Bay of Bengal Large Marine Ecosystem Project

Report on establishing a Clearing House Mechanism (CHM) on biological diversity for the South Asia region

BOBLME-2014-Governance-08

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Final Report on Establishing a Clearing House Mechanism on Biological Diversity for the South Asia region

LOA/RAP/2013/87

Between BOBLME and SACEP

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Acronyms

BOBLME- Bay of Bengal Large Marine Ecosystem

CHM - Clearing House Mechanism

FAO - Food and Agricultural Organization of United Nation

LOA– Letter of Agreement

NBSAP – National Biodiversity Strategy and Action Plan

SACEP – South Asia Co-operative Environment Programme

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Final Report of the Project on Establishing a Clearing House Mechanism on Biological Diversity for the South Asia region

Introduction

South Asia Co-operative Environment Programme (SACEP) entered into an agreement with the "Sustainable Management of the Bay of Bengal Large Marine Ecosystem (BOBLME)" Project of the Food and Agricultural Organization of United Nations (FAO) to jointly implement the project on establishing South Asia Regional Clearing House Mechanism (CHM). Under this agreement, BOBLME assisted SACEP financially to implement the Project.

The objectives of the project was:

- Develop a regional CHM that meets the needs of the region, links together the national CHMs and provides a forum for or promoting regional scientific and technical cooperation.
- Assist SACEP's member countries to update, maintain and host their national CHMs which are now being developing under the NBSAP process.

The following Outputs were expected to achieve by implementing the project.

1. A progress report on the information gathering process on South Asia Biological Diversity and the design and development of regional CHM
2. A report on the updated and validated information on South Asia Biological Diversity and the links to the information base
3. Report on the completion of the design and development of Regional CHM website and link to the same
4. Report on the discussion group on the regional CHM
5. Report on assistance provided to BOBLMEmember countries on the establishment of their national CHM websites and the links to the same

The expected outcome was a regional Clearing House Mechanism on Biological Diversity that meets the needs of the South Asia region, linked to strengthened national CHMs and providing a forum for promoting regional scientific and technical cooperation in the conservation of biological Diversity.

SACEP has successfully implemented the project by 31st August 2014. During the project implementation, following activities have been undertaken.

Information Gathering

Gathering of Information required to design the CHM website was completed. The information compiled in this report was gathered through a desktop review. It will be a dynamic website which will be updated regularly. After uploading the initial website, user-rights will be given to the national authorities nominated by the respective governments of SACEP member countries where those authorities can upload updated information. A protocol will be set up to publish the information after approval of the Administrator.

Updating and Validating the Information

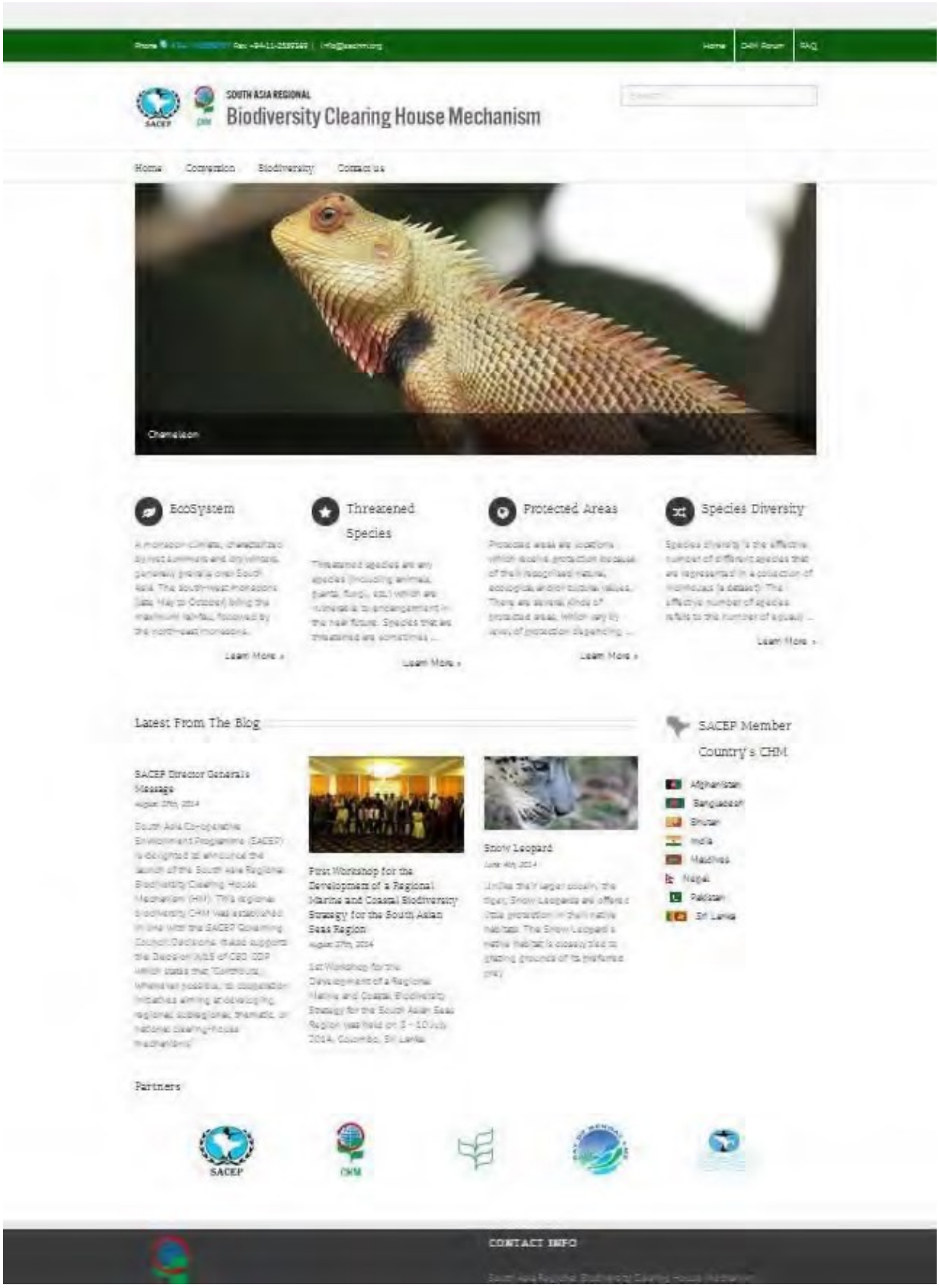
During the desktop review, only official reports of respective government authorities of our member countries were used, which helped to avoid questions about validity of the data gathered. This has been purposely applied to minimize the time consuming. On the occasions of regular updating, data will be fed by the nominated authorities of respective countries directly, so that way validation will be done before feeding the data at national levels.

