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**REPORT OF AN INDEPENDENT REVIEW BY CHOU LOKE MING
“REVIEW OF THE EAST ASIAN SEAS ACTION PLAN AND
STRATEGY FOR FUTURE DEVELOPMENT”**

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EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

The East Asian Seas (EAS) Action Plan, established in 1981 with five member countries, has developed into a programme involving ten member countries. Its activities evolved from many nationally implemented projects of a small scale to fewer but more regionally integrated and larger projects. The progression placed the region in a better and more effective position to deal with marine environment issues not only at national levels, but also at the regional level. The maturity to deal with international and regional issues is evident from the programme's more recent activities.

This review of the EAS Action Plan was conducted taking into account member country needs, other regional programmes/projects, and various challenges facing COBSEA. The major challenges are that of funding, rationalisation of geographical and programme scope, and COBSEA's approach and relationship with other regional programmes/projects. COBSEA member countries supported the continuation of the programme and recommendations were formulated in this review based on the collective views of the National Focal Points. The focus of future activities take into consideration the common needs of the region and the activities of other on-going regional programmes/projects.

An analysis of the common priority needs indicate the following focus areas in order of priority:

- transboundary issues (international waters) and capacity to deal with international conventions,
- capacity development,
- habitat protection, inventory, monitoring,
- pollution management,
- policy development,
- public education.

The re-activation of the Secretariat is most crucial to the continued implementation of the Action Plan. It is therefore imperative to start the selection and recruitment process immediately in order to avoid loss in momentum of the programme. Following a synthesis of the issues and challenges, the following recommendations are proposed:

Financial considerations

Recommendation 1. COBSEA should firmly and urgently address the issue of funding and develop an appropriate arrangement that ensures sustainable operation of the Secretariat and at the same time provides some degree of flexibility in the level of contributions during periods of financial crisis.

Secretariat structure and function

Recommendation 2. The Secretariat should be re-activated to ensure continued coordination and implementation of the Action Plan. A minimum staff structure proposed for the Secretariat is a P5 level Programme Officer and a P3 level Programme Officer, and two support staff.

Recommendation 3. Relocation of the Secretariat should not be considered unless a host institution offers to provide salaries in addition to rent-free premises.

Geographic focus

Recommendation 4: Research activities should focus at a more defined geographic area. COBSEA should consider the seas of Southeast Asia and southern P.R. China as the main geographic region for the implementation of the EAS Action Plan.

Recommendation 5: Attempts be initiated/continued to invite Brunei Darussalam, Myanmar and East Timor to join COBSEA.

Programme focus

Recommendation 6: The focus areas of the Long-Term Action Plan should be considered and a decision taken to proceed with all components or selected ones based on direct relevance to most member states.

Recommendation 7: In the implementation of the Long-Term Plan, effective collaborative arrangements and stronger partnerships with other regional programmes/projects be expanded (e.g. following the model established with AWGCME, which resulted in regional criteria for marine water quality, national marine protected areas, and marine heritage areas).

Recommendation 8: EAS/RCU considers reviving the Association of Southeast Asian Marine Scientists and to involve it as a partner in the Long-Term Action Plan.

INTRODUCTION

Following the decision of the last UNEP Governing Council meeting on strengthening the Regional Seas Programme, and the consultations organized during the meeting, UNEP engaged the author of this report as a consultant to carry out an independent review on COBSEA (Coordinating Body on the Seas of East Asia). The main aims are to:

1. review relevant previous and on-going programmes carried out by other international organizations in the region that were, and/or are, complementary to the objectives of the East Asian Action Plan
2. prepare a concrete proposal to strengthen the East Asian Seas Action Plan for 2003-2005
3. provide an analysis of the secretariat functions to the Action Plan.

The detailed terms of reference for the consultant are appended as Annex 1.

The consultant, with the assistance of UNEP EAS/RCU (East Asian Seas / Regional Coordinating Unit) office, contacted and arranged visits to National Focal Points of member countries and four regional programme/project offices: Association of South East Asian Nations (ASEAN) Secretariat, Partnerships in Environmental Management for the Seas of East Asia (PEMSEA), Mekong River Commission, WorldFish Center. Annex 2 provides the schedule of visits and personnel met for discussion. Visits were conducted throughout the month of July 2003.

The consultant was unable to arrange visits to the NFPs (National Focal Points) of People's Republic of China (because of travel restrictions due to the Severe Acute Respiratory Syndrome), and Vietnam (because of difficulty in identifying suitable dates during the travel itinerary that was convenient to both parties). The views of these two NFPs were sought through faxes and e-mail, but no response was received. This report is built upon the collective views of the NFPs visited (Australia, Cambodia, Indonesia, Malaysia, Philippines, Republic of Korea, Singapore, Thailand), and personnel of the four regional programmes/projects.

BACKGROUND OF THE EAST ASIAN SEAS ACTION PLAN

In 1977, the Governing Council of UNEP endorsed an initiative by States of the region (Indonesia, Malaysia, Philippines, Singapore, Thailand) that "steps are urgently needed to formulate and establish a scientific programme involving research, prevention and control of marine pollution and monitoring", by supporting the establishment of a regional seas programme in East Asia. Preparatory meetings (consisting of two Meetings of Experts to review a Draft Action Plan) and two intergovernmental meetings followed. By 1981, the "Action Plan for the Protection and Development of the Marine Environment and Coastal Areas of the East Asian Region" was adopted. The East Asian Seas Trust Fund to finance activities was established and the Coordinating Body on the Seas of East Asia (COBSEA) formed with "overall authority to determine the content of the action plan, to review its progress and to approve its programme of implementation, including financial implications". COBSEA was to provide the overall policy coordination of the Action Plan.

An in-depth evaluation of the Action Plan was conducted in 1986 resulting in the formulation of a long-term strategy (1987-96) to guide future development of the Action Plan. Recognizing the availability of expertise in the region to provide scientific advice on activities of the Action Plan, COBSEA supported the formation of the Association of Southeast Asian Marine Scientists (ASEAMS) in 1989. A Regional Coordinating Unit was also proposed to provide more effective coordination over the projects, which evolved from small-scale, localized investigations lacking regional perspectives to larger, integrated activities addressing common regional issues.

In 1991, COBSEA agreed to step up efforts to expand membership in the region and to strengthen coordinating capabilities in the East Asian Seas region in view of ASOEN's (ASEAN Senior Officials on the Environment) Working Group on ASEAN Seas and Marine Environment, and ASEAN COST's (Committee on Science and Technology) Sub-committee on Marine Sciences. COBSEA defined its role within ASEAN to focus solely on coordinating COBSEA-approved projects funded by the East Asian Seas Trust Fund and/or Environment Fund of UNEP. The 9th COBSEA meeting (1991) noted with concern, the stagnation of activities since 8th meeting (1989), and requested the appointment of a full-time Programme Officer to handle day-to-day running and coordination of activities of the Action Plan.

The Regional Coordinating Unit (RCU) was established in 1993 with a Coordinator, a Programme Officer, and 3 general services staff. The EAS/RCU was to be kept small but yet effective in order to maximize the availability of funds for programme activities under the action plan. Communication links on policy matters and technical matters between COBSEA, EAS/RCU, UNEP, and National Institutions were defined at the 10th COBSEA Meeting (Figures 1 and 2). A Long-Term Strategy for the period 1987-1996 was adopted with the understanding that COBSEA will at regular intervals review, amend and extend it.

COBSEA's membership expanded in 1994 with the inclusion of 5 new member countries: Australia, People's Republic of China, Kingdom of Cambodia, Republic of Korea, Socialist Republic of Vietnam. A revised Action Plan (Protection and Sustainable Development of the Coastal and Marine Areas of the East Asian Seas) and the Long-Term Strategy (with modifications to include expanded membership) were adopted by the Meeting of Plenipotentiaries in October of the same year.

