



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

First Meeting of the SCS SAP Regional Working Group on Coral Reefs

Teleconference, 2 December 2021

REPORT OF THE MEETING



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1. Opening of the Meeting

1.1 Welcome Address

1. Dr. Virginie Hart, SCS SAP Senior Project Manager, welcomed all the participants to the first Regional Working Group meeting on coral reefs of SCS SAP project, which was originally established in the first SCS project. She thanked the participation of some of the original focal points who were responsible for the delivery of all reports, national activities and demonstrations of the project. She highlighted the challenges brought by the pandemic and the achievements made by the project at regional and national levels. The project is now in the stage where on the ground action and implementation needs to start. The main purposes of this meeting were to: revitalize this working group; agree on mandates and responsibilities for the next three years; share some past works and present plans; and look and discuss together the next steps of the project. She looked forward to the open and dynamic dialogues and discussion, particularly recommendations in facing the challenges on coral reef management and restoration. There is need to consider all challenges and emerging issues such as climate change and their impacts including integrating new technologies and tools on surveying, monitoring and communications into the project. The plan is to conduct regular meetings, combining face to face with virtual meeting including breaking the meetings into thematic themes. She thanked and wished everyone a productive meeting.

2. Mr. Isara Chanrachkij, Head of the Project Planning and Management Division of the Southeast Asian Fisheries Development Center, provided some welcoming statements on behalf of Ms. Malinee Smithithee, SEAFDEC Secretary General and Chief of the Training Department. He stressed the importance of coral reef habitat and the global concern this habitat is facing due to both natural and man-made activities, including the importance of the project in the implementation of plans and exchanging information and experiences on coral reef conservation and management in each participating country. SEAFDEC as the Executing Agency of the project is responsible for regional activities and hosting the Project Coordination Unit. Also, SEAFDEC is one of the inter-governmental organizations in fisheries to support Southeast Asian countries for sustainable utilization and management of both fisheries and human resources. SEAFDEC welcomes and supports the project by linking the fisheries sector. He thanked everyone for participating in the meeting and looked forward to receiving the fruitful result of the meeting which would be the first step to conduct effective implementation of project activities to sustain coral reef habitat in the future.

1.2 Introduction of Members

3) Mr. Reynaldo Molina of the Project Coordination Unit introduced the members of the Regional Working Group on Coral Reefs from Cambodia, Indonesia, Philippines and Thailand. There was no representative from Viet Nam while China is not participating in the Coral Reef Focal Area. He also introduced the national lead agencies and project teams and experts including representatives from other regional organizations and initiatives. The participant list is attached as Annex 1 of this report.

2. Organization of the Meeting

2.1 Designation of Officers

4. The draft rules of procedure for the Regional Working Group on Coral Reefs (RWG-CR) requires the election of a Chairperson, Vice-Chair and Rapporteur. The membership of the RWG-CR will be formally established at the first meeting of the working group, which will elect a Chairperson and a

Vice-Chair from among its members. The Chairperson of the RWG-CR will represent the RWG-CR on the Regional Scientific and Technical Committee (RSTC) and will attend the meetings of that Committee. The Vice-Chair shall act as Chairperson of meetings in the absence of the Chairperson.

5. The RWG-CR members were invited to elect a Chairperson and Vice-Chairperson. There was no Rapporteur elected since the meeting was online and being recorded. Following deliberation, Mr. Ukkrit Satapoomin, Focal Point for Coral Reef in Thailand and Mr. Yon Yonvitner, Focal Point for Coral Reef in Indonesia were elected as a Chairperson and Vice-Chairperson, respectively.

2.2 Organization of Work

6. The Chairperson invited the Secretariat to brief the participants on the proposed organization of work of the meeting. Dr. Virginie Hart presented the summary facts of the project, which includes the background and objectives, components and outputs of the project. Component 1 aims to reduce habitat degradation and loss via national and local reforms to achieve the Strategic Action Programme targets for coastal habitat management in the South China Sea, to be achieved through Outcome 1.2 which is to sustainably manage 110,430 ha of coral reef at 46 priority sites, and a number of specific outputs. There are also some supporting activities related to coral reefs under Components 2 and 3 of the project.

7. According to the Terms of Reference of the Regional Working Group on Coral Reefs (RWG-CR), adopted at the 1st Project Steering, the purpose of RWG-CR has the responsibility “for coordinating the work of the National Coral Reef Committees established in each of the participating countries; for ensuring effective implementation of project activities undertaken in the context of the achievement of the coral reef management targets of the project; and to provide a mechanism for exchange of information and experience of coral reef management activities in each country”.

8. The objectives of this First Meeting of the Regional Working Group on Coral Reefs were to: present and discuss the SAP targets for coral reefs, and selected sites; present the compiled information provided on the status of SAP implementation between 2008-2020, which will be further developed into a publication in 2022; present the compiled information on the national revisions of targets and sites, building upon recent and ongoing projects, initiatives and best practices; and discuss executing arrangement and workplans for 2021-2022. The Terms of Reference of the RWG-CR will be the main document to be adopted in the meeting. To access the organization of work presentation, please click [[LINK](#)].

3. Adoption of the Meeting Agenda

9. The Chairperson invited the Secretariat to present the draft annotated agenda and list of documents prepared as document SCSSAP RWG-CR.1/2, and invited members of the RWG-CR for comments and consideration including any additional agenda that could be considered. Dr. Virginie Hart presented the document. With no further comments, the RWG-CR members agreed and adopted the agenda. The annotated agenda is attached as Annex 2 of this report.

4. Consideration of the Terms of Reference of the Regional Working Group

10. The Chairperson invited the Secretariat to present the document SCSSAP RWG-CR.1/3: Provisional Terms of Reference for the Regional Working Group on Coral Reefs UNEP/GEF SCS SAP Project”. Dr. Virginie Hart presented the document section by section, which is based on the terms of reference of first SCS project working group.

11. The RWG-M members were invited to consider, amend and adopt the Terms of Reference as outlined in the document. There were several clarifications raised in terms of the relevance of some sections such as the holding of the first meeting of the RWG in Section 4.1, the changing of the

timeframe to June 2024 in Section 5.1, and the changing of the name ‘National Coral Reef Committee’ with other related words. The frequency of holding the meeting was also raised.

