

VIETNAM NATIONAL DATABASE ON THE STATE OF MARINE ENVIRONMENT

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Abstract

Vietnam has rich and diverse data and information on the coastal and marine environment. However, such data and information are scattered in various government agencies, research institutions, universities and even expert archives. To find certain information or data on coastal and marine environment, much time is required to find out where the information and data are stored, who are authorized to provide information and data, and under what conditions can the information and data be accessed. These problems hinder the effectiveness of the state management of coastal and marine environment and create obstacles for sharing important information and data at regional and global levels for joint efforts on sustainable use and management of the coastal and marine environment.

The need for developing a focal organization to serve as a portal to access and share information at national and regional levels has been recognized in Vietnam. In line with this, the development of the Vietnam National Database on the state of the marine environment was initiated in parallel with the East Asian Seas Knowledge Hub. The system will serve as a focal point to manage and provide information on the state of the coastal and marine environment, relevant organizations, projects and experts, and to share the information among COBSEA countries.

During the process, a number of activities were undertaken, such as, collection of data and information and the development of a comprehensive and easy-to-access database on coastal and marine environments. Support has been provided by both government and international organizations, such as, UNEP EAS/RCU for the activity. However, the process has experienced a number of difficulties including:

1. Difficulties in collecting information and data;
2. Incompatible information and data for analyses;
3. Insufficient reporting and monitoring schemes (in terms of frequencies and sites);
4. Insufficient collaboration and coordination among agencies and organizations;
5. Lack of compatible standards for and formats of information and data collected; and
6. Inappropriate and overlapping coastal and marine management.

Despite the above-mentioned challenges, Vietnam, with its own resources and through support provided by international organizations, has succeeded in developing a national database and portal on the state of the coastal and marine environment that facilitates access to coastal and marine environmental information for decision makers, specialists, general public, and local people. This effort will also help to share information on the state of the coastal and marine environment at regional and global levels.