The 12th COBSEA meeting in 1996 agreed to a revised Strategy that was more responsive to Agenda 21, Chapter 17. It included a paradigm shift in the approach to the implementation of the EAS Action Plan. Six priority areas for this strategic approach were:

1. Establishment of integrated management and sustainable development of coastal and marine areas, including the establishment where appropriate, of institutional and legal mechanisms, policies and action plans for integrated coastal management in member countries.
2. Combating degradation of the marine environment from land-based activities.
3. Establishment of a regular monitoring and assessment programme on the state of the region's marine environment, in particular coastal areas, to allow a more accurate evaluation of EAS programme achievement, and review and modification of management.
4. Strengthening regional cooperation and coordination through increased collaboration between the EAS/RCU and other relevant agencies and organizations.
5. Conservation and sustainable use of marine living resources under national jurisdiction, and high seas living resources.
6. Establishment of options for financial support of the programmes and activities of the East Asian Seas Plan including innovative economic mechanisms, and GEF Funds.

The EAS/RCU updated the EAS Action Plan adopted in 1994 to reflect these priority areas and a revised Action Plan was endorsed in 1998. At the same time COBSEA directed EAS/RCU to develop a more pragmatic action programme for the Long-Term Plan for the next 10 years that would be more effective in resolving marine and coastal issues. COBSEA also endorsed the preparation of a GEF (Global Environment Facility) proposal. A series of experts meetings together with meetings to prioritise marine environmental issues during the PDF Block B phase of the GEF project proposal in 1998 provided the prioritisation of issues for the action-oriented Long-Term Plan. During 1999, EAS/RCU was involved with UNEP's Global Programme of Action by developing a Regional Programme of Action on Land-Based Pollution Affecting the Marine Environment (referred to as GPA/LBA) through the project "identification of regional hot spots on land-based pollution, their characteristics and impacts: towards a better management".

Figure 1. Communication links on policy matters (10th COBSEA Meeting, 1993).

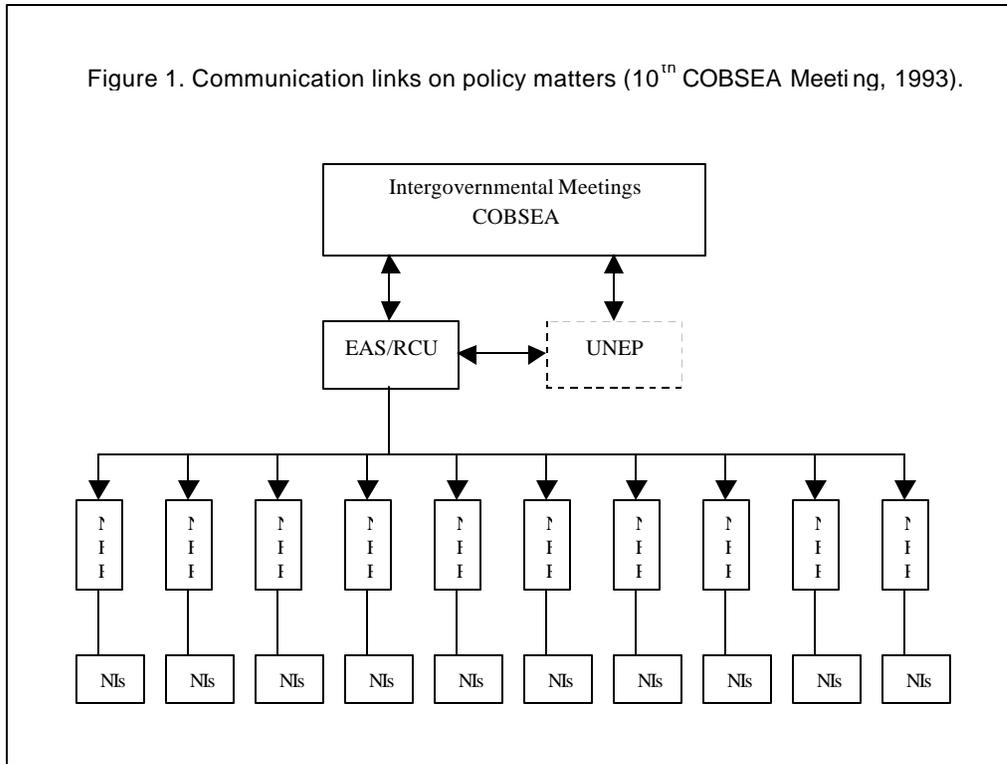
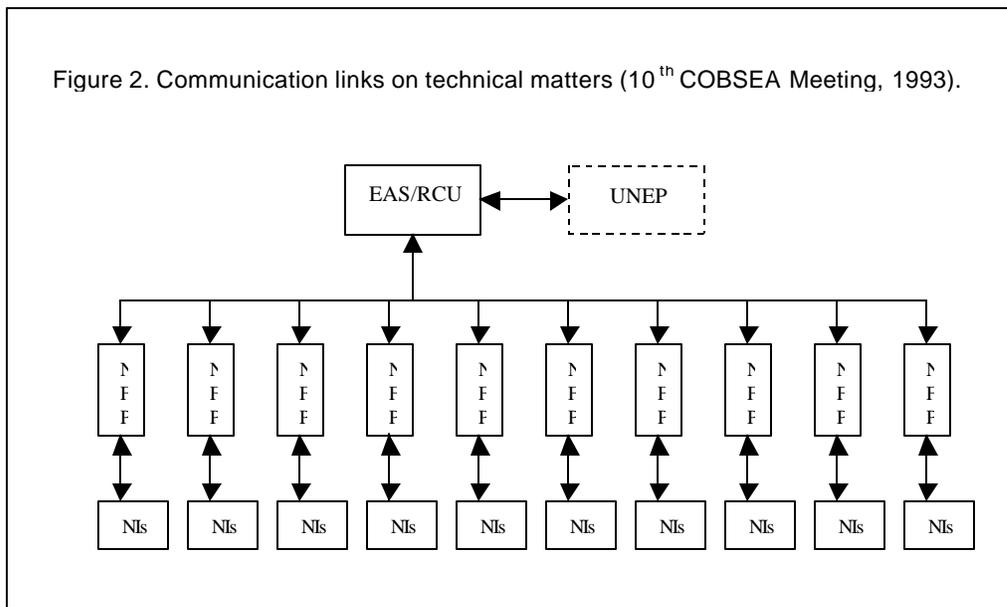


Figure 2. Communication links on technical matters (10th COBSEA Meeting, 1993).



The 15th COBSEA Meeting (2000) endorsed the UNEP/GEF Project “Reversing Environmental Degradation Trends in the South China Sea and Gulf of Thailand” (hereafter referred to as the South China Sea Project), and adopted the GPA/LBA project and the revised Long-Term Plan as contained in the document “Vision and Plan – A Systematic Approach”. The plan now focused on preventing degradation of marine habitats (particularly corals reefs, mangroves and seagrasses),

and reducing overexploitation of fisheries and land-based sources of pollution that damage marine resources. Seven areas of focus were identified:

1. Develop and maintain a regional database (later changed to a regional metadata base).
2. Promoting, improving, networking and maintaining marine protected areas in the region.
3. Implement activities to restore marine habitats.
4. Assist with State of Environment reporting for agencies preparing such reports and marine and coastal assessment.
5. Implement activities to reduce land-based sources of pollution.
6. Encourage monitoring and environmental assessment including mapping in the region.
7. Encourage and implement projects to build capacity in the member countries to counter environmental degradation and to educate all members of the community in caring for the marine resources of the region.

The Meeting was also updated on the progress of the GEF PDF-B proposal "Reducing Loss of Mangrove Forests and Biodiversity through Promotion of Sustainable and Environmentally Sound Shrimp Farming" being developed by EAS/RCU. (The proposal was subsequently not supported by GEF).

