

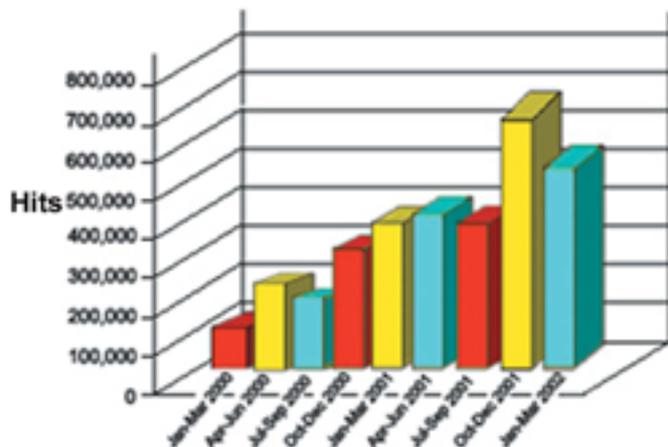
GPA CHM - 'A Network of Networks'



Clearing-House Statistics

In September 1999, the GPA launched the GPA Clearing-House Mechanism. This site has seen a massive increase in users since this opening date. Now into the year 2002, the GPA web site receives on average more than 150,000 hits per month. The graph below helps to show the success of the site in quarterly results from January 2000 to the present.

GPA Web Site Quarterly Report



Come to www.gpa.unep.org for more information on GPA activities and programmes and learn more on how you can help the marine environment in your region.



UNEP/GPA Coordination Office

P.O.Box 16227
 2500 BE The Hague, The Netherlands
 Tel: (+31 70) 311 4460
 Fax: (+31 70) 345 6648
 E-mail: gpa@unep.nl
 Web: www.gpa.unep.org

This Brochure was Created by the GPA Coordination Office

GPA

Clearing-House Mechanism

SAVE OUR OCEANS!



LOG-ON TO THE GPA AT

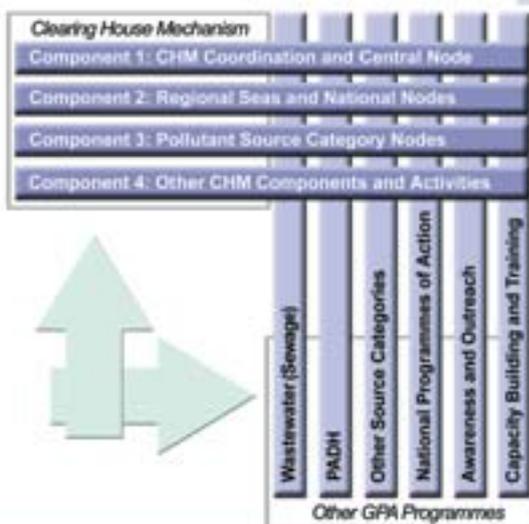
<http://www.gpa.unep.org>



What is the Clearing-House?

International cooperation through the development of a clearing-house mechanism (CHM) is a critical pillar of the Global Programme of Action for the Protection of the Marine Environment from Land-based Activities (GPA). The GPA defines the CHM as a referral system through which decision-makers at the national and regional level are provided with access to current sources of information, practical experience, and scientific and technical expertise relevant to developing and implementing strategies to deal with the impacts of land-based activities.

