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Global Environment
Facility

*Reversing Environmental Degradation Trends
in the
South China Sea and Gulf of Thailand*

REPORT

Second Meeting of the Regional Scientific and Technical Committee

Nha Trang, Viet Nam 11th – 13th December 2002

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Report of the Meeting

1. OPENING OF THE MEETING

1.1 Opening statement from the Chairperson

1.1.1 Dr. Vo Si Tuan, Chairperson of the Regional Scientific and Technical Committee, declared the meeting open at 0900 am on Wednesday 11th December 2002. He welcomed all participants to Nha Trang, and expressed the wish that, all participants have a successful meeting and pleasant stay in Nha Trang.

1.2 Welcome address

1.2.1 The Project Director welcomed all participants to the meeting personally, and on behalf of Dr. Klaus Töpfer, the Executive Director of UNEP, and Dr. Ahmed Djoghlaif, Director, UNEP, Division of Global Environment Facility Co-ordination.

1.2.2 He informed the meeting that many things had happened since the last session of the Regional Scientific and Technical Committee and that one of the tasks of the RSTC was to review the implementation of project activities during the inter-sessional period, including both the achievements and the problems encountered. The Committee needs to discuss various issues and to provide advice to the Project Steering Committee and Project Co-ordinating Unit regarding numerous scientific, technical, and operational matters.

1.2.3 Dr. Pernetta indicated that the important tasks of the meeting were to look forward, to plan the future implementation of project activities, and to provide guidance to the RWGs at regional level and NTWGs at national level on their work plans and activities.

1.2.4 Dr. Pernetta emphasised that the sustainability of the project was a critical issue that needed to be considered by the Committee. He noted that sustaining the benefits of the project beyond the life of this project was an issue that had been raised during the first meeting of the Project Steering Committee. He noted further that, arrangements for future execution of project activities needs to take account of the need to secure more co-financing resources for the demonstration sites and pilot activities.

1.3 Introduction of members

1.3.1 As this was the first full meeting following appointment of the Chairpersons of the Regional Working Groups and the regional experts, members were invited to introduce themselves to the meeting by providing a brief outline of their experience, expertise, and involvement in the execution of the project. The list of participants is attached as Annex 1 to this report.

2. ORGANISATION OF THE MEETING

2.1 Officers of the meeting

2.1.1 The Chairperson drew the attention of members to the Rules of Procedure, as agreed during the first meeting of the Regional Scientific and Technical Committee (RSTC), which allow for the election of a Chairperson, Vice-Chairperson and Rapporteur to serve for a period of one year. The Chairperson and Vice-Chairperson attend, as observers, the Project Steering Committee meeting to report on the work of the Committee during their period of Office.

2.1.2 During its first meeting, the RSTC had elected Dr. Vo Si Tuan, Mr. Koch Savath and Mr. Huang Zhengguang as Chairperson, Vice Chairperson and Rapporteur of the RSTC respectively. Dr. Vo Si Tuan, therefore continued to serve as Chairperson, Mr. Savath as Vice-Chairperson and Mr. Huang as Rapporteur for this meeting.

2.1.3 It was proposed by the Project Director that the RSTC form an *ad hoc* reporting group, consisting of the three officers of the Committee, together with such other members, as the committee deemed appropriate, to take responsibility for the preparation, during the meeting, of the formal report of the RSTC that, will be presented by the Chairperson, to the Project Steering Committee on December 16th, 2002.

2.1.4 The Chairperson invited volunteers to join the reporting group. On the suggestion from, and with agreement of the meeting, Dr. Ong Jin-Eong, Expert member, and Ms. Kluephan Baitrakul, National Technical Focal Point from Thailand joined the *ad hoc* reporting group. Mr. Yihang Jiang, Senior Expert, was requested to act as the secretary of this group.

2.2 Documentation available to the meeting

2.2.1 Mr. Jiang, Secretary to the Committee, introduced this agenda item by referring participants to document UNEP/GEF/SCS/RSTC.2/Inf.2. He informed the meeting that most documents for this meeting had been circulated to the members of the Committee six weeks before the meeting, and that all documents had been posted on the project web-site <<http://www.unepscs.org>>. He further informed the meeting and apologised that, due to various reasons, some of the documents had been sent to the members late. The list of documents available to the meeting is attached as Annex 2 to this report.

2.3 Programme of work

2.3.1 Mr. Jiang briefed the meeting on the proposed programme of work, prepared by the PCU and contained in information document UNEP/GEF/SCS/RSTC.2/Inf.3. He further advised members of the administrative arrangements for the conduct of the meeting.

2.3.2 The Committee agreed to conduct its meeting in plenary as far as possible. The committee further agreed that sessional working groups could be formed when necessary to deliberate on items between the plenary sessions. The meeting was conducted in English.

3. ADOPTION OF THE MEETING AGENDA

3.1 The Chairperson introduced the provisional agenda for the meeting as contained in discussion document UNEP/GEF/SCS/RSTC.2/1. He invited comments and suggestions from members on any modifications or additions to the agenda of the meeting.

3.2 There being no proposals for additional items or changes to the provisional agenda it was adopted as the agenda without modification and is attached as Annex 3 to this report.

4. REPORT OF THE PROJECT DIRECTOR ON ACTIVITIES DURING 2002

4.1 Dr. Pernetta presented the report of the Project Director to the Project Steering Committee, for the year 2002 (document UNEP/GEF/SCS/PSC.2/4). He briefed the meeting on the major events and achievements during the year 2002.

4.2 He informed the Committee that the reports of the first and second meetings of the Regional Working Groups for the project components and sub-components, had all been published with the exception of the reports for the second meetings of the coral reef and seagrass sub-components which were in press. Photocopies of these reports were available to members and the reports had been posted on the project website. The RWGs had reviewed national data and information, past and on-going activities and legal and institutional frameworks and substantive outcomes and outputs had been produced at both national and regional levels.

4.3 Dr. Pernetta informed the meeting that the GIS workshop organised in co-operation with SEA START RC, had resulted in agreement regarding the form and structure of the regional GIS database and meta-database, which are now under construction. Co-operation with ICLARM on the development of the Coastal Challenge Programme could result in a regional programme covering coastal areas and

he noted that the ICLARM secretariat had contacted and received responses from numerous focal points for this project. He also informed the meeting on the status of the preparation of a project proposal on coastal resource valuation which will be considered for support by the Netherlands Foundation for Tropical research (WOTRO) on 17th December 2002.

4.4 He noted that the Project Co-ordinating Unit was fully staffed by 16th April, but that it had operated with insufficient work-space and equipment until the beginning of December. The project web-site had been brought online in August, and provided a useful tool for the distribution of meeting documents and project information. He invited participants to inform the PCU of any problems which they had encountered in accessing the site or downloading information and noted that he had in fact visited the site prior to the opening of the meeting using his mobile phone and portable computer.

4.5 Dr. Pernetta reported to the Committee that some difficulties had been encountered during the first year of operation, which were mainly associated with the mid year reports and expenditure statements. He apologised for the delay in transferring the second payments to some of the Specialised Executing Agencies (SEAs), but indicated that the delays resulted from the necessity to meet the financial rules of the United Nations. He noted that as the SEAs became familiar with these rules such delays should be eliminated in the future.

4.6 Mr. Sudariyono, the National Technical Focal Point from Indonesia, asked a question regarding Table 3 of the report, which indicated the dates by which mid year reports had been received by the PCU. Dr. Pernetta provided clarification and informed the meeting that Table 3 was just a simple table indicating the situation regarding the timing of submission of the mid year reports, expenditure statements and the cash advance requests.

4.7 The meeting accepted the report of the Project Director.

5. PRESENTATIONS BY THE NATIONAL TECHNICAL FOCAL POINTS (NTFP) ON THE WORK OF THE NATIONAL TECHNICAL WORKING GROUPS AND EXECUTION OF PROJECT ACTIVITIES AT THE NATIONAL LEVEL¹

5.1 Cambodia

5.1.1 Mr. Koch Savath, the National Technical Focal Point from Cambodia presented his report as Chairperson of the National Technical Working Group. He informed the meeting that the MOUs between UNEP and relevant institutions in Cambodia concerning the implementation of the project activities were signed in January 2002 and that implementation of project activities had started immediately thereafter, including the establishment of the National Technical Working Group.

5.1.2 He noted that the NTWG played an important role in co-ordinating project activities at the national level among the six components, and in providing ideas and technical advice to the national committees for the project components and sub-components. He informed the meeting that the Inter-Ministry Committee of Cambodia (IMC) had met on 27 June 2002 with participation of 35 persons from relevant ministries and local agencies. He noted further that meetings of the national committees for each project component and sub-component had taken place throughout the year.

5.1.3 Mr. Savath reported to the Committee the status of implementation of project activities in Cambodia including the review of national data and information, review of past and on-going projects, and creation of the national GIS database and meta-database.

5.1.4 He reported to the meeting that the main problems encountered during the first year of project implementation had involved difficulties in providing information on the concept at the national level, and in the organisation of the national meetings. He noted that it would be helpful if the agenda and objectives of the meetings could be provided together with the invitation letter, and sent to the identified participants earlier.

¹ Summaries of these reports are provided in Annex 4 of this report.

5.2 China

5.2.1 Mr. Zhengguang HUANG, the National Technical Focal Point from China, presented the Report of the Chairperson of the National Technical Working Group. He informed the meeting that the Government of China had provided cash co-financing equivalent to 1.9 million US dollars for the implementation of project activities at the national level. In addition negotiations with the local government of Fangchenggang City had resulted in the local government investing 30,000 US\$ in establishing a mangrove management committee and GIS database. Negotiations were underway with various local governments and if successful, may result in additional co-financing in cash, equivalent to a half million US dollars, by June or July next year. These commitments clearly indicate that the Government of China pays special attention to the implementation of this project.

5.2.2 He informed the meeting that the NTWG had held 4 meetings, one preparatory meeting, and 3 working meetings during the year and noted that, the last meeting of the NTWG had been attended by, representatives from local government. It was well recognised in China that in order to ensure the success of the project, the participation of the local governments in planning and management of project activities was vital.

5.2.3 Mr. Huang reported to the Committee on the status of implementation of the project activities in China on the 4 components, in which China participates. He also informed the meeting that the main difficulties encountered during the first year involved delays in receipt of the second tranche of GEF grant funds. He confirmed that the delay was not due to delays on the part of the PCU but difficulties on the part of the SEAs in completing the necessary reports and expenditure statements. As this was the first time for the SEAs to prepare half yearly reports and expenditure statements, it had taken time for them to be completed. The second difficulty was that, the provision of data and information to the regional level needed the approval of the government, which would result in delays in submission.

5.2.4 Mr. Jiang commented on the issue of the provision of data and information and indicated that, the MOU between UNEP and the relevant ministries in the participating countries, included an agreement on the provision of data and information. Appropriate mechanisms should be established by the Inter-Ministry Committee to address this problem.

5.2.5 Mr. Dibyo asked whether the co-financing from the Government of China was to be used for the agreed activities, or if it represented existing funds for activities that were related to the project. Mr. Huang clarified that the funding was new and additional for the project activities, and can be used to collect new data. For example, there was no seagrass data available at the start of the project and in order to fulfil the tasks agreed by the project, several field surveys had been carried out using the funds provided by the government to the project.

5.2.6 Dr. Pernetta informed the meeting that in the case of mangroves in China, the co-financing had been used to collect satellite images and produce digitised GIS maps of mangrove habitats. He further confirmed that the GEF likes to see the GEF funding being used to leverage additional cofinancing.

5.2.7 In responding to the question raised by Mr. Lee on whether the US\$ 1.9 million represents a special allocation to this project, Mr. Huang confirmed that the funding is for this project only.

5.3 Indonesia

5.3.1 Mr. Sudaryono, the National Technical Focal Point from Indonesia presented the report of the NTWG. He informed the meeting that from its inception, the project has been designed to create a "work-together" and "concerned-together" system among institutions and individuals in the form of National Committees, which consisted of representatives from institutions and individuals from both the government and national NGO community. By the end of November 2002, the six national committees had held several meetings to discuss various topics regarding the execution of project activities.

5.3.2 He also reported on the implementation of the project activities at national level, which included a review of national legislation, review of national data and information and past and on-going projects. These reviews had been carried out in nine provinces, bordering the South China Sea.

5.3.3 The Indonesian National Committees for the six components are proposing three locations for each component and/or sub-component as demonstration sites, which are:

- Mangrove: Batu Ampar (West Kalimantan) and Jakarta;
- Coral Reef: Bareleng-Bintan Islands, Natuna Islands and Senayang-Lingga Islands, all of these demonstration sites are located in the Province of Riau;
- Wetlands: Sembilang (South Sumatera);
- Seagrass: Tanjung Berikat (Bintan Island) and Banten Bay;
- Land-based Pollution: Batam Island, Pontianak (West Kalimantan) and Jakarta.

5.3.4 Mr. Sudariyono concluded that the implementation of project activities in Indonesia was proceeding smoothly and within the timeframe agreed by the Regional Working Groups for the various components and sub-components.

5.3.5 In responding to a question raised by Dr. Anond on the provision of data and information as agreed during the GIS workshop, Mr. Sudariyono informed the meeting that following that workshop, it had been agreed by the National Technical Working Group that, the GIS experts who attended the workshop will take responsibility for the relevant activities in Indonesia.

5.3.6 It was also noted that the geographic scope of the Indonesian work was wider than the geographic scope of the existing South China Sea, in the GIS database.

5.4 Malaysia

5.4.1 Mr. Lee Heng Keng, designated alternate, presented the report of the National Technical Focal Point and apologised on her behalf that she was unable to attend the meeting due to prior commitments. He informed the meeting that the MOU between the Ministry of Science, Technology and Environment (MOSTE) and UNEP regarding project co-ordination had been signed and forwarded to the PCU in September 2002. The MOUs for 3 components namely coral reefs, seagrass and land-based pollution had also been signed and forwarded on the same date. The wetland MoU had been signed and submitted on the 11th November 2002.

5.4.2 The National Technical Working Group met for the first time on the 18th November 2002 to discuss the work plan. The full implementation of project activities would commence in early 2003.

5.5 Philippines

5.5.1 Dr. Gil Jacinto, the National Technical Focal Point from the Philippines gave a presentation on the activities carried out in the country during the first year of the project. He informed the meeting that the Inter-Ministry Committee was established and had its first meeting on 21 November 2002. The Committee is composed of the heads/representatives of various institutions and agencies. The IMC was briefed by the NTFP and the component focal points on the status of the project. The terms of reference of the IMC were reviewed and approved.

5.5.2 The NTWG had held 12 meetings during 2002 that had focused on progress in the various components and activities, data management and collection (including GIS requirements), and administrative issues. The NTWG had also conducted a project organisational workshop (3-5 July 2002) with participation of 34 heads/representatives of 14 agencies and groups in the country, most of them were members of the national committees of the various project components. At the last meeting of the NTWG among the issues discussed and requiring follow-up actions were: the testing of the blast fishing detection system and concerns related to intellectual property rights.

5.5.3 Reviews of national data and information have been done for many of the components with significant progress having been made by the corals, seagrass, and wetlands components. Site selection criteria for demonstration sites have also been put forward and discussed, but there is a need to harmonize these criteria so that 2 or 3 national (and possibly regional) demonstration sites could be considered. Initial compilations of national policies and legislation related to the various components have been made, but these also need to be further integrated and evaluated. A national management and action plan for seagrass has been drafted, but the consensus of the NTWG is that, in addition to management and action plans for each habitat, it would be more appropriate to develop an integrated, cross-component and cross-sectoral management and action plan. Guidance is being sought to address the possible overlap of activities of the wetlands component with the other components (e.g., coral reef, mangroves, and seagrass).

5.6 Thailand

5.6.1 Ms. Kluephan Baitrakul, the National Technical Focal Point from Thailand presented the report of the Chairperson of the National Technical Working Group. She informed the meeting that Thailand's National Technical Working Group (NTWG) had been established on 5 April 2002. The working group is composed of Chairpersons from six components of the project, as well as four experts from the related fields of resource economics, environmental law, coastal and marine environmental management, and data and information management. During the year 2002, the Office of Natural Resources and Environmental Policy and Planning had convened three meetings of Thailand's NTWG.

5.6.2 She reported to the Committee that the major problems that seem to be affecting the progress and activities of the project, include the delay in transferring funds from the Project Co-ordinating Unit to National Focal Point and SEAs, the disbursement of funds within the SEAs, because of strict financial rules and regulations of individual organisations and the workload associated with preparing the GIS database. She informed the Committee that the first problem has been resolved by the PCU.

5.7 Viet Nam

5.7.1 Dr. Vo Si Tuan, the National Technical Focal Point from Viet Nam presented the report of the Chairperson of the National Technical Working Group. He reported that the National Technical Working Group was established by the decision of National Steering Committee. The group included 2 sub-groups, a permanent sub-group consisted of 9 members and an Assistant sub-group whose activities are co-ordinated by the National Environment Agency (NEA). The first meeting of the NTWG was held in the National Environment Agency offices on 14th April 2002 with participation of representatives from all the Specialised Executing Agencies and the NEA. There were two meetings organised subsequently to discuss matters concerning the implementation of project activities. With respect to the National Committees, the mangrove group had held 8 meetings; the coral reef and seagrass groups two meetings each; the fishery group two meetings; and, the land-based pollution group had convened four meetings during the year.

5.7.2 He introduced the outcomes and outputs of project implementation at the national level, and the status of the project activities. With regard to the review of past and on-going projects, all sub-components had completed this task. All other activities are still on-going. The main output of the fisheries component was introduced, which included the first draft of the national report, the review of national fisheries, species with transboundary significance, criteria for resource protection, threats and status of environment and resources, review of legislation in fisheries management, policy and strategy to develop fisheries and the fisheries database. The outputs of the land-based component included the first draft of the review of the national report prepared as part of the Transboundary Diagnostic Analysis; updated and revised data and information; first draft of legislation and institutional arrangements concerned with environmental criteria; discharge management and monitoring; and, the first draft identification of hot spots including Ha Long-Hai Phong, Vung Tau Ganh Rai, Da Nang-Dung Quat, Rach Gia – Kien Giang.

6. PRESENTATION BY THE CHAIRPERSONS, ON THE WORK OF THE SIX REGIONAL WORKING GROUPS AND IMPLEMENTATION OF THE PROJECT ACTIVITIES AT REGIONAL LEVEL²

6.1 Regional Working Group for Land-based Pollution

6.1.1 Dr. Pham Van Ninh, Vice-Chairperson of the Regional Working Group on Land-based Pollution presented the report, on behalf of the Chairperson, Mr. Sudariyono, who is also the National Technical Focal Point of Indonesia. Dr. Ninh informed the meeting that there were two regional working group meetings on Land-based Pollution in 2002.

