



**United Nations  
Environment  
Programme**

UNEP(DEC)/EAS 1.NFP

25 May 2005

Original: ENGLISH

---

Brainstorming Meeting of National Focal Points  
on new Strategic Direction of COBSEA

Bangkok, Thailand, 11 May, 2005

**REPORT OF THE BRAINSTORMING MEETING OF  
THE NATIONAL FOCAL POINTS  
ON NEW STRATEGIC DIRECTION OF COBSEA**

UNEP Regional Coordinating Unit for the East Asian Seas Region (UNEP EAS/RCU) held the Brainstorming Meeting of the National Focal Points on the New Strategic Direction of COBSEA on 11 May, 2005 in Bangkok, Thailand.

Representatives from COBSEA National Focal Points (NFPs) of Australia, Cambodia, People's Republic of China, Indonesia, Malaysia, Philippines, Singapore, Thailand and Vietnam attended the meeting. The representatives of Brunei Darussalam and Myanmar were also present as observers. A list of participants is attached as Annex I.

The objectives of the meeting were to discuss pertinent issues related to the new strategic direction for COBSEA based on the White Paper prepared by the EAS/RCU. It is envisaged that the outcome of this meeting will be used to revise the White Paper to be submitted for COBSEA approval at the 18<sup>th</sup> Meeting of COBSEA in China later this year.

The meeting was opened by Mr. Surendra Shrestha, Regional Director of UNEP Office for Asia and Pacific. His opening remarks included: need for COBSEA to be of service to governments; need to build on national priorities and focus on transboundary and common issues; partnerships with existing regional projects as well as existing regional cooperation mechanisms; role as a policy forum on coastal and marine issues; need to address the sustainability of COBSEA/RCU.

The meeting was chaired by Dr. Maitree Duangsawasdi, Director General, Department of Marine and Coastal Resources, Thailand. The meeting discussed two important issues namely programme development and institutional arrangement after the presentations on these topics. The details are available in the draft White Paper attached as Annex II

The result of the discussions can be summarized as follows:

### **New Strategic Direction**

- Shift focus towards integrated marine management

### **Coordination**



- Improve regional coordination and linkages among activities
- Shift towards regional coordination and facilitation of integrated management of coastal marine issues
- Better delineation between tasks for ASEAN Working Group on Coastal and Marine Environment (AWGCME) COBSEA and APEC working groups
- Improve coordination mechanisms at national/sub-regional level
- Establish forum for dialogue among agencies to harmonize their efforts
- Establish regional network of coastal managers

### **National Ownership & Capacity Building**

- Assistance to countries to better manage intra-governmental coordination

### **Effective Use of Resources**

- Assistance to countries to address coastal marine issues
- Assistance to countries to meet their MEA obligations

### **Information & Reporting**

- Close gaps in information/knowledge/management networks
- Improve program publicity by use of media
- Establish a regional clearinghouse for databases

### **Institutional Arrangement**

- Strengthen EAS/RCU in coordinating role instead of the chair of COBSEA
- High level representation of the appropriate ministry
- Promote involvement of countries in inter-sessional activities,
- Strengthen NFP's role in intra-governmental coordination
- Expand the existing membership

### **Think-Tank Topics**

- To be identified later in a workshop

### **Financial resources**

- In order for countries to provide contribution to cover the running cost of EAS/RCU (estimated USD 300,000-500,000), COBSEA needs to revitalize its role and respond to what is needed by countries.
- COBSEA countries are faced with funding pressure because more and more projects and activities –such as PEMSEA, COBSEA, SCS, are requesting for funding but there is limited amount of funding available at national level for regional activities. Therefore, the new strategic direction should add value to existing regional projects

### **Follow-ups**

- Visit countries to explain about the new direction and seek support. NFPs are requested to invite key agencies that are outside the environment portfolio to this meeting that is to be organized for the visit
- Consultations to delineate responsibilities among AWGCME, APEC and COBSEA
- Identifying topics for Think-Tank by organizing a workshop with participation of up to 4-5 experts per country

**ANNEX I**  
**LIST OF PARTICIPANTS**

### **Australia**

Mr. Andrew BROOKE  
Assistant Director  
International Team Marine Division  
Department of the Environment and Heritage  
GPO Box 787, Canberra ACT 2601, Australia

