

BOBLME Newsletter

Bay of Bengal Large Marine Ecosystem Project



SEPTEMBER 2014

Bangladesh, India, Indonesia, Malaysia, the Maldives, Myanmar, Sri Lanka and Thailand are collaborating through the Bay of Bengal Large Marine Ecosystem (BOBLME) Project to better the lives of their coastal populations by improving regional management of the Bay of Bengal environment and its fisheries.



Bangladesh



India



Indonesia



Malaysia



Maldives



Myanmar



Sri Lanka



Thailand

Almost there!

Strategic Action Programme for a healthier Bay of Bengal close to completion

A roadmap leading to a healthier Bay of Bengal Large Marine Ecosystem (BOBLME) has taken a major step closer to completion.

A first draft of a Strategic Action Programme (SAP) for the BOBLME has been published and is under review by the eight countries fringing the Bay of Bengal that have been involved in its development through their participation in the BOBLME Project.

The SAP is a comprehensive plan to address the major fisheries, environmental and socio-economic problems affecting the Bay.

It lists close to 400 actions that countries have agreed to carry out either regionally or on an individual basis to ensure better management of the marine ecosystem that some 450 million people in the region depend upon.

Chris O'Brien, Regional Coordinator for the BOBLME Project said, "The SAP is the key output that the vast majority of our activities over the past five years have been leading up to."

"The SAP recognizes that many of the issues facing BOBLME are transboundary in nature and that improved regional collaboration and management hold the greatest promise of positive change."

The draft document is currently undergoing a final review process by each of the participating countries with a view to the text being finalised by October 2014. Adoption and signature of the SAP by the fisheries and environment ministers of the respective countries is expected to be complete by February 2015.

"Many of the challenges and issues that threaten the sustainability of the Bay of Bengal Large Marine Ecosystem fall outside the mandate of fisheries management agencies," Dr O'Brien added. "For this reason it has been vital to ensure the commitment and cooperation of environment ministries alongside their fisheries counterparts."

The SAP is the product of many years of work including: reviews and assessments as well as national and regional consultations carried out through the BOBLME Project and other regional forums.

Continued on page 2

Bay of Bengal Large Marine Ecosystem

Strategic Action Programme

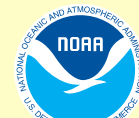
DRAFT 7 AUGUST 2014



Food and Agriculture
Organization of the
United Nations



Norad



3.4 The BOBLME Strategic Action Programme vision and objectives

VISION

A healthy ecosystem and sustainable use of marine resources for the benefit of the people and countries of the Bay of Bengal Large Marine Ecosystem

1

Theme:
Marine living resources

EcoQO:

Fisheries and other living marine resources have been restored and are managed sustainably

OBJECTIVES

1. Restore fishery resources that have declined
2. Restore and maintain species composition
3. Reduce the proportion of juvenile fish caught and/or retained
4. Restore biodiversity status level of 1980 by 2020

2

Theme:
Critical habitats

EcoQO:

Degraded, vulnerable and critical habitats are restored, conserved and maintained

OBJECTIVES

1. Protect, manage and restore mangroves habitats to increase mangrove coverage and improve biodiversity
2. Restore, protect and sustainably manage existing coral reef ecosystems, habitats and associated biodiversity, and prevent pollution and destructive activities
3. Protect and manage seagrass habitats and associated biodiversity (maintain and increase extent and biodiversity)

3

Theme:
Water quality

EcoQO:

Coastal and marine pollution and water quality are controlled to meet agreed standards for human and ecosystem health

OBJECTIVES

1. Reduce or minimize the discharge of untreated sewage and waste water into river, coastal and marine waters
2. Reduce and minimize solid waste and marine litter
3. Reduce and control nutrient loading into coastal waters

4

Theme:
Social and economic considerations

EcoQO:

Socio-economic constraints are addressed, leading to increased resilience and empowerment of coastal people

OBJECTIVES

1. Reduce vulnerability to natural hazards, climate variability and climate change, and increase climate resilience
2. Improve the living and working conditions of coastal fishing communities
3. Empower coastal people to participate in and benefit from sustainable development practices

