



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

UNDP/GEF/YS/RWG-B.3/8
Date: 15 September 2006
English only

**Third Meeting of the Regional Working Group
for the Biodiversity Component**
Weihai, China, 20 – 23 October 2006

Proposed Regional Targets for Biodiversity Conservation in the Yellow Sea

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 biodiversity 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 biodiversity section of the SAP, all steps should be considered simultaneously:
 - a) consider the technical and management issues affecting biodiversity-related problems in the Yellow Sea;
 - b) recommend realistic and achievable regional targets for biodiversity 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-B agreed to focus the Biodiversity Component's activities on the higher trophic levels (vulnerable species conservation), while the Ecosystem Component focused its activities mostly on the lower trophic levels. However, in preparing the SAP, it is suggested that habitat and genetic diversity as a whole need to be considered. The technical and management issues are not limited to addressing the species level of the biodiversity, but may include addressing management capability and other non-tangible issues, such as agreed regional indicators to monitor and assess biodiversity conservation.
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 biodiversity 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 biodiversity, one should take into account the methods to define critical habitats/biodiversity in order to prepare action plans for protection and management of the critical 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 Biodiversity Components. Some other "targets" to consider, *inter alia*, are:
 - identification of regional actions to mitigate threats from possible introduction of exotic species;
 - prevention of further losses of known genetic diversity of exploited wild fish and other wild and cultured marine and coastal species;
 - maintenance of the associated indigenous and local knowledge; and
 - finalise management plan for the protection of the critical habitat identified as Potential Priority Areas by YSEPP
 - development of further scientific and ecological criteria for identification, designation, management, monitoring and evaluation of national and regional systems of protected areas.
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, in particular how to further verify the critical habitats identified by YSEPP?

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

- Regionally coordinated strategies for conservation areas and the protection of vulnerable species;
- Experts workshop on gene pool analysis;
- Regional consensus on the requirements for conservation of genetic diversity; and
- Training course on the implementation of the regulation and control of exotic species.

After agreeing on the activities to implement, members should provide guidance on how the 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 biodiversity targets.

EXPECTED RESULTS FROM THE MEETING

9. 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 biodiversity targets
 - Development of robust criteria to identify critical habitats
 - Development of regional agreements to delineate conservation areas and protection of vulnerable species, which is closely linked with future activities in relation to the critical habitats.
 - Regional consensus on conservation of genetic diversity