According to the LOA SACEP has submitted an interim Report to BOBLME on the above two activities which reflected the expected Output 1 & 2 and all information in the report was uploaded to the CHM website. Please refer http://chm-sacep.org.

Designing and Developing of Regional CHM

The regional CHM website was developed and all the initial information gathered were uploaded to the website.

http://chm-sacep.org



Picture 1: Home page of the CHM website

All the necessary hardware and software were purchased, installed and now in fully operational state. With this, SACEP is now able to host this CHM web site and can provide a wide range of services to its member countries including hosting of National CHM websites.

Picture 3: Web and mail server

Picture 2: Web and mail server with server rack

In order to ensure the maintenance and sustainability of the project outcomes, a staff member of SACEP has been trained in Sever Management and Hardware installation as well as web designing and updating.

Development of a discussion group on the regional CHM

A discussion forum was created on the CHM website and it will provide opportunities for concerned stakeholders to share their views on Biodiversity related issues. This forum will be open to stakeholder on request and their registration with the forum.

http://chm-sacep.org/?forum=chm-forum

Assisting SACEP member countries to develop and host their national CHMs

SACEP is now ready to provide hosting facility for national CHM websites of its member countries. In this regard, SACEP is assisting Sri Lanka to develop their National CHM and when completed, it can be hosted in SACEP's server free of charge. Similarly, other member countries of SACEP are in the process of developing their National CHMs under the NBSAP updating projects. Therefore, if required, SACEP offered hosting facility for them as well.

Conclusions and Recommendations

It was a great challenge to collect up to date information during the exercise. Therefore, for the initial step, rely on the already published information to develop the CHM website. As this is a dynamic website, it is very important to keep updating regularly. Therefore, the CHM website will produce up to date information during the short period of operation.

As a next step, it is necessary to produce regional aggregate data on biodiversity of South Asia. This will give a real picture of the status of biodiversity in South Asia and provide platform for developing regional policies and strategies for safeguarding the biodiversity.

In this regard, further collaboration between SACEP and BOBLMEis recommended.

Bangladesh, India, Indonesia, Malaysia, Maldives, Myanmar, Sri Lanka and Thailand are working together through the Bay of Bengal Large Marine Ecosystem (BOBLME) Project to lay the foundations for a coordinated programme of action designed to better the lives of the coastal populations through improved regional management of the Bay of Bengal environment and its fisheries.

The Food and Agriculture Organization (FAO) is the implementing agency for the BOBLME Project.

The Project is funded principally by the Global Environment Facility (GEF), Norway, the Swedish International Development Cooperation Agency, the FAO, and the National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration of the USA.

For more information, please visit www.boblme.org

Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations

gef

SWEDEN

Norad

NOAA