
West African Coastal Management Scheme

Update 2016 - Conference of the Ministers of Environment

Abidjan, July 10th to July 12th 2018

Recommendations of the IUCN Coastal Specialist Group

Commission on Ecosystems Management - International Union for the Conservation of Nature



Note to the Ministers in charge of Environment and to the Experts of the Countries of the West African Atlantic Façade

INTRODUCTION

The experts of the Coastal Specialist Group have led the first West African Coastal Management Scheme (WACMS) in 2010 – 2011 and were strongly committed to its update in 2015 – 2016 (see short presentation in annex 2).

This note provides a short contribution of the Coastal Specialist Group to the attention of the Ministers in charge of Environment and to the experts participating to the Abidjan meeting for the adoption of the WACMS updated in 2016.

It proposes a set of recommendations in the perspective of the update of the Dakar Declaration, and of decision making to better anticipate the impacts of quick changes and to strengthen the coherence between the public policies implemented in the coastal zones.

Annex 1 relates key evolutions as well as major stakes and risks concerning the West African coastal zones. It also underlines opportunities and expected evolutions for regional cooperation of the West African coastal areas.

RECOMMENDATIONS TO THE MINISTERS IN CHARGE OF ENVIRONMENT AND TO THE EXPERTS

The Coastal Specialist Group encourages the Ministers and the experts to consider the following elements in the perspective of the update of the Dakar Declaration:

- **Articulate and link at three levels the climate change adaptation efforts**

Adaptation at the territorial level, through the implementation of measures at different relevant scales (local, regional and inter-States). A prospective vision of land use planning, specifically targeting risk reduction, should be combined to a local approach of coastal territories management respecting and preserving the natural infrastructures. It generally leads to “no regret” adaptation decisions, to be integrated to decentralization processes.

Adaptation at sectoral level aiming to update the tools, methods, norms and practices, particularly for certain sectors and jobs linked to the sea: tourism, fisheries, urbanism and infrastructures, transports, extractive industries, etc.

Strengthening of the climate change adaptation governance, through (i) strengthening of the territorial governance; (ii) increased intersectoral transversality, in order to improve synergies between sectoral measures and reduce the negative effects of adaptation actions; and (iii) strengthening of finalized research and information systems to reduce uncertainty about future climate change effects.

- **Develop and maintain a demo-economic prospective vision at 20 - 30 years in order to better anticipate future risks**

The present situation generally consists in the treatment of situations of risks generated by wrong decisions making during the past decades. Anticipation is a crucial element allowing to integrate today’s decisions and their effects concerning land use planning in a perspective of sustainability and resilience despite ongoing changes. It is also necessary to address usual delays in decision making, funding and implementation, in order to ameliorate the efficacy and avoid new situations of risk.

- **Integrate the natural infrastructures and protected areas as structuring elements of the management of resilient coastal territories**

Establishing land reserves, under the responsibility of the State or other conservation authorities, will contribute to the preservation of natural systems generating ecological services, therefore developing all possible synergies for the implementation of the Abidjan convention articles 10 and 11 (particularly on coastal erosion and specially protected areas).

The projects aiming to set up coastal defenses should systematically integrate a component dedicated to the preservation and/or the restoration of adjacent coastal ecosystems in order to increase their efficacy and sustainability.

Nature based solutions, which represent less than 4% of the global investment for coastal protection, should be recognized and promoted in West Africa like they are in the North. They must get a louder weight in the funding and in the coastal areas planning options.

- **Marine Spatial Planning**

The fast densification of coastal spaces occupation, multiplication of transport infrastructures, and the important development of hydrocarbon exploitation in the coastal seas make necessary the **setup of marine spatial plans in coherence with coastal land use planning**.

- **Promote a coastal planning governmental action as inclusive as possible**

The public policies dealing with coastal management should give space to the participation of the civil society, professional corporations and communities, who face and experiment the hazards and who are the depositories of the memory of risk. Procedures for consultation and public enquiries should be developed and strengthened in order to enlarge the participation to impact studies processes and to the elaboration of local management schemes.

- **Enlarge the international cooperation in order to capitalize the best practices identified concerning the resilience of coastal territories**

During the 12th Conference of the Parties, the Abidjan Convention has adopted the decision CP-12.20 on transatlantic cooperation, the implementation of this decision concerning the actions linked to articles 10 and 11 of the Convention.

The West African States should strengthen their participation to existing international partnerships, among which the “Transatlantic Partnership for MPAs / initiative for resilient coastal territories”, funded by the European Union, in order to benefit from the efforts made for capitalization and identification of the best coastal management practices.

ANNEX 1. MAIN OBSERVATIONS: CURRENT EVOLUTIONS AND CHALLENGES

- **Coastal demographic growth and littoralization of the societies**

« Among African regions, the stronger coastal population growth will be observed in East and West Africa, especially in urban centers of West Africa, where, depending on scenario, 72 to 94 million persons will live in 2060. Nigeria, Senegal, Benin and Ivory Coast will record the highest growth and will enter in the group of the 25 countries with the largest population living in low elevation coastal zone of the world. As an example, in 2000, Senegal coastal lowlands hosted 2,9 million inhabitants [out of 9,8 million or 30% of the national population], while 50% of the national population will live there in 2060¹ ».

