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Fourteenth Meeting of the Coordinating
Body on the Seas of East Asia (COBSEA)
on the East Asian Seas Action Plan

Bangkok, Thailand, 23-25 November 1999

**REPORT OF THE FOURTEENTH MEETING OF THE
COORDINATING BODY ON THE SEAS OF EAST ASIA (COBSEA)
ON THE EAST ASIAN SEAS ACTION PLAN**

INTRODUCTION

1. The Intergovernmental Meeting on the East Asian Seas Action Plan which was held in Bangkok, 9-11 December 1981, agreed *inter alia*, to establish the Coordinating Body on the Seas of East Asia (COBSEA), to serve as the overall authority to determine the contents of the Action Plan, to review the progress of the Action Plan and to approve its programme of implementation during the annual meetings of the governments (intergovernmental meetings) that participate in the action plan. The eleventh meeting of the Coordinating Body on the Seas of East Asia (COBSEA) was held in Bangkok, 28-29 October 1994. This meeting was preceded by the Meeting of Plenipotentiaries on the East Asian Seas Action Plan (Bangkok, 27-28 October 1994). The meeting of plenipotentiaries decided to enlarge the geographic coverage of the Action Plan to enable Australia, Kingdom of Cambodia, People's Republic of China, Republic of Korea and Socialist Republic of Viet Nam to participate in activities concerning the Protection and Sustainable Development of the Coastal and Marine Areas of the East Asian Seas. The decision to revise the Action Plan, originally adopted by five countries of the region in 1981, was taken in order to:

- (a) bring it in line with new developments, particularly with regard to the decisions of the United Nations Conference on Environment and Development (UNCED) and its programme, Agenda 21;
- (b) allow the addition of the new member-states; and
- (c) take into consideration emerging environmental issues of the past thirteen years.

2. The Executive Director of the United Nations Environment Programme (UNEP), in accordance with the above-mentioned institutional arrangements of the Action Plan, and in consultation with National Focal Points of the East Asian Seas Action Plan, convened the Fourteenth Meeting of the Coordinating Body on the Seas of East Asia in the Siam City Hotel, Bangkok, Thailand, 23-25 November 1999.

3. Representatives from Australia, People's Republic of China, Republic of Korea, Singapore, and Thailand attended the meeting. Apologies were received from Viet Nam and Malaysia for not being able to attend the meeting.

4. The meeting was also attended by the following observers: ESCAP, IMO, IOC/WESTPAC of UNESCO, SEAPOL, START and the UNDP/IMO/GEF project.

5. This document is the report of the Fourteenth Meeting of the Coordinating Body on the Seas of East Asia (COBSEA). The list of participants and observers appears as Annex I to this report.

Agenda item 1. Opening of the meeting

6. Mr. Hugh Kirkman called the meeting to order and welcomed all participants on behalf of the Secretariat, he invited Mr. Nirmal Andrews, Regional Director and Representative of UNEP to the Asia Pacific Region to officially open the meeting.

7. On behalf of the Executive Director of the United Nations Environment Programme (UNEP), Mr. Klaus Topfer, Mr. Nirmal Andrews welcomed participants from member states and organisations participating as observers in the 14th Meeting of the COBSEA.

8. Mr. Andrews informed the meeting that it has been a very active year for the East Asian Seas Regional Coordinating Unit with much to be proud of. For further development of the East Asian Seas Action Plan, he stressed that member countries should ask the following questions:

- What is the EAS/RCU doing for the Region?
- What can it do that other UN or similar agencies can't do?
- Does the EAS/RCU fulfil the needs and objectives of member states?
- Are there other requirements that have been missed that the EAS/RCU should attend to?

9. Mr. Andrews also advised the meeting that progress has been achieved with regard to the GEF project proposal for the South China Sea, the Regional Programme of Action for land-based pollution, and the Long-term plan for the East Asian Seas Action Plan. He continued by stressing that with COBSEA's endorsement of these proposed regional projects, implementation can be integrated and the EAS/RCU would have a pathway for the future conservation, restoration and management of the East Asian Seas.

