

**DECISION No. 131/2004/QĐ-TTg OF JULY 16,
2004 APPROVING THE AQUATIC RESOURCE
PROTECTION AND DEVELOPMENT
PROGRAM TILL 2010**

THE PRIME MINISTER

*Pursuant to the Law on Organization of the
Government of December 25, 2001,*

*Pursuant to the Law on Aquatic Resources of
November 26, 2003,*

*Pursuant to the Government's Decree No. 43/
2003/ND-CP of May 2, 2003 defining the functions,
tasks, powers and organizational structure of the
Ministry of Fisheries,*

At the proposal of the Minister of Fisheries,

DECIDES:

Article 1.- To approve the Aquatic Resource
Protection and Development Program till 2010 with
the following major contents:

I. OBJECTIVES

- To protect and conserve aquatic diversity,
especially the precious and rare aquatic species
of scientific and economic value; preserve the
diversity and originality of Vietnam's biological
aquatic ecology for the present and future.

- To restore aquatic resources in inshore sea
areas, rivers, reservoirs and submerged regions
for sustainable aquatic resource development.

- To raise the awareness about the importance
and value of natural resources and bio-diversity,
and at the same time, clearly define the role and
responsibilities of fishermen in the protection of

aquatic resources.

- To enhance the capability of State management over aquatic resource protection and development, of the functional agencies and administrations at all levels.

II. GUIDING PRINCIPLES

- The aquatic resource protection and development must take into account the balance between economic development and protection of natural resources and environment, the harmony between the interests of different industries and localities, and must concurrently be effected with focal points.

- The aquatic resource protection and development shall go in couple with the enhanced control of natural aquatic resource exploitation and environment so as to ensure the natural ecological balance of water basins.

- The aquatic resource protection and development constitute an immediate and long-term requirement and also the responsibility of the entire society, particularly the responsibility of the fishermen's community. Therefore, the socialization policy must be well implemented in order to protect and develop aquatic resources.

III. PROGRAM CONTENTS

1. Restoring, regenerating and developing aquatic resources

To combine the adjustment of exploitation capacity with the production of seeds for further stocking in the natural environment; improve the habitats of aquatic species so as to restore their recreating capability and increase the population density of endangered aquatic species, thereby restoring the ecological balance and stabilizing the biological community in water basins. Priority objects of regeneration in this period include:

- Marine shrimps, focussing on the prawn species, especially tiger prawns and lobsters.

- Mollusks (scallops, oysters, clams, pearl oysters, etc.) in the sea areas of southern Central Vietnam and sea areas of eastern and western South Vietnam.

- Small drift fishes (herrings, scads, round herrings, long-jawed anchovies, etc) in the sea areas from Thanh Hoa to Kien Giang and around a number of offshore islands.

- Fresh water fishes, first of all, in big rivers, reservoirs and frequently-flooded areas in southern delta provinces and a number of submerged areas in the northern delta region.

2. Protecting and conserving aquatic diversity

Efforts shall be concentrated on the following priority activities:

- Controlling the exploitation of endangered precious and rare aquatic species of high scientific and economic value.

- Stepping up the intra-perimetric conservation work through the establishment of a system of marine conservation areas and inland conservation areas, as well as the extra-perimetric conservation work.

- Restoring the biotopes and habitats of aquatic animal species, especially breeding fields, where young aquatic animals gather or precious and rare aquatic species of high scientific and economic value live. Regenerating and recovering the ecosystems of coral reefs, sea grass-covers, swamps, lagoons and river mouths while releasing artificial reefs, creating biotopes and habitats for aquatic animals in a number of areas where conditions permit or in high-priority areas.

- Monitoring the aquatic diversity, which cover the following activities: monitoring the environment; changes of ecosystems and water quality; monitoring the environment-indicating species;

making annual reports on changes of fishing grounds and aquatic resources.

- Evaluating the impacts of the use of fertilizers, pesticides, aquatic veterinary medicines and water-treating substances... on the life of aquatic animals in the natural environment. Formulating criteria on the safe use of pesticides, water-treating substances, fertilizers and industrial chemicals... for the natural environment of water basins.