More than 23 % of the world population lives near the coast (less than 100 km away from the coastline and less than 100 m of elevation). A recent publication (Merkens. J.L. & al., 2016)² shows that the population of low elevation coastal zones, estimated at 638 million in 2000, will record an increase situated between 58 et 71% in 2050. If the maximum absolute growth will be observed in Asia, the strongest relative growth will be in Africa (153 à 218%). For Africa, the population living in low elevation coastal zones, estimated at 54 million in 2000, will reach 137 to 172 million in 2050 and 130 to 265 million in 2100.

It is noteworthy that the growth perspectives presented in SDLAO1 are, in 2016, at least confirmed and sometimes overpassed. The attractiveness and the economic dynamism of coastal zones, linked to urban growth, multiplication of port and industrial investments, will maintain this strong demographic growth by generating important immigration (migration?) flow from the hinterland and neighboring countries. This is particularly true in the more populated areas, already saturated and at risk.

- **Increase of the risks and promotion of nature-based solutions**

The situations of coastal risks addressed by article 10 of the Abidjan Convention will multiply, affecting not only coastal populations, but also infrastructures and economic investments concentrated on the littoral.

It is useful to remember that the coasts of the Atlantic façade, constituted of large sedimentary basins, are among the most sensible worldwide. It is observed that local solutions for coastal protection commonly implemented do not yield convincing results, can be counter-productive and do not contribute to long term resilience of coastal territories. They involve heavy investment and maintenance costs.

To face the same risks, the most advanced countries include or substitute to conventional coastal engineering solutions nature-based and reversible ecological solutions, emphasizing the preservation or the restoration of natural ecosystems and green infrastructures which directly strengthen the sustainability of the investments and the stability of the coastline.

¹ Neumann B, Vafeidis AT, Zimmermann J, Nicholls RJ (2015) : "Future Coastal Population Growth and Exposure to Sea-Level Rise and Coastal Flooding - A Global Assessment". PLoS ONE 10(3): e0118571. doi:10.1371/journal.pone.0118571.

² Merkens. J.L. & al. (2016) : "Gridded population projections for the coastal zone under the Shared Socioeconomic Pathways". Global and Planetary Change. 145: 57-66.

NEW DEVELOPMENTS AT THE SCALE OF THE ATLANTIC BASIN

- **Transatlantic partnership – Resilience of Coastal Territories**

The Transatlantic Partnership for Marine Protected Areas, funded by the European Union, constitutes a wide initiative which reached its highest international visibility during the 4th International Congress on Marine Protected Areas. It allowed the creation of a Transatlantic twinning on the Resilience of Coastal Territories, facilitated by the Coastal Specialist Group of IUCN.

More than 20 countries of the Atlantic basin, including Morocco, Senegal, Cameroon and Gabon for the countries of the Abidjan Convention participated in this partnership, which identifies the best practices to valorise marine protected areas and to make public policies more coherent in order to strengthen the resilience of coastal territories.

The 2018 Commission on the roadmap towards “Healthy, Productive and Resilient Oceans” mentions the capitalization of the actions of this Transatlantic Partnership as a milestone towards Strategic Objective 3.

- **Abidjan Convention, Transatlantic cooperation and promotion of MPAs**

During the 12th Conference of the Parties, the Abidjan Convention has adopted decision CP 12.20 on Transatlantic Cooperation, the implementation of this decision concerning specifically the cooperation actions relative to articles 10 and 11.

Combined with the Transatlantic Partnership mentioned above, this decision constitutes a vector allowing West African countries to better integrate the best practices for management, conservation, adaptation and risk reduction thanks to the promotion of nature-based management and strengthen coherence between public policies.

- **Orient the investments of the large regional projects**

Up until today, only 3% of the investments for coastal protection have been oriented on green solutions (conservation, restoration)³, whilst their efficacy, the limited initial investment and long term maintenance costs have now been widely documented, justifying a growing comparative advantage for these options, insufficiently taken in consideration by the countries of the Atlantic façade of Africa.

³ McCreless, Erin and Beck, Michael W. (2016) "Rethinking Our Global Coastal Investment Portfolio," *Journal of Ocean and Coastal Economics*: Vol. 3: Iss. 2 Climate Change Adaptation, Article 6. DOI: <https://doi.org/10.15351/2373-8456.1069>

ANNEXE 2. PRESENTATION OF THE COASTAL SPECIALIST GROUP OF IUCN

The role of this expert group is to mobilize high profile expertise to the benefit of the IUCN members and partners, for all questions relative to coastal management, and to contribute to the capitalization of the main experiences of coastal management.

It includes the experts who produced the Mauritanian Coastal Management Scheme in 2004, the West African Coastal Management Scheme in 2011 and contributed to its update in 2016.

The Coastal Specialist Group recently delivered the Regional Strategy for Marine Protected Areas in Central Africa, le Coastal Mauritanian Investment Plan and provides regular technical support to the Abidjan Convention.

The Coastal Specialist Group facilitates the twinning of the Resilient Coastal Territories in the framework of the Transatlantic Partnership for Marine Protected Areas and identifies the promising approaches allowing improved coherence between public policies dealing with management and adaptation as a response to rapid changes in coastal areas. It has organized various exchanges between experts and identifies the best practices for sustainable coastal management and contribution of natural infrastructures to adaptation and risk reduction policies between more than 20 countries of the Atlantic basin, among which Morocco, Senegal, Cameroon and Gabon for the countries of the Abidjan Convention.

It is chaired by Dr Jean-Jacques Goussard (lead expert SDLAO1 et SDLAO2), and co-chaired by Mathieu Ducrocq, ex-coordinator of the IUCN PACO Coastal and Marine Program (general coordinator SDLAO1).