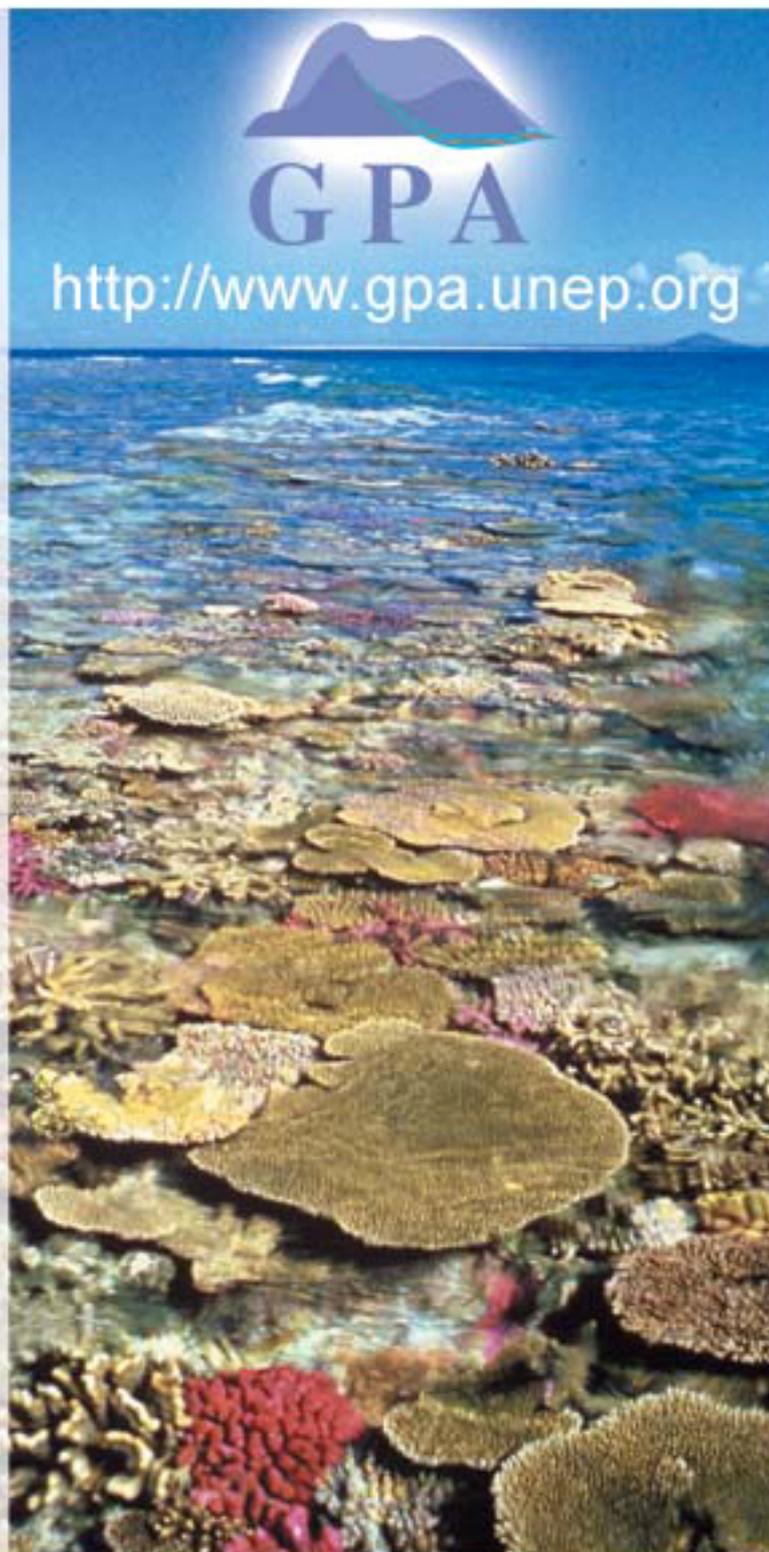
The aim of the CHM is to enable decision-makers to establish rapid and direct contact with the organizations, institutions, firms and/or individuals most able to provide relevant advice and assistance. Capacity-building, public awareness, donor coordination, responding to requests, and providing access to information on appropriate technologies and best practices are of paramount importance to achieve the goals of the GPA – the clearing-house mechanism provides a means and a framework to achieve this.



Structure and Characteristics of the CHM

The structure is based on the premise that the Internet and the World Wide Web (WWW) provide the necessary capability and capacity to link the disparate sites that comprise the CHM, and that accessibility to the Internet can be enjoyed by GPA CHM users throughout the world.

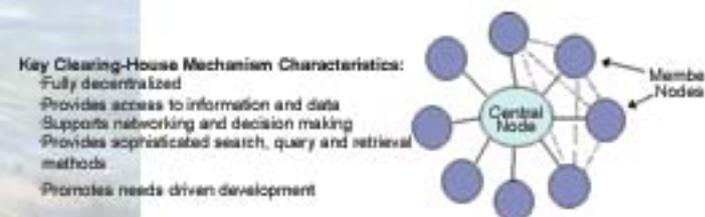
The CHM provides structured queries and searches to member sites, while a typical Website will search the whole of the World Wide Web (WWW), which often results in considerable work by the user to filter and find the information that is required.



The clearing-house also brings relevant information sources together in an organized and consistent manner through the use of standards, guidelines and a common suite of tools and functions.

For this reason, the GPA utilizes the concept of a "node" to define each member site participating in the network. These nodes include designated pollutant source categories and regional level nodes that are primarily developed through the regional seas programmes. These nodes are coordinated through a central node, or central site, which provides a suite of common elements that are shared by all sites. The role of the central node is not to control, but rather to facilitate and coordinate the information delivery mechanism.

In its simplest definition, the clearing-house can be viewed as a 'network of networks'. The diagram below helps to illustrate the concept and main characteristics of the CHM:



CHM Components

Within the CHM, there are 4 major activity clusters to undertake the development of the clearing-house in an integrated, targeted, scalable and modularised approach:

Component 1: Overall **CHM Coordination** and further development of the **Central Node**. This component also includes a number of projects and forward-looking activities that contribute to the enhancement and creation of new tools and functionality for the benefit of all CHM participants.

Component 2: Development of **Regional Seas** and **National** level clearing-house nodes, usually through the auspices and framework of the regional seas programmes.

Component 3: Support to the further development of the **Pollutant Source Category Nodes**. Although there are UN lead agencies designated for each source category, funding issues are of major concern for most of the agencies.

Component 4: There are a number of other important clearing-house initiatives and activities, grouped together as **Other CHM Components and Activities** that should be developed as soon as possible.