6.1.2 The main achievements of the group include:

- Establishment in the participating countries and the region, of the components of the management framework which have been shown to be effective;
- During the intersessional period, the Regional Working Group had discussed through an electronic discussion group, regional water quality criteria, based on the ASEAN water criteria and the Chinese Water Criteria. The Regional Working Group had agreed to adopt the Chinese standards for biological and sediment samples as the regional criteria for the comparison of regional data and information;
- Substantive data and information were provided by the National Committees from the participating countries, which will serve as the basis for an overview of the status of land-based pollution in the region.

6.1.3 The problems encountered during the first year of implementation were mainly associated with a too early focus of project efforts on the selected sites in the participating countries.

6.1.4 It was noted that the PSC should assist the Chinese sub-group for land-based pollution to solve the problem of getting data and information relevant to Hong Kong as the area around the mouth of the Pearl River is considered to be an important hot spot of land-based pollution in China.

6.2 Regional Working Group on Fisheries

6.2.1 Mr. Ing Try, the Chairperson of the Regional Working Group on Fisheries (RWG-F), presented the report for the year. He informed the meeting that the RWG-F currently has representatives from 5 countries, Cambodia, Indonesia, Philippines, Thailand and Viet Nam. Malaysia and China are not participating in the Fisheries component in the initial stages of the project.

6.2.2 The RWG-F met on two occasions in 2002, in May and in October. At the first meeting, a work plan and timetable were agreed, as well as the outline for a National Report from each country.

6.2.3 In the period between the two meetings, the focal points for fisheries in each country, assisted by the Special Executing Agency (SEA) and the National Fisheries Committee (NFC), had collected data and information, and produced a first draft of their National Reports, based on the agreed outline.

6.2.4 At the second meeting, representatives from Cambodia, Indonesia, Thailand, and Viet Nam, presented the first drafts of their National Reports. The Philippines did not attend this second meeting, and to date has not presented a first draft of their National Report. Considerable data and information had been collected, however, a substantial amount of work is still required in order to produce acceptable reports by the due date. It was agreed that the National Reports would be completed by the end of the first quarter of 2003, though the chapter dealing with the habitats would be completed by 21st February, 2003 so that it could be considered at the third round of meetings of the habitat sub-components of the project scheduled for late February and early March, 2003.

² Summaries of these reports are presented in Annex 5 of this report.

6.2.5 Also at this second meeting, a list of species of transboundary significance, and a list of endangered and threatened species for the South China Sea region, to be considered in the National Reports, was discussed and agreed.

6.2.6 Concern was expressed by the members of the RWG-F that the GIS representatives from each country who had participated in the GIS workshop had failed to contact or communicate adequately with the Fisheries Focal Points, resulting in a noticeable lack of progress in the GIS related work.

6.2.7 A number of time-bound targets and other decisions relating to fisheries conservation and fish stock rehabilitation, which will have significance to the work of the RWG-F, were reached at the World Summit on Sustainable Development (WSSD) held in Johannesburg from 26th August – 4th September 2002.

6.3 Regional Working Group on Mangroves

6.3.1 Dr. Sonjai Havanond, the Chairperson of the Regional Working Group on Mangroves presented the report and informed the RSTC that, the first meeting had been held in Phuket, Thailand, and had discussed and agreed on approaches to be used in the conduct of the causal chain analyses once the potential demonstration sites have been identified. During the second meeting, in Ho Chi Minh City, Viet Nam, the members discussed and agreed on a revised and accelerated schedule of activities to meet the overall project goals, including the delivery of interim products according to a shortened timetable. The meeting had also agreed on species lists of obligate and associated mangrove species that would be used in the site characterisations.

6.3.2 He reported to the Committee that the implementation of the project activities had been smooth and successful, including: the reviews of past and on-going activities; national data and information; creation of national meta-databases; reviews of national legislation, and economic valuation.

6.3.3 Delivery of outputs has been slow to date with some countries being more advanced than others. Few deliverables have been produced according to the agreed schedules with some countries showing considerably more progress than others.

6.3.4 The level of detail provided in reports to date varies both in terms of the detail contained in individual sections of each national report and in terms of the detail contained in the different national reports. This is not unexpected since it reflects both the availability of information and the range of expertise contained within the different national committees.

6.3.5 Whilst it seems likely that, the deliverables required for the third meeting of the Regional Working Group will be available from most countries prior to the meeting, a number will have to invest considerably more time in order to ensure that the target dates are met.

6.3.6 Dr. Pernetta asked a question regarding the status of the mangrove sub-component in Malaysia and Mr. Lee Heng Keng, informed the meeting that discussions were on-going in Malaysia and the National Focal Point would report on the status at the forthcoming Project Steering Committee meeting.

6.4 Regional Working Group on Coral Reefs

6.4.1 Mr. Kim Sour, the Chairperson of the Regional Working Group on Coral Reefs (RWG-CR) presented the report. He informed the meeting that the RWG-CR is composed of the Focal Points for Coral Reefs from Cambodia, Indonesia, Malaysia, Philippines, Thailand, and Viet Nam, two Regional Experts, and one member from the Project Coordinating Unit.

6.4.2 The RWG-CR has had two regional meetings. The First Meeting was held in May in Bangkok, Thailand and the Second Meeting was in October in Sihanoukville, Cambodia. The First Meeting was to orient the members of the RWG-CR to the objectives and financial procedures of the South China Sea Project, develop a workplan, and provide details for the characterisation of coral reef sites.

6.4.3 The draft reviews and reports that have been received to date vary in quality and volume. The characterisation of these coral reef sites in Thailand is underway.

6.4.4 There were a few difficulties encountered in the execution of national and regional activities including the collection and synthesis of socio-economic data and information for the characterisation of sites and the review of "valuation data and information", which were difficult due to the dispersed data and information on economic benefits from coral reefs.

6.4.5 Following an extensive discussion the recommendation of the Regional Working Group on Coral Reefs to retarget the agreed activities and budget allocation for the testing of a blast fishing device was agreed by committee. The Committee noted that the proposed activities in the coral reef sub-component were to be completed during the first two years, and that the actual testing would be over-seen by the fisheries RWG and would take place later in the project. The Committee noted that the budget line for actual testing of the device was separate from that of the Coral Reef SEAs and agreed with the recommendation of the Regional Working Group regarding the re-allocation of the coral reef budget line for the blast fishing activities to a broader based review of threats to coral reefs at the site level.

6.5 Regional Working Group on Seagrasses

6.5.1 Mr. Xiaoping Huang, Chairperson of the Regional Working Group (RWG-SG) on Seagrass, presented the report and noted that the RWG-SG has representatives from all seven participating countries.

6.5.2 The RWG-SG had met on two occasions in 2002, in May and in October. At the first meeting, a workplan and timetable was agreed, as well as the data and information requirements from each country. A significant outcome from the first meeting was the table of parameters and indicators required to characterise seagrass sites.

6.5.3 In the period between the two meetings, the focal points for seagrass in each country, assisted by their Special Executing Agency (SEA) and the National Seagrass Committee (NFC), had collected data and information and produced first drafts of:

- Review of past and on-going projects;
- Identification and characterisation of "sites"; and,
- Review National legislation

6.5.4 It is vital that the National Seagrass Committees and Regional Working Group follow the agreed workplan and timetable if the project is to proceed on schedule, and decisions can be made by the PSC on the selection of the most appropriate demonstration sites in December 2003.

6.6 Regional Working Group on Wetlands

6.6.1 Mr. Dibyo Sartono, the Chairperson of the Regional Working Group on Wetlands (RWG-W), presented the report. He informed the meeting that the RWG-W is composed of the seven Focal Points for Wetlands, two regional experts, and one member from the Project Coordinating Unit.

6.6.2 The RWG-W met for the first time in April in Phuket, Thailand and again in September in Shenzhen, China. The First Meeting was to orient the members of the RWG-W to the objectives and financial procedures of the South China Sea Project, develop a workplan, identify the scope of work of wetlands, and provide details for the characterisation of wetland sites. The Second Meeting was convened to inform members of the progress of work, to deliberate on the difficulties, and to identify solutions. At the Second Meeting of the RWG-W, an important discussion was also conducted on broadening the scope of work of the RWG-W. During the intersessional period between the First and Second Meetings of the RWG-W, an electronic discussion was held on the re-scoping of the work of the RWG-W.

6.6.3 There were difficulties experienced by the Focal Points for Wetlands in executing the activities of the wetland sub-component. The broad scope of work, limited trained personnel in some countries, and lack of appropriate data in many countries, made the work of the RWG-W difficult. It was suggested that the National Technical Working Groups consider focusing on one area and working in a more integrated manner across the habitat components. Professor Ong Jin-Eong informed the meeting that in his opinion it would be extremely difficult to identify one site, which encompassed all the habitat types since these biological communities required quite different physical and chemical environments. In addition if one looks at mangroves, coral reefs and seagrass then there is no indication that these systems are functionally linked even when they are found in close proximity to one another.

6.6.4 It was noted that even though there is no budget allocation of GEF grant funds for demonstration sites within the wetland sub-component, there is still a need to prepare proposals for wetlands demonstration sites, which can be used by the PCU to raise co-financing from other sources.

6.6.5 There was extensive discussion on the scope of the work for the wetland sub-component. Dr. Ong stated that there are two types of wetlands, which are of regional and global significance, and which should be considered namely peat swamps and freshwater swamp forests and he noted with appreciation that the wetlands group had agreed to include these within their broadened scope of work.

6.6.6 The Committee endorsed the recommendation of the RWG-W on the expansion of its scope of work to cover more types of wetlands including peat swamps, and non peat swamps in coastal areas in addition to the originally agreed mud-flats, estuaries (including deltas) and lagoons.

7. PLANNING, MANAGEMENT, AND INTEGRATION OF PROJECT ELEMENTS

7.1 Regional Perspectives and Considerations

7.2 National Perspectives and Considerations

7.3 Recommendations to the Regional Working Groups (RWGs) and the National Technical Working Groups (NTWGs)

7.1.1 The Committee agreed to discuss the three sub-items under this agenda item together.

7.1.2 Dr. Anond Snidvongs, Director of SEA START RC informed the meeting that the GIS Workshop had been organised with participation of GIS experts from all seven countries involved in the project. The workshop had agreed that the first step in preparing the regional GIS database would be to compile a regional base map, which includes shorelines, coastal administrative boundaries and river catchments. He informed the meeting that the regional default shoreline is the World Vector Shoreline in the scale of 1:1 million. Thailand has provided a 1:50,000 shoreline, and the Philippines will soon provide a 1:250,000 shoreline map to the regional GIS database.

7.1.3 With regard to the administrative boundaries and units, the regional default base map was the one produced by CIESIN. Since the GIS workshop, Thailand had provided administrative unit boundaries on the scale of 1:50K, developed by the Department of Land Development, Thailand. He informed the meeting that Cambodia and Viet Nam provided relevant data regarding the correct names of the administrative units in the coastal region.

7.1.4 As for the component specific GIS, only mangrove distribution updating by the Philippines had been received in GIS format. Cambodia and Viet Nam have provided samples of mangrove distribution but only as images. No information has been provided to either SEA START RC or the PCU for coral reefs, seagrass, wetland, land-based pollution and fisheries even though the deadline that had been agreed in the GIS workshop has passed.

7.1.5 Dr. Anond also reviewed the status of the regional meta-database, and indicated that the only contribution received to date was from Cambodia on some samples of meta-database entries.

7.1.6 On behalf of all members of the Committee, Dr. Pernetta expressed appreciation to Dr. Anond, and his staff in the SEA START RC for their efforts and co-operation in this important aspect of the project implementation. He indicated that without this assistance, it is unlikely that any significant progress would have been made to date.

7.1.7 Mr. Lee asked what would happen in the case of disputed islands, if the project received data and/or information from two countries on the same island, how would this situation be dealt with? Dr. Pernetta responded that if this happened, then neither data set would be included in the regional database.

7.1.8 Mr. Sudariyono asked about the situation regarding the provision of satellite images by UNEP to the SEAs of the participating countries. Dr. Pernetta stated that he had received approval from the highest levels in UNEP to access these satellite images but that the specific requirements needed to be identified by the Regional Working Groups, in order that a single request could be made to the GRID centre in Sioux Falls. To date only a limited number of requests have been received by the PCU.

7.1.9 The meeting noted that, it is critical to have a regional perspective on the distribution and status of the habitats in order to provide the PSC with the justification for the recommendations regarding the selection of demonstration sites. Once the sites have been selected, a decentralised system of site-specific, GIS databases would provide a more effective way of collecting and providing access to relevant data and information.

7.1.10 In responding to questions raised by some members of the Committee, Mr. Jiang indicated that the GIS questionnaires had been prepared according to the agreements of the Regional Working Groups on the data and information requirements for site characterisation. The GIS Workshop had not created any additional tasks, merely reformulated the agreed data and information requirements into a uniform format.

7.1.11 The Committee recognised the urgent need for closer cooperation between the GIS experts who had attended the GIS workshop and the focal points of the SEAs in the participating countries, and encouraged the National Technical Focal Points to facilitate such co-ordination and co-operation and to provide the data and information according to the agreement.

8. NETWORKING, TRANSLATION AND ENGAGEMENT OF THE WIDER STAKEHOLDER COMMUNITY IN PROJECT IMPLEMENTATION AND EXECUTION

8.1 Mr. Jiang introduced this agenda item and informed the members that the committee at its first meeting had requested the PCU to prepare a publication strategy providing guidelines on *inter alia* translation of key documents into appropriate languages for use at the national level (Paragraph 9.1.3 of document UNEP/GEF/SCS/RSTC.1/3).

8.2 In addition the Committee had proposed that, the PCU work with relevant persons to expand the Association of South East Asian Marine Scientists (ASEAMS) to a regional network of marine scientists covering appropriate geographic areas. (Paragraph 9.2.1 of document UNEP/GEF/SCS/RSTC.1/3).

8.3 He then introduced the document entitled "*A Communications, Networking and Publications Strategy*" (UNEP/GEF/SCS/RSTC.2/7) prepared by the Project Co-ordinating Unit. In this document there are a number of recommendations proposed by the PCU regarding: internal communications between SEAs and the PCU; external communication at the regional level; and communication at the national level. The recommendations cover a wide scope of actions, including: email communication; improvement and effective use of the project web-site; electronic discussion groups; networking of scientific communities; and enhancing public awareness of the environment problems of the South China Sea and of the project activities.

8.4 Mr. Dibyo noted that the document is very important for the project, and suggested that the National Technical Focal Points and the Chairpersons of the Regional Working Groups take prompt action after this meeting, to distribute this document widely to all institutions and individuals.

8.5 There were several proposals agreed by the meeting including:

- Translation of the introduction of the project contained in the project web-page;
- Issuing project newsletter and brochures;
- Linking the project web-site with the web-sites of the participating institutions;
- including the logos of the Key Ministries and SEAs on the website;
- more effective use of e-mail group discussions.

8.6 Mr. Sudariyono informed the meeting that the project web-site has been linked with the web-site operated by his Ministry in the URL: <www.lautkita.org>.

8.7 Ms. Kluephan informed the meeting that a Thai language web-page about the project will be developed next year, and the project brochures and booklet will also be published in Thai language. The NTWG in Thailand is also considering the translation of important project documents into Thai.

8.8 The meeting approved the recommendations contained in the document with the further suggestions mentioned in paragraph 8.5 above.

9. FURTHER CONSIDERATION OF REGIONAL CRITERIA FOR RANKING OF POTENTIAL DEMONSTRATION SITES

9.1 Mr. Jiang made a presentation on this agenda item and reminded the Committee that during its first meeting, elements for consideration by the Regional Working Groups on the habitat sub-components in developing criteria for prioritising areas of intervention had been prepared (Annex 4 of document UNEP/GEF/SCS/RSTC.1/3). The outcome of the work of the Regional Working Groups with respect to the further development of the preliminary criteria are summarised in discussion document UNEP/GEF/SCS/RSTC.2/9.

9.2 He introduced the contents of this discussion document regarding the ranking of potential demonstration sites. A three-step procedure was proposed to the Committee, namely:

- **Step 1:** use cluster analysis to review the similarity and difference of all proposed sites, and group them using objective parameters encompassing indicators of biological diversity, transboundary significance, regional and/or global significance and area;
- **Step 2:** Within the groups, apply weighted scores to the same set of elements used in the cluster analysis in order to rank the importance of the various sites;
- **Step 3:** Develop and apply a numerical score to the elements listed in the national significance and financial components of the site characterisation.

9.3 Mr. Jiang introduced an example of such a cluster analysis based on data received from the mangrove committee in China, for 5 sites. The results suggest that with appropriate transformation the data could be used successfully to group the proposed sites.

9.4 Dr. Pernetta and Prof. Ong provided explanation and information on the cluster analysis and its application for this purpose. Dr. Pernetta indicated that taking into consideration the fact that the data and information from the proposed sites, included both metric and non-metric, quantitative and non-quantitative variables, Gower's Index of similarity was an appropriate statistical tool permitting consideration of all such variables simultaneously.

9.5 The meeting discussed the proposed procedure extensively. During this discussion, various questions were raised regarding the scientific rationale and applicability of the proposed procedure and various suggestions were made regarding the weighting of the different elements.

9.6 The committee noted that the contents of this agenda item were related to the substance of agenda item 11, regarding the nature and types of the demonstration sites, and decided to postpone further discussion of item 9 and consider agenda item 11. Following consideration of agenda item 11 the meeting resumed its discussion of agenda item 9.

9.7 Mr. Dibyo asked that, since there is no budget allocation for demonstration sites within the wetland sub-component, should the regional working group continue with the process of identifying wetland demonstration sites? Dr. Pernetta confirmed that there are funds available for 9 demonstration sites under the current budget allocated by the GEF and that these did not include wetlands demonstration sites. However the Regional Working Group should continue to work on the development of proposals for demonstration sites since part of the role of the PCU was to attempt to raise, additional co-financing for such sites. If good proposals are prepared by the project components, and sub-components, these are likely to attract co-financing and the committee should note that a donors' workshop would be convened within the context of the Regional Scientific Conference scheduled for December 2003.

