
UNIT 12 SOUTH ASIA CO-OPERATIVE ENVIRONMENT PROGRAMME (SACEP)

Structure

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12.1 INTRODUCTION

South Asia is the second largest growing region in the world. Most of the South Asian countries share similar problems stemming from poverty and over population resulting in unmanaged natural resource use and environmental pollution. The UNEP took the initiative to establish South Asia Co-operative Environment Programme (SACEP) for the protection and preservation of the South Asian environment.

SACEP is an association of eight member states namely: Afghanistan, Bangladesh, Bhutan, India, Maldives, Nepal, Pakistan and Sri Lanka. It came into being with the adoption of the Colombo Declaration and the Articles of Association at the Ministerial Meeting held in Colombo in February 1982. SACEP fulfills the need of sharing information, knowledge and efforts for tackling common environmental problems. This unit briefly examines the aims, objectives, functions, organisational structure of the SACEP and its programmes and activities.

Objectives

After studying this unit, you should be able to:

- explain the role of regional cooperation in human development and environmental management,
- appreciate the need for the establishment of SACEP,
- discuss the vision and mission of SACEP,
- explain the organisational structure of SACEP,
- appreciate the various programmes and activities run by SACEP, and
- describe the partnerships and cooperative management by SACEP.

12.2 SALIENT FEATURES OF SOUTH ASIA

Before giving a detailed information regarding SACEP, let us first get acquainted with the salient features of environment and development of South Asia and the establishment of SACEP.

South Asia is one of the most diverse regions in the world. Bordered to the north by the Himalayas and to the south the Indian Ocean, covers a diversity of ecosystems from lush tropical forest to harsh dry desert. It is also one of most populous regions,

with over 1 billion people living in India alone. The movements of people over thousands of years has resulted in strong commonalities between cultures. Yet there remains a huge diversity of languages, religions and outlook across the sub-continent. Most of the South Asian nations share similar problems related to natural resources. Significant natural resource concerns of the region include depletion of water quality and quantity, dwindling forests and coastal resources, and soil degradation resulting from nutrient depletion and salinisation.

Some of the salient attributes of South Asia are given below:

- The region covers almost one twentieth of the earth's surface and provides a home for about one fifth of the world population.
- The degree of urbanisation in 1999 ranged from 7 percent in Bhutan to 33 percent in Pakistan. Mumbai, Calcutta, Delhi, Karachi and Dhaka are fast growing cities with population more than 10 million.
- Over 30 percent of the population earns less than one dollar per day and the per capita GNP for 1998 ranged for US\$ 210 to 130. It is US\$ 210 in Nepal to 1,130 in Maldives.
- Although the economies of the countries are primarily agricultural, industrialisation has increased during the past decade.
- South Asia is home to 14 percent of the world's mangrove forests and the Sundarbans found between Bangladesh and India is one of the largest continuous mangrove stretch in the world.
- 6 percent of the world's coral reefs are in the South Asian seas. The atolls of Maldives and Lakshadweep islands of the region, are biodiversity-rich marine habitats.
- The Hindu Kush Himalayan belt is home to over 25,000 major plant species, comprising 10 percent of the world's flora.
- The region is prone to natural disasters such as cyclones, floods and landslides. From 1990-1999, the region accounted for over 60 percent of disaster-related deaths worldwide.

It was strongly felt that while national programmes are important, it is the regional co-operation among the countries of South-Asia in the sphere of environmental management that is of significance. SACEP is an important step in this direction. In the following section you will study about initiatives taken to establish SACEP.

12.3 ESTABLISHMENT OF SACEP

The 1972 Stockholm Conference had drawn the attention of the world to the environmental issues that would change the life styles of the people and in many ways would threaten the future well-being of the world if the continuing pattern of resource consumption was not changed to a more sustainable pattern. The warning echoed by the Stockholm Conference and the establishment of the United Nations Environment Programme (UNEP) was taken seriously by the developing world and in particular by the leaders of South Asia.