Agenda item 2. Organisation of the meeting

(a) Designation of officers

10. The Delegate from Korea nominated Mr. David Osborn from Australia as the Chairperson of the meeting. The nomination was seconded by the delegate from Singapore. Mr. Osborn was elected Chairperson by acclamation.

11. The Delegate from Thailand nominated Mr. Fong Peng Keong as Vice-Chairperson of the meeting. The nomination was seconded by the Delegate from China and Mr. Fong was duly elected as Vice-Chairperson by acclamation.

12. The delegate from Australia proposed that Mr. Fong from Singapore be invited to serve as Rapporteur of the meeting, and the nomination was seconded by the Delegate from China, who offered his services as Co-Rapporteur.

(b) Organisation of work

13. The Chairman proposed and the meeting agreed that the rules of procedure of UNEP's Governing Council, as applicable to meetings convened by the Executive Director, would apply, *mutatis mutandis*, for this meeting. The Chairperson proposed and the meeting agreed to carry out its work in plenary session. The proposed time table was introduced (document UNEP(DEC)/EAS IG.10/INF.4) and accepted by the meeting.

14. Mr. Yihang Jiang, Programme Officer of the EAS/RCU provided information with regard to the working documents (Annex II). The meeting was informed that one document, the revised version of the Regional Overview of GPA/LBA, originally intended to be presented at the meeting was not available, and is currently being reviewed together with a Regional Overview on socio-economic implications of sewage.

Agenda item 3. Adoption of the agenda

15. The provisional Agenda was adopted without amendment and is attached as Annex III.

Agenda item 4. Report of the Executive Director

16. Mr. Hugh Kirkman presented the report of the Executive Director. He briefly reported that during the last inter-sessional period, there were several activities carried out by the secretariat in the East Asian Seas region, including the preparation of a GEF proposal on the South China Sea, Regional Programme of Action on the Land-based Pollution Affecting the Marine Environment, and the Long-Term Plan for the East Asian Seas Action Plan. He indicated that with endorsement of the member states of the COBSEA, it would be possible for the EAS/RCU to approach funding agencies for potential financial support to the activities identified.

17. He then informed the meeting that a more detailed report of each project activity will be presented to the meeting of the COBSEA later on in the programme.

Agenda item 5. Review of programme activities for 1999

- (a) Progress of the South China Sea Project proposal for GEF funding consideration.

18. Mr. Kirkman provided a general introduction regarding the development of the project. He noted that project development was initiated at the request of all COBSEA member states at its 12th Meeting. Since then a series of activities had been carried out including the preparation of the Transboundary Diagnostic Analysis, Strategic Action Programme and the Project Brief. During this process which had extended from mid 1996 to the present, the development of the project had received in principle, support and agreement from all participating countries.

19. Mr. Kirkman then invited Mr. Jiang to give a presentation on the activities carried out since the 13th Meeting of COBSEA.

20. Mr. Jiang presented the activities carried out and events that had transpired since the last COBSEA meeting, including

- endorsement in principle of the draft Strategic Action Programme,
- preparation of the Project Brief, which was dispatched to the GEF National Operational Focal Points for endorsement;
- endorsement received by UNEP from 6 of 7 GEF eligible participating countries;
- withdrawal of the project proposal from the work programme of GEF Council at the request of the Government of China;
- relevant activities carried out to discuss issues with relevant ministries of China in further development of the project;
- a visit to China by the Executive Director of UNEP;
- receipt of a letter from the Minister of SEPA, People's Republic of China, to the Executive Director of UNEP; and
- an informal meeting between the Chinese delegation to the 14th Meeting of COBSEA and the UNEP secretariat.

21. Mr. Jiang's entire presentation appears as Annex IV to this report.

22. The six principles stated in the letter from the Minister of State Environmental Protection Administration (SEPA) of China to the Executive Director of UNEP are summarised below;

1. *The project should not affect China's sovereignty.*
2. *The project should not cover the salient controversial South China Sea islets and waters in their vicinity.*
3. *The government of China holds that this project shall not cover the issue of multilateral fishery cooperation.*
4. *The project should not involve legal framework.*
5. *Except the relevant countries of the COBSEA and UNEP, any other countries and international organizations shall not get involved in this project.*
6. *The project shall work on consensus by all the participating countries through consultations.*

23. The outcome of the informal meeting between the COBSEA delegates from China and the UNEP Secretariat, held on 22nd November was introduced. Following this discussion, agreement was reached on principles 1 and 2, namely,

No activities shall be undertaken under this project in disputed areas of the South China Sea, nor shall issues of sovereignty be addressed directly or indirectly through project activities.

