



Implementing the Strategic Action Programme for the South China Sea and Gulf of Thailand (SCS SAP Project)

First Meeting of the Regional Scientific and Technical Committee

Bangkok, Thailand, 17-19 October 2022

REPORT OF THE MEETING



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1. Opening of the meeting

1.1 Welcome address by the Task Manager of the United Nations Environment Programme

1. Ms. Isabelle Vanderbeck welcomed and thanked all the participants and wished she could join the meeting. She stressed the importance of the meeting as the committee serves as advisory body to the project, providing guidance to a number of activities that has not yet been fully designed. The activities include the: development of a regional governance mechanism for cooperation to address emerging issues which could be captured through a convention. The Coordinating Body on the Seas of East Asia (COBSEA) is a Regional Seas Programme in the region without a convention. The committee can help think on the best regional mechanism to address the issues; Updating of the Transboundary Diagnostic Analysis (TDA) and Strategic Action Programme (SAP). The project has an obligation to update the documents especially the TDA which is the science part of the SAP. The committee could look into tools and initiatives including priorities and connections that could be used and considered in updating the TDA and SAP; review and guidance on processes to be more transformational than sectoral; and involvement and collaboration with other stakeholders and processes like COBSEA and PEMSEA, and processes like ABNJ and BBNJ, among others. She wished everyone a productive meeting.

1.2 Welcome remark by the Programme Management Specialist of the United Nations Office for Project Services

2. Mr. Dan Bodunescu thanked the participants and experts for their participation and encouraged everyone to be open, share ideas and find solutions that could be considered in project implementation. He recognized the challenges and difficulties encountered by the project due to Covid-19. He stated that the national implementation has been established. The regional implementation will be kickstarted and discussed in this meeting. He expressed gratitude to Thailand for hosting and giving opportunity to gather and discuss the scientific and technical elements of the project as well as thanked the PCU for the organization of the meeting.

1.2 Welcome remark by the Secretary General of the Southeast Asian Fisheries Development Center

3. Mr. Isara Chanrachkij welcomed the participants on behalf of Ms. Malinee Smithithee, SEAFDEC Secretary General and Chief of the Training Department. He stressed the importance of coastal and marine habitat, the global concern these habitats are facing due to both natural and man-made activities, and the actions taken by agencies and institutions from government and non-government organizations, inter-governmental bodies, academic and research institutions including the private sectors to protect, conserve, and sustain these ecosystems for the present and future generations. He provided the background of the project and SEAFDEC as executing agency for regional activities and noted the achievements and implementation delays due to Covid-19 pandemic. He stressed the importance of the meeting in moving the project forward, ensuring that scientific and technical elements will be considered and accommodated in regional and national activities to be implemented, and facilitating sharing and exchange of scientific and technical information and experiences that will help and guide the project and participating countries in achieving the targets of the Strategic Action Programme. He encouraged participating countries to accelerate the implementation of the project particularly the development and signing of the Project Cooperation Agreement and requested them to collaborate closely with the PCU to accelerate the PCA process. He thanked the participants and looked forward to their active participation and contribution in the meeting.

1.4 Welcome remark by the Deputy Director General of the Department of Marine and Coastal Resources of the Government of Thailand

4. Dr. Pornsri Suthanaruk welcomed the members and participants on behalf of the Royal Thai Government to the meeting. She stressed the important role the committee members will play at the meeting as it provides opportunity to discuss scientific data and technical information including best practices that would benefit participating countries in the effective management of coastal habitat. She informed that DMCR is the lead agency to implement the SCS SAP project with eleven project sites in four focal areas in Thailand. She invited the committee to visit the Don Hoi Lot wetland site at Samut Prakan Province, which is also a Ramsar site. DMCR worked with local communities to enhance the management of the wetland area and welcome suggestions and recommendations in managing the site to achieve the SAP targets. She wished the committee a fruitful meeting and looked forward to the outcome of the meeting.

1.5 Welcome remark by the Regional Science Coordinator of the SCS SAP Project Coordination Unit

5. Dr. Vo Si Tuan expressed his happiness having the meeting as it brings back the SCS family again to meet and work together, recalling the many impressive outcomes and outputs including friends during the first phase of the project. For the last two years, the project focus mainly on activities at national and site level. The meeting starts the discussion on the regional activities of the project such as such as scientific and technical issues, cooperation on environmental management and governance in the region. He stressed the importance of the meeting in further designing the activities of the project for the next two years and two-year extension if possible. He wished the participants a healthy and successful meeting and looked forward to a fruitful output of the meeting as baseline for further step and cooperation with countries bordering the South China Sea.

1.5 Introduction of members

6. Mr. Reynaldo Molina of the Project Coordination Unit introduced the members of the Regional Scientific and Technical Committee from Cambodia, China, Indonesia, Philippines, Thailand and Vietnam, composed of the Chairs and Representatives of the National Technical Working Group and technical support staff, the Chairs of the Regional Working Group on Mangroves, Coral Reefs, Seagrass and Wetlands, five regional experts and staff of the PCU. Due to covid and travel restrictions, members from China and Indonesia participated online.

7. Other participants and guests of the meeting include the Project Director and National Technical Focal Points of the Fisheries Refugia Project, the National Coordinators of the SCS SAP Project, staff from national lead agencies, and staff and representatives from COBSEA, SEAFDEC, UNEP, UNOPS and PCU. The list of participants is attached as Annex 1 of this report.

2. Organisation of the meeting

2.1 Designation of officers

8. The draft rules of procedure for the Regional Scientific and Technical Committee (RSTC) requires the election of a Chairperson, Vice-Chairperson and Rapporteur. The membership of the RSTC will be formally established at the first meeting of the committee, which will elect a Chairperson and a Vice-Chairperson from among its members. The Chairperson and Vice-Chairperson of the RSTC will represent the RSTC on the Project Steering Committee (PSC) and will attend the meetings of that Committee. The Vice-Chairperson shall act as Chairperson of meetings in the absence of the Chairperson.

9. The RSTC members were invited to elect a Chairperson, Vice-Chairperson and Rapporteur. Following nomination and deliberation, Mr. Ukkrit Satapoomin, National Technical Focal Point of Thailand and Mr. Meas Rithy, National Technical Focal Point of Cambodia were elected as Chairperson and Vice-Chairperson, respectively. Ms. Amelita Ortiz, National Technical Focal Point of the Philippines was elected as Rapporteur.

2.2 Organisation of work

10. The Chairperson invited Dr. Vo Si Tuan who briefed the participants on the proposed organization of work (SCSSAP RSTC.1/2); the list of documents available to the meeting (SCSSAP RSTC.1/Inf.1), and administrative arrangements for the conduct of the meeting and field visit. The list of documents is attached as Annex 2 of this report. The meeting was conducted face to face and online, in English.

3. Adoption of the meeting agenda

11. The Chairperson invited participants to consider the provisional agenda (SCSSAP RSTC 1/1) and annotated agenda (SCSSAP RSTC 1/2) prepared by the Secretariat, propose any amendments or additional items for consideration, and adopt the agenda. The Chairperson briefly walked through the provisional agenda and invited members for comments and suggestions.

12. Dr. Tuan suggested under Agenda 14 Any Other Business the briefing on the field visit for the participants information and guidance. With no further comments, the committee agreed and adopted the agenda. The annotated agenda is attached as Annex 3 of this report.

4. Consideration of the Terms of Reference and Rules of Procedures of the Regional Scientific and Technical Committee

13. The Chairperson invited Dr. Vo Si Tuan who introduced the Provisional Terms of Reference (SCSSAP RSTC 1/3) and the Provisional Rules of Procedures (SCSSAP RSTC 1/4) for the Regional Scientific and Technical Committee of the UNEP/GEF SCS SAP Project. The documents were prepared as part of the project document, which was revised during the inception phase, and presented and agreed in principle at the first meeting of the PSC in June 2021. Dr. Tuan walked through the documents and invited the committee to consider, amend and adopt the Terms of Reference and Rules of Procedures.

14. An inquiry was raised on Section 3.1.3 on regional activities whether the Regional Task Force has already been established under the project, and if a task force is still needed and what kind would it be given the time elapsed. It was clarified that the task force has not yet been established as this will be further discussed at the meeting such as the nomination of national focal points and organization of meetings. It was noted that task force provides an efficient mechanism to deal with emerging issues. It was suggested that a small modification be made on the terms of reference by adding some words to make the arrangements for the task force flexible and clear. A concern was raised on Section 4.1 on proposed membership to revise the last sentence to add PCU representative given that the Senior Project Manager is not yet onboard. Another concern raised on Section 4.2 on regional expert nomination to consider having a regional expert on social science to draw the social aspects of the project. It was clarified that there is no need to revise since the Senior Project Manager will soon be on board and the responsibility could be taken by other PCU members. The social dimension has always been considered in project governance with the representation of local governments in national working groups, and engagement of local communities in project activities. The social aspects including participation of a social science expert will be considered and take into account by the committee in future activities and meetings, and if needed, to create a task force on community engagement. It was suggested that the social dimension of the project should be written and documented,

not only the technical activities. As to the participation of alternates in committee meetings, it was suggested that alternates should be duly appointed or designated by the national lead agency.

15. Following deliberations, the committee agreed and adopted the draft terms of reference and rules of procedures based on the discussions and suggestions of the members of the committee. The revised term of reference is attached as Annex 4 of this report.

5. Review of the SCS SAP outcomes designed in the SAP and revised in the Inception Report

16. The Chairperson invited Dr. Vo Si Tuan who introduced the Regional Implementing Report (SCSSAP RSTC 1/Inf.3), providing the SCS SAP background, outcomes and outputs designed in the SAP and revised in the Inception Phase.

17. Dr. Tuan presented the history of the project starting from the first SCS Project implemented from 2002-2008 by the environment related ministries from seven participating countries – Cambodia, China, Indonesia, Malaysia, Philippines, Thailand and Vietnam. Several government departments, universities and research institutions including NGOs were engaged as Specialized Executing Agencies. A key output is the Strategic Action Programme which is currently being implemented through this project, aside from the national action plans, technical publications and network of demonstration sites. Several medium size projects were also implemented to support the implementation of the Strategic Action Programme. In 2016, the Fisheries Refugia Project and the SCS SAP Project were approved by GEF. The participating countries for the Fisheries Refugia Project are Cambodia, Indonesia, Malaysia, Philippines, Thailand and Vietnam while Cambodia, China, Indonesia, Philippines, Thailand and Vietnam for the SCS SAP Project. The Fisheries Refugia Project will end in December 2022, but many activities will still be continued at the national level and in collaboration with the SCS SAP Project.

18. Dr. Tuan presented and discussed the targets of each habitat for the SAP which will be further reviewed in the meeting in terms of achievements in the last 12 years. The coral reef target sites were reduced as many of the sites were from Malaysia which is not participating in the project. He suggested to document the achievements in Malaysia for all habitats. Before 2008, seagrass was not considered in the development of MPA, and for this reason, the target is to augment MPA planning and development of new MPA related to seagrass. For wetland, the plan is the development and management of coastal wetlands focusing only on estuaries, lagoons, tidal flats, peat swamps and non-peat swamps. For land-based pollution, the details will be discussed more in a separate agenda particularly on the outcome, output and activity which has not yet been looked into. The difference of the SCS Project and the SCS SAP Project is the focus, the former on national level and the latter on regional level. The regional economic valuation and cost benefit analysis will focus mainly on regional output but will require national inputs. The targets on fish habitat and fish stock have been achieved through the Fisheries Refugia Project, which will be presented in a separate agenda. On regional cooperation, the proposed framework adopted in the last PSC meeting of the SCS Project will have to be revisited. The SCS SAP Project needs to develop again a long-term cooperation framework for the South China Sea.