The initiative to establish an organisation for the protection, preservation and management of the South Asian Environment was taken by the United Nations Environment Programme Regional Office for Asia and the Pacific in the late seventies and the result was the establishment of the South Asia Co-operative Environment Programme (SACEP). SACEP is the brainchild of the high level meeting of Ministers of the South Asian Countries held in February 1981. SACEP became a legal entity on January 1982 when the required number of countries ratified the Articles of Association. SACEP is an inter-governmental organisation of eight countries namely Afghanistan, Bangladesh, Bhutan, India, Maldives, Nepal, Pakistan and Sri Lanka, who ratified the Articles of Association of SACEP. The mission of the SACEP is to promote and support conservation and management of the environment, both natural and human, in the member states of the South Asian region in a cooperative manner to achieve sustainable development.

All member countries of SACEP belong to the developing world, and five have been classified as least developed covering one twentieth of the earth surface and a home for about one fifth of the world's population. According to the World Bank, during the past decade, South Asia has been the second fastest economically growing region in the world, and their efforts at increased production have put enormous pressure on the natural resources and the environment. Significant natural resource concerns in South Asia include depletion of water quality and quantity, dwindling forests and coastal resources, and soil degradation resulting from nutrient depletion and salinisation.

In most of these countries, much work has been undertaken for the protection and management of the environment in the face of the need for accelerated development. They are also party to several international agreements, covering many aspects of economic development and environmental conservation. However, the progress and achievements in the field of environment in these nations were not much known to each other and therefore, SACEP fulfilled a long felt need for a regional arrangement for the sharing of information and knowledge on tackling environmental problems.

The SACEP was established to fulfill a vision based on the following five assumptions:

- The types and scales of environmental degradation taking place in the South Asian Region are positively dangerous not only to the economic development but also to the survival of the humans inhabiting it.
- The greed of the rich and the needs of the poor continue to cause irrevocable damage to the fragile ecosystems and their ability to regenerate themselves.
- There is an urgent need to reduce environmental degradation and pollution, while giving equal emphasis to the elimination of the root causes of environmental degradation such as poverty, over population, over consumption and waste production.
- Environment and development are two sides of the same coin and therefore integration of environmental concerns into development activities should be recognised as an essential prerequisite to sustainable development.
- The ecological and development problems of the South Asian Region transcend national and administrative boundaries; therefore, co-operative action is needed to effectively deal them.

SAQ 1

On which five assumptions the vision of SACEP is based?

12.4 AIMS AND MISSION OF SACEP

As set forth in the Colombo Declaration in 1982, the aims of SACEP are:

- a) To promote and support the protection, management and enhancement of the environment, both natural and human, of the countries of South Asia, individually, collectively, and co-operatively;
- b) To make judicious use of the resources of the environment towards removal of poverty, reduce socio-economic disparity, improve the quality of life, and prosperity on a continuing basis;
- c) Make the full use of the organisational arrangements and facilities for cooperation under SACEP.

The Mission of SACEP is to promote regional co-operation in South Asia in the field of environment, in the context of sustainable development and on issues of economic and social development which also have tremendous impact on the environment and vice-versa, to support conservation and management of natural resources of the region and work closely with all national, regional, and international

institutions, governmental and non-governmental, as well as experts and groups engaged in such co-operation and conservation efforts.

12.5 ORGANISATIONAL ARRANGEMENT OF SACEP

In accordance with the Articles of Association, the organisational arrangement of SACEP is made up of five sub units:

- The Governing Council (GC)
- Consultative Committee (CC)
- National Focal Points (NFP)
- Subject Area Focal Points (SAFP) and
- The Secretariat

The organisational arrangement of SACEP is depicted in Fig 12.1.

i) The Governing Council (GC)

The Governing Council is the main review and deliberative body, responsible for determining the policy and programmes of SACEP and it oversees these activities by meeting regularly to review the ongoing programmes and to endorse new recommendations put forward by the Secretariat. It consists of one representative from each member state who will be of Ministerial rank. As a legal entity since 1982, SACEP held eight GC Meetings.

