Project Update: May 2011

The project has been implemented since December 2010 in Phu Quoc Island. The selected area for implementation is Ham Ninh fishing village where seahorses are caught and traded the most.

During the last 6 months, activities have included:

- Investigating the fishing status of seahorses by direct interview of fishermen who have been involving in capturing seahorses either as targeted or non-targeted species. Total fishermen were interviewed was 30, mainly in Ham Ninh area.
- Investigating the maturation and spawning season of seahorses: six sampling periods have been conducted. Measuring and recording samples of seahorses have been done at a landing point. All seahorses' samples were measured the length and recorded for sex ratio, ratio of egg-pouch males.
- Direct sampling and recording number of seahorses caught have been implemented monthly from a selected fishing boat. Sampling for plankton and water quality in the fishing area has been also conducted at the same time. Total of 24 phytoplankton samples, 24 zooplankton samples and 24 physical-chemical water samples (with 10 parameters per given period) were collected and being analysed. A logging book was given to the fishermen for recording all the figures needed in other days. A total of 20 samples of seahorse females have been collected each month for histological analysis of the gonad in the laboratory.
- Identification of seahorses at the landing point is also routinely done. There have been at least 3 species recognised from the samples, in which *Hippocampus kuda* is the most abundant species.
- All data are being processed.
- Besides the seahorses, investigation on fishing and marine culture status in Phu Quoc was also additionally accomplished.

Problem encountered: it is difficult to approach the traders to get data, though they are allow measuring the seahorses, recorded landing data are not regularly obtained.

Planning: monthly samples will be continuously implemented until November 2011, try to approach a full landing data set.