

PEMSEA News

Sihanoukville Municipality: Balancing Economic Development and Coastal Resources Management through Local Initiatives

Sihanoukville, Cambodia – In 2005, the Department of Tourism had high hopes for Sihanoukville becoming a prime tourist destination. "We need to get the upper and middle class crowd to visit more often because they're the ones who can pay more for the services. Right now, there are a lot of tourists coming in, but only a few are staying in high-end resorts," expressed then DOT Deputy Director Tang Socheat Kresna. Sihanoukville's only 5-star hotel at that time, the Sokha Beach Resort, was only sparsely occupied. Three years later, investors are scrambling to have a piece of Sihanoukville. With construction all over the municipality - from five-star hotels, flats, ports, bridges - that hope for the municipality may soon become a reality. Land prices are soaring, investments and tourists are pouring in and, construction and more construction is seen everywhere. While the municipal government is cautious about these developments, it cannot be denied that such economic expansion brings hope to many people. For many, more investors mean more jobs and more income.

Sihanoukville's "growth" is founded on the use of its natural resource base, but with the influx of tourists and more capital from foreign corporations, can Sihanoukville's natural resource base handle this environmental stress? Are resources enough to fuel the growing population in the municipality?

Sihanoukville's newly appointed Governor, Sbong Sarath, answered these questions while addressing local officials and stakeholders during the Inception Workshop on Integrated Coastal Management in Sihanoukville.

"Coastal resources in Sihanoukville provide the foundation for socioeconomic and environmental activities. Benefits from fishing, tourism industry and port services, provide for local people's livelihood. However, the Municipality has to face several difficulties in relation to preserving and managing the coastal zone environment owing to population growth, demands for environmental services, industry development, increased fishing efforts and the growth of coastal tourism. There is imbalance between economic development and natural resource management," Governor Sbong Sarath admitted during the Workshop on 8 September.

The one-day Inception Workshop was participated in by 60 commune officials, representatives from local government departments and other stakeholders. The culmination of the workshop was marked by the signing of a Memorandum of Agreement (MOA) between the Municipality of Sihanoukville and PEMSEA on the scaling up of the integrated coastal management (ICM) programme in Sihanoukville for the period 2008-2011. Under the MOA, the Municipality will focus on strengthening marine and coastal governance through such initiatives as operationalization of its coastal use zoning scheme, implementation of strategic actions focusing on habitat protection, restoration and management, water use supply and management, food security and livelihood management, and pollution reduction and waste management in Stung Hav, Prey Nup and Mittapheap Districts, and application of an environmental

users fee. PEMSEA's role will be to provide technical guidance and assistance to the Municipal Government in the development of a State of the Coasts reporting system, setting up a sustainable ICM governance system and strengthening local capacity in ICM implementation and scaling-up actions.

Meeting the Challenges Ahead: A 3-year Commitment to ICM

The implementation of the ICM Scaling up programme in Sihanoukville will be a challenging task for the Municipality as it will need to move fast enough to ensure that economic expansion will not lead to detrimental environmental impacts. To do this, a combination of a broader institutional capacity development coupled with practical projects that would have an immediate impact on people's lives will be the main strategies for the next three years.

The institutionalization of coastal management is hoped to be accomplished through the establishment of the Sihanoukville Coastal Management Committee (SCMC). The SCMC, which will be a permanent interagency and multisectoral body, will be the venue for discussion, policy direction and monitoring of ICM activities. Additional membership will be sought from nongovernmental organizations, the private sector and community-based organizations to ensure proper representation of other sectors. The existing Project Management Office and the Technical Working Group will serve as a secretariat for the SCMC.

The Municipal Government will come up with a Deka (provincial law) to support the establishment of the SCMC. The establishment of the SCMC is also in anticipation of the pending national Organic Law on Decentralization and Deconcentration in Cambodia.

Coastal Use Zoning

With the booming construction, the Coastal Use Zoning plan needs to be legislated, enforced and made known among stakeholders. In 2005, the National Coastal Steering Committee (NCSC) adopted the coastal use zoning plan in Sihanoukville, but there was no corresponding sub-decree or law that would back up its implementation. In the next three years, the municipal government will seek support from the NCSC to develop and submit a sub-decree on CUZ.

"We need an Anukret (sub-decree) for the CUZ and to publish what we have done on zoning so that the stakeholders know that the zones are for specific use only," commented one participant.

