

INSTITUTIONAL FRAMEWORKS FOR ECOSYSTEM-BASED MANAGEMENT IN THE ASIA PACIFIC REGION

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Ecosystem-based management, as an approach to resolving the fragmented management of the oceans and achieving the goals of sustainable development, is becoming increasingly significant in managing the vast expanse of the oceans and seas of the Asia-Pacific Region. While the regionalization of the oceans and seas of the Asia-Pacific region has been established for its better management, the unique and diverse nature of the seas and oceans in this region require a sound management regime that transcends political boundaries and takes into account the ecological features and processes that will help achieve the long-term sustainability of resources and environment. The most desirable condition for management is where a particular management program fully coincides with the spatial extent of an ocean ecosystem or contiguous ecosystems. However most established ocean management areas, particularly in the Asia Pacific region, are managed along politically defined management areas and are managed for a variety of economic and other management goals which may impede the more integrated ocean space and resource management. This paper focuses on the existing regimes that adopt ecosystem-based management as a principle to the ecological sustainability of the Asia-Pacific region, and highlights the international legal basis for the principle. It also identifies the challenges that governing institutions face in implementing measures related to this approach and proposes measures to address such challenges.