24. It was also agreed that a UNEP expert team will visit China to further discuss, amend and finalise a draft GEF project document for the South China Sea GEF project between 15 and 31 January 2000.

25. The delegation from China stated that China attaches great importance to marine environmental protection, and also highlights international cooperation on marine environmental protection. Regarding the GEF project, the Chinese government fully appreciates the original intention and expectations of UNEP, GEF, and the other parties concerned. However, further studies of this project exposed some problems. The Chinese government will continue to take part in the consultation process on this project, and is also willing to have further consultations with UNEP as well as to exchange views with the other countries concerned. The Chinese government has to re-think and even to re-evaluate the project, especially on the associated political problems. The Chinese government proposes to suggest necessary modifications to the title, framework and contents of the project. The Chinese government is willing to hold consultations with the experts from UNEP on this proposal. They will proceed in a step by step manner towards the common goal that is to complete the project brief on the basis of consensus as soon as possible

26. The delegate from Australia express his government's support for a project addressing the degradation of the marine environment in the South China Sea, but noted Australian's intention to remain absent from any debate on the design of the proposal. Australia would like to see negotiation among the relevant countries completed as rapidly as possible, noting the resource implications of any drawn-out debate.

27. The delegate from Thailand reiterated Thailand's strong support for the principles of the project. She questioned what procedure will take place if there is substantial modification to the project documents.

28. The secretariat confirmed that if there were to be substantial changes in the project document, all participating countries would be informed accordingly, and the documents would need to be re-examined and endorsed by all participating countries.

29. The representative from IOC of UNESCO expressed his concern regarding principle 5 proposed by China, and the implications of this for his organisation, other international organisations, non governmental organisations, and countries other than COBSEA members that might wish to co-finance the project. He indicated that UNEP should act as implementing agency

for the GEF project, and should co-ordinate with other executing agencies in the implementation of the project.

30. The meeting noted that substantial efforts and resources have already been devoted to the development of this project proposal, including staffing time of both EAS/RCU and the UNEP GEF Co-ordination Office as well as many experts from all participating countries. The meeting instructed the UNEP secretariat to work with the Government of China and finalise the project document as soon as possible.

- (b) Development of a Long-term Plan for the EAS/RCU: a pragmatic approach to implementation of the East Asian Seas Action Plan.

31. Mr. Kirkman introduced the Long-term Plan of the East Asian Seas Action Plan with emphasis on the development of the plan. He informed the meeting of the inter-linkages between the proposed activities. He emphasised that the adoption of the plan will provide guidelines for EAS/RCU to achieve its goals, and a means to mobilise the necessary financial requirements for the implementation of the plan.

32. The delegate of Thailand stated the importance of the establishment of a well co-ordinated database in the region and necessary requirements for the regional monitoring programme, which allow the member states to achieve a better understanding of the marine environment as a basis for sustainable management.

33. The delegate of Australia indicated the position of his government in supporting the development of the Long-term Plan. He further emphasised the importance of the programme activities on marine protected areas and restoration of marine habitats.

34. Some delegations raised questions regarding the activity of the scale of the mapping, and an explanation was provided by the EAS/RCU.

35. With the understanding of the need to mobilise more financial support for the implementation of the regional programmes in a programmatic way, most countries supported the endorsement of the Long-term plan. See paragraph no. 43.

- (c) The review of the Regional Programme of Action for the GPA for the Protection of the Marine Environment from Land-based Activities.

36. By referring to the document UNEP EAS/GPA ver. 3, Mr. Jiang informed the meeting that since the last COBSEA meeting, as other resources were not available, the staff of EAS/RCU revised the Regional Programme of Action, incorporating the suggestions made by the last COBSEA. The revised programme was prepared and circulated to the Member States for comment. Member States responded positively to the revised programme and offered some comments and suggestions for modification. The comments and suggestions were incorporated in the document as presented to the meeting. Mr. Jiang further introduced the rationale, objectives, proposed activities and pilot projects to the meeting.