The development of the sub-decree will be matched with corresponding capacity development among local authorities, coupled with an effective information campaign to instill vigilance among stakeholders and implementers.

Financing for Coastal Management One of critical concerns in implementing coastal management initiatives in Sihanoukville is resource mobilization to implement ICM. From the growing number of tourists comes an opportunity to generate environmental fees. Within the next three years, a series of consultations will be conducted to set up an environmental user fee that would finance environmental infrastructure and services, as well as ensure effective collection and management of the fund.

At the heart of the ICM implementation in Sihanoukville is strengthening individual and institutional capacity to fully implement ICM activities through the learning-by-doing approach. Specific training activities will be done on-site in support of implementation of strategic action programs such as beach water quality monitoring, coastal use zoning and environmental user fee.

Community-based SGP-PEMSEA Project Crucial in Increasing Crab Catch and Mangrove Rehabilitation in the Province of Chonburi

Chonburi, Thailand – Halfway through its two-year implementation, the first project of the UNDP/GEF Small Grants Programme and PEMSEA Partnership in Thailand is reaping the benefits within the framework of integrated coastal management (ICM).

Initiated in July 2007, the SGP-PEMSEA project involves developing the capacity of communities to implement activities related to protection and sustainable use of marine resources, coastal habitat rehabilitation, and waste management and pollution reduction. The project is implemented by community organizations at seven different locations in Chonburi Province, with the guidance of the local governments, government agencies and academic institutions.

In the municipalities of Sriracha, Laem Chabang and Bangphra, a project to rehabilitate the declining crab population through a "crab condominium" has been implemented. The crab condominium is an artificial shelter for spawning crabs until the eggs are released. The crab condo project, which has increased the crab catch along the coasts by at least two-fold, relies on the active participation of fisherfolk and community members. These stakeholders turn over spawning crabs caught in the wild to the concerned caretakers for protection and nurturing in the crab condos, which now contain around 2,000 crabs.

In the municipalities of Chonburi, Angsila and Saensuk, a series of community mangrove reforestation activities has resulted in thriving mangrove areas that serve as habitats to marine life, coastline protection, and learning areas for local schools. In Sattahip Municipality, demonstration areas for community-based waste management activities involving recycling and organic composting, which aim to reduce the burden on local landfill sites, have been set up in three communities with the participation of individual households.

The project has placed emphasis on the need to strengthen capacity among the beneficiary communities to address their own concerns, as well as the need for the participation of different sectors to create a strong community of implementers that is conscious of the development initiatives being pursued under the project.

Developed within the framework of the Chonburi ICM Program and the Chonburi Coastal Strategy, the SGP-PEMSEA project has received steady support from different sectors, including the local governments, government agencies, nongovernmental organizations, business sectors, academic institutions and various social groups within the ICM network. It has also provided opportunities for developing partnerships among the neighboring municipalities and various stakeholders.

The project sites are currently serving as learning centers for visitors from other local areas intending to replicate the innovative approaches and good practices. The project was also highlighted during the field visit for the UNDP/GEF SGP Asia Regional Workshop held in Thailand on 30 June - 4 July 2008.

Sihanoukville Preps Up for 2008 PNLG Forum on Water Management

Sihanoukville, Cambodia – The Municipality of Sihanoukville in Cambodia is poised to host the 2008 PEMSEA Network of Local Governments for Sustainable Coastal Development (PNLG) Forum on 19-21 November at the Sokha Beach Hotel. The Forum will discuss critical issues on "Water Resource Protection, Utilization and Management" and will convene more than 80 local executives and technical staff from nine PEMSEA participating countries. It will also be a venue for the directors and staff of the Project Management Offices in ICM sites to discuss the proposed highlights and activities for the next three years of ICM program implementation.

"As a local government member, we are 100-percent committed to the PNLG, which is why, after a series of discussions with various agencies and the Ministry of Interior, we have decided to host this year's Forum. It is also a way for us to get people to know more about Sihanoukville," says PMO Director and Second Vice Governor, Prak Sihara.

"You know, a lot of people don't even know where Sihanoukville is. We don't have the usual tourist destinations like those in Siem Reap and Phnom Penh, but we hope that the PNLG participants can take a break from the usual hustle bustle of the city and just relax," added Mr. Prak Visal, Project Manager for the Sihanoukville ICM Office.

For the host Municipality, the event is also hoped to raise awareness among coastal municipalities and local partners on potential water management issues arising from unmitigated urban expansion, and possibly encourage the coastal municipalities to implement integrated coastal management in their respective municipalities.