Tel: (61 2 6) 274 1585  
Fax: (61 2 6) 274 1662  
Email: andrew.brooke@oceans.gov.au

### **Brunei Darussalam**

Ms. Martinah Hj. TAMIT  
Senior Environmental Officer  
Department of Environment  
Parks and Recreation  
Ministry of Development  
Old Airport Road Berakas BB3510  
Negara Brunei Darussalam

Tel: (673 2) 383 222 ext 325  
Fax: (673 2) 383 644  
Email: mht7894@hotmail.com

### **Cambodia**

Mr. Koch SAVATH  
Deputy Director General  
Ministry of Environment  
48 Samdech Preah Sihanouk  
Tonle Bassac, Chamkamon  
Phnom Penh, Cambodia

Tel: (85512) 787088  
Fax: (855 23) 987233, 215925  
E-mail: ksavath@ncdproject.com  
kochsavath@yahoo.com

### **People's Republic of China**

Mr. TONG Yu  
Director  
Division of Marine Environmental Protection  
Department of Pollution Control  
State Environmental Protection Administration  
(SEPA) 115 Xizhimennei Nanxiaojie  
Beijing 100035, China

Tel: (86 10) 6655 6273  
Fax: (86 10) 6655 6272  
E-mail: tongyu@sepa.gov.cn

Mr. HUANG Zhengguang  
Senior Engineer  
South China Institute of Environmental Sciences  
7 West Street  
Yuancun Guangzhou 510655  
Guangdong Province, China

Tel: (86 20) 8552 8748  
Fax: (86 20) 8552 8748, 8552-4439  
E-mail: georgehuang@scies.com.cn

## **Indonesia**

Mr. Turyawan ARDI  
Staff to the Assistant Deputy  
Sub Division for Artificial Coastal Environment  
Ministry of Environment  
Center for Marine and Coastal Ecosystem  
Degradation Control  
JL. DL. Panjaitan kav. 24 A Building 5<sup>th</sup> Fl.  
Kebon Nanas Jakarta 13410, Indonesia

Tel: (62 21) 851 8138, 858 0111  
Fax: (62 21) 858 0111, 8590 4929  
E-mail: turyawan@menlh.go.id

## **Malaysia**

Mr. Hashim bin DAUD  
Director, Water and Marine Division  
Department of Environment  
Ministry of Natural Resources and Environment  
Level 7, Block C4  
Federal Government Administrative Center  
62662 Putrajaya, Malaysia

Tel: (7 603) 88858238  
Fax: (7 603) 88884070  
Email: hd@jas.sains.my

## **Myanmar**

Ms. Daw Yin Yin LAY  
Joint Secretary/ Director  
National Commission for Environmental Affairs  
(NCEA), Ministry of Forestry  
Thirimingakr Lane, Kaba Aye Pagoda Road  
Yangon, Myanmar

Tel: (951) 664845  
Fax: (951) 664459  
E-mail: env.myan@mptmail.net.mm

## **Philippines**

Ms. Ella S. DEOCADIZ  
Environmental Management Bureau  
Department of Environment and Natural  
Resources (DENR) Visayas Avenue  
Diliman, Quezon City 1100, Philippines

Tel: (63 2) 426 4340  
Fax: (63 2) 426 4340  
E-mail: gellamini@yahoo.com

elladeocadiz@edsamail.com.ph

**Singapore**

Mr. Navin P. RAJAGOBAL  
Assistant Director  
International Relations Division  
Ministry of the Environment and Water  
Resources, Environment Building  
40 Scotts Road #23-00  
Singapore 228231

Tel: (65) 6731 9807  
Fax: (65) 6738 4468  
E-mail: navin\_rajagobal@mewr.gov.sg

**Thailand**

Mr. Maitree DUANGSAWASDI  
Director General  
Department of Marine and  
Coastal Resources  
Ministry of Natural Resources and Environment  
92 Phaholyothin 7, SamSen Nai  
Phayathai, Bangkok 10400, Thailand

Tel: (66 2) 298 2640  
Fax: (66 2) 298 2592, 298 2167  
E-mail: maitree@dmcr.go.th