Complementing the Action Plan, EAS/RCU implemented a series of activities on coral reef monitoring and data management from 2000 with funding from US Department of State through the International Coral Reef Initiative (ICRI). This included the project "Establishment of an Effective Coral Reef Monitoring Network in the East Asian Seas Region" in 2001. EAS/RCU also received funding from the United Nations Foundation in 2001 to implement the project "International Coral Reef Action Network" (ICRAN) in the EAS region. EAS/RCU organized the "International Symposium on Protection and Management of Coastal Marine Ecosystems" in Bangkok in 2000 with support by the Government of Japan through the Environmental Management of Enclosed Seas (EMECS) Centre. It also jointly organized with UNEP GPA Coordinating Office and the Government of Japan, the Regional Workshop on Protecting Coastal and Marine Ecosystems from Land-Based Activities in the Asia-Pacific Region in Toyama in September 2001.

At the 16th COBSEA Meeting (2001), measures on strengthening co-operation with the ASEAN Working Group on Coastal and Marine Environment (WGCME) were supported. An ASEAN/UNEP workshop to discuss water quality standards and marine protected areas was organized in 2002 and water quality criteria established for the region in connection with aquaculture and tourism. ASEAN expressed the hope for further integration of its activities with major regional initiatives and can provide the coordination role, commitment, policy and institutional framework. The Meeting fully recognized the importance of coordination and cooperation with other regional organizations and programmes.

MAJOR ACHIEVEMENTS OF THE ACTION PLAN

The activities of the EAS Action Plan evolved from a fair number of nationally-implemented projects of a small scale to fewer but more regionally integrated and larger projects. This progression, guided by longer term strategic approaches placed the region in a better and more effective position to deal with marine environment issues not only at national level, but also at the regional level. The maturity to deal with international and regional issues is evident from some of the recent activities. The region is now better prepared for involvement with international initiatives such as the GPA/LBA. The GEF-funded South China Sea project will significantly enhance the region's capacity to develop regionally coordinated action programmes designed to reverse environmental degradation with particular regard to coastal habitat degradation and loss, land-based pollution and fisheries over-exploitation. Collaboration with the ASEAN WGCME resulted in the establishment of water quality standards for the region in connection with aquaculture and tourism.

The trend indicates the growing capability of the Action Plan in helping member countries address marine environment issues at national level, and the region as a whole to be meaningfully involved with international initiatives. Capacity building has benefited member countries, some more than others, based on a combination of factors including membership duration.

The Action Plan was first established in response to marine environmental problems. "Steps are urgently needed to formulate and establish a scientific programme involving research, prevention and control of marine pollution and monitoring". This recognition still applies today without deviation. Stronger capacity and better approaches will improve the region's efficiency and effectiveness in protecting the marine environment. Enhanced monitoring and protection measures, reduction of impacts, habitat restoration, information synthesis, information management and flow are areas that should be strengthened and implemented on an integrated basis.

OTHER MAJOR REGIONAL PROGRAMMES/PROJECTS

ASSOCIATION OF SOUTHEAST ASIAN NATIONS (ASEAN)

ASEAN was established in 1967 by Indonesia, Malaysia, Philippines, Singapore and Thailand. It now has ten member countries with the admission of Brunei Darussalam in 1984, Vietnam in 1995, Lao PDR and Myanmar in 1997 and Cambodia in 1999. The institutions and processes in ASEAN have evolved gradually. The aims and purposes of the Association are to accelerate economic growth, social progress and cultural development in the region through joint endeavors, and to promote regional peace and stability. *In 1996, the ASEAN Plan of Action on Science and Technology and the Strategic Plan of Action on the Environment were developed under the Framework for Elevating Functional Cooperation to a Higher Plane.*

ASEAN Heads of State and Government meet annually at the ASEAN Summit to provide decision making at the highest level. In addition Ministerial meetings of Foreign Ministers are convened annually, and Ministerial meetings of various sectors meet regularly. Supporting these ministerial bodies are 29 committees of senior officials and 122 technical working groups. The ASEAN Secretariat was established in 1976 "to provide for greater efficiency in the coordination of ASEAN organs and for more effective implementation of ASEAN projects and activities". The Secretary-General, appointed on a 5-year term, has the responsibility of initiating, advising, coordinating and implementing activities.

The Hanoi Plan of Action (1999-2004) includes a call for 1) the development of a framework to improve regional coordination for the integrated protection and management of coastal zones, 2) the development of a regional action plan for the protection of the marine environment from land-based and sea-based activities and 3) the promotion of regional coordination to protect Marine Heritage Parks and Reserves. The ASEAN Working Group on Coastal and Marine Environment (AWGCME) oversees the technical and implementation issues, while the ASEAN Environment Ministers and the ASEAN Senior Officials on the Environment provide policy and strategic guidance. AWGCME current focus areas are: coral reefs, seagrass and mangroves; tanker sludge and ballast water; solid, liquid and hazardous waste management; coastal erosion; ecotourism; coastal wetlands including protected marine areas; and clean technology.

The ASEAN Ministers responsible for environment have adopted the a) Marine Water Quality Criteria for the ASEAN Region, b) ASEAN Criteria for National Marine Protected Areas and 3) ASEAN Criteria for Marine Heritage Areas. These Criteria would help national level action to protect the shared marine waters of the region.

ASEAN welcomes collaboration with various organizations that are implementing numerous activities to ensure a coordinated approach to action programmes and capacity building. It is well placed to facilitate and provide the forum for developing and implementing regional activities, to ensure ownership and sustainability of activities. ASEAN member countries through the GEF operational focal points have agreed that any future regional GEF activities will be coordinated using the relevant ASEAN institutional mechanism.

PARTNERSHIPS IN ENVIRONMENTAL MANAGEMENT FOR THE SEAS OF EAST ASIA (PEMSEA)

The Global Environmental Facility (GEF) supported the Regional Programme for Marine Pollution Prevention and Management in the East Asian Seas region from 1994 to 1999. PEMSEA is

the 5-year (2000-2005) follow-on phase meant to develop stronger partnerships in addressing environmental management problems in the region. The partnerships share a common vision, implement strategies and action plans to ensure that the seas of East Asia can continue to contribute to the well being of the people of the regions. The twelve participating countries are Brunei Darussalam, Cambodia, China, DPR Korea, Indonesia, Japan, Malaysia, Philippines, RO Korea, Singapore, Thailand and Vietnam.

PEMSEA is assisting local governments at eight sites in the region to develop Integrated Coastal Management (ICM) capacity, which will demonstrate the effectiveness of ICM in addressing coastal environmental problems. The emphasis is on the strong partnerships required of all stakeholders at the local, national and regional levels through pooling of human and financial resources. The partnerships maximises the strength of individual sectors for more effective management of the coastal and marine environment.

Its action programmes also include the management of hotspots (through the application of environmental risk assessment and risk management), capacity building (by narrowing disparities in environmental protection and management capacities), environmental investments (by developing a policy and management framework to facilitate private sector participation in coastal and marine resource development and pollution prevention), scientific research (to advance scientific inputs in support of decision-making), integrated information management system (to support effective decision-making), civil society (to promote public participation and information dissemination), coastal and marine policy (by developing tools for the adoption of national coastal policy). PEMSEA is also developing a regional mechanism to facilitate sustained collective action among the participating countries to protect and manage their environment under the framework of international conventions.

MEKONG RIVER COMMISSION

The Mekong River Commission (MRC) originated as the Mekong Committee in 1957, which then became the Interim Committee for Co-ordination of Investigations of the Lower Mekong Basin in 1978. In 1995, the MRC was formed when the four nations (Cambodia, Lao PDR, Thailand, Vietnam) sharing the Lower Mekong River Basin signed an Agreement on the Co-operation for the Sustainable Development of the Mekong River Basin. The two upper states of the Mekong River Basin (People's Republic of China and the Union of Myanmar, are dialogue partners with the MRC. The MRC consists of the Council, the Joint Committee and the Secretariat. National Mekong Committees were established by member countries to support the MRC's mission to promote and co-ordinate sustainable management and development of water and related resources for the countries' mutual benefit and the people's well-being by implementing strategic programmes and activities and providing scientific information and policy advice.