SAP draft goes out

From page 1

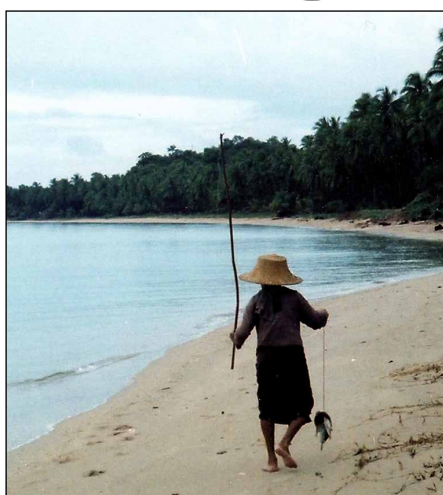
The SAP is based on the transboundary diagnostic analysis (TDA) developed by the BOBLME Project and endorsed by the eight BOBLME countries in March 2012. The TDA drew on more than 10 years of studies, reviews and analyses and identified the main transboundary issues in the Bay and their causes.

The SAP subsequently sets out the actions required to address problems identified by the TDA. These fall into four main areas: marine living resources; critical habitats such as mangroves, coral reefs and seagrass; and water quality. A fourth section covers social and economic matters.

"It is important to give recognition to the human dimension of social and economic issues such as climate change, gender and decent work in the SAP," explained Rudolf Hermes, BOBLME Project's Chief Technical Adviser.

"In addition, the Voluntary Guidelines for Securing Sustainable Small-scale Fisheries in the Context of Food Security and Poverty Eradication were approved earlier this year.

"We therefore have an excellent opportunity to support the implementation of the guidelines through the SAP and to help countries incorporate elements of them into their national work plans."



Empowerment of coastal people is part of the agenda of the Strategic Action Programme. Photo Blair Stirrett.

More than 400 potential actions to be included in the SAP were identified by technical experts who participated in three planning workshops in 2012. These include transboundary actions that will be coordinated through a regional mechanism under a second phase of

the BOBLME Project. A wide range of national actions will also be undertaken and recognized as contributing to SAP implementation.

Each country has identified the actions that are already being undertaken, the actions it would like to receive assistance for (to start or strengthen), and the actions it is not considering undertaking in the near future.

Where four or more countries identified actions they would like to start or strengthen, they were included in the regional activities list.

Countries will not undertake all the actions identified and each country has proposed different subsets of actions according to its priorities, resources and capacity. Importantly, countries are already undertaking many of the actions.

Activities in each of the main thematic areas of the SAP fall into one of four categories: institutional arrangements, legal and policy reforms; management measures; knowledge strengthening, communications and awareness; and human capacity development.

The BOBLME Project Steering Committee, which comprises high-level government officials from the ministries of fisheries and environment in each country, is guiding the development and completion of the SAP.



Dr Rudolf Hermes (centre), of the BOBLME Project, with trainers at the Socioeconomic Monitoring course organised at Mawlamyine University, Myanmar, in January this year.

Socioeconomic monitoring: The crucial people equation

It is becoming increasingly clear throughout the world – and Southeast Asia is no exception – that coastal development and marine conservation are as much about understanding people as they are about understanding ecological processes.

Understanding socioeconomic factors and the communities' relationship with coastal and marine resources is crucial for the success of marine conservation – a process that has come to be known as Socioeconomic Monitoring, or SocMon.

Integration of socioeconomic monitoring at conservation sites can serve to involve local communities in resource management, provide adaptive management strategies to reflect local needs, and facilitate understanding of the importance of marine and coastal resources.

Understanding socioeconomic factors and the communities' relationship to coastal and marine resources is crucial for the success of marine conservation.

A training course on SocMon methodology was therefore arranged from January 9 to 19 at Mawlamyine University in Mon State, Myanmar.

The course comprised 27 classroom sessions with field work and practical application taking place in Setse and Kyaikami Villages – two coastal fishing villages in Mawlamyine District.