The governing council of SACEP has recently approved biennium (2004-2005) and quennium (2004-2008) programmes. Their implementation will give new impetus to the efforts of SACEP in the region.

ii) The Consultative Committee (CC)

The Consultative Committee comprising of the representatives of the diplomatic missions in Colombo and the Secretary of Ministry of Forestry and Environment of Sri Lanka is responsible for facilitating the implementation of policies, strategies and programmes approved by the SACEP's Governing Council. CC is also expected to provide guidance to the secretariat in the planning, implementation and monitoring of programmes and projects. The Consultative Committee meets regularly to provide guidance to the Secretariat in its activities and up to May 2001, 79 Consultative Committee Meetings have been held.

iii) National Focal Points (NFP)

Each Member State has designated a National Focal Point to facilitate the work of the Secretariat and to function as the main communication link between the Secretariat and the respective country. National Focal Points are expected to implement and monitor national programmes in co-operation with the Secretariat.

The national focal points are deemed to be liaison points in their countries for all matters related to SACEP including their own.

At an official level, secretaries of the ministries of environment are the designated national focal points of SACEP in member countries. For operational needs, an official(s) of appropriate level are designated as the liaison officer(s) as the secretaries in the work related to SACEP.



Fig. 12.1: Organisational Structure of SACEP

iv) **Subject Area Focal Points (SAFP)**

The Subject Area Focal Points are expected to co-operate with the Secretariat in project identification, formulation, implementation and monitoring. The country which is responsible for a particular subject area, designates a centre of excellence in that subject and appoints a liaison officer. The member countries were assigned as the focal points for the following subject areas at the 7th GC Meeting of SACEP in 1998;

Bangladesh: Management of Freshwater Resources

India: Conservation of Biodiversity, Energy and Environment, Environment Legislation, Education & Training, Waste Management

Maldives: Management of Coral Island Ecosystems, Sustainable Tourism Development

Nepal: Participatory Forestry Management

Pakistan: Air Pollution, Desertification, Science and Technology for Sustainable Development

Sri Lanka: Sustainable Agriculture and Land use, Sustainable Human Settlement and Development

v) **The Secretariat**

The Secretariat consists of the Director General, professional, administrative and supporting staff. The Director General is appointed in rotation from the member states in alphabetical order and the appointment is for a period of three years. Presently

Mr. Mahboob Elahi from Pakistan occupies the position. The main function of the Secretariat is to assist the Governing Council, the Consultative Committee, National

Focal Points, and Subject Area Focal Points in the discharge of their duties and responsibilities. It is based in Colombo, Sri Lanka and the Sri Lankan Government provides financial support for its existence.

SAQ 3

What are the functions of NFP and SAFP?

12.6 FUNCTIONS OF SACEP

The functions performed by SACEP towards environmental management are:

- To promote cooperative activities in priority areas of environment of mutual interest;
- To ensure that these activities result in benefit individually or collectively to the member states;
- To extend support as needed through exchange of knowledge and expertise available among the member countries;
- To provide local resources towards implementation of projects and activities; and
- To encourage maximum constructive and complementary support from interested donor countries and other sources.

It should be noted that this was the first regional organisation to be established in the sub-region even before the coming into being of the SAARC a couple of years later. Due credit should be given to the leaders of South Asia for their far sightedness in establishing this specialised agency.

The SACEP Governing Council in its meeting held in November 2003 formally re - endorsed the role of SACEP as an intergovernmental organisation of the region and to this end work closely with all national, regional, and international institutions, governmental and non-governmental organisations as well as experts and other groups involved with environmental protection and sustainable development.

While there are many environmental and development challenges common to the countries of the region, actions at the regional level can create synergy and optimise the benefits. SACEP seeks to work in areas where regional cooperation and collective action can add value to the member countries and produce better outcomes for the region. The 3rd special session of the 8th Governing Council has approved a new work programme. Deliberations in this session directed the SACEP to concentrate on the following broad areas:

- Assessment and Strategy Development
- Experience Sharing and Networking
- Capacity Building Training

SACEP is also an appropriate forum for action on transboundary environmental issues. These are issues where the geographical scope or impact extend beyond national boundaries. One such area of engagement is the control and prevention of air pollution and its likely transboundary effects.

SAQ 2

What are the initiatives taken by SACEP in the context of capacity building and transboundary environmental issues?

