Report of the

BOBLME SAP Finalisation meeting

21-22 October 2014 • Bangkok, Thailand

Bay of Bengal Large Marine Ecosystem Project
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Executive summary

The BOBLME Project Steering Committee, in its capacity as the SAP Team met in Bangkok, Thailand from 21-22 October 2014, to finalise the BOBLME Strategic Action Programme (SAP).

1. The meeting agreed on the following:
2. The final SAP content and text
3. A SAP completion plan
4. That the RCU should request a nine month extension to the Project (to 31 December 2015) in order to fully utilise around an estimated $600,000 of unspent GEF funds (that will be available after completion of the 2014 work plan); to allow some flexibility if required in the SAP completion plan; to better prepare for the GEF PIF process; and to wrap up the project activities

The SAP completion plan included the following steps:

1. The SAP be delivered to countries together, to enter the national processes for Ministerial signature - by the end of December
2. Holding a meeting involving the PSC and the GEF Focal Points from each country to inform GEF focal points about the SAP and the proposed SAP Implementation Project, and obtain their assistance in the SAP completion process
3. The Regional Coordinator would devise an itinerary of travel in order to visit each country to support SAP signing in each country - during February-March
4. The SAP Implementation Project would be submitted to the GEF Council during its November 2015 meeting
Table of contents

Background to the meeting .................................................................................................................... 1
1. Opening of the meeting .................................................................................................................. 1
2. Introduction to the SAP ................................................................................................................ 1
3. Finalisation of the SAP content ................................................................................................... 1
4. The SAP completion process ...................................................................................................... 2
5. Any other business ....................................................................................................................... 2
5.1. Introduction to the draft SAP implementation project .......................................................... 2
5.2. No cost extension .................................................................................................................... 3
6. Actions for PSC members .......................................................................................................... 3
7. Adoption of the report ................................................................................................................... 4

Appendix I List of participants ........................................................................................................ 5
Appendix II Agenda ........................................................................................................................ 7
Appendix III Draft SAP with revisions adopted by the PSC ................................................................. 8

Acronyms used

BOBLME Bay of Bengal Large Marine Ecosystem
EAFM Ecosystem Approach to Fisheries Management
EEZ Exclusive Economic Zone
FAO Food and Agriculture Organisation
GEF Global Environmental Facility
ICM Integrated Coastal Management
PIF Project Information Form
PSC Project Steering Committee
RCU Regional Coordination Unit
SAP Strategic Action Programme
TDA Transboundary Diagnostic Analysis
USD United States Dollar
1. **Background to the meeting**

The Bay of Bengal Large Marine Ecosystem (BOBLME) Project has two major outputs: a Transboundary Diagnostic Analysis (TDA) which is a report on the major transboundary issues affecting the health of the Bay and their causes and a Strategic Action Programme (SAP), which is a plan for addressing the major transboundary issues and their causes.

The TDA was adopted by the BOBLME Project Steering Committee at its annual meeting in 2012. At the same time, the PSC agreed that it would constitute the BOBLME SAP Team and manage a range of key activities relating to the development of the Strategic Action Programme.

A draft SAP was delivered to the BOBLME countries for review in August 2014, with a view to the SAP team convening at meeting in October to finalise the text. Below is the report of this meeting.

2. **Opening of the meeting**

1. The meeting of the Bay of Bengal Large Marine Ecosystem (BOBLME) Project Steering Committee (PSC) was held at the Amari Watergate Hotel, Bangkok, Thailand from 21 to 22 October 2014. PSC members from the eight Project countries attended. The list of participants is attached as Appendix I.

2. The Regional Coordinator, who was also chair for the meeting, welcomed the participants.

3. The PSC adopted the Agenda as presented in Appendix II to this report.

3. **Introduction to the SAP**

4. The Regional Coordinator presented an overview of the BOBLME Project and described in detail the work that had been undertaken to develop the Strategic Action programme (SAP).

5. Each country was invited to give feedback on the SAP development process and the draft SAP.

6. The Regional Coordinator introduced the draft SAP, describing the framework of the document, elaborating why certain content was included/not included, and explaining the thinking behind the document’s design and format.

4. **Finalisation of the SAP content**

7. The PSC first focused on the SAP vision, objectives and targets (section 3.4) and while acknowledging that these had been derived from previous consultations, it made several changes to the targets, including: changing the target dates from the year 2020 to 2025 (as the SAP implementation project would probably only start in 2016/17) and making some revisions to the wording in the water quality and social and economics sections to improve clarity.

8. The PSC then reviewed the regional and national actions. A more in depth examination was made of the priority of the regional actions pertaining to the social and economics section as the prioritisation exercise for the regional actions in this section was only completed at the meeting. The wording of several regional actions was combined and/or revised to improve clarity. And newly worded regional actions were re-scored in terms of their priority.

9. Several countries provided updated information on their national actions and the levels of country cofinancing for inclusion in the final document.
10. The PSC reviewed the draft SAP page by page and adopted a range of changes that will be reflected in the text of the final SAP. Overall, however, the scope and approach of the draft SAP did not change.

11. The changes adopted by the PSC are shown as hand written amendments to the draft SAP provided in Appendix III. The PSC also gave permission to the Regional Coordinator to independently make any additional corrections relating to statements of fact and minor revisions to improve the English.