In his remarks at the opening, on January 10 – which was graced by Chief Minister U Ohn Myint – Dr Rudi Hermes, BOBLME Chief Technical Officer, explained, "SocMon ... promotes the use of site-specific socio-economic information in decision-making on fisheries and coastal management, moving away from or – better – complementing the generally

biophysical focus which usually dominates the considerations.

"I see SocMon as a set of guidelines for establishing a socio-economic monitoring programme and generating socio-economic information, and this will certainly be one of the early topics of this course."

The BOBLME Project considers the promotion of SocMon in the eight countries it covers (Bangladesh, India, Indonesia, Malaysia, Maldives, Myanmar, Sri Lanka and Thailand) as an important activity under the Ecosystem Approach to Fisheries Management (EAFM) and integrated coastal management (ICM).

The goal of this introductory two-week training course was to develop capacity in Myanmar to improve understanding of the socio-economic drivers and situation of coastal communities.

The specific objectives were:

- to provide the trainees with the background and methodological procedures;
- to 'pilot test' the SocMon methodology at selected coastal villages by generating relevant field data;
- to undertake initial processing of the collected data at the research sites; and
- to prepare a work plan for the application of SocMon at other selected study sites in Myanmar and/or among the other BOBLME countries.

Methodologically, the training proper proceeded largely as scheduled. The three major phases or stages covered the designed 27 sessions (or modules). Moreover, the targeted number of respondents for the field data gathering was either met or exceeded.

The sample results for the household surveys relate to these three indicators:

- Socio-demographic characteristics,

- Primary and secondary occupations, and

- Perceptions of resource conditions.
- Overall, the program was rated highly by participants. Trainees found the program useful and the training methodology appropriate. Many praised the trainers as hard-working and energetic.

Several suggestions were provided on how the SocMon training could be improved. One was to translate the guide and other instructional materials into Burmese language. Another was to allot more time for training so that students could fully understand the various concepts, tools and techniques.

Lastly, the majority strongly suggested a follow-on, intensive training in data analysis, both qualitative and quantitative, and including some forms of report writing.

The host institution was Mawlamyine University, headed by Rector Prof Htay Aung. The management of the BOBLME Project provided the funding.

FFI served as the lead collaborating international NGO, represented by its Myanmar Programme Director, Frank Momberg.

A pool of SocMon experts from three organizations participated. The Palawan State University (PSU) – being the SocMon South East Asia (SEA) Center – sent Dr Michael Pido; Prof Marissa S Pontillas and Eva Marie C Ponce de Leon.

From FFI's headquarters in UK, Dr Helen Schneider shared her expertise in training methodologies and socio-economic baseline assessment.

The Centre for Action Research on Environment Science & Society (CARESS) from India sent Dr Vineeta Hoon who shared her skills in visualization techniques.

Indonesia's high-energy NC

The BOBLME Project's new National Coordinator in Indonesia is Erni Widjajanti.

Born in Magelang in Central Java, Erni received an MSc in Aquaculture from Bogor Agricultural University in 1986, and then joined the Program, Planning, and International Cooperation Department at the Indonesian Directorate-General of Capture Fisheries.

She has been in government service since then, taking off two years to study at the University of Adelaide in Australia, at the end of which she received an MSc in agricultural business.

A series of tours of duty saw Erni appointed in June last year to the post of Deputy Director for Fish Resources Management of the Territorial Sea and Archipelagic Waters (FRMTSAW).

In this role she has a full plate; she is responsible for developing the Fisheries Management Plan (RPP) in the waters she oversees; organising a meeting of the Indonesian National Working Group II on Ecosystem Approach to Fishery Management (EAFM), along with an EAFM Technical Working Group; organising BOBLME activity at the national level and leading EAFM implementation at the same level; organising and conducting a national coordination forum for fisheries management in Indonesia (FKPPS); and coordinating, monitoring and evaluating activities in the Sub-Directorates of then FRMTSAW.

She enjoys working with the different fisheries stakeholders whether at a local or regional level, which she says gives her the opportunity to broaden her knowledge, experience and understanding of the complexity of fisheries resources – and managing them.

"By managing fish resources properly, we can help fishermen preserve their livelihood and income, which in turn could increase fishermen's welfare," she says.

