Initial process consultations in key Southeast Asian countries.

In late 2013, regional stakeholder meetings across the shrimp aquaculture industry were held in Thailand, Indonesia, and Vietnam. The primary objective was to present the background and rationale for the initiative to govern sustainable shrimp aquaculture development, and enlist Steering Committee members to serve in furthering the working draft(s).


In late 2013, an assessment of the congruence of Good Aquaculture Practices (GAP) developed by individual Southeast Asian countries (Thai GAP, Indo GAP, Viet GAP, and the Thai Code of Conduct), the regional ASEAN Shrimp GAP, and key sustainability requirements was completed. All of the existing GAP Standards were compiled together to create a 1st working draft of the Southeast Asian Shrimp Aquaculture Improvement Protocol that was presented to interested stakeholders for review at a first steering committee meeting in December 2013.

1st Steering Committee meeting.

On December 13 – 14, 2013, the 1st Steering Committee Meeting was held in Bangkok, Thailand. Fourteen people representing NGOs, certification bodies, processors, shrimp farmers, and association members met to discuss the process and the 1st working draft of the standard. Substantial input and revisions were collected and used to develop the 2nd working draft of the standard.

2nd Working Draft of Southeast Asian Shrimp Aquaculture Improvement Protocol.

After the steering committee meeting in December 2013, the 2nd working draft of the protocol was created based on input collected from the stakeholders present. Edits and modifications were made to raise the environmental performance bar based on the Monterey Bay Aquarium’s Seafood Watch® Program’s sustainability assessment criteria.

National Public Consultations on the 2nd Working Draft.
The goal of the public consultations was to generate a broader awareness and buy-in of the goals of the Southeast Asian Shrimp Aquaculture Improvement Protocol, the steps for development, and to collect feedback on 2nd draft of the protocol. At the meetings, 130 stakeholders from the shrimp aquaculture industry from Southeast Asia were briefed on development steps, timeline, and goals of the process. All comments were collected and shared with the Steering Committee for their consideration in developing the next draft of the standard for the first public comment period. Public consultations were held in:

- General Santos, Philippines on February 18, 2014
- Can Tho, Vietnam on February 26, 2014
- Surabaya, Indonesia on April 23, 2014

2nd Steering Committee Meeting.

A 2nd Steering Committee was convened in Ho Chi Minh City, Vietnam on July 14-15, 2014. Twelve steering committee members met to confirm the scope of the Southeast Asian Shrimp Aquaculture Improvement Protocol, discuss the inputs provided during the national public consultations, seek agreement on the terms of reference and working procedures for the Steering Committee, and make plans for the 60-day public comment period. The Steering Committee developed a 3rd working draft of the standard that would be released for the first public comment period in August 2014.

1st Public Comment Period.

A 60-day Public Comment Period was initiated on August 11 – October 10, 2014. During the 60-day commentary period, stakeholders were invited to submit comments on any part of the draft document. All submitted comments during the public comment period will receive an official reply from the steering committee that will be posted on a public domain. The steering committee is required to review all public comments received, but as the decision making body, they reserve the right to decide on whether the comments are incorporated in the standard. Nine public comments were received on the document.

3rd Steering Committee Meeting.

A 3rd Steering Committee was convened in Bangkok, Thailand on October 14 - 15, 2014. Eleven steering committee members and two observers met to review the results of the public comment period, draft responses for the public comments received, and to finalize the field-testing phase.

Field Testing.
This phase allowed the Steering Committee to understand the practical application of the standard as applied across a practical, real-time setting with select shrimp farmers in the region. It was designed to test the applicability of the protocol in the field, and to highlight any issues that may require modifications to be made in the protocol. This is a critical part of making sure the discussions and work of the Steering Committee is more easily implementable upon the completion of the process. Assessments were conducted between August and December 2014. The assessed farms cover four different countries (Thailand, Vietnam, Indonesia and the Philippines), and included four different farming intensity levels (extensive, semi-extensive, intensive and super-intensive). Findings from the field tests suggests that compliance levels range from 56% to 91%, and that there are no major differences among the general compliance levels of the farms observed.

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<thead>
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<td>11</td>
<td>Vietnam</td>
<td>Cau Mau</td>
<td>Extensive</td>
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</table>

4th Steering Committee Meeting.

The 4th Steering Committee meeting was convened in Bangkok, Thailand on January 19-20, 2014. Eight steering committee members and seven observers attended the meeting and met to review the results from the field testing phase, confirm responses to the public comments received, discuss a new name for the process, discuss ideas for the verification, and to discuss pilot projects to the finalized protocol, auditing checklist, and the interest of buyers. The Steering Committee further developed and refined a 4th working draft of the standard that would be released for a 2nd public comment period (30 days).

Process Name Change.
At the 4th Steering Committee meeting, the Steering Committee members decided to change the name of the tool from “Shrimp Standard for the ASEAN Region” to “Southeast Asian Shrimp Aquaculture Improvement Protocol (SEASAIP)” as of February 1st, 2015. The change of name was made to ensure that the initiative is accurately reflected from its name, and to avoid any confusion with other existing initiatives.

2nd Public Comment Period.

A second public comment period was convened from February 10, 2015 to April 15, 2015 to allow all stakeholders to observe how their initial comments were considered, and also provide another opportunity to comment on the draft protocol. As with the first public comment period, the steering committee will issue an official reply for all comments collected during the public comment period.

Transition from the USAID M.A.R.K.E.T Project to Seafood Watch.

On May 1st, 2015, the USAID M.A.R.K.E.T project ended and the convener role, which is responsible for managing the process including setting up meetings, fundraising, and ensuring that the process moves forward was passed by vote of the Steering Committee to the Seafood Watch Program at the Monterey Bay Aquarium. The ownership and decision making role remains with the Steering Committee and the convener can be changed at any time.

Finalization of Draft #5.

The present document is the finalized version of Draft #5 which will remain in place for at least 1 year. This draft will serve as the basis for the demonstration phase which will begin later in 2015 and remain in place indefinitely.

Development of the Verification System.

Once draft #5 is finalized by vote of the Steering Committee then a verification system that ensures that the benchmarks included in ASIC Shrimp will be developed and will need to be approved by the Steering Committee.

Demonstration Phase.
The demonstration phase will test the ability of the ASIC Shrimp tool to bring producers and buyers together to foster improvements in the Southeast Asian shrimp aquaculture industry. The goal of the demonstration phase is to determine how many farms can be brought into the program immediately at Level 1 vs. how many will need to be improved. In addition, the demonstration phase will test the ability of the verification system to communicate performance and improvements to buyers and the marketplace.

5th Steering Committee Meeting.

The 5th Steering Committee meeting was held in Bangkok, Thailand on January 20 – 21, 2016. Agenda items will included checking in on the status of the project, planning the pilot assessments, and identification of next steps. Including: consideration of an internal control system for the process and development of a Level 2 that would be considered a Seafood Watch “Green” or “Best Choice”.