19. Dr. Tuan presented and discussed in detail the outcomes for each component and outputs for each habitat including the objective level indicators. A lot of time was spent in the development of activities and indicators which will have to be reviewed again in the meeting. There were also some differences in numbers because of miscalculation in the SAP preparation. For coral reef, outputs and indicators on capacity building, management approach and tool and monitoring were considered but not on area under sustainable management, which has to be given more consideration. The seagrass outputs and indicators are clear and easy to track and monitor the achievements on SAP implementation. For wetland, the indicator on site with protection status like Ramsar site will have to be reviewed and considered if protected area

(with management plan, management board and enforcement team) or not since Ramsar only provides recognition.

20. Dr. Tuan presented further the outcomes of Component 2 and Component 3 which will be discussed in another agenda including the outcomes, outputs and indicators. He stressed that the committee would have to work hard on these two components because they have been delayed including developing guidance for the regional working groups in the review and updating of their achievements under these components. A concern was raised on the outcomes and outputs which may have been mixed up and requested more information and clarification to avoid confusion. Another concern is the outcomes that was developed in 2008 which may have to be reviewed and updated given the information that will be available in country presentations. The Transboundary Diagnostic Analysis, for example, needs a lot of updating to have a sound updated TDA.

21. The Chairperson clarified that the agenda mainly intends to introduce to the committee and take note of the review and changes made on the outcomes and outputs during the inception phase as indicated in Table 1 of the Regional Implementation Report that was considered by the Project Steering Committee in June 2021. With no other comments, the committee took note of the changes as provided in the revised project outcomes and outputs.

6. Reports on achievements in implementing the SAP at the national level during 2008 – 2021

22. The Chairperson invited the SCS SAP National Technical Focal Points and Representatives from Cambodia, China, Indonesia, Philippines, Thailand and Vietnam to present key achievement in SAP implementation between 2008-2021. The presentations were based on the reports prepared in advance of the 1st RSTC meeting. Following the presentations, the committee was invited to discuss on further steps for the finalization and publication of national achievement in SAP implementation in 2008-2021.

23. Dr. Vo Si Tuan provided the rationale of reporting the achievements in SAP implementation, which is not only based on regional activities but also based on activities implemented at national level funded through national budget, bilateral and multilateral cooperation, international and non-government organizations. In the framework of the SCS SAP Project, there is a need to review and document on what has been achieved following the adoption and implementation of the SAP in 2008. Draft reports have been prepared for review in the meeting including discussion on further steps to document all the achievements during the last 12 years including plans for publication. The GEF highly considers the SAP implementation report as very few projects have documented its achievements and efforts in implementing the SAP.

24. Mr. Meas Rithy, Deputy Director of the Department of Marine and Coastal Zone Conservation, General Directorate for Natural Protected Area, Ministry of Environment, presented Cambodia's achievement in SAP implementation, on behalf of National Technical Focal Point. Mr. Rithy discussed the key progress of the SCS SAP Project in Cambodia and the achievements in implementing the SAP from 2008 until 2021 per habitat, including the issues and challenges, and lessons learned in the implementation of the SAP. To further move the implementation and achievement of the SAP and targets, the following were recommended: Update regulations and laws related to marine habitats to meet the current management needs; Encourage local empowerment for ecotourism sites where possible; and Support updating of official data on the status of the habitats for effective management decisions. In conclusion, the Royal Government of Cambodia is highly committed and will cooperate in the SAP implementation. With several good progress made for the SAP targets, Cambodia is in a good position ready for the SCS SAP implementation over the next 2 years. For the Cambodia presentation on SAP implementation achievement, see [LINK].

25. Dr. Yu Yunjun, Senior Engineer of the South China Institute of Environmental Sciences, Ministry of Ecology and Environment, presented China's achievements in SAP implementation. Dr. Yu discussed

China's participation and involvement in the SCS SAP Project including the achievements in implementing the SAP per habitat, based on regional outputs. The issues and challenges, and lessons learned in the implementation of the SAP were also discussed including some recommendations to further move the implementation and achievement of the SAP and targets such as: Explore approaches to alternative livelihoods including mechanism for financial sustainability; Strengthen capacity building and public involvement including scientific research and public education; Exchange of best practice of coastal habitats management; Request PCU to provide technical support to coastal habitat management such as exchange of best practice; and Ensure synergies among mangroves, coral reef, seagrass and wetland, especially for ecological connectivity among them. In conclusions, many activities in the SAP target sites for mangroves, seagrass and wetlands were implemented. The mangrove, seagrass bed and wetland ecosystems were all in healthy state. This was made possible with funding support from central and local governments. To move the SCS SAP Project in the next two years, China is waiting for the signing of the Project Cooperation Agreement to implement the activities of the project. For the China presentation on SAP implementation achievement, see [LINK].

26. Mr. Dasminto of the Directorate of Coastal and Marine Pollution and Degradation Control, Ministry of Environment and Forestry, presented Indonesia's achievements in SAP implementation, on behalf of National Technical Focal Point. Mr. Dasminto presented Indonesia's participation and involvement in the project and the national targets and achievements in implementing the SAP from 2008 to 2021. The issues and challenges including lessons learned in the implementation of the SAP were also discussed. Some of the recommendations to move the implementation and achievement of the SAP and targets include: Coordination among agencies and with local governments needs to be carried out, considering the data and information are scattered across various agencies, and for this reason the formation of the National Technical Working Group in the implementation of SCS-SAP becomes a forum to strengthen coordination in providing the desired data and information; and MOEF will cooperate with the appointed specialized executing agency (CCMRS-IPB) to further accelerate the implementation process of SCS-SAP which is relatively lagging behind other participating countries. In conclusions, Indonesia's SCS-SAP implementation targets from 2008 – 2021 have been achieved and even exceeded but there were several targets that have not been achieved optimally. To achieve the SCS-SAP target, it is not possible to rely on the government budget alone but also requires the involvement of all stakeholders (local government, private sectors, foundations, NGOs, etc.) through cooperation in the implementation of activities. For the Indonesia presentation on SAP implementation achievement, see [LINK].

27. Ms. Amelita DJ Ortiz, Assistant Director of the Biodiversity Management Bureau, Department of Environment and Natural Resources, presented the Philippines' achievements in SAP implementation, on behalf of National Technical Focal Point. Ms. Ortiz presented the Philippines involvement in SAP implementation and the summary and details of achievements and co-financing contribution from projects and partners for each habitat. The issues and challenges, and lessons learned in the implementation of the SAP were also discussed including recommendations to further move the implementation and achievement of the SAP and targets such as: Exploring co-financing opportunities with partners and institutions; and Identifying projects and activities that will complement the implementation of the SCS SAP with the DENR's banner Coastal and Marine Ecosystems Management Program (CMEMP). In conclusion, the SCS SAP Project is well aligned with the DENR-BMB's CMEMP and contributes to the achievement of the targets identified under the Philippine Development Plan (PDP) and the Philippine Biodiversity Strategic and Action Plan (PBSAP), including international commitments such as the Aichi Targets and the UN Sustainable Development Goals (Goal 14 – Life below Water). For the Philippines presentation on SAP implementation achievement, see [LINK].

28. Mr. Ukkrit Satapoomin, Director of the Marine Resources Conservation Division, Department of Marine and Coastal Resources, Ministry of Natural Resources and Environment, presented Thailand's achievements in SAP implementation. Mr. Satapoomin presented the background of the project in terms of

the selection of sites, and the evaluation of achievements per habitat from 2008 to 2021 including the estimated funding (and co-financing) from implementing partners. The issues and challenges, and lessons learned in the implementation of the SAP were also discussed. Some of the recommendations to move the implementation and achievement of the SAP and targets include the: Establishing mechanism for the monitoring of management, ecological, and socio-economic indicators for all habitats; Partnering with local communities, business, and relevant agencies in the project sites to ensure progress; Focusing on proper management tools and approaches; and Ensuring long-term sustainability of actions beyond the project life. In conclusion, Thailand has achieved the SAP targets in terms of declaration of mangrove area as National Park/Protected area, declaration of wetland with protection status, management approach and tools. However, not much focus on biodiversity increased (for mangrove) and mechanism for monitoring indicators. To move forward, DMCR will execute implementation following the workplan and activities mentioned in the cooperation agreement. For the Thailand presentation on SAP implementation achievement, see [LINK].

29. Mr. Luu Anh Duc, Deputy Director of the Department of Science, Technology and International Cooperation, Viet Nam Administration of Seas and Islands Ministry of Natural Resources and Environment, presented Vietnam's achievements in SAP implementation. Mr. Duc presented the involvement of Vietnam in the project and the summary of achievements in implementing the SAP targets per habitat from 2008 to 2021 including the funding sources and implementing agencies and partners. Issues and challenges, and lessons learned in the implementation of the SAP were also presented. Some of the recommendations to move the implementation and achievement of the SAP and targets further include the: Remove the difficulties in the way of organizing the implementation of project coordination activities and expand the participation of the parties; Improve the quality of international cooperation; Strengthen dialogue between the project parties; and Increase funding for SCS SAP Project implementation. In conclusion, the Department of Science, Technology and International Cooperation under VASI is coordinating with UNOPS to develop and finalize the cooperation agreement to implement the project in Vietnam. Funding for activities have already been estimated and implementing agencies and partners have been identified. For the Vietnam presentation on SAP implementation achievement, see [LINK].

30. Dr. Tuan reminded the committee of the need to further discuss the data provided in the presentation including the steps for the finalization and publication of the report. He presented the summary of regional targets and national achievements based on the submitted draft reports. The figures indicated that the achievements have exceeded the targets significantly. However, Dr. Tuan raised some concerns on the figures presented. Some figures have no description. Some achievements were achieved before 2008. The reporting of outputs and achievements are different per habitat like the area under sustainable management of coral reef which includes the area before 2008. There may also be some overlapping of reported achievements. Some targets have been achieved but are still proposed as targets under the project. Dr. Tuan informed the committee that the data and information have to be reviewed carefully as the report will be published. The summary table was shared with the members of the committee to check and review the figures for discussion in Agenda 13.

7. Reports of the First Meetings of Regional Working Groups (RWGs) on Mangroves, Coral Reefs, Seagrass and Coastal Wetlands

31. The Chairperson invited the Chairpersons of the SCS SAP Regional Working Groups to report and highlight key discussions, issues and challenges including recommendations of the 1st meeting of the Regional Working Groups (RWG) on Mangroves, Coral Reefs, Seagrass and Coastal Wetlands.

32. Dr. Yu Yunjun, Chairperson of the RWG on Mangroves, presented the report of the first regional working group meeting on 1 December 2021 that was organized virtually. Dr. Yu presented the background of the RWG-Mangroves in terms of structure, roles and functions, the date and objectives of first RWG

meeting including the designated officers of the regional working group. Discussions and agreements made during the RWG-Mangroves meeting were also presented including the issues and challenges encountered in the implementation of the SCS SAP Project, SAP targets and achievements such as: Alternative livelihoods; Mechanism for financial sustainability; Lack of public awareness on the importance of the mangrove forests at local level; Enhancing capacity on mangrove management and conservation at local level; and Absence of harmonized institutional data on the extent and cover of mangrove areas. The recommendations of the RWG-Mangroves and next steps were: 1. Request what additional support PCU can provide, identify capacity and training needs; 2. To review what are the key impacts to mangroves, and consider new issues such as plastics and climate change; 3. PCU to compile mangrove resources from regional and global level, including UNEP and WCMC's work on mangroves; and 4. Small Grants Program to be launched in 2022, to include mangrove restoration. For 2022, the next steps include the signing of the legal agreements (PCAs) with each SEA, organize a regional workshop/training on best-practices, tools and guidelines, and organize the Second RWG-Mangroves Meeting. For the RWG-Mangroves presentation, see [LINK].