5. The SAP completion process

The Regional Coordinator described the steps and timing needed to complete the SAP, and linked these with the development and submission of the SAP Implementation Project. The SAP completion plan included the following steps:

12. Publication of the SAP - by end November
13. Drafting of the SAP Implementation Project PIF (Project Information Form) and distribution to countries - by end November
14. Holding a meeting involving the PSC and the GEF Focal Points from each country to inform GEF focal points about the SAP and the proposed SAP Implementation Project, and obtain their assistance in the SAP completion process, - by end December
15. The SAP and PIF delivered to countries together, to enter the national processes for Ministerial signature - by the end of December.8
16. The Regional Coordinator would devise an itinerary of travel in order to visit each country to support SAP signing in each country - during February-March

Note 1

This process was predicated on the SAP Implementation Project being submitted to the June meeting of the GEF Council. Advice obtained from GEF specialists after the SAP Finalisation Meeting, recommended that the BOBLME Implementation Project should be submitted for consideration at the November 2015 GEF Council meeting, as inclusion in the June meeting would require the SAP to be signed and the PIF to be developed around March 2015, and there is not enough time to complete these requirements.

The PSC agreed while adopting this report that the BOBLME Implementation Project should be submitted for consideration at the November 2015 GEF Council meeting; and because this gives more time to develop the SAP Implementation Project/s, that the SAP should be sent for ministerial signature without the PIF.

6. Any other business

6.1. Introduction to the draft SAP implementation project

17. The Regional Coordinator presented a draft outline of the SAP Implementation Project objectives, outcomes and outputs, and described how these linked to the draft SAP objectives, targets and activities. The PSC noted that the draft project proposal was very much a work in progress and would likely change during consolations.
6.2. **No cost extension**

18. The Regional coordinator informed the PSC that after the completion of the 2014 work programme (i.e. by the current project end date of 31 March 2015), it is projected that the BOBLME Project will have an unspent balance of GEF funds of around $USD600,000.

19. Noting that there were projected savings in the budget, the PSC instructed the RCU to request a six month, no-cost extension from the GEF Agency to extend the Project completion date to 30 September 2015 (see note 2 below) in order to fully utilise the remaining GEF project funds. The PSC agreed that such an extension would enable the Project to consolidate and enhance the work and cooperative engagements already underway, including deferred activities. In particular, it would implement intensive capacity development in support of SAP implementation (i.e. some activities identified in the SAP). Such an extension would minimise the gap between project completion and SAP implementation.

20. A no-cost extension would mean that the BOBLME Project should continue on, basically with the same set-up and approach. In particular, the Project would:

- Translate the SAP into country languages
- Work towards submitting the PIF for the SAP implementation Project to the GEF Council
- Write its terminal report
- Hold a range of meetings and workshops previously deferred (7)
- Extend the completion date of the major fisheries statistics initiatives in Myanmar and Indonesia, if required
- Undertake more EAFM training
- Undertake small projects as required
- Plan and hold a major BOBLME conference event that would showcase the outputs of the BOBLME project and the proposed SAP
- Support and consolidate ongoing national activities - research, communications and awareness
- Support regional capacity building activities on project management, project development, stock assessment, EAFM, ICM, and science communications to the extent possible

**Note 2**

*The proposed extension to 30 September 2015 was predicated on the SAP Implementation Project being submitted to the June meeting of the GEF council. Advice obtained from GEF specialists after the SAP Finalisation Meeting recommended that the BOBLME Implementation Project should be submitted for consideration at the November 2015 GEF Council meeting.*

*Given this timing, the PSC agreed while adopting this report that an extension to 31 December 2015 be requested in order to have continuity in the RCU to meet the GEF Council requirements and allow time a small amount of time for the administrative closure of the project.*

7. **Actions for PSC members**

21. For those members that have not already done so, provide budget information to the RCU for section 3.5.3
22. To devise and provide to the RCU a plan for including the SAP and the PIF in national approval procedures, including a timeline for obtaining Ministerial signatures, and a media plan.

8. Adoption of the report

23. The PSC adopted this report by email.
## Appendix I  List of participants

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<th>Environment</th>
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<td></td>
<td><strong>Alternate to Mr Md. Nurul Karim</strong></td>
<td><strong>Mr Md Anisur Rahman</strong></td>
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<td><strong>Mr Md. Afal Hossain</strong></td>
<td>Joint Secretary</td>
<td>Joint Secretary (Fisheries)</td>
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<td>Ministry of Environment and Forrest</td>
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<td><strong>Mr Shashi Shekhar</strong></td>
<td><strong>was unable to attend</strong></td>
<td><strong>Director General</strong></td>
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Nay Pyi Taw |

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# Appendix II  
## Agenda

<table>
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<th>Tuesday — Wednesday 21-22 October 2014</th>
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<tr>
<td>Registration</td>
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<td>8.45 - 9.00 am</td>
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<td>Ayudhaya suite, 8th floor, Amari Watergate Hotel, Bangkok</td>
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*Dress: Smart casual (preferably no ties)*

1. Opening remarks from the facilitator (Regional Coordinator)
2. Introductions
3. Adoption of the agenda
4. Group photograph
5. Overview of the SAP development process (presentation)
6. Country feedback on the SAP (up to 5 minutes each)
7. Discussions on SAP general content and format
8. Discussions on the regional and national actions
   - Theme 1
   - Theme 2
   - Theme 3
   - Theme 4
9. Discussion on country cofinancing section (SAP section 3.5.3)
10. Adoption of the SAP Text (working through the document, paragraph by paragraph)
11. Introduction to the draft GEF PIF (SAP Implementation Project)
12. Review of the SAP completion process
13. Any other business

**Expected Outcomes:**
- An agreed SAP content that can be sent for country signatures
- An agreed SAP completion plan
- Agreement in principle to the PIF outline and plan for its completion
Appendix III  Draft SAP with revisions adopted by the PSC

2014-11 BOBLME
SAP with changes
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