12.7 FINANCIAL ARRANGEMENT

SACEP currently receives three types of financial assistance for its activities:

- Annual country contributions from the member countries on an agreed scale of assessment.
- The support facilities provided from the Government of Sri Lanka as the host country of the Secretariat.
- Financial assistance by donor/funding agencies to implement projects and programmes
 - i) Multilateral – UNEP, UNDP, IMO, ADB, ESCAP (Economic and Social Commission for Asia and The Pacific)
 - ii) Bilateral – Norwegian Agency for Development Cooperation (NORAD), Swedish International Developmental Agency (SIDA) and the Netherlands Government.

The decision of the leaders of the SACEP member countries to commit funds from their national budgets to the organisation to protect and preserve the environment just nine years after the Stockholm Conference shows their commitment to preserve the natural resources for the benefit of present and future generations.

12.8 IMPORTANT MILESTONES OF SACEP

Some crucial meetings that led to establishment of SACEP and the important milestones of SACEP till 2004, after it was established in 1982, are listed in Table 12.1

Table 12.1: Some important milestones of SACEP (1980–2004)

Year	Event
1980	An intergovernmental experts' group meeting of the South Asian countries was held in Bangalore, India, to identify and discuss the common ecological problems of the region. The meeting unanimously adopted that it would be mutually beneficial to establish a sub-regional organisation, devoted for protection and management of the environment.
1981	A Ministerial level meeting held in Colombo, Sri Lanka, approved the Colombo Declaration and the Articles of Association for the initiation of SACEP.
1982	SACEP became a legal entity in 1982, when Afghanistan, Bangladesh, Bhutan, India, Maldives, Pakistan and Sri Lanka ratified the Articles of Association.
1983	The first Governing Council meeting of SACEP approved the 15-priority subject areas identified by SACEP with necessary support from UNEP and UNDP.
1984	At a national focal point meeting held in Bangkok, the five maritime nations of SACEP committed themselves to the development of an action plan to protect and manage the marine environment of the South Asian Seas region.
1989	SACEP initiated a programme for the establishment of a regional information network in the countries of region with the technical and financial assistance of Asian Development Bank (ADB).
1992	First strategic plan for SACEP for the period of 1992–1996 was prepared and approved by GC, SACEP. Its implementation was facilitated by NORAD's financial support.
1994	Nepal ratified the Articles of Association of SACEP and thereby became its eighth member state. Preparation of national and regional state of environment reports was initiated.
1995	The South Asian Seas Action Plan was adopted by the maritime nations of SACEP at the meeting of plenipotentiaries held in New Delhi.
1998	Male Declaration on Control and Prevention of Air Pollution and its likely tranboundary effects for South Asia was adopted.
1999	First South Asian Seas inter-governmental meeting of ministers was held in Islamabad, Pakistan.
2002	An external review of SACEP was commissioned.

	SACEP took part in preparing the South Asian regional position paper on sustainable development to present at the World Summit on Sustainable Development, Johannesburg, South Africa.
2003	MoU on UNEP-SACEP co-operation in the field of environment was signed. Dr. Klaus Töpfer, Executive Director and Mr. Mahboob Elahi, Director General signed the MoU on behalf of the UNEP and SACEP respectively. The GC, SACEP approved the strategy and biennium (2004–2005) and quennium (2004-2008) work programmes of the SACEP.
2004	SACEP and South Asia Association for Regional Cooperation (SAARC) have signed a MoU on cooperation for the protection of environment of the region. Mr. Mahboob Elahi, Director General and Mr. Q.A.M.A. Rahim, Secretary General signed the MoU on behalf of the SACEP and SAARC respectively.

Source: <http://www/sacep.org.com>

12.9 PROGRAMMES AND ACTIVITIES OF SACEP

Let us now discuss as to how far the SACEP has been successful in achieving its aims and objectives. In this section, you will study about some of the projects and activities undertaken and successfully completed by SACEP.

Since its inception, SACEP has promoted sustainable development in the region by implementing a number of projects and programmes in the fields of environment education, environment legislation, biodiversity, air pollution, and the protection and management of the coastal environment with the assistance of various bilateral and multilateral funding agencies. UNEP's Environment Assessment Programme for Asia Pacific (UNEP-EAP.AP) made use of SACEP as a sub-regional partner in the field of environment assessment, reporting, data management and capacity building by establishing South Asia Environment and Natural Resources Information Centre (SENRIC) with the assistance from Asian Development Bank (ADB).

