



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

DRAFT TERMS OF REFERENCE AND RULES OF PROCEDURE FOR THE REGIONAL SCIENTIFIC AND TECHNICAL COMMITTEE



PROVISIONAL 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 established 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 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.

PROVISIONAL 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 RST 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 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).