Bay of Bengal

LARGE MARINE ECOSYSTEM PROJECT

BAY OF BENGAL LME

A SHARED VISION

EIGHT COUNTRIES CONNECTED BY ONE ECOSYSTEM, WORKING TOGETHER TO SECURE ITS FUTURE

- Enough fish for future generations
- Healthy coastal and near-shore marine habitats
- Reduced pollution from agriculture, industry and large coastal cities
- Coastal communities resilient to the impacts of climate change
- Stakeholders working together for the common good

OUR APPROACH

To bring people together to recover the health of the Bay of Bengal, rejuvenate its living resources, and improve the livelihoods of the coastal populations.

STRENGTHENING GOVERNANCE

- Creating and strengthening processes for planning and dialogue
- Harmonizing policies on transboundary challenges
- Enhancing mechanisms for regional collaboration and information exchange
- Involving people in coastal communities in management and decision making processes

IMPROVING RESOURCE MANAGEMENT

- Implementing best management practices
- Developing and applying indicators of ecosystem health
- Promoting the use of marine protected areas in fisheries management
- Strengthening management capacity
- Providing advice on the status of fisheries resources

EXPANDING OUR KNOWLEDGE AND UNDERSTANDING OF:

- Fisheries and ecology of hilsa, Indian mackerel and sharks
- Large-scale processes, ecology and climate change
- The challenges facing small-scale fishers

Bay of Bengal

HOME TO ONE QUARTER OF THE WORLD'S POOR

Bangladesh India Indonesia
Malaysia Maldives Myanmar
Thailand Sri Lanka

AREA

Total maritime area : 6.2 million km^2

Total area of EEZs : 4.3 million km^2

Combined length of coastline : 14,000 km

PEOPLE

Total population of countries : 2 billion

Population of the coastal zone : 450 million

FISHERIES

Employment in fisheries : 4.5 million

Number of fishers : 2.2 million

Number of fishing boats : 415,000

Annual fisheries production : 6 million tonnes

Value of fisheries production : USD 4 billion

ENVIRONMENT

8% of the world's mangroves : including some of the oldest mangroves

12% of the world's coral reefs

Some of the largest estuaries in the world

FACING UP TO THE BIG CHALLENGES

Marine resources in the Bay of Bengal are under increasing pressure due to over exploitation, loss of critical habitats, and pollution.

OVER EXPLOITATION OF MARINE RESOURCES

THE EVIDENCE:

- Decline in fish stocks
- Changes in composition of species
- High proportion of juvenile fish in catches
- Changes in marine biodiversity

THE UNDERLYING CAUSES:

- Open access to fishing grounds
- Increasing effort from trawlers and purse seiners
- High demand for seed and fish meal for aquaculture
- Ineffective fisheries management
- Illegal and destructive fishing

LOSS OF CRITICAL HABITATS

MAINLY:

- Mangroves
- Coral reefs
- Seagrasses

THE UNDERLYING CAUSES:

- Overuse by coastal poor to fulfill day-to-day needs
- Lack of coastal development plans
- Increasing trade in products from coastal habitats
- Coastal development and industrialization
- Ineffective marine protected areas and lack of enforcement
- Intensive upstream agricultural practices
- Increasing tourism
- Climate change

POLLUTION

SOURCES:

- Sewage-borne pathogens and organic effluents
- Solid waste/marine litter
- Nutrient inputs
- Oil spills
- Persistent organic pollutants and persistent toxic substances
- Sedimentation
- Heavy metals

THE UNDERLYING CAUSES:

- Increasing coastal populations
- More garbage per person
- Migration of industry into BOBLME countries
- Proliferation of small industries
- Low per capita GDP resulting in insufficient waste management

ABOUT THE PROJECT

The BOBLME Project includes Bangladesh, India, Indonesia, Malaysia, Maldives, Myanmar, Sri Lanka and Thailand. The project aims to improve the lives of the coastal populations through better regional management of the Bay of Bengal environment and its fisheries.

Over a five-year period—the first of two phases of the Project—our work is focused on gaining a better understanding of major marine resources and identifying the critical issues and the underlying causes contributing to a decline in the health of the Bay of Bengal ecosystem.

With that knowledge, we can begin strengthening and harmonizing management capabilities in each participating country in preparation for the second phase of the project.

EMPHASIS ON HEALTHY ECOSYSTEMS AND FISHERIES MANAGEMENT

Ensuring that future generations have sufficient fish and other marine resources will depend on how well we manage the supporting ecosystems today.

