



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

FIRST MEETING OF REGIONAL WORKING GROUP ON SEAGRASS

*Teleconference, 3 December 2021
13.00 – 17.00 Indochina time (ICT)*

**National Presentations on SAP implementation
Philippines**



UNOPS

SAP Evaluation (2008-2021)

- *Institutionalization of the Coastal and Marine Ecosystems Management Program (CMEMP) through the DENR Administrative Order 2016-26;*
- *Expansion of the coverage of Marine Protected Areas (MPAs) under the National Integrated Protected Areas System through the Republic Act 11038;*
- *There are still seagrass areas that are not yet included as part of this System, and DENR (BMB) management interventions are still limited outside the MPAs; and*
- *The implementation of SCS SAP shall complement our efforts in ensuring that seagrass habitats are conserved and protected, and in securing the ecosystem services that this habitat provides to coastal communities.*





SAP Evaluation (2008-2021)

SAP Output/Target	Implication at the national level	Details at sites	
Outcome 1.3 Conservation, management and sustainable use of 15,848 ha of known seagrass area in the South China Sea and Gulf of Thailand	3357.96 has	Cape Bolinao	1290 has
		El Nido	412.85 has
		Looc	846 has
		Lubang	647 has
		Masinloc	162.11 has
1.3.1 Twenty-one seagrass areas totalling 15,848 ha under sustainable management with supporting laws and regulations	3357.96 has		
1.3.2 Amended management plans for 7 existing MPAs with significant seagrass areas, to include specific seagrass-related management actions and policy, legal & institutional reforms	5 sites		
1.3.3 Designation of 7 new Marine Protected Areas focusing on seagrass areas identified in the prioritized listings of the SCS Project	5 sites		
1.3.4 Established mechanism for monitoring management, ecological and socio-economic indicators at 20 sites [based on SAP results framework]	5 sites		

See RWG-SG.4 Seagrass SAP Evaluation



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



SAP Implementation: Best Practices

- ***On the DENR-LGU Level:***
 - *Implementation of seasonal closure for fishing activities*
 - *Establishment of Marine Protected Area Networks*
 - *Strong collaboration with key stakeholders in the implementation of various plan, programs, and projects*
 - *Strong support of LGUs and partner agencies in law enforcement*
 - *Strong institutional support in the implementation of environmental laws*





SAP Implementation: Challenges

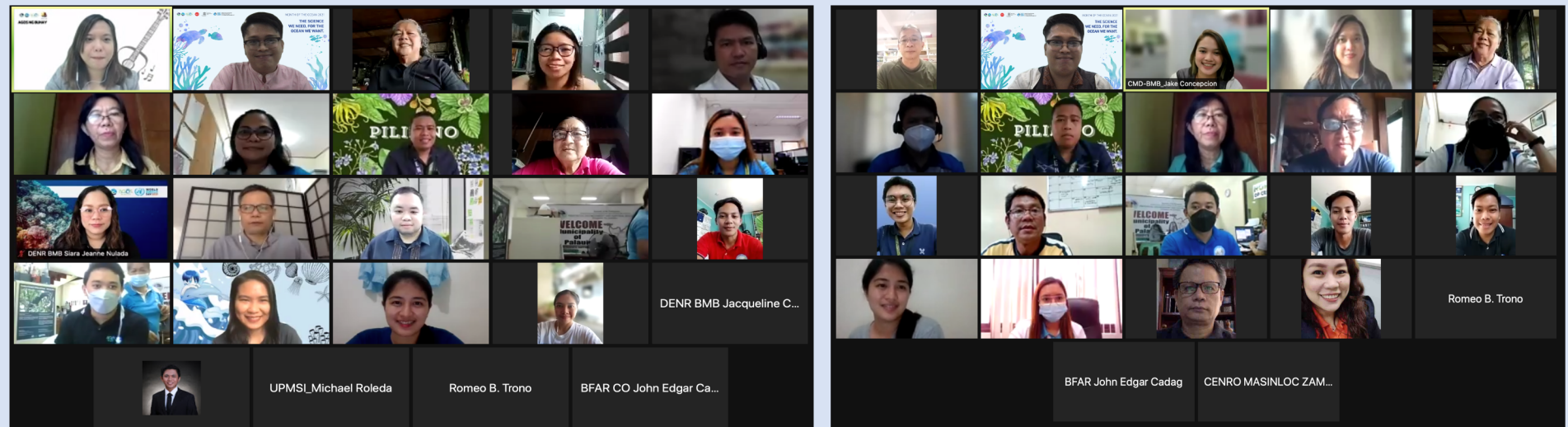
- No existing policy governing the conservation and protection of seagrass ecosystems
- Cooperation of the LGU in the implementation of the project
- Lack of man-power in the DENR Field Offices specializing in seagrass and coastal and marine
- Presence of illegal, unreported and unregulated fishing activities and other threats which disturbs and destructs the integrity of the coastal and marine ecosystems
- Accessibility of the sites due to some prevailing factors (i.e. weather conditions, logistical and budget implications, etc)
- Planting of mangroves in seagrass beds
- Accumulation of marine litter in seagrass beds





SAP Implementation: Consultations

- Conduct of the National Consultations on July 27 and September 29-30, 2021 to confirm the concurrence and local managers on the identified sites, as well as to gather initial site information and to identify initial activities to be performed under the program.