In consultation with member governments, the following areas have been selected for priority attention.

- Capacity Building and Awareness Raising
- Systematic Information Exchange and Intra-regional Technology Transfers
- Environmental Management for Training and Institutional Development for Training
- Regional Co-operation in Management Plans for Mountain Ecosystems, Watersheds and Coastal Resources
- Wildlife and Wildlife Habitat Conservation in the Region

12.9.1 Projects and Programme Activities Completed

SACEP's programme activities primarily focus on the following aspects:

Institutional Strengthening and Capacity Building; Conservation and Sustainable Management of Ecosystems; Pollution Assessment and Control; Environmental Information, Reporting and Networks; Environmental Education and Awareness.

The project and programme activities implemented by SACEP cover the periods as provided in Table 12.2.

Table 12.2: Project and programme activities implemented in period: 1983–1991

Project/ Programme	Collaborating agencies	Major achievements
Environmental Legislation Programme	UNDP	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Country reports • A regional overview • A regional workshop on environmental legislation

		(1987) New Delhi, India.
Environmental Impact Assessment and cost/Benefit Analysis	UNEP/ Netherlands	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Experts level meetings, New Delhi, India • Regional workshop on EIA proceedings and methodologies
Conservation of Mangrove, Coral and Island Ecosystems	UNEP / ESCAP (Economic and Social Commission for Asia and The Pacific)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Formulation of action plans • Dissemination of reports among stakeholders.
Desertification	UNEP	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Regional workshop on dryland degradation and rehabilitation • Expert meetings to delineate the areas and causes
South Asian Seas Action Plan	UNEP	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Two meetings for National Focal Points of SACEP and a legal expert meeting to develop the South Asian Seas Action Plan.

**SACEP's Strategy and Programme 1 (SSP1)
Period: 1992–1996**

Project/ Programme	Collaborating agencies	Major achievements/ outcomes
Assessment of Faunal Biodiversity	NORAD	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Workshop for national co-ordinators on the methodologies for the preparation of the report, Calcutta, India (1995) • Formulation of Regional Action Plan for the Management of Faunal Biodiversity • Final workshop on the Management of Faunal Biodiversity in Maldives (1996) • Wide dissemination of the action plan among the member countries
Assessment of environmental training needs and opportunities in the SA region	NORAD	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Regional workshop (1995) • Manual on training needs
Environmental Management Seminar for South Asia	NORAD/ UNEP-ROAP	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Regional seminar in Colombo, Sri Lanka (1996) • Three national workshops in Bangladesh, Maldives and Nepal (1996) • Publication of a book on Harmonising Environment and Development in South Asia by SACEP (1996)
Environmental Awareness: South Asian Region	UNEP-ROAP (Regional Office for Asia and The Pacific)	<p>Following publications were produced and widely disseminated</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • ABC Naturally

		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Puzzling Out Pollution • Where's Away and • Forest Tales
Air Pollution Management	UNEP/WHO	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Two training courses for environmental officers of the member countries in Nagpur, India (1995)
Training & provision of GIS facility	UNEP/-EAP-AP (Environment Assessment Programme-Air Pollution)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Organised 6 inhouse training courses for the environmental and forestry officers of the member countries • Provided hardware and software to the participating institutions of the member countries • Training Programmes
Training for reporting data for the preparation of national and sub-regional State of the Environment Reports	UNEP/-EAP-AP	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • A workshop for senior level government officials in Kathmandu Nepal (1994) • Meeting for national consultants in Colombo, Sri Lanka (1994)
Finalisation and adoption of South Asian Seas Action Plan	UNEP	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Formal adoption of the plan at a meeting of plenipotentiaries of the member states in New Delhi, India (1995).
Capacity Building for Planning & Management of the Coastal Areas in the South Asian Region	UNEP/ESCAP	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Regional workshop in Colombo, Sri Lanka (1993).

