South Asia Coral Reef Task Force


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SOUTH ASIA COOPERATIVE ENVIRONMENT PROGRAMME (SACEP)

Started in 1982, SACEP is an inter-governmental organization of eight member states: Afghanistan, Bangladesh, Bhutan, India, Maldives, Nepal, Pakistan, and Sri Lanka.

Apex decision body is the SACEP Governing Council comprising of Ministers.

SACEP core programme and project activities apart from South Asian Seas Programme and are:

- Waste Management
- Adaptation to Climate Change
- Data Base and Information Management
- Biodiversity
South Asian Seas Programme (SASP)

- Action Plan for SASP (sub-regional agreement) was formally adopted at a Meeting of Plenipotentiaries of the concerned countries held in New Delhi, on March 24th 1995.
- The overall objective of the SASP is to protect and manage the marine environment and related coastal ecosystems of the region in an environmentally sound and sustainable manner.
- The Action Plan in addition to specifying the needs under the main components of Environmental Sassement, Environmental Management, Environmental Legislation & Institutional and Financial Arrangements, identified the following priority areas:
  - Integrated Coastal Zone Management (ICZM),
  - oil-spill contingency planning,
  - human resource development and
  - the environmental effects of land-based activities.
SASP Programme Activities

- Regional Strategy and Task Force on Ballast Water Management in South Asia
- South Asia Coral Reef Task Force
- Regional Oil Spill Contingency Plan in South Asian Region
- A Scoping Study of Nutrient Pollution on the Coastal and Marine Systems of South Asia
- Development of a Marine and Coastal Biodiversity Strategy for the South Asian Seas Region
South Asia Marine Environment

- Five maritime countries of the South Asian share marine resources and are characterized by extensive river deltas and diverse marine and coastal habitats.
- Supporting some of the richest concentrations of marine biodiversity in the world.
- Encompassing globally significant mangrove, sea grass and coral reef habitats.
- Home to around 10% of the world mangroves.
- Home to 6% of world coral reefs more than 250 species of coral species.
- Over 1200 reef associated fish species.
- Maldives Atolls largest atoll system in the world.
- Over 100 globally threatened species are recorded from coast and marine habitats.
Threats to Coral Reef Ecosystem

- Despite current protection measures degradation of coral reef resources continues
- 1/3 or almost ½ of coral reef resources of South Asia are now effectively dead and further 30 percent are threatened
- The anthropogenic factors have further aggravated the degradation
  - Such as unplanned human settlements, improper industrial growth, improper infrastructure, over expiration of resources
- Global warming leading to coral bleaching
- Runoff of chemicals and nutrients from land
- Sedimentation
- Rubbish including marine debris/litters
- Overfishing
- Physical damage from tourists and fishermen
- Pollution from untreated solid waste, sewage and various types of oils
Why coral Reef is important?

- Income: they provide millions of dollars of income annually for people living depending on coral reef business
- Medical Research: coral reefs have the potential to be used as medical cures to treat cancer, heart disease, HIV and arthritis among others
- Protection: Thy protect 20% of the worlds coast from wave erosion
- Food: they are a food source for millions of people
- Tourism: coral reefs attract tourisms from all over the world.
- Habitat for marine biodiversity
South Asia Coral Reef Task Force (SACRTF)

Mission Statement

☐ To actively participate and support the effective implementation of existing national regulations, action plans and strategies for the management of coral reefs and associated ecosystems
☐ To promote the development of the strategic linkages for enhanced regional cooperation and the establishment of an effective networked system of marine and coastal protected areas in the South Asian Region.
Structure of the SACRTF

✓ 2 Government Representatives from each country
✓ Coral Reef Ecosystem Expert, one from each country
✓ Coral Reef Task Force Representative, one from each country
✓ International NGO or Agency (e.g. UNEP)
✓ Member Secretary- Director General, SACEP
Task Force Areas

Target countries: Bangladesh, India, Pakistan, Maldives, Sri Lanka.

- Improve the effectiveness of management at existing Marine Protected Areas (MPAs)
- Improve information exchange and data management across the region
- Improve regional cooperation and responses to regional marine and coastal resources management challenges.
- Strengthen the capacity of policy makers, planners and managers to design and implement viable livelihood diversification for poor reef users.
Focus

- Capacity Development
- Communications and Data Management
- Regional coordination
- Livelihood enhancement and diversification
Regional Cooperation

Limited inter-agency and government cooperation has been identified as compounding factor to effective management.
✓ Provision of opportunities to link regional stakeholders to discuss key issues.
✓ Coordinated regional response to shared environmental challenges.
Communication and Data Management

Actions: Communication and coordination of knowledge and information are critical elements in effective management.

- Identification of communication gaps and needs
- Establishment of responsive communication services and tools
- Stakeholder identification
- Development of knowledge base
Sustainable Livelihood Enhancement and Diversification

- Understand critical factors in livelihood diversification
- Development guidance strategies, institutional capacity and supportive policies
- Create an informed and enabling environment for the effective uptake of outputs and greater success rate
Achievements

- Developed Regional Strategy for Coral Reef Management in South Asia
- Communication strategy for coral reef management in South Asia
- Shared experiences among the stakeholders
Recommendations

- Uniqueness of SACRTF and importance of South Asia on coral reef management to be recognized
- Assistance in securing sustainable financing for the SACRTF
- Importance of South Asian coral reefs to be recognized
- SACEP/SASP will Participate actively and support new initiatives of SACRTF
- SACEP is willing to be part of the “Global Coral Reef Partnership: Towards an Ecosystem Approach to Coral Reef Management” in its work plan for 2016-17.