9.8 Dr. Anond indicated that as the proposed process is a new approach and involved some technical matters, it would be helpful if a technical workshop could be organised before the next meetings of the regional working groups for the various components, to familiarise the focal points with the methods of analysis. Dr. Pernetta responded that this would be difficult given that this would involve a total of around 80 people and funds were not available for such a large meeting. He suggested that a technical presentation would be given to each regional working group during the first day of the third meeting. The meeting agreed to the proposal.

9.9 Following extensive discussion, and clarification provided, the meeting adopted the proposed three-step procedure for ranking of potential demonstration sites as proposed by the PCU. The meeting also agreed that more weight should be given to biological diversity, threats and transboundary significance. The Committee recommended that each regional working group should carefully consider the parameters to be used in their analysis and ranking of the potential demonstration sites and that this should be conducted via e-mail discussions in advance of the next round of Regional Working Group meetings.

10. CONSIDERATION OF REGIONAL GUIDELINES FOR CAUSAL CHAIN ANALYSIS, THREAT ANALYSIS AND MANAGEMENT INTERVENTIONS FOR APPLICATION TO POTENTIAL DEMONSTRATION SITES

10.1 Causal Chain Analysis

10.2 Threat Analysis

10.3 Management Interventions

10.1.1 Dr. Pernetta introduced this agenda item by referring to the document UNEP/GEF/SCS/RSTC.2/9 which had been developed by the PCU on the basis of the discussions of the first meeting of the Regional Working Group on Mangroves. He informed the meeting that a causal chain analysis is a linear approach to analysing the proximate and ultimate or, root causes of observed environmental issues or problems in a specific location. Whilst such an analysis can be conducted for a wide geographic area the end results do little more than identify general areas of intervention either at the level of issue or problem or, at the level of cause.

10.1.2 There were four examples provided, in the document:

- Algal blooms in the Adriatic Sea;
- Mangrove Loss in Sabah;
- Conservation of Coastal Wetlands in the Red River Delta, Viet Nam; and
- Conservation of Upland Biodiversity in Yunnan, Myanmar.

10.1.3 Dr. Pernetta concluded his presentation by stating that, once the site characterisation has been completed a causal chain analysis needs to be undertaken for each site. Such an analysis would encompass the review of threats at each site, together with the management interventions that could be initiated to address the environmental issues and problems. The causal chains must identify the key environmental issues, problems or threats and their causes prior to conducting a cost benefit analysis for each potential intervention. A clear identification of the relative importance of each identified problem and the comparative importance of each cause in the case of problems with multiple causes, dictates available choices regarding the priority interventions that can be made.

10.1.4 Dr. Anond indicated that the four examples provided in the presentation were qualitative, but that a quantification of the issues, problems and causes was an imperative, if a proper analysis was to be conducted. He suggested that the National Committees for the project components and sub-components should carry out the qualitative analysis in as many sites as possible and that the quantitative analysis should be undertaken for priority demonstration sites for which full proposals were to be prepared.

10.1.5 Ms. Kluephan informed the meeting that in Thailand, there is the need to have a technical workshop to discuss the causal chain analysis next year. She invited the PCU to make a technical presentation during this workshop. On behalf of PCU, Dr. Pernetta accepted the invitation, and informed the meeting that if other countries needed the same assistance, then the PCU would be pleased to provide it. He also noted that one of the expert members of the committee, Dr. Anond, is in fact an expert in the conduct of such analyses and that perhaps he could also assist the NTWG.

10.1.6 Following the conclusion of the afternoon session Dr. Pernetta made a presentation on the conduct of transboundary diagnostic analysis and preparation of Strategic Action Programmes, based on his presentation to the GEF-International Waters Conference held in Dalian China in October.

11. GUIDANCE TO THE PSC ON THE NATURE AND TYPES OF THE DEMONSTRATION SITES TO BE ADOPTED IN THE FRAMEWORK OF THE PROJECT

11.1 This agenda item was discussed together with agenda item 9. Dr. Pernetta introduced the discussion document UNEP/GEF/RSTC.2/10 by outlining the goals and purpose of the demonstration sites, and noting that demonstration sites could be directed to:

- maintaining existing biodiversity; or,
- restoring degraded biodiversity to former levels; or,
- attempting to remove or reduce the cause, and hence reduce the existing rates of degradation; or,
- attempting preventive actions that halt the adoption of unsustainable patterns of use, before they commence.

11.2 Regarding the types of demonstration site, Dr. Pernetta indicated that the types of sites could be further divided into function related sites, process related sites and problem related sites.

11.3 Mr. Sudariyono requested clarification concerning the difference between the demonstration sites for the habitat component and pilot activities in the land-based pollution component. Dr. Pernetta responded that the pilot activities at hot spots were intended to be actions, which demonstrate alternate methods of reducing land-based pollution. However unlike the habitat demonstration sites there was no intention to attempt to manage all sources of land-based pollution within each hot-spot since this would require considerably more funds than were available to the project. In contrast the habitat demonstration sites were intended to be areas within which all activities are managed in a co-ordinated and sustainable manner.

11.4 Mr. Lee noted that from the document on the nature and types of demonstration, there is clear indication that more weight should be given to the biological diversity, threats and the transboundary significance, as discussed under agenda item 9.

11.5 Dr. Jacinto supported the view expressed by Mr. Lee and indicated that the proposed three-step procedure is acceptable, and the weighting sequence should be: biological diversity; threats; and, transboundary significance. Other parameters should receive less weight.

11.6 The meeting adopted the guidance on the nature and types of demonstration sites as proposed in the document UNEP/GEF/SCS/RSTC.2/10, subject to some re-writing and clarification that would be done by Dr. Anond and Dr. Pernetta. The Committee further agreed that this document should be submitted to the Second Meeting of the Project Steering Committee, to be held in Hanoi, 16-18 December 2002.

12. PREPARATION OF THE REGIONAL SCIENCE CONFERENCE AND PARTNERSHIP WORKSHOP

12.1 Purpose

12.1.1 Mr. Jiang introduced this agenda item by referring to document UNEP/GEF/RSTC.2/11, entitled "*A Note on the Regional Scientific Conference and Partnership Workshop*", prepared by the PCU. He informed the meeting that the Project Steering Committee in approving the framework budget for the project (paragraph 9.2.4 of document UNEP/GEF/SCS/PSC.1/3) approved an allocation of 100,000 US\$ in 2004 and a similar sum in 2006 for the convening of two regional scientific meetings and partnership conferences at which the results and outcomes of the project would be presented and discussed.

12.1.2 The purposes of the Conference in 2003 are to:

- review the outputs from the first two years (such a review providing the independent evaluators with the opportunity to see first hand, the outputs);
- provide an opportunity for wide and extensive discussion and review of the next stage of project development;
- provide the opportunity for engaging the wider scientific community in the region; and,
- provide the opportunity for engaging the donor community in the next phase of activities.

12.2 Outputs and Outcomes

12.2.1 Mr. Jiang then introduced a list of potential keynote presentations for the Conference, which clearly shows the Conference is focused on the outcomes and outputs of the implementation of the project activities in the first two years, in particular those issues related to the GEF expectations and the project components and sub-components.

12.2.2 He also introduced two alternative proposals regarding the organisation of the Conference. Alternative 1 is for a four-day meeting, and the second was for a three-day meeting. Referring to the relevant part of the document, he briefly introduced the financial considerations including estimated costs based on experience in organising the projects regional meetings in various venues.

12.2.3 The committee agreed that the PCU should explore all the possibilities to maximise the participation of regional experts in the Conference, and that support should be given to enable young scientists from the region to participate in the conference.

12.2.4 The committee also agreed that as the Conference will be organised to precede the fourth meeting of the RSTC and the third meeting of the PSC, it should be a 3-day event. The meeting also agreed that the Conference should be open to all persons who are interested in participating, within the budget limitations.

12.2.5 As the organisation of the Conference requires a considerable amount of work, the RSTC agreed to form an organising committee for this event. The members of the organising committee should consist of the National Technical Focal Points in the participating countries, or their alternates together with additional volunteers as required. The meeting entrusted the Project Director to form the organising committee.

13. WORK PLAN AND TIMETABLE FOR THE REGIONAL SCIENTIFIC AND TECHNICAL COMMITTEE

13.1 Agreed work plans and timetables for the components and sub-components of the project

13.1.1 Mr. Jiang introduced document UNEP/GEF/RSTC.2/12 containing the agreed work plans, timetables, and meeting schedules for the various habitat components and sub-components of the project. He informed the meeting that, following the second meetings of the regional working groups, the

PCU had put the work plans of the RWGs together, and found that individual work plans were generally lacking consideration of other components, and of, the agreed overall work plan and timetable for the project. It was also discovered that in some work plans and schedules, the completion dates for certain tasks would mean that the project schedule approved by the Project Steering Committee could not be met. The result of this analysis was presented to the meeting.

13.1.2 Taking into consideration these issues, the PCU had prepared the proposal for adjustment of the work plans and timetables of the regional working groups contained in Table 2 of document UNEP/GEF/RSTC.2/12.

13.1.3 Mr. Lee noted that as Malaysia had signed the MOUs only recently, the implementation of project activities was behind that of the other countries. He suggested that one possibility of catching up would be to allocate more manpower to the activities, but that this would mean the need for more funding. He sought clarification regarding the budget allocations for the SEAs in Malaysia.

13.1.4 Dr. Pernetta stated that the budget allocation for the SEAs in Malaysia was unchanged and that the original allocation of funds for the two years was still available. He offered to visit Malaysia and discuss with the focal points for the project components revisions to the budgets and work plans to accommodate the delays. Mr. Lee expressed his appreciation of this offer from the Project Director, and confirmed that he will fix a time for such a visit.

13.1.5 The meeting fully appreciated the need to reorganise the schedule and work plans of the regional working groups to meet the project deadline of deciding on the demonstration sites at the third meeting of the Project Steering Committee, but noted that the reorganisation should be realistic.

13.1.6 The meeting agreed to change the completion dates for all "reviews" to ten working days before the third meetings of the regional working groups. The revised schedule for the completion of the tasks of the regional working groups associated with demonstration site selection is attached as Annex 6 to this document.

13.1.7 With regard to the issue of economic valuation at the regional level, the meeting was informed by the Project Director that a proposal is before the Project Steering Committee to form an *ad hoc* group of environmental economists from the region, to assist in the economic valuation and cost benefit analysis work of the regional working groups. He formally invited all members of the RSTC to nominate experts in this field to the PCU.

13.2 Date and Place of the Next Meeting of the Regional Scientific and Technical Committee

13.2.1 Mr. Huang Zhengguang, the National Technical Focal Point from China offered to host the next meeting of the Regional Scientific and Technical Committee in Guangzhou, China. The meeting accepted, with appreciation, the generous offer, and decided to have its third meeting in Guangzhou, China, 8-11 May 2003.

13.3 Substantive Items for Consideration at the Third Meeting

13.4 Substantive Items for Consideration at the Fourth Meeting

13.4.1 Dr. Pernetta introduced the two agenda sub-items together. He suggested to the meeting that the main task of the third meeting of the RSTC would be to review the recommendations from the regional working groups on the ranking of demonstration sites. From the national point of view, the National Technical Focal Points will need to consolidate views and recommendations from all national committees and sub-committees regarding the choice of demonstration sites.

13.4.2 For the fourth meeting of the RSTC, the primary responsibility will be to review the full portfolio of demonstration sites and to decide on which sites should be recommended to the Project Steering Committee for support under the GEF grant to the project.

13.4.3 The meeting noted and agreed with the suggestions made by the Project Director.

14. ANY OTHER BUSINESS

14.1 Under this agenda item, Ms. Kluephan, the National Technical Focal Point from Thailand, requested information on the implementation of activities relating to the reviews of national legislation.

14.2 Dr. Pernetta informed the meeting that a proposal to form an *ad hoc* group of experts on legal matters was included in the agenda of the next meeting of the PSC and that its purpose was to assist the regional working groups and national committees in legal matters relating to the national action plans and demonstration sites. He requested the members of the RSTC to provide names of legal experts to the PCU.

14.3 It was agreed that the PCU would prepare a listing of action points for the National Technical Focal Points as promptly as possible following the closure of the meeting.

15. ADOPTION OF THE REPORT OF THE MEETING

15.1 The draft report of the meeting was presented by Professor Huang, the Rapporteur, amended, and approved as contained in this document.

16. CLOSURE OF THE MEETING

16.1 Following an exchange of courtesies during which the Chairperson thanked the PCU for their efficient organisation of the agenda and documents for the meeting and the Project Director thanked all participants for their hard work and efficient operation of the meeting Dr. Vo Si Tuan, Chairperson declared the meeting closed at 1730 on 13th December 2002.

ANNEX 1

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ANNEX 2

List of Documents

Discussion documents

UNEP/GEF/SCS/RSTC.2/1	Provisional agenda
UNEP/GEF/SCS/RSTC.2/2	Annotated provisional agenda
UNEP/GEF/SCS/RSTC.2/3	Report of the meeting
UNEP/GEF/SCS/RSTC.2/4.Cam	Report of the Chairperson of the National Technical Working Group of Cambodia to the RSTC.
UNEP/GEF/SCS/RSTC.2/4.Chi	Report of the Chairperson of the National Technical Working Group of China to the RSTC.
UNEP/GEF/SCS/RSTC.2/4.Ind	Report of the Chairperson of the National Technical Working Group of Indonesia to the RSTC.
UNEP/GEF/SCS/RSTC.2/4.Mal	Report of the Chairperson of the National Technical Working Group of Malaysia to the RSTC.
UNEP/GEF/SCS/RSTC.2/4.Phil	Report of the Chairperson of the National Technical Working Group of Philippines to the RSTC.
UNEP/GEF/SCS/RSTC.2/4.Thai	Report of the Chairperson of the National Technical Working Group of Thailand to the RSTC.
UNEP/GEF/SCS/RSTC.2/4.Viet	Report of the Chairperson of the National Technical Working Group of Viet Nam to the RSTC.
UNEP/GEF/SCS/RSTC.2/5.RWG-LbP	Report of the Chairperson of the Regional Working Group on Land-Based Pollution to the RSTC.
UNEP/GEF/SCS/RSTC.2/5.RWG-F	Report of the Chairperson of the Regional Working Group on Fisheries to the RSTC.
UNEP/GEF/SCS/RSTC.2/5.RWG-M	Report of the Chairperson of the Regional Working Group on Mangroves to the RSTC.
UNEP/GEF/SCS/RSTC.2/5.RWG-CR	Report of the Chairperson of the Regional Working Group on Coral reefs to the RSTC.
UNEP/GEF/SCS/RSTC.2/5.RWG-SG	Report of the Chairperson of the Regional Working Group on Seagrass to the RSTC.
UNEP/GEF/SCS/RSTC.2/5.RWG-W	Report of the Chairperson of the Regional Working Group on Wetlands to the RSTC.
UNEP/GEF/SCS/RSTC.2/6	Status of data and information gathering and management procedures within the Project
UNEP/GEF/SCS/RSTC.2/7	UNEP/GEF South China Sea Project: A communications, networking and publications strategy.
UNEP/GEF/SCS/RSTC.2/8	Draft proposal for regional criteria for prioritising sites and selecting demonstration sites in the framework of the UNEP/GEF Project entitled: <i>“Reversing Environmental Degradation Trends in the South China Sea and Gulf of Thailand.”</i>
UNEP/GEF/SCS/RSTC.2/9	Preliminary Regional Guidelines for Causal Chain Analysis, Threat Analysis and Management Interventions for application to potential demonstration sites in the context of the UNEP/GEF Project entitled: <i>“Reversing Environmental Degradation Trends in the South China Sea and Gulf of Thailand.”</i>

- UNEP/GEF/SCS/RSTC.2/10 Guidance to the PSC on the nature and types of potential demonstration sites to be established within the framework of the UNEP/GEF Project entitled: *“Reversing Environmental Degradation Trends in the South China Sea and Gulf of Thailand.”*
- UNEP/GEF/SCS/RSTC.2/11 A note on the regional science conference and partnership workshop.
- UNEP/GEF/SCS/RSTC.2/12 Agreed workplans, timetables and meeting schedules for the components, sub-components of the South China Sea Project and proposed schedule and workplan for the RSTC.

Information documents

- UNEP/GEF/SCS/RSTC.2/Inf.1 Provisional list of participants
- UNEP/GEF/SCS/RSTC.2/Inf.2 Provisional list of documents
- UNEP/GEF/SCS/RSTC.2/Inf.3 Draft programme
- UNEP/GEF/SCS/PSC.2/4 Draft annual report, January to December 2002, of the Project Director, to the Project Steering Committee for the UNEP/GEF Project entitled: Reversing Environmental Degradation Trends in the South China Sea and Gulf of Thailand.
- UNEP/GEF/SCS/PSC.1/3 First Meeting of the Project Steering Committee for the UNEP/GEF Project *“Reversing Environmental Degradation Trends in the South China Sea and Gulf of Thailand”*. Report of the meeting. UNEP/GEF/SCS/PSC.1/3. Bangkok Thailand, 22-23 October 2001.
- UNEP/GEF/SCS/RSTC.1/3 First Meeting of the Regional Scientific and Technical Committee for the UNEP/GEF Project *“Reversing Environmental Degradation Trends in the South China Sea and Gulf of Thailand”*. Report of the meeting. UNEP/GEF/SCS/RSTC.1/3 Pattaya, Thailand, 14-16 March 2002.
- UNEP/GEF/SCS/RWG-LbP.1/3 First Meeting of the Regional Working Group for the Land-based Pollution Component of the UNEP/GEF Project *“Reversing Environmental Degradation Trends in the South China Sea and Gulf of Thailand”*. Report of the meeting. UNEP/GEF/SCS/RWG-LbP.1/3 Bangkok, Thailand, 35 April 2002.
- UNEP/GEF/SCS/RWG-W.1/3 First Meeting of the Regional Working Group for the Wetland Sub-component of the UNEP/GEF Project *“Reversing Environmental Degradation Trends in the South China Sea and Gulf of Thailand”*. Report of the meeting. UNEP/GEF/SCS/RWG-W.1/3 Phuket, Thailand, 24-26 April 2002.
- UNEP/GEF/SCS/RWG-M.1/3 First Meeting of the Regional Working Group for the Mangrove Component of the UNEP/GEF Project *“Reversing Environmental Degradation Trends in the South China Sea and Gulf of Thailand”*. Report of the meeting. UNEP/GEF/SCS/RWG-M.1/3 Phuket, Thailand, 29 April - 1 May 2002.
- UNEP/GEF/SCS/RWG-SG.1/3 First Meeting of the Regional Working Group for the Seagrass Sub-component of the UNEP/GEF Project *“Reversing Environmental Degradation Trends in the South China Sea and Gulf of Thailand”*. Report of the meeting. UNEP/GEF/SCS/RWG-SG.1/3 Bangkok, Thailand, 6-8 May 2002.

