

PROJECT FACTS

Sustainable management of marine resources



- Project name : Arafura and Timor Seas Ecosystem Action programme (ATSEA)
- Total budget : USD 2,900,000
- Project period : 2010 - 2013
- Implementing partner : Agency for Marine and Fishery Research.
- Donor : GEF, UNDP Indonesia.
- Co-financing : Government of Indonesia, Timor Leste, Australia, UNDP-BDF, WWF, Sustainable Fisheries Partnership,



Background

The tropical and semi-enclosed Arafura and Timor Seas (ATS) are shared by Australia, Indonesia, Timor-Leste and Papua New Guinea (PNG). It is a region extremely rich in living and non-living marine resources, including major fisheries. In fact, the ATS region is an integral part of the Coral Triangle zone considered to have the highest marine biodiversity in the world. It sustains both small- and large-scale fisheries, including several high-value transboundary fish stocks that provide livelihoods for millions of people in the region. Consequently, it makes a crucial contribution

to food security for both regional coastal populations and large populations in the export market countries to the north of region, such as China.

Unfortunately, the marine environment in the ATS region is now in serious decline, primarily as a result of over-harvesting as well as other direct and indirect impacts of anthropogenic stresses and global climatic changes. Overexploitation of fisheries and other living coastal and marine resources, coastal and marine habitat destruction/modification (threatening coral reefs, mangrove

Donor:





A good sea ecosystem will also benefit the people who live from the sea

forests and sea grass beds) as well as changes to Arafura and Timor Sea ecosystem dynamics stand out as particularly important transboundary concerns for the ATS region.

Root causes for unsustainable fisheries relate to several factors, such as a lack of information on the extent and nature of unsustainable harvesting and overexploitation of resources. There is poor baseline knowledge on socio-economics and the state of the ecosystems, and a weak understanding of the complex matters of cumulative impacts and effects, feeding and breeding grounds of various species etc. Moreover, a regional management approach is absent and there is no integrated coastal zone development planning or capacity for enforcement across sectors. Poor enforcement by governments on issues such as illegal, unregulated and unreported fishing (IUU fishing) is equally a problem on a national level. The artisanal fishers and rural coastal people in the region have short of alternative sustainable livelihoods. Furthermore, strong demand for high value resources at local, regional and international markets contributes to the problem.

Expected Results

The abovementioned objectives will be sought through the formulation, the inter-governmental adoption and the initial implementation of a Regional Strategic Action Programme (SAP) and National Action Programs (NAPs). Additionally, the undertaking of a Trans-Boundary Diagnostic Analysis (TDA) and the implementation of innovative demonstration projects are important aims. In fact, SAP/NAP Initial Implementation will be sought through targeted demonstration projects addressing high priority transboundary issues identified by the TDA.

More concretely, the project aims to obtain local stress reduction through at least three pilot projects on alternative fishing methods and the protection of key habitats for shared stocks. The projects should lead to improvements in local livelihoods.

Objectives

As the concerns for the Arafura and Timor Seas region are transboundary, the rationale for the project is the need for the littoral nations to work cooperatively to sustain the ATS' shared living resources, conserve the biota of the seas and coasts, and improve sustainable socio-economic conditions and opportunities for coastal peoples. Littoral nations will be greatly assisted to collaboratively understand and address the shared waters problems that cannot be solved by any country alone.

It is crucial to ensure an integrated, cooperative, sustainable, ecosystem-based management use of the living coastal and marine resources of the ATS region.

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