



CONSERVATION
INTERNATIONAL



BLUE CARBON POLICY ASPECTS

Julian Barbère
Intergovernmental Oceanographic Commission IOC
of UNESCO

The Blue Carbon Initiative

Increase conservation, restoration and sustainable management of coastal Blue Carbon ecosystems



CONSERVATION INTERNATIONAL

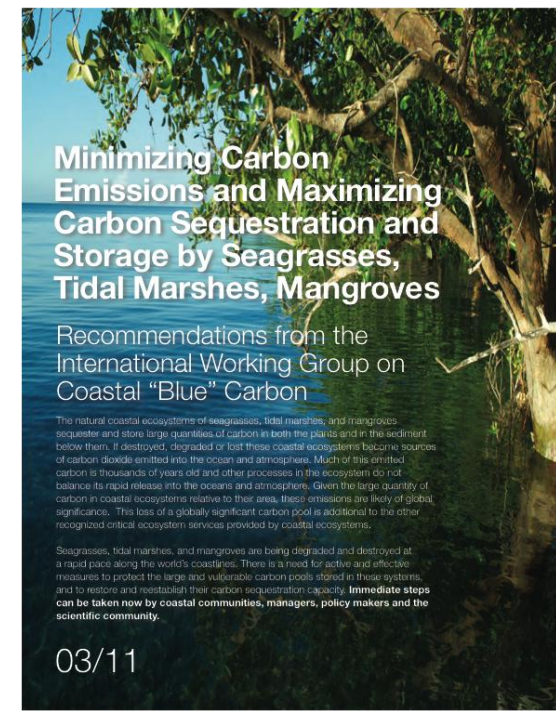
IUCN

THE BLUE CARBON INITIATIVE:
The Importance of Coastal Ecosystems for Mitigating Climate Change

Human-caused carbon in the atmosphere and oceans is the most significant cause of global climate change. Curbing climate change means both removing carbon from the atmosphere and oceans and avoiding new carbon emissions. An important piece of this solution is preserving and restoring coastal ecosystems.

What is "Blue Carbon"?
Blue Carbon is the carbon stored by coastal and ocean ecosystems. In particular, coastal ecosystems such as tidal marshes, mangroves, and seagrasses remove carbon from the atmosphere and ocean, storing it in plants and depositing it in the sediment below them by natural processes. These coastal ecosystems are very efficient at sequestering and storing carbon - each square mile of these systems can remove carbon from the atmosphere and oceans at rates higher than each square mile of mature tropical forests. Furthermore, coastal ecosystems have been found to store huge quantities of carbon in organic rich sediments - up to 5 times more carbon than many temperate and tropical forests. These ecosystems are found in all continents, except Antarctica.

© Jeff Yonover



Minimizing Carbon Emissions and Maximizing Carbon Sequestration and Storage by Seagrasses, Tidal Marshes, Mangroves

Recommendations from the International Working Group on Coastal "Blue" Carbon

The natural coastal ecosystems of seagrasses, tidal marshes, and mangroves sequester and store large quantities of carbon in both the plants and in the sediment below them. If destroyed, degraded or lost these coastal ecosystems become sources of carbon dioxide emitted into the ocean and atmosphere. Much of this emitted carbon is thousands of years old and other processes in the ecosystem do not balance its rapid release into the oceans and atmosphere. Given the large quantity of carbon in coastal ecosystems relative to their area, these emissions are likely of global significance. This loss of a globally significant carbon pool is additional to the other recognized critical ecosystem services provided by coastal ecosystems.

Seagrasses, tidal marshes, and mangroves are being degraded and destroyed at a rapid pace along the world's coastlines. There is a need for active and effective measures to protect the large and vulnerable carbon pools stored in these systems, and to restore and reestablish their carbon sequestration capacity. **Immediate steps can be taken now by coastal communities, managers, policy makers and the scientific community.**

03/11

- International Blue Carbon Science Working Group
- International Blue Carbon Policy Working Group
- Blue Carbon research projects
- Demonstration projects
- Capacity building

Blue Carbon Policy Working Group

2 levels:

The development of targeted (harmonized) policy across different relevant international Multilateral Environmental Agreements (MEAs)

And implementation of coastal Blue Carbon-based incentives (including financial) and management into national policies

