

PERSGA AND MAIN ACHIEVEMENTS SINCE 2005

Summary Voluntary Report

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This summary voluntary report provides background on PERSGA and main achievements since 2005. It was prepared for Secretariat of the Convention on Biological Diversity in February 2009.

BACKGROUND

The Organization (PERSGA)

PERSGA “*The Regional Organization for the Conservation of the Environment of the Red Sea and Gulf of Aden*” is an intergovernmental organization dedicated to the conservation of the coastal and marine environments in the Region. PERSGA’s legal basis stems from Article XVI of the Regional Convention for the Conservation of the Red Sea and Gulf of Aden, known as the Jeddah Convention, signed in 1982: “A Regional Organization for the Conservation of the Red Sea and Gulf of Aden Environment, the permanent headquarters of which shall be located in Jeddah, Saudi Arabia, is hereby established”. It was not until September 1995, however, with the signing of the Cairo Declaration during the First Council Meeting in Egypt, that PERSGA’s creation was formally announced. Since then, PERSGA has been recognized as one of the leading marine conservation organizations operating in the Red Sea and Gulf of Aden region, falling under the umbrella of the Arab League. The Member Countries of PERSGA are Djibouti, Egypt, Jordan, Saudi Arabia, Somalia, Sudan and Yemen.

Strategic Action Plan (SAP)

PERSGA was the executing agency for the Strategic Action Plan (1999 -2005) at the regional level, with support of GEF and implementing agencies (UNEP, UNEP, and The world Bank, the Islamic Development and the Members Countries. It aimed to assist PERSGA in translating the Jeddah Convention (1982) and its action plans into activities on the ground. The SAP has provided a formwork for long-tern conservation and management of coastal and marine resources. The main results included capacity building training and baseline surveys on status of key habitats and species in the PERSGA region. More information and results of the SAP are available at the web site of PERSGA (www.persga.org).

Operational Framework of Action for 2006- 2010

The framework is the follow-up phase for the SAP. The priority of it is establishment of a sound foundation of structure and systems; to developing regional capacity building; to promoting national and local on-the-ground initiative and; and to transferring lessons learned across the Region. The framework includes partnership activities with donors and international organizations.

MAIN ACHIEVEMENTS

PERSG/MEMAC (Marine Emergency Mutual Aid Center)

The PERSGA/MEMAC has officially been established since May 2006 in Hurghada, Egypt, at the regional level. The legal framework of it is the Protocol Concerning Regional Co-operation in Combating Pollution by Oil and Other Harmful Substances in Case of Emergencies. The key achievements of the PERSGA/MEMAC include:

- Established database on oil spills and communications in the PERSGA region.
- Produced PERSGA/MEMCAC Express emergency Pocket Directories 2007 and 2009.
- Organized training workshops within PERSGA Training Prgramms.

Regional Protocols

- Regional Protocol on Movement of Experts/Technicians, Equipment and Materials in Case of Emergency in the PERSGA Region. *Under final discussion in Arabic, expecting to be signed in 2009. The English version, including title, is not yet officially translated.*
- Regional Protocol Concerning the Conservation Biological Diversity and the Establishment of Protected Area in the Region, signed by the Country Members in December 2005
- Regional Protocol Concerning the Protection of the Marine environment from Land-Based Activities, signed by the Country Members in September 2005.

Activities, Surveys and Studies

Global Regional Meeting

PERSGA organized the Ninth Global Meeting of UNEP/Regional Seas Programme in 2007 in Jeddah. The Government of Saudi Arabia hosted this meeting with generous hospitality.

Regional Level

- Conducted surveys and established monitoring programs for coral reefs and sea water quality in the PERSGA Region.
- Developed
 - Regional Action of Programm for the Protection of the Marine Environment from Land-Based Activities, jointly with UNEP/GPA.
 - National Action of Programm for the Protection of the Marine Environment from Land-Based Activities, coordinated with ASEZA (Aqaba) and jointly with UNEP/GPA.
 - Regional Action Plans on Marine Litter, jointly UNEP/RSP.
 - Strategic Action Plan on Effects of Climate Change on Marine Resources.
- Updating network of the marine protected areas in the Region. Most recently, PERSGA organized a regional meeting for this purpose.

