



Establishing a Regional Socioeconomic Monitoring Network in East Africa

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INTRODUCTION

The coral reefs of the Indian Ocean provide sustenance and resources to a wide range of coastal populations that depend on fishing and tourism for their livelihoods. Preserving this source of livelihoods to alleviate poverty through the protection of biodiversity is becoming recognized as a primary goal for governments of the region (UNEP, 2001) alongside the conservation goal of protecting biodiversity for its own sake. One of the primary tools for achieving conservation with resource use is the Marine Protected Area (MPA), which forms the focus for the primary regional conservation organizations, such as the World Wide Fund for Nature (WWF), and the World Conservation Union (IUCN). To assess their impact on people and resource users, and to assess the effectiveness of the MPAs themselves, countries require information, on the state of the environment, on the nature and extent to which resources are being used, and on the wellbeing and standard of living of dependent coastal populations. Biological and resource monitoring are well established in East Africa. Socio-economic information has been lacking (Kemp et al. 1999) in the region, though initial attempts have been made to develop socio-economic monitoring protocols for application at the site level by Socio-Economic Monitoring Project (SEMP) of CORDIO East Africa. No consistent information has been available to inform local responses to livelihood changes due to loss of corals from natural factors such as the El Niño of 1998, or to assess the impacts or effectiveness of management responses such as Marine Protected Areas (MPAs), at local site or even the regional and national level policy responses. The development of socio-economic monitoring relating to coral reef use was identified as a priority activity under the 2004-2005 biennial work programme of the Nairobi Convention, in the ICRI Call for Action, by regional organizations (e.g. ICRAN, WIOMSA, IUCN, WWF, CORDIO, WCS), in the strategic plan for GCRMN.

The SocMon Western Indian Ocean (WIO) is an ongoing monitoring programme that was initiated with the aim of expanding socio-economic monitoring by SEMP throughout the WIO and to establish a regional network. The approach of the project has been to build on existing local-level monitoring systems at sites and emphasised participation by community members. Implementation of SocMon was by local projects i.e. marine protected areas (MPAs), local area management authorities, fisheries officers or community groups. Methods were developed from existing socio-economic programmes and integrated with the Global SocMon initiative. SocMon WIO became a reality following a “regional partnership workshop” June 2005 which established organisational commitment to socio-economic monitoring at new sites and reviewed regional activities and methods, reviewed socioeconomic research since 2003 when the WIOMSA/IUCN workshop on “Human Dimension of the Coastal and Marine Environment” took place. The regional partnership workshop (SocMon WIO 2005) also defined the purpose and activities of a regional socio-economic programme and network and came up with a vision for socio-economic monitoring in the Western Indian Ocean, priority activities and identified sites for a regional socio-economic monitoring programme. The drafting workshop used input from the partnership workshop to draft the socio-economic monitoring guidelines for the Western Indian Ocean.

This report is a summary of the project for the activities reported in the quarterly reports according to the components of SocMon WIO from October 1 2005 to March 31 2007. The report provides the goals and objectives of SocMon WIO and the mode of implementation and levels of their accomplishment over the first 18 months period. The report also includes some of the challenges faced by participating sites during implementation and some lessons learned.



PROJECT OBJECTIVES

The objectives of the SocMon WIO initiative during the first 18 months were:

- i. To compile an East African SocMon manual as a reference for all further socio-economic monitoring activities in the region.
- ii. Establish socioeconomic monitoring at a representative suite of sites in the region, managed by different partners under a single framework.
- iii. Establish a functioning Socio-Economists Network based on activities in the monitoring programmes and dissemination of information.
- iv. Establish a coordinated data archiving, reporting and sharing protocol for partners within the region and applicable to sites outside.
- v. Establish reporting and educational guidelines for disseminating the information widely, targeting managers, government policy makers, resource users and schools.

The first 6 months of the programme's implementation was very successful and most of the planned activities were almost complete.

PROJECT COMPONENTS

Most of the project activities under this grant were undertaken during the first six months of implementation and others during the second six months while the last six months were mainly co-ordination activities.

The SocMon WIO monitoring programme builds on the preceding initiatives that help improve the livelihoods of poor communities dependent on coral reefs through increasing the management decisions which take into consideration their socio-economic needs and status. A Regional Socio-economic Monitoring Strategy formulated by partners guides this initiative and includes a functional structure consisting the network of 12 sites, regional socio-economic working group of over 120 individuals, country focal points and the SocMon WIO advisory committee. The goal of SocMon WIO was to establish a functional regional socio-economic monitoring network. This has been achieved through the following components:

- Regional Partnership Workshop

The Regional Partnership workshop in June 2005 brought together participants representing multiple institutional partners in East Africa who confirmed commitments to develop socioeconomic monitoring. The workshop set the stage for SocMon by formulating a common vision for promoting the integration of social science in ICM/MPA/fisheries management and research i.e.:

“The identification of stakeholders, their needs, perceptions and relationships, their opportunity to be involved in management and provide feedback, the identification of threats to the marine environment and their causes, assessment of the impact and effectiveness of management strategies, and methods of improving management.”

