



# **Implementing the Strategic Action Programme for the South China Sea and Gulf of Thailand (SCS SAP Project)**

**First Meeting of the Regional Working Group on Coral Reefs**

Teleconference, 2 December 2021

## **Provisional Terms of Reference for the Regional Working Group on Coral Reefs UNEP/GEF SCS SAP Project**



## INTRODUCTION

According to the initial project document of the SCS SAP project in line with the Strategic Action Programme, Outcome 1.2. 110,430 ha of coral reef at 46 priority sites managed sustainably through the following:

- 1.2.1 Management capacity (number/levels human resources, facilities and equipment, and sustainable financing mechanisms) built for 46 coral reef sites
- 1.2.2 Management approaches and policy, legal & institutional reforms (integrated, community- based, multiple use) improved at 46 coral reef sites
- 1.2.3 Management tools (licensing and permit systems, seasonal closures, zoning) developed and utilized to address key threats at priority sites
- 1.2.4 Established mechanism for monitoring management, ecological and socio-economic indicators at 46 sites [based on SAP results framework]

According to the Terms of Reference of the Regional Working Group on Coral reefs (RWG-CR), adopted at the 1<sup>st</sup> Project Steering Committee (29-30 June 2021), the purpose of RWG-CR has the responsibility ***“for coordinating the work of the National Coral Reefs Committees established in each of the participating countries; for ensuring effective implementation of project activities undertaken in the context of the achievement of the coral reef management targets of the project; and to provide a mechanism for exchange of information and experience of coral reef management activities in each country.”***

The RWG-CR of the SCS SAP Project shall consist of the Chairpersons of the National Coral Reef Committees together with one member of the SCS SAP Project Coordination Unit and selected regional experts. The SCS SAP Project Coordination Unit in consultation with the National Technical Focal Points for the project shall nominate no more than four such experts to ensure a balance of expertise and specialization consistent with the mandate of the working group. The membership of the RWG-CR shall be formally established at the first meeting of the Working Group, which shall elect a Chairperson and a Vice-Chair from amongst its members. The Vice-Chair shall act as Chairperson of meetings in the absence of the Chairperson. The Chairperson of the RWG-CR will represent the RWG-CR on the Regional Scientific and Technical Committee (RSTC) and will attend the meetings of that Committee.

The objectives of this First Meeting of the Regional Working Group on Coral Reefs include:

1. Present and discuss the SAP targets for coral reefs, and selected sites
2. Present the compiled information provided on the status of SAP implementation between 2008- 2020, which will be further developed into a publication in 2022
3. Present the compiled information on the national revisions to targets and sites, building upon recent and ongoing projects, initiatives and best practices;
4. Discuss executing arrangement and workplans for 2021-2022

The meeting will be conducted using Zoom, and therefore will be open for additional national experts to participate.

## **Provisional Terms of Reference for the Regional Working Group on Coral Reefs**

### **1. RATIONALE AND PURPOSE OF A REGIONAL WORKING GROUP ON CORAL REEFS**

1.1 To facilitate the achievement of the Strategic Action Programme targets for coral reefs, a Regional Working Group on Coral Reefs (RWG-CR) shall be established with overall responsibility for: coordinating the work of the National Coral Reefs Committees established in each of the participating countries; for ensuring effective implementation of project activities undertaken in the context of the achievement of the coral reef management targets of the project; and to provide a mechanism for exchange of information and experience of coral reef management activities in each country.

### **2. MEMBERSHIP**

2.1 The RWG-CR of the SCS SAP Project shall consist of the Chairpersons of the National Coral Reef Committees together with one member of the SCS SAP Project Coordination Unit and selected regional experts. The SCS SAP Project Coordination Unit in consultation with the National Technical Focal Points for the project shall nominate no more than four such experts to ensure a balance of expertise and specialisation consistent with the mandate of the working group.

2.2 The membership of the RWG-CR shall be formally established at the first meeting of the Working Group, which shall elect a Chairperson and a Vice-Chair from amongst its members. The Vice-Chair shall act as Chairperson of meetings in the absence of the Chairperson. The Chairperson of the RWG-CR will represent the RWG-CR on the Regional Scientific and Technical Committee (RSTC) and will attend the meetings of that Committee.

### **3. SECRETARIAT**

3.1 The SCS SAP Project Coordination Unit shall act as Secretariat to the RWG-CR, and shall ensure that reports of the meetings are circulated to all members of the working group, and are copied to the members of the Regional Scientific and Technical Committee. The National Coral Reef Committees shall serve as the principal source of national scientific and technical data and information to the RWG-CR.

### **4. MEETINGS OF THE COMMITTEE**

4.1 The SCS SAP Project Coordination Unit in consultation with the Chairperson shall convene meetings of the RWG-CR according to an agreed schedule, which will form part of the agreed work plan and timetable for the work of the Committee. The first meeting of the RWG-CR will be convened within three months of signature of the operational project document to agree on the detailed activities, workplan and timetable for the first twenty-four months of project execution leading to the project's mid-term review.

## 5. TERMS OF REFERENCE

### The RWG-CR shall:

5.1 Provide direction, and strategic guidance to the National Coral Reef Committees regarding the sustainable management of 110,430 ha of coral reef at 46 priority sites by Yr 5, including a reduction in the decadal rate of degradation in live coral cover from 16 to 5%, including the achievement of the following targets:<sup>1</sup>

- Management capacity built for 46 coral reef sites
- Management approaches (integrated, community-based, multiple use) improved at 82 coral reef sites
- Management tools (licensing and permit systems, seasonal closures, zoning) developed and utilized to address key threats at priority sites
- Established mechanism for the monitoring of management, ecological and socio-economic indicators at 46 sites

5.2 Assume overall responsibility for the timely execution of project activities in support of the achievement of the abovementioned targets;

5.3 Update, in close collaboration with the National Coral Reef Committees, the regional coral reef meta-database and GIS, including meta-data on biodiversity and the results of coral reef research pertaining to this project.

5.4 Develop, in close collaboration with the National Coral Reef Committees, public awareness and information materials concerning the national and regional importance of such ecosystems;

5.5 Receive, and review reports, data and information from the National Coral Reef Committees and compile the regional syntheses regarding coral reef management needs and priorities;

5.6 Develop guidelines regarding best practices for sustainable coral reef management for adoption and application at national level in participating countries;

5.7 Develop, review and recommend for adoption by the Regional Scientific and Technical Committee the proposed targets and timelines that may be included in a revised Strategic Action programme in order to achieve, sustainable management of coral reefs bordering the South China Sea in the longer-term;

5.8 Prepare a regional review of national experiences in coral reef restoration with a view to developing widely applicable guidelines concerning best practices in coral reef restoration and rehabilitation;

5.9 Review and evaluate, at the regional level, progress in implementation of the coral reef activities of the project, and provide guidance for improvement when necessary; and

5.10 Develop annual workplans and provide periodic progress reports to the Regional Scientific and Technical Committee.

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<sup>1</sup> To be revised if required following finalization of the National Implementation Reports