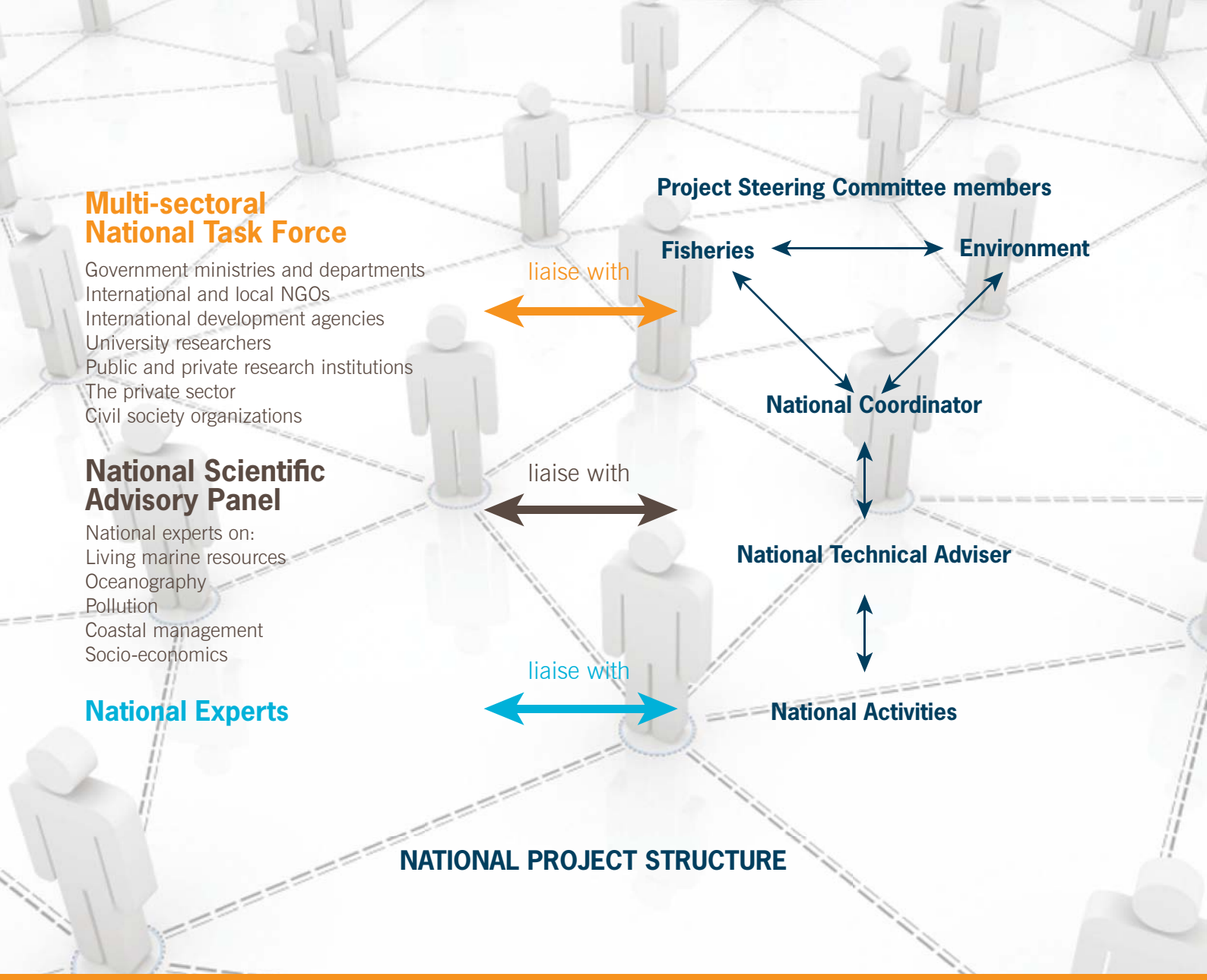
The Project promotes ecosystem based management approaches for sustaining some of the most important shared fish stocks including Hilsa shad, Indian mackerel, and sharks.

FULL STAKEHOLDER INVOLVEMENT

Involving a wide range of stakeholders is vital to the success of the Project. The project therefore works with communities, local, national and state governments, universities, NGOs, industry and regional organizations.

DIAGNOSIS AND STRATEGY

The Project brings stakeholders together to develop a joint Strategic Action Programme - a road map that outlines the ways and means of addressing priority issues identified by the member countries.



TEN AREAS OF WORK

1. Identifying the major transboundary issues and their causes, and developing a plan to address them
2. Integrated Coastal Management
3. Policy Harmonization
4. Fisheries Resources Assessment and Management
5. Critical Habitat Management
6. Ocean Dynamics, Productivity and Climate Change
7. Marine Protected Areas
8. Ecosystem Health Indicators
9. Land-Based Sources of Pollution
10. Training and Communications

MANAGING LARGE MARINE ECOSYSTEMS: A TRANSBOUNDARY CHALLENGE

Living ecosystems don't conform to political boundaries. Managing transboundary resources is one of the greatest challenges a government faces.

Transboundary challenges of concern in the BOBLME region include:

- Sustaining shared fish resources
- Restoring and protecting mangroves, coral reefs and seagrass
- Reducing pollution and promoting ecosystem health
- Preparing coastal communities for the impacts of climate change

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