Ms. Cherdchinda CHOTIYAPUTTA  
Marine and Coastal Resources Management  
Specialist  
Department of Marine and Coastal Resources  
Ministry of Natural Resources and Environment  
92 Phaholyothin 7, SamSen Nai  
Phayathai, Bangkok 10400, Thailand

Tel: (66 2) 298 2167  
Fax: (66 2) 298 2592  
E-mail: cherdchc@dmcr.go.th

**Viet Nam**

Mr. Hua Chien THANG  
Head of Integrated Coastal Zone Management  
Division  
Vietnam Environment Protection Agency  
No. 67 Nguyen Du Street  
Hoan Kiem Dist., Hanoi, VIET NAM

Tel: (844) 822 4419  
Fax: (844) 822 3189  
Mobile: 001 849 1356 2863  
E-mail: hthang@nea.gov.vn

**REPRESENTATIVES OF THE UNITED NATIONS SYSTEMS  
AND OTHER ORGANIZATIONS**

**UNITED NATIONS ENVIRONMENT PROGRAMME  
Regional Office for Asia and the Pacific (ROAP)**

Mr. Surendra SHRESTHA  
Regional Director  
United Nations Environment Programme  
Regional Office for Asia and the Pacific  
United Nations Building, 2nd Floor, Block A  
Rajdamnern Avenue, Bangkok 10200, Thailand

Tel: (66 2) 288 1870  
Fax: (66 2) 280 3829  
E-mail: Surendra.shrestha@rrcap.unep.org

**UNITED NATIONS ENVIRONMENT PROGRAMME  
East Asian Seas Regional Coordinating Unit  
(EAS/RCU)**

Ms. Srisuda JARAYABHAND  
Co-ordinator  
United Nations Environment Programme  
United Nations Building, 2nd Floor, Block B  
Rajdamnern Avenue, Bangkok 10200, Thailand

Tel: (66 2) 288 1905  
Fax: (66 2) 281 2428  
E-mail: jarayabhand@un.org

Mr. Vellayutham PACHAIMUTHU  
Programme Officer  
United Nations Environment Programme  
United Nations Building, 2nd Floor, Block B  
Rajdamnern Avenue, Bangkok 10200, Thailand

Tel: (66 2) 288 1860  
Fax: (66 2) 281 2428  
E-mail: pachaimuthu@un.org

Ms. Birgitta LISS  
Junior Professional Officer  
United Nations Environment Programme  
United Nations Building, 2<sup>nd</sup> Floor, Block B  
Rajdamnern Avenue, Bangkok 10200, Thailand

Tel: (66 2) 288 2214  
Fax: (66 2) 281 2428  
E-mail: Liss@un.org

Ms. Charuvan KALYANGKURA  
Administrative Assistant  
United Nations Environment Programme  
United Nations Building, 2<sup>nd</sup> Floor, Block A  
Rajdamnern Avenue, Bangkok 10200, Thailand

Tel: (66 2) 288 1894  
Fax: (66 2) 281 2428  
E-mail: kalyangkura@un.org

Ms. Krittika KLEESUWAN  
Secretary  
United Nations Environment Programme  
United Nations Building, 2nd Floor, Block B  
Rajdamnern Avenue, Bangkok 10200, Thailand

Tel: (66 2) 288 1889  
Fax: (66 2) 281 2428  
E-mail: [kleesuwan.unescap@un.org](mailto:kleesuwan.unescap@un.org)

**UNITED NATIONS ENVIRONMENT PROGRAMME**  
**East Asian Seas Regional Coordinating Unit**  
**(EAS/RCU) – Senior Advisor**

Mr. Gunther MAU  
Senior Advisor  
23 Lakeview Gardens  
Jerrabomberra  
NSW 2619 Australia

Tel: (612) 6274-1064  
Fax: (612) 6255-8639, 6274-1640  
E-mail: [gunther.mau@deh.gov.au](mailto:gunther.mau@deh.gov.au)  
[guntherm@unopsmail.org](mailto:guntherm@unopsmail.org)  
[gunthermau@bigpond.com](mailto:gunthermau@bigpond.com)