"Well managed, fisheries resources can recover over time, though if they are not well managed they may vanish, leaving nothing, so it is important to create a management plan that involves all stakeholders working together to achieve sustainable fisheries management."

She says she is proud to have been



Erni Widjajanti in charge at one of the conferences she had organised.

appointed Indonesia's National Coordinator for the BOBLME Project.

She is also proud to have developed a set of EAFM indicators for assessing fisheries management performance in Indonesia, to have led Indonesia delegations to various international and regional meetings on fisheries, and to have developed a fisheries management plan for Fisheries Management Areas which has already adopted EAFM as part of its basic credo.

"Being involved in the BOBLME project is a great opportunity for me. Through the project we can exchange knowledge and experience in managing fisheries with other member countries."

"Since the project covers eight countries there will be various transboundary issues that we can share through the project."

"In Indonesia, the BOBLME Project covers four provinces – Aceh, Riau, West Sumatra and North Sumatra."

"Activities that we carried out through the project include collaborative regional fishery assessment (targeted on

Indian mackerel and sharks); the role of Marine Protected Areas in the conservation of fish stock; and the development of Indonesia's national Strategic Action Programme [SAP]."

She clearly sees the value of the BOBLME Project. "At the national level, through the project we have been able to carry out the Transboundary Diagnostic Analysis [TDA] within the four provinces and use this as a basis to formulate the National SAP."

"Regionally, the project has successfully accomplished the TDA and the regional SAP."

She would like to see the BOBLME Project keep pushing. "I would like to see the project ensure that [the SAP] is adopted by all the member-countries."

"Hopefully all the stakeholders will be able to implement all of the SAP consistently and responsibly, in order to protect the health of the [regional] ecosystem and manage resources on a sustainable basis that will improve the food and livelihood security of the region's coastal communities."



U Mya Than Tun, working with a local fishing community in Myanmar.

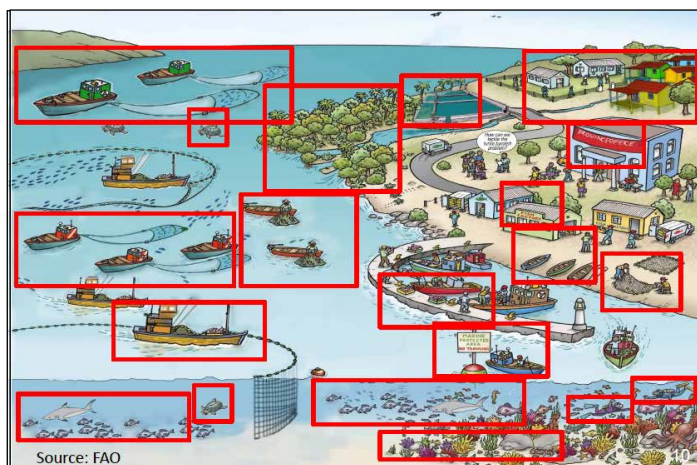
It's farewell to Myanmar NC

One of the BOBLME Project's most stalwart supporters, U Mya than Tun of Myanmar, has retired.

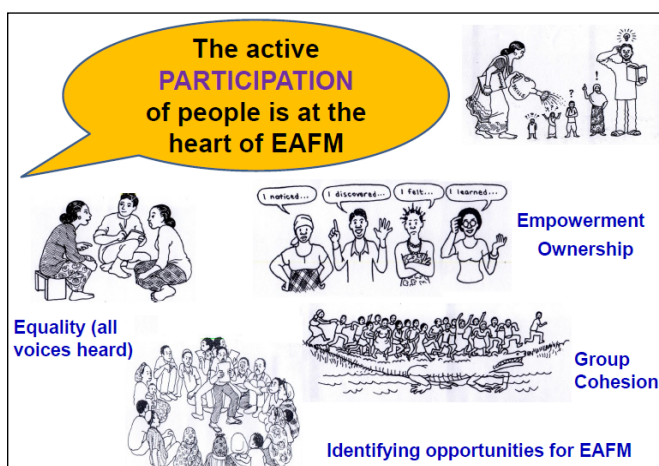
Mr Tun, Assistant Director of Myanmar's Department of Fisheries, was BOBLME National Coordinator for that country and a great believer in BOBLME's agenda.