33. A concern was raised on the country presentations on achievements which if combined, is much larger than the SAP targets. It is the responsibility of RWG to review and come up with recommendations on how to address and move forward. Another concern raised is the country issues and recommendations such as capacity building, poor community engagement and enforcement, which have been existing for a long time. The RWG could come up with specific recommendations for each site to do specific activities like one site doing capacity building, another site doing demonstration activities and another doing policy review and formulation, which could be replicated and considered in future projects and activities. A clarification was raised on the level and process in updating of SAP targets, whether the RWG or RSTC recommends the SAP updating. Dr. Tuan explained the process of setting the SAP targets in the first phase, starting with the RWG developing the SAP targets, the RSTC reviewing and recommending the SAP targets to the PSC for approval. The same process will be used in the project. A working group on SAP updating can be established if needed.

34. Mr. Ukkrit Satapoomin, Chairperson of the RWG on Coral Reefs, presented the report of the first regional working group meeting on 2 December 2021 that was organized virtually. Mr. Satapoomin presented the RWG-Coral Reefs roles and functions, the date and objectives of first RWG meeting including the designated officers of the regional working group. Discussions and agreements made during the RWG-Coral Reefs meeting were also presented in detail for each country, including the best practices on coral reef management. The issues and challenges encountered were the: Impacts of IUU fishing to coral reef / unsustainable fishing practices; Marine pollution; Encroachment and unregulated development activities due to tourism; Climate change; Outbreak of Crown-of-Thorn Seastar; Lack of robust governance structure; and Lack of sustainable financial mechanism. The recommendations of the RWG-Coral Reefs including next steps were: Establish the national coral reef committees/working groups; Establish the National Technical Working Group with all habitat focal points and conduct first meeting to ensure synergies between habitats; Establish the Inter-Ministerial Committee and conduct the first meeting to confirm workplan and budget; Provide best practice on coral reef management/restoration (2008-2021) in cooperation with UN Decade Incubator Coral Reef Group; Organize the 2nd RWG-Coral Reefs meeting; Review the key impacts on coral reefs and consider these impacts and new issues such as climate change and marine debris; Compilation of coral reef resources from regional and global level; and Launch of the Small Grant Program in 2022 for NGOs and community organizations to implement community-based projects/activities. For the RWG-Coral Reefs presentation, see [LINK].

35. Mr. Wenxi Zhu of the UNESCO/Intergovernmental Oceanographic Commission for the Western Pacific (IOC-WESTPAC) inquired on the basis for the reduction of sites, if based on funding or other reasons. The reported combined achievements are much bigger than the SAP targets and reducing the sites will reduce the area into a reasonable level. He also stressed the importance of coral reefs and reiterated the

strong support of the UNESCO/IOC-WESTPAC to the SCS SAP Project particularly on the coral reef component and will keep working with the RWG-Coral Reefs in the context of the UN Decade of Ocean Science. He will explore the possibility of sponsoring relevant coral reef activities on climate change and ocean acidification, microplastic monitoring and research and other emerging issues.

36. On the reduction of sites, Mr. Satapoomin explained that in the case of Thailand, the main constraint is the implementation period which is too short, and the shortage of manpower. The site should also be a priority area with a particular issue that needs to be addressed. Another is the limited resources of the project which should be used efficiently to enhance the activity of the site. Dr. Tuan recalled some discussions on the reduction of sites and areas for all habitats in the inception phase and recognized the challenges at national level to implement the project in a short period of time. On the achievement of SAP targets, Dr. Tuan clarified that the evaluation of achievement is not only based on the SCS SAP implementation but also the achievements for the last 12 years. Considering the evaluation results, more than half of SAP targets have already been achieved by the countries, with some targets achieved before SCS SAP Project implementation. Dr. Somboon Siriraksophon of the Fisheries Refugia Project noted the achievements by the countries since 2008-2021. He informed the meeting that the project started in 2018 and should meet the targets until the end of the project. There was a lot of good achievements in the past that should be taken into account in the implementation phase. He suggested to review the past achievements from 2008 to 2017 and the achievements from 2018 till now to know the difference as well as the achievements made since the project started in 2018.

37. Ms. Maria Katrina Apaya, Ecosystem Management Specialist II of the Biodiversity Management Bureau, Department of Environment and Natural Resources, representing the Chairperson of the RWG on Seagrass, presented the report of the first regional working group meeting on 3 December 2021 that was organized virtually. Ms. Apaya presented the RWG-Seagrass structure, roles and functions, objectives of first RWG meeting including the designated officers of the regional working group. Discussions and agreements made during the RWG-Seagrass meeting were also presented including the best practices on seagrass management. The issues and concerns identified include the: limited time to gather data and the unavailability of data and information of some sites which are necessary to complete the national implementation reports and evaluation document; and review the key impacts on seagrass and consider these impacts and new issues such as climate change. The recommendations of the RWG-Seagrass and next steps were the: Signing of legal agreements (PCAs) between UNOPS and SEAs; Organization of the First Regional Scientific and Technical Committee Meeting, back-to-back with workshop/training on best-practices, tools and guidelines; Organization of the Second RWG-SG Meeting; and Organization of the Second Steering Committee Meeting. For the RWG-Seagrass presentation, see [LINK].

38. Mrs. Sumana Kajonwattanakul, Director of the Marine and Coastal Resources Research and Development Institute, Department of Marine and Coastal Resources, Ministry of Natural Resources and Environment, and Vice-Chairperson of the RWG on Wetlands, presented the report of the first regional working group meeting on 7 December 2021 that was organized virtually. Mrs. Kajonwattanakul presented the RWG-Wetlands roles and functions, objectives of first RWG meeting including the designated officers of the regional working group. Discussions and agreements made during the RWG-Wetlands meeting were also presented including some issues and concerns categorized as follows: 1) Issues to address: Harmonization between national activities proposed by the different working group, e.g., linkage with mangrove; Not much on the sustainability of the management plan developed – ensuring the sustainability of the plan; Role of local stakeholders and local communities; Sustainable financing scheme; and Data monitoring and information gathering; 2) Challenges in evaluation and development: Difficulties to provide data for SAP Evaluation; Development of NIRs – identification of areas and lack of data on the identified specific wetland type; and 3) Challenges in implementation: Lack of management capacity; Human and natural treats e.g., encroachment, wildlife hunting/poaching, illegal logging, and forest fires; Weak enforcement of policies e.g., easement regulation and foreshore policies – resulting in development

activities; Weak consideration of biodiversity concerns; Sedimentation and pollution from land-based activities, mining, and dredging activities; and Reduced water retention capacity of estuaries and other aquatic ecosystem. The RWG-Wetlands recommendations and next steps include: Establish national wetland committees/working groups; Establish the National Technical Working Group with all habitat focal points and conduct first meeting to ensure synergies between habitats; Establish the Inter-Ministerial Committee and conduct the first meeting to confirm workplan and budget; Provide best practice on wetland management/restoration (2008-2021); Data and monitoring workshop – to coordinate the regional and national activities on data management and monitoring; Organize the 2nd RWG-Wetlands; Start the process of developing the revision of TDA including key impacts on wetlands, and consider these impacts and new issues such as climate change; Compilation of wetland resources from regional and global level; and Launch of the Small Grant Program in 2022, following the good practices done in the first project. For the RWG-Wetlands presentation, see [LINK].

8. Report of the Regional Scientific and Technical Committee Members of the Fisheries Refugia Project

39. The Chairperson invited the Fisheries Refugia Project National Technical Focal Points from Cambodia, Indonesia, Malaysia, Philippines, Thailand and Viet Nam to report and highlight key achievements of the project, including issues and challenges, and recommendations for integration and collaboration. The Chairperson invited the Project Director of the Fisheries Refugia Project to give some opening statement about the project.

40. Dr. Somboon Siriraksophon, Project Director of the Fisheries Refugia Project briefly presented the background of the project particularly the participating countries and the overall achievements of the project. He reported that based on the GEF approval, the project planned to establish 14 Fisheries Refugia sites covering an area of around 260,000 hectares. Through stakeholders' consultations and acceptance by the community, 15 Fisheries Refugia sites were established covering an area of around 1.3 million hectares. He encouraged the committee to hear the country presentations for more details.

41. Mr. Leng Sy Vann, Deputy Director of the Department of Fisheries Conservation, Fisheries Administration, presented the key achievements of the Fisheries Refugia Project in Cambodia. He presented the background and objectives of the project, the SAP targets, project sites and target habitats and species including the management and coordination structure, roles and functions of the agencies. The key achievements were discussed in detail in terms of the engagement of stakeholders in project establishment, site base management board and management mechanism. Some issues and challenges encountered during the implementation of the project were: Difficulty to organize meetings with provincial administration leaders such as provincial governor or deputy governor; Postponement of the approval of the project in Kampot province due to changing new provincial governor and impact with the development project of companies; Covid-19 pandemic outbreaks in the project target provinces; Illegal fishing activities at the refugia site during closing season; and Community fisheries and Fisheries Administration Cantonment lack budget, materials, and equipment for patrolling and cracking down illegal fishing activities. Some recommendations to integrate and collaborate with SCS SAP Project were: SCS SAP Project should not establish site base management boards in Kep and Koh Kong province and can use the existing site base management boards to coordinate or solve problems happening during project implementation; SCS SAP Project should consider to formulate site base management boards in Kampot and Preah Sihanouk provinces; SCS SAP Project should consider to prepare the proclamation on the Establishment of Management Area of Seagrass and Coral Reef in Koh Kong, Preah Sihanouk, and Kampot provinces; and SCS SAP Project should consider to monitor and assess current seagrass and coral reef status under managed by Marine Fisheries Management Area in Kep province. For the Cambodia Fisheries Refugia achievement presentation, see [LINK].

42. Ms. Astri Suryandari, Senior Researcher of the Ministry of Marine Affairs and Fisheries, presented the key achievements of the Fisheries Refugia Project in Indonesia. She presented the background and objectives of the project, the SAP targets, project sites and target habitats and species including the management and coordination structure, roles and functions of the agencies. She informed the meeting the late implementation of the project, starting only in June 2019. The key achievements were discussed in detail in terms of the engagement of stakeholders in project establishment, site base management board and management mechanism. The issues and challenges encountered during project implementation were also presented. These include the: Limited information on critical habitat linkage for fish stock; Lack of understanding of the fisheries refugia concept; Community perception and acceptance; Covid-19 pandemic; and Changes in the structure and leader of the institution/agency implementing the project. To integrate and collaborate with SCS SAP Project, the following were recommended: Joint activities on policy and legal aspects review and management plans; Sharing information on identified root causes of the problems and priorities for intervention; and Join activities on rehabilitation and enhancement of critical habitats in the refugia site. For the Indonesia Fisheries Refugia achievement presentation, see [LINK].

43. Mr. Sallehudin bin Jamon, Senior Research Officer of the Fisheries Research Institute Kg. Aceh, Department of Fisheries, presented the key achievements of the Fisheries Refugia Project in Malaysia. He presented the background and objectives of the project, the SAP targets, project sites and target habitats and species including the management and coordination structure, roles and functions of the agencies. The key achievements were discussed in detail in terms of the engagement of stakeholders in project establishment, site base management board and management mechanism. Some issues and challenges encountered during the implementation of the project were: Unclear/lack of information about the implementation of refugia and its roles; Level of awareness/understanding the benefit of tiger prawn refugia; and Usage conflicts-overlap of refugia areas, more development to expand Kuala Baram to a larger shipping port. For the Malaysia Fisheries Refugia achievement presentation, see [LINK].