3. Organizing the management of exploitation of aquatic resources in inshore sea areas

To concentrate on the following activities:

- Restructuring the exploitation of natural aquatic resources according to their potentials. Strictly controlling destructive exploitation methods while not developing, then gradually reducing unselective exploitation and exploitation of young aquatic animals; restoring and developing branches and trades in substitute for the exploitation of natural aquatic resources in inshore sea areas, thus creating conditions to stabilize the fishermen's life, alleviating the exploitation pressure on the aquatic resources in the inshore sea areas.

- Establishing the fishing-ground forecast system, guiding aquatic resource exploitation, first of all in key fishing grounds where ships and boats gather for operation.

- Enhancing the capability of aquatic resource protection organizations so as to control aquatic resource exploitation activities, especially in key sea areas (Tonkin Gulf, eastern and western South Vietnam), exploitation-prohibited or restricted zones, breeding fields and areas densely populated by young aquatic animals.

- Building up models for organizing the management of inshore sea areas suitable to the customs and traditions of local fishermen. At the same time, promoting and highlighting the role of the fishermen's community in the management and

protection of aquatic resources as well as their habitats.

4. Building an aquatic resource- database system

Building an aquatic resource- database system to meet the demand for information for the work of managing and selecting investment projects, which includes:

- Building a National Database Center on aquatic resources in order to manage and archive data on aquatic diversity, species and their distribution, physiological habits of aquatic species, typical ecosystems and aquatic habitats, combined with the mapping and application of the geographical information system (GIS).

- Building one or two museums for preservation and display of Vietnam's aquatic species in service of scientific research, study, visits and education to raise the awareness about aquatic resource protection and development.

- Establishing a communication network linking the National Database Center with the research and managerial agencies as well as localities.

5. Education for raising the awareness about aquatic resource protection

Formulating and organizing the implementation of, the national communication and education plan to raise the awareness about the protection of aquatic resources and habitats, that covers the following activities:

- Organizing refresher courses to raise the awareness of district- and commune-level officials and fishermen about laws on fisheries, the benefits brought about by aquatic resource and habitat protection for the fishermen's community itself as well as for the entire society.

- Elaborating communication programs for aquatic resource protection and development on the mass media.

- Printing, distributing pictures, photographs and posters for aquatic resource protection advocacy.

- Elaborating appropriate contents of education about the protection of aquatic resources and habitats for each education level.

6. Priority projects under the Aquatic Resource Protection and Development Program till 2010

In the period from now to 2010, to concentrate on elaborating and implementing the following priority projects:

- Restoring, regenerating and developing aquatic resources; conserving endangered precious and rare aquatic species of high economic and scientific value;

- Building up models for conversion of inshore marine aquatic exploitation into other appropriate trades in a number of coastal areas;

- Planning and organizing the management of marine conservation areas, inland aquatic resource-conservation areas, aquatic exploitation-prohibited and -restricted zones;

- Building up models for management of aquatic resources with community participation;

- Establishing and managing a database system on aquatic resources and habitats;

- Elaborating and implementing a national communication plan for aquatic resource protection and development.

IV. A NUMBER OF MAJOR SOLUTIONS

1. To encourage investment in aquatic resource protection and development activities

- Domestic and overseas organizations and individuals investing in scientific research, transfer and application of advanced technologies to aquatic resource protection and development activities such as researching into, creating through hybridization, producing new aquatic breeds of

economic value for aquaculture development or stocking in natural water areas for regeneration and development of aquatic resources, shall enjoy preferential mechanisms and policies under the Law on Domestic Investment Promotion (amended) and current regulations.

- Organizations and individuals investing in the establishment and management of marine conservation areas and inland aquatic conservation areas shall, apart from enjoying the preferences provided for in the Law on Domestic Investment Promotion (amended), be entitled to join in the exploitation of the values of conservation areas under law provisions.

2. To gradually reduce and convert aquatic resource exploitation trades in inshore sea areas

- Supporting fishermen to shift from inshore aquatic exploitation to offshore aquatic exploitation or to other trades by providing credit loans at preferential interest rates; organizing the provision of technical guidance and training; allotting land and water surface to fishermen's households; providing financial supports in case of natural calamities or epidemics...

- Studying to adopt the natural resource tax policy suitable to different fishing trades and fishing tools as well as the seasons when exploitation is restricted or encouraged.