37. Some delegates raised questions on the financial mechanisms for the programme, and were informed that financial support will be received from the East Asian Seas Trust Fund, UNEP's Environmental Fund, the GPA Trust Fund and other donor support to the programme.

38. With regard to the activities on the development of the regional criteria and pilot project, EAS/RCU provided the necessary explanation and clarification to the meeting.

39. The meeting expressed its appreciation for the hard work of the EAS/RCU staff in the preparation of the programme, and their satisfaction on the actions that have been taken.

40. Most countries expressed their strong support for the proposed Regional Programme of Action, and the willingness to support the implementation of the project.

41. The delegation from the People's Republic of China expressed concern regarding some components of the Regional Programme of Action for the Protection of the Marine Environment of the East Asian Seas from the Effect of Land-based Activities and the Vision and Plan – A Systematic Approach: Leading the EAS Action Plan to the 21st Century, but stated that the Chinese government wished to see the two projects proceed smoothly.

42. The meeting agreed that COBSEA member states would provide their proposed amendments and revisions to the EAS/RCU before 31 December 1999.

43. The meeting expressed its support for the two projects and agreed that the EAS/RCU will finalise the documents taking into account the proposed amendments or revisions. The revised documents will be circulated by the secretariat to the Member states of COBSEA by 5 January 2000 for approval on a 30 day no-objections basis.

(d) Other projects

44. Mr. Kirkman briefed the meeting on the Training Course on Coral Reef Monitoring held for scientists from the region in Viet Nam from 22 February- 31 March 1999. Support for the course came from the Marine Parks Center of Japan, Australian Institute of Marine Science and National Institute of Oceanography of Viet Nam. He also informed the meeting on the support of regional scientists to attend the Estuarine Research Federation conference in New Orleans, U.S.A from 25 September- 1 October 1999 with support of the Carl Duisberg Gessellschaft Institute of Germany.

45. The meeting expressed its appreciation to the efforts made by EAS/RCU in promoting the capacity of the member states in marine environmental protection, and instructed the EAS/RCU to continue with similar efforts.

46. Mr. Jamie Machin, a consultant of the EAS/RCU, presented a draft proposal for GEF PDF funding entitled, "Integration of Shrimp aquaculture and mangrove forest conservation in Southeast Asia". Mr. Machin discussed the importance of, and issues affecting, mangrove forests in the region, and the impacts associated with shrimp aquaculture. He also discussed the importance of shrimp aquaculture to regional economies and the problems that this industry is facing. Mr. Machin went on to detail the components of a project developed by EAS/RCU to address the above issues. The project activities will focus on the integration of planning of shrimp aquaculture and mangrove conservation and the removal of impediments to shrimp aquaculture in the region. Activities planned for the Project Development Stage of the project were also discussed. Mr. Machin outlined the possibilities for collaboration with other agencies e.g. the United Nations Food and Agriculture Organisation (FAO), the Network of Aquaculture Centres in Asia Pacific (NACA), Wetlands International and other organisations working in this field. Finally Mr. Machin, outlined the benefits of the project to participating countries, specifically; reduction in the loss and degradation of mangrove forests due to shrimp aquaculture; assistance in the implementation of international, and regional conventions, agreements and plans pertaining to marine environmental protection; and assistance in developing sustainable shrimp aquaculture industries.

47. The meeting expressed its interest in the proposed project, in particular the environmental and economic benefits for the participating countries. The meeting instructed EAS/RCU to further

elaborate the proposal document and distribute it to other countries who were not able to attend the meeting.

48. The meeting was informed that there are 7 participating countries in this project, namely; Cambodia, Indonesia, Malaysia, Myanmar, Philippines, Thailand and Viet Nam. Noting that Myanmar is currently not a COBSEA member state and that 5 participating countries (Cambodia, Indonesia, Malaysia, the Philippines, and Viet Nam) are not present in this meeting, the EAS/RCU was instructed to circulate the document of the proposed project to the other COBSEA member states and Myanmar for their consideration.