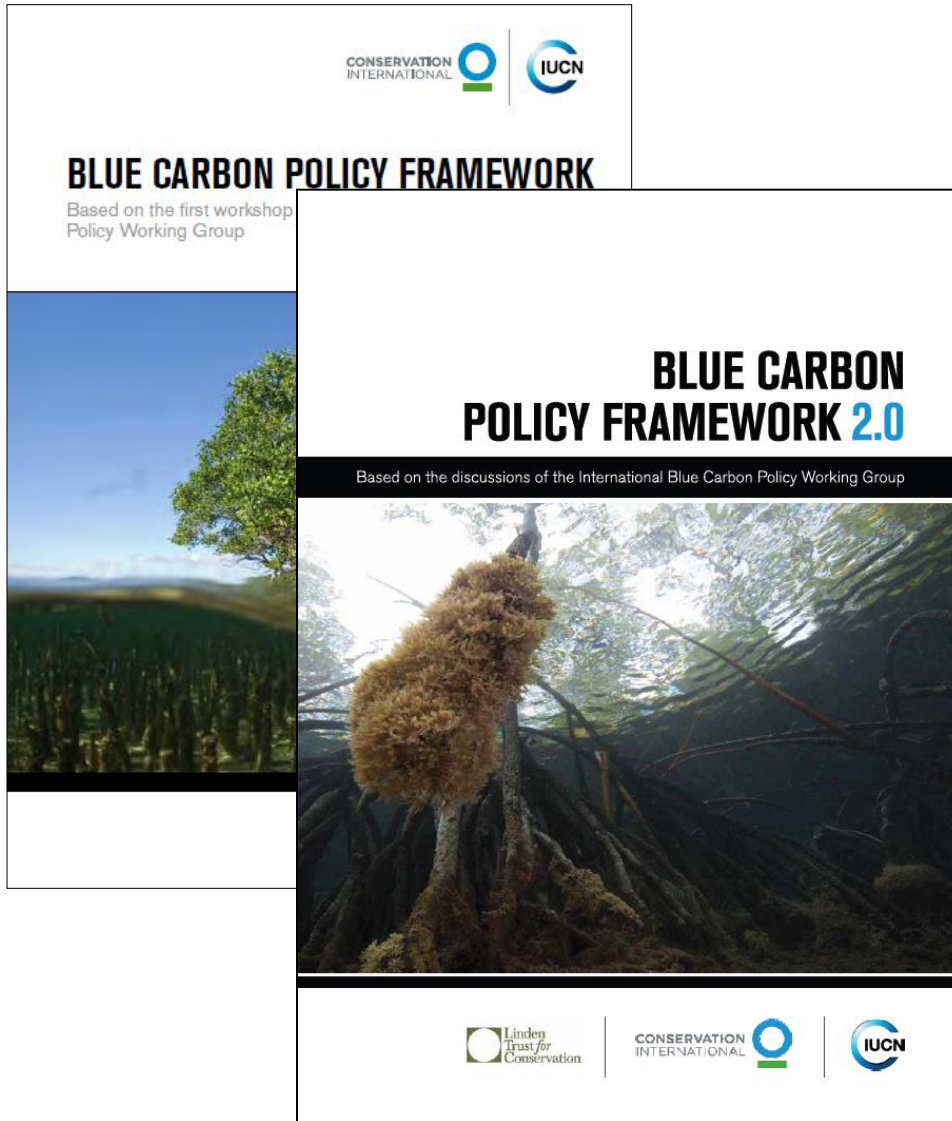
UNFCCC, CBD, Ramsar Convention, Rio +20

Blue Carbon open Symposium

- EP Intergroup meeting - Brussels
- High attendance from different EU stakeholders, including MEPs and Directors EU Commission - DGs
- Representatives from the Blue Carbon Science Working Group
- Awareness raising, discussion, networking



Blue Carbon Policy Framework



- Blue Carbon \neq new or separate policy or financing scheme

Blue Carbon Policy Objectives

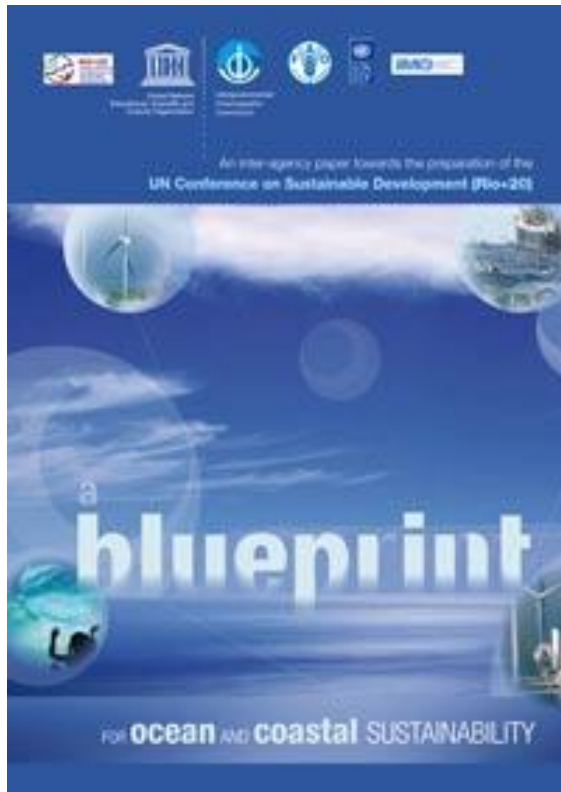
1. Integration into the international **policy and financing processes of the UNFCCC**
2. Integration of Blue Carbon fully into **other carbon finance mechanisms** such as the voluntary carbon market
3. Develop a network of Blue Carbon **demonstration projects**
4. Integration of Blue Carbon into other international, regional and national frameworks and policies, including **coastal and marine frameworks and policies**
5. Facilitate the inclusion into the accounting of **ecosystem services**



Coastal and marine frameworks & policies

- National and regional governance structures (Integrated Coastal Zone Management, Marine Protected Areas, Marine Spatial Planning, Regional Seas etc.)
- Need for additional economic analysis
- Private sector engagement – e.g. shrimp farming, tourism industry...

Promoting Blue Carbon at Rio+20



10 Proposals for Ocean and Coastal Sustainability

Objectives:

- Set coastal habitat protection and restoration targets
- Improve institutional capacity
- Global strategy on blue carbon

Rio +20 Outcome

- Emphasize the importance of conserving and restoring coastal ecosystem for climate change mitigation, as well as adaptation, and its benefit for coastal communities in developing States.
- A Voluntary Commitment on Blue Carbon?
 - Demonstration sites
 - Capacity development activities
 - Network /best practices
 - Scientific Assessments

We need to act now for
the future we want.



Thank you for your attention!