SACEP's Strategy and Programme 2 (SSP2)

Period: 1996–2000

Project/ Programme	Collaborating agencies	Major achievements/ outcomes
Management of protected areas and coral island ecosystems: South Asia	NORAD	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Training workshop on integrated coastal and marine protected areas management in Maldives (1998)
Framework legislation for environmental management	NORAD/ UNEP	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Published a report on Co-operation Capacity Building for Environment Training in South Asia (1996) • Development of national action plans • Published 4 books on different aspects of environmental law and policy
Environmental Training- follow up	NORAD	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Published a report on Co-operation Capacity Building for Environment Training in South Asia (1996)
Environment Management Seminar for South Asia	UNEP-ROAP	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Seminar on exchange of ideas based on country experiences in meeting the challenges of sustainable

		development (1998) in Pakistan
	UNEP	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • First Intergovernmental Meeting of Ministers (1999)
South Asian Seas Programme		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Revision of the progress of the implementation of the Action Plan • Identification of 10 priority projects for the Programme Cycle 1999-2002
Preparation of National Action Plans for the implementation of the GPA in member countries of SACEP	UNEP-GPA (Global Programme of Action)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Workshop on Implementation of the Global Programme of Action for the protection of the marine environment from land-based activities in Colombo, Sri Lanka (1997).
Preparation of Strategic Action Plan on Sewage-Case studies for South Asia	UNEP-GPA	<p>Two reports on</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • An overview of socio-economic opportunities related to the protection of coastal and marine environment from land based sources of pollution particularly urban and domestic sewage in the South Asian Region • An overview with a compilation, description and analysis of case studies for the South Asian Region on socio-economic benefits
Development of draft regional oil spill	UNEP	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Updating and finalisation of the regional oil spill contingency plan in collaboration with the member countries of SACEP and IMO, Colombo, Sri Lanka (1999)
Contingency plan	IMO	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • High level meeting to approve the draft Contingency Plan and the Memorandum of Understanding for co-operation on the response to Marine Oil Spills in the SA region (2000) • Second Intergovernmental Meeting of Ministers of the South Asian Seas Programme to formally adopt the plan
Malé Declaration on the Control and Prevention of Air Pollution and the likely Transboundary Effects for South Asia	SIDA/UNEP-EAP.AP	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Network establishment • Baseline studies • Action plans • Workshop to review baseline studies and action plans Male, Maldives (2000)
Strengthening of	UNEP-EAP.AP	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Publication and launch of

Environmental Assessment & Monitoring Capabilities (SEAMCAP)		South Asia regional SoE, Children of the Monsoon and national SoE reports of Bangladesh, Bhutan, India, Maldives, Nepal, Pakistan and Sri Lanka
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Period 2000–2003

Project/ Programme	Collaborating agencies	Major achievements/ outcomes
Facilitating the implementation of UNFCC	UNEP	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> National workshop on the UNFCC and the Institutional Design of the Cooperative Implementation Mechanisms of the Kyoto Protocol, Colombo, Sri Lanka
Assessment of floral biodiversity	NORAD	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Regional workshop on “Assessment of Plant Diversity and Preparation of Action Plans for South Asia”
Integrating environment concerns into economic development	UN-ESCAP	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Workshop on “Integrating Environmental Considerations into the Economic Policy Making Process in Sri Lanka”
Private sector participation in environment management	UNEP/NORAD	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Organised a South Asian Forum on Environmental Co-operation, India
Multilateral environmental agreements	UNEP	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Asia Pacific regional Workshop on the “Implementation of Multi-lateral Environmental Agreements and the Review of the Training Manual, Colombo, Sri Lanka”
Facilitating the ratification/implementation of MARPOL 73/78	UNEP/IMO	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Organised a workshop on Port Reception Facilities, Colombo Sri Lanka
Facilitating to protect coral reefs	GCRMN (Global Coral Reef Monitoring Net Work)/CORDIO (Coral Reef Degradation in The Indian Ocean Programme)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Organised Sri Lanka Coral Reef Forum 1 and 2 OPRC level 2 training course for supervisors and on-scene commanders for the South Asian region, Colombo, Sri Lanka
Capacity building on oil spill contingency planning	IMO	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> OPRC level 3 training course for supervisors and on-scene commanders for the South Asian region, Colombo, Sri Lanka National training course on OPRC level 3 for Pakistan, Karachi, Pakistan
Integrated Coastal Area and River Basin Management	UNEP	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Organised a regional workshop, Chennai, India
GIWA-Bay of Bengal	UNEP/GEF (Global	Final Workshop in Colombo, Sri