12. Dr. Virginie Hart took note and supported the suggestions as some of the provisions and wordings in the TOR were no longer relevant to the present situation. She proposed to revise the TOR to include suggested changes like the timeframe and use of the words ‘committee/working group’ to make it more flexible with national situation. She explained that the word ‘national’ was used to distinguish between national and regional working groups of the project. Dr. Hart proposed to use the name ‘National SCS SAP Coral Reef Committee/Working Group’ which was supported by the RWG-CR members.

13. Dr. Vo Si Tuan expressed concern on the inclusion of the words ‘SCS SAP’ as it provides some limitations. He clarified that the country activities are not only limited to the project and sites but also includes national activities like development of national action plans on coral reefs as well as engaging other initiatives and sectors at national level. Dr. Hart further explained the three levels of work - at the local/site specific level, at the entire coastal zone of each country bordering the South China Sea, and at the national level in terms of coordinating policy and legislation reforms, monitoring, and contributing to TDA/SAP revisions.

14. Following deliberation, the RWG-CR members agreed to revise the TOR and will be shared with track changes to the members after the meeting for adoption by silence procedure. The frequency of the meeting will not be reflected in the TOR and instead included in the workplan. The revised terms of reference is attached as Annex 3 of this report.

5. Review the SAP Targets for Coral Reef Focal Area

15. The Chairperson invited the Secretariat to present the review on the SAP targets on coral reefs including the objectives and outputs of the SCS SAP project. Dr. Vo Si Tuan presented the SAP development process which was adopted in 2008. Accordingly, many activities were implemented at national level to support the SAP and national action plans including developing a proposal to support the SAP implementation which was approved in 2016 by the GEF. The SAP targets for coral reef focused on Outcome 1.2 on the sustainable management of 110,430 ha of coral reef in six participating countries, to be achieved through four regional outputs. A total of 46 priority sites were identified in the SAP.

16. A concern and suggestion raised on the SAP targets in terms of adjusting the number of sites and areas due to the available budget. The cost of activity like planting/replanting of mangroves as example, has increased from the past and the available budget may or may not be enough to cover the total targets. Hence, the need to reduce/increase the target area. Dr. Virginie Hart explained that the SAP evaluation document and the recommendations provided could help in the revision and justification of new targets. In terms of cost, countries can make a proposal but will need to consider and ensure the long term sustainability of the activity, building upon on the lessons learned from SAP implementation. Dr. Vo Si Tuan pointed out that targets can be achieved not only from GEF funds but also from co-financing from other sources doing similar activities at sites.

6. SAP Evaluation at the National Level During 2008 – 2020

17. The Chairperson invited the Secretariat to present the evaluation of SAP implementation of the coral reef focal area for the period of 2008 to 2021. Dr. Vo Si Tuan informed the meeting that the purpose of the evaluation was to provide evidences on proactive contribution of the participating countries in the implementation of the SAP and their national action plans. Based on the evaluation, countries can calculate their co-financing contribution as well as provide updated baseline for developing relevant activities for the SAP SCS Project. The evaluation can help adjusting targets and outputs at the national level. He informed the meeting that the evaluation will be finalized for publication in 2022.

18. Based on the review of available national implementation reports from Cambodia, Philippines and Thailand, there were changes in the original target sites with little information provided on the past and ongoing activities at site level. There was no information from China, Indonesia and Viet Nam since they have not yet submitted their national implementation reports. In terms of summary of key achievements (2008-2021), there was little information from the national implementation reports submitted as contained in document SCSSAP RWG-CR.1/4 Evaluation of SAP Implementations of the Coral Reef Focal Area During 2008-2021. The document is a template that was developed and shared to countries to assist in evaluating the SAP implementation at site level including recommendations for final sites based on the evaluation.

19. Dr. Virginie Hart explained that the SAP was already outdated. The document will provide an updated baseline information of the SAP targets, which are mostly qualitative information or narrative description on what has been done and achieved. Also, the GEF requested an evaluation for all SAP projects funded especially on the progress of SAP implementation. Countries have the responsibility to report and show that before the project started, there were a lot of information on the SAP implementation. Based on the document and information provided, a publication will be made in 2022. To access the SAP implementation evaluation document (2008-2021), please click [\[LINK\]](#).

7. Reviews and Revision of SAP Targets at the National Level

20. The Chairperson invited the Secretariat to introduce document SCSSAP RWG CR.1/5 SAP Implementation of the Coral Reef Focal Area (2021-2023). Dr. Virginie Hart presented the rationale of the document and the need to revise and finalize the targets and sites that will be included in the National Implementation Reports (NIRs), which will be the basis for cooperation agreement between UNOPS and SEAs. The document is a working draft that includes information from the NIRs, to be finalized once all NIR are completed.

21. As to the progress of the NIRs, Cambodia, Philippines and Thailand are well advanced with sites and targets, draft activities, workplans and budget. These countries were supported by UNOPS in terms of funding and consultancy support. China is not participating in the meeting since they have no SAP targets for coral reefs. Indonesia is under preparation with SEAs already identified to work on the NIRs. Viet Nam is still under preparation.

22. Some points were highlighted for consideration of the RWG-CR members such as the need to complete the minimum information of the NIRs like sites, targets, activities, budget and workplans as they will be included in the project cooperation agreement to be finalized by early 2022 to start national execution. Hence, the NIRs need to be completed in order to finalize and sign the legal agreements. The document RWG-CR1/5 SAP Implementation report needs to be completed by the end of 2021. The design of activities is not consistent across countries submission. The RWG-CR may need to review and design actions that lead to the achievement of the outputs, addresses the gaps and needs identified in the national action plans, and long term sustainability beyond project life. The RWG-CR was encouraged to inform the PCU of any additional support needed by the group.

23. An inquiry was raised on the allocation of budget for each site. Dr. Hart clarified that a guidance document on the NIR development was developed and presented at the third inception phase meeting in March 2021 which includes discussion on budget allocation. The guidance document will be shared after the meeting as some of the participants have not yet been involved with the project. Accordingly, there is flexibility on the budget that was adopted in the first steering committee. Countries can focus and have more budget on few specific sites with less budget on some sites for minor activities like monitoring, capacity building etc. Countries would have to coordinate the allocation of budget at the level of the inter-ministerial committee and national technical working group to ensure balance of budget among the four habitats. Dr. Hart recommended that the NIRs and budgets be presented at the IMC and NTWG meetings.

