

Panelist Abstract

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Name of Session: Session X. Coastal/Marine/LME Issues (Thematic Session)

Presentation Title: Ecosystem approach for coastal resource management

Summary of Key Issues and Best Practices/Lessons Learned

PEMSEA adopts integrated coastal management (ICM) as the ecosystem approach for managing multiple uses of the goods and services generated by the coastal and marine ecosystems. ICM has the following features:

- Σ It considers the ecosystem and human-defined boundaries in determining its management boundary.
- Σ It has an integrated planning, management and coordinating framework which allows cross sectoral, interagency concerns to be addressed.
- Σ The ICM development and implementation cycle provides a gradual process in managing human use of the goods and services generated by the ecosystems, thus allowing continuous efforts for policy, technological and other management interventions through successive ICM programs.
- Σ It clearly defines stakeholders whose interests intersect the ecosystem at different points.
- Σ The common vision, strategies and action plans provide a long-term, systematic, and ecosystem approach to resource management, thereby ensuring production of goods and services from the ecosystems at sustainable level.

PEMSEA has set up 8 demonstration sites in 8 countries specifically in Cambodia, China, DPR Korea, Indonesia, Malaysia, Philippines, Thailand and Vietnam to demonstrate the ecosystem approach in the management of coastal and marine areas. Two demonstration sites at Batangas Bay (Philippines) and Xiamen (China) have successfully completed their first cycle of ICM program and are moving to the implementation of the second cycle.

Ecosystem approach for the management of subregional seas, large bays and gulf

PEMSEA adopts large scale and systematic approach for the environmental management of subregional seas (Gulf of Thailand), international straits (Malacca Straits) and large bays (Manila Bay and Bohai Sea). This approach simultaneously considers resources, human activities, ecosystem processes and their interactions. It also allows close coordination with and mutually supportive of ICM programs within the management boundary. The management of international waters, subregional seas and many transboundary environmental issues require the local implementation of related international conventions, some of which ICM could effectively implement.

Such approach requires time and effort but perhaps is the only effective mechanism for sustainable management of coastal and marine resources.

The risk assessment and risk management approach being applied in these large bodies of water have been found to be conducive in promoting stakeholders participation including the use of science and policy in management decision-makings.

IW Operational Program

Operational programs are in general supportive of interventions needed to address transboundary coastal and marine environmental issues. However, there are still confusions in clearly defining what

interventions belong to national responsibility and those that GEF could support, an example would be, environmental problems arising from intense economic activities in the economic growth triangles of the region.

In the area of financing and private sectors' involvement, however, we encountered difficulties in harmonizing the desire to involve the private sector as emphasized in the Operational Programs and the rigid rulings of some UN executing agencies. This has become a stumbling block when developing sustainable financing mechanisms involving the participation of the private sector.

Optimal scale for addressing coastal and marine issues

Our experience shows that ICM operation is effective at the local government level. The two ICM programs at Xiamen and Batangas Bay were able to address the issues of land-based pollution, habitat degradation, coastal aquaculture and use conflicts while at the same time allowing economic growth to continue. Xiamen (sea area: 334 km², coastline: 184 km and 1.17 m inhabitants) represents the efforts of one municipality while Batangas Bay is the joint effort of 5 municipalities (sea area: 220 km², coastline: 470 km, and 773,000 inhabitants) under the same province.

Specific impediments in the design and implementation of projects

We experienced relatively less impediments in the design and implementation of regional projects. However, we did encounter the following difficulties:

Impediments in designing regional projects:

- Σ Difficulties in obtaining common understanding and priority on transboundary environmental issues affect the determination of priority areas that required collective actions.
- Σ Different levels of capability between concerned countries affect designed target outputs.
- Σ Political sensitivity affects geographical scope and nature of activities.

Impediments in implementing regional projects:

- Σ Different socioeconomic, cultural, technological and political backgrounds amongst the participating countries affect project operation, target outputs and data sharing.
- Σ Proficiency in the English language amongst project staff in the field weakens dissemination of project outputs.

PEMSEA resolved the above issues through specific innovative solutions:

- Σ Organizing workshops/group meetings to build consensus amongst technical experts of the concerned countries of the region to identify issues and problems and agree on their priorities.
- Σ Creating opportunity for south-south cooperation in project design to allow greater interaction between technical experts amongst the participating countries through training, technical task force, internships and networking.
- Σ Project framers should be aware of the political sensitivity and avoid the issues where possible.
- Σ Special consideration needs to be given in countries with lower capacity in project implementation such as special in-service training or intensifying south-south cooperation scheme.
- Σ Allowing project personnel not proficient in English to implement the project but ensure they understand the objectives and operational procedures. Reports in their own languages can be translated.

- Σ All Pemsea project personnel in the field were given intensive pre-project implementation training on “project development and implementation” covering project design, scope of activities, project management, financial analysis, report writing, project monitoring and evaluation, etc.

Key References

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