



**UNDP/GEF PROJECT ENTITLED “REDUCING ENVIRONMENTAL STRESS IN THE
YELLOW SEA LARGE MARINE ECOSYSTEM”**

UNDP/GEF/YS/RWG-E.3/8
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**Third Meeting of the Regional Working Group
for the Ecosystem Component**
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Proposed Regional Targets for Management of the Yellow Sea Ecosystem

1. According to the overall workplan, the Project has reached the beginning of its second major phase, that is, to develop the Strategic Action Programme (SAP). The “TDA/SAP Training Module” developed by UN’s TRAINSEACOAST network gives the definition of SAP as:

“a negotiated policy document which should identify policy, legal and institutional reforms and investments needed to address the priority transboundary problems. Endorsed at the highest level, it establishes clear priorities for action to resolve the priority problems which were identified in the TDA. The preparation of a SAP is a cooperative process among the countries of the region.”
2. Given the definition, the Project should now focus its activities over the next two years on those that will be relevant to the development of the SAP, including the regional and national SAPs, i.e. activities that will eventually lead to formation of management actions, some of which will be included in the pilot implementation phase during Project Year 5, for their feasibilities, efficiency and effectiveness in addressing Yellow Sea’s transboundary ecosystem problems.
3. A three-step approach is proposed: a) management issues, b) regional targets of the management activities, c) management actions, where activities need to be recommended for each step. While it is suggested that these three steps are taken to develop the ecosystem section of the SAP, all steps should be considered simultaneously:
 - a) consider the technical and management issues affecting ecosystem-related problems in the Yellow Sea;
 - b) recommend realistic and achievable regional targets for ecosystem conservation and management; and
 - c) suggest sustainable actions for execution by political, technical, institutional, and legal bodies.

TECHNICAL AND MANAGEMENT ISSUES

4. During the first two years of project implementation, the RWG-E agreed to focus the Ecosystem Component's activities on the lower trophic levels, while the Fisheries and Biodiversity Components focused their activities mostly on higher trophic levels. However, in preparing the SAP, it is suggested that the ecosystem, as a whole, is considered. The technical and management issues are not limited to addressing the physical state of the ecosystem, but may include addressing management capability and other non-tangible issues, such as agreed regional indicators to monitor and assess ecosystem health.
5. The earlier exercises on the preliminary Causal Chain and Governance Analysis, the activities on national data and information collection activity, and the regional synthesis have somewhat addressed Part "3a." The draft Transboundary Diagnostic Analysis (TDA) will provide further insight into some of the region's ecosystem management issues.

TARGETS

6. Based on the outcomes of the governance analyses, and before recommending management actions, one must be clear about the management targets that one wishes to achieve. Common "target" levels need to be agreed on, in order to enable effective regional management actions.
7. In considering the "targets" for protecting and managing the Yellow Sea's marine ecosystem, one should take into account the methods to define critical habitats/ecosystems in order to prepare action plans for protection and management of the habitats. The restoration of degraded habitats is another issue to consider. The YSEPP has identified "Potential Priority Areas" and "Ecologically Important Areas." These data will be made available to the Project, and may be used to help identify the "targets" for the Ecosystem Components. Some other "targets" to consider, *inter alia*, are: stress levels, carrying capacity, species diversity and richness, and ecosystem "health."
8. Issues that should be considered and agreed on during the meeting include:
 - What kinds of targets are relevant, reasonable, and achievable in the region?
 - What activities are needed to realise the development of such targets?

Some relevant activities already listed in the Project Implementation Plan include:

- Identifying and ranking stresses to ecosystem¹;
- Estimation on carrying capacity of ecosystem; and
- Regional synthesis and assessment of carrying capacity.

Members should provide guidance on how the above activities should be implemented, or the results used in such a way that they complement the development of regional targets.

Members may also elaborate additional activities related to the development of regional ecosystem targets.

¹ This activity was combined with the regional data synthesis, but the result depends on the availability of national data.

ACTIONS

9. When the types of targets and their associated activities have been discussed and agreed, one needs to devise actions to achieve the targets. These actions may be technical, managerial, political, legal, or a combination of some or all of them. Costs and benefits analysis of each action also needs to be contemplated. When considering the actions to propose, members should note that as the ecosystem encompasses the entire Yellow Sea, some of the actions will overlap with those of other components, especially with the Biodiversity Component. It is foreseeable that both components will likely propose actions targeting habitat conservation.
10. In the Project Implementation Plan, “ecosystem monitoring guidelines” and “develop long-term sustainable investments & lessen stress to the ecosystem,” and are listed as activities to be implemented. These activities will contribute toward actions for the SAP; however, there are no clear instructions on the nature of the latter activity, or how it should be implemented.
11. Members should revisit the TOR for the monitoring guidelines activity in Document UNDP/GEF/YS/RWG-E.3/7. Members should also expand on these activities by giving concrete ideas on what actions should be included for implementation.

EXPECTED RESULTS FROM THE MEETING

12. In summary, during the consideration of this Agenda, members should discuss and recommend activities to be implemented in order to produce the SAP. Some suggestions for “Target” activities are:
 - Regional expert’s consultation on developing regional ecosystem targets
 - Development of robust criteria to identify critical habitats
 - Development and use of regional indicators to monitor ecosystem health (e.g. productivity, stress indicators)
 - Identifying and ranking stresses to ecosystem
 - Estimation, assessment and synthesis of carrying capacity of ecosystem
13. Some suggestions for “Actions” activities are:
 - Development of regional guidelines to monitor ecosystem
 - Development of regional agreements to delineate conservation areas and protection of vulnerable species
 - Based on the targets, report of ideas recommending types of “long-term investments” needed for the region. “Investments” may include financial, technical, resources items.
 - Based on the targets, report of ideas recommending regional ecosystem stress reduction strategies
 - Pilot projects to test “investments” and strategies
 - Regular regional state of environment report for ecosystem

Members should note that some of the above activities can be combined, and reports should include actions to test the recommended ideas through pilot projects.