24. Dr. Hart presented in details the SAP implementation document and the information needed using Cambodia as example. These include the different regional outputs of the project, the proposed original and SCS SAP sites including indicative targets, the status and justification of proposed sites, and summary of planned activities per site including cross-cutting activities. The RWG-CR members were requested to carefully review and complete the document which already contained some information to help and guide the countries. To access the SAP implementation document (2021-2023), please click [\[LINK\]](#).

8. National Presentation on SAP Implementation and Future Planning

8.1. National Presentation on SAP Implementation

25. The Chairperson invited the National Mangrove Focal Points and representatives from Cambodia, Indonesia, Philippines and Thailand to present key achievement in SAP implementation between 2008-2021 including the current status of consultations towards the revision of national targets and sites and NIRs.

26. Mr. Dara Sum of the Ministry of Environment of Cambodia presented the SAP implementation in Cambodia. Currently there are two government organisations that manage coral reef areas, namely the Ministry of Environment, who works on protected areas, and the Fisheries Administration that looks after overall coral reef area including all the islands. Several relevant regulations for managing coral reefs areas have also been issued. Seven sites were proposed under the SAP with a total areas of 2,808 ha. In terms of achieving the SAP targets, Cambodia focused on the seven sites proposed, building the management capacity of two sites on marine national park, marine fisheries management area and fisheries management area. In the implementation of SAP, the best practice noted is the good participation and working relationship of local fisheries community with the tourism sector particularly diving groups on diving activities and reporting.

27. In terms of project implementation, Cambodia conducted several small meetings with key stakeholders particularly the local authorities. For site selection, due to the limitation of time and budget, Cambodia proposed to reduce the sites from seven to three sites, namely Koh Kong archipelago, Koh Rong archipelago and Koh Tonsay archipelago. Activities will focus on building the management capacity of the proposed sites including improving management approaches and tools to address key threats, and establishing mechanism for the monitoring of management, ecological and socio-economic indicators. In the implementation of the project in Cambodia, some consideration proposed includes: identify zone and species for management, conservation, and restoration; amendment of laws and regulations in order to strengthen law enforcement; enhance capacity building on coral reef management and conservation; establish mechanism financial sustainability; conduct research and monitoring; raise public awareness; pollution control; improve local livelihood through tourism and ecotourism; promote and encourage eco-tourism practices with local communities; and expand and designate new MPAs. To access Cambodia presentation, please click [\[LINK\]](#).

28. Mr. Yon Yonvitner, SCS SAP Coral Reef National Focal Point of Indonesia presented the status of SAP implementation focusing on the 10 coral reef sites in Indonesia which includes information on the management approaches and policy, legal and institutional reforms such as development and implementation of strategic plans and regional regulations including management status, the coral reef areas and conditions, and the identified regional actions for coral reef focal area. In the implementation of SAP, several best practices were identified. Most notable are the integration of traditional wisdom and practices in the development and implementation of a coral reef management plan and legislation, and development of community-based management system involving numerous stakeholders from local government and communities, among others. Several lessons learned were also identified to include the development of local regulations on the management of coral reefs by local authorities has a high potential for replication; adoption of principles for dispute resolution between fishermen have potential for replication in areas where similar fishing methods are used and conflicts exist; and

integrating local wisdom in local management plan development has potential for up-scaling to sub-region level. Among the gaps and challenges identified were the impact of illegal, unregulated, and unreported fishing to coral reef, marine pollution such as marine debris, plastic and oil spill, and sediment transport from land-based pollution.

29. With regard to project implementation, consultations and discussions were undertaken with the MOEF and former focal points on activity planning and past project implementation. Seven sites were selected, namely: Karimata straits, Bintan, Natuna, Batam, Senayang Lingga, Anambas and Bangka. Proposed activities are: profiling of coral reef ecosystems and areas including integration of data among sites, and capacity building at management and community levels. Final consideration proposed in the implementation of the project are the compilation of profiling of coral reef ecosystems and areas, the implementation of rehabilitation, and increased capacity of managers and communities in the selected sites. To access Indonesia presentation, please click [[LINK](#)].

30. Ms. Desiree Eve Maaño of the Biodiversity Management Bureau of the Department of Environment and Natural Resources presented on behalf of the SCS SAP Philippine Coral Reef National Focal Point the status of SAP implementation. The Philippines supported SAP implementation with the issuance of several Department Administrative Orders such as the Sustainable Coral Reef Ecosystems Management Program (SCREMP) and the institutionalization of the Coastal and Marine Ecosystems Management Program (CMEMP) including Technical Bulletin on coral reef ecosystems restoration and rehabilitation. The selected SAP sites were managed and conserved either by the national government or local government units and communities. A total of 4,406 ha of coral reef has been committed covering four sites in four provinces where all SAP targets were implemented. A number of best practices were identified. Most notable were the establishment of protected areas covering coral reefs with a multi-sectoral management board, promoting stewardship among stakeholders including resource use management and regulations, and sustainable financing mechanisms in the form of user's fee. In terms of challenges, these include threats from climate change, marine debris and deteriorating water quality, unsustainable fishing practices, outbreak of Crown-of-Thorns Seastar, encroachment and unregulated development activities due to tourism activities.

31. In terms of project implementation, series of consultations have been conducted with partners and stakeholders, mostly done online due to the Covid-19 pandemic. For the site selection, based on consultations, four sites were retained from the original nine sites, namely: Masinloc, Zambales; El Nido, Palawan; Bolinao/Lingayen Gulf, Pangasinan and Maricaban Strait, Batangas. Some of the original site targets have been accomplished or currently being addressed by other programs and projects. Other reasons for changing were logistical challenges, lack of information, absence of local participation and political situation. The areal extents were also changed. The proposed activities include capacity development for protected area managers and community-based coastal and marine law enforcement units, integration and streamlining of different management plans, regular habitat monitoring and patrolling, formulation of relevant policies including strengthening the implementation of fishery ordinances by local government units, mainstreaming of integrated coastal management in the preparation of the Comprehensive Land Use Plan for a ridge to reef approach, and regular conduct of management effectiveness assessment of marine protected area. As a final consideration in the implementation of the project, the following were proposed: harmonize and streamline the different management plans; key stakeholders should be represented in the management bodies for a wholistic approach; continuously look on existing local policies to determine what is effective and what needs reform; and learn from documented good practices to save time and resources and as valuable inputs to policy formulation and future similar undertaking. To access the Philippines presentation, please click [[LINK](#)].