- UNEP/GEF/SCS/RWG-CR.1/3 First Meeting of the Regional Working Group for the Coral Reef Sub-component of the UNEP/GEF Project *“Reversing Environmental Degradation Trends in the South China Sea and Gulf of Thailand”*. Report of the meeting. UNEP/GEF/SCS/RWG-CR.1/3 Bangkok, Thailand, 9-11 May 2002.
- UNEP/GEF/SCS/RWG-F.1/3 First Meeting of the Regional Working Group for the Fisheries Component of the UNEP/GEF Project *“Reversing Environmental Degradation Trends in the South China Sea and Gulf of Thailand”*. Report of the meeting. UNEP/GEF/SCS/RWG-F.1/3 Bangkok, Thailand, 20-22 May 2002.
- UNEP/GEF/SCS/EW.1/3 UNEP/GEF/SCS and SEA START RC, GIS Workshop in support of the UNEP/GEF Project *“Reversing Environmental Degradation Trends in the South China Sea and Gulf of Thailand”*, Report of the meeting, UNEP/GEF/SCS/EW.1/3, Bangkok, Thailand, 7-9 August 2002.
- UNEP/GEF/SCS/RWG-W.2/3 Second Meeting of the Regional Working Group for the Wetland Sub-component of the UNEP/GEF Project *“Reversing Environmental Degradation Trends in the South China Sea and Gulf of Thailand”*. Report of the meeting. UNEP/GEF/SCS/RWG-W.2/3 Shenzhen, China, 4-7 September 2002.
- UNEP/GEF/SCS/RWG-M.2/3 Second Meeting of the Regional Working Group for the Mangrove Component of the UNEP/GEF Project *“Reversing Environmental Degradation Trends in the South China Sea and Gulf of Thailand”*. Report of the meeting. UNEP/GEF/SCS/RWG-M.2/3 Ho Chi Minh City, Viet Nam, 10-13 September 2002.
- UNEP/GEF/SCS/RWG-LbP.2/3 Second Meeting of the Regional Working Group for the Land-based Pollution Component of the UNEP/GEF Project *“Reversing Environmental Degradation Trends in the South China Sea and Gulf of Thailand”*. Report of the meeting. UNEP/GEF/SCS/RWG-LbP.2/3 Batam, Indonesia, 18-21 September 2002.
- UNEP/GEF/SCS/RWG-F.2/3 Second Meeting of the Regional Working Group for the Fisheries Component of the UNEP/GEF Project *“Reversing Environmental Degradation Trends in the South China Sea and Gulf of Thailand”*. Report of the meeting. UNEP/GEF/SCS/RWG-F.2/3 Phuket, Thailand, 7-11 October 2002.
- UNEP/GEF/SCS/RWG-CR.2/3 Second Meeting of the Regional Working Group for the Coral Reef Sub-component of the UNEP/GEF Project *“Reversing Environmental Degradation Trends in the South China Sea and Gulf of Thailand”*. Report of the meeting. UNEP/GEF/SCS/RWG-CR.2/3 Sihanoukville, Cambodia, 23-26 October 2002.
- UNEP/GEF/SCS/RWG-SG.2/3 Second Meeting of the Regional Working Group for the Seagrass Sub-component of the UNEP/GEF Project *“Reversing Environmental Degradation Trends in the South China Sea and Gulf of Thailand”*. Report of the meeting. UNEP/GEF/SCS/RWG-SG.2/3 Hue, Viet Nam, 28-31 October 2002.

ANNEX 3

Agenda

- 1. OPENING OF THE MEETING**
 - 1.1 Opening statement from the Chairperson
 - 1.2 Welcome address
 - 1.3 Introduction of members
- 2. ORGANISATION OF THE MEETING**
 - 2.1 Officers of the meeting
 - 2.2 Documentation available to the meeting
 - 2.3 Programme of Work
- 3. ADOPTION OF THE MEETING AGENDA**
- 4. REPORT OF THE PROJECT DIRECTOR ON ACTIVITIES DURING 2002**
- 5. PRESENTATIONS BY THE NATIONAL TECHNICAL FOCAL POINTS (NTFP) ON THE WORK OF THE NATIONAL TECHNICAL WORKING GROUPS AND EXECUTION OF PROJECT ACTIVITIES AT THE NATIONAL LEVEL**
 - 5.1 Cambodia (Mr. Koch Savath, NTFP)
 - 5.2 China (Mr. Zhengguang Huang, NTFP)
 - 5.3 Indonesia (Mr. Sudariyono, NTFP)
 - 5.4 Malaysia (Mr. Lee Heng Keng, designated alternate)
 - 5.5 Philippines (Dr. Gil Jacinto, NTFP)
 - 5.6 Thailand (Mrs. Kluephan Baitrakul, NTFP)
 - 5.7 Viet Nam (Dr. Vo Si Tuan, NTFP)
- 6. PRESENTATION BY THE CHAIRPERSONS, ON THE WORK OF THE SIX REGIONAL WORKING GROUPS AND IMPLEMENTATION OF THE PROJECT ACTIVITIES AT REGIONAL LEVEL**
 - 6.1 Regional Working Group on Land-based Pollution (Mr. Sudariyono)
 - 6.2 Regional Working Group on Fisheries (Mr. Try Ing)
 - 6.3 Regional Working Group on Mangroves (Dr. Sonjai Havanond)
 - 6.4 Regional Working Group on Coral Reefs (Mr. Kim Sour)
 - 6.5 Regional Working Group on Seagrasses (Mr. Huang Xiaoping)
 - 6.6 Regional Working Group on Wetlands (Mr. Dibyo Sartono)
- 7. PLANNING, MANAGEMENT, AND INTEGRATION OF PROJECT ELEMENTS**
 - 7.1 Regional Perspectives and Considerations
 - 7.2 National Perspectives and Considerations
 - 7.3 Recommendations to the Regional Working Groups (RWGs) and the National Technical Working Groups (NTWGs)
- 8. NETWORKING, TRANSLATION AND ENGAGEMENT OF THE WIDER STAKEHOLDER COMMUNITY IN PROJECT IMPLEMENTATION AND EXECUTION**
- 9. FURTHER CONSIDERATION OF REGIONAL CRITERIA FOR RANKING OF POTENTIAL DEMONSTRATION SITES**

10. **CONSIDERATION OF REGIONAL GUIDELINES FOR CAUSAL CHAIN ANALYSIS, THREAT ANALYSIS AND MANAGEMENT INTERVENTIONS FOR APPLICATION TO POTENTIAL DEMONSTRATION SITES**
 - 10.1 Causal Chain Analysis
 - 10.2 Threat Analysis
 - 10.3 Management Interventions
11. **GUIDANCE TO THE PSC ON THE NATURE AND TYPES OF THE DEMONSTRATION SITES TO BE ADOPTED IN THE FRAMEWORK OF THE PROJECT**
12. **PREPARATION OF THE REGIONAL SCIENCE CONFERENCE AND PARTNERSHIP WORKSHOP**
 - 12.1 Purpose
 - 12.2 Outputs and Outcomes
13. **WORK PLAN AND TIMETABLE FOR THE REGIONAL SCIENTIFIC AND TECHNICAL COMMITTEE**
 - 13.1 Agreed work plans and timetables for the components and sub-components of the project
 - 13.2 Date and Place of the Next Meeting of the Regional Scientific and Technical Committee
 - 13.3 Substantive Items for Consideration at the Third Meeting
 - 13.4 Substantive Items for Consideration at the Fourth Meeting
14. **ANY OTHER BUSINESS**
15. **ADOPTION OF THE REPORT OF THE MEETING**
16. **CLOSURE OF THE MEETING**

ANNEX 4

Summaries of the Reports of the National Technical Focal Point to the Second Meeting of the Regional Scientific and Technical Committee

REPORT OF THE NATIONAL TECHNICAL WORKING GROUP – CAMBODIA FOR THE YEAR 2002

INTRODUCTION

The progress report of the Cambodian NTWG is submitted annually prior to each meeting of the RSTC in accordance with the MoU and work plan. This executive summary is prepared for attachment with the entire description of the project's progress, challenges and constraints in the Report of the Chairperson of the RSTC to the Project Steering Committee.

PROJECT STATUS

Cambodia is similar to the other countries within the project in term of the execution of the South China Sea project. The Memorandum of Understanding of each component indicates separately the outputs need to be accomplished. Here are the progresses, achievements, and outcomes in the first phase for the Cambodia's NTWG.

Each component has created its own national committee following their MoU with UNEP/GEF in order to help them in reviewing, and providing information and backstopping for the project as well as related national coastal issues. The lists of members of each committee have been posted on the project's website at: www.unepscs.org.

MEETINGS

Several meetings have been convened which include the inter-ministry committee meetings, expert group meetings for different components namely the Mangrove and wetland committee meetings, Land based pollution committee meetings, fisheries committee meetings and Coral reef and seagrass meetings. Regarding the outputs, the inter-ministry committee has established and agreed upon its function with specific goals and objectives of the project. The establishment of national committee for each component was created and agreed upon their role, functions and supports. Some meetings have been convened with significant outputs such as

- Establishment of work plans for each committee with the activities based on the timeframe of each component as momentum;
- Review past and on-going activities, projects, programmes related to each component within the area;
- Review national data and information;
- Review national legislation;
- Review of institutional and legal framework.

PROGRESS AND ACHIEVEMENTS

The following provides a summary of the achievements of each component:

Mangrove and Wetlands

- Creation of national committee for wetlands and mangrove
- Review of national data and information
- Review of past and on-going projects/activities
- Creation of meta-database for wetlands
- Creation of meta-database for Mangrove

Land Based Pollution

- Creation of national committee for Land based pollution
- Review national report
- Review national legislation
- Review institutional and legal framework
- First draft report on the hotspot both Khmer and English

Fisheries

- Creation of national committee
- National report on fisheries
- Status of current marine fisheries resources management

Coral reef and Seagrass

- Creation of national committee
- Review of past and on-going activities/projects
- Socio-economic review
- Legislation and institutional framework

There are the progresses that need to be done for each component, it based mainly on the work plan of each component that was revised and approved during the meeting of each RWG.

Based on the MoU and TOR of NTFP, their roles in coordination are a key issue since the NTWG is central to regional and national co-ordination and in facilitating information flows between the PSC to NTWG, NTWG and RSTC and within the NTWG. Efforts of the coordination of the NTFP and the participants from the SEAs as well as other stakeholders have shown greatly positive aspects during the first year of project execution.

There were some printed materials as indicated by the SEA for each component and some reports which include the report of the Cambodian IMC meeting.

PROJECT DELIVERY

In spite of the great successes during the first year of the project's implementation there was some small problems encountered in particular the coordination and comprehension of the project concepts, approaches and procedure because of regional project by adjusting to national project.

Regular meetings and discussions with RSTC, RWG and PCU should provide better solutions that should be considered by all parties. Furthermore, there is a need to enhance communication ways such as email; e-discussions with specific issue need to be taken into account. The deadlines for response should be indicated in order to push the time constraints. On the other hand, the cooperation and collaboration of all stakeholders will improve too.

The following key documents are considered necessary to be translated into Khmer

1. All the MoU within the Country's project such as MoU1; MoU2a, MoU2f, MoU2b, MoU2e.
2. All the TORs such as ToR of PSC, IMC, NTWG, Mangrove, wetlands, land based pollution, coral reef and seagrass committees, RWG's and RSTC.
3. Reports of PSC meetings, Reports of RWG's meetings and Reports of RSTC's meetings.

REPORT OF THE NATIONAL TECHNICAL WORKING GROUP – CHINA FOR THE YEAR 2002

INTRODUCTION

After signatures of five MoUs between China and UNEP in November 2001, China officially started to implement UNEP/GEF SCS Project in February 2002. In the first year, a lot of work towards execution of the project has been done and preliminary outputs accomplished through cooperation among the four Specialized Executing Agencies, the NTWG of China and the IMC.

This is the first report of China to the Project Steering Committee (PSC) since commencement of project activities in China. The report focuses on the operations, management, and main achievements in China of the project since substantive progress in the execution of project activities.

FINANCIAL SUPPORT FROM GOVERNMENTS

Following approval of the project by China's GEF focal point, Financial Ministry, State Environment Protection Administration of China (SEPA) applied domestic cash co-financing. The Financial Ministry of China approved 1.9 million US\$ equivalent for the project. This is the not only and indication of confidence and enthusiasm on the part of China, but also a big support to the project and its activities.

Local governments have paid attention to and interest in the project and its activities in the period of operation. Fangchenggang municipal government of Guangxi Zhuang Autonomous Region, in October 2002, decided to invest 30,000 US\$ in establishing a mangrove management committee and in preparing a GIS database for an area of rich mangroves on the border with Viet Nam.

ESTABLISHMENT, MEETINGS OF CHINA'S INTER-MINISTRY COMMITTEE

China's Inter-ministry Committee (IMC) was established in its first meeting held in Beijing on 9th April 2001. The initial 15 members of China's IMC were officers, managers and experts from State Environment Protection Administration, the Ministry of Foreign affairs, Social developing and Planning Committee, Financial Ministry, Communication Ministry, and other ministries and agencies. Three new members from local governments, namely, Guangdong Province, Guangxi Zhuang Autonomous Region, and Hainan Province, participated in the second meeting. Thus, China's IMC is composed of 18 members from ministries, agencies, and local governments.

SEPA has convened one preparatory meeting and two meetings of China's IMC for the project. The preparatory meeting held in Beijing on 13th March 2001 involved 13 representatives from 11 ministries, agencies, and institutions who attended the meeting. The meeting focused on the background of the project, the Project Brief and other project documents; recommendation of experts of NTWG; establishment matters of Inter-ministry Committee.

The First meeting of IMC was held in Beijing on 9th April 2001. The meeting selected its vice chair; discussed and agreed the TOR, procedural rules, role and functions of IMC. The second meeting was held in Beijing on 28th December 2002. The second meeting considered progress and achievements of the project, and expressed its satisfaction regarding implementation of the project in China; discussed and agreed institution arrangements for the project. The meeting expressed necessity to include local representatives into IMC, and welcome new members from local governments.

EXECUTING INSTITUTION ARRANGEMENTS

Following the process of careful selection of experts to contribute to the project regarding technical matters, China's National Technical Working Group for the project was initiatively established in 17 August 2001 in its first meeting. The initial working group had 10 members. After 3 representatives from environment protection departments of Guangdong Province, Guangxi Zhuang Autonomous Region and Hainan Province located at the South China Sea joined the NTWG, in its Fourth meeting held in Guangzhou on 21-22 November 2002, the new NTWG is composed of 13 members. Four

NTWG meetings have been convened since commencement of the project activities. In addition, one preparatory and three working meetings of NTWG were convened as of December 2002.

China agreed to implement three habitat sub-components, namely, mangrove, seagrass, wetlands, and land-based pollution component. Four institutions were selected to execute the sub-components and component of the project.

Component	SEA
Mangrove	Guangxi Mangrove Research Center
Seagrass	South China Sea Institute of Oceanology
wetlands	Zhongshan University
Land-based pollution	South China Institute of Environmental Sciences, SEPA

3-5 meetings of each sub-groups of NTWG for sub-components and component have been convened since commencement of component activities.

ACHIEVEMENTS

Substantive work towards project execution, in China, have been carried out by the SEAs, and some outputs achieved. All activities of the four components designed and required in the work plan are completed or on-going. Due to data gap on habitats and land-based pollution, each of the four SEAs carried out field surveys to obtain necessary data and information. Further field surveys in potential demonstration sites have been planned and carried out in due time by the SEAs.

DIFFICULTIES ENCOUNTERED AND SOLUTIONS TAKEN TO ADDRESS THEM

The execution of the UNEP/GEF South China Sea Project in China has encountered a few difficulties. The difficulties have affected the progress of some activities. Solutions taken to address the difficulties encountered during 2002 are summarized in the following table.

Difficulty	Solution
GEF fund for the second half of 2002 delay to transfer	Pre-paid by Seas and coordinating organizations
Base map to the region regulated by China laws	Using Regional base map

REPORT OF THE NATIONAL TECHNICAL WORKING GROUP – INDONESIA FOR THE YEAR 2002

This report was completed to fulfil the Memorandum of Understanding between The United Nations Environment Programme and Institute of Mangrove Research & Development for Mangrove Component; Research Center for Oceanography for Coral Reef and Sea Grass Components; Wetland International Asia Pacific Indonesia Programme for Wetlands Component; Directorate General of Capture Fisheries for Fisheries Component and Environment Protection Agency (Ministry of Environment) Republic of Indonesia for Land-based Pollution Component, based on the Ref : UNEP GEF/SCS/Ind/MoU 2a-2b-2c-2d-2e-2f).

In general the MoUs from the 6 (six) components all state that the activities include: establishment of national committee and convening of regular meetings; review and develop national data on six components; review existing management, adoption of national management plans.

It is common that in starting a new activity or new project, more time and works are needed for preparation as a precondition including socialization of the activity. Due to this requirement, the progress of real activities of the project in the first and second months is usually slow, while after the third month progress is faster and mostly able to achieve the target as mentioned in the MOUs.

The Progress report for semester I, showed a low degree of achievement, especially, for the targeted activities, but actually has succeeded in strengthening the foundation and preconditioning for the follow up activities as already planned in the MoUs.

PREPARATION & NATIONAL COMMITTEE

Since from the beginning, the project has been designed to create a “work-together” and “concerned-together” system among institutions and individuals in the form of National Committees.

The complete personnel of National Committees, consist of representatives from institutions and some individuals. Indonesia has formed 6 (six) National Committees which are on mangrove, coral reef, sea-grass, wetlands, fisheries and land-based pollution. The job description and working mechanism of the committee have also been formulated.

It has been agreed, that the National Committee will act as a “working group” in enhancing the demand and target of the project or activities, the basic idea is to build further commitment of each institution right from the beginning.

SCOOPING THE PROJECT AREAS IN INDONESIA

Focusing only on provinces that are bordering or surrounding the South China Sea, the provinces which are covered in this project are mainly located at the Western Part of Indonesia: Riau, Jambi, South Sumatera, Lampung, Bangka-Belitung; Banten, Jakarta, West Java; and West Kalimantan.