44. Dr. Tuan expressed concern on Malaysia's non-participation in the SCS SAP Project and requested the committee to discuss on how the outcomes and outputs of the Fisheries Refugia Project could be integrated with the habitat components of the SCS SAP Project. He inquired if there are existing mechanism in Malaysia that could bring to work closely the Fisheries Refugia network and habitat management. Dr. Tuan also noted the SAP achievements from countries to improve habitat management for the last 12 years, which could also be the same for Malaysia. He requested Mr. Jamon to link with the SCS SAP Project and habitat management authorities to gather the Malaysia achievements on SAP implementation. Mr. Jamon informed the meeting that he will bring the issue on fisheries and habitat integration to higher authorities, and that the Department of Marine Park is now with the Department of Fisheries and will request the Department of Marine Park to collaborate to get the information needed.

45. Mr. Valeriano M. Borja, Aquaculturist II of the National Fisheries Research and Development Institute, Department of Agriculture, presented the key achievements of the Fisheries Refugia Project in the Philippines. He presented the background and objectives of the project, the SAP targets, project sites and target habitats and species including the management and coordination structure, roles and functions of the agencies. He informed the meeting that the Bureau of Fisheries and Aquatic Resources (BFAR) and the National Fisheries Research and Development Institute (NFRDI) are now totally separated, with NFRDI as research arm of BFAR. The key achievements were discussed in detail in terms of the engagement of stakeholders in project establishment, site base management board and management mechanism. The issues and challenges encountered during project implementation were also presented. These include the: Difficulty in conducting site-based meeting and activities due to mobility restrictions brought about by the pandemic; and Site-based management committee concern on the way forward of the project. To integrate and collaborate with SCS SAP Project, the following were recommended: SCS SAP should consider the Fisheries Refugia Sites established; Best practices/lessons learned can be of use for SCS SAP implementation (ie science-based policy making, EAFM, transparency in consultative process); and Close

cooperation between implementing agencies to build strong partnership between the Fisheries Refugia and SCS SAP Projects. He stressed that BFAR/NFRDI is willing to assist and support the DENR/BMB in the implementation of the SCS SAP Project in whatever capacity. He hoped the Fisheries Refugia initiative could be replicated nationwide towards improving the status of globally significant habitats and fisheries resources. Considering the importance of integrating habitats and fisheries management in sustaining the livelihood of coastal communities, concerted efforts between all stakeholder from national and community level is paramount. For the Philippines Fisheries Refugia achievement presentation, see [LINK].

46. Ms. Nipa Kulanujaree, Fishery Biologist Practitioner Level Fisheries Resources Assessment Group, Marine Fisheries Research and Development Division, Department of Fisheries, presented the key achievements of the Fisheries Refugia Project in Thailand. He presented the background and objectives of the project, the SAP targets, project sites and target habitats and species including the management and coordination structure, roles and functions of the agencies. The key achievements were discussed in detail in terms of the engagement of stakeholders in project establishment, site base management board and management mechanism. The issues and challenges encountered during project implementation were also presented. These include the: Disagreement on management planning regarding the restriction of gill net fishing during the critical period in Trat Fisheries Refugia Site; and Lack of technical information focusing on the critical area (Koh Sed), including ecosystem and abundance of the priority species (blue swimming crab) in their young stages. The recommendations to integrate and collaborate with SCS SAP Project were: Monitoring and assessment of fisheries refugia and its habitat linkages at sites should be subsequently integrated with SCS SAP Project for the most effective collaboration and evaluation; Assessment of the status of fisheries and habitat at fisheries refugia sites should be included as the sub-project in each relating habitat component of SCS SAP Project; and Department of Fisheries and Department of Marine and Coastal Resources should closely cooperated in the action on integrated management of fisheries and ecosystem/habitat in critical areas along the coastal seas of the country. For the Thailand Fisheries Refugia achievement presentation, see [LINK].

47. Mrs. Pham Thi Thuy Linh, Directorate of Fisheries, Ministry of Agriculture and Rural Development, presented the key achievements of the Fisheries Refugia Project in Vietnam. She presented the background and objectives of the project, the SAP targets, project sites and target habitats and species including the management and coordination structure, roles and functions of the agencies. The key achievements were discussed in detail in terms of the engagement of stakeholders in project establishment, site base management board and management mechanism. The issues and challenges encountered during project implementation were the following: Impact of the Covid-19 epidemic along with regulations on distance, contact and movement restrictions, many project activities were interrupted because of continuous outbreaks; The project lasts until 2022, which means that the Vietnamese side needs to adjust the project document; and During the process of waiting for approval of the Adjustment Decision, the project's activities as well as the project's finance are temporarily suspended. This greatly affects the progress, SAP targets, achievements and results of the project. To integrate and collaborate with SCS SAP Project, the recommendations were: Support Vietnam to implement components and achieve project results; and Sharing experiences during the implementation of project components. For the Vietnam Fisheries Refugia achievement presentation, see [LINK].

48. Following the presentations, several questions were raised on the actions taken on the difficulty in engaging local administration and the sustainability of project impacts. It was explained that the project work closely with the local administration. In terms of sustainability, all countries have long-term management plans for replication and scaling-up of project activities with site-based management boards and with funding support from local governments and partners. Even when project ends, countries have plans to continue and promote the Fisheries Refugia concept. An inquiry was raised as to the basis for seasonal closure and the action taken to address the impact (no income) of seasonal closure to fisherfolks. It was explained that countries conduct research to get data and information on spawning period which are

then discussed with local fisheries authorities. During close season, the entire area is not closed but only on the agreed site within the area so that fishermen can still access other areas. It was further explained that the Fisheries Refugia approach is different from fisheries management approach. Fisheries Refugia focused on spawning and nursery areas of target species, not all species. The Fisheries Refugia approach linked the habitat management and fisheries management with the purpose of conserving the habitats for fisheries biological process like spawning and nursery.

49. The importance of fisheries and habitats components to work together and the different ministries involved were noted. A suggestion was made to discuss and provide guidance on some practical arrangement for the future of these two components to realize the objectives and linkages as many of the issues presented were institutional, and to sustain activities of the Fisheries Refugia Project that can be integrated with the SCS SAP Project. Dr. Tuan suggested that since the sites of the Fisheries Refugia and SCS SAP Projects are the same, the project can continue to use the Fisheries Refugia site management framework which involves the same local governments and communities. On monitoring activities, where all sites have monitoring program, he suggested to consider developing some additional indicators on fishery resources. For habitats, the focus is more on corals and seagrass cover but not much on ecological species indicators like fish for corals and swimming crab for mangroves or monitoring the density of larvae and juveniles.

50. Mr. Isara Chanrachkij of the Southeast Asian Fisheries Development Center (SEAFDEC) expressed congratulations to all the Fisheries Refugia country teams on the achievements of the project particularly the fisheries ministries and departments and SEAFDEC council directors for their support in the project. He also expressed appreciation to the Project Director and team of the Fisheries Refugia Project on the successful effective management of 15 Fisheries Refugia sites covering around 1.4 million hectares, significantly higher than the proposed area adopted by GEF.

51. The Chairperson expressed appreciation to the National Focal Points of the Fisheries Refugia Project who shared the progress and outcomes of the project particularly on the important site for fishery resources and examples of good practices and experiences focusing on local fishery community. It was observed that a lot of valuable recommendations were raised and how these recommendations will be used and delivered into tangible actions. Dr. Tuan suggested that the Fisheries Refugia activity, which is very scientific, practical and transformative solution, be developed as an initiative under the UN Decade on Science for Sustainable Development. As to the recommendations and challenges from the project, Mr. Chanrachkij recommended that the Project Director of the Fisheries Refugia Project wrap up all the recommendations from each country and propose in the SEAFDEC Program Committee Meeting for consideration including finding solutions to deal with the challenges raised.

9. Review of status in development and signature of the PCAs and update of SCS SAP targets at the site level designed in available PCAs

52. The Chairperson invited Mr. Reynaldo Molina and Dr. Vo Si Tuan who presented document SCSSAP RSTC 1/6 PCA development and finalization status and updated SCS SAP targets at the site level as well as challenges in the implementation. The committee was requested to discuss on solutions to proceed finalization and implementation of PCAs.

53. Mr. Molina presented briefly on the status of the Project Cooperation Agreement of the participating countries starting with the designated Specialized Executing Agencies (SEAs). He stressed that most of the countries opted to have one SEA except for Vietnam which has several SEAs. Two PCAs have been duly signed from Cambodia and Thailand, while two PCAs are awaiting signature by UNOPS for China, and by the implementing agency for the Philippines. The two other PCAs from Indonesia and Vietnam are undergoing review and updating. Mr. Molina encouraged the countries to facilitate the finalization and

signing of the PCAs. For those who have signed the PCAs, countries were requested to move the project as soon as possible.

54. Dr. Tuan presented the summary of SCS SAP targets at the site level for implementation in the next two years. He noted the reduction of sites and targets for all habitats, which are comparatively low with the original targets in the SAP adopted in 2008. He raised concern in monitoring sites which are less than the target sites including tracking the outputs based on indicators as there is no monitoring data. He encouraged to consider and use the SAP management matrix as it contains set of indicators that are useful in tracking the outputs.

55. Based on the presentations, the participating countries were requested to consider the actions required as follows:

- For SEAs and PCAs:
 - Acknowledgement/Confirmation of the Specialized Executing Agencies by the National Technical Working Group Chairs
 - Signing of the PCAs for Philippines and China
 - Completion and finalization of the PCAs for Indonesia and Vietnam
 - Implementation/Execution of the signed PCAs for Cambodia and Thailand
 - PCA reporting requirements submission
 - Identify SEAs for Land-based Pollution, Economic Valuation and Legal Matters focal areas
- For the targets proposed for SCS SAP Project implementation:
 - Confirmation of the targets proposed for implementing in the SCS SAP Project from 2022-2024

For the details of the PCA status and SCS SAP targets presentation, see [LINK].

56. Dr. Somboon shared his experience working with the Fisheries Refugia Project on the end of project targets, stating that after 4 years of implementation, the project has aligned their targets with the end of project targets. He noted from the presentation that the end of project targets will be based on country proposal, which is less than the targets endorsed by GEF as presented in the result framework of the SCS SAP project. He suggested to refer and consider the results framework of the Project Document and make it clear that the new targets are based on the review and evaluation of SAP targets and achievements by the countries. The review on country SAP achievements is a good status update of the country's remaining targets for future implementation. He further suggested that the proposed end of project targets, even if it is less than the targets in the results framework, have to be raised at the Project Steering Committee to accept and approve as it is important to record and get the approval of PSC. During evaluation, the project can use the review of achievements and PSC decision as basis and reference in implementing the new end of project targets. It is important that a very clear document be prepared and proposed to the PSC.

57. The Chairperson noted the observation and suggestion of Dr. Somboon and requested the participating countries through the national lead agencies and specialized executing agencies to revisit the targets proposed for implementation and confirm the figures with the Project Coordination Unit as soon as possible. Dr. Tuan clarified that for the countries with agreements signed or under review for approval, changes cannot be made and have to wait for the first quarterly report as basis for revision of targets, while agreements under development can be changed. Mr. Bodunescu of UNOPS further clarified that the revisions is also connected to the project extension until June 2024 that was approved by the PSC in June 2021 which is now being formalized including the budget revision. Once approved, all agreements will be amended to include new timeline and other changes.

58. An inquiry was raised on the date of the next PSC meeting of the SCS SAP Project. Mr. Molina informed the meeting that following consultation with the Project Director of the Fisheries Refugia Project and the

UNEP Task Manager, the next PSC meeting is planned in January 2023 in the Philippines, back-to-back with the PSC/Project Closing Meeting of the Fisheries Refugia Project. The exact date is still pending as the Project Director of the Fisheries Refugia Project will still have to discuss the date with UNEP and SEAFDEC as the executing agency of the project. The Philippine team requested for the exact date of the meeting to start the preparation in the Philippines.

59. Mr. Duc noted that Vietnam is late compared with the other countries, citing the ongoing restructuring of MONRE and VASI including the absence of a focal point to coordinate the PCA. He assured that Vietnam will accelerate the procedure to have the PCA signed as soon as possible including the official nomination of SEAs.