**UNITED NATIONS ENVIRONMENT PROGRAMME**  
**East Asian Seas Regional Coordinating Unit**  
**(EAS/RCU) - CONSULTANT**

Mr. CHOU Loke Ming  
Department of Biological Sciences  
The National University of Singapore  
Faculty of Science  
Blk S2, 14 Science Drive 4  
Singapore 117543

Tel: (656) 874 2696  
Fax: (656) 779 2486  
E-mail: [dbsclm@nus.edu.sg](mailto:dbsclm@nus.edu.sg)

## ANNEX II

### Draft White Paper

#### Executive Summary

1. This draft white paper proposes a new and diversified programme of work for COBSEA and a revised governance structure, possibly leading to the replacement of the action plan as first adopted in 1981 and revised in 1994. Its improvement and possible endorsement by countries will enable COBSEA to continue the delivery of high quality services to member governments, contribute to COBSEA's sustainability and establish it as an innovative organisation that is at the cutting edge of regional policy formulation. This in turn will enable COBSEA to tap into new sources of funding and enhance its ability to assist the sustainable development of economies of member countries.

#### Background

2. COBSEA was established in 1981 with the support of the UNEP to steer and oversee the further development and implementation of the East Asian Seas Action Plan. In its initial stages it was heavily project-oriented and relied on the UNEP for much of its funding. COBSEA has been successful in raising the profile of marine and coastal environmental issues in member countries, including through implementing its action plan, initiating and obtaining funding for several marine projects and catalyzing regional action and programmes aimed at protecting the marine environment. It was successful in attracting UNEP/GEF funding for a number of multidisciplinary regional marine environmental projects such as Reversing Environmental Degradation Trends in the South China Sea and the Gulf of Thailand and establishing good working relationships with related marine environment projects, such as the GEF-UNDP-IMO funded Regional Program on Partnerships in Environmental Management for the Seas of East Asia (PEMSEA). It has also established a close cooperation with the ASEAN Working Group on Coastal and Marine Environment.

3. The 1999 Long-term Plan for East Asian Seas proposed a redirection of COBSEA, mainly focusing on technical/scientific aspects of the Action Plan (eg monitoring and assessments) and taking the financial reality of shrinking multilateral donor budgets into consideration.

4. The 1999 plan did not really provide a new strategic direction, but was rather geared towards a better coordination of ongoing donor-funded activities. National ownership remained generally low. Subsequent years saw a further deterioration of UNEP's funding situation and, at the 17<sup>th</sup> COBSEA meeting in March of 2004, UNEP informed member governments that it was no longer able to support staff at the COBSEA Regional Coordinating Unit in Bangkok. Funding support for two RCU staff would phase out over an 18 months interim period.

#### The Response - Restructure and Revitalization

5. On 16<sup>th</sup> November 2004 UNEP organised an informal brainstorming meeting of interested parties in Bangkok to respond to these challenges and to develop some proposals for the future of COBSEA. In summary, the meeting recommended that COBSEA should aim at becoming a high-level policy forum at ministerial/senior officials level. COBSEA could mainly focus on adding value to national governments through strengthening national capacities to harness project synergies and avoid duplication of externally co-funded projects, through ensuring post-project sustainability and, through addressing high priority marine related strategic policy issues. Some changes to the present structure of COBSEA will be necessary to enable it to fulfill its new role, including a shift from a technical/scientific towards a policy focus.

6. Adoption of an amended version of this draft white paper will require a paradigm shift in COBSEA's programmatic approach, a modified governance structure and a streamlined Regional Coordinating Unit. It has the potential to significantly expand COBSEA's client base and, over time, it is hoped that this in turn will lead to a broadened resource base from which an expanded work program can be funded.

### **Proposed Program**

7. Three program streams are suggested for a revised COBSEA:

Program Sustainability which involves networking / coordination and national ownership of externally funded projects

Regional Think Tank which could involve studies, extensive intra- and inter-governmental consultations, assessment of capacities available within the region and identification of capacity building needs on regional issues concerning resources security, socio-economic stability and transboundary issues.

Pilot Projects which would include those already 'on the ground', such as GPA and ICRAN, as well as new pilot projects on emerging issues.