The Council is responsible for policy formulation and decision making. It provides guidance on ways to implement the 1995 Agreement. The Joint Committee implements the policies and decisions of the Council and supervises the activities of the Secretariat. The Secretariat provides technical and administrative services to the Council and the Joint Committee. The MRC is funded by contributions from the four member countries and from the aid donors.

The MRC has a special focus on issues affecting more than one country. In this respect, it develops policies for water sharing, monitors the quality of water resources, and supports a joint planning process for the Basin Development Plan, all within the overall framework of renewable resources management. Its activities also include fisheries management, agricultural development, flood mitigation, hydropower planning, and promotion of safe navigation. They are all integrated within the Commission's current three core programmes: the Basin Development Plan, the Water Utilisation Programme and the Environment Programme.

WORLD FISH CENTER

The WorldFish Center (formerly known as ICLARM – The World Fish Center) was established as an international center in 1977 and became a research center of the CGIAR (Consultative Group on International Agricultural Research) in 1992. Co-sponsors of the CGIAR are World Bank, Food and

Agriculture Organization of the United Nations, United Nations Development Programme, and International Fund for Agricultural Development. All research centers of CGIAR share the same overarching mission, which is to contribute to food security and poverty eradication in developing countries through research, partnership, capacity building, and policy support, so promoting sustainable agricultural development based on the environmentally sound management of natural resources. The WorldFish Center fulfils this mission by specializing in living aquatic resources. The Center is governed by an international Board of Trustees and its policies are implemented by the Director General.

The Center's research encompasses both marine (coastal waters, coral reefs) and fresh waters (inland water bodies) under four major programmes. The Biodiversity and Genetic Resources Research Program focuses on maintaining biological and genetic diversity in natural populations and developing techniques for improving breeds of fish. The Coastal and Marine Resources Research Program develops and disseminates methods for sustaining production from coral reefs and tropical coastal waters through aquaculture, stock enhancement, improved management of fisheries and ecosystems, marine protected areas, interactive databases, and training in integrated coastal management. The Freshwater Resources Research Program deals with improving productivity and assessing sustainability of small farms through integration of fish farming with agriculture. The Policy Research and Impact Assessment Program examines policy environments and develops policy options, including proper measures for assessing the impact of aquatic resources research and development, for wider adoption of technologies, and improving policies to benefit the poorer people in developing countries.

ASIA PACIFIC ECONOMIC FORUM (APEC)

APEC was established in 1989 as a public sector forum to promote greater economic and trade cooperation in the Pacific Rim. Its programmes are adopted on a consensual basis by its 21 member economies (Australia, Brunei Darussalam, Canada, Chile, China, Hong Kong SAR, Indonesia, Japan, Republic of Korea, Malaysia, Mexico, New Zealand, Papua-New Guinea, Peru, Philippines, Russia, Singapore, Chinese Taipei (Taiwan), Thailand, the United States, Vietnam). Annual Ministerial meetings (attended by Foreign Ministers and Trade Ministers) delegate responsibilities to APEC Senior Officials, who meet about four times a year. Each year, one member plays host to APEC meetings and serves as the APEC Chair and Executive Director of the APEC Secretariat. APEC's activities and secretariat functions are supported by small annual contributions from member economies.

The Forum has about 16 special committees and working groups of which, the Marine Resource Conservation Working Group (MRCWG) is most relevant to the EAS Action Plan. Established in 1990 to protect the collective marine resource, the MRCWG's main task is the implementation of the Action Plan on Sustainability of the Marine Environment. Socio-economic and environmental gains resulting from this initiative will benefit member economies. Three key objectives of the Action Plan are 1) integrated approaches to coastal management, 2) prevention, reduction and control of marine pollution, and 3) sustainable management of marine resources. These objectives will be supported through research (including exchange of information, technology and expertise), capacity building (including training and education), and public/private sector participation and partnership.

The initiative will help member economies develop strategies for future sectoral and multi-sectoral ocean management and to share information on integrated oceans management. It will benefit all stakeholders including government agencies responsible for ocean management and business with interests in the marine environment.

The APEC Coral, Fisheries and Reef Network was recently established to enhance information exchange between government agencies, research institutions and non-governmental organisations. Its aim is to promote the sustainable development and utilisation of coral reef resources that would result in increased per capita income and economic development of APEC coastal communities. The network seeks to increase cooperation and transfer of information and expertise among network partners and aims to encourage "higher level support" within Member Economies for projects supporting fisheries development.

CO-ORDINATION OF ACTIVITIES WITH OTHER REGIONAL PROGRAMMES/PROJECTS

All four implementing agencies of other regional programmes consulted welcomed the possibility of collaboration and efforts at coordinating activities implemented in the region. Similarity of activities is apparent (Table 1) and coordination is clearly needed to identify areas of collaboration. Collaborative arrangements should be functional, benefiting participating parties in terms of resource sharing and delivering products of relevance to the region. A good example is the collaboration between EAS/RCU and ASEAN in formulating the ASEAN marine water quality criteria, ASEAN Criteria for National Marine Protected Areas and ASEAN Criteria for Marine Heritage Areas.

The Worldfish Center's Coastal Programme maintains comprehensive databases, which can be linked to EAS Action Plan's (EASAP) information base on coastal ecosystems. Its TrawlBase data when integrated with EASAP's information on coastal ecosystem will facilitate better understanding of the value of coastal ecosystems to fisheries and establish firm connections that will influence decision making. Its ReefBase data can be combined with EASAP's activities on coral reefs to provide a suitable platform for better management approaches and policy formulation. The MRC's programme is starting to focus on cross-sectoral issues in coastal areas (deforestation, shrimp farming, transboundary impacts. They have an interest in seawater intrusion and nutrient entrapment in deltas and the land-sea interaction is a possible area of collaboration that build upon combined information from MRC and EASAP. PEMSEA has an established record in implementing Integrated Coastal Management programmes involving local governments across the region. The EASAP could capitalize on this experience and focus on aspects such as marine protected areas that contribute further to overall management goals.

Table 1. Activity focus of regional programmes/projects.

	ASEAN	PEMSEA	MRC	WorldFish	APEC	EAS Action Plan
ACTION FOCUS						
Marine pollution management			(rivers, deltas)			
Marine protected areas						
Marine habitat protection						
Integrated coastal management						
Integrated information systems						
Public education						
Environmental investments						
Clean technology						
Coastal erosion						
POLICY DEVELOPMENT						
Coastal and marine policy			(rivers, deltas)			
Information for management policy						

NEEDS OF COBSEA MEMBER COUNTRIES

The expectations of the EAS Action Plan in meeting the priority needs of member countries are summarised in Annex 3. An analysis of the common priority needs (Table 2) indicate the following focus areas in order of priority:

- transboundary issues (international waters) and capacity to deal with international conventions,
- capacity development,
- habitat protection, inventory, monitoring,
- pollution management,
- policy development,
- public education.

Table 2. Needs of COBSEA member countries.

Focus areas	Aus-tralia	Cam-bodia	Indo-nesia	Malay-sia	Philip-pines	S. Korea	Singapore	Thailand
Habitat protection, inventory, monitoring.								
Pollution management								
Policy development								
Capacity development								
Public education								
Transboundary issues								
Capacity to deal with international conventions								

Marine environment management capacity varies widely among member countries. National mechanisms in support of coordinated approaches to the management of the marine environment are well developed in some member countries, but not in others. Capacity enhancement needs are more acute in some countries than in others. While capacity enhancement needs are indicated by almost all NFPs consulted, the type and level of capacity development differ. For example, Cambodia requires the capacity to identify and prioritise issues, assess resources, strengthen legal and policy analysis framework, provide alternative livelihood for community development.

Assistance to member countries in planning, policy development, legal and institutional capacity strengthening is required. Some require this at the national level, while others are looking at developing the capacity to meet obligations to international conventions. The capacity to address transboundary issues is one of the more common needs of member countries.