32. Mr. Ukkrit Satapoomin, SCS SAP Coral Reef National Focal Point of Thailand provided the presentation on SAP implementation. The overall activities that have contributed to the progress in achieving the SAP targets at the national level were capacity building for technical staff like training on coral taxonomy and coral reef monitoring; coral reef ecosystem rehabilitation programme such as coral transplantation and installation of artificial reefs; development of improved management

approaches like issuance of regulations and use of Green Fins approach; and development and utilization of management tools to address threats like seasonal and temporary closure of marine national parks and diving sites. A total of 27,490 ha of coral reefs at 4 sites proclaimed as National Park have been sustainably managed through governance structure of the Department of National Park, Wildlife and Plant Conservation. These four sites have proper management capacity built and key management tools established. Ten sites were covered by existing policies and legal reforms such as the Act on the Promotion of Marine and Coastal Resources Management and the National Parks Act. All 14 target sites were included in quadrennial status assessment and monitoring program. The best practices identified include the establishment of concrete management program with effective surveillance and enforcement; multi-level stakeholder engagement in management planning and zoning scheme, coral reef rehabilitation and community involvement; applying proper management tools/approach such as marine spatial planning. A major gap and challenge identified is the lack of robust governance structure and sustainable financial mechanism.

33. With regard to project implementation, several national consultations in formulating program scope and activities for the target sites were conducted including site visits and focused group discussions. For site selection, nine sites were removed as some were well managed and included in the 3–4 year management roadmap. Five sites were retained - Lan and Phai, Si Chang, Koh Kra, Koh Losin, Koh Tao with Koh Mak as additional new site. These sites were considered as priority sites with ongoing development for Marine and Coastal Resources Protected Area. The proposed indicative activities in all selected sites include: establishing law enforcement measures to minimize the impact from marine tourism industry and coastal development; establishing utilization and conservation zones; educating and raising awareness for local people and other resource users on importance of coral reef conservation; building collaboration among all stakeholders and public participation by setting up networks of local communities, private sectors, and NGOs to promote coral reef conservation, monitoring, and sustainable uses of coral reefs. To ensure long-term achievement for sustainable management, the following should be considered in the implementation of the project: 1) National Action Plan for Coral Reef Management (2022-2026), which is a good policy guideline on coral reef management and protection including regional cooperation; 2) Act on the Promotion of Marine and Coastal Resources Management, which allow DMCR to work on coral reef management and proclamation of protected area including coral reef; 3) Office of Marine and Coastal Resources Administration, which act as management authority on coral reef management; 4. Regular government financial support; and 5 Ensure participation and support of local communities and local governmental administration on coral reef activities. To access Thailand presentation, please click [[LINK](#)].

34. Dr. Virginie Hart thanked all countries for the presentations as it contains the majority of information needed for the two working documents. There was a lot of significant information on SAP implementation after its adoption and project implementation in terms of prioritising sites and activities. There was also a lot of information on best practices including cross cutting element like community involvement and sharing and exchanges of best practices between national teams. There were still a lot of issues, gaps and challenges that need to be addressed at the national and regional level including the need for more detail information on impacts and pressures from marine debris and pollution, link with the fisheries sector, land use development, sustainable tourism and impacts of climate change. As project funds are limited, the project can help support and coordinate the development of proposal for investment funding including sustainable financing as part of Component 3. Marine spatial planning is another issue that needs to be considered and integrated in the updating of the SAP.

8.2. Best Practices in Coral Reef Management

35. The Chairperson invited the Secretariat to introduce the agenda on best practices on coral reef management in the region. Dr. Vo Si Tuan provided briefly the background and invited the regional experts to present.

36. Dr. Chou Loke Ming of National University of Singapore and former Regional Expert of the UNEP/GEF SCS Project presented the reef restoration in Singapore's urbanizing environment. Singapore's marine environments is urbanized, resulting to a lot of sedimentations which is a big challenge for the restoration initiative. The approach is to restore degraded reefs and create new reef habitats by increasing the surface area for the development of reef communities, as the original reefs were destroyed due to coastal development. The approach also look into employing the innovative techniques that would be useful for urbanized environments. With heavy sedimentation due to coastal urbanization, it was observed that there was compressed coral growth zone due to non-penetration of sunlight, and substrate becomes unstable because of sediments settling down. This resulted to the decline of coral reef area and the need to protect and restore coral reef area.

37. To make reef restoration work in Singapore, the challenges of high sedimentation and substrate instability need to be addressed. Singapore makes use of in-situ coral nurseries, using mesh net which is useful in high sediment condition as it provide stability for coral growth and reduce impacts of sedimentation as the sediments fall through. Based on scientific study conducted, the survival and growth rates of nursery-reared transplant method, which takes about 8 months, is higher than direct transplants. To address unstable substrate, Singapore uses reef enhancement units that are made of fibre glass. To create reef communities in non-reef areas, Singapore uses nursery frames to help coral reefs grow and create coral reef communities. In terms of coastal defence and reef biodiversity enhancement, there is a lot of seawalls being built to combat sea-level rise. Singapore is looking how these seawalls provide an opportunity to increase coral and marine biodiversity such as building terraced sea walls and large intertidal pools. In summary, urbanization and reef biodiversity can enhance the reef to become more diverse. The urbanized coasts can serve both development and biodiversity functions. Restoration is necessary to enhance biodiversity of degraded habitats as well as create new habitats in order to ensure that reef biodiversity is sustained so it can help to mitigate future impacts of climate change. To access Dr. Chou presentation, please click [\[LINK\]](#).