10. Plan for documentation and publication of good practices on habitat and land - based pollution

60. The Chairperson invited Dr. Vo Si Tuan who introduced the document SCSSAP RSTC 1/7 Good Practices on Habitat and Land-Based Pollution and invited the committee to discuss on the publication of the document in 2022/2023 and to include additional information on past and present good practices.

61. Dr. Tuan presented and walked through the good practices document contents in details including the two lessons learned provided by China. He noticed that a lot of good practices and lessons learned from the SAP achievements reported by the countries on project management, SAP implementation, and site management which could be added in the document. Dr. Tuan suggested to the committee to discuss the plans for providing additional inputs, compilation, editing and publication of the document. He encouraged the involvement of the National Technical Focal Points and regional experts, who will play an important role in the process, and suggested to establish an editorial group with representatives from the countries and experts.

62. A suggestion was made to add a section on integration of habitats and fisheries management in the document. An inquiry was raised on the number of good practices per country, the timeline for submission of inputs and publication, and composition of the editorial group. Dr. Tuan clarified that all inputs are welcome, and it will be the responsibility of the editorial group to select the appropriate inputs for the document. He further explained the finalization and publication process. He suggested that country to nominate a representative to the editorial group with all the regional experts including representatives from the Fisheries Refugia Project.

63. Following discussions, the committee agreed on the following:

- Editorial group will be composed of the SCS SAP National Technical Focal Points or alternates and the National Coordinators for each country, the Regional Experts, and the Fisheries Refugia Project Coordination Unit who will coordinate with their Fisheries Refugia NTFP for the inputs.
- Countries to submit the names of NTFP and alternates within a week after the RSTC meeting.
- Countries and Fisheries Refugia PCU to submit additional inputs by mid-December 2022. Input should be based on quality.
- PCU to organize a meeting for the editorial group to review the submitted inputs in January 2023.
- A small group from the editorial group will review the selected inputs for editing, formatting and layout, etc.
- Publication of the document by March 2023.

For the good practices document, see [LINK].

11. Next steps in implementing regional and national activities under the components 2 and 3

64. The Chairperson invited Dr. Vo Si Tuan who presented and discussed the document SCSSAP RSTC 1/8 Regional and National Activities under Components 2 and 3. The committee was requested to discuss the priority actions and next steps in coordinating regional and national activities under component 2 and 3.

65. Dr. Tuan informed the committee that not much activity has been done under these components as some of the activities are unclear and need decision of the Project Manager, inputs from consultants and guidance from this committee. Dr. Tuan presented and walked through the targets and key actions and deliverables for each of the regional outputs under Components 2 and 3 including the required execution arrangements and responsibilities such as the National Focal Points on Land-based Pollution, Economic Valuation and Legal Matters, and the organization of regional working groups and task forces, which have not yet been designated and organized, including the recruitment of consultants for updating of TDA and SAP, development of regional governance mechanism and initiation of small grants program, among many others.

66. Mr. Satapoomin, in his capacity as the National Technical Focal Point of Thailand, expressed some concern on some deliverable like Output 2.3.4 Endorsed policy and executive orders, provincial/local ordinances and by-laws, which is difficult to achieve. He inquired how this deliverable could be achieved and suggested that the deliverables must be flexible and not fixed, and according to national circumstances. It was noted that the project has no control in many of the activities like the revision of national policies and suggested that the project focus on its role and support to the countries on this matter like highlighting the policy gaps or reformulating the policy.

67. Mr. Zhu expressed concern that participating countries have to implement the 5-year workplan within a 2-year time period. He noted that the committee has the mandate to provide the PSC with recommendation on proposed regional activity, workplan and budget and suggested that the committee should provide actionable recommendations to the PSC for approval rather than general principles. He emphasized that if the project goes ahead with the implementation of the 5-year workplan, it is impossible to accomplish all the targets within two years. He stressed that the committee could recommend a reasonable and realistic timeframe to the PSC for approval. Mr. Bodunescu also stressed the need to consider the available budget of the project.

68. The Chairperson noted the mandate of the committee to give recommendations to PSC and inquired how to resolve the concerns raised on the deliverables, activities and workplan under Components 2 and 3. It was suggested that these matters have to be discussed at the Regional Working Group on Land-based Pollution, Regional Task Force on Economic Valuation and Regional Task Force on Legal Matters, and that meetings will be organized before the PSC to get their ideas and recommendations for PSC consideration. Considering the limited time and budget, it was suggested that the activities and deliverables be prioritized to focus on regional issues like the regional seas, sustainable development goals, the global programme of action, and international cooperation instrument. It was further suggested that SEAFDEC and UNOPS to work together on the engagement of regional consultants to initiate the activities, and that participating countries through the National Technical Focal Points to nominate and designate Land-based Pollution National Focal Points and Specialized Executing Agencies.

69. Following discussions, the committee agreed on the following:

- Establish and convene first meetings of the Regional Working Group on Land-based Pollution (RWG-LbP), Regional Task Force on Economic Valuation (RTF-EV) and Regional Task Force on Legal Matters (RTF-LM) to review and discuss Components 2 and 3 outcomes, outputs, activities and timelines, based on regional and national priorities, before the PSC meeting.
- Submit the RWG-Land-based Pollution, RTF-Economic Valuation and RTF-LM reports and recommendations to PSC for consideration.

- SEAFDEC and UNOPS to work together on the engagement of regional consultants to initiate the activities of Components 2 and 3.
- Participating countries through the National Technical Focal Points to nominate and designate National Focal Points and Specialized Executing Agencies for RWG-Land-based Pollution, RTF-Economic Valuation and RTF-LM.

70. Ms. Vanderbeck shared some information related to the agenda like the governance mechanism that will be developed in the SCS SAP Project where it will look into regional governance mechanism for the South China Sea. At the moment, there is no legal binding agreement in the region, only an action plan through the Coordinating Body on the Seas of East Asia (COBSEA), a Regional Seas Programme administered by UNEP. Other Regional Seas Programmes have a convention with established protocols to address specific issues in the region. She shared the information about the Cartagena Convention in the Caribbean region as example.

71. Ms. Vanderbeck shared another information on the Small Grants Programme activity of the SCS SAP Project. During the first phase of the project, small grants to communities were implemented to meet the SAP targets. The current project intends to replicate the experience of first phase through a mechanism where SEAFDEC would become the facility to provide small grants to communities. She encouraged the committee to discuss the mechanism if interested, as the region have the opportunity to work and test the mechanism through the SCS SAP Project. She informed the meeting that there are other grant mechanism existing such as the blue carbon facility, which capitalizes on the small grants. Blue carbon market is very high for coastal ecosystems. UNEP is pilot testing the mechanism and can share the experience of other regions if interested.

12. Initial discussion on national data required to develop the revised Transboundary Diagnosis Analysis (TDA) of the South China Sea

72. The Chairperson invited Ms. Isabelle Vanderbeck who introduced some information related to the agenda. Ms. Vanderbeck informed the committee that the GEF requested the project to update the Transboundary Diagnostic Analysis using the Transboundary Water Assessment Programme (TWAP) which has developed a set of methodology, indicators and parameters that can be looked into in updating the TDA or recreating a TDA for the South China Sea. She walked through the TWAP website (<http://www.geftwap.org/>) and encouraged the committee to visit and advise the SCS SAP Project on how to update the TDA. She informed that there are experts supporting countries around the world like Dr. Liana McManus, who compiled the TDA for the South China Sea in 2000 including the TWAP in the Caribbean. Dr. McManus could provide and support the committee and the region in updating the TDA.

73. The Chairperson invited Dr. Vo Si Tuan who introduced and walked through the contents of the TDA document published in 2000, noting the many elements considered such as habitats, fisheries, and land-based and sea-based pollution. He informed the meeting that there were similar updates and outputs made in 2008 during the first phase of the project. The emerging issues that were not included in the TDA were also presented. He informed the meeting that one of the key outputs of the project is to revise the TDA and SAP and suggested steps to further move the TDA updating such as the hiring of consultant to help and develop the TDA. The consultant, however, cannot do anything without the national reports as it contains the data and information at national level, which is very important for TDA updating. He stressed the important role of the National Technical Focal Points for the national inputs including regional organizations like COBSEA, PEMSEA and SEAFDEC.

74. Dr. Tuan invited the committee to review the TDA published in 2000 and discuss on needed and available data and information which can be provided for preparation of the revised TDA of the South China Sea. Dr. Miguel Fortes commended the many laudable achievements of the participating countries

in implementing the SAP such as the expansion of activities, financial schemes, reforms and regulations and management plans. He, however, expressed concern on the use of these achievements to benefit or advance the SAP objectives. Mr. Zhu noted that most of the achievements were done over a long-term period by a number of institutions and expressed concern on the limited timeframe of the project to do the assessment. He recognized the importance and the need to revise the TDA to integrate emerging issues as well as to provide regional context for regional and site managers on environmental issues and programs to enhance their knowledge. He informed the meeting that the project provides opportunity to consolidate the achievements, the knowledge acquired and the problems emerging including possible solutions to enhance knowledge and science, capacity and governance. In the development of the terms of reference for the TDA, Dr. Pei Xiangbin, National Coordinator of China suggested that the development of the terms of reference be made in consultation with participating countries since the TDA needs the endorsement of the countries to coordinate the process.

75. Following discussions, the committee agreed to hire a consultant to help develop and update the TDA and SAP including the national reports. The terms of reference for the TDA will be developed in consultation with the participating countries. The National Technical Focal Points will be the main contact points for the national inputs. For regional inputs, the Project Coordination Unit will coordinate with regional organizations like COBSEA, PEMSEA and SEAFDEC.

13. Execution arrangement and work plans

76. The Chairperson invited Mr. Reynaldo Molina who presented the next steps in the RSTC towards execution of activities under the SCS SAP, including next meeting of the RSTC. Mr. Molina presented the follow up actions as discussed and agreed in the meeting.

The Project Coordination Unit will:

- Revise RSTC TOR on establishment of Regional Task Forces and membership of RSTC to include a social science expert
- Fast track the PCA process and signing - Review and finalization of Indonesia and Vietnam PCAs; Follow-up signing of Philippines and China PCAs
- Develop TOR and engage/hire consultant(s) to assist in the updating of TDA and SAP, development of regional governance mechanism, development of SGP facility, etc.
- Draft schedule of regional meetings – PSC2, RSTC2, RWG2-Habitats, RWG1-LBP, RTF-LM and RTF-EV
- Establish and convene the RWG-LBP, RTF-LM and RTF-EV to review and discuss components 2 and 3 activities, tentatively in December 2022, before the PSC meeting planned in January 2023
- Follow up discussions with COBSEA and PEMSEA and other projects on global/regional processes and issues including possible collaboration
- Organize group for the publication on good practices to be composed of NTFP, NC, regional experts and PCU FR; National project team to provide the names of focal points a week after RSTC meeting
- Revise the SAP implementation achievement template for sharing to national project teams
- Review project Results Framework in relation to overall and proposed (revised) targets
- Review and evaluate project timeline and possible extension beyond June 2024, including project resources and funding
- Draft revised project workplan and budget for PSC consideration
- Draft report of the meeting by 31 October 2022 for circulation. PCU to receive final comments by 15 November 2022. Final report for circulation and adoption by RSTC members via silent procedure.