In an article in an earlier issue of the BOBLME Newsletter, he said, "We need to train young scientists so that they understand our resources and environment and want to do something to support sustainable practices and use of these resources."

The BOBLME Project wishes him all enjoyment in his retirement but hopes he will stay in touch and will from time to time offer comment and advice based on his huge fund of experience.



Source: FAO



Course materials include graphics that are easy to understand yet explain the complex concepts employed in EAFM.

A training course that contributes to the practical and effective management of fisheries in Asia and the Pacific was launched on June 10 by the Food and Agricultural Organisation (FAO) and the US National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration (NOAA).

The Essential Ecosystem Approach to Fisheries Management (EAFM) training course seeks to improve upon the traditional stock-based fisheries management approaches that are currently used in the complex fisheries of the Asia-Pacific region.

It offers a practical and effective means to manage fisheries more holistically, moving away from fisheries management focusing on target species, and towards systems and decision-making processes that balance environmental, human and social well-being within improved governance frameworks.

Hiroyuki Konuma, FAO Assistant Director-General and Regional Representative for Asia and the Pacific, explained, "Many countries and organisations in the region recognize that the ecosystem approach offers the most practical and effective way to manage complex fisheries."

"However, progress in developing ecosystem-based management plans has been slow, mainly due to a lack of experience and capacity amongst fisheries staff."

"The Essential EAFM training course has been designed to address these capacity development needs and provides the practical skills, tools and resources to do so."

Recognising that many of the challenges and issues that threaten sustainable fishing fall outside of the mandate of fisheries management agencies, the five-day course is targeted not just at mid-level fisheries and coastal resource managers but also at environmental, economic development and planning staff.

"The Essential EAFM training course is a long overdue contribution to support fisheries and ecosystem managers in performing their functions," said Jason S Link, Senior Scientist for Ecosystem Management at the National Marine Fisheries Service of the National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration.

"This regional course will be invaluable for fishery management training and we believe it will become a standard practitioners' guide in the Asia-Pacific region, as well as in fisheries institutions around

BOBLME plays major role in boosting EAFM



Hiroyuki Konuma: "Many countries and organisations in the region recognize that the ecosystem approach offers the most practical and effective way to manage complex fisheries."

the world."

The Essential EAFM course begins by addressing the merits of a new approach to address the many threats and issues facing capture fisheries.

Participants then develop professional planning skills for more effective decision-making.

By working through the entire planning process, participants are equipped with an array of tools to develop fisheries management plans that address current demands for food security and livelihoods

while protecting marine resources for the future.

Although the training material focuses on Asian coastal marine capture fisheries, it can be applied to any fisheries system.

"By changing the focus and examples, the Essential EAFM course can be easily modified to apply to other marine and inland fisheries and even aquaculture," said Chris O'Brien, BOBLME Regional Coordinator. "The principles and the approach to management planning are the same."

The course was developed jointly by specialists in fisheries, conservation, resource management and education and training from the FAO's Bay of Bengal Large Marine Ecosystem (BOBLME) Project, the US Coral Triangle Support Partnership, NOAA's Pacific Islands Fisheries Science Center, the Asia-Pacific Fishery Commission (APFIC), and IMA International.

The Southeast Asian Fisheries Development Center is becoming a regional hub for the Essential EAFM course, training the current and next generation of fisheries managers by delivering the course in fisheries institutions and university faculties throughout the region.

All the training course materials are available free of charge and can be found by searching for E-EAFM or by emailing rcu@boblme.org.

They may also be downloaded from collaborating partner websites at: www.boblme.org/eafm, http://www.pifsc.noaa.gov/cred/eafm_training/index.php and www.apfic.org/training/eafmtraining.html

For more information contact Dr Chris O'Brien, Regional Coordinator of the BOBLME Project, by emailing chris.obrien@boblme.org

Workshop aims to help IOTC members step up to the mark

The Indian Ocean Tuna Commission (IOTC), with co-financing from the Bay of Bengal Large Marine Ecosystem (BOBLME) Project, organised a regional workshop in February to promote understanding about international fisheries obligations using practical examples based on IOTC management measures.

