPUE of 106 kg per boat day, in which trashfish of about 40 kg/boat day, mixed fish of 11 kg per boat day, shrimp of 39 kg per boat day. Shrimp and prawn accounted for about 40 % total catch and corresponded to about 70 % total catch value while trashfish accounted for 37% catch volume but only about 8% catch value. Trash fish are comprised of many different fish species belonging to 40 families identified.

Vietnam government has been applied numbers of measures for trawl fisheries management including closed season, closed area, access limits (licenses, vessel registration), ban of destructive fishing methods/practices, zoning, gear limitation (meshsize regulations)... these regulations and measures are described in Decree No 33 **33/2010/NĐ-CP** (dated March 21st 2010) and **Circular No 02/2006/TT-BTS** (dated March 20th 2006). However, there are no specific legal frameworks for management of trawl fishery. A fisheries development strategy to 2020 approved by the central government noted that the trawlers will be kept at 15% total number of the national fishing vessels.

Nevertheless, the trawl fishery of Vietnam is being faced with number of challenges and difficulties, some notable issues as follows:

- Over fishing capacity, too many trawlers while demersal fisheries resources and overall fishery resources in the coastal water have been overfished;

¹ DECAFIREP, Department of Capture Fisheries and Resources Protection, Directorate of Fisheries (D-FISH), Ministry of Agriculture and Rural Development (MARD).

- Recently, serious conflicts among and within fisheries (gillnet and other gears vs trawl) significantly increased;
- Big trawlers fishing in coastal and near-shore waters;
- Destroying critical habitats (seagrass, coral reef...);
- Trawling more small and juvenile fish;
- Catch all, no "by catch" context, IUU fishing increased;
- Unclear, unavailable specifically legal framework for management of trawler fisheries;
- Neglectful role of fisher associations (FAs) in management;
- Overfishing, depleting offshore resources lead to increase inshore fishing pressure;
- Insufficient information (catch, species composition, licenses...);
- Weakness of enforcement;
- Poor compliment of fisheries management measures;
- No studies implemented on impacts of trawlers on ecosystems, resources, sustainability of the sector...
- Increasing in livelihood pressure in the coastal communities;
- Existing a "vicious cycle" in management policy "expanse offshore fishing fleets...";
- Existing a "Trade off" between increasing demands on trashfish for fish meal production, mariculture – "demand" and sustainable fishery resources – "protection";

Recognition of the important role as well as the "hot issues", negative impacts of the fishery to the marine ecosystem, Vietnam government, representatively D-FISH is developing some specific regulations and action plan for better manager this fishery. DECAFIREP is composing a draft of Circular on trawl fishery management. However, urgent tasks, technical and other relevant solutions must be taken place and more feasible management measures are being sought.