At national level, the participating countries will:

- Completion and Finalization of remaining Project Cooperation Agreements by December 2022 (Indonesia and Vietnam)
- Full implementation of signed PCA workplan and activities (Cambodia and Thailand)
- Facilitate countersigning of PCA by government (Philippines)
- Updating and submission of inputs (including Fisheries Refugia) from countries for the good practices document by December 2022. Review and finalization of document from January to March with the final draft by end of March 2023 for publication.
- Further review and completion of SAP implementation achievement report by December 2022. Review and finalization of report from January to March with the final draft by end of March 2023 for publication.
- Confirm SEA and national focal points for Land-based Pollution, Economic Valuation and Legal Matters by 1st week of November 2022
- Review Components 2 and 3 workplan and activities taking into consideration national priorities and emerging issues in the prioritization of activities for implementation
- Establish and convene NTWG with all habitats focal points (mangroves, coral reefs, seagrass, wetlands, land-based pollution, economic valuation and legal matters plus national experts) to share RSTC discussions, recommendations and workplan
- Reconfirm/update national focal points and members of project bodies (IMC, NTWG, National Committees/Working Groups) including SEAs
- Review of resource tools and information on TDA/SAP updating, SGP facility development, and regional governance mechanism
- Ensure integration and participation of Fisheries Refugia counterparts and activities in SCS SAP national and site level meetings and activities
- Review involvement of Malaysia in project activities, e.g., updating of TDA and SAP. Malaysia Fisheries Refugia National Focal Point to coordinate.
- Completion and submission of updated NIR by December 2022
- Proposed next RSTC meeting location. Bilateral talk with Cambodia team expressed interest to host the next meeting in Cambodia, subject to consultation and approval of MOE officials.

The key steps and meetings are as follows:

- 1st week November 2022 – Submission of national focal points and SEAs for the Land-based Pollution, Economic Valuation and Legal Matters focal areas
- November/December 2022 – Develop TOR and initiate recruitment process of consultant/s
- December 2022 – 1st meetings of the Regional Working Group (RWG) on Land-based Pollution, Regional Task Force (RTF) on Economic Valuation, and RTF on Legal Matters
- December 2022 – All legal agreements (PCAs) to be finalized and signed with each SEA
- December 2022 – Submission of: 1) draft updated good practices document; 2) draft updated SAP implementation achievement report; and 3) updated National Implementation Report (NIR)
- January 10-15, 2023 – 2nd Project Steering Committee (PSC) Meeting back-to-back with the Final Fisheries Refugia Project Steering Committee/Project Closing Meeting
- February/March 2023 – 2nd Regional Working Group (RWG) and Regional Task Force (RTF) Meetings
- March 2023 – Publication of good practices document and SAP achievement report
- April 2023 – 2nd Regional Scientific and Technical Committee (RSTC) Meeting
- September/October 2023 – 3rd Regional Working Group (RWG) and Regional Task Force (RTF) Meetings
- November 2023 – 3rd Regional Scientific and Technical Committee (RSTC) Meeting
- December 2023 – 3rd Project Steering Committee (PSC) Meeting

77. The Chairperson informed the meeting that the meeting report will be shared with the committee members for review before adoption via silent procedure. The point of concern will have to be considered by the participating countries otherwise it will require more consultation.

14. Any other business

78. The Chairperson invited the committee members to consider and discuss any items of business introduced under Agenda item 3. There was no pending agenda raised under Agenda item 3.

79. Mr. Chanrachkij inquired if there is any plan to conduct the mid-term evaluation of the project, noting that the project will end in June 2023 as per project document. Mr. Bodunescu informed the meeting that there is no plan yet as it is important to consider having a demonstrable progress of the project to be meaningful. UNEP has to be considered since they are an important decision factor.

80. Mr. Zhu, on behalf of IOC/WESTPAC, informed the meeting that they would like to develop collaboration activities with the SCS SAP Project but expressed concern on the timeline of the project. Nevertheless, IOC/WESTPAC will explore opportunities to make the collaboration possible such as in the context of the UN Decade of Ocean Science particularly on marine spatial planning. IOC/WESTPAC will establish a meaningful partnership with the project and find a meeting point within the two-year implementation of the project. The Chairperson noted IOC/WESTPAC interest to collaborate and suggested that the project can participate in activities that will be conducted by IOC/WESTPAC.

81. Ms. Pakawan Tawalat, National Coordinator of Thailand provided a brief information about the field visit at Don Hoi Lot wetland site on 19 October 2022.

15. Closure of the Meeting

The Chairperson informed the meeting that the meeting report will be prepared and shared to the Rapporteur of the meeting for review, and then to the committee members for adoption via silent procedure. He invited members of the committee for some closing statement. Committee members expressed appreciation to the Government of Thailand for hosting the meeting, the Project Coordination Unit for the organization and conduct of the meeting and all the people involved in the meeting. Committee members recognized the challenges in implementing the project and assured the project of their full support and cooperation to implement the project smoothly.

The Chairperson expressed thanks to the organizing committee, the SEAFDEC and UNOPS staff, and the Project Coordination Unit who helped a lot in the conduct of the meeting. He thanked all the regional experts for their valuable suggestions and all the participants for their active participation. The Chairperson formally closed the meeting.

ANNEXES

Annex 1	List of Participants
Annex 2	List of Documents
Annex 3	Agenda and Annotated Agenda
Annex 4	Revised Terms of Reference and Rules of Procedure

Annex 1. List of Participants

SCS SAP REGIONAL SCIENTIFIC AND TECHNICAL COMMITTEE (RSTC) MEMBERS

NATIONAL TECHNICAL WORKING GROUP (NTWG) CHAIRPERSONS AND TECHNICAL STAFF

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Annex 2. List of Documents

Meeting documents

SCSSAP RSTC.1/1	Provisional Agenda
SCSSAP RSTC.1/2	Annotated Provisional Agenda
SCSSAP RSTC.1/3	Draft Terms of Reference and Rules of Procedures for the Regional Scientific and Technical Committee
SCSSAP RSTC.1/4	SAP Implementation Achievements at National Level 2008-2021
SCSSAP RSTC.1/5	Reports of the Chairpersons of the Regional Working Groups on Mangroves, Coral Reefs, Seagrass and Wetlands
SCSSAP RSTC.1/6	Reports of the National Technical Focal Points of the Fisheries Refugia Project Progress and Achievements
SCSSAP RSTC.1/7	PCA Development and Finalization Status and Updated SCS SAP Targets
SCSSAP RSTC.1/8	Good Practices on Habitat and Land - Based Pollution
SCSSAP RSTC.1/9	Regional and National Activities under Components 2 and 3 and Priority Actions and Next Steps
SCSSAP RSTC.1/10	RSTC Workplan and Next Steps
SCSSAP RSTC.1/11	Report of the meeting

Information documents

SCSSAP RSTC.1/Inf.1	Provisional list of documents
SCSSAP RSTC.1/Inf.2	Draft List of Participants
SCSSAP RSTC.1/Inf.3	PSC.1/3 Inception Phase Regional Implementation Report
SCSSAP RSTC.1/Inf.4	PSC.1/Inf.3 Cambodia Summary Profile
SCSSAP RSTC.1/Inf.5	PSC.1/Inf.4 China Summary Profile
SCSSAP RSTC.1/Inf.6	PSC.1/Inf.5 Indonesia Summary Profile
SCSSAP RSTC.1/Inf.7	PSC.1/Inf.6 Philippines Summary Profile
SCSSAP RSTC.1/Inf.8	PSC.1/Inf.7 Thailand Summary Profile
SCSSAP RSTC.1/Inf.9	PSC.1/Inf.8 Vietnam Summary Profile
SCSSAP RSTC.1/Inf.10	EAS/RCU TRS No. 14 Transboundary Diagnostic Analysis for the South China Sea [LINK]

Reference documents

	SCS SAP full project document [LINK]
	SCS Strategic Action Programme [LINK]
SCSSAP IP.1/4	1 st Regional Inception Phase Meeting Report [LINK]
SCSSAP IP.2/5	2 nd Regional Inception Phase Meeting Report [LINK]
SCSSAP IP.3/5	3 rd Regional Inception Phase Meeting – NIR Development and Completion [LINK]
SCSSAP PSC.1/9	Project Steering Committee Meeting Report [LINK]
SCSSAP IW/3	SCS SAP Inception Meeting Report [LINK]
SCSSAP RWG-M.1/6	First Meeting of the Regional Working Group on Mangroves Report [LINK]
SCSSAP RWG-CR.1/6	First Meeting of the Regional Working Group on Coral Reefs Report [LINK]
SCSSAP RWG-SG.1/6	First Meeting of the Regional Working Group on Seagrass Report [LINK]
SCSSAP RWG-W.1/6	First Meeting of the Regional Working Group on Wetlands Report [LINK]

Annex 3. Agenda and Annotated Agenda

1. Opening of the meeting

- 1.1 Welcome address by Project Manager (or UNEP Task Manager)
- 1.2 Welcome remark by the Secretary General of the Southeast Asian Fisheries Development Center
- 1.3 Welcome remark by the Representative of the Thailand Government
- 1.4 Introduction of members

2. Organisation of the meeting

- 2.1 Designation of officers
- 2.2 Organisation of work

3. Adoption of the meeting agenda

4. Consideration of the Terms of Reference and Rules of Procedures of the Regional Scientific and Technical Committee

5. Review of the SCS SAP outcomes designed in the SAP and revised in the Inception Report

6. Reports on achievements in implementing the SAP at the national level during 2008 – 2021

- 6.1 Cambodia SCSSAP National Technical Focal Point
- 6.2 China SCSSAP National Technical Focal Point
- 6.3 Indonesia SCSSAP National Technical Focal Point
- 6.4 Philippines SCSSAP National Technical Focal Point
- 6.5 Thailand SCSSAP National Technical Focal Point
- 6.6 Viet Nam SCSSAP National Technical Focal Point

7. Reports of the First Meetings of Regional Working Groups (RWGs) on Mangroves, Coral Reefs, Seagrass and Coastal Wetlands

- 7.1 RWG Mangrove Chair
- 7.2 RWG Coral Reef Chair
- 7.3 RWG Seagrass Chair
- 7.4 RWG Wetland Chair

8. Report of the Regional Scientific and Technical Committee Members of the Fisheries Refugia Project

- 8.1 Cambodia FR National Technical Focal Point
- 8.2 Indonesia FR National Technical Focal Point
- 8.3 Malaysia FR National Technical Focal Point
- 8.4 Philippines FR National Technical Focal Point
- 8.5 Thailand FR National Technical Focal Point
- 8.6 Vietnam FR National Technical Focal Point

- 9. Review of status in development and signature of the PCAs and update of SCS SAP targets at the site level designed in available PCAs**
- 10. Plan for documentation and publication of good practices on habitat and land - based pollution**
- 11. Next steps in implementing regional and national activities under the components 2 and 3**
- 12. Initial discussion on national data required to develop the revised Transboundary Diagnosis Analysis (TDA) of the South China Sea**
- 13. Execution arrangement and work plans**
- 14. Any other business**
- 15. Closure of the Meeting**

