

ENHANCING REGIONAL MANAGEMENT OF THE BAY OF BENGAL ENVIRONMENT AND ITS FISHERIES

Some 400 million people live in the Bay of Bengal area, and rely on it for food and livelihoods. Many subsist at or below the poverty level. Further degradation of the coastal and marine resources of the Bay is likely to have a severe impact on the quality of life and on economic growth prospects in the region. This Global Environment Facility (GEF) International Waters (IW) project, which was conducted alongside parallel projects supported by the Norwegian Agency for Development Cooperation (NORAD) and the Swedish International Development Cooperation Agency (SIDA), was the first phase of a larger intervention. The whole programme has the long-term goal of improving the lives of the coastal populations in the eight countries surrounding the Bay of Bengal - Bangladesh, India, Indonesia, Malaysia, Maldives, Myanmar, Sri Lanka and Thailand - through enhanced regional management of the Bay of Bengal environment and its fisheries.



WHAT DID THE PROJECT DO?

The project was a change agent, facilitating better collaboration among national agencies involved with fisheries and environment management in the Bay of Bengal Large Marine Ecosystem (BOBLME) countries. Through strategic partnerships with many other regional and national organizations, project funding was used to leverage support and provide a catalyst for many people to work together for a common good. Local government agencies, commercial and rural fishers and their families, and local environmental and social/cultural Non-governmental Organizations were involved in many activities, leading to greater participation and empowerment. Three major capacity-development programmes, plus a wide range of training courses considerably strengthened the capacity of the participating countries to develop new institutional arrangements, and plan and implement management measures through an ecosystem approach. An institutional arrangement was proposed, to facilitate better planning and management of transboundary issues for both fisheries and critical habitats.

IMPACT

The wide range of activities implemented during the project contributed to developing the capacity of communities to better manage the marine environment on which they depend for their livelihoods. The development and future implementation of the Strategic Action Programme is expected to further contribute to enhancing food security and reducing poverty for coastal communities in the Bay of Bengal region.

KEY FACTS

Contribution

USD 31 million

Duration

April 2009 – March 2017

Resource Partners

Global Environment Facility (GEF [International Waters]), Norwegian Agency for Development Cooperation (NORAD) and Swedish International Development Cooperation Agency (SIDA)

Beneficiaries

Communities dependent on the Bay of Bengal for their livelihoods, food and nutrition security, including small-scale fishers; government at local and national level; regional fisheries bodies; international and local Non-governmental Organizations, civil society organizations, the private sector, academic institutions

ACTIVITIES

- Transboundary Diagnostic Analysis identifying the major shared issues affecting the Bay of Bengal ecosystem produced, as well as Strategic Action Programme specifying remedial national and regional actions to address the issues and their causes.
- Key documents developed, including: the first regional assessment of the economic value of marine and coastal ecosystem services in the BOBLME; best practices in Integrated Coastal Management; determination and characterization of the subregional ecosystems within the BOBLME; a Large Marine Ecosystem gender assessment; migratory fishers; and studies to benchmark environmental indicators and management capacity.
- Consultative processes and policy analyses undertaken to strengthen coastal resources management and governance of transboundary fisheries and critical habitats.
- Signatures endorsing the BOBLME Strategic Action Programme from all 16 of the respective Ministries for Fisheries and Environment of the eight participating BOBLME countries obtained; and project concept for its implementation developed.
- The first ever regional fisheries advisories based on scientific assessments of Hilsa shad and Indian mackerel developed, as a result of transboundary collaboration.
- National Plans of Action for Sharks developed and strengthened, leading to a draft Regional Plan of Action.
- Contributed to formulation and dissemination of the Voluntary Guidelines for Securing Sustainable Small-scale fisheries in the Context of Food Security and Poverty Alleviation, including awareness creation and empowerment for co-management.
- Essential ecosystem approach to fisheries management training package developed and launched with partners.



Project Codes

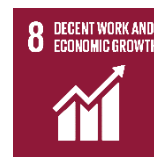
FAO: GCP/RAS/236/GFF, GCP/RAS/246/NOR and GCP/RAS/248/SWE
 GEF: 1252
 NORAD: 0600522
 SIDA: 2008-001742

Project Title

Sustainable Management of the Bay of Bengal Large Marine Ecosystem (BOBLME) - Full Size Project

Contact

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Partners

Bangladesh: Ministry of Fisheries and Livestock - Bangladesh Fisheries Research Institute, Ministry of Environment and Forests;

India: Ministry of Agriculture - Department of Animal Husbandry, Dairying and Fisheries, Ministry of Environment, Forests and Climate Change; **Indonesia:** Ministry of Marine Affairs and Fisheries - Directorate General of Capture Fisheries, Ministry of Environment and Forestry – Coastal and Marine Environmental Degradation Control;

Malaysia: Ministry of Agriculture and Agrobased Industry - Department of Fisheries Malaysia, Fisheries Research Institute, Ministry of Natural Resources and Environment - Department of Marine Parks Malaysia; **Maldives:** Ministry of Fisheries and Agriculture, Ministry of Environment and Energy - Environmental Protection Agency;

Myanmar: Ministry of Livestock, Fisheries, and Rural Development - Department of Fisheries, Ministry of Environmental Conservation and Forestry; **Sri Lanka:** Ministry of Fisheries and Aquatic Resources, State Ministry of Mahaweli Development and Environment; **Thailand:** Ministry of Agriculture and Cooperatives - Department of Fisheries, Ministry of Natural Resources and Environment - Department of Marine and Coastal Resources; and National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration (NOAA).

Regional fisheries bodies, including Bay of Bengal Programme Inter Governmental Organization (BOBP-IGO), Southeast Asian Fisheries Development Center (SEAFDEC), Network of Aquaculture Centers in Asia-Pacific (NACA); United Nations Agencies; multilateral/bilateral development agencies and programmes; regional development banks; international and local Non-governmental Organizations; civil society organizations; the private sector; academic institutions; commercial and rural fishers; coastal/marine tour operators; local citizens