Assessment Programme	Environment Facility)/KALMAR UNIVERSITY OF SWEDEN	Lanka
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12.9.2 Ongoing Projects

The projects that are being successfully handled by SACEP are listed as under:

- **Project for the preparation of Handbooks of National Environmental Legislation and Institutions in South Asia.**
- **Project on Environmental Education and Training**
- **South Asian Seas Programme (SASP)**
- **Integrated Coastal Area and River Basin Management**
- **South Asia Environment Natural Resources Information Centre (SENRIC)**
- **Male Declaration on Control and Prevention of Air Pollution and its Likely Transboundary Effects for South Asia**
- **South Asia Biodiversity Clearing House Mechanism**

SASP: SASP is a co-operative partnership, formally adopted in 1995 for the protection and management of shared marine waters and associated coastal ecosystems of five maritime SACEP countries-Bangladesh, India, Maldives, Pakistan and Sri Lanka.

SENRIC: Since the inception of SACEP, exchange and access to information was seen as a priority for the development of the region. To facilitate this, the Regional Environmental and Natural Resources Information Centre (RENRIC) was established in July 1990 with the support from the Asian Development Bank. The broad objectives of RENRIC were:

- a) Establishment of an environmental and natural resources clearing-house within the SACEP Secretariat;
- b) Establishment of an environmental and natural resources information network within the SACEP membership;
- c) Provision of an information network system including appropriate hardware and software;
- d) Provision of advisory support and training for representatives of member nations.

The partnership further led to the nations establishment of the South Asia Environment and Natural Resources Information Centre (SENRIC). This was sponsored by the ADB and UNEP Global Resources Information Database (UNEP - GRID).

SENRIC’s early activities included assisting the UNEP – RRC.AP programme on “Environment and Natural Resources Information Networking” (ENRIN) in Asia and the Pacific Region. Between the years 1994–1997, SENRIC pursued Training and Data Management activities.

Activities carried out by SENRIC include:

- Preparation of GIS Training Manuals (Professional and Policy Level)
- Training programmes (GIS and Image Processing/Remote Sensing)
- Setup of GIS Training Units (University of Peradeniya, Sri Lanka)
- Setup of National Coordinating Units at the Ministries of Environment (Sri Lanka, Maldives)
- Provision of Hardware and Software in the region

At present the activities focus on the assessment and reporting of the following:

12.9.3 Future Projects

The projects that will be taken by SACEP in future are listed in Table 12.3.

Table 12.3: Future projects of SACEP

Subject Area	Project
Biodiversity	South Asia Biodiversity Clearing House Mechanism.
Biodiversity	Conservation and Integrated Management of Marine Turtles and Their Habitats in the South Asia Seas Region.
Coral Reefs	Reef-Based Corals Management.
Energy	Accelerated Penetration of Cost Effective Renewable Energy Technologies.
Hazardous Waste	Establishment of a Basel Convention Sub Regional Centre for South Asia
Protected Areas	Management of World Heritage Areas.
Wetlands	Implementation of Ramsar Strategic Plan at Sub-regional Level.

12.10 PARTNERSHIPS AND CO-OPERATIVE MANAGEMENT

Partnerships are very relevant to South Asia given the complexity and scale of the environmental challenges in the region and is now one of the specific areas of interest of SACEP.

Partnerships and co-operation between governments, communities, NGOs and regional and multilateral institutions are increasingly seen as critical drivers for the achievement of sustainable development. The focus on partnerships was one of the salient features of the World Summit on Sustainable Development (WSSD) and is thus receiving attention by SACEP.

SACEP itself is indeed the result a partnership of its member countries, working through the National Focal Point and Subject Area Focal Point networks.