PRIORITIZING THE ACTIVITY STATED IN THE SIX WORK PLANS FROM SIX MOUS

Step: (1) Developing and strengthening six National Committees; (2) Collecting and reviewing data, legislation and existing management regimes; (3) Using the collected data and information, to develop ideas for better regulation, legislation and management of the mangrove, coral reef, sea grass, wetlands, fisheries and land based pollution; (4) Selecting some important areas related to the project goal and develop proposals for demonstration sites (hot spots) of each components; (5) Disseminating the result of the project, develop further commitments for better management.

PROGRESS OF THE SIX COMPONENTS

Formation of National Committees

The Indonesian Committees for the six components are: Mangrove, Coral Reef, Sea Grass, Wetlands, Fisheries and Land-based Pollution, mostly were formed on April 2002, consisted from the various related institutions from the central government and local government (province) and from universities.

Periodic Meetings

Up to the end of November 2002, the six components through each national committees have held several meetings to discuss various topics and issues including: Explaining the Term of Reference of National Committee; deciding on Non Profit Supporting Organizations for compiling data; informing them of which meta-data should be compiled, such as activities related to land based, water quality standard, controls, review of existing legislation; informing criteria's and indicators based on the First Regional Working Group meeting; deciding areas to be considered as "national hot spots" or demonstration sites; review the progress of data compilation done by Non Profitable Supporting Organizations.

Review National Legislation

The review is to elaborate an overall view on the establishment of fundamental laws and its implementing regulations, the laws and regulations concerning the management of mangrove, coral reef, sea grass, fisheries, wetlands and land-based pollution which may be established in a proper place of the system of governmental activities.

Hierarchically the legal system in Indonesia consists of: The Basic Constitution, General Assembly Decrees, Law and Act, Government Regulations, Presidential Decrees, Ministerial Decrees, Provincial Government Regulation, District or City Regulations.

There are many agencies involved in the multiple use of the marine and coastal resources (mangrove, coral reef, sea grass, wetlands and fisheries), which some times are not properly coordinated, many resource management issues were addressed by ministerial decrees, which covered only part of the solution, because the ministry concerned has limited jurisdiction.

Many resource allocation and resource use decisions were taken at a high level of government without considering resources sustainability and adherence to legal provisions. Such decisions were frequently made without adequate consultation with local governments and the affected communities. Regional Autonomy Act No. 22 year 1999 provides a new dimension to the legal framework of natural resources planning. The Act aims to decentralize most government services and devolve the planning and management functions and responsibilities of marine and coastal resources within Indonesia's territorial waters to the provincial and district governments. The Act provides incentives to local government for sustainable management of natural resources within their respective jurisdiction and requires a revision of some existing laws and regulations to bring them into harmony with it.

Local people's traditional rights over certain places of the Indonesian waters differ from place to place. In certain places could be found local people traditional law having the same character on land as well as on coastal waters. This kind of people's right at sea is limited to surrounding area of waters where the people's live.

Review of National Data

The existing gap between data on national report and data should be compiled based on the criteria and indicator of the first RWG Meeting; the data and information for the proposed national hot spot area decided by national committee is not available in related institutions, more over connected to the criteria and indicators.

No single series of data and information were compiled based on monitoring system. Before collecting and reviewing of data scoping of area for the SCS Project have been decided. This cover 9 (nine) provinces, that are bordering the SCS. Data review and updating has been done and finalized referring to the project report. In the review several sites have been identified as mangrove, coral reef, wetlands, sea grass, fishing ground of fisheries and primary area problem for land based pollution, but the data completeness is different from one site to another. As for GIS mapping, it is still difficult to find the whole size of the site (no data can be found), except just for one dot (longitude and latitude).

To complete the information, activities are still going on to find other data and information e.g. social economics, pressure activities, etc. In general, these activities for the six component, have been going on quite smoothly.

Preparation of Management Plan

In preparing the document, the team have been doing primary data collection/field study in two proposed demo site, i.e. Muara Angke-Rambut Island (Province Jakarta) and Batuampar-Pontianak Regency (Province West Kalimantan), respectively. The data collection include ecological and socio-economical aspects, physical factors and management of mangrove ecosystem.

Identification and Characterization of Site

The Indonesian National Committees on the six components for the South China Sea Project are proposing three locations as demonstration sites, (1) Mangrove: Batu Ampar (West Kalimantan) and Jakarta; (2) Coral Reef: the three sites of: Bareleng-Bintan Islands, Natuna Islands and Senayang-Lingga Islands, all of these demonstration sites are located in the Province of Riau; (3) Wetlands: Sembilang (South Sumatera); (4) Sea Grass: Tanjung Berikat (Bintan Island) and Banten Bay; (5) Fisheries for Gulf of Thailand and (6) Land-based : Batam Island, Pontianak (West Kalimantan) and Jakarta.

FINANCIAL ARRANGEMENT

Disbursement of funds by UNEP is facilitated by ESCAP under authorization from the PCU and takes place in advance of the SEAs incurring expenditures in line with the budgets attached to the six MOUs (Mangrove, Coral Reef, Sea Grass, Wetlands, Fisheries and Land-based Pollution). These budgets clearly follow the purpose for which funds are provided to cover several activities.

CONCLUSIONS

Activities are going on as planned and are still following the schedule. Although not all the targets for 2002 have been achieved, the activities and progress are still within the timeframe or just slightly behind the targets.

As for November and December 2002, due to the Ramadhan, Idul Fitri, Christmas and New Year holidays, it is estimated that there will be a slow down in the progress. It is hoped that by mid January 2003 activities will speed and overcome any delays.

STATUS REPORT BY THE NATIONAL TECHNICAL WORKING GROUP MALAYSIA

MEMORANDUM OF UNDERSTANDING

The MOU between the Ministry of Science, Technology and Environment (MOSTE) and UNEP regarding project coordination was signed and forwarded to the PCU on the 23rd September 2002. The MOUs for 3 components namely, coral reefs, sea grass and land based pollution were also signed and forwarded on the same date. The wetlands component was signed and submitted on the 11th November 2002.

SPECIALIZED EXECUTING AGENCY

The Specialized Executing Agencies for the four components are as follows:

Coral reefs	Department of Fishery
Sea grass	Department of Fishery
Land based pollution	Department of Environment
Wetlands	Conservation and Environment Management Division, MOSTE

MEETING

The National Technical Working Group met for the first time on the 18th November 2002 to discuss the work plan. As the transfer of funds is still pending, we would probably commence the activities in early 2003.

WORK PLAN

The work plans for the coral reefs, sea grass and land based pollution components are attached.

LAND BASED POLLUTION WORK PLAN 2003

Activities	Jan	Feb	Mar	April	May	June	July	Aug	Sep	Oct	Nov	Dec
National Working Group Meeting		•		•					•			•
Review National Report and national water quality data		←————→										
Review national legislations and criteria					←————→							
Identify and prioritised hotspots					←————→							
Develop national management plan									←————→			

CORAL REEF WORK PLAN 2003

Activities	Jan	Feb	Mar	April	May	June	July	Aug	Sep	Oct	Nov	Dec
National Working Group Meeting	•	•		•	•		•	•		•		
Information Gathering	←————→											
Review national legislations	←————→											
Workshop on the review of legislations				•								
Create database	←————→											
Review national data and information		←————→										
Review available site information							←————→					
Identification of sites								←————→				
Prioritisation of sites										←————→		

REPORT OF THE NATIONAL TECHNICAL WORKING GROUP – PHILIPPINES FOR THE YEAR 2002

INTRODUCTION

Background and Context

The overall goals of the UNEP/GEF project entitled “Reversing Environmental Degradation Trends in the South China Sea and the Gulf of Thailand” are: to create an environment at the regional level, in which collaboration and partnership in addressing environmental problems of the South China Sea, between all stakeholders, and at all levels is fostered and encouraged; and to enhance the capacity of the participating governments to integrate environmental considerations into national development planning.

The medium term objective of the project is to elaborate and agree at an intergovernmental level, the Strategic Action Programme encompassing specific targeted and costed actions for the longer-term, to address the priority issues and concerns.

Rationale and Purpose

To facilitate the achievement of the regional goals and objectives, each participating country shall, in accordance with paragraph 37 of the Project Brief, establish an Inter-ministry Committee with overall responsibility for coordinating the work of national agencies and institutions engaged in project activities; for ensuring timely provision of national inputs to the regional working groups and other entities established under the project; and for ensuring national level acceptance of, and agreement with, the actions proposed under the Strategic Action Programme.

To assist the Inter-Ministry Committee in achieving its overall goals and purpose, a National Technical Working Group shall be established to coordinate the preparation of national scientific and technical reports and inputs required for the finalization of the contents of the Regional Strategic Action Program.

This brief report outlines the activities, outputs, and concerns associated with the implementation of the project in the Philippines for the year 2002.

PROJECT STATUS

Status of Implementation

Establishment of Inter-Ministerial Committee (IMC)

The Inter-Ministerial Committee was established and had its first meeting on 21 November 2002. The Committee is composed of the heads/representatives of the following institutions/agencies:

1. **Chair:** Secretary of the Department of Environment and Natural Resources (DENR) through the Environmental Management Bureau (EMB).
2. **Vice-Chair:** Director, Bureau of Fisheries and Aquatic Resources (BFAR) of the Department of Agriculture (DA).
3. Director, National Economic Development Authority (NEDA).
4. Director, Center for Maritime and Ocean Affairs (MOAC), Dept. of Foreign Affairs (DFA).
5. Director, Philippine Council for Aquatic and Marine Resources Research and Development, Dept. of Science and Technology (DOST).
6. President, University of the Philippines System (UPS).
7. Director, Marine Science Institute, University of the Philippines.
8. Director, Maritime Command, Philippine National Police, Dept. of Interior and Local Government.

The IMC was briefed by the NTFP and the Component focal points on the status of the project. The terms of reference of the IMC were reviewed and approved. Among the issues discussed and requiring follow-up action were: the testing of the blast fishing detection system and concerns related to intellectual property rights (e.g., collection of specimens).

Establishment of the NTWG

The members of the NTWG are as follows:

- Dr. Gil Jacinto, National Technical Focal Point, Marine Science Institute, UP Diliman
- Dr. Porfirio Aliño, Focal Point, Coral Reef Component, Marine Science Institute, UP Diliman
- Dir. Florendo Barangan, Focal Point, Mangroves Component, CMMO, DENR
- Mr. Noel Barut, Focal Point, Fisheries Component, National Fisheries Research and Development Institute, Bureau of Fisheries and Aquatic Resources
- Ms. Ella Deocadiz, Environmental Management Bureau, DENR
- Mr. Vicente Diaz, Focal Point, Land-based Sources of Pollution Component, Environmental Management Bureau, DENR
- Dr. Miguel Fortes, Focal Point, Seagrass Component, Marine Science Institute, UP Diliman
- Ms. Marlynn Mendoza, Focal Point, Wetlands Component, Parks and Wildlife Bureau, DENR
- Mr. Robert Jara, Foreign-Assisted Special Projects Office/DENR

The NTWG had 12 meetings this year. The meetings focused on progress of various components and activities undertaken, data management and collection (including GIS requirements), and administrative issues. The NTWG also conducted the project organizational workshop (3-5 July 2002) participated in by 34 heads/representatives of 14 agencies and groups in the country, most of them members of the national committees of the various project components.

Establishment of National Committees

Coral Reef Component:

Focal Point: Porfirio Aliño MSI, UP Diliman

Members: DA-BFAR, CMMO, PHILMAR, Asian Center-UP Diliman, NEDA, FASPO-DENR, PCAMRD, PCSD, NFRDI

Mangroves Component:

Focal Point: Florentino Barangan CMMO, DENR

Members: DENR Regional Offices, PCSD, ERDB

Seagrass Component:

Focal Point: Miguel Fortes MSI, UP Diliman

Members: PCSD, DENR, NFRDI-DA, LGU-Palawan, ELAC, ICLARM, ARCBC, UPMSI

Wetlands Component:

Focal Point: Marlynn Mendoza PAWB, DENR

Members: PAWB-DENR, EMB-DENR, PCSD, Conservation International, UP Diliman

Fisheries Component:

Focal Point: Noel Barut Bureau of Fisheries, DA

Members: BFAR, LGU-Palawan, KKP (WWF-Phil), UP Visayas, PCAMRD, BFAR Regional Office

Land-based Pollution Component:

Focal Point: Vicente Diaz EMB, DENR

Members: EMB-DENR, DENR Regional Offices, UPMSI, PCSD, Batangas LGU

Participation in Regional Meetings

The national focal points have attended the 2 regional meetings for each project component, and two representatives also attended the GIS workshop held in Bangkok.

Outputs

Progress made by the various National Committees and their associated Specialized Executing Agencies (SEAs) varied. Much of the delay appears to be associated with the processing of sub-contracting arrangements and attendant government procedures and guidelines vis-à-vis fund disbursements.

Review of national data and information has been done for many of the components with significant progress made by the corals, seagrass, and wetlands components. Site selection criteria for demonstration sites have also been put forward and discussed, but there is a need to harmonize these criteria so that 2 or 3 national (and possibly regional) demonstration sites could be considered. Initial compilations of national policies and legislation related to the various components have been made, but these also need to be further integrated and evaluated. A national management and action plan for seagrass has been drafted but the consensus of the NTWG is that, in addition to management and action plans per component, it would be more appropriate to develop an integrated, cross-component and cross-sectoral management and action plan. Guidance is being sought to address the possible overlap of activities of the wetlands component with the other components (e.g., coral reef, mangroves, and seagrass).

PROJECT DELIVERY

Problems encountered and Actions Taken

Problems associated with the implementation of the project in the Philippines included the delay in fund mobilization and also subsequent fund utilization. The latter was in part due to government guidelines and procedures associated with the sub-contracting of agencies/groups, and the attendant bureaucracy. Moreover, UNEP and PCU fund management guidelines were not necessarily appreciated by and/or clear to the SEAs that led to difficulties. Guidance was obtained from the PCU regarding these issues and further clarification will be sought, as needed.

The IMC could not be convened until later this year because of the delay in the confirmation of the Secretary of the DENR, the national focal point for the project. However, with the IMC finally convened, this should no longer be an issue for the duration of the project.

Access to digitized maps by the various components was hampered by the availability of maps of the desired scale, and also by the bureaucracy. The NTWG was assured that progress would be made early next year.

BRIEF REPORT OF THE ACTIVITIES OF THAILAND'S NATIONAL TECHNICAL WORKING GROUP WITHIN THE YEAR 2002

BACKGROUND

The Office of Natural Resources and Environmental Policy and Planning has served as Thailand's National Focal Point for the UNEP GEF SCS since the beginning of the project in January 2002. During the year 2002, a lot of activities have been initiated and accomplished, as well as emerging of many obstacles that were overcome by cooperation and networking among the Specialised Executing Agencies (SEAs) and members of Thailand's National Technical Working Group. The details of the substantive works on project's execution in Thailand within the year 2002 can be summarized into three particular topics; establishment of Thailand's National Technical Working Group, the working group meetings and substantial works accomplished in year 2002, and problems encountered and solutions to the problems.

ESTABLISHMENT OF THAILAND'S NATIONAL TECHNICAL WORKING GROUP

The South China Sea Project in Thailand was officially started on 14 March 2002. After the process of intensive selection of experts to work for the project on technical aspects, Thailand's National Technical Working Group (NTWG) was established on 5 April 2002. The working group is composed of Chairpersons from six components of the project namely; mangrove (Royal Forest Department), coral reefs (Ramkhamhaeng University), seagrass (Mahidol University), wetlands (Kasetsart University), land-based pollution (Pollution Control Department) and fisheries (Department of Fisheries), as well as four experts from the related fields of resource economics, environmental laws, coastal and marine environmental management, and data and information management. The working group was chaired by Dr. Wanee Samphantharak, Deputy Secretary-General of the Office of Natural Resources and Environmental Policy and Planning and National Technical Focal Point at that time, with experts and officials from the Coastal and Marine Resources Group as secretariat. Thus, the members of Thailand's NTWG are totally 16 persons. The mandates of the working group are to provide guidance to the SEAs regarding design and execution of individual activities within each project component in accordance with the workplan and to assume over all responsibility for the timely execution of project activities by SEAs. Moreover, Thailand's NTWG will give advice to Inter-ministry Committee on the scientific and technical merits of alternative courses of action proposed by the Project Steering Committee, regarding project execution and implementation together with reviewing and approval of scientific and technical content of reports from the SEAs regarding the outputs and outcomes of project activities.

THAILAND'S NATIONAL TECHNICAL WORKING GROUP MEETINGS AND SUBSTANTIAL WORKS ACCOMPLISHED WITHIN YEAR 2002

During the year 2002, the Office of Natural Resources and Environmental Policy and Planning had convened three meetings of Thailand's NTWG. The first meeting was held on 19 June 2002, at the Office of Natural Resources and Environmental Policy and Planning's building in Bangkok, Thailand. The meeting started with the introduction of the members of the working group, informing on the background and progress of activities under the project, administrative structure and framework. The two-year workplan and timetable for SEAs during the year 2002-2003 were considered and agreed as approved by the Regional Working Groups (RWGs) for each component of the project. The meeting also considered the framework of data and information needs for national reports, which were developed and approved by the RWGs. Comments and suggestions were taken on inconsistency of the framework for four ecosystems components namely; mangrove, coral reefs, seagrass and wetlands. Eventually, the meeting agreed with the framework, and requested each of the SEAs to prepare and propose the types, sources, formats for data and information needs for national reports to the RWGs meeting.

The Second Meeting of Thailand's NTWG was convened on 20 August 2002. The focuses of the meeting were on progress and activities on the South China Sea Project in Thailand, especially on the data management and collection. Firstly, the meeting had considered and agreed with the framework of GIS database and information needs, which was adapted from the regional GIS framework set up during the GIS workshop held by PCU in collaborating with the Southeast Asia START (Global Change System for Analysis, Research and Training) Regional Centre (SEA START RC) in Bangkok, Thailand on 7-9 August 2002. For Thailand, the framework was divided into three main tasks; 1) GIS base map in 3 elements of shoreline base map, administrative boundaries, rivers and catchments, 2) GIS database and information needs from each of the SEAs by the end of year 2002, and 3) meta-database collecting. It was noted that the data for coral reefs in Thailand would be classified into only two types of those found in Thailand: fringing reef and coral community. Secondly, the meeting also requested the SEAs for land-based pollution component to collect additional data about pollution from oil spill and disposal of chemicals and wastes from ship into the sea. Lastly, the meeting requested all of the SEAs to propose up-to-date information as requested in the framework and data retrieved to the second meeting of the RWGs for consideration.