Despite the wide variation, the general perception among the member countries consulted is that the EAS Action Plan has been useful particularly in helping to catalyze national programmes and in raising capacity that places member countries in a better position to meet commitments to international conventions. Member countries are in full support of the continuation of the EAS Action Plan and for the continuation of COBSEA as an intergovernmental mechanism with a direct link to UNEP.

It is worth noting that COBSEA is the only intergovernmental mechanism in the region that incorporates the term "Coordinating" in its title, and that this should be capitalized on. As a regional programme, COBSEA can facilitate and consolidate the region's collective capability in addressing issues of international waters. The 9th COBSEA Meeting recognized that "it was imperative that COBSEA strengthen its coordinating capabilities in the East Asian Seas".

Member countries and implementing agencies of other regional programmes/projects all agree that there is a strong and urgent need to integrate/coordinate the activities and particularly the results of the numerous initiatives on the marine environment of the region. This will help to synergise all the various efforts and provide the region with the capacity to manage the marine environment more effectively and methodically.

Member countries expressed the desire for stronger ownership of the EAS Action Plan by COBSEA, and for more effective command over EAS/RCU and better screening of projects considered for implementation. There is a need to consider projects that are more action-oriented instead of reviews. In addition, benefits derived from participation must be seen to be more tangible and of more direct relevance to national/regional needs. The COBSEA identity is not well established despite all its years of existence, as most projects and publications carry the identity of EAS/RCU and not COBSEA.

Some member countries requested more time be given to studying the proposals on Long-Term Action Plans before their adoption. This is to allow member countries to prioritise regional needs that harmonise with national needs, and to conduct national discussion of the issues, before they are in a firm position to adopt the Action Plan.

While member countries want COBSEA to continue, most are not yet prepared to increase their annual contributions mainly because of present economic difficulties and uncertainties. Some have not fulfilled past unpaid pledges, while others have indicated that they may have to scale down their annual contribution as they are unable to maintain their pledged level of contribution. Many member countries maintain that they are committed to a large number of Multi-Lateral Agreements and are contributing a huge sum in combined annual subscriptions to these agreements. Increased contributions appear most unlikely. Some member countries pointed out that if COBSEA is suspended, it will be difficult to re-secure the annual contributions and that going through the national decision-making process may not guarantee support for participation in a revived COBSEA.

RECOMMENDATIONS

The major challenges that COBSEA must address include funding, rationalization of geographical and programme scope, and its approach and relationship with other regional programmes/projects. The following recommendations are formulated based on the collective expression of interest by COBSEA member countries to continue with the East Asian Seas Action Plan. The focus of future activities take into account the common needs of the region and the activities of other on-going regional programmes/projects. The financial constraints and Secretariat structure are first dealt with as these do influence the future magnitude and intensity of COBSEA's action plans to a large extent.

FINANCIAL CONSIDERATIONS

Financial difficulties as outlined in the Report of the 16th COBSEA Meeting stem mainly from the reduction/removal of support from the UNEP Environment Fund. As a partner of the East Asian Seas Action Plan, UNEP contributed two-thirds of funding from the UNEP Environment Fund. The difference between the sum of the pledges paid and the costs has been met by UNEP through the Environment Fund. In the past four years, all projects were funded from external sources.

Since the 16th COBSEA Meeting, UNEP allocated from the Environment Fund \$150,000 in 2002 of which \$120,000 is for the Coordinator's salary and \$30,000 for activities. For 2003, \$95,000 is allocated from the Environment Fund to cover salaries (\$80,000) and an East Asian Seas Congress (\$15,000). Combined annual country contributions to the EAS Trust Fund (\$171,600 if fully paid up) can only support a reduced Secretariat (salaries, rental, maintenance). The structure of the Secretariat is discussed further in the next section. As at the end of 2001, the EAS Trust Fund had a reserve of \$907,771. At the current rate of utilization and without support from the Environment Fund, this will last only four years. Sweden was approached by RCU/EAS in late 2002 to help fund the Action Plan activities. In August 2003, Sida approved a grant of SEK 4.2 million (\$490,000) for the period 2003 to 2006.

The Sida grant is indeed timely in view of the current funding situation. It does provide some "reprieve" at this time and reduces the immediate problem of how to maintain a working Secretariat. However COBSEA must realize that it cannot continue to depend on this nature of funding. COBSEA must address the issue of financial sustainability, at least as far as in maintaining an effective working Secretariat to implement the Action Plan. This is a tough issue that should **not** be avoided or delayed. Member countries should take this opportunity to address this issue for the longer term and not use it to reduce or not fulfill their annual pledges. The Resolution of the 16th COBSEA Meeting "urges member governments to pay their arrears as promptly as possible" and also "urges member governments to maintain their current levels of contribution whilst they consider raising their annual contributions in order to ensure the sustainable operation of the Secretariat". During the consultations, some countries have indicated that they are unlikely to increase their present level of contribution as they are committed to other Multilateral agreements.

Steps must be taken to formulate a mechanism to ensure that Action Plan implementation is not interrupted, neglected or suspended. COBSEA could consider the NOWPAP financial arrangement model, where the four participating countries each contribute a fixed sum to the Trust

Fund, and those that wish to contribute more could do so. This provides some assurance to the continued implementation of the Action Plan.

COBSEA may want to revise its present financial arrangement and consider a more flexible mechanism that allows some degree of scaling down in times of a regional financial crisis. However, to accommodate this, it must first build up its reserves in the Trust Fund. It is important for COBSEA to formulate a funding arrangement that ensures sustainable operation of the Secretariat particularly when it desires greater ownership of the Secretariat and the continuation of the Action Plan.

Recommendation 1. COBSEA should firmly and urgently address the issue of funding and develop an appropriate arrangement that ensures sustainable operation of the Secretariat and at the same time provides some degree of flexibility in the level of contributions during periods of financial crisis.

In considering this recommendation, member countries should be aware that current pledges if fully paid up, are barely sufficient to maintain a minimum Secretariat (see next Section). It is therefore not possible to consider lowering current level of pledges without compromising Secretariat functions and smooth implementation of the Action Plan. The present level of contributions should at least be maintained. A three to four-year target could be set for member countries to consider increasing their contributions and for COBSEA to embark on a drive for funds from donor agencies and the business sector to increase the Trust Fund reserves to healthier levels. Policies on the use of Trust Fund reserves should then be formulated to ensure its prudent use to make up for agreed and accepted reductions in country contributions during times of regional financial crisis.

SECRETARIAT STRUCTURE AND RELOCATION

The Secretariat serves a very important function in coordinating and implementing activities of the Action Plan. COBSEA realised this in 1991 when, at the 9th meeting, it noted with concern, the stagnation of activities since 1989, and requested the appointment of a full-time Programme Officer to handle day-to-day running and coordination of activities of the Action Plan. The success of a programme is very dependent on a strong Secretariat staffed by highly qualified people. EAS/RCU has operated as the dynamo of the programme, providing the important day-to-day running and building up strength and momentum.

The Secretariat has been staffed in the past four years by a Coordinator at D1 level, a Programme Officer at P4 level and two support staff. The activities implemented were by no means minor.

Until and unless member countries revise their annual pledges upwards, the present annual contribution level of \$170,000, which can only maintain the Secretariat, can be used to support:

A. One Coordinator at D1 position and two support staff. A lone Coordinator will have difficulty in managing the full Secretariat functions. While a Coordinator at this level can be expected to develop well crafted proposals for external funding, it is unlikely that he/she will have the needed support to coordinate and implement activities efficiently. The day-to-day management of the Secretariat will be hampered when the Coordinator is away on mission and it is impossible to expect a single individual to administer a Secretariat to service COBSEA. While it may be argued that consultants supported by external project funds can contribute to Secretariat management, such personnel are transient and around only if such funding is available. A Secretariat with a lone D1 position Coordinator and two support staff is unlikely to contribute much to the required regional coordination as his/her efforts will be fully directed at formulating proposals and negotiating with donor agencies. The Coordinator will not be in a position to implement and coordinate activities, and the risk of programme stagnation remains high.