Monday, 17 October 2022, 09.00 – 17.15

08.30-09.00	Registration of participants
1. Opening of the meeting	
09.00-09.10 10 min	1.1 Welcome address by the Project Manager (or UNEP Task Manager) The Secretariat will invite the SCS SAP Project Manager (or UNEP Task Manager) to open the meeting and deliver the welcome address.
09.10-09.20 10 min	1.2 Welcome remark by the Secretary General of the Southeast Asian Fisheries Development Center The Secretariat will invite the Secretary General of SEAFDEC to deliver the welcome remark as the executing agency for regional activities.
09.20-09.30 10 min	1.3 Welcome remark by the Representative of the Thailand Government The Secretariat will invite the Representative of the Thailand Government to deliver the welcome remark as the host country of the meeting.
09.30-09.45 15 min	1.4 Introduction of members The Secretariat will be invited to introduce the members of the Regional Scientific and Technical Committee and other participants.
2. Organization of the meeting	
09.45-10.00 15 min	2.1 Designation of officers In accordance with the draft rules of procedure for the Regional Scientific and Technical Committee, participants will be invited by the Secretariat to elect a Chairperson, Vice-Chairperson and Rapporteur.
10.00-10.15 15 min	2.2 Organisation of work The Chairperson will invite the Secretariat to brief participants on the proposed organization of work, the list of documents available to the meeting and administrative arrangements for the conduct of the meeting. The meeting will be conducted face to face and online in plenary. The meeting will be conducted in English.
3. Adoption of the meeting agenda	
10.15-10.30 15 min	The Chairperson will invite participants to consider the provisional agenda and annotated agenda prepared by the Secretariat as the documents SCSSAP RSTC 1/1 and SCSSAP RSTC 1/2 (this document), propose any amendments or additional items for consideration, and adopt the agenda.
10.30-10.45	MORNING BREAK
4. Consideration of the Terms of Reference and Rules of Procedures of the Regional Scientific and Technical Committee	
10.45-11.15 30 min	The Chairperson will invite the Secretariat to introduce documents SCSSAP RSTC 1/3: Provisional Terms of Reference and SCSSAP RSTC 1/4: Provisional Rules of Procedures for the Regional Scientific and Technical Committee of the UNEP/GEF SCS SAP Project, previously circulated. The RSTC is invited to consider, amend and adopt the Terms of Reference and Rules of Procedures as outlined in this document.
5. Review of the SCS SAP outcomes designed in the SAP and revised in the Inception Report	
11.15-12.00 45 min	The Chairperson will invite the Secretariat to briefly introduce document SCSSAP RSTC 1/Inf3: Regional Implementing Report, focusing on the SCS SAP outcomes and outputs designed in the SAP and revised in the Inception Phase.
12.00-13.30	LUNCH BREAK
6. Reports on achievements in implementing the SAP at the national level during 2008 – 2021	
13.30-15.00	The Chairperson will invite SCS SAP National Technical Focal Points from Cambodia, China, Indonesia, Philippines, Thailand and Viet Nam to present key achievement in SAP

15 min country presentation	<p>implementation between 2008-2021 based on the reports prepared in advance of the 1st RSTC meeting. Following the presentations, the members will be invited to discuss on further steps for the finalization and publication of national achievement in SAP implementation in 2008-2021.</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Cambodia SCSSAP National Technical Focal Point 2. China SCSSAP National Technical Focal Point 3. Indonesia SCSSAP National Technical Focal Point 4. Philippines SCSSAP National Technical Focal Point 5. Thailand SCSSAP National Technical Focal Point 6. Vietnam SCSSAP National Technical Focal Point
7. Reports of the First Meetings of Regional Working Groups (RWGs) on Mangroves, Coral Reefs, Seagrass and Coastal Wetlands	
15.00-16.00 15 min presentation	<p>The Chairperson will invite the Chairs of the SCS SAP Regional Working Groups to report and highlight key discussions, issues and challenges including recommendations of the 1st meeting of the Regional Working Groups on Mangroves, Coral Reefs, Seagrass and Coastal Wetlands.</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. RWG Mangrove Chair 2. RWG Coral Reef Chair 3. RWG Seagrass Chair 4. RWG Wetland Chair
16.00-16.15	AFTERNOON BREAK
8. Report of the Regional Scientific and Technical Committee Members of the Fisheries Refugia Project	
16.15-17.15 10 min presentation	<p>The Chairperson will invite the Fisheries Refugia Project National Technical Focal Points from Cambodia, Indonesia, Malaysia, Philippines, Thailand and Viet Nam to report and highlight key achievements including issues and challenges, and recommendations for integration and collaboration.</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Cambodia FR National Technical Focal Point 2. Indonesia FR National Technical Focal Point 3. Malaysia FR National Technical Focal Point 4. Philippines FR National Technical Focal Point 5. Thailand FR National Technical Focal Point 6. Vietnam FR National Technical Focal Point

Tuesday, 18 October 2022, 09.00 – 16.30

9. Review of status in development and signature of the PCAs and update of SCS SAP targets at the site level designed in available PCAs	
09.00-09.45 45 min	<p>The Chairperson will invite the Secretariat to present document SCSSAP RSTC 1/6 PCA development and finalization status and updated SCS SAP targets at the site level as well as challenges in the implementation. The meeting will be requested to discuss on solutions to proceed finalization and implementation of PCAs.</p>
10. Plan for documentation and publication of good practices on habitat and land - based pollution	
09.45-10.45 1 hour	<p>The Chairperson will invite the Science Coordinator to introduce the document SCSSAP RSTC 1/7 Good Practices on Habitat and Land-Based Pollution, and invite the members to discuss on publication of this living document in 2022/2023 to include all past and present good practices</p>
10.45-11.00	MORNING BREAK
11. Next steps in implementing regional and national activities under the components 2 and 3	
11.00-12.00 1 hour	<p>The Chairperson will invite the Secretariat to present the document SCSSAP RSTC 1/8 Regional and National Activities under Components 2 and 3. The meeting will be requested to</p>

	discuss the priority actions and next steps in coordinating regional and national activities under component 2 and 3.
12.00-13.30	LUNCH BREAK
12. Initial discussion on national data required to develop the revised Transboundary Diagnostic Analysis (TDA) of the South China Sea	
13.30-14.30 1 hour	The Chairperson will invite the Secretariat to introduce the document SCSSAP RSTC 1/Inf4 Transboundary Diagnostic Analysis for the South China Sea. The Chairperson will invite members to review the TDA published in 2000 and discuss on needed and available data and information which can be provided for preparation of the revised TDA of the South China Sea.
13. Execution arrangement and work plans	
14.30-15.30 1 hour	The Chairperson will invite the Secretariat to present the next steps in the RSTC towards execution of activities under the SCS SAP, including next meeting of the RSTC.
14. Any other business	
15.30-16.00 30 min	The Chairperson will invite members to consider and discuss any items of business introduced under agenda item 3.
15. Closure of the Meeting	
16.00-16.30 30 min	The Chairperson will call for a formal motion to close the meeting. The Chairperson will invite a representative member of the RSTC to deliver the closing remark.

Wednesday, 19 October 2022, 08.00 – 15.00

08.00-15.00	Visit to Project Site in Thailand
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Annex 4. Revised Terms of Reference and Rules of Procedures

TERMS OF REFERENCE FOR THE REGIONAL SCIENTIFIC AND TECHNICAL COMMITTEE

1. RATIONALE AND PURPOSE OF A REGIONAL SCIENTIFIC AND TECHNICAL COMMITTEE

1.1 To facilitate the achievement of the goals and objectives of the UNEP/GEF project entitled “*Implementing the Strategic Action Programme for the South China Sea and Gulf of Thailand*”, a Regional Scientific and Technical Committee (RSTC) will be established with responsibility for: overseeing the scientific and technical elements of the project; ensuring effective implementation of activities undertaken during project execution; and providing sound scientific and technical advice to the SCS SAP Project Steering Committee.

1.2 The RSTC will also be responsible for ensuring that scientific and technical aspects of SCS SAP Project meet International standards. Specifically, it will review the substantive activities of the project to: (1) reduce habitat degradation and loss via national and local reforms to achieve Strategic Action Programme targets for coastal habitat management in the South China Sea; (2) strengthen knowledge-based planning for the management of coastal habitats and land-based pollution to reduce environmental degradation of the South China Sea; and (3) facilitate regional and national level integration and cooperation for implementation of the South China Sea Strategic Action Programme.

2. ROLE AND FUNCTION

2.1 As the over-riding scientific and technical body for the project, the RSTC shall provide sound scientific and technical advice to the SCS SAP Project Steering Committee regarding matters requiring decision and shall provide direction and strategic guidance to the national level activities aimed at the achieved of Strategic Action Programme targets as required.

3. THE REGIONAL SCIENTIFIC AND TECHNICAL COMMITTEE SHALL:

3.1 Regional Activities

3.1.1 Review and co-ordinate regional scientific and technical activities of the SCS SAP Project;

3.1.2 Review and evaluate, from a scientific and technical perspective, progress in achievement of Strategic Action Programme targets, and provide guidance for improvement when necessary;

3.1.3 Receive, and review reports, data and information from Regional Working Groups and Task Forces to be established, if necessary, under the project;

3.1.4 Provide the SCS SAP Project Steering Committee with recommendations on proposed regional activities, work plans, and budgets;

3.1.5 Provide the SCS SAP Project Steering Committee with technical guidance and suggestions to improve project activities where necessary, including reforms of national and regional policy and planning

frameworks, including the update of the Transboundary Diagnostic Analysis and Strategic Action Programme for the South China Sea;

3.1.6 Facilitate co-operation with relevant international, regional, and national organisations and projects to enhance the effectiveness and efficiency of the SCS SAP implementation initiative; &

3.1.7 Monitor the progress of the project's regional activities and ensure the quality of outputs.

3.2 National Activities

3.2.1 Review and evaluate, from a scientific and technical perspective, progress in implementation of the national activities of the SCS SAP Project, and provide guidance for improvement when necessary;

3.2.2 Receive, and review reports, data and information from national level activities of the project and oversee the regional syntheses of this information to identify overall needs and priorities for strengthening scientific and technical support to Strategic Action Programme implementation;

3.2.3 Receive, review, and comment on drafts of national policies and/or action frameworks; and

3.2.3 Advise the regional SCS SAP Project Coordination Unit and National Focal Points of the need for public awareness and information materials concerning efforts to reverse environmental degradation trends in the South China Sea.

4. PROPOSED MEMBERSHIP FOR THE REGIONAL SCIENTIFIC AND TECHNICAL COMMITTEE

4.1 The Regional Scientific and Technical Committee shall consist of: the Chairpersons of the National Technical Working Groups (NTWGs); the Chairpersons of the Regional Working Groups (RWGs) and Regional Task Forces (RTFs); up to 5 selected regional experts; and the Senior Project Manager of SCS SAP Project Coordination Unit.

4.2 The SCS SAP Project Coordination Unit, in consultation with National Technical Focal Points, shall nominate no more than 5 regional experts including a social science expert, to ensure a balance of expertise and specialisation consistent with the mandate of the Committee. The membership of the RSTC shall be formally established at the first meeting of the committee.

4.3 At the commencement of each meeting the committee shall elect a Chairperson and a Vice-Chair from amongst the members. The Vice-Chair shall act as Chairperson of meetings in the absence of the Chairperson. The Chairperson and Vice-Chair shall participate in the annual meetings of the SCS SAP Project Steering Committee at which they shall present the reports and recommendations of the RSTC.

5. SECRETARIAT

5.1 The SCS SAP Project Coordination Unit shall act as Secretariat to the RSTC and shall ensure that reports of the meetings are circulated to all members of the regional SCS SAP Project Steering Committee.

6. MEETINGS OF THE REGIONAL SCIENTIFIC AND TECHNICAL COMMITTEE

6.1 The SCS SAP Project Coordination Unit in consultation with the Chairperson shall convene meetings of the RSTC according to an agreed schedule, which will form part of the agreed work plan and timetable for the work of the Committee.

6.2 The first meeting of the RSTC will be convened during project inception to: agree on the detailed activities, work plan and timetable for the twenty-four months leading to the project's mid-term evaluation: and to provide guidance to the project's emerging scientific and technical needs.

7. CONDUCT OF REGIONAL SCIENTIFIC AND TECHNICAL COMMITTEE BUSINESS

7.1 The Committee shall operate and take decisions on the basis of consensus, regarding any matter relating to project execution that has regional significance. Where full consensus cannot be achieved in reaching agreement during a meeting of the Committee, the Chair, Vice-Chair and Senior Project Manager shall decide on the least contentious course of action to be adopted.