The Third Meeting of Thailand's NTWG will be held on 28 November 2002, as the introductory meeting for the new Thailand's National Technical Focal Point and Chairperson of Thailand's NTWG, Mrs. Kluephan Baitrakul. The topics of discussions will be focused around the project's data report and distribution, and Thailand's national criteria for selection of demonstration sites. An updated information and conclusion of the meeting will be delivered by Thai representative to the Second Regional Scientific and Technical Committee Meeting.

PROBLEMS ENCOUNTERED AND SOLUTIONS TO THE PROBLEMS

The South China Sea Project in Thailand has encountered a few major problems. Most problems occurred during the first few months of the project implementation. The problems that seem to affect the progress and activities of the project are the delay in transfer of fund from Project Co-ordinating Unit to National Focal Point and SEAs, and the complication of Thai official budgetary rules. However, such issues have been resolved shortly by PCU and have minor effect to the project. At present, the SEAs have faced a problem on the disbursement of funds within the SEAs, because of strict financial rules and regulations of individual organization. The last issue is the additional workload on GIS database causing an increased cost of project's execution. Even though it was agreed that the GIS data base collecting seems to be beneficial to the project's data management, the workload came with the GIS database collecting has brought about the higher costs of data management and compilation to the SEAs. During the past few months, the SEAs have tried to deal with this additional workload rather well. However, in the long run, series of technical workshops on GIS data management and compilation is necessary to facilitate database management and reporting.

REPORT OF THE NATIONAL TECHNICAL WORKING GROUP OF VIET NAM FOR THE YEAR 2002

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

ACTIVITIES

Establishment of National Technical Working Group

The National Technical Working Group was established by the decision of National Steering Committee. The group includes 2 sub-groups.

Permanent sub-group consisting of 9 members as follows:

- Dr. Vo Si Tuan, Vice Director, Institute of Oceanography
- Dr. Nguyen Van Tien, Acting director, Institute of Oceanology at Hai Phong
- Dr. Mai Trong Nhuan, Vice president, Ha Noi University
- Dr. Do Dinh Sam, Vice director, Institute of Forest Science
- Dr. Pham Van Ninh, Director, Centre for environment surveys, consultation
- Dr. Dao Manh Son, Vice director, Research Institute of Marine Product
- Dr. Nguyen Van Tai, Deputy head, Department of Policy and Legal Affair, NEA
- Dr. Tran Hong Ha, Vice director, NEA
- Hoang Thanh Nhan, NEA

Assistant sub-group with its activities operated under NEA coordination;

- Dr. Nguyen Dac Hy, Director, Centre for Ecology & Environment
- Dr. Nguyen Van Truong, Director, Institute of Ecological Economy
- Dr. Tran Hong Hai, Polytechnical University of Ha Noi
- Dr. Tran Hong Son, Centre for environment surveys and regional development
- Dr. Nguyen Duc Chi, Ministry of Finance

Meetings of NTWG

The first meeting NTWG was held in NEA office in 14 April 2002 with the participants from all Specialised Executing Agencies and representatives of NEA with main activities as follows:

- Election of Vice Chair and Secretary of the group (Dr. Mai Trong Nhuan & Hoang Thanh Nhan).
- Adoption function and responsibilities of the group
- Providing outputs of the first meeting of RSTC
- Discussion and agreement on implementing schedule of each component, establishment of National Working Groups, information collection and management, coordination among the components, expert participation, meeting schedule of NTWG, mechanism for report valuation and submission
- Proposing to delay workplan with all activities later 3 months (It is not accepted later)
- Proposing to have guideline in budget expenditure from UNEP

The second meeting was held in Ha Noi in 6 August 2002 with main activities below:

- Informing the status of implementing the project in each component
- Exchange information in signing sub contracts with formal agencies and consultant hiring
- Nominating experts to attend regional GIS workshop
- Exchange information among components to select priority sites
- Promoting information exchange among the components and with coordinating agency
- Integration with other projects in the country
- Problems encountered and finding solutions

The third meeting will be held in Hanoi in 19 November 2002. Before it, there was a informal meeting in 15 November 2002 to assess the outputs from each components, giving requirement to submit reports to coordinating agency, national technical focal point and regional working group to prepare RSTC and PSC meeting in December 2002.

Regional meetings

The National Technical Focal Point attended all meetings of the RSTC in the year.

National Working Groups

All components established working groups and organised their meeting as indicated in the table below:

Component	Members	Meeting	Remark
Mangroves	16	8	Core group established
Seagrass beds	11	2	
Coral reefs	13	2	Permanent discussion in core group
Wetland	17		
Land based Pollution	13	4	
Fisheries	10	2	

STATUS OF ANTICIPATED INITIAL OUTPUTS

Habitat sub-components

There are some differences on required activities among the sub-components. Main outputs of each, however, are summarized in the table below

Reports	Mangroves	Seagrass beds	Coral reefs	Wetland
Past and ongoing project	Completed	Completed	Completed	Completed
National metadata base	ongoing	ongoing	ongoing	
Site characterisation	Ongoing	1 st draft	1 st draft	ongoing
Review of TDA national report	Completed			
Assemble data/info in GIS database	ongoing	ongoing	ongoing	ongoing
Review of legislation	ongoing	ongoing	1 st draft	1 st draft
Prepare national action plan	ongoing	ongoing	ongoing	
Review of threats		ongoing		
Transboundary analysis		ongoing		
Economic valuation			ongoing	ongoing

Fisheries

Main outputs of the component up to November 2002 is the first draft of national report including review of national fisheries, species with transboundary significance, criteria for resource protection areas, threats and status of environment and resources, review of legislation in fisheries management, policy and strategy to develop fisheries and fisheries database.

Land based pollution

Outputs of the component include:

- First draft of review of TDA National Report with updated and revised data and information;
- First draft of legislation and institutional arrangement concerning with environment criteria, discharge management, monitoring, environment supervise;
- First draft of identification of hot spots composing of Ha Long-Hai Phong, Vung TauGanh Rai, Da Nang-Dung Quat, Rach Gia – Kien Giang.

DIFFICULTIES AND ACTION TAKEN TO ADDRESS

Difficulties	Action taken to address
Time gap for careful comment from National PSC	Quick arrangement made by coordinating agency
Differences in budget management	Getting agreement from PCU to use UNDP rate
Demand of Remote Sensing Images was not met	Discussion with PCU on the way to get the images with free of charge (Need more negotiation)

ANNEX 5

Summaries of the Reports of the Chairpersons of the Regional Working Groups, to the Second Meeting of the Regional Scientific and Technical Committee

Summary of the Report of the Chairperson of the Regional Working Group on Land-based Pollution for the year 2002 to the Regional Scientific and Technical Committee

1. ORGANISATION OF THE REGIONAL WORKING GROUP

1.1 Members of Regional Work Group

1.1.1 The members of the RWG-LbP consist of the focal points for land-based pollution from Cambodia, China, Indonesia, Malaysia, the Philippines, Thailand, and Viet Nam. Mr. Sudaryono, focal point from Indonesia, Mr. Pak Sokharavuth focal point from Cambodia and Ms. Pornsook Chongprasin were elected as Chairperson, Vice-Chairperson, and Rapporteur respectively.

1.2 Meetings

1.2.1 Two regional working group meetings on land-based pollution have been held, the first in Bangkok from 3 to 5 April 2002 and the second Batam Indonesia 18 – 21 September 2002. The next meeting of the RWG-LbP will be held in Philippines on 25 – 28 February 2003.

1.2.2 During the second meeting in Batam, Indonesia, information concerning hot spot sites was presented by six countries (the exception being Malaysia). Agreement within the Regional Working Group on the format and kinds of data, and information to be submitted to the regional meta-data base, was reached together with agreement regarding the standards, based on those of ASEAN and China for water quality, sediment and biological samples, and on the GIS format at National and Regional levels.

1.2.3 Country reports are at an advanced stage of completion encompassing reviews of the original country reports, national legislation, and characterisation of Hot Spot sites. Many new data and information have been provided, analysed and compiled. All these items are presented in the national reports as follows:

- a. **Cambodia**, has completed a draft report according to the guidelines agreed by the first meeting of the regional working group, and now is drafting national action plan; three hotspots have been identified.
- b. **China**, has finished a draft report and proposed three hotspots, these are: Neilingding, Pearl River estuary, North catchments of Daya Bay and Boihai city area.
- c. **Indonesia**, has formed a National Committee on land based pollution and held several meetings, one of the conclusions is the proposal of three priority hot spots which are: Batam Island, Jakarta bay and Pontianak (West Kalimantan).
- d. **Malaysia**, has made little progress due to the delayed signing of the MoU, and is still forming the national committee for land-based pollution.
- e. **Philippines**, relevant activities have been implemented including a review of the laws on pollution management and identification of possible hotspots as Lingayen Gulf, Manila Bay, and Batangas Bay.
- f. **Thailand**, the National Committee, has held four meetings and identified two locations proposed as hotspots they are upper Gulf of Thailand and the Songkhla lake region.
- g. **Viet Nam**, has finished a draft report and has selected three hotspots, which are Quang Ninh-Hai Pong area, Vung Tau-Ganh Rai area and Danang, Dung Quat area, also collected some information for the meta-database.

2. STATUS OF ANTICIPATED INITIAL OUTPUTS

2.1 National Reviews of Data & Information

2.1.1 Though many efforts have been made in preparing draft national reports, evident gaps in relevant data and information required to complete a regional picture of land-based pollution and existing data have still to be addressed. In the case of China, getting data and information relevant to Hong Kong is still a problem.

2.2 Status of site specific characterisation

2.2.1 Almost all of the countries involved in the Project have identified already, site-specific information following the formats developed by the RSTC and RWG. Once again the problem is the gaps of data, and information mentioned above.

2.3 Status of reviews of national legislation

2.3.1 At the Second Meeting of RWG, 18-31 September 2002, all countries involved, provided inputs to this activity.

2.4 Status of reviews of economic valuation

2.4.1 This matter is quite difficult for most of the countries involved in the Project due to a lack of appropriate economic methodology for valuing impacts and lack of quantitative data regarding those impacts.

3. CONCLUSIONS

3.1 Difficulties encountered

- The most evident difficulty is the gap in the required data and information particularly information and data related to the biological impacts of pollution and economic valuation of these impacts.
- The national mechanisms for international sharing of data, and information do not allow reports, data, and information to be submitted to the regional level easily.
- In the case of China there is an administrative problem relating to information and data from Hong Kong since Hong Kong is not directly involved in project implementation.
- The time schedule of the Pollution Component is very tight impacting delivery and the quality of national inputs to the regional level.

3.2 Recommendations to the Project Steering Committee

- PSC should make agreement on information and data sharing within the Project.
- PSC should assist the Chinese National Committee for Land Based Pollution to solve the problem of getting information and data relevant to Hong Kong as this area around the mouth of the Pearl River is considered to be an important hot spot site for Land Based Pollution from China.
- Suggested that participation of Singapore in the project would provide useful experience, because Singapore had cleaned their rivers over a ten years period, the participation of Singapore in the project could be facilitated through other sources of funding.

3.3 Recommendations to the Regional Scientific and Technical Committee

- RSTC is asked to provide guidance in more detail for the collection of information and data related to the biological impacts of pollution and economic valuation of pollution impacts.
- Taking into account the interaction between the land-based pollution component and other components of the project, linkage and communication among the regional working groups should be established.

Summary of the Report of the Chairperson of the Regional Working Group on Fisheries for the Year 2002 to the Regional Scientific and Technical Committee

1. ORGANISATION OF THE REGIONAL WORKING GROUP

1.1 Members of Regional Work Group

1.1.1 The regional working group for fisheries (RWG-F) currently has representatives from 5 countries, Cambodia, Indonesia, Philippines, Thailand, and Viet Nam. Malaysia and China have not been participating in the fisheries component during these initial stages of the project.

1.1.2 For the second meeting in Phuket in October, the Focal Point from the Philippines, Mr. Noel Barut, was unable to attend, and was also not able to organise an alternate representative. Mr. Salim from Indonesia was also not able to attend, and was represented by Dr. Johannes Widodo, an active member of Indonesia's National Fisheries Committee. Mr. Somsak Chullasom joined the Working Group as a regional fisheries expert. This second meeting, was also attended by, 3 observers from the Andaman Sea Fisheries Development Centre in Phuket, one from the Upper Gulf Marine Fisheries Development Centre in Thailand, and one from the Eastern Marine Fisheries Development Centre, also in Thailand.

1.1.3 In addition, Dr. George Woodman from Hong Kong University of Technology made a presentation on a blast fishing detection system on which he is working, and Mr. Len Garces, from the World Fish Centre in Penang, Malaysia, presented the outcomes of the TrawlBase project in which he was involved.

1.2 Meetings

1.2.1 The RWG-F met on two occasions during 2002, in May and in October. At the first meeting, a work plan and timetable were agreed, as well as the outline for a National Report from each country.

1.2.2 In the period between the two meetings, the focal points for fisheries in each country, assisted by the Special Executing Agency (SEA) and the National Fisheries Committee (NFC), were to collect data and information and produce a first draft of their National Report, based on the agreed outline.

1.2.3 At the second meeting, representatives from Cambodia, Indonesia, Thailand, and Viet Nam, presented the first drafts of their National Reports. The Philippines did not attend this second meeting, and to date has not presented a first draft of their National Report. Considerable data and information have been collected, which was apparent from the reports presented. However, a substantial amount of work is still required, in order to produce acceptable reports by the due date. It was agreed that the National Reports would be completed by the end of the first quarter of 2003, though the chapter dealing with the habitats would be completed by 21st February, 2003 so that it could be considered at the third round of meetings of the habitat sub-components of the project scheduled for late February and early March, 2003.

1.2.4 Also at this second meeting, a list of species of transboundary significance, and a list of threatened species for the South China Sea region, to be considered in the National Reports, was discussed and agreed.

1.2.5 Concern was expressed by the members of the RWG-F that the GIS representatives from each country who had participated in the GIS workshop had failed to contact or communicate adequately with the Fisheries Focal Points, resulting in a noticeable lack of progress in the GIS related work.

2. BRIEF OVERVIEW OF THE STATUS & CONTENTS OF NATIONAL REPORTS

2.1 Draft reports have been received from Cambodia, Indonesia, Thailand, and Viet Nam. Nothing has yet been received from the Philippines, though the Focal Point has assured the PCU that the final report will be ready by the due date.

2.2 Considering that the species to be considered in these reports were only finally agreed at the second meeting in October, progress to date on the reports received is reasonable. However, more attention now needs to be paid to concentrating on the agreed species/species groups, and also in ensuring that information is reported under the appropriate heading. The volume of information presented in the reports is reasonable, though some of the reports contain information, which though generally informative, is not relevant to the topic. All the reports require substantial editing, and the content of some reports requires rearranging in certain areas.

3. STATUS OF ANTICIPATED INITIAL OUTPUTS

3.1 Status of National reviews Data

3.1.1 A tabulated summary of the information contained in the country reports received, is provided in annex 8.5 of the full Chairpersons report to the RSTC.

3.2 Status of site specific characterisation

3.2.1 The habitat sections of the reports have so far received very little attention. Only Thailand and Viet Nam have included some information on known spawning sites and fishing grounds. No attempt has been made to rank any sites.

3.3 Status of reviews of national legislation

3.3.1 Cambodia, Indonesia, and Thailand report on some fisheries and related legislation that exists. Viet Nam refers to some Government policies and plans, but does not list any actual legislation. All countries need to add more information to this section.

3.4 Status of reviews of economic valuation

3.4.1 Apart from some information from Cambodia, Indonesia, and Thailand on the local market value of some species, and value of exports provided by some countries, there has been no attempt made to value the marine resources, or to rank them by their value to the countries.

4. FINDINGS CONCLUSIONS

4.1 Achievements and developments to date

4.1.1 Reasonable progress has been made on the collection of data and preparation of the reports however; substantial additional work has still to be done by all national committees.

4.1.2 A number of time bound targets and other decisions relating to fisheries conservation and fish stock rehabilitation that, will have significance to the work of the Regional Working Group on Fisheries, were reached at the World Summit on Sustainable Development (WSSD) held in Johannesburg from 26 August - 4 September 2002. Those of particular significance are to be found in paragraph 29 to 31 of the Plan of Implementation, and include:

- Maintain or restore stocks to levels that can produce the maximum sustainable yield with the aim of achieving these goals for depleted stocks on an urgent basis and where possible not later than 2015.
- Develop and facilitate the use of diverse approaches and tools, including the ecosystem approach, the elimination of destructive fishing practices, the establishment of marine protected areas consistent with international law and based on scientific information, including representative networks by 2012 and time/area closures for the protection of nursery grounds and periods, proper coastal land use; and watershed planning and the integration of marine and coastal areas management into key sectors.

4.1.3 These targets are comparable to the objectives set for the Fisheries component of the project and should aid the RWG-F and the National Fisheries Committees in their efforts to gain support from the National Governments and regional organisations for their activities, and to develop and implement the National Action Plans and regional Strategic Action Plan.

4.2 Difficulties encountered

Availability of information

4.2.1 There is a lack of species level data for landings. Although some work has been done on exploitation rates in general, as the fisheries are multi-species, it is difficult to be sure that fishing is at an overall sustainable level, and that overexploitation of some species is not occurring.

Country Commitment to the Fisheries Component

4.2.2 Generally the countries participating in the fisheries component of the project have demonstrated a commitment to the activities, however, Malaysia has indicated that it may not sign the MoU for Fisheries. This affects the work of the RWG, as it may lead to information gaps in relation to the geographic area of coverage.

4.2.3 The lack of receipt of a first draft from the Philippines is also of concern, as there will be limited opportunity to review and comment on the report and leave sufficient time for modifications before the final report is due.

GIS related activities

4.2.4 At the regional GIS workshop held in July, it was agreed that country representatives to the workshop would provide GIS support to the SEAs, and that initial work on baseline maps would be completed before the second meeting of the Regional Working Group. This did not eventuate, and there was some confusion expressed at the RWG-F second meeting regarding the roles of the participants to the GIS workshop in relation to the GIS related work.

