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Findings occasionally reports on development initiatives not assisted by the World Bank. This article is one such effort. The views expressed here do not necessarily reflect the views of the World Bank Group, the Government of Ghana, or the banks and NGOs mentioned.

A Regional Approach to Capacity Building for Coastal Management : Emerging Lessons

Introduction

The numerous economic opportunities offered within the coastal zone attract increasing populations to these areas. As these populations and their economic activities grow, there is a corresponding compelling need for sound management of coastal and marine resources, so that developmental options can be kept open. Effective coastal and marine resource management transcends boundaries and a regional approach is clearly the most effective method for governance of these fragile areas and important resources. Regional environmental organizations have, however, not always proved to be useful to the countries they were created to serve. Constraints, including unclear mission, lack of priority-setting, poor management, politics, inadequate funding and weak national support, have derailed many regional environmental organizations. The promising start of the Secretariat for Eastern African Coastal Area Management (SEACAM) illustrates that regional organizations can provide effective support to national Integrated Coastal Zone Management (ICZM) efforts.

In 1996, the Ministers for environment and natural resources from Eastern African met for the Seychelles Conference on ICZM in Eastern Africa to assess ICZM's successes and failures since the Arusha ICZM Ministerial Conference in 1993 (these meetings were supported by the World Bank/SIDA (Swedish International Development Authority) collaboration on coastal management in Eastern Africa.). In the Seychelles, the countries decided to create a Secretariat to assist them to accelerate the implementation of ICZM in the region. After extensive consultations in the region, nine countries in the region (Comoros, Eritrea, Kenya, Madagascar, Mauritius, Mozambique, Seychelles, South Africa and Tanzania) and one Overseas Department of France, Reunion, formally established SEACAM in Maputo, Mozambique in October 1997 to work with a variety of coastal stakeholders. A Reference Group, consisting of senior government representatives of the ten countries, select donors and other regional coastal management organisations, was formed to guide the Secretariat.

Box 1. SEACAM's objective

To assist the Eastern African coastal countries to implement and coordinate coastal management activities in the region following up on the Arusha Resolution and the Seychelles Statement on Integrated Coastal Zone Management.

Approach

Recognizing the large number of coastal management issues facing the region and the new secretariat's limited capacity, the Reference Group and SEACAM decided to focus on information sharing and capacity building assistance to the Eastern African countries in five priority areas:

- Capacity building of local NGOs;
- Database of: (i) ICZM programs, projects and activities; and (ii) institutions and individuals;
- Environmental assessment training and guidelines in tourism and coastal aquaculture;
- Public sector management; and
- Sustainable financing of coastal management programs.

Box 2. World Bank's strategy for Integrated Coastal Management in Sub-Saharan Africa and support for SEACAM's key activities

Nurturing existing constituencies, training, capacity building, advancing knowledge, strengthening governance processes for the management of coastal and marine resources (CMR) and promoting community-based management of CMR are key themes of the World Bank's strategy for ICZM in Sub-Saharan Africa. The Bank's support to SEACAM specifically targets select activities in line with the above objectives. The assistance for setting-up the Eastern Africa Coastal Management Database and public sector management training are geared to support governance processes for managing CMR. The training workshops at the regional and local level, aim to promote awareness of integrated and sustainable approaches to managing CMR.

Results and Impact on the Shore

The Secretariat moved quickly to implement a sizeable work program focused on priority areas decided by the countries. The accomplishments in just one year are quite significant (see Box 3). While it is still too early to comprehensively assess the impact of SEACAM's programs on coastal management in the region, evaluations from participants in the training courses and feedback from the Reference Group are very positive.

Box 3. Major accomplishments in one year from being operational

1. Building Capacity:

Local level:

- Trained 60 NGO officers from Angola, Kenya, Mozambique, Namibia, South Africa and Tanzania in 3 week-long courses.
- Published the training manual, *From a Good Idea to a Successful Project: Development and Management for Local Level Projects* (May 1999)

Regional level:

- *Workshop on Experiences in Local and Community ICZM Workshop - Lessons to Date* (with the Western Indian Ocean Marine Sciences) to review progress of local-level ICZM projects. It brought together nearly 70 participants from 18 countries.
- Published the Workshop Proceedings shortly after the Workshop.
- Held ICZM training course with a Swedish firm for over 25 senior managers from 6 countries.

2. Eastern Africa Coastal Management Database

- Completed the first version of the database. Available on the web from end-June 1999.

3. Dissemination of ICZM Information

- Contributed to national, regional and international publications.
- Published quarterly newsletters, ***SEACAM Update*** and ***Reference Group Progress Letter***.
- Published extensive webpage (www.seacam.mz) and the SEACAM video
- Disseminated over 1500 coastal management documents.
- Active participation in national and international conferences

4. Environmental Assessment Training and Guidelines

- Trained nearly 40 government EA managers and NGO officers from 9 countries in EA of coastal tourism development.
- Organized Regional Coastal Aquaculture Course.
- Prepared *Composite EA Guidelines for Coastal Tourism* and *Composite EA Guidelines for Coastal Aquaculture* for publication in mid-1999.