38. Dr. Thamasak Yeemin of Ramkhamhaeng University and former SCS Coral Reef National Focal Point of Thailand presented the lessons learned and good practices of the Mu Koh Chang Coral Reef Demonstration Site of the UNEP/GEF SCS Project. Several lessons learned were identified. Most notable were: 1. Encourage local people and tourism organizations to clean up coral reefs to raise public awareness on coral reef conservation; 2) Control land-based pollution and implement pollution monitoring programs supported by government policies and carried out by local administrative organization and resort owners; 3) High cost and limited scale of coral reef restoration puts the responsibility on government and communities to prevent coral reef damage; 4) Coral restoration should be in small scale for tourism, education, and raising public awareness with supports of stakeholders and local communities; 5) Ecological and socio-economic monitoring programs should be appropriately planned and implemented; and 6) Encourage coordination among government agencies, private sector, NGOs, and local communities during planning, operation and evaluation phases to strengthen co-management of all activities in the area and reduce any obstacles on the project implementation.

39. The good practices highlighted were the coral reef management plan in Trat Province, the financial sustainability of the activities, dissemination of experience on sound scientific information for tourism development, and managing bleached coral reefs in Eastern Gulf of Thailand. In conclusion, the project showed effective collaboration between scientists, local communities and local government officials as decision-makers to integrate scientific data into policy and adaptation practices. Artificial reef sites can be used to support ecotourism and learning rooms for students and local people. Capacity building, public awareness and education through disseminating printed materials and conducting training courses, workshops and seminars for stakeholders, youth, students and local government officials can enhance resilience in coastal communities. To access Dr. Thamasak presentation, please click [\[LINK\]](#).

40. Dr. Si Tuan Vo introduced the information document SCSSAP RWG 1/Inf.2 Best Practices in Habitat Management to the meeting. The document provided the current good practices and lessons learned on habitat and pollution management including transboundary issues that could be replicated

and published. Some information were from the first phase of the SCS Project project sites. He encouraged the members to review and work further to synthesise and exchange best practices information in the region. He suggested to the RWG-CR members to work together to combine and deliver as a publication the best practices in the last decade to demonstrate the activities done in the countries after the first phase of the project. Dr. Tuan informed the meeting about a related regional meeting organized by IOC/WESTPAC in support to the UN Decade on Ocean Science for Sustainable Development where the coral reef incubator session discussed and considered as best practice the integrated framework on site management. To access the best practice document, please click [\[LINK\]](#).

41. The Chairperson noted the presentations made by the regional experts and expressed that the best practices presented could be useful for the further development of national activities in terms of coral reef restoration of degraded habitat including the technology and innovation used on coral reef rehabilitation. The Mu Koh Chang experience provided a good example on coral reef management particularly on the governance structure, ecotourism establishment and rehabilitation program including awareness raising and stakeholder engagement.

42. Dr. Virginie Hart informed the meeting that discussions have been made with UNEP World Conservation Monitoring Center (WCMC) to present in the meeting their activities, tools, guidelines and best practices at the global level related to CBD Post 2020, UN Decade on Ocean Science and Restoration, UNEP activities on habitat restoration including coral reef, which could be useful to the countries. Due to the loaded meeting agenda, there was an agreement to have a separate meeting with WCMC to be scheduled at a later date to allow some time to plan and prepare for the meeting. Meantime, the UNEP coral reef restoration guideline will be shared to the participants.

9. Execution Arrangement and National Work Plans

43. The Chairperson invited the Secretariat to present the next steps in the RWG towards execution of activities under the SCS SAP, including next meeting of the RWG-CR. Dr. Virginie Hart presented the follow up actions as discussed and agreed in the meeting.

The Project Coordination Unit will:

- Share NIR guidance documents that was used on the 15 March 2021 meeting for the finalization of the NIR and for the finalization of the SAP evaluation and implementation documents.
- Revise the RWG-CR TOR based on comments provided. Then share the revised version by 10 December 2021 for final comments, to be received by 24 December 2021. Then adopt the document via silent procedure.
- Draft the meeting report by 17 December 2021, after all the meetings have been conducted.

At national level, the RWG-CR members are requested to:

- Adopt the RWG-CR TORs by 24 December 2021 via silent procedure
- Submit pending Coral Reef NIRs by 17 December 2021
- Reconfirm the Coral Reef focal point (chairs of Coral Reef committee/working group) by 17 December 2021 as some of the countries have not yet nominated their coral reef focal points.
- Complete the RWG-CR.1/4 (SAP Evaluation 2008-2020) document and discuss at national coral reef committees/working groups by 31 December 2021.
- Complete the RWG-CR.1/5 (SAP Implementation 2021-2023) document and discuss at national coral reef committees/working groups by 31 December 2021.

44. Other follow up actions requested from countries include:

- Submit pictures of meetings/site visits to PCU for the newsletter by 3 Dec 2021.

- Establish National Coral Reef committees/working groups with initial workplan of activities and meetings. It is recommended to include Fisheries Refugia Project and experts as well as key coral reef initiatives and projects.
- Establish the National Technical Working Group (NTWG) with all habitat focal points and conduct first meeting to ensure synergies between habitats.
- Establish the Inter-Ministerial Committee (IMC) and conduct the first meeting to confirm workplan and budget of NIRs.
- Provide best practices on coral reef management/restoration (2008-2021) which will be cooperated with UN Decade Incubator Coral Reef group.

45. The next steps and meetings for 2022 are as follows:

- January 2022: Signing of legal agreements (PCAs) between UNOPS and SAP Specialized Executing Agency (SEA) by January 2022.
- February 2022: First Regional Scientific and Technical Committee (RSTC) Meeting, back to back with workshop/training on best-practices, tools and guidelines,
- April 2022: Second RWG-CR Meeting, planned to be organized twice a year (online and face to face), to present and discuss the 1) Methodology for revising the National Coral Reef reports, 2) Progress in the execution of activities, 3) Monitoring and data management and indicators, 4) Any revision to work plans and budget, and 4) Compiling best-practices
- June 2022: Second Steering Committee Meeting

46. Dr. Hart also presented some consideration in the implementation of the project as follows:

- Assessment on travel restrictions whether meetings in first half of 2022 can be held in person.
- Assess and identify what additional support is needed from PCU in terms of executing project activities such as capacity and training needs.
- 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.
- Launch of the Small Grants Program in 2022 for NGOs and community organizations to implement community-based projects/activities. The details and call for proposal are being prepared and will be shared with participating countries. The IMC and NTWG will lead the review and approval of applications.

47. The Chairperson noted and stressed the need to follow the deadline of some activities, and suggested to reflect the status of agreed actions and next steps in the next meeting. To access Dr. Hart presentation on follow up actions and next steps, please click [[LINK](#)].