3. To step up the management decentralization, mobilization of people's participation in the work of aquatic resource and habitat protection

- Delineating areas and decentralizing management to local administrations at all levels in coastal areas; organizing the management of aquatic resources and habitats, in association with the development of aquaculture and other services and trades, first of all in inshore marine areas.

- Mobilizing mass organizations such as Ho Chi Minh Communist Youth Union, Ho Chi Minh Young

Pioneers' Brigade, Women's Union, War Veterans' Association, Peasants' Association, and the Elderly Society, etc. to join in activities of propagating aquatic resource protection and development.

4. To apply advanced technologies to aquatic resource protection and development

- Researching into, importing and applying technological solutions for selective exploitation of aquatic resources, aquaculture in a clean environment, minimizing post-exploitation and post-harvest losses; increasing value-added aquatic commodities; using biological preparations and reducing the use of chemicals...

- Applying advanced technologies to the production of artificial aquatic seeds to meet the demand for recreation and restoration of the population density of aquatic species which have been or are being intensively exploited as well as precious and rare aquatic species.

- Applying new material technologies to the netting and release of artificial reefs; restoring coral reefs and sea grass-covers

5. On finance

- The central budget shall focus on supporting activities of: establishing and managing marine conservation zones of national or international significance; transferring advanced technologies for the production of high-quality aquatic breeds; maintaining and preserving wild aquatic and reared aquatic gene sources (progenitors and parental breeds...); investigating, researching into and evaluating aquatic resources; training human resources for the implementation of the Program.

- The local budgets shall be mostly spent on activities of: establishing and managing marine conservation zones and inland aquatic conservation zones already decentralized to localities for management; regenerating, restoring

and developing aquatic resources; overcoming environmental incidents, restoring ecosystems; building and deploying models for management and protection of aquatic resources and habitats with community participation; assuring the inspection, control and supervision of program implementation.

- Other capital sources shall be mobilized for establishing and managing marine conservation zones and inland aquatic conservation zones; transferring aquatic seed-production technologies; regenerating and restoring aquatic resources and ecosystems as well as aquatic habitats; investigating into and evaluating aquatic resources; training human resources in service of the Program and strengthening the capability of the agencies in charge of the aquatic resource and habitat management and protection (according to the projects already approved by competent agencies).

V. ORGANIZATION OF IMPLEMENTATION

1. The Ministry of Aquatic Resources shall assume the prime responsibility for, and coordinate with the concerned ministries and branches and the People's Committees of the provinces and centrally-run cities in, guiding localities to elaborate their respective detailed programs; building up State- and people-run aquatic resource protection and development models; training communication collaborators for the protection of aquatic resources and habitats; organizing the implementation of the Program's priority projects; preliminarily and finally reviewing the program implementation to draw experiences on a yearly basis, promptly expanding good models; consolidating and strengthening the operation capability of research institutions and organizations involved in aquatic resource protection and development.

2. The Ministry of Planning and Investment and

the Ministry of Finance shall have to balance and allocate the State budget capital and international aid, ensuring annual funding for implementation of the Program.

3. The Ministry of Natural Resources and Environment, the Ministry of Agriculture and Rural Development, the Ministry of Education and Training shall coordinate with the Ministry of Fisheries in organizing the management of relevant national conservation zones and submerged land areas; compiling aquatic resource protection and development contents to be taught at schools; working out programs and contents of propagation and education to raise the people's awareness about the protection of aquatic resources and habitats on the mass media.

4. The People's Committees of the provinces and centrally-run cities shall direct the administrations of all levels and functional agencies in their respective localities to elaborate detailed programs for the localities, elaborate and organize the implementation of specific projects; coordinate with the ministries and centrally-run branches as well as donors in attracting capital sources and technical supports in order to boost the implementation of the Program.

Article 2.- This Decision takes effect 15 days after its publication in the Official Gazette.

Article 3.- The ministers, the heads of the ministerial-level agencies, the heads of the agencies attached to the Government and the presidents of the People's Committees of the provinces and centrally-run cities shall have to implement this Decision.

For the Prime Minister
Deputy Prime Minister
NGUYEN TAN DUNG