

SOC Far... SOC Good

Batangas, Philippines – “So far...so good,” so goes the initial testing of the State of the Coasts (SOC) reporting in Batangas province in the Philippines. Stakeholders regard the SOC as a tool for documenting their progress in meeting their socioeconomic and environmental targets as well as a means to consolidate the various efforts in environmental management in the province.

The SOC represents an integrated and comprehensive approach of reporting the condition of the coastal and marine environment; measures the policy and management interventions of addressing environmental issues; and assesses the progress of local governments in achieving their sustainable development targets. Like a “one-stop shop,” the SOC presents the needed information for local managers to effectively manage the resources while sustaining economic development. It serves as a scorecard on “which ones work well and which ones do not” in managing the coastal and marine resources. To this date, there is no systematic way of documenting the progress in the implementation of integrated coastal management (ICM). Hence, the conceptualization and development of the SOC is primarily for local governments to monitor regularly their ICM implementation, and assess the impacts of ICM implementation with respect to the environment and the well-being of stakeholders.

SOC incorporates indicators which track the progress of local governments in meeting their targets for the delivery of basic services. In Batangas, their minimum basic needs (MBN) serve as their local strategy to meet the targets of the Millennium Development Goals. Examples of these targets are increased access to safe drinking water and basic sanitation, reduction of the malnutrition rate, and better employment. In 1990, only 55 percent of the households in the province had access to safe drinking water, but this remarkably improved in 2005, with almost 97 percent of the households having access. Similarly, the local government has progressed in providing households access to basic sanitation, with only 52 percent of households having access in 1990 and increasing to 83 percent in 2005. Population increase in the province is evident, consequently resulting to a higher unemployment rate. As captured initially in the SOC, unemployment rate has gone up to 12.26 percent in 2003 from 9.89 percent in 1990.

Through the years, industrial development has increased in the Batangas Bay Region (BBR). Efforts to maintain the integrity of the area are not wasted – as apparent with the information captured through the SOC. Since 1998, the concentration of dissolved oxygen in the bay is still above the water quality standard of 5 mg/L which indicates good environmental condition. The region began ICM implementation in the bay area in 1994 and ICM efforts are now being replicated in other bays in the province.

Initial results of the Batangas case study were presented during the Project Management Office (PMO) Directors/National Focal Points (NFPs) Workshop held on 12-15 December 2007 in Pasig City, Philippines, and these received positive feedback from the workshop participants. The implementation of the SOC as a regular reporting process in the East Asian Seas Region won the support of various countries in the region (e.g., PR China, DPR Korea, Philippines, Thailand, Timor-Leste and Vietnam), resulting in the incorporation of SOC reporting into their three-year work plans for SDS-SEA implementation.

Community Engagement Focused in Tropical Coasts Issue

Manila, Philippines – During the East Asian Seas Congress 2006, the role of each stakeholder was highlighted as a crucial element in ocean protection, development and governance. As a way to impart the key lessons learned and actions being undertaken in various parts of the region and even in other areas, two special issues of the Tropical Coasts magazine on the East Asian Seas Congress 2006 have been released.

Entitled “One Vision, One People,” this special Tropical Coasts issue looks back at the Thematic Workshops on Communities in Sustainable Development; Ecosystem-based Management: From River Basins to Coastal Seas; and Applying Management-related Science and Technology, and explores how numerous approaches and tools are utilized to engage different stakeholders in the process of coastal management.

Also featured is the first-ever Youth Forum for the East Asian Seas (EAS), co-organized by the Coastal Management Center (CMC) and PEMSEA, and the Youth Agenda for the East Asian Seas, a document prepared and signed by the 45 delegates that reflects the youth's ingenuity and commitment for the environment.

The first issue carried the title “One Vision, One Ocean” and highlighted the continuing degradation of the marine and coastal environment and focused on the key outputs and outcomes of the Thematic Workshops on Securing the Oceans; Safer Shipping and Cleaner Oceans; Certifying Sustainability; and Local Government Financing for Water, Sewage and Sanitation.

If you wish to obtain electronic copies of these special Tropical Coasts issues, email info@pemsea.org or visit the bookstore at the PEMSEA Website (<http://www.pemsea.org>).

Getting Ready for the East Asian Seas (EAS) Congress 2009

Manila, Philippines – Following the success of the East Asian Seas (EAS) Congress 2006, PEMSEA together with its Partners are again getting ready for the next EAS Congress in 2009. This time, the spotlight is set on the doers on the ground.