B. Two Programme Officers (one at P5 level and another at P2 level) and two support staff. A highly experienced P5 Officer assisted by a P2 Officer is likely to be more cost efficient and productive. The P5 Officer should be able to handle project proposal preparation, plan and implement activities and be supported in all aspects of the work by the junior Programme Officer. However, a P2 Officer is considered too junior to act in the place of the P5 Officer when the latter is out of office and is unlikely to be sufficiently experienced to carry out the work. It will be ideal to have a P5 Officer supported by a P3 Officer (additional funds needed to support this work-force combination could be taken from the present reserve in the Trust Fund as a short-term temporary measure or from donor agency funding).

This arrangement of two Programme Officers (at a senior and a junior level) appears to be more suitable for the viability of the EAS Action Plan. Such a team can be expected maintain coordination activities, while also focusing on developing research proposals for external funding as well as implementing research activities defined in the Action Plan.

Both options above are based on the annual pledges as this would be the only source of sustained funding available to maintain a Secretariat without interruption, provided the annual pledges are maintained in full. Both options are based on minimum level staffing to maintain the work of the Secretariat. While both options provide the flexibility of upgrading the appointments to more senior levels when the funding situation improves, the second option has the advantage of providing more of the necessary Secretariat functions to avoid stagnation of activities. If the funding situation improves in the future, efforts should be made to have a Coordinator at D1 position supported by a P3 Programme Officer. A sufficiently senior Coordinator with the experience of securing funds from donor agencies will help the programme to expand and intensify its usefulness to the region.

Project activities will have to depend on external funds, and wherever possible, additional staff or consultants could be hired from funds provided from donor agencies.

The possibility of relocating the Secretariat was considered. If a host is willing to provide rent free premises and better, provide salaries, this will free up the annual contributions to support project activities. During consultations, two institutions expressed interest in hosting the Secretariat and requested further information. Should COBSEA decide, discussions could be initiated with these institutions (Department of Coastal and Marine Resources of the Ministry of Natural Resources and Environment, Thailand; Tropical Marine Science Institute, Singapore).

The idea of relocation has to be considered carefully. The Secretariat presently pays a \$12,000 annual rental (inclusive of utilities, maintenance, cleaning) and a \$600 annual inter-agency support fee (medical, security). The Secretariat is presently attached to UNEP ROAP and benefits from being able to use existing UN management system (from ESCAP). To relocate, a government agreement with the host country must be negotiated and will involve the UN Legal Office and the Foreign Affairs Ministry of the host country as issues such as UN privileges and immunity are involved. Another disadvantage of relocating the Secretariat is that its present close link with the South China Sea project will be affected. If the relocation is only to save present rental cost, it does not appear worthwhile. But if the host institution is willing to provide salaries, then further discussion should be initiated. The Department of Coastal and Marine Resources (Ministry of Natural Resources and Environment, Thailand) indicated willingness to provide office space and support personnel.

Recommendation 2. The Secretariat should be reactivated to ensure continued coordination and implementation of the Action Plan. A minimum staff structure proposed for the Secretariat is a P5 level Programme Officer and a P3 level Programme Officer, and two support staff.

The re-activation of the Secretariat is most crucial to the implementation of the Action Plan. It is imperative to start the selection and recruitment process immediately. Reasons for proposing this minimum staff structure are discussed above, after considering the tasks and the financial resources.

Recommendation 3. Relocation of the Secretariat should not be considered unless a host institution offers to provide salaries in addition to rent-free premises.

The Secretariat should contact the two institutions that expressed interest in hosting it for further details and clarification. A proper appraisal can be made after the terms of offer are known.

GEOGRAPHIC FOCUS

At the 9th COBSEA meeting, it was decided that while COBSEA's role within Southeast Asian Seas was to coordinate COBSEA approved projects, COBSEA also has a major role to play within the wider East Asian Seas region. This led to the expansion of membership that included countries from East Asia and Australia. It is evident that the level of funding is inadequate to maintain research activities over such an extensive geographic area. Activities such as training workshops to improve capacity transfer are not constrained by funding limitations and the two member countries furthest from the Southeast Asian region (Australia and South Korea) can remain meaningfully involved. Both

countries have well developed capacities to deal with the marine environment and have important roles within COBSEA.

South Korea has indicated the possibility of pulling out of COBSEA as it is more fully involved with NOWPAP (North West Pacific Action Plan). Its marine resource systems are influenced by processes different to that of the Southeast Asian region. South Korea will however, like to maintain an observer status within COBSEA as it is convinced that there are important experiences that can be shared between EASAP and NOWPAP and both regions have a geographical linkage.

Brunei Darussalam and Myanmar are two ASEAN nations with a marine environment that are not members of COBSEA. Their involvement will facilitate the integration of activities and collaboration with the AWGCME, and improve regional efforts in dealing with international waters. East Timor lies within ASEAN seas and should also be involved.

Recommendation 4: Research activities should focus at a more defined geographic area. COBSEA should consider the seas of Southeast Asia and southern P.R. China as the main geographic region for the implementation of the EAS Action Plan.

Recommendation 5: Attempts be initiated/continued to invite Brunei Darussalam, Myanmar and East Timor to join COBSEA.

PROGRAMME FOCUS

An analysis of the major programmes/projects in the region dealing with the management of the marine environment or aquatic resources all share the same vision of improving the well being of people and of managing the environment to improve its provision of ecological goods and services. Approaches and emphases may vary between the different programmes/projects, but similarities are apparent in the tools and methodology. They include integrated management, sustainable resource management, prevention of environmental degradation, partnerships, information dissemination, capacity building, and the importance of science to decision making.

During consultations, two main observations became apparent. The first is that everyone feels strongly about the need for effective coordination of the many similar activities in the region. The second is that partnerships are necessary to optimise resources and synergise efforts. All implementing agencies of regional programmes/projects consulted expressed willingness to collaborate on activities whenever the opportunity arises. The ultimate goal of the EAS Action Plan is to improve the region's marine environment. More effective coordination and strong partnerships with other agencies will increase the pace towards sustainability of efforts.

The Long Term Plan (of the East Asian Seas Action Plan) aims to systematically and pragmatically coordinate the conservation, restoration and sustainable use of the marine environment in the East Asian Seas Region. The Plan takes into account the Regional Action Plan of GPA/LBA, and the Strategic Action Programme in the South China Sea, and the activities serve the purposes of these programmes to provide effective means for implementation and to ensure maximum benefits to Member States.

The Long Term Plan includes 7 components with the establishment of a Regional Database Network and Information System for Marine Environmental Protection and Management centrally supporting the rest.

The Regional Database is a bold undertaking. Many other agencies recognise the need and strength of such a database but no one has yet attempted it. Once established, it fulfils the function of coordination by drawing on all existing data from Member States, regional and international organizations, and NGOs. The synthesis of the collected data will provide information that is highly relevant to management. The Secretariat will then be in a position to serve as a resource centre of synthesised information (gathered from results of all activities in region) addressing the state of the marine environment. Linkages between natural resources and fisheries, and land-based pollution can be identified with a high measure of confidence. This initiative provides the natural synergy between all activities, establishes linkages and connections, is more effective in identifying information gaps

that will help in formulation of future projects, optimises efforts and limited resources, and minimises duplication of efforts and resource wastage. What is unacceptable is information lost when it can be a useful part of an overall synthesis that enhances the value of results from all activities. This can and should be translated to management and capacity improvement.

Opportunities for collaboration exist with all the regional programmes/projects. Databases can be linked and information power enhanced. The WorldFish Center maintains large databases (FishBase, Reef Base). PEMSEA has quality information on ICM development and implementation. APEC's Coral, Fisheries and Reef Network is an important information exchange mechanism. The Mekong River Commission is interested in the connection between coastal waters and basin waters. Relevant Working Groups of ASEAN and APEC will find this Regional Database extremely useful.

The establishment of the Regional Database will efficiently facilitate most of the other 6 proposed components: State of Environment Reporting, Marine Environmental Assessment, Education, Restoration of Marine Habitats, Marine Protected Areas, Reduction of Land-Based Pollution.