- Developing
 - A report on status of coral reefs in the PERSGA Region.
 - Guidelines on Economic Valuation of Marine and Coastal Resources in the Region, jointly with UNEP/Regional Office for Western Asia (ROWA).

National Level (Within PERSGA national on-the-ground projects)

- Assessed sea cucumbers fisheries of Yemen and provided recommendations for management to the Yemen Government.
- Constructed a number of moorings for diving sites in Jeddah coast, Saudi Arabia.
- Implemented a public environmental awareness aiming conservation of marine habitats and species on the ground with environmental clubs in schools in Djibouti.
- Managed mangroves of Hurghadah (Egypt) for eco-tourism purposes.
- Developing a regional guidelines on education for sustainability, jointly with Al-Balqa University, Amman (Jordan).
- Supporting two national oil response centers: one for Yemen and the other for Sudan.

Training Workshops

PERSGA have developed annual training programs since 2005; manuals for each year are available since 2006. PERSGA organized at least six training workshops yearly for participants from country members. The training programmes included the areas of economic valuation of marine resources and fisheries management. Manuals are available at www.persga.org.

Partnership Building/Enhancement

PERSGA enhanced partnerships with UNEP/GPA, UNEP/RSP, UNEP/ROWA, IMO, IUCN and ISESCO for supporting implementation of some activities, including capacity-building development.. Most recently, PERSGA build new partnership with Centre of Red Sea Research, University of King Abdullah, Saudi Arabia for cooperation in relevant researches.

Publications *(since 2005) (some are available at www.persga.org)*

PERSGA have produced several main documents since 2005 (Annex I). Three of them are Technical Series based on studies conducted during the period of SAP (1999-2005) and others are based on activities undertaken after completing of the SPA. PERSGA also produced periodically documents that are:

- *Al Sanbouk* (A Newsletter of PERSGA) Issues 22, 23, 24, 25 and 26.
- Training Programme 2006, 2007, 2008 and 2009. (English & Arabic)

Annex I. List of PERSGA Publications (after ending SAP-since 2005)

(some are available at www.persga.org)

1. PERSGA. 2009. *Sea Cucumber Fisheries of Yemen. Status and Recommendations*. PERSGA, Jeddah. (English & Arabic).
2. PERSGA/UNEP. 2009. *Guidelines on Compensation of Coral Reefs Damage Following Ships or Boats Grounding*. PERSGA, Jeddah. (English).
3. PERSGA. 2009. *Standard Survey Methods for Key Habitats and Key Species in The Red Sea and Gulf of Aden*. PERSGA, Jeddah. (It is the Arabic Version of English PERSGA Technical Series. No. 10).
4. PERSGA/UNEP. 2008. *Marine Litter in the PERSGA Region*. PERSGA, Jeddah (English)
5. ASEZA/PERSGA/UNEP.2008. *Jordan's National Programme of Action for the Protection of the Marine Environment from Land-Based Activities*. ASEZA, Jordan. (English)
6. PERSGA. 2008. *Guide of Diving and fishing sites with Mooring Buoys* (Jeddah coast).
7. PERSGA./GEF. 2007. *Survey of Habitats and Plans for their Protection*. PESRGA Technical Series No 13. PERSGA, Jeddah.
8. PERSGA./GEF. 2007. *Current status of the Ornamental Fish Trade in the Red Sea and Gulf of Aden with Guidelines for Self-financing Monitoring Control and Surveillance Programme and Proposal for Quotas*. PESRGA Technical Series No 14. PERSGA, Jeddah.
9. PERSGA./GEF. 2007. *Regional Actions Plans for the Conservation of Marine Turtles, Sea Birds and Mangroves in the Red Sea and Gulf of Aden*. PESRGA Technical Series No 12. PERSGA, Jeddah.
10. PERSGA. 2006. *The State of the Marine Environment Report for the Red Sea and Gulf of Aden*. PESRGA, Jeddah. (English and a separate Executive Summary in Arabic).
11. PERSGA. 2006. *Guidelines on Coastal Zone Management and Planning for the Red Sea and Gulf of Aden*. PERSGA. (Arabic).