

Development co-operation for Marine Research in East and West Africa

Lessons Learned and Future Directions

IUCN Global Marine Programme



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Acknowledgements

The meeting was produced by Dan Wilhelmsson and Carl Gustaf Lundin, with generous support from FIBA,

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Summary

From the mid 1970s, a number of ambitious programmes and activities, supported by Norway, Finland, France, Sweden, UK and others countries as well as international agencies and organisations (e.g. GEF, IUCN), were initiated in both East and West Africa, with special focus on capacity building and strengthening of the research base for better understanding of coastal processes and marine ecosystems as well as for coastal management interventions. In addition, several programmes aimed at improving basic education and the development of institutional capacity at academic institutions.

It is time to take stock of accomplishments, and to identify key factors for success in order to optimise future efforts in the area of development co-operation for marine research at regional, national, and local levels in East and West Africa. To this regard a scientific review and technical exchange meeting, "Development co-operation for marine research in East and West Africa; lessons learned and future outlook" was held in Stockholm, May 21-22, 2007.

The objectives of the meeting were to:

- (1) Review the functioning of different modalities of development assistance for marine research, as well as foci of research, in different geographical and institutional contexts.
- (2) Enhance networking to ameliorate the scopes for regional and interregional co-operation, and to promote extended research collaboration between Swedish (and other countries) and African scientists and institutes.

51 key people involved in current, planned, and past research capacity building initiatives in Africa, as programme directors, coordinators or senior scientists, from 14 countries participated in the meeting. Over 40 different organisations, universities, and departments were represented.

Experiences and lessons from the process of capacity building for marine research, including different modalities for capacity building, collaboration between North and South, sustainability of efforts, and local ownership were presented and discussed. The meeting also treated how the built capacity is being utilized, and how the research capacity responds to local management and policy needs and priority issues. Research gaps and interactions between research and management/policy were discussed and exemplified. Encouraging enough, the discussions largely came to centre on synergies, strategies and concrete actions for establishing collaboration between West and East Africa, as well as potential obstacles in this process. It was broadly expressed among participants from both East and West Africa that there is scope and a need for inter-regional collaboration under a broader coastal management framework, as well as for scientific, technical and administrative exchange.

Introduction

BACKGROUND

The coastal ecosystems of East and West Africa provide food security and livelihoods for millions of people, through for example fishing, aquaculture, gleaning and tourism. During the last few decades, however, signs of degradation of the environment, natural resources, and biodiversity have become more and more obvious. Simultaneously, the links between decreased productivity of marine ecosystems services and impeded human social and economic development have been clearly illustrated by for example dwindling fish catches, coastal erosion, and conflicts among user groups.

On the other hand, if the trend can be halted and reversed towards more effective and sustainable management of marine ecosystems, the marine natural resources may in fact constitute a basis for economic growth and social development in coastal areas of East and West Africa.

Knowledge of ecological and socio-economic processes, including existing problems and risks, are essential prerequisites for making informed decisions and developing appropriate policies and responses to manage marine ecosystems and their resources effectively. Relevant and accurate data is also important to conduct cost-benefit analyses to justify and continuously evaluate management measures. To cite Snoussi and Awosika (1998) who discuss the situation in West- and North Africa, "Economic growth cannot be achieved without science. Since the coastal areas are centres of socio-economic activities, marine science capacity development is an integral part of economic development".

Although this insight is receiving increasing attention most developing countries are impoverished when it comes to scientific information and research capacity (Crawford et al. 1993, Lindén & Lundin 1996, Olsen et al. 1998, Snoussi & Awosika 1998, Hale & Anaral 2000). To a large extent research has also been focused on time

and spatial scales that are not sufficient for dealing effectively with coastal management issues, development, and sustainable use of natural resources (e.g. Moffat et al. 1998, Berg et al.