49. The meeting also urged the EAS/RCU to advise countries participating in this project to inform their GEF National GEF Operational Focal Points early to facilitate subsequent endorsement of the proposal.

Agenda item 6. Financial arrangements

(a) Financial report for 1999

50. With regard to the report made by Mr. Kirkman on the expenditure of the East Asian Seas Action Plan since the last COBSEA meeting and the contribution of member states to the East Asian Seas Trust Fund, further information and clarification was provided to the meeting, taking into account the decision of the last COBSEA meeting for a more transparent financial report. The report is provided as Annex V.

51. The delegate of Thailand informed the meeting that the unpaid contributions of Thailand to the East Asian Seas Trust Fund were those of 1991 and 1992 as a consequence of the restructure of government organisations. Since then, Thailand has paid its contribution to the Trust Fund regularly. Regarding this matter, Thailand contacted the Executive Director of UNEP in Nairobi to request that he consider waiving the two outstanding contributions. The suggestion from the Executive Director of UNEP was that the issue be considered and endorsed by COBSEA members at the 14th COBSEA meeting. The meeting agreed that this issue be placed on the agenda of the 15th meeting of COBSEA, namely that Thailand be excused for its unpaid pledges in 1991 and 1992.

52. The delegate of China informed the meeting that the government of China is the largest contributor to the East Asian Seas Trust Fund. He further indicated that his government will pay its contribution of 1999 in the near future. China's delegation further stated that it is necessary for all COBSEA member states to give support to that Fund.

(b) Contributions to the East Asian Seas Trust Fund

53. The meeting noted that the current level of member contributions to the East Asian Seas Trust Fund is inadequate to meet current expenditure of the EAS/RCU. The meeting was advised that some member states had not made their contribution for 1999 and previous years.

54. With regard to the extension of the East Asian Seas Trust Fund, the meeting adopted the resolution 1, a (Annex VI).

55. In order to increase the financial support to the operation of the East Asian Seas Action Plan, the meeting adopted the resolutions 1, b, c, d and e (Annex VI).

Agenda item 7. Workplan and Budget for the 2000-2001 biennium

56. Mr. Jiang informed the meeting that it was not possible for the EAS/RCU to prepare a document on this agenda item as it was difficult to foresee what projects would be approved at this meeting.

57. The meeting instructed the EAS/RCU to prepare a workplan and budget after receiving endorsement from member states on the Regional Programme of Action for the Protection of the Marine Environment of the East Asian Seas from the Effect of Land-based Activities and the Vision and Plan – A Systematic Approach : Leading the EAS Action Plan to the 21st Century. The workplan and budget should then be circulated to the member states.

Agenda item 8. Other business

58. Mr. Kirkman suggested and the meeting agreed that the next meeting should be in two years time. A letter will be circulated by the Secretariat to member states in order to identify a host country.

Agenda item 9. Adoption of the Report

59. The report was adopted with amendments as contained in this document.

Agenda item 10. Closing of the Meeting

60. Mr. Kirkman, on behalf of the participants thanked most warmly the Chairman for chairing the meeting. He also expressed his appreciation to the delegates and participants for their hard work and the constructive atmosphere in which the business had been conducted. He thanked the Vice-Chair and Rapporteurs for their assistance in ensuring the speedy production of the meeting report.

61. The Chairman thanked Mr. Kirkman and his staff for their efficient organisation of, and support to, the meeting, and thanked Thailand for hosting the meeting and their kind offer to arrange a city tour.

62. The meeting was closed at 18:30, 24 November 1999.

ANNEX I

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ANNEX II

LIST OF DOCUMENTS

Working documents

| | |
|-----------------------------|--|
| UNEP(DEC)/EAS IG.10/1 | Provisional agenda |
| UNEP(DEC)/EAS IG.10/2 Rev.1 | Annotated provisional agenda |
| UNEP(DEC)/EAS IG.10/3 | Report of the Fourteenth Meeting of the Coordinating Body on the Seas of East Asia (to be prepared at the meeting) |
| UNEP(DEC)/EAS IG.10/4 Rev.2 | Report of the Executive Director on the implementation of the East Asian Seas Action Plan in 1997-1998 |

