

Capacity Building

An effectively managed MCPA site will produce local rewards, but a networked approach to marine resource conservation is considered to be more effective for the protection of biological diversity. The development of a protected area network is therefore a principal requirement of the South Asia region in order to ensure the food and livelihood security of coastal populations.



This project seeks to improve the effectiveness of management and operation at existing MCPA sites, developing the necessary staff capacity and training tools, and encouraging the replication of best practices at other sites across the region.

Actions will be undertaken at 5 existing MCPA sites across the region to:

- Build and maintain management capacity.
- Build capacity and equip enforcement teams.
- Develop and enhance community education.

PROGRESS

A regional coordination workshop was held in September 2006, at which, stakeholders identified the following sites to participate in project actions:

- St. Martins Island, Bangladesh.
- Mahatma Ghandi National Park, Andaman Is.
- Baa Atoll, Maldives.
- Bar Reef, Sri Lanka.

Communication & Data Management

Communication and coordination of knowledge and information are critical elements in effective management, facilitating access to up-to-date information and data, and the exchange of tried and tested methodologies and successes between projects and organisations.

It is recognised that challenges exist to obtain and exchange information vital to marine and coastal resource conservation in the South Asia region.



To improve communications and data management to and from MCPA sites, and within the wider region, actions will be undertaken to:

- Develop an electronic issue-based discussion forum to provide a platform for Internet discussions and announcements to link marine and coastal stakeholders in real time.
- Develop a centralised information portal, distilling critical data into useable tools and resources for managers and marine and coastal stakeholders across the region.
- Develop a strategy to highlight the communication pathways and information storage options available, and to encourage the streamlining of information exchange.

PROGRESS

Work has started on the issue based electronic discussion forum, which SACEP hope to launch in the first quarter of 2007.

Livelihood Diversification & Enhancement

A lack of alternative livelihood options in coastal areas has been identified as a root cause of continued coastal degradation and poverty. While many programmes and projects dealing with natural resource management in the South Asia region have included alternative livelihood components, these have often been poorly designed and ineffective.

Working alongside local communities and field teams, IMM Ltd. and IUCN will conduct activities to develop a more systematic approach to livelihood enhancement that builds on an understanding of the complex lives of poor coastal communities, and assists in the uptake of sustainable



Actions will be undertaken to:

- Review existing global literature on Alternative Livelihood Generation processes.
- Develop and test a methodology for identifying and responding to the need for livelihood diversification and enhancement.
- Develop supportive guidelines for Sustainable Livelihood Enhancement and Diversification in South Asia.

PROGRESS

Work is underway to identify field teams at pilot sites, and prepare for the SLED Pilot workshop to characterise reef dependency, and provide basic training in the developing methodology.

Regional Coordination

REGIONAL TASK FORCE

A Task Force will be established with a key objective to promote the design and initiation of a networked system of MCPAs across the region. The Task Force will help participating countries to work together to safeguard the biodiversity and conserve essential habitats in line with MEA targets.



Major progress has been made towards enhanced regional cooperation for coral reef monitoring and management through the development of the South Asian regional node of the Global Coral Reef Monitoring Network (GCRMN) based in Sri Lanka, and the development of the Indian Coral Reef Monitoring Network (ICRMN).

This project seeks to strengthen and build upon these advances through collaboration with GCRMN, ICRMN, and local stakeholders, to capitalise on the existing expertise and re-engage stakeholders.

PROGRESS

Work is underway in collaboration with country Governments and coastal and marine resource stakeholders to define the structure, constitution, and role of the Task Force within the region.

Partners

This project was made possible by a generous grant from the EUROPEAN UNION

Collaborating partners include:



South Asia Cooperative Environment Programme (SACEP)



Integrated Marine Management Ltd.



The World Conservation Union



Coral Reef Degradation in the Indian Ocean (CORDIO)



United Nations Environment Programme



United Nations Foundation



Ministry for Foreign Affairs of Finland



International Coral Reef Action Network



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Long Term Management and Conservation of Marine and Coastal Resources in South Asia

THE CHALLENGE

The 2003 United Nations List of Protected Areas ranked the South Asia region lowest in the world in terms of declared Marine and Coastal Protected Areas (MCPAs), making the Indian Ocean with its wealth of coral reefs, seagrasses, and mangrove forests, one of the World's most poorly protected coastline.

As a result, and despite current protection measures, the degradation of coastal and marine resources continues at an unprecedented rate.



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THE RESPONSE

A grant has been secured from the European Union for a three-year project in the 5 maritime nations of South Asia (Bangladesh, India, Maldives, Pakistan and Sri Lanka).

The project aims to contribute to the reduction in marine and coastal biodiversity loss within the region, and protect the natural resources on which the economic and social development of future generations is based. Actions will support countries to meet commitments to develop networks of MCPAs in line with Multilateral Environmental Agreements (CBD, WSSD, MDG's).