



UNDP/GEF PROJECT ENTITLED "REDUCING ENVIRONMENTAL STRESS IN THE YELLOW SEA LARGE MARINE ECOSYSTEM"

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English only

Fourth Meeting of the Regional Scientific and Technical Panel for the UNDP/GEF Yellow Sea Project Guangzhou, China, 26-28 November 2007

Involvement of DPR Korea in the Project

1. BACKGROUND

At the First Meeting of the Project Steering Committee (Seoul, R. Korea, 7-8 March 2005), the meeting instructed the PMO to take necessary actions to contact DPRK, and a proposal should be prepared by the PMO on the strategy to involve DPRK.

At the Second Meeting, the PSC further agreed that:

The Meeting expressed its appreciation to SHMA, DPRK for inviting Mr. Yihang JIANG, the Project Manager of the YSLME and Mr. Wenxi ZHU, Representative of SOA, China to SHMA to explain the Project and to explore the possibility of DPRK's participation, and for sending a delegation to attend the meeting as observers. The PSC instructed the PMO to continue working with the relevant national authorities of DPRK to facilitate its full participation in the YSLME Project.

At the Third Meeting, the PSC made the following decision:

*The informal meeting examined the technical, legal, and logistical procedures to include a new member to the project. Following the group's exchange of suggestions and ideas, the informal meeting recommended that the PSC should welcome the participation of DPRK, and prepare for DPRK's participation in the Project by taking the opportunity of Mr. Li, NPC of China, and Mr. Jiang, Project Manager's, upcoming visit to DPRK. **The Meeting agreed with the recommendations of the informal meeting.***

2. CURRENT STATUS

Following the decision of the PSC at its 3rd meeting, Mr. Haiqing Li, the ex- National Project Co-ordinator and Mr. Yihang Jiang, the Project Manager, planned a visit to DPR Korea, 12-15 February 2007. However, due to the concerns on UNDP operations in DPRK, it was decided by UNDP that the planned mission should be postponed.

To facilitate further communication between DPR Korea and the YSLME project, a meeting was organised in Dalian, China, on 10 August 2008, with participation of Mr. Nam Chol, Director, Department of International Co-operation, State Hydrometeorologic Administration, DPRK, Mr. Fengkui Liang (representing the National Project Co-ordinator), Director, International Co-operation Department, State Oceanic Administration, China, and Mr. Yihang Jiang, Project Manager, YSLME.

The representative of DPR Korea expressed his concern on delaying formal involvement of the country in the project, and expressed again their interests and willingness to participate in the project. The Project Manager provided information on the decision of the PSC at its third meeting, and current situation of UNDP operation in DPR Korea. The representative understood the current problem.

The meeting discussed the possible ways to implement certain activities for the benefit of DPR Korea. However, it will be impossible to use the project funding at this moment, until the time that UNDP operation resumes in DPR Korea. The Project Manager will seek necessary financial support from other sources to implement the activities.

At the time when this document was prepared, there are two activities that are planned:

- (i) Training Workshop on Capacity Building for Environmental Pollution Monitoring and Assessment, Dalian, China, 3-9 December 2007; and
- (ii) Participation at UNDP/GEF Yellow Sea Project's "4th Regional Scientific and Technical Panel Meeting" and "4th Project Steering Committee Meeting", as observers, Guangzhou, China, 26-30 November 2007.

In the mid-term evaluation of the project, the evaluators recognised the importance of the involvement of DPR Korea and recommended:

It is vital to the long-term sustainability of the Yellow Sea ecosystem that the DPRK becomes a partner in this regional effort. Recent events have set the stage for enlargement of the YSLME partnership in the near term. In particular, during the just concluded summit between the leaders of the two Koreas, confidence building agreements were reached, some of which directly involve the Yellow Sea.

- *This recommendation to now involve the DPRK is built upon a regional consensus that has been developing concerning their participation. The DPRK has indicated to the PMO its interest to participate, and both Chinese and ROK officials have signalled their desire for the DPRK to join.*
- *The DPRK has been invited to send participants to the November 2007 PSC annual meeting and participation is likely. A key issue that may determine the level of participation is whether they are invited as observers or as future partners. It would be very useful for UNDP, China and ROK to signal that this meeting sets the stage leading to full DPRK participation in 2008.*
- *During its November meeting, the YSLME PSC should consider the budget and management implications of DPRK involvement.*
- *There is currently a freeze on direct UNDP support to DPRK, pending resolution of an (unrelated) investigation into financial management issues at UNDP's DPRK country office in Pyongyang. While this investigation places some restrictions on the YSLME, it should not prohibit the commencement of partnership negotiations. The YSLME is a regional UNDP/GEF project,*

executed through UNOPS, not through the UNDP country offices. Significant financial support to DPRK for YSLME-related demonstration projects and consultancies will require a signed agreement for YSLME involvement, as well as resolution of the UNDP–Pyongyang office financial issues. In the meantime, limited support – for travel allowances of DPRK officials to participate in YSLME negotiations, should be made available.

- *GEF has received an MSP PIF (project proposal) to provide support for inclusion of the DPRK into the Yellow Sea Project. The PIF provides a good basis for GEF financial consideration, noting that a \$1 million GEF commitment would enable the DPRK to fully integrate into Yellow Sea Project activities. The PIF estimates \$815,000 in co-financing, through in-kind contributions of office space and expert time in the DPRK, and through bilateral support from China and other external sources. GEF approval of this proposal in 2008 would provide a strong boost to the YSP.*

The UNDP/GEF International Waters Programme is designed to protect and enhance natural resources through transboundary cooperation. It is hoped that through the joint sustainable management of shared natural resources, the parties will also build greater trust and reduce cross-border conflicts. Establishing a successful three-way partnership in the YSLME will be a crowning achievement for the project, and a strong basis for subsequent GEF financial support for protection of the Yellow Sea ecosystem.