The IOTC is a Regional Fisheries Management Organisation of the FAO with a mandate to manage tuna and tuna-like species in the Indian Ocean and adjacent seas, in such a way as to conserve and optimise use of stocks, and encourage sustainable development of fisheries based on such stocks.

The objectives of the workshop, held in Kuala Lumpur from February 11 to 14, were to build the capacity of IOTC member countries to implement the management decisions of the IOTC, and to discuss and understand some of the difficulties that these countries face in doing so.

At the 14th Session of the IOTC in March 2010 as well as in previous sessions, the IOTC concluded that there was a low level of implementation of IOTC resolutions.

In particular it was noted that, in some of the member states and cooperating non-contracting parties (CNCs), fisheries officials and other stakeholders (for example owners of tuna fishing vessels) still have limited awareness of IOTC aims, resolutions and the countries' obligations.

The workshop discussed measures that would help improve compliance levels.

Six of the 32 IOTC Member States (Indonesia, Iran, Malaysia, Oman, Pakistan, Sri Lanka and Thailand) took part. In addition, two BOBLME member-states (Bangladesh and Myanmar) that are not yet members, attended.

The workshop provided an opportunity for the countries' technical staff who are involved in implementing the decisions of the Commission, to share their experiences and challenges.

It was also an opportunity to engage with colleagues from Bangladesh and Myanmar, two Indian Ocean states with significant catches of IOTC species.

At the conclusion of the workshop the participants made 11 recommendations which they felt would result in improved implementation of the IOTC resolutions and a more effective Commission:

- The Secretariat should assist member countries to build human capacity, through appropriate training, to implement conservation and management measures adopted by the IOTC.

- The Commission should consider creating a working party on compliance. This would review implementation of resolutions, share experiences, make recommendations on active resolutions and capacity building activities. Terms of reference would have to be developed.



Eleven recommendations have been made for the IOTC to improve understanding of international fisheries obligations, and compliance and implementation of resolutions to manage tuna stocks.

- Closer collaboration between stakeholders and state agencies at national level should be encouraged, to improve implementation of IOTC Resolutions.

- The secretariat should improve its strategy for communication and information-sharing with IOTC members. For example, it should ensure that communications from the secretariat reach national focal points.

- Resolutions should be easily executable, with very clear language and reporting requirements clearly defined. Where appropriate, reporting templates should be developed to facilitate the reporting requirements.

- Where applicable, the financial implications of implementation of resolutions should be provided for in resolution proposals.

- CNCs should improve consultations between the different tiers at their national level (both technical and policy) before and after the Commission meeting. CNCs are encouraged to

establish a mechanism at national level to address IOTC related issues.

- The Commission should develop mechanisms for engaging coastal countries that are not part of the IOTC process, with the aim of getting these countries to join in the work of the Commission.

- CNCs are encouraged to explore mechanisms to improve compliance by the industry, for example by engaging them in pre- and post-meeting discussions.

- CNCs are encouraged to foster greater collaboration on matters considered by the Commission, with the aim of developing a common position for "like-minded" states.

- The Commission should consider the publication of a country-based compliance scoreboard, which will provide CNCs with a visual appreciation of their performance. The need for confidentiality should be carefully considered.



EwE modellers (left to right): Pralau Nootmorn (Thailand), Khadeeja Ali (Maldives), Amy Yee-Hui Then (Malaysia), Reny Puspasari Ramli (Indonesia), WNC Priyadarshani (Sri Lanka) and Sylvie Guénette.

Taking a closer look at the large marine ecosystem

In order to understand how the Bay of Bengal large marine ecosystem works we must also understand its sub-systems.

The BOBLME Project has been collaborating with the Commonwealth Scientific and Industrial Research Organisation (CSIRO) in Australia to describe the sub-systems of the Bay of Bengal Large Marine Ecosystem, the linkages across sub-systems, and the large scale drivers in the Bay of Bengal.

The aim is to understand better how the Bay of Bengal ecological systems function as a whole.

