



CELEBRATING TWENTY YEARS
GLOBAL ENVIRONMENT FACILITY
INVESTING IN OUR PLANET



Reversing Environmental Degradation Trends in the South China Sea and Gulf of Thailand



Fast Facts

Achieved: Improved regional coordination and management of the China South Sea coastal environment and improved integration of biodiversity management in the Gulf of Thailand.

Where: Cambodia, China, Indonesia, Malaysia, Philippines, Thailand and Vietnam

Cost: GEF funds: \$16.294 million; Co-financing: \$36.2 million

When: January 2002 to December 2008

Partners: UNEP and government ministries in Cambodia, China, Indonesia, Malaysia, Philippines, Thailand and Vietnam



Achievements The South China Sea Project created regional coordination and a framework for joint management of the coastal areas and waters in seven countries on the South China Sea and in the Gulf of Thailand. It focused on environmental threats including degradation of four coastal habitats, fisheries depletion, and land-based pollution. The coastal habitats targeted were mangroves, sea grass beds, coral reefs and wetlands.

Legacy

Achievements with ongoing consequences include:

- Development of an intergovernmental Strategic Action Programme (SAP) based on updated data of the coastal ecosystems that is still used to address long-term issues in the region.
- Fostering of regional alliances to address environmental problems.
- Increased capacity of governments to incorporate environmental concerns into their development planning.
- Creation of a network of environmental ministries and specialized executing agencies with an ongoing dedication to improving the coastal environment.
- *Establishment and Operation of a Regional System of Fisheries Refugia in the South China Sea and Gulf of Thailand* program and the *South China Sea Small Grants Programme (SCS-SGP)*.
- Community-based demonstration projects currently operating in Cambodia, Indonesia, Philippines, Thailand, and Vietnam.

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What People Say:

The project was awarded highly satisfactory ratings for stakeholder involvement and efficiency in an independent evaluation.

Publications:

The project produced a website that serves as a repository for documents. It customized a regional interactive geographic information system database. The website is being administered by Coordinating Body for the Seas of East Asia and UNEP and can be found at: www.unepscs.org.

Outputs and Deliverables:

The project's achievements include:

- Set a scientific and information baseline for resource and habitat management.
- Characterized more than 140 local sites and prioritized them according to their ecological importance and the severity of threats.
- Launched 11 demonstration sites to support the implementation of the SAP.
- Created seven sets of national management plans and databases on mangroves, non-oceanic coral reefs, sea grass and coastal wetland habitats.
- Adopted and implemented priority habitat projects within the region.
- Established a system of *refugia* to maintain trans-boundary fish stocks with four national and one regional management plan.
- Developed 39 National Action Plans to support the larger SAP.
- Wrote and distributed educational and public awareness materials on sustainable fishery practices and fish stock conservation methods in the Gulf of Thailand.
- Evaluated a blast fishing detection device.
- Adopted regional water quality objectives and effluent standards.
- Reviewed country obligations under global conventions for countries in the project.
- Produced a website that served as a repository for more than 1,800 documents that is now being administered by the Coordinating Body for the Seas of East Asia (COBSEA) and UNEP.



Partners: Included the Southeast Asian Regional Centre for the System of Analysis Research and Training of the International Geosphere-Biosphere Programme, International Human Dimensions Programme on Global Environmental Change, The Association of Southeast Asian Nations -Southeast Asian Fisheries Development Center, The Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations, Ramkhamkaeng University, National University of Singapore, Australian Embassy in Cambodia, The World Bank, the International Union for Conservation of Nation in China, Development Support Consortium/Thai Fun Foundation; and other universities and marine research institutes around the world.

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