Information documents

| | |
|---------------------------------|---|
| UNEP(DEC)/EAS IG.10/INF.1 Rev.1 | Provisional list of documents |
| UNEP(DEC)/EAS IG.10/INF.2 | Provisional list of participants |
| UNEP(DEC)/EAS IG.10/INF.3 | EAS/RCU Activities |
| UNEP(DEC)/EAS IG.10/INF.4 | Provisional Programme of Work |
| UNEP(DEC)/EAS IG.10/INF.5 | Project Proposal on Integration of shrimp aquaculture and mangrove conservation in Southeast Asia |

Reference documents

| | |
|--------------------------------|---|
| UNEP(WATER)/EAS IG.9/3 | Report of the Thirteenth Meeting of the Coordinating Body on the Seas of East Asia |
| UNEP EAS/GPA-RPA ver.3 | Regional Programme of Action for the Protection of the Marine Environment from Land-based Activities in the East Asian Seas Region |
| UNEP(WATER)/EAS IG.9/4 Annex V | Overview of National Reports for the Global Programme of Action for the Protection of the Marine Environment from Land-based Activities in the East Asian Seas Region |
| UNEP(WATER)/EAS IG.9/4 Annex I | Long-term Plan and Specific Actions to Accomplish |


ANNEX III

AGENDA

1. Opening of the meeting
2. Organization of the meeting
 - (a) Designation of officers
 - (b) Organization of work
3. Adoption of the meeting agenda
4. Report of the Executive Director
5. Review of programme activities for 1999
 - (a) Progress of the South China Sea Project proposal for GEF funding consideration.
 - (b) Development of a Long-term Plan for the EAS/RCU, a pragmatic approach to implementation of the East Asian Seas Action Plan.
 - (c) The review of the Regional Programme of Action for the GPA for the Protection of the Marine Environment from Land-based Activities.
 - (d) Other projects
6. Financial arrangements
 - (a) Financial report for 1999
 - (b) Contributions to the East Asian Seas Trust Fund
7. Workplan and Budget for the 2000-2001 biennium
8. Changes and modifications to member country pledges
9. Other business
10. Adoption of the Report
11. Closing of the Meeting

ANNEX IV

MR. JIANG'S ENTIRE PRESENTATION


November 1998 

Endorsement of SAP

Endorsement in Principle of SAP by 13th COBSEA,
18-19 November 1998

From the report:
The SAP was endorsed as a working draft document that would be further discussed, elaborated and amended over the next two years.

*Page 7, UNEP(WATER)/EAS IG. 9/3
East Asia Seas Regional Coordinating Unit*

January - February 1999 


Preparation of the Project Brief

Secretariat prepares the Project Brief as required by GEF
January - February 1999

4-6 March 1999

Project Brief dispatched to the GEF National Operation Focal Points of the participating countries for written endorsement, 4-6 March 1999

East Asia Seas Regional Coordinating Unit

November 1998 

Preparation of the Project Brief

From the report:
Participants authorised the Secretariat to proceed with the development of a GEF project brief for the endorsement by the countries and submission to the Global Environment Facility.

*Page 7, UNEP(WATER)/EAS IG. 9/3
East Asia Seas Regional Coordinating Unit*




Endorsement Letters

Endorsement letters were received by the secretariat from

| | |
|-------------|---------------|
| Cambodia | 8 April 1999 |
| Indonesia | 16 March 1999 |
| Malaysia | 28 March 1999 |
| Philippines | 8 March 1999 |
| Thailand | 19 March 1999 |
| Viet Nam | 23 March 1999 |


East Asia Seas Regional Coordinating Unit

November and December 1998 

Finalisation of TDA and SAP

Finalisation of Transboundary Diagnostic Analysis (TDA) and SAP by the Secretariat in accordance with the agreements of the 13th Meeting of COBSEA and the 3rd Meeting of National Coordinators 15-17 November 1998

*Documents: UNEP SCS/SAP ver.3
UNEP SCS/TDA ver.4
East Asia Seas Regional Coordinating Unit*

3-12 March 1999 

Visit to China

Coordinator and Programme Officer visited China and gave presentation of the project proposal to several ministries and departments Beijing and various institutions in the provinces (3-12 March 1999).