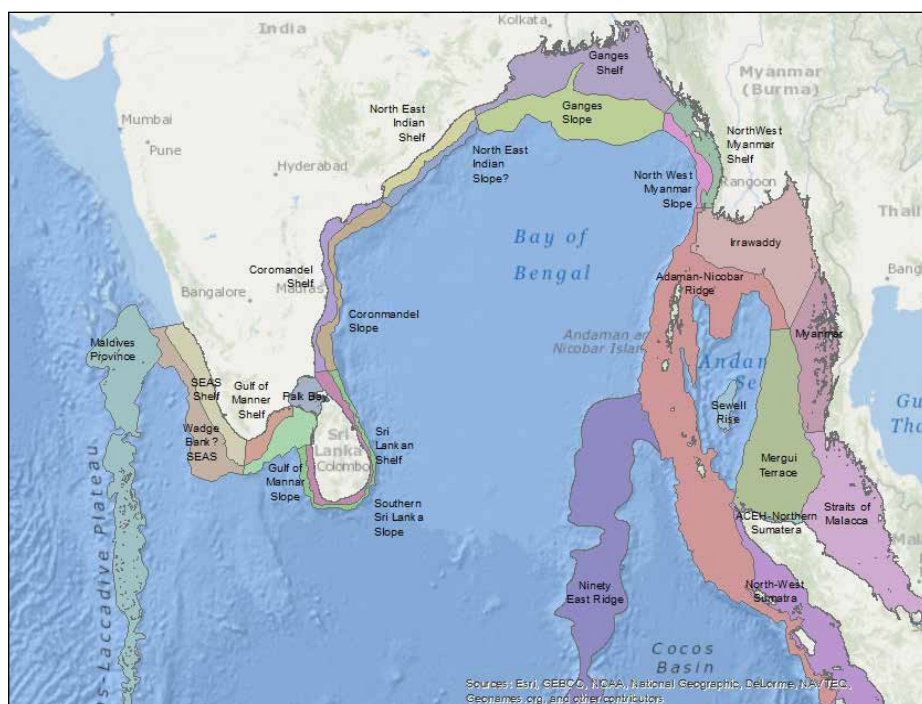
A workshop of experts from BOBLME countries was held in February, to examine the results of a CSIRO analysis, and based on this information and the technical contributions of the experts, more than 20 ecosystem sub-regions were identified for the Bay of Bengal LME (See map).

The Regional Coordinator Dr Chris O'Brien said, "This was a novel workshop. Not only did it bring together national scientists from a range of disciplines to exchange information, but it also introduced a very valuable learning experience on data integration techniques."

Given the likelihood that more data was available, the workshop agreed that more work was needed to include additional data into the analysis. To this end a second regional workshop will be held in October with a broader range of experts (especially those from NGOs) to re-assess and verify the results.

The BOBLME Project has also been developing a working computer model of the Bay of Bengal marine ecosystem using the Ecopath with Ecosim (EwE) software.

One of the main uses of the model will be to enable the exploration of



Twenty ecosystem sub-regions were identified for the Bay of Bengal LME.

fisheries management scenarios and their effects on different species groups, with emphasis on hilsa, Indian mackerel and sharks.

The BOBLME Project is collaborating with the University of British Columbia (UBC) to develop the model.

Ecopath with Ecosim (EwE) is an ecology modelling software suite that has been built and extended on for almost 20 years. The development of this software is centred at the UBC's Fishery Centre, while applications are widespread throughout the world.

Dr Villy Christensen and Dr Sylvie Guénette recently led the one-week workshop for modellers from the Bay of Bengal region to verify, validate and add to the model.

The workshop was an outstanding success, with participants contributing to the Bay-wide model through the development of sub-regional models. Buoyed on by the success of the workshop, the BOBLME Regional Coordinator, Dr Chris O'Brien agreed to support a EwE help desk for national scientists, and hold a second workshop in 2015.

Workshops build capacity among small stakeholders

Local fishers want more control over the use of living resources in the Sundarbans, and want to be consulted before decisions are taken on management measures for their fisheries.

This message came out clearly during workshops organized in communities in the Indian part of the Sundarbans by the International Collective in Support of Fishworkers (ICSF) from November 2013 to March this year with financial and technical support from BOBLME.