#### 7.1 Program Sustainability

This stream aims to ensure that member governments get the best value out of regional marine/coastal projects and gives donors the confidence that their investment is secure and maximized. The following could be the key aspects of this stream:

##### *(i) Strategic direction*

- Providing a policy platform for member governments to debate regional positions for regional/global fora
- Reviewing the impact of marine issues not only on the environment but also on social and economic sectors in member countries

##### *(ii) Information and reporting*

- Setting up a regional database and networking system to improve information exchange and reporting system for current and future regional programmes
- Identifying examples of best practice and promoting their uptake by other programs

##### *(iii) Coordination*

- Facilitating improved coordination at all levels, i.e. inter-governmental and intra-governmental coordination
- Coordinating among regional programmes and projects including developing regional guidelines, criteria and standards

##### *(iv) Effective use of resources*

- Working with donors, implementing agencies and national governments to reduce overlap and duplication of work at both national and regional levels and to making maximal use of existing national capacities

(v) *National ownership and capacity building*

- Promoting post-project sustainability and national ownership of regional, externally funded projects and programs
- Identifying national/regional capacity building and institutional strengthening needs and assist countries to mobilize external resources to meet these needs
- Ensuring stakeholder participation

7.2 Regional Think Tank / Study Centre

The Regional Think Tank would be geared towards promoting common regional positions on emerging issues in the form of studies, extensive intra- and inter-governmental consultations, assessment of capacities available within the region and identification of capacity building needs on regional issues aiming at integrating the social, economic and environmental aspects.

The mode of operation to address these and other issues could include: (1) joint identification of topics to be addressed (2) identification of a lead country/institute to develop the topic (3) regional meetings to review the topic analysis and agree on a common regional position.

Topics to be addressed could include:

**Resources Security** - Globalisation, high economic growth rates and a general trend towards bilateral, regional and multilateral free trade agreements influence regional resource flows and can put pressure on limited natural resource bases. The protection of marine and coastal resources to serve as sources for food, recreation and transport would be examples of a comprehensive approach to sustainable resource. The following could be key areas of interest:

- (i) Food security
- (ii) Sustainable Coastal Tourism
- (iii) Alternative uses of marine resources

**Socio-Economic Stability** - Changes to the coastal/marine environment can directly influence the livelihood of millions of people and affect national accounts (eg through export losses and rising import bills). Work could include impact studies on potential scenarios likely to affect socio-economic stability in the coastal regions. It could also include the development of alternate scenarios, impacts on social and political cohesion in affected areas and, the enhanced involvement of the private sector in resource transfer and allocation. Some key areas of interest could be:

- (i) Impact of international trade on coastal and marine resources environment
- (ii) Impact of climate change on coastal development
- (iii) Impact of disasters on livelihood of coastal communities

**Transboundary Issues** - The marine environment of countries often transcends beyond national boundaries. There is therefore the need for cooperation in areas which could conceivably include joint resource exploitation, marine transport, transboundary-protected areas, implementation of relevant MEAs such as the Basel Convention, PIC, POPs and the Marpol Convention and address the better delivery of MEAs. Key elements here could include:

- (i) Transboundary Marine Pollution
- (ii) Transboundary Marine Protected Areas
- (iii) Joint Resource Management and Exploitation
- (iv) Synergies and coordination of marine related MEAs

### 7.3 Pilot Projects or Work on the Ground

Based on the 1981 action plan and subsequent COBSEA work programmes, projects that should/could be continued and for which funding is available should be identified and the most cost-effective manner to implement them agreed upon, taking into full consideration other ongoing programmes in the region. Projects in this cluster could include

- (i) Continuation of the ongoing project to implement regional and global commitments such as ICRAN and LBA projects
- (ii) Developing new pilot projects on emerging issues such as post-Tsunami activities, clean technology

### **Proposed Governance**

8. Building on the 2003 independent review of the East Asian Seas Action Plan, on the recommendation of the 17<sup>th</sup> COBSEA Meeting in March 2004, and the 18 November 2004 brainstorming workshop in Bangkok, it is proposed to fine-tune the governance structure of COBSEA to better reflect the proposed transformation from what was basically a technical coordination unit towards a high level policy forum.

### **COBSEA**

9. COBSEA's main rationale in revitalizing and restructuring would then be to add value to national governments in strengthening national capacity and promoting regional cooperation by harnessing project synergies and avoiding duplication, by ensuring post-project sustainability and, by addressing high priority marine related strategic policy issues. Some changes to the present structure of COBSEA will therefore be necessary to enable it to fulfill its new role.