Key meeting objectives

The objectives of the meeting were:

- (1) **FY j j Y k` h \ Y` Z i b W h] c b] b [` c Z` X] Z Y f Y b h` a c X U`] h] Y g` c Z` X Y j Y` c d a Y b h` U g g] g h U b W Y` Z c f` a U f] b Y` f Y g Y U f W \ ž` U g` k Y` ` U g` Z c W]` c Z` f Y g Y U f W **, in different geographical and institutional contexts. We also sought to identify key factors for success, in the light of specific aims of the efforts, local ownership perspectives, and management needs.
- (2) **9 b \ U b W Y` b Y h k c f _] b [` h c` U a Y`] c f U h Y` h \ Y` g W c d Y g` Z c f` f Y [] c b U` ` U b X`] b h Y f f Y [] c b U` ` W c ! c d Y f U h] c b**, and to promote extended research collaboration between Swedish (and other countries) and African scientists and institutes, as well as among African researchers and efforts. Encouraging enough, the discussions largely came to centre on synergies, strategies and concrete actions for establishing collaboration between West and East Africa, including potential obstacles in this process.

Synthesis of Discussions and Recommendations

1. ISSUES OF RESEARCH CAPACITY BUILDING AND FOCUS OF

- Marine protected areas (MPA) are imperative tools for biodiversity and habitat conservation, fisheries management, and for broadening and sustaining local economic options. A representative network of MPAs requires a concerted approach at regional scale. Local ecological and social settings create different threats to MPAs, but overall monitoring approaches and conflict resolution- and management strategies needed are similar across regions.

- Research gaps for effective, integrated and adaptive MPA management include ecological, social, cultural, and economic baseline and impact data, conservation status on species and habitats, and effectiveness of MPA networks in terms of connectivity and degree of representation. Reasons for the gaps include poor interaction between MPAs and the research community, insufficient funding, and lack of harmonisation of research efforts and methods.
- Although variable between countries and research areas, human and institutional (core funding, employment opportunities, equipment, laboratories, IT-facilities) capacities are generally weak. Access to data, including global data sets, due to insufficient data collection and accessibility adversely affect scientific quality, and hampers the development of both good research environments and management tools. There is, further, a need to improve skills in sta-

has largely not been able to manage natural resources. There are also a lot of shortcomings in tourism development and equity in revenue sharing).

- There is scope and a need for inter-regional collaboration under a broader coastal management framework, bringing together diverse issues and including the complete range of stakeholders, not just scientists. Integration of management tools may be more fruitful if it includes experiences from both regions.
- The long-term capacity building efforts in East Africa could serve as model for replication in West Africa. Institutes and Networks in East Africa (e.g. IMS, WIOMSA) could be used as resources for starting up education/training programmes in West Africa.
- Joint East-West research ventures with mixed teams on climate change related issues were proposed. Individual ongoing initiatives (e.g. at IMS) need to be identified. Possibilities of EU-funding (promoting joint climate change projects) could be investigated.
- At political level there is agreement on stimulating exchange between East and West Africa. For example, there will be a joint Conference of Parties of the Nairobi and Abidjan Conventions. Progress has been made at institutional level, e.g. African Process, COSMAR secretariat under NEPAD in Kenya. Interest for strong collaboration has also been expressed at WCC Bangkok. There may thus be good scope for achieving support for concrete activities.

4B POTENTIAL OBSTACLES AND CONCERNS RAISED

- There is little current cooperation between East and West Africa. This may be due to differences in e.g. interests/issues, bio-physical environment, priorities, and importantly also language, which is a main obstacle (also a problem within the regions)
- It was emphasized that inter-regional collaboration should be based on needs, rather than “forced” upon countries/institutions. Are the needs and common factors strong enough? If there were better means for collaboration, would there be collaboration?