The provision of Sida funding can facilitate the initial phases of these components. It may be prudent for COBSEA to consider proceeding with the initial phases of all the seven components of the Long-Term Plan or to select some of the priority ones for greater attention. This consideration should take into account the request by some member states for assistance in planning, policy development and improvement of legal/institutional capacity.

EAS/RCU should consider reviving ASEAMS (Association of Southeast Asian Scientists), which provided scientific input to the strategic action plans from 1989 to 1995. EAS/RCU established and financially supported ASEAMS which represented the region's marine scientists. ASEAMS organized a number of conferences in conjunction with EAS/RCU. When financial support was withdrawn, the Association ceased to function. ASEAMS can play a significant supportive role and can be tapped for consultancy services related to the preparation of synthesized data in connection with the Regional Database and the preparation of State of the Marine Environment Reports. The diversity of disciplines among the region's marine scientists provides many opportunities for involvement in the implementation of projects. The revival may require some seed funding for the first two or three years with a provision that the Association be financially sustainable after that from membership subscriptions.

Recommendation 6: The focus areas of the Long-Term Action Plan should be considered and a decision taken to proceed with all components or selected ones based on direct relevance to most member states.

The Long-Term Action Plan will provide the region with improved capacity to manage the marine environment and its resources. COBSEA should consider if it is essential to proceed with all seven components or to initiate those considered of high priority first and phasing in the others at a later stage. The advantage of initiating all components is the holistic approach in which, opportunities for integration can be identified early and information synthesis enhanced from the broad spectrum of relevant information. The disadvantage is that financial and personnel constraints may impede some of the components, or prevent more than just a superficial coverage of each that the results are not of much use. If the decision is taken to adopt a phased approach, then *the "Regional Database" and "State of the Environment Reporting" components should be considered for implementation first because they address the region's need for effective coordination of regional activities.* They also provide countries with good information to support planning, policy development and improvement of legal/institutional capacity at national level and prepare them for addressing regional/international issues.

Recommendation 7: In the implementation of the Long-Term Plan, effective collaborative arrangements and stronger partnerships with other regional programmes/projects be expanded (e.g. following the model established with AWGCME, which resulted in regional criteria for marine water quality, national marine protected areas, and marine heritage areas).

Some areas for collaboration with respective partners have been identified in the report. These opportunities exist and will help to reduce cost and resources for collaborating parties. The Secretariat should follow-up with interested partners on these possibilities.

Recommendation 8: EAS/RCU considers reviving the Association of Southeast Asian Marine Scientists and to involve it as a partner in the Long-Term Action Plan.

The involvement of ASEAMS will help facilitate the work of the Secretariat, which is minimally staffed. This arrangement has the advantage of commissioning work to regional experts on an ad-hoc basis without the need to maintain a large support staff, and makes financial sense. It will also give the region's experts a greater sense of ownership and involvement in the development and implementation of the Action Plan.

PROPOSED PROGRAMME SCHEDULE

With the loss of the Coordinator's position early this year, the operation of EAS/RCU is overseen by an Interim Coordinator, assisted by a Programme Officer on halftime. To get activities back on track, decisions are needed on the above recommendations. This is expected to take place at the next COBSEA Meeting later this year. The more pressing decisions relate to the Secretariat and the financial status. The Secretariat staff should be recruited before mid-2004, so that the Secretariat can see to the implementation of the Long-Term Plan. COBSEA will have to resolve the financial issue as early as possible. With the Sida funding, programme activities can commence. COBSEA should at its next meeting, decide on which or all components of the Long-Term Plan to proceed with. In the implementation of the Long-Term Plan over the rest of 2004 and 2005, the programme should develop products that will benefit member states. The Regional Database and State of the Marine Environment Reporting are products that will help member states manage the marine environment more effectively.

ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

The author appreciates the ready support and cooperation given by the National Focal Points and implementing agencies of regional programmes/projects. Representatives and officials as indicated in Annex 2 willingly expressed their views, which provided the basis for the recommendations. The UNEP EAS/RCU Secretariat staff was extremely helpful in facilitating contacts with National Focal Points and for providing all relevant background information and documents.

ANNEXES

ANNEX 1. TERMS OF REFERENCE FOR A CONSULTANT TO REVIEW THE EAST ASIAN SEAS ACTION PLAN.

Under the overall supervision of the Coordinator of the East Asian Seas Regional Coordinating Unit, the incumbent shall:

1. Through necessary consultations with COBSEA focal points and experts of the East Asian Seas Action Plan, undertake a review of the implementation of the East Asian Seas Action Plan since it was established. This review shall include:
 - (i) National requirements of the participating countries for meeting their needs for the protection of the marine and coastal environment and the rational use of coastal resources in the East Asian Seas region;
 - (ii) National commitments to meeting obligations under global and regional conventions relevant to the protection of marine and coastal environments;
 - (iii) Achievements of the East Asian Seas Action Plan in assisting the participating countries in meeting national requirements and their obligations at global and regional levels;
 - (iv) Operation of the East Asian Seas Regional Coordinating Unit in implementing the decisions of COBSEA, providing guidelines and services to the national institutions.
2. Review relevant previous and on-going programmes carried out by other international organizations in the region that were, and/or are, complementary to the objectives of the East Asian Seas Action Plan, with a view to:
 - (i) preparing an inventory of major global, regional and national programmes and projects in the East Asian Seas region dealing with protection of the marine environment and the sustainable use of marine and coastal resources. This inventory shall include consideration of the objectives, activities and associated financial commitments of the identified programmes;
 - (ii) identifying areas of potential cooperation and coordination between these organizations and the East Asian Seas Action Plan in order to maximize the benefits to the participating countries in the region and avoid duplication of effort;
 - (iii) identifying existing capacities of the participating countries of the East Asian Seas Action Plan that have been developed through the execution of past and on-going programmes and projects in the region and the needs for further enhancement of these capacities.
3. Based on the information obtained from items 1 and 2 above and taking into consideration on-going regional programmes and projects (i.e., the UNEP/GEF South China Sea project, the PEMSEA project and the Mekong River project) prepare a concrete proposal to strengthen the East Asian Seas Action Plan for 2003-2005, including:
 - (i) Programme of actions to address the national and regional priorities in protecting coastal and marine environment and sustainable use of coastal resources;
 - (ii) Necessary programme to address the transboundary marine environmental issues in the region;
 - (iii) Cooperation and coordination of the Programme of actions with other programmes and project carried out by other international and regional organizations;
 - (iv) Further needs from the COBSEA countries in capacity building, and institutional arrangement, in order for them to more actively participate in the regional programmes and project.
4. Based on the tasks proposed in the item 3, provide analysis on the secretariat functions to the Action Plan, including:
 - (i) The structure and location of the secretariat, and associated requirements for human and financial resources;

- (ii) Financial requirement, established as EAS Trust Fund, for implementation of the East Asian Seas Action Plan; and
 - (iii) Financial resources that will need to be mobilized from other sources and options for raising such support for the East Asian Seas Action Plan.
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ANNEX 2. SCHEDULE OF MEETINGS WITH NATIONAL FOCAL POINTS AND IMPLEMENTING AGENCIES OF REGIONAL PROGRAMMES/PROJECTS IN JULY 2003