8. PARTICIPATION OF OBSERVERS IN REGIONAL SCIENTIFIC AND TECHNICAL COMMITTEE MEETINGS

8.1 The RSTC may invite observers to participate in its meetings;

8.2 Upon the invitation of the Chairperson, observers may participate in the discussion of issues within their competence or scope of activities, without the right to participate in decision-making; and

8.3 Observers may, upon invitation of the Chairperson, submit written statements that shall be circulated by the SCS SAP Project Coordinating Unit to the members of the RSTC.

RULES OF PROCEDURE FOR THE REGIONAL SCIENTIFIC AND TECHNICAL COMMITTEE

ESTABLISHMENT OF THE COMMITTEE

The Regional Scientific and Technical Committee (RSTC) is established under the project brief for the UNEP/GEF Project entitled: “Implementing the Strategic Action Programme for the South China Sea and Gulf of Thailand” (SCS SAP Project), endorsed by the GEF CEO on the and the sixteenth meeting of the Global Environment Facility (GEF) CEO on the November 03, 2016, as follows:

“The Regional Scientific and Technical Committee as the scientific and technical oversight body of the project, will be composed solely of representatives of the participating countries, regional experts and PCU. The Committee shall be responsible for overseeing the scientific and technical elements of the project ensuring effective implementation of activities undertaken during project execution, and providing sound scientific and technical advice to the Project Steering Committee. The PCU will act as Secretariat of the Committee. UNOPS and SEAFDEC officials responsible for the execution of the project will support the PCU. During the execution of the project, decisions of the Committee will be made through consultation and on the basis of consensus by all members of the Committee”.

Rules of Procedure

I – MEMBERSHIP

Rule 1

Full members

Full members of the RSTC shall consist solely of the:

1. Chairpersons of the National Technical Working Groups (NTWGs);
2. Chairpersons of the Regional Working Groups (RWGs) and Regional Task Forces (RTFs);
3. Five (5) regional experts; and
4. Senior Project Manager of SCS SAP Project Coordination Unit.

Rule 2

Designation of members

Following the establishment of the National Technical Working Group (NTWG) in each country, the Chairperson of the NTWG shall notify the Project Co-ordinating Unit of their designated members, 6 weeks (30 working days) before the RSTC meetings.

Rule 3

Alternate members

In the event that a full member is unable to participate in a meeting of the Committee an alternate representative may be designated to represent the member concerned. Alternate Members shall be designated through written notification by the Chairman of the NTWG, to the Project Coordinating Unit (PCU) 4 weeks (20 working days) before the RSTC meeting, which the alternate member will attend. Alternate members shall have the same powers and duties as a full member of the Committee.

Rule 4

Amendment of the membership

Notwithstanding the rules contained in this document the RSTC shall have the power to amend, from time to time, the membership of the Committee.

Rule 5

Observers

The RSTC may invite observers to participate in its meetings. Upon the invitation of the Chairperson, observers may:

1. Participate in the discussion of issues within their competence or scope of activities, without the right to participate in decision-making; and
2. Submit written statements that shall be circulated by the SCS SAP Project Coordinating Unit to the members of the RSTC.

Rule 6

Co-opted members

The RSTC may agree, by consensus at the commencement of each meeting to co-opt to any meeting or meetings of the Committee or parts thereof, as the Committee shall deem appropriate:

1. Additional experts as observers or advisers; and
2. Alternate representatives who have not been designated under rule 3 as full members.

II - SESSIONS

Rule 7

Regular sessions

The Project Co-ordinating Unit shall convene regular annual meetings of the RSTC. Each regular session of the RSTC shall be held at a date and location, fixed by the Committee at its previous session.

Rule 8

Ad hoc meetings

Ad hoc meetings may be convened by the Chairman:

1. When the majority of members make a request for such a meeting to the Project Coordinating Unit.
2. At the request of the Project Co-ordinating Unit when circumstances demand.

III - ROLE AND FUNCTIONS OF THE COMMITTEE

Rule 9

Powers of the Committee

The RSTC shall provide sound scientific and technical advice to the PSC regarding matters requiring decision and shall provide direction and strategic guidance to the national level activities aimed at the achieved of Strategic Action Programme targets as required. Specifically the RSTC shall:

Regional Activities

1. Review and co-ordinate regional scientific and technical activities of the project;

2. Review and evaluate, from a scientific and technical perspective, progress in achievement of Strategic Action Programme targets, and provide guidance for improvement when necessary;
3. Receive, and review reports, data and information from Regional Working Groups and Task Forces to be established, if necessary established under the project;
4. Provide the PSC with recommendations on proposed regional activities, work plans, and budgets;
5. Provide the PSC with technical guidance and suggestions to improve project activities where necessary, including reforms of national and regional policy and planning frameworks, including the update of the Transboundary Diagnostic Analysis and Strategic Action Programme for the South China Sea;
6. Facilitate co-operation with relevant international, regional, and national organisations and projects to enhance the effectiveness and efficiency of the SCS SAP implementation initiative; and
7. Monitor the progress of the project's regional activities and ensure the quality of outputs.

National Activities

1. Review and evaluate, from a scientific and technical perspective, progress in implementation of the national activities of the project, and provide guidance for improvement when necessary;
2. Receive, and review reports, data and information from national level activities of the project and oversee the regional syntheses of this information to identify overall needs and priorities for strengthening scientific and technical support to Strategic Action Programme implementation;
3. Receive, review, and comment on drafts of national policies and/or action frameworks; and
4. Advise the regional Project Co-ordinating Unit and National Focal Points of the need for public awareness and information materials concerning efforts to reverse environmental degradation trends in the South China Sea.

IV - AGENDA

Rule 10

Drawing up of the provisional agenda

The Senior Project Manager shall submit to the RSTC the provisional agenda. The provisional agenda shall include all items proposed by members of the RSTC and by the Project Co-ordinating Unit. Items proposed by members shall be accompanied by an explanatory memorandum and, if possible, by background documentation which shall be submitted to the PCU at least 4 weeks (20 working days) prior to the meeting. A provisional annotated agenda will be prepared from the provisional agenda and shall make reference to all relevant discussion and information documents.

Rule 11

Distribution of the agenda

The Project Co-ordinating Unit shall communicate the provisional agenda and provisional annotated agenda of each RSTC meeting together with working documents to the members at least 4 weeks (20 working days) in advance, whereas information documents will be sent at least 2 weeks (10 working days) in advance.

Rule 12

Adoption of the Agenda

At the commencement of each RSTC meeting, subject to Rule 10 and following the election of officers as required under Rule 15, the RSTC shall adopt the agenda for the meeting on the basis of the provisional agenda.

Rule 13

Agendas for special Ad hoc meetings

The provisional agenda for a special meeting of the RSTC shall consist only of those items proposed for consideration in the request for the holding of the meeting. The provisional agenda shall be transmitted to RSTC members 3 weeks (15 working days) in advance.

Rule 14

Revision of the agenda

During a meeting, the RSTC may revise the agenda for the session by adding, deleting, deferring or amending items. Notwithstanding Rule 11 the RSTC may at its absolute discretion agree to amend the agenda in order to enable the Committee to discuss urgent and important matters for which documentation was not distributed in advance.

V – OFFICERS

Rule 15

Elections of Officers

At the commencement of each RSTC meeting, the Committee shall elect a Chairperson, Vice-Chairperson and a Rapporteur from among its members.

Rule 16

Terms of office

The Chairperson, Vice–Chairperson and Rapporteur shall hold office until the subsequent meeting of the RSTC. They shall be eligible for re-election no more than once. None of them may hold office once their membership of the Committee is terminated by the country of which they are representative.

Rule 17

Acting Chairperson

If the Chairperson cannot preside at a meeting or any part thereof, the Vice-Chairperson shall act as Chairperson.

Rule 18

Powers of the Acting Chairperson

The Vice–Chairperson, acting as Chairperson shall have the same powers and duties as the Chairperson.

VI - SECRETARIAT

Rule 19

Secretariat

The Project Co-ordinating Unit, under the direction of the Senior Project Manager, shall act as Secretariat to the Committee. The secretariat shall:

1. Receive and circulate the documents of the RSTC;

2. Publish and circulate the decisions, reports and relevant documentation of the RSTC;
3. Have the custody of the documents in the archives of the PCU and generally perform all other work that the RSTC may require; and,
4. Prepare reports on project progress and future workplans for consideration by the RSTC.

Rule 20

Role of the Senior Project Manager in the convening and conduct of meetings

The Senior Project Manager shall:

1. Act as Secretary to all meetings of the RSTC and shall be assisted during meetings by a PCU staff member;
2. Designate when appropriate any officer of the Project Co-ordinating Unit to act as his/her representative;
3. Make oral and written statements to the RSTC concerning any question under consideration;
4. Be responsible for the necessary arrangements being made for meetings including the preparation and distribution of working documents in accordance with these rules; and,
5. Prepare and deliver reports on project progress and plans to appropriate international meetings of other bodies.

VII - CONDUCT OF BUSINESS

Rule 21

Quorum

A simple majority of the members of the Committee shall constitute a quorum.

Rule 22

Powers of the Chairperson

In addition to exercising the powers conferred upon them elsewhere by these rules, the Chairperson shall declare the opening and closing of each meeting of the RSTC, shall direct the discussion, ensure the observance of these rules, and shall accord the right to speak, and announce decisions. The Chairperson may also call a speaker to order if their remarks are not relevant to the subject under discussion.

Rule 23

Conduct of committee business

The Committee shall operate and take decisions on the basis of consensus, regarding any matter relating to project execution that has regional or transboundary significance. Where full consensus cannot be achieved in reaching agreement during a full meeting of the Committee, on any matter relating to project execution that has regional or transboundary significance, the Secretariat shall, in consultation with the Chairperson, facilitate negotiations during the subsequent inter-sessional period with a view to seeking resolution. The Secretariat will report the results of these negotiations to the Committee members.

Rule 24

Adjournment of debate

During the discussion of any matter on which a clear consensus fails to emerge, a representative may move the adjournment of the debate and its referral to a working group of the committee. The working group shall be charged with resolving the matter and shall be required to report the outcome to the full committee at the time of resumption of the debate. Any such motion shall have priority. In addition to the proposer of

the motion, one representative shall be allowed to speak in favour of, and one representative against, the motion.

Rule 25

Points of order

During the discussion of any matter, a member may raise a point of order. In this case, the Chairperson shall immediately state his/her ruling. If the ruling is challenged, the Chairperson shall forthwith submit their ruling to the Secretariat for decision, and it shall stand unless overruled.

Rule 26

Closure of debate

A representative may at any time move the closure of the debate whether or not any other representative has signified a wish to speak. Not more than two Members may be granted permission to speak against the closure. The Chairperson shall take the sense of the Secretariat on a motion for closure. If the Secretariat is in favour of the closure, the Chairperson shall declare the debate closed.

Rule 27

Decisions and amendments

Draft decisions, and substantial amendments or motions, shall be introduced in writing and handed to the Secretary of the Committee, who shall circulate copies to the Members before they are discussed and decided upon, unless the Committee decides otherwise. Upon the request of any member, any motion and amendment thereto made by any speaker shall be given to the Chairperson in writing and shall be read by them before any further speaker is called upon. The Chairperson may direct that any motion or amendment be circulated to the members present. This rule shall not apply to formal motions such as one for closure or adjournment.

Rule 28

Language of meetings

English shall be the working language of the RSTC.

Rule 29

Records of the meeting

Records of the meetings of the RSTC may be kept by the secretariat. They shall be prepared in the form of a draft report by the Secretary to the Committee working with the Rapporteur following the meeting. Members shall inform the Rapporteur of any changes they wish to have made. Any disagreement concerning such changes shall be referred to the Chairperson, whose decision shall be final. These amended records will be the official minutes of the meeting.

Rule 30

Distribution of meeting reports

The corrected version of the records of RSTC meetings shall be distributed as soon as possible following closure of the meeting in accordance with the usual practice of the United Nations. All reports will be available on the web-site (www.scssap.org).