- Drafting workshop for SocMon WIO manual



Participants discussed SocMon variables with the bid to adapt, omit or add new ones tailored for the Western Indian Ocean situation.

- Publishing of standardised regional guidelines (the SocMon WIO manual)

SocMon WIO is a third in the series of regional SocMon guidelines after SocMon SEA and SocMon CARIBBEAN, which were launched in 2003. SocMon WIO was launched at global level at ITMEMS 3, Cozumel, Mexico 2006 and regionally during the SocMon WIO ToT, Mahe, Seychelles 2007. The SocMon WIO guidelines describes the monitoring variables and prioritises them according to what they signify for the WIO including how they could be monitored.

- Translation of the regional guidelines into the regions main languages- English, French, Kiswahili and Portuguese.
- Establishment of SocMon and expansion to new sites- there were 4 SEMP sites initially which were increased to make 10 SocMon WIO sites by Dec 2006 under this grant.

SocMon WIO has provided full support to the SocMon network of sites through technical assistance and training in socioeconomic monitoring techniques, provision of SocMon trainers and coordination.

- SocMon WIO site level database has been developed to address the challenges associated with ineffective data management and analysis procedures. Integration of site level databases at a regional level and compatibility with the Global SocMon database is expected to allow broader comparisons between site, information sharing.
- Facilitation of reporting and awareness products for different target audiences. Basic reporting needs have been identified to enable sites to produce outputs that are relevant to their local and immediate needs at the click of a button. Similarly, more complex and academic reporting needs will be identified that will be more useful at higher (national/regional) levels and for analytical assessments of sites.

SOCMON WIO IMPLEMENTATION

Institutional collaborations between Governments, NGOs and Project sites was key to the successful implementation of the SocMon WIO initiative. For socio-economic monitoring to be sustainable in the long term, it needs sustainable partnerships at local, national, regional and global levels to provide the institutional and financial support. Implementation was undertaken as a partnership activity with contributions and guidance from regional partners, and respective commitments at site-level implementation.

- i) **Site level Partnership:** SocMon builds on the local-level monitoring systems and based on participation by community members. The existing local-level partners at the site did implementation; these may be fisheries department staff, local project staff, marine protected areas authorities, local area management authorities, or community groups. The aim of local level partnerships was to develop a monitoring process and the associated information management system at the local/project level. It involved reviews, identification of the suitable socio-economic indicators, provision of monitoring training and tools and implementation of the monitoring plan. By the end of this NOAA grant award period SocMon WIO had a network of 10 participating sites in the region and these have since been increased to 12 on a separate grant.



Table 1. SocMon Site implementing partners

SocMon Site	Country	Local Institution	implementing	Category of site
Tana Delta	Kenya	Kenya Wildlife Service/Kenya Marine Forum		EAME site of regional importance
Diani-Chale	Kenya.	CORDIO		MPA/Co mgt
Mwambweni	Kenya	Fisheries Dept		Fisheries
Shimoni-Muheza Trans-boundary	Kenya & Tanzania	Kenya Marine Forum/Tanga Coastal Zone Conservation and Development Project (TCZCDP).		Co mgt/ Fisheries/MPA
Tanga	Tanzania	TCZCDP		MPA/Co mgt
Rumaki Seascape	Tanzania.	WWF- Mozambique		MPA
Mnazi Bay-Ruvuma Estuary Marine Park	Tanzania.	Tanzania Marine Parks.		MPA
Quirimbas Marine National Park	Mozambique,	WWF- Tanzania		MPA
Andavadoaka	Madagascar.	Wildlife Conservation Society/Blue Ventures.		MPA
Rodrigues	Mauritius	Shoals Rodrigues		Co mgt

Information collected directly by the concerned area management authority is more relevant for improving management of marine resources at the site. It also allows resource managers and conservationists to understand communities better and thus improve working relations among all area stakeholders. Participatory monitoring using members of the community to collect the data promotes ownership, understanding, and acceptance of the whole process by community. It is holistic and people-centered; it involves all the stakeholders including local community groups, researchers, reef managers, reef users government agencies, site projects and other institutions. SocMon WIO encouraged a blend of participatory and process oriented monitoring; the process of collecting information and the learning mechanisms are as important as the information collected, all groups learn from the process.

- ii) Regional Partnership: There were very few collaborative projects that included social science in the WIO. The WIOMSA/IUCN 2003 workshop laid a foundation for development of a regional network of social scientists. Partnerships among the regions' institutions and projects to undertake socio-economic monitoring was the key to the successful implementation of the SocMon WIO initiative. The operational structure of SocMon WIO included a regional SocMon WIO advisory committee which represented the primary partners; Coral Reef Degradation in the Indian Ocean (CORDIO East Africa) as lead implementer, the IUCN-World Conservation Union, the Western Indian Ocean Marine Science Association (WIOMSA), the Seychelles government and World Wildlife Fund for nature East African Marine Eco-region programme (WWF-EAME). Regional co-ordination facilitated provision of support including technical expertise,



monitoring guidelines and additional monitoring tools, data storage/analyses, coordinated communication and reporting among participating sites.