With the theme, “Partnerships at Work: Local Implementation and Good Practices,” the EAS Congress 2009 focuses on real actions and initiatives from the local level that contribute to the achievement of international and regional environmental targets and objectives, as well as the issues that confront local governments, communities and other stakeholders. The 2009 Congress will also serve as the venue to review and identify future actions pertaining to the implementation of the Sustainable Development Strategy for the Seas of East Asia (SDS-SEA).

The EAS Congress 2009 aims to delve on key issues that are affecting the local communities and stakeholders, including foreshore development and coastal reclamation, environmental infrastructures and services such as waste management, pollution reduction and water use; local coastal and marine governance and good practices at the local level; innovative technologies; exercising corporate social responsibility for sustainable development; and others.

The 2009 Congress is hosted by the Government of the Philippines through the Department of Environment and Natural Resources (DENR) and is scheduled on 23 to 27 November. The Congress will feature the Third Ministerial Forum, the International Conference on Sustainable Coastal and Ocean Development, the Third EAS Partnership Council Meeting, the Second EAS Youth Forum, an Environmental Exhibition on Good Practices and Innovative Technologies, Field Visits, and other side events.

The EAS Congress began in 2003 and has been held every three years to serve as a marketplace for knowledge and venue for partnership building contributing towards the vision of attaining the sustainable development of the East Asian Seas region.

If you wish to know more about the EAS Congress 2009, please email congress@pemsea.org.

PEMSEA shares ICM experiences in Tokyo Bay Conference

Tokyo, Japan – The Nihon University held its 2nd International Conference of the Support Program for Contemporary Educational Needs with the theme “Coastal Zone Management and Projects of Asian Countries – Toward Restoration of Tokyo Bay” on 12 January in Tokyo, Japan. Ms. Kazumi Wakita, PEMSEA Resource Facility (PRF) Programme Officer for Partnership Programmes, participated in the conference as a keynote lecturer.

The presentation, entitled “Movements, Challenges and Suggestions on Environmental Management for the Seas of East Asia,” provided the audience with: comprehensive information on the environmental situation in the Seas of East Asia; PEMSEA’s activities in the region including various ICM projects and experiences; and future activities of PEMSEA. Ms. Wakita also shared her insights on coastal issues to which people involved in coastal environment management from Japan could contribute. Finally, she invited the participants to the East Asian Seas Congress 2009, which would serve as a venue for Japanese government agencies and stakeholder groups to share good practices derived from their experiences in managing Tokyo Bay. The Congress will be held on 23-27 November 2009 in the Philippines.

Dr. Takeo Kondo, professor at Nihon University and head of the organizers for the international conference, expressed his appreciation for the PRF’s participation and promised his attendance at the Congress, as well as his commitment to encourage participation of students and stakeholders in Tokyo Bay to join the EAS Congress 2009.

The lecture was attended by over 200 participants consisting of university students from Japan and RO Korea, the academe from Japan, China, RO Korea and Taiwan, practitioners of coastal environmental management, NGOs who are working on the various coastal activities along Tokyo Bay, as well as national and local governmental officials from Japan.

Philippines Conducts Seminar/Workshop for the Implementation of ICM as National Strategy

Quezon City, Philippines – The Government of the Philippines, in cooperation with the PEMSEA Resource Facility, conducted a Seminar/Workshop for the Implementation of Executive Order No. 533. The Executive Order was issued by President Gloria Macapagal-Arroyo on 7 June 2006, adopting integrated coastal management (ICM) as the national strategy to ensure the sustainable development of the Philippines' coastal and marine environment and resources.

The objective of the Seminar was to orient the officials of the Philippine Department of Environment and Natural Resources (DENR) on the principles of ICM and approaches to ICM scaling up, covering the various topics, including: components of PEMSEA's sustainable development framework for coastal areas; essentials of ICM program development and implementation; and practical approaches and strategies to improve management of ICM programme activities. The objective of the seminar was to build and develop a strong core of ICM practitioners who will effectively establish and implement the National Integrated Coastal Management Program mandated under E.O. 533.

Participants to the seminar were 45 officials and staff of the DENR composed of the Regional Technical Directors for Protected Areas Wildlife and Coastal Zone Management; Chiefs of the Coastal and Marine Management Divisions from the 14 regional offices of the DENR; technical staff from the various bureaus and offices, and staff from the Philippines' PEMSEA Coordinating Office.