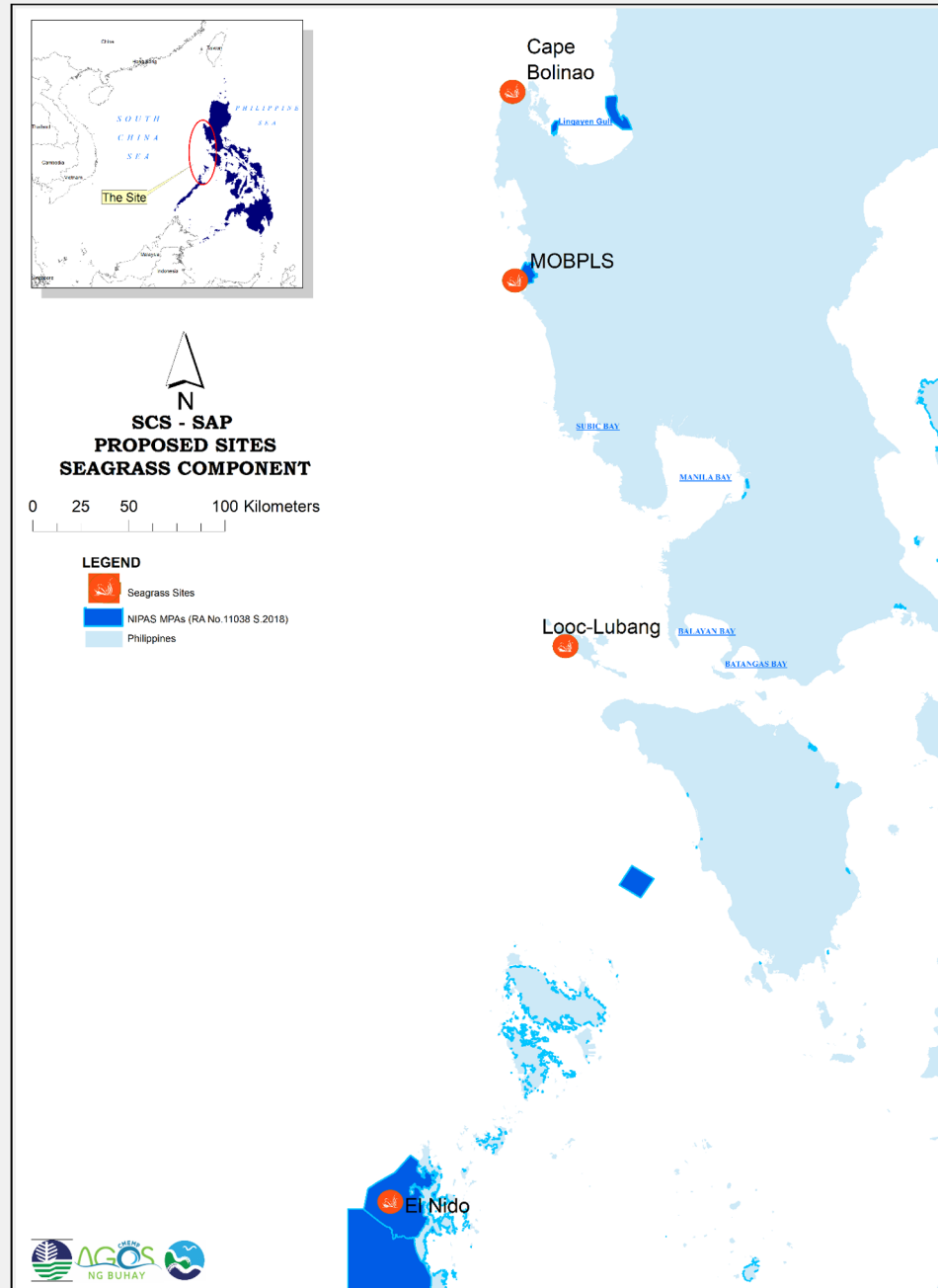
SAP Implementation: Site selection

From the three (3) identified sites during the Phase I of the SCS SAP implementation, the finalized sites were increased to five (5).

Selection of the final sites were based on the:

- willingness of the local managers to implement the SCS-SAP;
- lack of information on the pre-identified sites;
- present seagrass cover not as extensive as compared to the data generated during the SCS-SAP Phase I due to anthropogenic and natural factors; and
- inclusion of other sites with mangrove and coral reef components under the SCS SAP to look into the interconnectivity of coastal and marine ecosystems.





SAP Implementation: Site selection

- Cape Bolinao, Pangasinan
- Masinloc Oyon Bay Protected Landscape and Seascape, Zambales
- Looc and Lubang, Occidental Mindoro
- El Nido, Palawan



SAP Implementation: Activities

- *Updating of the Protected Area Management Plan in NIPAs areas and/or Preparation of management plan for non-NIPAS areas*
 - *Updating of LGU-based policies as legal basis for the protection and conservation of seagrass habitats*
- *Periodic monitoring of seagrass sites*
 - *Complementation with water quality monitoring within these sites*
 - *Installation of monitoring blocks/monitoring buoys/monitoring markers*
 - *Installation of signages and/or billboards*
- *Conduct of capacity building/training for local stakeholders (LGU) and DENR personnel*
- *Production of Communication, Education, and Public Awareness (CEPA) materials*





Final considerations

- Considering that the Philippines is still under a National State of Emergency due to the CoVID-19 pandemic, lockdown restrictions may affect the timely delivery of the project targets and objectives, thus, the possibility of extending the field implementation duration.
- Lasting and sustainable change be achieved through an extensive monitoring and evaluation mechanism, as well as a thorough CEPA activities to effect social and behavior change towards conservation and protection of seagrass habitats.