5. RECOMMENDATIONS TO NATIONAL TECHNICAL WORKING GROUPS, NATIONAL COMMITTEES/SUB-COMMITTEES

It is recommended that the National Committees consider the following recommendations:

1. The National Committees need to incorporate expertise in economic evaluation in their committees.
2. To date there is only one expert on the working group. The National Committees need to nominate additional regional experts to serve on the RWG-F. Economic evaluation should be considered as a possible area of expertise to include.
3. The committees need to complete their final draft reports as soon as possible, to allow sufficient time for incorporating changes after review by the PCU and the Regional Experts.
4. The NTWG should coordinate the activities of the GIS specialists in relation to the assistance they provide to the SEAs

6. RECOMMENDATIONS TO THE REGIONAL SCIENTIFIC & TECHNICAL COMMITTEE

It was agreed at the second RWG-F that there was justification for pursuing the development of a blast fishing detection device. It is recommended that the RSTC request the PSC to endorse further action on this issue.

Report of the Chairperson of the Regional Working Group on Mangroves for the Year 2002, to the Regional Scientific and Technical Committee

1. ORGANISATION OF THE REGIONAL WORKING GROUP

1.1 Members of Regional Work Group

1.1.1 The members of Regional Work Group include the Focal Points from six of the seven participating countries, three regional experts and, a Project Coordinating Unit member. Dr. Sonjai Havanond from Thailand, Dr. Fan from China, and Mr. Barangan from the Philippines, served as Chairperson, Vice-Chairperson, and Rapporteur for the year. During the first meeting Professor Ong Jin-Eong served as expert member being replaced in the second meeting by Professor Gong Whoi Khoon.

1.1.2 A major concern to the group has been the failure of Malaysia to designate a mangrove focal point and hence the absence of Malaysia from the discussions held to date. This is of particular concern for a number of reasons not the least being the active leadership role played by Malaysia in the UNESCO mangrove programme now completed. During that programme the Forest research institute of Malaysia played a key and important role at the regional level.

1.2 Regional Work Group Meetings

1.2.1 The first meeting was held in Phuket, Thailand, and the second from September 11-13, in Ho Chi Minh City, Viet Nam. Despite the fact that the first meeting of the Regional Working Group was intended to familiarise members of the group with the project structure, reporting procedures, and requirements in terms of financial management, a considerable amount of technical and scientific business was conducted. Recognising the critical importance of analysis the threats and causes of degradation in mangrove systems the group, with the assistance of Dr. Hoang Tri, expert from Viet Nam discussed and agreed on approaches to be used in the conduct of the causal chain analyses once the potential demonstration sites have been identified. The nature of the data and information required to characterise sites was identified and details of the nature of indicators of biological diversity agreed.

1.2.2 During the second meeting members discussed and agreed on a revised and accelerated schedule of activities to meet the overall project goals, including the delivery of interim products according to a shortened timetable. The list of reports received by the PCU to date is included as Annex 1 of this report. In addition the group discussed and agreed on the list of obligate and associate mangrove species, the distribution of which is to be recorded at each site characterised during the next inter-sessional work period. A tabulation of species distribution by country was prepared during the meeting and appended as an Annex to the meeting report.

2. THE MID-YEAR REPORTS FROM PARTICIPATING COUNTRIES

2.1 With one exception the participating countries sent the six monthly progress reports, expenditure statements, and cash advance requests to the Project Coordinating Unit on time. Although internal difficulties in two countries (Philippines and Thailand) have resulted in no advances being requested for the period from July to December 2002. In one case responsibility for the activity has been transferred from one Government Department to another whilst in the second difficulties in accessing the funds on the part of the executing office delayed commencement of activities. In both instances work has continued using other resources and this has not impacted the schedule of work and in both cases these difficulties have been resolved and adjustments will be made to the budget for the year 2003 to account for these delays in fund transfer.

3. INTER-SESSIONAL ACTIVITIES AT THE NATIONAL LEVEL

3.1 Activities of National Committee

3.1.1 National Committees have been formed in all countries except Malaysia. In Thailand pre-existing National Mangrove Committee (NatManCom) is a large and well-established, high level body, which meets infrequently. NatManCom was created during the UNESCO regional mangrove project and continues to exist and to guide the management of mangroves in Thailand. In view of this the National Mangrove Committee for the project has been formed as a sub-committee of the NatManCom. In China, the committee has been formed as a sub-committee of the NTWG. In Cambodia the mangrove and wetlands committee is a joint committee responsible for activities in both project sub-components, and in that country, several, local level meetings have been convened at the Provincial level with a view to engaging stakeholders from local government and the communities. In Indonesia, widespread consultation has also occurred at the local level.

3.1.2 Most committees have met fairly regularly although the frequency has tended to be lower than that envisaged in the calculation of in-kind co-financing.

3.2 Review of Past and On-going Activities and National Data and Information

3.2.1 The National Focal Points for Cambodia, China, Indonesia, Philippines, Thailand, and Viet Nam have presented reports in various forms and with varying degrees of detail (Table 1).

3.2.2 The following deadlines for submission of reports were agreed during the second meeting:

- Review of past and ongoing activities, following the format in Annex 5 of the meeting report **October 25th 2002**, to be sent to the Chairperson and Project Co-ordinating Unit.
- Identification and characterisation of sites. **November 30th 2002** first draft containing as many sites as possible for entry into the Regional GIS and presentation to the Project Steering Committee. A revised complete and final listing needs to be prepared no later that **January 31st, 2003** for distribution by the PCU in advance of the third meeting of the RWG-M.
- Review of National Legislation: **November 30th**, first draft for review by the PCU and presentation to the RSTC & PSC. **Revised draft January 31st, 2003** for finalisation at the third meeting of RWG-M.

Table 1. Summary Table of report delivery by country

	Past & Ongoing	Data & information	GIS	Country report	National Legislation Review	Action Plan	Meta-database
Cambodia	draft	draft					1 st draft
China	yes	yes		yes			
Indonesia		draft		draft	draft	draft	
Malaysia							
Philippines			partial				
Thailand	yes			yes			
Viet Nam		yes		yes			

3.2.3 The level of detail presented in the reviews of data and information and in the review of past and ongoing activities is neither of sufficient quality nor quantity at the present time, to provide a GIS based regional overview of the distribution and state of the mangrove habitats bordering the South China Sea. For some countries detailed data and information have been assembled for specific sites (China, Viet Nam) but a picture of distribution and diversity at the national level has not generally been provided electronically to date (see section 4.1 below). Cambodia has identified an existing GIS map of the mangrove habitat, which can be used at the regional level provided that, the data are made available in the correct form to the SEA START RC. At present such distributional maps are known to be available for Cambodia, Indonesia, Philippines, Thailand and Viet Nam, but they have

not been provided at the regional level and hence preparation of a regional map of distribution is not yet possible. Work is ongoing in China to produce a GIS map based on satellite imagery and considerable detail is provided regarding distribution and abundance in the draft national report, which needs to be converted into map format.

3.2.4 In general it may be concluded that a considerable amount of preparatory work has been completed in all countries to date but the target of completion of these activities by the end of 2002 is slightly delayed.

3.3 Creation of National Meta-database

3.3.1 A task which is common to all MoUs with all Specialised Executing Agencies is the creation of a national meta-database for planning and management of mangrove habitats at the national level. In the case of Thailand such a database already exists and discussions regarding the linking of this database with the regional meta-database are on going.

3.3.2 The working group has agreed to use the format for the regional meta-database for submitting information to the regional level and adoption of this format could serve as an initial starting point for the creation of the national meta-databases, where these do not already exist. The Cambodian team has made efforts to develop a specific database format for use in the framework of the project. The second meeting agreed the following timetable for the submission of data to the regional GIS database:

- Tables M.1.1 to M1.3 of the GIS questionnaires need to be completed by the Focal Points **no later than October 15 2002** and dispatched to the PCU and to the SEA START RC;
- Questionnaires contained in M2 need to be corrected by the SEA START RC **no later than October 15 2002**;
- **By the end of November 2002**, a first draft of completed questionnaires for sites should be submitted to the PCU. These questionnaires should be submitted as they are completed, and not retained by the Focal Points up to the deadline.

3.3.3 Initial tables have been completed and submitted by Cambodia and the Philippines, but completion of this task is somewhat behind schedule.

4. ON-GOING ACTIVITIES REGARDING THE CHARACTERISATION OF MANGROVE SITES

4.1 Identification and Characterisation of "Sites"

4.1.1 As noted above China has submitted draft, completed GIS questionnaires for five sites whilst the draft report contains considerable detail regarding various characteristics of these and other sites totaling 59 locations which mangrove areas ranging in size from 1 to >2,000Ha. In addition Viet Nam had completed a detailed description of three sites by the time of the second meeting but these site descriptions have not been submitted to the PCU. The Viet Namese report provides details on mangrove areas by the 29 coastal provinces including areas under shrimp farms whilst the Thai report provides information on mangrove area for the 11 provinces bordering the South China Sea. Mangrove sites bordering the South China Sea have been identified in the Philippines but detailed data regarding these sites is not yet available. No electronic data has been submitted by Indonesia to date but the hard copy report dispatched in June contains some preliminary information regarding the distribution and abundance of mangroves bordering the South China Sea.

4.1.2 The revised and final listing of sites should be received by the PCU by January 31st 2003 if it is to be edited revised and distributed in time for a more detailed consideration of priority sits during the third meeting of the Regional Working Group. Given the amount of data and information already assembled by most national committees this should still be achievable bearing in mind that finalisation for publication can be deferred to later in the year. The most important consideration is to have available to the third meeting as comprehensive a list of site characterisations as possible for discussion and collective review by the group.

4.2 Review of National Legislation

4.2.1 The Working group has agreed that the review of national legislation would consist of sections encompassing the following issues:

1. Laws
2. Regulations
3. Cabinet resolutions
4. National criteria used in designating sites for specific purposes such as: national park, biosphere reserve, conservation area, production forest, or commercial activity

4.2.2 First drafts of the Reviews of National Legislation were to have been sent to the PCU by November 30th for review and presentation to the RSTC and PSC. A preliminary review of national legislation of relevance to mangroves was included in the June report from the Indonesian committee but to date no review has been received by the PCU.

4.2.3 The RWG-M agreed that revised drafts of the Reviews of National Legislation, for finalisation at the third meeting of the RWG-M would be sent to the PCU by January 31st 2003. It seems unlikely on the basis of information available to date that this deadline will be met.

5. ACTIVITIES TO BE UNDERTAKEN WITHIN THE NEXT INTER-SESSIONAL PERIOD

5.1 Economic valuation

5.1.1 As part of the review of national data and information relating to mangroves data regarding economic valuation studies were to have been reviewed and the RWG-M agreed that this review would be finalised and a report produced by 20th December 2002.

5.1.2 The national report of Thailand contains some information on economic valuation studies of mangrove and provides some concrete data regarding actual values for mangrove goods and services, whilst the reports from China and Viet Nam provide extensive discussion of uses, both actual and potential and some figures for an overall assessment of the economic value of mangrove habitats.

5.2 Review National Criteria & priorities

5.2.1 As part of the national reviews, national committees were to have reviewed the management of mangroves at the national level. Within this overall review they agreed to examine the criteria used at national levels to determine the different uses of mangrove areas and the basis on which the status of particular sites were designated for use, for reserves etc.

5.2.2 The national reports from China, Thailand and Viet Nam contain information regarding ownership patterns, management and use, which encompasses in part, information regarding the process by which use regimes are determined.

6. STATUS OF ACTIVITIES AS OF NOVEMBER 2002

6.1 Delivery of outputs has been slow to date with some countries being more advanced than others. Few deliverables have been produced according to the agreed schedules with some countries showing considerably more progress than others.

6.2 The level of detail provided in reports to date varies both in terms of the detail contained in individual sections of each national report and in terms of the detail contained in the different national reports. This is not unexpected since it reflects both the availability of information and the range of expertise contained within the different national committees.

6.3 Whilst it seems likely that, the deliverables required for the third meeting of the Regional Working Group will be available prior to the meeting from most countries a number will have to invest considerably more time in order to ensure that the target dates are met.

7. RECOMMENDATIONS

7.1 To encourage national focal points to meet the deadlines it is suggested that all national level draft reports are circulated to all focal points as they are received by the PCU and that intersessional discussions be initiated and stimulated via e-mail.

Report of the Chairperson of the Regional Working Group on Coral Reefs for the Year 2002, to the Regional Scientific and Technical Committee

1. ORGANISATION OF THE REGIONAL WORKING GROUP

1.1 Members of Regional Work Group

1.1.1 The Regional Working Group on Coral Reefs (RWG-CR) is composed of the Focal Points from Cambodia, Indonesia, Malaysia, Philippines, Thailand, and Viet Nam, two Regional Experts, and one member from the Project Coordinating Unit. The RWG-CR was established to coordinate national activities of the National Coral Reef Committees, Sub-committees, or Working Groups, develop regional criteria and priorities for potential coral reef demonstration sites. The Chairperson is Mr. Kim Sour, Focal Point for Coral Reefs (and Seagrass) in Cambodia, Dr. Suharsono, Focal Point for Coral Reefs in Indonesia, and Dr. Porfirio M. Alino, Focal Point for Coral Reefs in the Philippines. The officers served for the full year.

1.1.2 The RWG-CR has held two meetings, the first in April in Phuket, Thailand and the second in October, in Sihanoukville, Cambodia. The first meeting was to orient the members of the RWG-CR of the objectives and financial procedures of the South China Sea Project, develop a work plan, and provide details for the characterisation of coral reef sites. The Second Meeting was convened to inform fellow members of the progress of work, identify difficulties and solutions, and to discuss future national and regional activities.

1.1.3 The RWG-CR has achieved significant outcomes from the two regional meetings and during the intersessional periods, including agreement on details for the characterisation of sites, production of drafts of the national Reviews of Past and On-going Activities; National Legislation; and draft reports on the Identification and Characterisation of Sites from Cambodia, Indonesia, Philippines, Thailand, and Viet Nam. Malaysia has not submitted a draft on these national reports but the Focal Point has attended both meetings and has given substantive reports on national data and information on projects, legislation, and coral reef sites.

2. OUTPUTS

Details of Parameters, Data, and Information requirements for Coral Reef Site Characterisation - The tabulation of parameters, data, and information requirements for coral reef site characterisation (Annex 7, UNEP/GEF/SCS/RWG-CR.1/3), follows the guidelines set by the RSTC in characterising sites (UNEP/GEF/SCS/RSTC-1/3). This tabulation was translated into a questionnaire for entry in the Geographic Information System (GIS). Based on the experience characterising coral reef sites during the intersessional period, this GIS-format was revised (see Annex 7, UNEP/GEF/SCS/RWG-CR.2/3).

Questionnaire and results for the regional overview of past and on-going projects in the participating countries - the questionnaire was intended to provide a synoptic view of the types of projects that have been conducted in the region and to assess whether sufficient data and information are now available to manage coral reef resources. The results show that "the objectives of projects on coral reefs in the region encompass a wide range, from biodiversity assessment to coastal zone planning. Distribution of coral reefs is widely known but not all reefs have been surveyed in detail. Adequate information for 50-75 % of corals can now be found for Indonesia, Philippines, and Thailand. Gaps in information for management issues vary among the participating countries reflecting the lack of trained personnel, of funds or financial and/or logistical support, inadequate monitoring, and enforcement.

Summary of Coral Reef Sites Identified and Characterised in the Participating Countries - There is a substantial amount of data and information on coral reefs in most participating countries. A total of 46 sites were identified and data and information were provided for 24 sites (Annex 6, UNEP/GEF/SCS/RWG-CR.2/3).

3. OVERVIEW OF OUTPUTS AND OUTCOMES

3.1 Focal Points from Cambodia, Philippines, Thailand, and Viet Nam have submitted drafts of their national report on the Identification and Characterisation of Sites. The national reports from Cambodia and the Philippines are highly satisfactory in providing the data and information required for the characterisation of coral reef sites. Cambodia has submitted metadata for 23 coral reef sites and the status of the data and information on 5 coral reef sites. The national report from the Philippines was in three formats: in a tabular format (as in Annex 7; UNEP/GEF/SCS/RWG-CR.1/3); in "text files"; and in meta-databases (GIS points and format). The national report was comprehensive, containing quantitative as well as qualitative information on biodiversity, ecological significance, socio-economic significance, and management (in Annex 4, UNEP/GEF/SCS/RSTC.1/3; and Annex 7, UNEP/GEF/SCS/RWG-CR.1/3). The national report from Viet Nam is satisfactory. Quantitative information was entered in the GIS meta-database format and qualitative information was presented in "text files". The national report from Thailand includes the identification of coral reef sites but does not have the characterisation required for each of the coral reef sites.

3.2 The anticipated outputs during the intersessional period, between the Second and Third Meetings of the RWG-CR, are the Final Drafts of the Review of Past and On-going Activities, of the Identification and Characterisation of Sites, and Final Drafts of Summaries of National Legislation and Management Regimes, and Regional Criteria for Selection of "demonstration sites". Many of these reports have been submitted and reports have improved and updated the information on coral reefs in the Country Reports for the preparation of the Transboundary Diagnostic Analysis.

4. STATUS OF ANTICIPATED INITIAL OUTPUTS

4.1 Status of National reviews of Data & Information & regional GIS relevant portions

4.1.1 The Final Drafts of the national reviews of data and information are anticipated from all countries, with the exception of Malaysia, by the end of December 2002. The results of the survey of projects on coral reefs in the countries (Annex 5, UNEP/GEF/SCS/RWG-CR.2/3) indicate that there are numerous projects with outputs from which data and information can be synthesized for the South China Sea regional GIS database. The first draft of the regional criteria was anticipated on the 30th of November and the Final Draft is due by the 1st of February 2003.

4.2 Status of site specific characterisation

4.2.1 The site-specific characterisation of coral reefs is in progress. All countries, except Malaysia, have begun site characterisation. Cambodia has identified 7 coral reef sites but needs to provide more data and information to characterise coral reefs on the biodiversity, ecological and socio-economic importance, and management levels. These data and information may not be abundant but are available (see Metadata, Annex 8.2). Indonesia has provided a text-file of the three coral reef sites, with information on biodiversity of corals and fishes and socio-economic importance. The production of the tabular characterisation of sites and the filling-up of the questionnaire on data and information can be accomplished according to the work plan. The Philippines has provided characterisation to majority of sites identified. The filling up of the questionnaire for the remaining coral reef sites is only the remaining task. Thailand has identified that coral reefs in the Gulf of Thailand and characterisation of sites has begun and can be accomplished as in the Work plan (see Report of the Second Meeting, UNEP/GEF/SCS/RWG-CR.2/3). Viet Nam has identified coral reefs and has begun characterising these by a "text-file" and by filling-in of the GIS-questionnaire. More sites have to be characterised but it is anticipated that these will be accomplished according to the Work plan.