10. Any Other Business

48. The Chairperson invited members to consider and discuss any items of business introduced under agenda item 3. There were no issues and additional items raised.

11. Closure of the Meeting

49. The Chairperson noted the importance of the meeting in delivering the progress done in the past particularly from 2008-2021 when the SAP was implemented in the countries, and the activities to be undertaken in the next two years. The best practices presented could be used in revising the National Implementation Report in terms of detailing the activities. He noted that the objective of the first RWG-CR meeting was achieved.

50. Mr. Yon Yonvitner suggested to have a coordination mechanism between national and regional working groups to discuss and address issues and concerns. Dr. Virginie Hart agreed on the suggestion

and will make a proposal after the meeting. Initially she suggested to send regular emails to the working group or have another online working session meeting.

51. In closing, the Chairperson, Mr. Ukkrit Satapoomin, thanked the Project Coordination Unit for organizing the meeting and documents. He thanked all the participants for joining the meeting and providing useful information necessary to improve the national implementation reports. He thanked the regional experts for the lesson learned and good practices in the region, which can be used to improve activities on the ground. He hoped that the next meeting would be face to face meeting.

52. With no other concerns raised, the meeting ended at 5:22 pm.

ANNEXES

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| Annex 1 | List of Participants |
| Annex 2 | Annotated Agenda and List of Documents |
| Annex 3 | Revised Terms of Reference |

Annex 1 List of Participants

National Focal Points / Representatives

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| <p>Cambodia</p> <p>Mr. SUM Dara Vice Chief, Department of Marine and Coastal Zone Conservation, Ministry of Environment Tel: (+855)15 431 011 - Email: darasum_63@hayoo.com</p> | <p>Indonesia</p> <p>Mr. Yon Yonvitner Director, Center for Coastal and Marine Resources Studies, Bogor Agricultural University (IPB) Email: yonvitner75@gmail.com</p> |
| <p>Philippines</p> <p>Datu Tungko M. Saikol Director, Biodiversity Management Bureau, Department of Environment and Natural Resources Email: director@bmb.gov.ph</p> | <p>Thailand</p> <p>Mr. Ukkrit Satapoomin Director, Marine Resources Conservation Division, Department of Marine and Coastal Resources Email: ukkrit@yahoo.com</p> |
| <p>Viet Nam</p> <p>No representative</p> | |

National Team and Experts

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| <p>Cambodia</p> <p>Mr. TIM Sophea Researcher, Centre for Agricultural and Environmental Studies, Royal University of Agriculture Tel: (+855) 12 291592 Email: stim3993@gmail.com</p> <p>Mr. Meas Rithy Deputy Director, Department of Marine and Coastal Zone Conservation, Ministry of Environment Tel: (+855)12 444 497 - Email: meas.rithymoe@yahoo.com</p> <p>Mr. Monomoyith Than Vice Chair of Office, Ministry of Environment Email: monomoyith84@gmail.com</p> <p>Mr. Ouk Vibol Director, Fisheries Conservation Department Fisheries Administration Email: ouk.vibol@online.com.kh</p> | <p>Indonesia</p> <p>Mr. Fery Kurniawan Assistant Professor / Senior Researcher Center for Coastal and Marine Resources Studies, Bogor Agricultural University Email: ferykurniawan@apps.ipb.ac.id</p> <p>Mr. Heru Waluyo Koesworo Ministry of Environment and Forestry Email: heruw.koes@gmail.com</p> <p>Ms. Aditya Yuniarti Head of Section for Environmental Quality Standards, Directorate of Coastal and Marine Pollution and Degradation, MOEF Email: widodari@yahoo.com</p> <p>Ms. Isdahrtatie Researcher, Center for Coastal and Marine Resources Studies, Bogor Agricultural University Email: isdahrtatie@pksplipb.or.id</p> <p>Ms. Artika Nanda Magfiroh</p> |
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| | <p>Researcher, Center for Coastal and Marine Resources Studies, Bogor Agricultural University Email: artikanandamagfiroh@gmail.com</p> |
| <p>Philippines</p> <p>Mr. Jeric Dejudos Coastal and Marine Division, Biodiversity Management Bureau, DENR Email: jikjik.dejudos@gmail.com</p> <p>Mr. John Michael Cornito Ecosystems Management Specialist, Coastal and Marine Division, Biodiversity Management Bureau, DENR Email: johnmichael.cornito@bmb.gov.ph</p> <p>Ms. Maria Katrina Apaya Ecosystems Management Specialist, Coastal and Marine Division, Biodiversity Management Bureau, DENR Email: katrina.apaya@bmb.gov.ph</p> <p>Mr. Romeo Trono National Technical Adviser, SCS SAP Project Email: romytrono@gmail.com</p> <p>Ms. Nilda Baling Supervising Environmental Management Specialist, Coastal and Marine Division, Biodiversity Management Bureau, DENR Email: nilda.baling@bmb.gov.ph,</p> <p>Mr. Desiree Eve Maano Supervising Environmental Management Specialist, Coastal and Marine Division, Biodiversity Management Bureau, DENR Email: desireeeve.maano@bmb.gov.ph,</p> <p>Ms. Armida Andres Chief, Coastal and Marine Division, Biodiversity Management Bureau, Department of Environment and Natural Resources Email: cmd@bmb.gov.ph, armida.andres@bmb.gov.ph</p> <p>Ms. Lei Esther Gabo Ecosystems Management Specialist Coastal and Marine Division, Biodiversity Management Bureau, DENR Email: leiesther.gabo@bmb.gov.ph</p> <p>Mr. Michael Atrigenio Assistant Professor, Marine Science Institute,</p> | <p>Thailand</p> <p>Mrs. Sumana Kajonwattanukul Director, Marine and Coastal Resources Research and Development Institute, Department of Marine and Coastal Resources Email: sumana11th@gmail.com</p> <p>Ms. Saowalak Winyoonuntakul Director, Foreign Affairs Division, Department of Marine and Coastal Resources Email: saowiny@yahoo.com, icsd.dmcr@gmail.com</p> <p>Ms. Vararin Vongpanich Fishery Biologist, Senior Professional Level, Department of Marine and Coastal Resources Email: khunvara@yahoo.com</p> <p>Ms. Achalee Chankong Fishery Biologist, Senior Professional Level, Department of Marine and Coastal Resources Email: anchankong@yahoo.com</p> <p>Mr. Ronawon Boonprakob Marine Biologist, Professional Level, Department of Marine and Coastal Resources Email: ronawon@hotmail.com</p> <p>Ms. Chanokphon Jantharakhantee Marine Biologist, Professional Level, Department of Marine and Coastal Resources Email: chanokphon_017@windowslive.com</p> <p>Ms. Supadsha Kuntong Foreign Relations Officer, Practitioner Level, Department of Marine and Coastal Resources Email: asean.dmcr@gmail.com</p> <p>Ms. Paweena Srisawetichot Foreign Relations Officer, Department of Marine and Coastal Resources Email: asean.dmcr@gmail.com</p> |

