INTERNATIONAL WATERS RESULTS NOTES

http://www.iwlearn.net/results 06-05-2013

East Asian Seas Environmental Management

GEF ID#s: 396, 597, 2700 PIMS ID#s: 637, 2215, 3469 Project Status: 2 Completed, 1 Active

Key results:
1. The Sustainable Development Strategy for the Seas of East Asia (SDS/SEA) was adopted by twelve participating PEMSEA countries in December 2003 after three years of extensive consultations.

2. Coastal and ocean policies have been initiated in four countries; draft coastal and ocean policies are being developed in six countries, Integrated Coastal Management coverage of the regional coastline has reached 11.7%, and the PEMSEA Network of Local Governments has adopted the State of Coasts (SOC) reporting system.

3. Piloting, replication and upscaling of a wide range of Integrated Coastal Management programmes is underway in over twenty sites across twelve PEMSEA participating countries.

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PROJECT OBJECTIVE

These projects are a series of three UNDP-GEF-PEMSEA (Partnerships in Environmental Management of the Seas of East Asia) interventions that integrate local, national, sub-regional, and regional initiatives to address coastal and marine issues, with a focus on unsustainable rates of, and conflicts over, resource use and the associated social, economic and environmental impacts, such as habitat degradation, natural and man-made hazards, water use and supply management, food security, pollution reduction and waste management. The most recent and still active project focuses is the Implementation of the Sustainable Development Strategy for the Seas of East Asia (SDS-SEA).

In one of the most densely populated, rapidly developing and increasingly urbanized (mainly in coastal cities) regions in the world, the coastal and marine ecosystems of the East Asian Seas (EAS) region have been increasingly subject to varying degrees of overexploitation and pressure as a result of human activities. Even with the significant progress made by countries, individually and collectively in the region, ecosystem services continue to be degraded including biodiversity loss; degradation of habitats; fisheries' overexploitation; mismanagement and pollution of water; uncontrolled development and urbanisation of coastlines; climate change and variability; and other natural and man-made hazards.

RESULTS: PROCESS

The Sustainable Development Strategy for the Seas of East Asia (SDS/SEA) was adopted by 12 participating PEMSEA countries in December, 2003, in Putrajaya, Malaysia. The SDS-SEA was developed after three years of extensive consultations with the 12 participating governments and 16 stakeholder partners, and embodies a shared vision among stakeholders towards achieving the sustainable use of coastal and marine natural resources, protection of the ecosystems, protection of life and property of the coastal population and sustaining the benefits provided by marine ecosystems. Action programs are developed under six major strategies: Sustain, Preserve, Protect, Develop, Implement and Communicate. In 2009, the Agreement Recognizing PEMSEA's International Legal Personality was ratified by eight Country Partners: Cambodia, PR China, DPR Korea, Indonesia, Lao PDR, Philippines, RO Korea, and Timor Leste formalising PEMSEA's transformation into an independent legal entity tasked with coordinating and monitoring SDS/SEA implementation.

Building on the Putrajaya Declaration of Regional Cooperation for Sustainable Development of the Seas of East Asia (2003), the Haikou Partnership Agreement on SDS-SEA Implementation (2006) and the Manila Declaration on Strengthening the Implementation of ICM for Sustainable Development and Climate Change Adaptation (2009), PEMSEA is working towards the adoption of sustainable ecosystem services for an ocean-based blue economy in the Seas of East Asia through the SDS-SEA implementation. To further strengthen the implementation of the SDS-SEA, PEMSEA developed national and regional SDS-SEA medium term plans (2011-2015).

EAS countries have committed to three priority targets under the SDS-SEA: develop coastal and ocean policies, and supporting institutional arrangements in at least 70% of partner countries by 2015; adopt and implement Integrated Coastal Management (ICM) programmes covering at least 20% of the region's coastline by 2015; and prepare State of Coasts (SOC) reports, including climate change adaptation measures.

Coastal and ocean policies have been initiated in four countries; draft coastal and ocean policies are being developed in six countries (five with GEF funding), ICM coverage of the regional coastline has reached 11.7%, and the PEMSEA Network of Local Governments (PNLG) has adopted the SOC reporting system, committing 100% of its membership to implement the system by 2015.

The EAS Partnership Council and the Executive Committee approved the following guidelines: the Port Safety, Health and Environmental Management (PSHEM) Code; the Port Safety, Health and Environmental Management System (PSHEMS) Development and Implementation Guideline; and the Guidebook on the State of the Coasts Reporting for Local Governments Implementing ICM. The

PSHEMS is being rolled out in seven ports, co-financed by the port authorities, the GEF and the German Technical Cooperation (GIZ).

The 2009 EAS Congress had 1,480 participants, 100 exhibitors, 51 co-conveners/supporting organisations and 12 sponsors. The EAS Congress was hosted by Changwon City, Republic of Korea. The PEMSEA Network of Local Governments (PNLG) for Sustainable Coastal Development adopted the Dongying Declaration on Building a Blue Economy through ICM (2011), committing to a 5-year PNLG Strategic Action Plan to include certification of ICM sites in accordance with the PEMSEA ICM Code. A Corporate Social responsibility (CSR) Forum for Public-Private Partnerships (PPPs) in the Rehabilitation of Manila Bay was conducted in 2009, attracting 35 Manila Bay corporations. This was followed by a series of workshops, three sub-regional training workshops, and 34 national and sub-national workshops. ICM Learning Centres have now been established in China, Cambodia, Indonesia, Philippines and Vietnam.