Recalling the response from local officials when asked about water management in 2007, local executives were then certain that this will not be a major concern for the coastal municipality. In recent years, however, Sihanoukville's landscape has undergone a dramatic change with the construction of hotels, industries, residential buildings and other tourist establishments. When asked of the same question now, Mr. Prak Visal does not hesitate to air what could be a common concern among PNLG members, "Sure, it is a problem now, especially water quality and supply."

This year's participants are eyeing the Forum to provide them with the needed guidance and advice to address, if not prevent, potential problems on water use and management. The Xiamen Municipal Government serves as the secretariat for the PNLG, with the PEMSEA Resource Facility providing technical guidance.

EAS Congress 2009 to Tackle Environmental Impacts of Coastal Reclamation and Foreshore Management

Quezon City, Philippines – To cope with the increasing demand for economic space brought on by development and migration to coastal cities, countries in the East Asian Seas region have engaged in coastal reclamation projects and foreshore developments. While a number of developments have been undertaken in the region, their impacts particularly on the coastal and marine resources and environment have not been given much attention. Both government and stakeholder partners of PEMSEA have recognized the need to look into the issues of coastal reclamation, foreshore management, and land and sea-use zoning as key emerging issues within the region. A consensus was reached during the recently concluded 2nd East Asian Seas Partnership Council Meeting to undertake a more extensive review and knowledge sharing on the trends, impacts, benefits and good approaches related to these issues at the East Asian Seas (EAS) Congress 2009.

The International Conference on Sustainable Coastal and Ocean Development of the 2009 Congress will feature land- and sea-use zoning, coastal reclamation and foreshore management as one of the key topics under the Coastal and Ocean Governance theme. The session hopes to look into the pace of changes made and effects of such issues in the region, highlight good examples and practices and provide recommendations for necessary policy development and implementation. The workshop is expected to be participated in by various sectors representing the governments as well as the scientific and business communities, and local, national and regional organizations.

Hosted by the Government of the Philippines, the Congress will be held on 23-27 November at the Philippine International Convention Center (PICC), Manila, with the theme: "Partnerships at Work: Local Implementation and Good Practices."

To learn more about the International Conference or to register, please go to pemsea.org/eascongress/registration. The EAS Congress website welcomes stories, good practices or lessons learned related to Coastal and Ocean Governance.

Partnership Tool Shows Philippines' Billion-dollar Investment in SDS-SEA Related Projects

Quezon City, Philippines – Initial analysis of projects and programs being undertaken in the Philippines that are contributing to the objectives and targets of the Sustainable Development Strategy for the Seas of East Asia (SDS-SEA) reveals over a billion dollars of investment. The largest proportion of investments is being utilized for multi-focal projects, such as capacity enhancement in disaster management, habitat restoration and management and fisheries management.

This Philippine information was presented to the 2nd EAS Partnership Council in July 2008, as a demonstration of a systematic process for identifying Country and Non-Country Partners' initiatives contributing to the objectives and targets of the SDS-SEA. PEMSEA has been working on its "Framework of Partnership Programmes (FoPP)" for about six months, with the objective of improving the coordination and synergies among the Partners.

The FoPP template was tested in the Philippines with the cooperation of the Department of Environment and Natural Resources (DENR), Philippines. The output was a comprehensive listing of SDS-SEA related initiatives that are ongoing in the Philippines, including budgetary allocations. The process also provided an opportunity for greater interaction among the various DENR bureaus and regional offices and other concerned departments, on coastal and marine matters. As a consequence of the interagency interaction, a document entitled Framework for the Implementation of Executive Order No. 533, Adopting Integrated Coastal Management as a National Strategy (June 2008) was developed. The Framework contains recommended approaches for strengthening institutional mechanisms at the national and local levels for ICM scaling up, including a national interagency coordinating mechanism. Furthermore, the document contains a work programme targeting priority sites/areas and sustainable development issues, as well as actions designed to improve coordination and address gaps and needs of managers and practitioners throughout the country. The draft document is currently undergoing review within DENR.

Both Country and Non-Country Partners welcomed the FoPP as a tool to avoid duplication and promote collaboration on subregional transboundary projects.