REGIONAL COORDINATION ASSESSMENT

Achievement of coordination responsibilities was a measure of regional progress of the SocMon WIO initiative, table 2

Table 2: Regional coordination progress indicators

Indicator	Achievement rate
• Size of network	• 10 trained and active site teams with monitoring plans
• Size of regional working group	• Over 120 individuals including marine researchers, project managers, social scientists, natural scientists, policy makers
• SocMon representation at regional meetings	• EAME workshop, 2005, • WIOMSA 2005, • Kwazulu management South Africa 2006
• SocMon representation at international meetings	• ITMEMS 3, • ICRI
• Promotional Materials	• 4 posters • 2 paper at the above meetings

CHALLENGES RELATED TO IMPLEMENTATION OF SOCMON WIO

- **Prioritization of variables for the whole WIO region:** different areas may have different monitoring priorities
- **High cost of publication:** the regions many languages required the translation of the manual and documents for effective communication
- **Tedious process:** to maintain the context of the information in all the translated versions the translation had to be done in close partnership with the respective countries targeted by each language.
- **Incorporating all the different assessment approaches** into SocMon; there were some pre-existing assessments at some WIO sites with varied approaches to socio-economic work and this were brought on board SocMon WIO.
- **Financial support** to implement SocMon: Funding limitation determined the maximum number of sites funded despite interest expressed by many more.
- **Sites implemented in partnership** between two institutions: The transboundary Kenya-Tanzania site and the Andavodoaka site in Madagascar were both implemented as partnerships by two institutions and so they had to incur additional costs due to co-ordination needs.
- **Internal institutional issues:** Interferences and delays to start monitoring at some sites due to various reasons, these include: - problems associated with SocMon team members at



the site lacking basic computer knowledge, organisational restructuring and high rates of staff changes and at one site SocMon work was considered of less priority in relation to other project activities and were not allocated resources on time.

- **Few SocMon trainers:** initial stages at some sites were slow to start monitoring, as only 3 trainers were available to train all 10 teams.
- **Local differences at sites:** it was necessary to adapt SocMon training and technical preparation to the local site needs so as to simplify training and monitoring especially for sites whose team members were from pure biological backgrounds or had many community members.
- **Sustained funding and follow-up** by the CORDIO East Africa coordination; Sustained communication and funding was necessary to facilitate active participation of the SocMon WIO working group members and two-way communication with the SocMon WIO Network of sites.
- **Lack of capacity in data entry, management, analysis;** The SocMon WIO site assumed the team had basic computer knowledge, at some sites this was very limited and has resulted in delayed submission of monitoring results for populating the Global SocMon database. The former SEMP Microsoft Access database was improved upon and customized to a new SocMon WIO site database for storing site data and provide a common platform for regional comparisons and analyses among participating sites and providing outputs compatible to the Global SocMon database. There were issues related to data ownership in the region, the SocMon WIO regional database which was initially designed for entry of raw data has since been replaced by the WIO part of the Global SocMon database. Sites are still inputting their data into the SocMon site databases and to submit their site analysis outputs to the regional coordination office for input into the Global database.
- **Lack of capacity to produce required reporting** and outputs at some sites; sites require consistent facilitation and technical assistance to produce all outputs targeting feedback to communities, project/institutional reporting and management.

LESSONS LEARNED

1. Socio-economic monitoring requires a **locally adaptive approach**. What works in one place does not always apply equally successfully at all sites without being adapted and thus the site training was used. For instance in Seychelles an outsider is likely to collect information better than a local whereas at all other sites the direct involvement of a local community member/leader in the team contributed to successful monitoring.
2. To do participatory monitoring with communities successfully, the site management should involve them early in the process.
3. Involving the authority in charge of site management directly in monitoring means they can act immediately on the outcomes of monitoring. At times communities may expect immediate solutions to their problems once the monitoring has identified them.
4. Support from national policies, institutions and legal frameworks are required for socio-economic monitoring to be effective.
5. Monitoring results should be disseminated locally and to a wider forum and co-



ordination with other participating sites should be improved.

6. Sites should provide their staff involved in SocMon data management with complete training in management of socio-economic data (i.e. using basic computer application packages. excel, database, word)
7. Monitoring is a continuing process, consistent financial support at global level, regional and local levels is required to enable coordination of sites that incorporate socio-economic monitoring in the management activities. Monitoring activities under SocMon WIO initiative are part of ongoing activities under separate grants, and go beyond the 18 months period reported here for sustainability.