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| University of the Philippines Email: matrigenio@gmail.com | |
| Viet Nam No representative | |

Regional Experts

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| Dr. Chou Loke Ming National University of Singapore Email: tmsclm@nus.edu.sg | Dr. Thamasak Yeemin Ramkhamhaeng University of Thailand Email: thamasakyeemin@hotmail.com |
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UN and Other Regional Organizations and Projects

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| Ms. Nora Kogel Intern, United Nations Office for Project Services (UNOPS) Email: norak@unops.org | Mr. Isara Chanrachkij Project Planning and Management Division Head, Southeast Asian Fisheries Development Center (SEAFDEC) Email: isara@seafdec.org |
| Ms. Chantelle Van Amburg Intern, Coordinating Body on the Seas of East Asia (COBSEA) Email: chantelle.vanamburg@un.org | Mr. Weerasak Yingyuad Officer, Southeast Asian Fisheries Development Center (SEAFDEC) Email: weerasak@seafdec.org |
| Ms. Suwanee Sayan Senior Program Officer, Southeast Asian Fisheries Development Center (SEAFDEC) Email: suwanee@seafdec.org | |

Project Coordination Unit

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| Dr. Virginie Hart Senior Project Manager, SCS SAP Project Email: virginieh@unops.org , virginie.hart@scssap.org | Mr. Reynaldo F. Molina Project Management Support Specialist, SCS SAP Project Email: reynaldom@unops.org , reynaldo.molina@scssap.org |
| Dr. Vo Si Tuan Scientific Officer, SCS SAP Project Email : vosituan@gmail.com | Ms. Chanikan Vibulsuk Project Officer, SCS SAP Project Email: chanikan.vibulsuk@scssap.org |
| Mr. Ivan Pavletich Project Management Support Officer, United Nations Office for Project Services (UNOPS) Email: ivanp@unops.org , | |

Thursday 2 December 2021, 13.00 – 17.00 Indochina time (ICT)

12.40-13.00 Participants are requested to login to the zoom meeting at least 10 minutes before the meeting.

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| 1. Opening of the meeting | |
| 13.00-13.10 | <p>1.1 Welcome address</p> <p>The SCS SAP Project Senior Manager will open the meeting and deliver the welcome address.</p> |
| 13.10-13.20 | <p>1.2 Introduction of members</p> <p>The Secretariat will be invited to introduce the members of the Coral Reef Working Group and other participants.</p> |
| 2. Organization of the meeting | |
| 13.20-13.30 | <p>2.1 Designation of officers</p> <p>In accordance with the draft rules of procedure for the Regional Working Group on Coral Reefs, participants will be invited by the Secretariat to elect a Chairperson, Vice-Chairperson and Rapporteur.</p> |
| 13.30-13.40 | <p>2.2 Organization of work</p> <p>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 online in plenary. The meeting will be conducted in English.</p> |
| 3. Adoption of the meeting agenda | |
| 13.40-13.50 | <p>The Chairperson will invite participants to consider the draft agenda prepared by the Secretariat as document SCSSAP RWG-CR.1/2, propose any amendments or additional items for consideration, and adopt the agenda.</p> |
| 4. Consideration of the Terms of reference of the Regional Working Group | |
| 13.50-14.20 | <p>The Chairperson will invite the Secretariat to introduce document SCSSAP RWG-CR.1/3: Provisional Terms of Reference for the Regional Working Group on Coral Reefs UNEP/GEF SCS SAP Project, previously circulated. The RWG-CR is invited to consider, amend and adopt the Terms of Reference as outlined in this document.</p> |
| 5. Review the SAP targets for coral reef focal area | |
| 14.20-14.30 | <p>The Chairperson will invite the Secretariat to briefly present the SAP targets on coral reefs and the objectives and outputs of the SCS SAP project.</p> |

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| 6. SAP evaluation at the national level during 2008 - 2020 | |
| 14.30-14.40 | <p>6.1. Introduction and rationale</p> <p>The Chairperson will invite the Secretariat to briefly introduce document SCSSAP RWG-CR.1/4 Evaluation of SAP Implementations of the Coral Reef Focal Area During 2008-2021.</p> |
| 7. Reviews and revision of SAP targets at the national level | |
| 14.40-14.50 | <p>7.1. Introduction and rationale</p> <p>The Chairperson will invite the Secretariat to briefly introduce document SCSSAP RWG-CR.1/5 SAP Implementation of the Coral Reef Focal Area (2021-2023).</p> |
| 8. National Presentations on SAP implementation and future planning | |
| 14.50-16.00 | <p>8.1. National Presentations on SAP implementation</p> <p>The Chairperson will invite National Coral Reef Focal Points from Cambodia, China, Indonesia, Philippines, Thailand and Viet Nam to present key achievement in SAP implementation between 2008-2021 and the current status of consultations towards the revision of national targets and sites and NIRs.</p> |
| 16.00-16.30 | <p>8.2. Best practices in Coral Reef management</p> <p>Presentations from invited experts on best practices on coral reef management in the region.</p> |
| 9. Execution arrangement and national work plans | |
| 16.30-16.40 | <p>The Chairperson will invite the Secretariat to present the next steps in the RWG towards execution of activities under the SCS SAP, including next meeting of the RWG-CR.</p> |
| 10. Any other business | |
| 16.40-16.50 | <p>The Chairperson will invite members to consider and discuss any items of business introduced under agenda item 3.</p> |
| 11. Closure of the Meeting | |
| 16.50-17.00 | <p>The Chairperson will call for a formal motion to close the meeting.</p> |