During the workshop, the participants identified the challenges and issues that they will meet in ICM implementation and scaling up. Likewise, they identified critical steps in ensuring the smooth implementation of ICM in priority bays, provinces and municipalities.

The Workshop was held from 17-19 December 2007 at the PEMSEA Office Building in Quezon City, Philippines.

Filling the Drinking Glass: The Quest for Improved Freshwater in Stung Hav Community

Stung Hav, Cambodia – In 2006, the Stung Hav Fishery Community implemented the Sustainable Community-based Coastal Resource Management project which focuses mainly on promoting sustainable fishery management, including the implementation of livelihood projects.

Part of the project involves organizing women community members into savings groups so they can borrow funds that can be used as start-up capital for small-scale livelihood projects. For other community members, a revolving fund was also set up to encourage supplemental livelihood projects. Many of those who availed of the fund went into planting cash crops, but later found that land productivity had gone down because of the dramatic change in water level.

“People have no source of freshwater so even if they want to maximize the land for agricultural production, they cannot do much. The wells have also dried up,” expressed Ms. Sally Nay of the ICM Project when asked about the status of livelihood projects of the women’s savings groups.

From an initiative that mainly addresses fishery resource management, the Project has embarked on a challenging initiative that was traditionally the domain of local governments and development institutions – the construction of a 5.9-hectare water reservoir that can store about 50,550 m³ of water for irrigation of agricultural lands and for household consumption. It was also intended to revive the surrounding deep wells by regenerating groundwater supply. The project, which is expected to be completed and operational within the second quarter of this year, will benefit more than 12,000 individuals in Khan Stung Hav.

“We have done something for the fishery management and we are now moving into some of the bigger problems that affect many families. This second project with the UNDP/GEF Small grants Programme addresses the immediate needs of the community. It is the people who identified the need to have a reservoir that can supply them with freshwater directly or through the regeneration of groundwater supply for the deep wells,” Mr. Prak Visal clarified.

“This is a felt need in the community and therefore we were able to get the community members to contribute something. For instance, many people participated in constructing the reservoir. I don’t see how we cannot fulfill our objective of having a sustainable water source. Water may run dry, but we should not lose hope,” he said when faced with skepticism on the project.

The project was initially confronted with several challenges including land claims on the site where the reservoir was to be constructed. Prior to construction, a series of community consultations and verifications were done to make sure that all legal requirements and social preparations had been fulfilled. Construction then started during the last quarter of 2007. To date, the project is about 70 percent complete.

Let’s Drink to That

Aside from freshwater supply for agriculture, women members of the savings group, who are usually in-charge of ensuring family welfare, are also concerned about the cost of safe drinking water. Cost in terms of the money spent for purified water, the time spent in boiling water to make sure that it is safe for drinking, and the indirect cost to the environment as people are still highly dependent on firewood for cooking.

The State of the Coastal Environment and Socioeconomy of Cambodia (2005) relates a startling figure – 84.42 percent of the total households in Stung Hav had access to safe water in 2003, which is significantly

higher than the 2005 target of 30 percent of the rural population. However, the low percentage of population with access to sanitation facilities explains the deteriorating water quality in Khan Stung Hav. In 2003, about 21.68 percent of total households had access to latrines. While this exceeds the 2005 MDG target of 12 percent, the poor access to such facilities is compounded with the absence of a comprehensive waste collection and disposal system and an increasing population. It is no wonder that safe drinking water has, over the years, been rendered unsafe for drinking. Left with no alternatives, impoverished families have no other way but to buy purified water or boil water for drinking.

The effort at establishing a small reservoir was therefore complemented with the provision of ceramic water purifiers among the members of the women's savings groups to reduce household expenses in buying purified water and ensure access to safe drinking water for the family. To date, around 280 families have benefited from the ceramic water purifiers. Information and communication campaigns were also done to orient the families on the importance of safe drinking water. And with increased income opportunities, it is hoped that more families would be able to procure the ceramic water purifiers.

The establishment of the freshwater reservoir and the distribution of the ceramic water purifiers were funded under the UNDP TRAC fund in Cambodia, which was approved during the last quarter of 2007. Both projects are being implemented through the UNDP/GEF SGP-PEMSEA Joint Communiqué.

The second cycle of the ICM Project in Sihanoukville will attempt to complete initiatives for safe drinking water and access to sanitation by implementing a comprehensive waste management project based on the experience in Sangkat 4, Khan Mittapheap.