Friday 4 Jul	Dept. of Environment and Natural Resources, Philippines.	<i>Fernandino Y. Concepcion</i> Assistant Director, Environmental Management Bureau. <i>Vincente Diaz</i>
Friday 4 Jul	UNDP/IMO/GEF Project Partnerships in Environmental Management on the Seas of East Asia.	<i>Chua Thia Eng</i> Programme Director
Monday 7 Jul	Ministry of Foreign Affairs & Trade, Republic of Korea.	<i>Kim Chan-woo</i> Director, Environmental Cooperation Division, MFAT. <i>Kim Young-jae</i> Dy. Director, Environment Cooperation Division, MFAT. <i>Min Hye Young</i> Dy. Director, Marine Environment Division, Ministry of Maritime Affairs & Fisheries.
Wed 9 Jul	Ministry of Environment, Cambodia.	<i>Koh Savath</i> Dy. Director General of Technical Affair <i>Sok Vong</i> NFP, Wetlands Component, Cambodia's Specialised Executing Agency, UNEP/GEF Project Reversing Environmental Degradation Trends in the South China Sea and Gulf of Thailand.
Wed 9 Jul	Mekong River Commission Secretariat, Phnom Penh.	<i>Pech Sokhem</i> Director, Technical Support Division. <i>Viengthavisone Thephachanh</i> Prog. Officer, Programme Coordination Section. <i>Minoru Kamoto</i> Expert on River Management Basin Development Plan, Natural Resources Development Planning Division. <i>Ian Campbell</i> Programme Manager & Senior Environment Specialist, Environment Division. <i>Thanongdeth Insisiengmay</i> Programme Officer (Hydrologist) Technical Support Division. <i>Choomjet Karnjanakesorn</i> Dy. Team Leader, Water Utilization Program.
Mon. 14 Jul	Ministry for Environment, Republic of Indonesia.	<i>Liana Bratasida</i> Dy. Minister for Environmental Conservation. <i>Henk Uktolseya</i> Policy Analyst for Coastal and Marine Ecosystem. <i>Sudariyono</i> Head, Directorate for Marine and Coastal Ecosystem Degradation Control, Environmental Impact Management Agency.
Mon. 14 Jul	Association of Southeast Asian Nations Secretariat, Jakarta.	<i>Wendy Yap Hwee Min</i> Senior Officer, Environment Unit, Bureau of Functional Cooperation. <i>Chandrasa Edhityas Sjamsudin</i> Technical Assistant, Environment Unit, Bureau of

		Functional Cooperation.
Wed. 16 Jul	Environment Australia, Department of the Environment and Heritage.	<i>Philip Burgess</i> Director, Marine and International Section. <i>Stephen Bates</i> Policy Advisor, International Regional Unit.
Fri. 18 Jul	WorldFish Center, Penang.	<i>Meryl Williams</i> Director General. <i>Paul Teng</i> Dy. Director General – Research. <i>Jamie Oliver</i> Senior Scientist. <i>Ilona Stobutzki</i> Coastal and Marine Resources Research Program. <i>Raul Ponzoni</i> Biodiversity and Genetic Resources Research Program.
Mon. 21 Jul	Ministry of the Environment, Singapore.	<i>Fong Peng Keong</i> Assistant Director (Regional Policy), International Relations Dept. <i>Lim Yew Heng</i> Senior International Relations Executive (International Policy), International Relations Dept. <i>Koh Joon Hong</i> International Relations Executive (Regional Policy), International Relations Dept.
Tue. 22 Jul	Ministry of Science, Technology and the Environment, Malaysia.	<i>Nadzri Yahaya</i> Deputy Director, Conservation and Environmental Management Division.
Thu. 24 Jul	Ministry of Natural Resources and Environment, Thailand.	<i>Chartree Chueyprasit</i> Deputy Permanent Secretary. <i>Srisuda Jarayabhand</i> Office of International Cooperation. <i>Ampan Pintukanok</i> <i>Sujitra</i>

ANNEX 3. SUMMARY OF VIEWS EXPRESSED BY NFPs REGARDING EAS ACTION PLAN

NFP	Benefits of participation	National needs	Future focus of EAS Action Plan
Australia	Regional networking.	(Not discussed).	<p>Consider a more focused work programme and to decide if emphasis should be on policy development or programme implementation.</p> <p>Facilitate region's capacity to deal with issues of International Waters.</p> <p>Benefits to member countries should be more clearly indicated.</p> <p>Collaboration with APEC and linking marine resources to trade may interest business sector participation and funding possibilities.</p>
Cambodia	Capacity improvement being established. Involvement with other regional/bilateral programmes/projects has also helped with capacity development.	<p>Need to address issues of habitat degradation, pollution, fisheries loss. Require capacity building; human resource development in marine and coastal science (to reach same level with other countries in order to participate fully in regional efforts).</p> <p>Issue identification (for causal chain analysis); resource inventories still required.</p> <p>Need to strengthen legal and policy analysis framework, community development and alternative livelihoods, so that it can be in a position to meet obligations of international conventions.</p> <p>Policy and planning at central government level. Stakeholder identification at local level.</p>	<p>Would like EAS Action Plan to include regional human capacity development.</p> <p>1999 Long-term Strategy – not all needs relevant to Cambodia – urgent regional needs not matched by national needs. Require more time (allowing for national discussion) to study Action Plan Strategy before regional adoption.</p> <p>Supports regional integration with other programmes to strengthen action.</p> <p>Require stronger demonstration of tangible benefits to members.</p>
Indonesia	Participation has been useful, and considered together with involvement in other regional programmes, has helped to raise national capacity.	<p>Capacity enhancement needs will continue in view of the large extent of its seas, particularly in the development of human resources, in transboundary diagnostic analysis, and in monitoring programmes of marine and coastal resources.</p> <p>Capacity and expertise</p>	<p>Stronger role in coordinating regional programmes/projects to reduce overlap and to identify gaps. National agencies are sometimes unaware of various programmes leading to cases in which similar activities of different programmes focus on the same site.</p> <p>RCU is not sufficiently close to countries to fully appreciate national issues.</p>

		needed to position country to meet commitments to international conventions.	
Malaysia	Participation has been useful in improving capacity to deal with coastal and marine environment issues.	Capacity to deal with issues of International Waters.	<p>Should demonstrate more tangible benefits to member countries.</p> <p>Coordination of various regional programmes/projects most necessary to identify gaps and to optimize resources.</p> <p>Action plan driven more by RCU than COBSEA. Greater ownership of Action Plan by COBSEA desirable and more local expertise should be considered for the Secretariat.</p> <p>Increase link and synergise activities with ASEAN Secretariat (meetings could be synchronized, as most NFPs are the same for both COBSEA and ASEAN).</p>
Philippines	<p>Helped catalyse national initiatives.</p> <p>Capacity enhancement particularly in the areas of habitat protection, pollution management, economic assistance, climate change. Involvement with other regional programmes helped in strengthening capacity building and regional networking.</p>	<p>Assistance in planning, policy development, legal/institutional capacity.</p> <p>Capacity strengthening to address:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. habitat protection, 2. management, 3. pollution, 4. planning & assessment, 5. policy development, 6. monitoring and research, 7. rehabilitation, 8. climate change, 9. transboundary concerns (high priority). 	<p>Stronger role of COBSEA in driving Action Plan.</p> <p>EAS/RCU to concentrate acquisition of funds.</p> <p>Regional criteria and standards. Regional indicators. Regional resolutions on transboundary issues. Regional legal/administrative frameworks.</p> <p>Stronger partnerships with other organizations to achieve goal of sustainability.</p>
Singapore	Participation has been useful to capacity building.	Continued capacity building to address national, regional and international issues.	Activities be planned to facilitate regional involvement with global programmes such as GPA and RPA.
South Korea	Benefits of participation not apparent. Marine systems and processes not similar to SE Asia. Direct participation minimal, but opportunity present for increased collaboration between EASAP and NOWPAP.	<p>Greater public awareness on the importance of marine environment and its resources.</p> <p>Greater involvement with NOWPAP, which is more directly relevant.</p>	<p>Activities to enhance public awareness and participation.</p> <p>Maintain strong linkage with NOWPAP as learning experiences from both programmes will be mutually beneficial.</p>
Thailand	Participation useful	Continued capacity	Activities should be more streamlined

<p>at improving capacity in coastal and marine issues.</p>	<p>enhancement to deal with national issues and transboundary issues, and to address international commitments.</p>	<p>and screened in consideration of regional approaches. Suggested priority focus on pollution hotspots with transboundary impact implications.</p> <p>Activities should be action-oriented instead of reviews. An information and database centre/network should be established to enhance coordination.</p>
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