5. Public Sector Management (PSM) Training

- Completed PSM review and needs assessment in preparation for the full-scale PSM program in June 1999.

Emerging Lessons

While SEACAM is a young organization, there are emerging lessons from its rapid and effective implementation of capacity building and information sharing initiatives.

Approach and Internal Structure

- ***Only take on what you can accomplish***

Set and keep priorities. By limiting its work to five carefully chosen regional priorities, SEACAM has been able to generate rapid results, use its limited resources effectively, and avoid duplicating the work of others. For example, SEACAM provides EA training in two rapidly-growing economic sectors, coastal tourism and aquaculture, rather than in general EA training.

Identify your comparative advantage. Rather than implementing projects, SEACAM found that it best meets regional needs by acting as a management umbrella linking national and regional ICZM needs with expertise and resources that meet their requirements. A regional Secretariat cannot have the necessary expertise in a wide variety of coastal management areas or the time to do everything itself. SEACAM and the Reference Group (RG) decided that it should not directly manage on-the-ground projects fearing that it would focus on the project sites to the detriment of its regional impact.

Built-in buffers. Long-term planning, as well as time and resource (human and financial) buffers, should be incorporated into all activities to minimize disruptions from unforeseen obstacles.

- ***Build organizational capacity, not an empire***

Invest in internal capacity building. SEACAM has invested in building the management and technical capacity of its staff. This commitment has helped to motivate the SEACAM team, led to better programs and is starting to decrease reliance on expatriate assistance.

Have a critical but small mass of staff. Understaffed regional organizations (i.e. the two-person office) are often the norm, but they are also ineffective. They create expectations that cannot be fulfilled and critical needs are often unmet.

Create a performance-oriented culture. Many regional organizations are staffed by former government managers comfortable with working in national bureaucracies. To manage an effective regional institution, there is need to shift into a performance-oriented culture. While the initial change can be challenging, it quickly becomes liberating as the managers grow with the freedom and responsibility they have.

- ***Be aware of regional and national political scenarios***

Recognize and balance action, political nuances. In its enthusiasm to obtain quick and substantial results, SEACAM neglected to pay sufficient attention to the concerns of existing coastal-related institutions, some of whom saw SEACAM as a threat. Greater awareness of this issue would have built their trust more quickly. By being located near the southern end of Eastern Africa, SEACAM has been inadvertently included in concerns that donor interests have shifted southward with the opening-up of South Africa and Mozambique.

2. Selectivity and Funding

Assess national demand and capacity. Countries often expect regional organizations to assist each country equally. While equity concerns are legitimate, they can be taken too far if activities are implemented in countries which are not able to use the support effectively.

Line-up funding early. Sufficient financial support should be committed at the inception of program activities. While SIDA was SEACAM's major donor from its inception, SEACAM spent significant time and resources securing funding for key programs. The World Bank provided timely support for specific activities (see Box 2).

3. Partnerships

- ***Build partnerships you can count on***

Strong country commitment and in-country champions. The Environment Ministers in Eastern Africa strongly endorsed the setting up of an ICZM Secretariat. This endorsement is matched by the Reference Group of SEACAM who act as in-country champions to encourage strong national participation in SEACAM activities. The coastal zone unit of the Mozambican Ministry for Coordination of Environmental Affairs (MICOA) continues to provide critical support.

Cooperate with other regional organizations. For many programmatic and political reasons, it is essential to coordinate, and as possible, work with existing regional organizations.

Partner with local institutions. For each training course, SEACAM works in partnership with a local institution. This approach ensures: (i) long-term relationships; (ii) strengthens national training capacity; (iii) ensures local issues are fully incorporated in the training; and (iv) improves selection of participants and follow-up actions.

4. Effectiveness, Visibility and Communications

- ***Communicate or be forgotten***

Emphasize speed and flexibility. From its inception, SEACAM committed itself to respond quickly and effectively to national and regional coastal management issues. For

example, the proceedings from *the Regional Experiences in Local ICZM Workshop* were published and disseminated in just over three months.

Be highly visible. SEACAM uses a range of tools - folders, newsletters, a video and presentations at regional conferences – to convey two messages: (i) ICZM is a national and regional priority; and (ii) SEACAM’s role in helping stakeholders address that priority. E-mail and web-based communication, which are quick, inexpensive and increasingly accessible should be the focus of most regional communication efforts.

Informal networking. SEACAM connects coastal managers and experts from all over the world to Eastern African coastal management efforts - an invaluable service in a region where communication and information-sharing remains weak. The new SEACAM Coastal Management Database will greatly expand this type of networking.

Conclusion

The early accomplishments of SEACAM and the strong demand for its work from stakeholders in Eastern Africa illustrate that well-managed regional organizations can make important contributions to national efforts to improve coastal management. It is hoped that the lessons learned not only provide the foundation for SEACAM’s long term success, but also prove useful to other regional organizations.

For further information on SEACAM activities please contact seacam@virconn.com or visit their web-site at www.seacam.mz. For information about the World Bank’s ICZM strategy and regional program for Sub-Saharan Africa please contact Indu Hewawasam, Environmental Specialist, Environment Group, Africa . E-mail address : ihewawasam@worldbank.org