LIST OF DOCUMENTS

Meeting documents

The Regional Working Group on Coral Reefs members are required to review these documents

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| SCSSAP RWG-CR 1/1 | Provisional Agenda |
| SCSSAP RWG-CR 1/2 | Annotated Provisional Agenda |
| SCSSAP RWG-CR 1/3 | Provisional Terms of Reference for the Regional Working Group on Coral Reefs UNEP/GEF SCS SAP Project |
| SCSSAP RWG-CR 1/4 | Evaluation of SAP Implementations of the Coral Reef Focal Area During 2008-2021 |
| SCSSAP RWG-CR 1/5 | SAP Implementation of the Coral Reef Focal Area (2021-2023) |
| SCSSAP RWG-CR 1/6 | Report of the Meeting (to be prepared following the meeting) |

Information documents

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|-----------------------|-------------------------------------|
| SCSSAP RWG-CR 1/Inf.1 | Draft List of Participants |
| SCSSAP PSC.1/Inf.3 | Cambodia Summary Profile (draft) |
| SCSSAP PSC.1/Inf.4 | China Summary Profile (draft) |
| SCSSAP PSC.1/Inf.5 | Indonesia Summary Profile (draft) |
| SCSSAP PSC.1/Inf.6 | Philippines Summary Profile (draft) |
| SCSSAP PSC.1/Inf.7 | Thailand Summary Profile (draft) |
| SCSSAP PSC.1/Inf.8 | Vietnam Summary Profile (draft) |

Reference documents

SCS SAP full project document (see www.scssap.org)

SCS Strategic Action Programme (see www.scssap.org)

SCSSAP IP 3/5 3rd Regional Inception Phase Meeting – NIR Development and Completion
[\[LINK\]](#)

SCSSAP PSC.1/9 1st Steering Committee Meeting of the UNEP/GEF Implementing the Strategic Action Programme for the South China Sea and Gulf of Thailand (SCS SAP) Project [\[LINK\]](#)

Terms of Reference for the Regional Working Group on Coral Reefs

1. RATIONALE AND PURPOSE OF A REGIONAL WORKING GROUP ON CORAL REEFS

1.1 To facilitate the achievement of the Strategic Action Programme targets for coral reefs, a Regional Working Group on Coral Reefs (RWG-CR) shall be established with overall responsibility for: coordinating the work of the National Coral Reefs Committees/Working Groups established in each of the participating countries; for ensuring effective implementation of project activities undertaken in the context of the achievement of the coral reef management targets of the project; and to provide a mechanism for exchange of information and experience of coral reef management activities in each country.

2. MEMBERSHIP

2.1 The RWG-CR of the SCS SAP Project shall consist of the Chairpersons of the National Coral Reef Committees/Working Groups together with one member of the SCS SAP Project Coordination Unit and selected regional experts. The SCS SAP Project Coordination Unit in consultation with the National Technical Focal Points for the project shall nominate no more than four such experts to ensure a balance of expertise and specialisation consistent with the mandate of the working group.

2.2 The membership of the RWG-CR shall be formally established at the first meeting of the Working Group, which shall elect a Chairperson and a Vice-Chair from amongst its members, which will be for the period of 12 months (unless otherwise agreed). The Vice-Chair shall act as Chairperson of meetings in the absence of the Chairperson. The Chairperson of the RWG-CR will represent the RWG-CR on the Regional Scientific and Technical Committee (RSTC) and will attend the meetings of that Committee.

3. SECRETARIAT

3.1 The SCS SAP Project Coordination Unit shall act as Secretariat to the RWG-CR, and shall ensure that reports of the meetings are circulated to all members of the working group, and are copied to the members of the Regional Scientific and Technical Committee. The National Coral Reef Committees/Working Groups shall serve as the principal source of national scientific and technical data and information to the RWG-CR.

4. MEETINGS OF THE REGIONAL WORKING GROUP

4.1 The SCS SAP Project Coordination Unit in consultation with the Chairperson shall convene meetings of the RWG-CR according to an agreed schedule, which will form part of the agreed work plan and timetable for the work of the Committee/Working Group. The first meeting of the RWG-CR will agree on the detailed activities, workplan and timetable for the first year project execution.

5. TERMS OF REFERENCE

The RWG-CR shall:

5.1 Provide direction, and strategic guidance to the National Coral Reef Committees/Working Groups regarding the sustainable management of 110,430 ha of coral reef at 46 priority sites by June 2024, including a reduction in the decadal rate of degradation in live coral cover from 16 to 5%, including the achievement of the following targets:¹

- Management capacity built for 46 coral reef sites
- Management approaches (integrated, community-based, multiple use) improved at 82 coral reef sites
- Management tools (licensing and permit systems, seasonal closures, zoning) developed and utilized to address key threats at priority sites
- Established mechanism for the monitoring of management, ecological and socio-economic indicators at 46 sites

5.2 Assume overall responsibility for the timely execution of project activities in support of the achievement of the abovementioned targets;

5.3 Update, in close collaboration with the National Coral Reef Committees/Working Groups, the regional coral reef meta-database and GIS, including meta-data on biodiversity and the results of coral reef research pertaining to this project.

5.4 Develop, in close collaboration with the National Coral Reef Committees/Working Groups, public awareness and information materials concerning the national and regional importance of such ecosystems;

5.5 Receive, and review reports, data and information from the National Coral Reef Committees/Working Groups and compile the regional syntheses regarding coral reef management needs and priorities;

5.6 Develop guidelines regarding best practices for sustainable coral reef management for adoption and application at national level in participating countries;

5.7 Develop, review and recommend for adoption by the Regional Scientific and Technical Committee the proposed targets and timelines that may be included in a revised Strategic Action programme in order to achieve, sustainable management of coral reefs bordering the South China Sea in the longer-term;

5.8 Prepare a regional review of national experiences in coral reef restoration with a view to developing widely applicable guidelines concerning best practices in coral reef restoration and rehabilitation;

5.9 Review and evaluate, at the regional level, progress in implementation of the coral reef activities of the project, and provide guidance for improvement when necessary; and

¹ To be revised if required following finalization of the National Implementation Reports

5.10 Develop annual workplans and provide periodic progress reports to the Regional Scientific and Technical Committee.