New Code Safeguards Safety, Health and Environmental Management at Ports

Quezon City, Philippines – Port authorities and operators face a number of challenges with respect to their role and impact in ICM programs and sustainable development of coastal areas - from the safest way to rig gangway nets, to the handling of hazardous substances and management of machinery and noise. The Port Safety, Health and Environmental Management System (PSHEMS) Code gives port authorities a defined structure within which to manage safety and the environment, and proof that they are doing it correctly. To support the Code, the PSHEM Recognition System has been set up for monitoring a port's capacities in safety and environmental management, using a structured tri-level approach to encourage the Port Authority and/or Port Operator to strive for excellence through continuous improvement.

The PSHEM Code is a voluntary standard against which to measure the performance of a port's operations with regard to quality, safety and health and the protection of the environment. It is based on the "Framework for Sustainable Development of Coastal Areas Through ICM Implementation" and incorporates the key elements of recognized international standards, namely ISO 9001 (Quality Management), ISO 14001 (Environmental Management), and OHSAS 18001 (Occupational Health and Safety).

The PSHEM Code defines the requirements for the port authority on port governance. It also delineates processes/systems that are commonly managed by the Port Authority and identifies relevant controls (governance mechanisms) for port activities.

To achieve the objectives of the PSHEM Code, port authorities or operators should establish, implement and maintain a Port Safety, Health and Environmental Management System (PSHEMS) following the PSHEMS framework and the "continual improvement cycle". The PSHEMS also ensures compliance with mandatory national rules, regulations and standards, as well as any applicable international conventions, codes, guidelines, recommendations and standards.

The PSHEMS Development, Implementation and Continual Improvement Process involves the following phases: Phase 1: Initial Status Review; Phase 2: Strategic Planning; Phase 3: System Development & Documentation; Phase 4: Implementation & Monitoring; Phase 5: PSHEMS Auditing; Phase 6: Continual Improvement;

The PSHEMS Recognition System is then put in place to validate that the PSHEMS of the port meets the requirements of the Code and to confirm the effective implementation of the system. The recognition process goes beyond the typical certification trend using the concept of "compliance" to international standard, since the assessment criteria involves the evaluation of the degree of performance/impact achieved through the implementation of the PSHEMS. The three levels of recognition are:

- Level 1 – Recognition for Compliance of PSHEMS: The integrated management system for PSHEMS is developed and implemented, compliant with the requirement of the PSHEM Code and consistent with the requirements of ISO 14001, OHSAS 18001 and ISO 9001.
- Level 2 – Recognition for the Proficiency in PSHEMS: Significant progress in building sound processes is achieved and superior results are demonstrated.
- Level 3 – Recognition for Performance Excellence in PSHEMS: A high level of Excellence in PSHEMS performance is achieved.

The PEMSEA Resource Facility is currently working with the Laem Chabang Port – Thailand and its port operators for the development of its PSHEMS. Training programs will be conducted on site starting October 2008 to guide the development and implementation of PSHEMS.

For more information on the PSHEM Code and PSHEMS, email info@pemsea.org or download the PSHEMS brochure at the PEMSEA website (<http://www.pemsea.org>).

Manila Bay Joins International Coastal Clean up

Manila, Philippines – More than 2,000 volunteers joined in cleaning up Manila Bay as part of the 2008 International Coastal Clean up Day celebration held on 20 September. The volunteers from government agencies, various colleges and universities, nongovernmental organizations, private corporations, religious groups and local residents gathered along the stretch of the Coastal Road in San Dionisio in Parañaque City, with the common aim of ridding the Bay of its large volume of garbage.

The Clean up, organized by the Department of Environment and Natural Resources (DENR), was part of several clean up activities held nationwide. The Manila Bay Environmental Management Project (MBEMP) and PEMSEA likewise showed their solidarity and commitment to coastal preservation.

Click to view more imagesThe site for the Manila Bay area clean up was originally planned for reclamation as a part of a development project in Manila Bay. However, in April 2007, Philippine President Gloria Macapagal Arroyo declared the site as a critical habitat and ecotourism area, which eventually prevented further land reclamation in the Manila Bay area. The place is home to 40 species of birds, including migratory birds, and 9 species of mangroves including the Nilad, which used to be abundant in the area and on which Manila derived its name (May nilad – to have Nilad).

The DENR organizes an annual clean up campaign as part of the implementation of the Manila Bay Coastal Strategy. Through this annual public awareness campaign, various stakeholders especially students can experience activities relating to marine conservation as well as waste recycling and reuse.

The EAS Congress website welcomes stories and photos on clean up activities made in the East Asian Region. Visit www.pemsea.org/congress.