It was found out that there was no inter-ministerial meeting organised in China as agreed by the contract to prepare national TDA

East Asia Seas Regional Coordinating Unit

27 March 1999



GEF Council Agenda

The project was included in the Work Programme of the GEF Council, subject to receipt of endorsement by the People's Republic of China, 27 March 1999

East Asia Seas Regional Coordinating Unit

End of April 1999



Withdrawn from GEF Council

The project proposal was withdrawn from the GEF Work Programme at the request of China during the Council meeting.

East Asia Seas Regional Coordinating Unit

February - April 1999



Discussions on Cooperation

Discussions on the implementation were carried out with relevant organisations on co-operation and co-ordination in executing the project, e.g. IOC of UNESCO, FAO, Wetlands International, MAB of UNESCO, Informal Working Group for the South China Sea, February - April, 1999

East Asia Seas Regional Coordinating Unit

June 1999



Matching Support

Proposal on working together with the GEF project was received from participating countries with extra funding support, e.g. protection dugong/seagrass in one participating country. The level of funding is about US\$ 600,000 addition to the GEF funding

East Asia Seas Regional Coordinating Unit

26 April 1999



Deputy ED's Visit to China

Deputy Executive Director of UNEP visited China and met with Deputy Minister, State Environmental Protection Administration (SEPA), and be informed that China disagreed the project proposal to be submitted to the GEF Council

East Asia Seas Regional Coordinating Unit

4 June 1999



Negotiation

Official letter was sent to EAS Focal Point in China by the Coordinator of EAS/RCU, seeking reasons and possible discussion on further implementation

East Asia Seas Regional Coordinating Unit

June 1999



Negotiation

Official letter was sent to the GEF National Operation Focal Point in China by the Coordinator of UNEP GEF Co-ordination Office

East Asia Seas Regional Coordinating Unit

6 October 1999



ED Visited China

Executive Director visited China and had a meeting with Minister, SEPA, and Assistant Minister, Ministry of Foreign Affairs.

East Asia Seas Regional Coordinating Unit

16 June 1999



Reaction of countries

A letter was received from one country expressing concern over the delay in the project, and willingness to implement it as planned

East Asia Seas Regional Coordinating Unit

15 October 1999



China's Points

There were 6 principles proposed by China in a letter to ED

- not affect China's sovereignty
 - not cover the salient controversial South China Sea islets and waters in their vicinity
 - hold that this projects shall not cover the issue of multilateral fishery cooperation
 - not involve legal framework in this project
 - except the relevant countries of the COBSEA and UNEP any other countries and international organizations shall not get involved in this project
 - Working on consensus by all the participating countries through consultations
- East Asia Seas Regional Coordinating Unit*

20 September 1999



Negotiation

Project Officer visited China for discussion with EAS Focal Point on the project, combining with other meetings in China

East Asia Seas Regional Coordinating Unit

8 November 1999



ED's Reply

ED agreed to initiate discussion with Chinese Delegation during the 14th COBSEA meeting and followed by a UNEP mission to China after the 14th COBSEA meeting.

East Asia Seas Regional Coordinating Unit

ANNEX V

EAST ASIAN SEAS TRUST FUND
Status of contributions as at 10 December 1999
(Expressed in US Dollars)

| COUNTRY | Unpaid Pledges as 10/12/99 | Adjustments | Pledges for 1999 | Collection during 1999 for 1999 and prior years | Unpaid pledges for 1999 and prior years |
|--------------------|-----------------------------------|--------------------|-------------------------|--|--|
| AUSTRALIA | 0 | 0 | 20,000 | 20,000 | 0 |
| COMBODIA | 10,000 | 0 | 5,000 | 0 | 15,000 |
| CHINA | 0 | 0 | 30,000 | 30,000 | 0 |
| INDONESIA | 66,000 | 0 | 20,000 | 86,000 | 0 |
| KOREA | 0 | 0 | 15,000 | 15,000 | 0 |
| MALAYSIA | 18,700 | 0 | 18,700 | 20,000 | 17,400 |
| PHILIPPINES | 49,978 | 0 | 25,000 | 41,846 | 33,132 |
| SINGAPORE | 0 | 0 | 10,000 | 10,000 | 0 |
| THAILAND | 41,800 | 0 | 20,726 | 20,726 | 41,800 |
| VIET NAM | 14,000 | 0 | 7,000 | 0 | 21,000 |
| TOTAL | 200,478 | 0 | 171,426 | 243,572 | 128,332 |

