

Yellow Sea Large Marine Ecosystem

Project Characteristics:

- *High-Level International Government Thematic Cooperation and Negotiation*
- *Biodiversity Assessment*
- *Coastal Zone Management*
- *5-Year Environmental Programme Coordination*

Among the 50 large marine ecosystems in the world, the Yellow Sea has been one of the most significantly affected by human development. Today the Yellow Sea faces serious environmental problems, many of a transboundary nature. The 600 million people who live in the basins that drain into the Yellow Sea are dependent on it as a source of marine resources for human nutrition, economic development, recreation, and tourism.

As an international waterbody, the Yellow Sea supports substantial populations of fish, invertebrates, marine mammals, and seabirds. Many of these resources are threatened by both land and sea-based sources of pollution and loss of biomass, biodiversity, and habitat resulting from extensive economic development in the coastal zone, as well as by the unsustainable exploitation of natural resources. The People's Republic of China, the Republic of Korea, and the Democratic People's Republic of Korea share common problems with pollution abatement and control from municipal and industrial sites in the Yellow Sea basin, as well as contributions from non-point source contaminants from agricultural practices.

As a result, the Yellow Sea Project, born out of a desire for regional cooperation, was established in August 1999. At that time, the United Nations contracted the Woods Hole Group to undertake an Inception Mission to region, to investigate further the region's needs and goals. Following that event, the United Nations again contracted the Woods Hole Group to initiate the Project Development Facility (PDF-B) phase of the Yellow Sea LME Project. As part of the Yellow Sea Project, consultants at the Woods Hole Group worked with academia, international development banks, national leaders, and the international donor agencies (UNEP, UNDP, and World Bank).

As the Yellow Sea Programme progressed, Woods Hole Group consultants played major roles in the development and the initiation of activities central to the project. In fact, since the inception of the Yellow Sea programme, Dr. Aubrey, CEO and President of the Woods Hole Group, has served as Chief International Expert to the Programme.



Participation in the program by Dr. Aubrey, as well as Dr. Vladimir Mamaev, International Project Manager, included traveling throughout the People's Republic of China and the Republic of Korea, meeting with high-level government officials and academicians, in order to ensure funding of the project and coordinate resources. Additionally, the Woods Hole Group was instrumental in merging national research efforts into central program documents, to provide consistency and cohesion. Moreover, Woods Hole Group consultants held key roles in breaking down barriers between the littoral countries, such as providing objective negotiation assistance when needed. Throughout the early stages of the program, Woods Hole Group staff assisted the region in embracing the participation of the Democratic Republic of Korea, hoping that one-day that country would join the Yellow Sea Project.

As part of their respective roles, Drs. Aubrey and Mamaev, leading other Woods Hole Group staff, worked with the contributing Yellow Sea countries to prepare a Project Document for the three-year GEF project. Next steps included additional travel to the littoral countries and Philippines, in order to secure funding for the program by regional development banks, as well as to move the program into the next phase. This next phase included assisting the Region to agree to an Institutional Arrangements Modality for the project implementation and reviewing regional facilities proposed for the Project implementation, to assure their adequacy. The Woods Hole Group, Inc. performed these services in September-October 2000.