Partnerships have also been established with international organisations to address several priority environmental concerns in the region. These include:

- Preparation of South Asia State of Environment report (SoE) 2001: UNEP, UNEP-ROAP and UNEP-RRC.AP
- Water quality assessment in the Bay of Bengal: Global International Waters Assessment (GIWA)
- Preparation of regional oil spill contingency plan and implementation of MARPOL: International Maritime Organisation (IMO)
- Environmental law programme for South Asia and assessment of faunal biodiversity: NORAD
- Preparation of national/regional GPAs for Bangladesh, India, Maldives, Pakistan and Sri Lanka: UNEP-GPA

SACEP is keen to work with other organisations that have relevant programmatic focus such as biodiversity, energy and environment, management of freshwater resources, and coastal and marine area management. SACEP would welcome such contributions from interested organisations. Some cooperative arrangements of SACEP from 1990–2003 are given in Table 12.4

Table 12.4: Cooperative arrangements at the project level

Years	Organisations	Objectives
2003	UNEP-Nairobi	MoU on co-operation in the field of environment Draft Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) for co-operation on the response to Marine oil and chemical spills in the South Asia Region.
2003	UNEP-Nairobi	Facilitate implementation of the South Asian Seas Action Plan for the Protection and Management of the Coastal and Marine

		Environment of the region
1999	CORDIO Programme	Promote environmental management, conservation and sustainable use of coral reef resources in India, Sri Lanka, and Maldives
1999, 2001	UNEP-ROAP	Preparation of “South Asian Action Plan for Environmental Education and Training”
1999	UNEP-Regional Seas	Support to South Asian Seas Programme: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Updating and finalising the “SAS Regional Oil Spill Contingency Plan” • Development of 7 detailed project proposals for the programme cycle 1999–2000
1997, 2000	UNESCAP	Project on integrating environmental considerations into economic policy making process-South Asia sub-continent
1997, 1999, 2002, 2003	IMO	Support in preparation of national and regional oil spill contingency plans and conducting workshops on IMO conventions (OPRC, MARPOL)
1996-2002	NORAD	Implementation of SSP.
1994-2003 Annual basis	UNEP-RRCAP	Implementing the environment assessment programme in the South Asian region (SENRIC programme activities)
1991	UNEP-ROAP	Preparation of SACEP’s Strategy and Programme for 1992-1996
1990	ADB	Establishment of Regional Environmental and Natural Resources Information Centre

12.11 SUMMARY

Let us summarise, what you have studied so far:

- The South Asia Co-operative Environment Programme (SACEP) is an association of eight member states namely: Afghanistan, Bangladesh, Bhutan, India, Maldives, Nepal, Pakistan and Sri Lanka.
- It came into being with the adoption of the Colombo Declaration and the Articles of Association at the Ministerial Meeting held in Colombo in February 1981.
- SACEP aims to promote and support the protection and enhancement of the environment of South Asia individually, collectively and cooperatively to encourage the judicious use of the resources of the environment with a view to alleviating poverty, reducing socio economic disparities, and improving the quality of life of the people.
- The key functions of SACEP are to promote co-operative activities in environment protection and management which are beneficial to the member states; facilitating sharing of knowledge and expertise and providing resources for project implementation through donor assistance and support.
- Organisational arrangement of SACEP is divided into five subunits: The Governing Council (GC), The Consultative Council, National Focal Points, Subject Area Focal Points and the Secretariat. Currently SACEP receives financial assistance from governments of member countries, government of Sri Lanka and from donor/funding multilateral and bilateral agencies.
- SACEP is working in the domain of capacity building and awareness raising, systematic information exchange and intra-regional technology transfers, environmental management for training and institutional development for training, regional co-operation in management plans for mountain ecosystems, watersheds and coastal resources, wildlife and wildlife habitat conservation in the region.
- South Asian Seas Programme (SASP) and South Asia Environment Natural Resources Information Centre (SENRIC) are some of the important projects undertaken by SACEP at present.

- Partnerships and cooperative arrangements are very relevant to South Asia for the management of common environmental issues.

12.12 TERMINAL QUESTIONS

1. In your opinion, how far has SACEP been able to fulfill its aims?
2. Do you think partnerships and cooperative arrangements will strengthen SACEP's framework of activities? Explain.
3. Discuss the important activities of two important projects of SACEP.

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