EAST ASIAN SEAS REGIONAL PROGRAMME STATUS OF EXPENDITURES AS SEPTEMBER 1999

| Source of Funding | ESTF | EF | GPA | GEF | CP (Japan) | CP (CDG- Bremen) | TOTAL |
|--|----------------|----------------|---------------|----------------|---------------|------------------------|----------------|
| Allocation | 239,534 | 292,100 | 47,500 | 129,549 | 50,000 | 25,000 | 783,683 |
| Expenditure up to 30/09/99 | | | | | | | |
| Coordinator | - | 73,903 | - | - | - | - | 73,903 |
| Programme Officer | 76,117 | - | - | - | - | - | 76,117 |
| Admin Assistant | - | 30,781 | - | - | - | - | 30,781 |
| Secretary to Coordinator | - | 21,327 | - | - | - | - | 21,327 |
| Secretary | 19,782 | - | - | - | - | - | 19,782 |
| Temporary Assistance | 3,233 | - | - | - | - | - | 3,233 |
| Travel of RCU Staff | 6,442 | 10,000 | - | - | - | - | 16,442 |
| Travel of Coordinator (to visit member countries) | 7,094 | - | - | - | - | - | 7,094 |
| ERF Conference | - | - | - | - | - | 18,115 | 18,115 |
| Training on CR Monitoring | - | - | - | - | 49,093 | - | 49,093 |
| Office supplies | - | 1,405 | - | - | - | - | 1,405 |
| Computers | 3,000 | - | - | - | - | - | 3,000 |
| Overhead Projector | 2,343 | - | - | - | - | - | 2,343 |
| Other equipment | 463 | - | - | - | - | - | 463 |
| Office Rent | - | 15,428 | - | - | - | - | 15,428 |
| Maint. Of equipment | - | 22 | - | - | - | - | 22 |
| Communication | - | 4,725 | - | - | - | - | 4,725 |
| Postage and Pouch | 1,230 | - | - | - | - | - | 1,230 |
| Freight | - | 101 | - | - | - | - | 101 |
| TDA (South China Sea) | 2,103 | - | - | 4,091 | - | - | 6,194 |
| TOTAL | 121,807 | 157,692 | - | 4,091 | 49,093 | 18,115 | 350,798 |
| Unspent balance as at 30/09/99 | 117,727 | 134,408 | 45,500 | 125,458 | 907 | 6,885 | 432,885 |

ANNEX VI
RESOLUTION

Noting the past expenditures from the East Asian Seas Trust Fund, the UNEP Environment Fund contributions, and the various project budgets reported to the meeting (Annex V);

Noting further that progress in implementing the Action plan for the Seas of East Asia is constrained by the limited funding available;

Considering the scope of activities proposed within: the Regional Plan for the implementation of the Global Programme of Action for the Protection of the Marine environment from Land-Based Activities; the long-term plan for the operation of the Regional Co-ordinating Unit for the Seas of East Asia; and the Strategic Action Programme;

The meeting resolved that:

- a) UNEP be requested to maintain the operation of the East Asian Seas Trust Fund for the next biennium and to carry forward the unspent balance of funds remaining at the end of the calendar year 1999;
- b) All COBSEA member governments review their current level of contributions to the East Asian Seas Trust Fund and increase these where possible;
- c) All COBSEA member governments make every effort to ensure that pledges are paid promptly;
- d) The Coordinator of the East Asian Seas Action Plan approach the Bureau of Fund Management Services and UNEP Senior Management to secure continuation of at least the present level of funding for the biennium 2000-2001; and
- e) UNEP be requested to increase the level of funding available to the Regional Co-ordinating Unit in order to catalyse the implementation of planned activities over the next biennium.