This was one activity of a regional programme carried out by ICSF and its local counterpart organizations, to enhance capacity of fishing communities for resource management.

The programme also aimed at enabling communities to link their traditional knowledge about fishing and fish resources to an ecosystems approach to management.

In the Sundarbans, with its mangrove forests, swamps and mud flats, there is a system of overlapping protected areas, including the Sundarban Tiger Reserve (STR), the Sundarban National Park, wildlife sanctuaries, and the Sundarbans Biosphere Reserve.

The fishers have limited access to the resources because of the restrictions on fisheries in the reserves and so called "boat license certificates", which are issued in only limited numbers.

The communities have not participated or been consulted, either in decision making on the reserves, or the licensing systems.

Participation in management is hindered by the communities' remote locations, difficult communications and lack of capacity to define management needs and measures. The latter issue was addressed by the programme.

The ICSF's training programme covered also the Gulf of Mannar in India, Bangladesh, Myanmar, Indonesia, and Thailand.

The activities had the same aim in



A fisher in the Sundarbans. Photo by Frances Voon

all places, but were adapted to the local conditions.

In addition to the training programmes, ICSF also organized a labor dialogue in Thailand and an exposure trip for community representatives from the Ayeyarwaddy region, an NGO and a government official in Myanmar, who went to Cambodia to study community fisheries arrangements there.

In Myanmar a local NGO, Network Activities Group (NAG), has facilitated the establishment of fisher development associations for them to claim their fishing rights in their relations with the government.

The activities organized by ICSF and NAG were co-management workshops

and village level meetings leading to a co-management plan for seven communities. The project laid the foundation for further steps to be taken for co-management and increased influence by the resource users.

In India the programme also covered the Gulf of Mannar in the south – an area with coral reefs and extensive sea grass beds.

There have historically been interactions between the communities and the government of Tamil Nadu, but the processes have invariably been government-led. The aim was to lay a foundation for community-led initiatives for resource management.

Fishing communities in Cox's Bazar in Bangladesh are not involved in decision-making on the use of the fishery resources and the fishers frequently break fisheries laws and regulations.

The area chosen for the activity has long open sandy beaches, ecologically very different from the delta area and the vast stretch of the Sundarbans mangrove forests in the western part of the country.

ICSF supported the fishers to set up community-based organizations, People's Organizations, through its local counterpart, COAST. The aim is that the POs will strengthen the communities in negotiations with government and enhance awareness about resource management and sustainable fisheries.

The result of the programme was one important step in the Bay of Bengal region towards enhanced capacities of fishing communities to engage with authorities in negotiations on the management of the fisheries resources.

It also enhanced awareness about the needs and measures for management of the resources for sustainable fisheries. This lays the foundation for functioning community-based co-management arrangements allowing fishing communities to increasingly take control of their fisheries.

DIARY

October 2014

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| 8-10: BOBLME India ecosystem characterisation workshop, India (with NIO). | 20-22: BOBLME - SAP Finalisation workshop, Phuket, Thailand. |
| 20-24: BOBLME Integrated Coastal Management training workshop, Chonburi, Thailand. (with PEMSEA) | 28-30: BOBLME Governance workshop, Bangkok, Thailand. |

November 2014

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| 3-5: BOBLME Fisheries Statistics Working Group, Phuket, Thailand. | 3-6: BOBLME Second Regional Ecosystem Characterisation Workshop, Phuket, Thailand (with CSIRO). |
| 24-27: BOBLME Science presentation training, Penang, Malaysia (with USM). | 26-28: BOBLME Hilsa Working Group, Barrackpore, India (with CIFRI). |

December 2014

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| 2-4: BOBLME Ecosystem Valuation Workshop, Phuket, Thailand. | 9-10: BOBLME Estimating Fishing Capacity Workshop, Phuket, Thailand. |
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Check www.boblme.org for more information.

This newsletter was compiled and designed by Alasdair Forbes and Forbes Communications in conjunction with the Regional Coordination Unit of the BOBLME Project, Phuket, Thailand. For further information please visit the website at www.boblme.org