4.3 Status of reviews of national legislation

4.3.1 The final drafts of reviews of legislation from Cambodia, Indonesia, Philippines, and Viet Nam have been received. The first draft of this review is anticipated from Thailand by the 31 December 2002.

4.4 Status of reviews of economic valuation

4.4.1 The review of economic valuation data and information has begun as part of the characterisation of coral reef sites. It was found that economic benefits from fishing and tourism are available. However, providing quantitative estimates of economic values from socio-economic activities (e.g., fishing and tourism), to particular coral reefs was difficult (see Report of Second Meeting, UNEP/GEF/SCS/RWG-CR.2/3). Thus, it was agreed that qualitative information on socio-economic values and benefits should be reported for each coral reef site.

5. FINDINGS/CONCLUSIONS

5.1 Difficulties encountered

5.1.1 There were a number of difficulties encountered, in particular with respect to the collection and synthesis of socio-economic data and information for the characterisation of sites, and for the review of "valuation data and information". These difficulties were due to the limited and dispersed data and information on economic benefits from coral reefs. In some countries, the characterisation of sites was delayed, partly because of confusion on the format to be used. The poor interaction between the GIS-experts and the Focal Points for Coral Reefs resulted to difficulties in the creation of national databases or submission of metadata entries to the regional meta-database.

6. RECOMMENDATIONS

6.1 To NTWGs and National Committees/Sub-committees

1. It is recommended that the National Technical Working Groups and National Committees follow closely the revised Work plan and Timetable;
2. National Coral Reef Committees and Working Groups are encouraged to communicate any difficulty to the Project Coordinating Unit as they occur rather than waiting for a regional meeting.

6.2 Recommendations to RSTC

It is recommended that the RSTC:

1. considers approving the change in activity from "*prepare guidelines on testing blast fishing activities*" to "*review threats at site level*", emphasising the impacts of destructive fishing practices such as fish bombing and cyanide fishing;
2. consider an extension for some national activities, particularly on the characterisation of sites, identification of proximate to ultimate causes by source (causal chain analysis), and assembly of national GIS database.

Report of the Chairperson of the Regional Working Group on Seagrass for the Year 2002 to the Regional Scientific and Technical Committee

1. ORGANISATION OF THE REGIONAL WORKING GROUP

1.1 Members of Regional Work Group

1.1.1 The Regional Working Group for Seagrass (RWG-SG) has representatives from all 7 participating countries, namely, Cambodia, China, Indonesia, Malaysia, Philippines, Thailand, and Viet Nam. Professor Xiaoping Huang, Focal Point from China, Dr. Suvaluck Satumanatpan, Focal Point from Thailand and Dr. Hugh Kirkman, member from the Project Coordinating Unit acted as Chairperson, Vice Chairperson, and Rapporteur respectively, for the two meetings of the Regional Working Group on Seagrass (RWG-SG).

1.1.2 The RWG-SG met on two occasions in 2002, in May and in October. At the first meeting, a work plan and timetable were agreed, as well as the data and information requirements from each country. The significant outcome of the First Meeting was agreement on the table of parameters and indicators to characterise seagrass sites. In the period between the two meetings, the focal points for seagrass in each country, assisted by their Special Executing Agency (SEA) and the National Seagrass Committee (NFC), were to collect data and information and produce first drafts of the: review of past & on-going activities; identification & characterisation of "sites"; and, review national legislation.

2. OVERVIEW OF OUTPUTS AND OUTCOMES

2.1 All countries, except Malaysia, have submitted drafts of the Review of Past and On-going Activities and Review of National Legislation. Cambodia, Philippines, and Viet Nam have submitted reports on the Identification and Characterisation of Sites. Philippines and Viet Nam have made substantial progress on the characterisation of sites. Only Cambodia and Viet Nam have submitted metadata on Seagrass. A list of reports received by the PCU in time for review before the RSTC are included in Annex 2 of the full text of the Chairperson's Report to the RSTC.

2.2 A number of outputs from the first meeting came from discussions held on data and information requirements for the seagrass component of the project. These included an agreed flow chart for countries to follow in collecting information and undertaking the activities in the seagrass sub-component of the project (Annex 5, UNEP/GEF/SCS/RWG-SG1/3), and a tabulation of parameters, data and information requirements for characterising seagrass sites (Annex 7, UNEP/GEF/SCS/RWG-SG1/3). A work plan and timetable for the working group was also agreed.

2.3 At the second meeting, progress on the various reports, the contents of which were agreed at the first meeting, was reviewed, and the work plan was amended slightly to ensure that specific outputs were completed in time for consideration at the next round of Regional Working Group meetings, and at the Regional Scientific and Technical Committee meetings scheduled for December 2002 and May 2003. From the second meeting, a listing of seagrass sites for each country was obtained, some of which had also undergone some degree of characterisation using the guidelines agreed at the first meeting. In addition, some guidelines for the selection of the nature of regional seagrass demonstration sites were developed (Annex 11, UNEP/GEF/SCS/RWG-SG.1/3), as well as a summary table of threats to seagrass beds in each participating country (Annex 12). This summary shows that many threats are common among the participating countries, such as physical damage due to destructive fishing methods (push-nets, trawling), sedimentation due to the clearing of mangrove forests and logging of perennial trees, and over-exploitation of seagrass resources. In addition, guidelines for management of sustainable seagrass resources were developed at the second meeting.

3. STATUS OF ANTICIPATED INITIAL OUTPUTS

3.1 Status of National reviews Data & Information & regional GIS relevant portions

3.1.1 The National Focal Points for Cambodia, China, Indonesia, Philippines, Thailand, and Viet Nam presented their draft national reviews of past and on-going projects to the second meeting. The meeting discussed these brief reports and paid attention to possible overlap or transboundary activities of relevance to the “sites” to be chosen in this Project.

3.1.2 At the second meeting, a survey was conducted to assess projects on seagrass beds in the participating countries using a questionnaire. The results of the survey showed that there were projects for the biodiversity assessment, socio-economic assessment, and management, protection, and conservation of seagrass habitats. These have been useful to increase public awareness, introduction of new legislation, and community involvement in seagrass management, among others but more work is needed in the distribution of seagrass to help address management issues. A tabulated summary of past and on-going projects on seagrass is attached to the report of the second meeting of the RWG-SG, which is contained in the meeting information documents as UNEP/GEF/SCS/RWG-SG.2/3.

3.1.3 A general overview of the past and on-going projects on seagrass in participating countries was prepared during the same meeting, and is attached to the meeting report as Annex 7.

3.2 Status of site specific characterisation

3.2.1 The National Focal Points of Cambodia, China, Indonesia, Philippines, Thailand, and Viet Nam reported on the seagrass areas of regional and transboundary significance for discussion and later prioritisation by the Regional Working Group.

3.2.2 Information available has been included in Annex 8 of the second meeting report. All countries have selected some sites for characterisation. Some countries have provided the location coordinates for these sites (China, Philippines, and Viet Nam). Although all countries agreed on using the GIS questionnaire to characterize the seagrass sites, only the Philippines and Viet Nam have made any progress on entering this data into the GIS format that was prepared by SEA-START based on Annex 7 of the first meeting report of the RWG-SG. Only Cambodia and Viet Nam have submitted metadata on seagrass sites.

3.3 Status of reviews of national legislation

3.3.1 There is no specific national seagrass policy for Cambodia but there was much useful legislation, including Fishery Law regarding the management of coastal living resources in Cambodia. The Fisheries Law is the only one that mentions seagrass. Many international conventions that concern marine issues have been signed and ratified by Cambodia. There is no law specific to seagrass in China but the Convention on Biological Diversity and Marine Environment Protection Law are treated seriously. There are a number of laws that would protect seagrass in China.

3.3.2 In Indonesia there is no law that specifically mentions seagrass and most legislation is top down and not community-based. In the Philippines, only one regulation has been developed for the specific purpose of protecting seagrass beds. There is no law specific to seagrass in the other countries. There are a number of laws that would protect seagrass, but it was agreed that there is a need for specific legislation on seagrass. In Thailand, there are 3 policies and laws that are relevant to seagrass conservation. These are the National Policy and Plan for Promoting and Protecting the Environment (1997-2016), Enhancement and Conservation of National Environmental Quality Act (1992), and the Fisheries Act (1947).

3.3.3 The format of a table to assemble information on national legislation pertaining to the management was agreed by all the countries. This form was circulated to compile all the legislation presented. All the countries have submitted to date drafts of Reviews of National Legislation.

3.4 Status of reviews of economic valuation

3.4.1 Very little progress has been made on the economic valuation of seagrass. The parameters, indicators, data, and information on economic valuation required for characterising seagrass sites were only agreed at the second meeting, and are attached as Annex 14 to the report of that meeting. The reviews of economic valuation are currently underway, and will be finished by January next year. Significant progress is therefore expected before the third meeting.

4. CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

4.1 Difficulties encountered

Difficulties encountered include:

- Payment to the SEAs in some countries was delayed because of internal National Government financial procedures.
- Financial regulation and reporting requirement are perceived as comparatively complicated.
- Outputs of sub-contracts submitted to the national focal point for compilation are very late.
- The MOU of Malaysia was signed in September, so the whole programme of seagrass faces some problems in that country.
- The additional workload on GIS database caused an increased cost of project's execution.

The only other notable difficulty was some confusion after the first meeting of the RWG-SG on the prioritisation of possible demonstration sites. The PCU explained during the second meeting that the countries would not, in fact, be asked to prioritise their seagrass bed sites at this stage but they would use the characterisation parameters developed in the first RWG-SG to list them. Prioritisation for selection of demonstration sites would be a regional activity.

4.2 Recommendations to NTWGs

1. The National Technical Working Groups should have more frequent meetings in order to address in a timely manner the problems encountered by the Specialised Executing Agencies.
2. It is also recommended that all National Seagrass Committees do their utmost to follow the agreed work plan and timetable, and to produce the required outputs on time.

4.3 Recommendations to National Committees/sub-committees

1. The National Committees/sub-committees should include members of local government departments.
2. It is further recommended that all Focal Points maintain regular correspondence with the PCU, and communicate any difficulties encountered to the PCU and the NTWG as they occur, rather than wait until the next regional seagrass working group meeting.

4.3 Recommendations to the Regional Scientific & Technical Committee

1. The Regional Scientific and Technical Committee should pay particular attention to the criteria for demonstration sites.
2. It is also recommended that the RSTC consider and endorse the economic evaluation parameters agreed to at the second RWG-SG (see 4.4 above).

Report of the Chairperson of the Regional Working Group on Wetlands for the Year 2002 to the Regional Scientific and Technical Committee

1. ORGANISATION OF THE REGIONAL WORKING GROUP

1.1 Members of Regional Work Group

1.1.1 The Regional Working Group on Wetlands (RWG-W) is composed of the Focal Points from all seven participating countries, two regional experts, and one member from the Project Coordinating Unit. The Chairperson is Mr. Dibyo Sartono, Focal Point for Wetlands in Indonesia, Vice-Chairperson, Ms. Marlynn Mendoza, Focal Point for Wetlands in the Philippines, and Rapporteur, Mr. Narong Veeravaitaya, Focal Point for Wetlands in Thailand. Representatives of all countries attended the first and second meetings of the RWG in Phuket and Shenzhen. At the first meeting of the RWG-W, the participant from Cambodia was Mr. Ke Vongattana who was replaced as Focal Point for wetlands in Cambodia, by Mr. Sok Vong. The Focal Point for Malaysia, Mr. Sivanesam Pillai, participated in the First Meeting of the RWG-W while Dr. Pan Khang Aun attended the second meeting. There were no Regional Experts at the First Meeting of the RWG-W two of three nominated experts attended the second meeting.

1.2 Meetings of the Regional Working Group

1.2.1 The RWG-W met for the first time in April in Phuket, Thailand and again in September in Shenzhen, China. The First Meeting of the RWG-W agreed that the scope of work should be restricted to coastal, salt-water environments and habitats. In this context it was agreed that the primary focus would encompass, estuaries (including deltas), tidal flats and lagoons, and that the definitions of these habitats used by the RAMSAR Convention would be those used in the framework of this Project." In addition, the group agreed on the details of parameters, data and information requirements for Wetlands Characterisation following the guidelines set by the RSTC in characterising sites (UNEP/GEF/SCS/RSTC-1/3). The Work plan and Timetable of activities for the RWG-W were revised at the Second Meeting with consideration of the broadening of the scope of work of the RWG-W.

1.2.2 Significant outcomes during the intersessional periods were initiation of intersessional electronic discussions, which although they did not result in a definitive agreement on the re-scoping of work of the RWG-W, were considered a useful mechanism for exchange of information and views amongst members.

1.2.3 The Second Meeting was convened to inform members of the progress of work, to discuss difficulties, and to identify solutions. The Second Meeting of the RWG-W produced Agreement on the contents of the Review of Past and On-going Projects - (par. 5.26, UNEP/GEF/SCS/RWG-W.2/3). And agreement on rescoping of the work on wetlands - The RWG-W agreed to broaden the scope of work on estuaries, tidal flats, and to include all other wetlands (e.g., peat swamps, non peat swamps, and lakes) in the areas bordering the South China Sea, wherever possible (par. 6.5, UNEP/GEF/SCS/RWG-W.2/3).

2. OVERVIEW OF OUTPUTS AND OUTCOMES

2.1 Review of Past and On-going Activities

2.1.1 Drafts of the national reviews of Past and On-going Activities; National Legislation; and Identification and Characterisation of Sites have been submitted by all countries except Cambodia and Malaysia. The drafts received to date vary in quality and volume, but have added significantly to the information on wetlands contained in the Country Reports used in preparation of the Transboundary Diagnostic Analysis.

2.1.2 The Reviews of Past and On-going Activities from the Philippines, Thailand, and Viet Nam were highly satisfactory including detailed information on the projects, including their duration, the study areas, implementing and funding agencies, and remarks on the products produced at the end of each project. However, the report from Thailand was the only one that followed the outline of the report agreed upon, containing a table of past and on-going activities and findings on the relevance of these projects to the South China Sea Project.

2.1.3 As a result of the re-scoping of the work of the RWG-W, the submission of final drafts of the national reviews on **Past and On-going Activities** were staggered. The final draft for review of activities on estuaries/deltas, inter-tidal mudflats, and lagoons were due in October while for the review on freshwater swamps, peat swamps, and other type of natural wetlands are due in December 2002. However, all countries that have submitted the reviews have submitted one final draft for all wetlands, including marine and coastal wetlands (e.g., estuaries/deltas, inter-tidal mudflats, lagoons), freshwater wetlands, and all other types that border the South China Sea.

2.2 Review of National Legislation

2.2.1 The Reviews of National Legislation from China, Thailand, and Viet Nam are highly satisfactory. The Reviews include a list of legislation, policies, decrees, and regulations and critiques of legal instruments for the conservation and management of wetland habitats. The Review of Legislation from Philippines was satisfactory, having a listing of national legislation, policies, and programs that pertain to the management of coastal habitats.

2.2.2 The reviews of **National Legislation** are anticipated from Cambodia and Indonesia by the end of December 2002. The National Technical Working Group in Indonesia decided that one legal expert for the RWGs would conduct the review. The Focal Point for Indonesia reported at the Second Meeting that the review is underway. Cambodia is encouraged to submit as soon as possible since funds have been advanced for this review.

2.3 Identification and Characterisation of Sites

2.3.1 The Focal Points of Indonesia, Philippines, and Viet Nam have submitted drafts of their national reports on the Identification and Characterisation of Sites. The national reports from Indonesia and Thailand include extensive lists of all types of wetlands that border the South China Sea. The national report from the Philippines is highly satisfactory in providing the data and information required for the characterisation of wetland sites in two formats: in a tabular format (as in Annex 7; UNEP/GEF/SCS/RWG-W.1/3) and in meta-databases (GIS points and format). The national report from Viet Nam is satisfactory, although it contains more limited data and information required to characterise wetlands.

2.4 Data & Information & regional GIS relevant portions

2.4.1 The inputs of the Focal Points for wetlands to the regional GIS for the South China Sea have attempted to follow the schedule prepared by the PCU and SEA-START RC, although only two countries, Philippines and Viet Nam, have begun preparing their contributions.

2.5 Status of reviews of economic valuation

2.5.1 The Philippines and Viet Nam have reviewed the "economic valuation data and information" for several wetland sites as part of the characterisation of sites. Information on the socio-economic importance of the sites, such as fishing, has been reported and, in some sites, the amount of catch was reported. This is a need, to have a more focused effort to review economic valuation data and information for all sites characterised.

3. CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

3.1 Difficulties encountered

3.1.1 There were difficulties encountered in executing the activities since the broad scope of work has made it difficult for the Focal Points to accomplish the tasks completely and on time. There exists potentially some overlap with the work of other groups such as the mangroves groups. Limited expertise is available in some countries and limitations also result from the limited amount of existing, secondary data, and information in some countries.

3.2 Recommendations to the National Technical Working Groups, National Committees and Sub-committees

3.2.1 It is recommended that the National Technical Working Group and National Committees consider encouraging all the National Focal Points for the sub-components of Habitat Loss and Degradation to focus on a specific areas and work together in an integrated manner.

3.3 Recommendations to the Regional Scientific and Technical Committee

It is recommended that:

1. The RSTC clarify the tasks, responsibilities, and scope of work of the RWG-Wetlands;
2. Due to the differences in availability of data and information in each country, general guidance is prepared to compare and measure achievement.

Table 2 Agreed Calendar of Deadlines for Tasks of the Regional Working Groups Required to Ensure Selection of Demonstration Sites by the Project Steering Committee in December 2003

Calendar	Agreed deadlines for the activities
November 2002	
December 2002	RSTC-2 & PSC-2
January 2003	Review of past and ongoing projects
	Review of national data and information
	Review economic valuation data & information
	Review National legislation
	Review National level management regimes
February 2003	Review National Criteria & priorities
	Review threats at site level & initiate preparation of causal chain analyses
	Identify proximate to ultimate causes by source
	National Prioritisation
	Identify priority points of intervention
March 2003	Evaluate barriers and possible solutions
	Regional Criteria development & finalisation
April 2003	Creation of National meta-database
	Identification & characterisation of potential demonstration "sites"
May 2003	RSTC-3
June 2003	Regional GIS database related tasks
July 2003	Quantitative causal chain analysis
August 2003	Preparation of demonstration site proposals
September 2003	
October 2003	
November 2003	
December 2003	Preparation/revision of the National Action Plan
	Finalisation of elements of the SAP
	RSTC-4 & PSC-3
January 2004	
February 2004	
March 2004	