- Are the regional capacities and research networks mature enough for inter-regional collaboration? There are examples of complex collaborations within regions, but in practice most activities are national, and there is not a lot of joining of forces between countries. This problem is even larger between regions. One would “need to crawl before walking or trying to run”.
- Funding may be a major obstacle – this type of collaboration easily gets very expensive, and in spite of rhetoric there seems to be a lack of understanding or acceptance of this among the donor community.
- Limited funding and competition for funding may lead to that many recipients see to “own needs” before “common needs”, which could hamper true collaboration. Thus, financial support for inter-regional collaboration needs to not threaten or undermine country specific processes. It must rather be perceived to strengthen these.

4C MEANS AND STRATEGIES FOR COLLABORATION SUGGESTED

- There is a need for careful and slow development of steps towards increased exchange, with clearly defined aims, objectives and outcomes at every stage, to create a gradual process that responds to actual needs and provides a service that no other process currently is providing or can provide.
- To initiate something concrete relatively fast that at the same time is sustainable, collaboration should start small-scale, with exchange between researchers at different universities and institutes at an individual and technical level.
- Build activities and networks on what is already there, for example PRCM, FIBA, IMS, WIOMSA. Further, IUCN and WWF are already represented in both regions, and work within all areas where there are scopes for inter-regional collaboration.
- There are in some cases needs to strengthen regional or sub-regional networks that can be the basis for inter-regional collaboration. A network in West Africa may be possible to create

under the Abidjan Convention, as WIOMSA was under the Nairobi Convention.

There is a need to establish a mechanism for identification of what is relevant and applicable for both regions, as some approaches cannot be copied and pasted.

Political decisions and certain target countries for development cooperation may, in terms of funding, limit the scopes for multilateral initiatives. However, through regional or sub-regional networks engagement of relevant countries can be ensured.

Identify funding sources, taking into consider-

There are many examples, however, where the research salaries are not competitive (many have to take up jobs on the side), or the academic incentives, research facilities, merit systems, or scopes

lar to Sida's: "strengthen the research capacity of developing countries and their access to knowledge in areas of central importance for poverty-reducing development". And the approach can be exemplified by Sida/SAREC's two complementary objectives (Boeren et al. 2006);

- "To facilitate research of relevance and utility for development" (including links between research and society)
- "To build capacity for research in development countries" (including links between research and

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Annexe 1

Acronyms

CMSC: Coastal Management Research Centre

COMSAR: The Coastal and Marine Programme area of NEPAD Environment Initiative

CORDIO: Coral Reef Research and Development in the Indian Ocean

FAO: Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations

FIBA: Fondation Internationale du Banc d'Arguin

GEF: Global Environment Facility

IMS: Institute of Marine Sciences

IUCN: International Union for the Conservation of Nature and Natural Resources (also known as the World Conservation Union)

KICAMP: Kinondoni Integrated Coastal Area Management Programme

NEPAD: The New Partnership for Africa's Development

NORAGRIC: the Department of International Environment and Development Studies, Norwegian University of Life Sciences

PRCM: Le Programme Régional de Conservation de la zone côtière et Marine en Afrique de l'ouest

SAREC: Department for Research Cooperation, Sida

Sida: Swedish International Development Cooperation Agency

UN: United Nations

UNESCO: the United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization

WCC: The World Conservation Congress, the general assembly of IUCN members.

WIOMSA: Western Indian Ocean Marine Science Association

WWF: World Wide Fund for Nature (also known as the World Wildlife Fund)

MAY 22

09.00—11.30 PRESENTATIONS (COFFEE BREAK AT 10.10-10.30)

CONTRIBUTIONS OF RESEARCH TO MANAGEMENT AND POLICY ADVICE, AND RESEARCH CAPACITY VERSUS PRIORITY ISSUES.

- RESEARCH IN DEVELOPMENT- CORDIO'S EXPERIENCE IN EAST AAP

IUCN Global Marine Programme
Rue Mauverney 28, CH-1196 Gland, Switzerland
Tel: +41 22-999 00 01
Fax: +41 22-999 00 25
www.iucn.org/marine
marine@iucn.org