#### 9.1 Membership

At present, three countries, which border the East Asian Seas, are not members of COBSEA. The involvement of Brunei Darussalam and Myanmar, which are two ASEAN Nations with marine environments, will facilitate the integration of activities and collaboration with the ASEAN Working Group on Coastal and Marine Environment (AWGCME). Furthermore, the involvement of Timor-Leste, which lies within the South East Asian Sea, in COBSEA will further enhance regional efforts in dealing with international waters. The involvement of more advanced economies in the region will help facilitate the implementation of the action plan by capacity building through research and development. The continuing involvement of the Republic of Korea and China, now part of NOWPAP, the North West Pacific Action Plan that went into operation recently is desirable for furthering strong linkage between these two neighboring Regional Seas Programmes.

#### 9.2 National Representatives

One of the weak points of the old COBSEA was the lack of political support in developing and implementing projects. With the proposed refocus on high level policy formulation in the region, the issue of appropriate national representation is becoming even more pronounced. It is proposed that high-level officials should represent member countries at COBSEA meetings. The ASEAN Senior Officials, for example, are represented at Permanent Secretary level and the national representatives of COBSEA should compose of officials from national environment ministries at a comparable executive level.

### 9.3 Appointment of Chair

The active involvement of member countries during inter-sessional periods will strengthen national ownership of COBSEA. It is proposed that the Chair of COBSEA, supported by the Regional Coordinating Unit, could carry on activities during inter-sessions. This could include responsibilities for ongoing high-level policy dialogue among member nations and implementation of strategic initiatives in support of such a dialogue. Terms of Reference need to be developed that clearly outline the Chair's responsibilities. The Regional Coordinating Unit will serve as the secretarial arm of the Chair. The Chairmanship would be for a term of one to three years with rotation among member countries.

#### **National Focal Points (NFP)**

10. Each member government shall appoint/endorse an agency designated as the National Focal Point. A senior official from that agency shall be the designated Senior Official COBSEA (national chair). S/he shall be assisted by at least a staff member of that agency. The National Focal Point will be mainly responsible for interdepartmental coordination at national level as well as coordination with the Regional Coordinating Unit to ensure effective implementation of activities and possibly avoiding duplication at the regional level.

#### **Regional Coordinating Unit (RCU)**

11. In addition to existing responsibilities, the RCU should strengthen intra-COBSEA coordination by establishing a regular communication channel with National Focal Points. The RCU should also establish a liaison mechanism with relevant other projects in the region and beyond. Another important responsibility will be to provide assistance to member governments in areas such as capacity building and technology support. The RCU would also act as secretariat of the Chair of COBSEA and would comprise the following key staff and support personnel:

- EAS/RCU Coordinator
- Programme Officer
- Senior Consultant (part time)
- Junior Professional Officer
- Administrative Assistant
- Secretary
- Administrative Officer for UNEP-ROAP (shared resource)

12. The Coordinator will report to the Head of the UNEP Regional Seas Programme and be under overall supervision of the Head Regional Seas and Regional Director UNEP ROAP.

#### **Financial Resources**

13. The 17<sup>th</sup> Meeting of COBSEA (COBSEA-17) in March 2004 agreed to maintain current levels of contribution but to consider raising national contributions in order to ensure the sustainable operation of the COBSEA-RCU and the implementation of agreed activities. At the present level of contribution, there is a need for raising external funds. The RCU should seek external funding by developing initiatives that are in accordance with the new strategic direction for COBSEA.

In order to maintain operation of EAS/RCU, a core funding of US\$ 500,000 per year is required for an initial period of five years. It is envisaged that if concrete outputs and outcomes of the new strategic direction can be achieved, COBSEA members will have to consider raising their contribution in the future

**Next Steps**

- 15 The COBSEA RCU will
- Organize formal and informal consultations with COBSEA member governments on the proposed strategic direction of COBSEA;
  - Organize country visits to existing and proposed new member countries;
  - Consult with other COBSEA staff on outstanding project responsibilities;
  - Consult with SIDA on the implementation of a project for support to the East Asian Seas Action Plan
-