

PARTNERSHIP INITIATIVES INFORMATION SHEET

Name of the Partnership/Initiative:

Arafura Seas-Timor Seas Experts Forum

Expected date of initiation: December 2002

Expected date of completion: December 2005

Partners Involved:

Governments: Australia, Indonesia, East Timor, Papua New Guinea

Other: CRC Reef, AIMS, ANU Research School of Pacific and Asian Studies

Leading Partner:

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Main objectives of the Partnership/Initiative:

The Arafura – Timor Seas Expert Forum provides opportunities to improve information-sharing arrangements between the littoral states of the Arafura and Timor Seas. It provides an opportunity to identify cooperative research agendas and arrangements to enhance the capacity to sustainably manage the Arafura – Timor Seas.

Relationship of the Partnership/Initiative with the objectives of Agenda 21, as well as relevant goals and objectives of the United Nation Millennium Declaration:

The Arafura – Timor Seas Forum supports objectives in Chapter 17 of Agenda 21 with particular reference to programme area F: “Strengthening international, including regional cooperation and coordination.” In particular, the Forum promotes effective information exchange and development of policy, scientific and institutional linkages to augment existing arrangements between littoral states and strengthen and extend intergovernmental regional cooperation.

Expected results:

- Development of agreements or protocols concerning information exchange;
- Identification of agreed management priorities for the Arafura – Timor Seas;
- Identification of research and information requirements to support agreed management priorities;
- Identification and development of opportunities for progressing sustainable development through the exchange of information on practical institutional and policy approaches.

Specific targets of the Partnership/Initiative and timeframe for their achievement:

The second meeting of the Forum was held at meetings associated with PrepCom4 in Bali on 5 June 2002. Specific targets will be progressed at the third meeting tentatively planned for late 2002.

Coordination and Implementation mechanism:

The Forum will serve as a key coordination mechanism between Arafura and Timor littoral states in issues relating to information needs for sustainable marine management. Appropriate implementation mechanisms will be identified in the context of Forum discussion. The Forum is designed to augment existing arrangements between littoral states. Areas of particular interest include integrated marine management; scientific, policy and institutional capacity building; and alternative sustainable livelihoods.

Arrangements for funding:

In-kind support by donor governments. Australia's marine science institutions and the National Oceans Office will seek to contribute information and research outcomes to meet Arafura – Timor Seas management needs where consistent with Australia's regional marine planning process and marine science priorities.

Arrangements for capacity building and technology transfer:

The Forum provides scope for institutional strengthening:

- through the sharing of information and capacity building in policy development and integrated marine planning;
- including developing effective domestic consultation mechanisms focused on sustainable management;
- assisting in further delineating national and shared responsibilities in terms of sustainably managing the Arafura – Timor Seas with particular regard to scientific cooperation, research and information sharing;
- through the identification and fostering of appropriate and effective monitoring capacities and approaches.

Links of Partnership/Initiative with on-going sustainable development activities at the international and/or regional level (if any):

Links in with the Millennium Ecosystem Assessment (MA). There is potential for the Forum to advance the work of MA (funded by World Bank, GEF and Packard Foundation) by fostering linkages between terrestrial ecosystem assessments to be carried out by MA in Indonesia and potential marine ecosystem assessment work through the Forum. In addition, MA may fund a meeting to plan the process with terrestrial groups with the expectation of research funding to follow.

Monitoring Arrangements:

Reports on key elements of the initiative will be produced and provided to participating Governments as part of the regular meetings of Forum experts.

Other relevant information:

N/A

Name and contact information of the person filling in this table:

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