RESULTS: STRESS REDUCTION

With PEMSEA now supporting piloting, replication and upscaling of ICM programmes in over 20 sites across 12 PEMSEA participating countries, a wide range of stress reduction is underway at sites already implementing their ICM strategies and initial commitments under SDS/SEA; below follows a few examples of some of the stress reduction being realised.

In line with the implementation of the Sihanoukville Coastal Use Zoning Scheme, the Preah Sihanouk province in Cambodia has established 18 protected area zones covering 2,201 ha of mangroves, seagrass and corals and establishment of a Protected Area in Kampong Smach (3,197 ha) of mangroves and mudflats is underway.

From 2008 to 2010, the Quanzhou (China) government began to restore native mangrove habitats in areas of Quanzhou Bay affected by an alien invasive plant, Smooth Cordgrass (*Spartina alterniflora*). 150 ha of Spartina was removed, complemented by restoration of 134 ha of mangroves. Since 2000, mangrove habitat has increased to over 500 ha in Quanzhou Bay, making it the largest mangrove habitat along the southeast China coast.

The Laguna de Bay-Pasig River-Manila Bay Watershed IRBCAM project has provided decision-makers with forecasts of total biochemical oxygen demand (BOD), nitrogen and phosphorus loadings in 58 sub-basins up to 2020. The project aims to strengthen investments in pollution reduction to eliminate hypoxia towards achieving the target of a “swimmable” Manila Bay.

To address sea-based pollution in the Gulf of Thailand, Cambodia, Thailand and Vietnam have worked jointly to strengthen and harmonise coastal oil spill sensitivity maps; sub-regional guidelines on the use of chemical dispersants for oil spills; and an information sharing system on oil spill response.

An improved and integrated disaster reduction, preparedness and response system has led to the reduction of hazard-induced damages in Xiamen. For example, the installation of Automatic Marine Water Quality Monitoring Buoys now provides vital daily forecasting and early warning information. The system provided up-to-date information during a 20-day red tide incident in 2008 resulting in no direct economic loss or personal injury and rapid implementation of Xiamen’s Emergency Response Plan Against Red Tide.

Development of an integrated macro-scale land and sea use zoning plan for the Manila Bay Area is focusing on different scenarios of sea level rise, flooding and storm surges as a consequence of climate change, variability and extreme events. The project delineated vulnerable coastal areas to be affected by one and two metre sea level rises and enhanced storm surges. In light of these scenarios, the project is identifying and costing zoning and adaptation options.

In Lao PDR, the Sedone Integrated River Basin Management Project has produced a Sedone River Basin Strategy for Sustainable Development (SRD-SDS) that includes an intergovernmental institutional mechanism, and a pilot-scale project which provides sanitation services to 3,000 households along the Sedone River.

In Timor Leste, a baseline scoping project for the Alternative Livelihood Programme in Timor Leste was completed at ICM sites in Liquica and Manatuto, along with a rapid appraisal and baseline State of the Coasts (SOC) preparation. The scoping report identified capacity development activities and a proposed work plan for developing sustainable, asset-based and conservation-enabling livelihood development programmes. Two pilot sites: Ulmera and Maabat, were identified in Liquica and Manatuto, respectively, for sustainable livelihood demonstrations.

RESULTS: WATER RESOURCE AND ENVIRONMENTAL STATUS

Environmental, social and economic benefits from investments in environmental facilities and services catalysed through PEMSEA ICM and other programs are only beginning to be monitored and documented at ICM sites through the implementation of PEMSEA's State of the Coasts reporting system.

Xiamen, as one of the most advanced ICM sites, provides some initial data on environmental status improvements. A recent Xiamen case study indicates that domestic sewage treatment rose from 28% of the population in 1995 to 85% in 2007. Improvements in water quality in sea areas around Xiamen have been documented, particularly in Yangdong Lagoon where the transition was from heavily polluted waters to fishable waters. Other sea areas around Xiamen have been able to maintain their water quality despite substantial increases in population and economic development.

KEY LESSONS LEARNED

1) It is necessary to continuously nurture and uphold the principles of partnership and consensus building, which have served as key pillars of PEMSEA. With strong support from partners, crucial issues such as the vision and mission of PEMSEA, and the plans/roadmap towards transformation, were agreed upon.

2) PEMSEA's combination of "top-down" and "bottom-up" impetus is effective in securing necessary political commitment.

3) Key ingredients for the success and sustainability of management of marine and coastal resources include (1) a clear shared vision, (2) inclusive, multi-level partnerships, (3) active stakeholder participation sustained through appropriate incentive mechanisms, (4) adequate funding streams marked with resource counterparting, (5) science-based management support, (6) purposive capacity-building and organizational strengthening, and (7) active communication and advocacy.

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