The Preparation of the First State of the Marine Environment report for Sierra Leone: *the pathway to improved marine and coastal zone management in West Africa*

Multi-Stakeholder Dialogue and Capacity-Building Partnership Event on UN Regular Process

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Context

➢ Prior 2014 there was no regular cycle of assessing the State of the Marine Environment in member states of the Abidjan Convention
➢ Reports produced by the member states were characterized by non-uniform formats and methodologies.
➢ In Decision CP10/6 and CP 10/16, Contracting Parties requested the Secretariat to provide a template for compiling country reports as a means for reporting to the Convention.
Context cont...

➢ The reporting template was aimed at facilitating the transmission of such information from Parties to the Secretariat.

➢ The convention also adopted a common methodology and reporting template to report on the State of the Marine environment towards the Abidjan Convention.

➢ In 2014, EPA requested support from the UNEP through the Abidjan Convention for the development of Sierra Leone State of Marine Environment Report.
The SoME process in Sierra Leone- Selection of methodology and costs considerations

➢ Pilot project with technical support from Grid Arendal

➢ The method selected depended on the type of information available and the budget.
Thus the process took into consideration the following:

- Whether or not existing assessments were available that would enable a synthesis approach to be used for the assessment or portions of the assessment;

- Whether or not recent data or literature were available that would enable an analysis approach to be used for the assessment (or sections of the assessment);

- Whether or not knowledgeable experts were available on the different subjects in the marine assessment (biodiversity and ecosystems, the physical and socio-economic aspects of the marine environment)
Options for funding of the Sierra Leone SoME assessment

- Government funding (regular subventions/budget support)
- Donor support – UNDP, Abidjan convention
- Technical support: Grid Arendal, Abidjan Convention
Scope of the assessment

➢ The assessment covered the entire coastal waters of Sierra Leone

➢ condition of marine and coastal ecosystems: habitats, species and ecological/physical chemical processes

➢ Assessment of pressures – environmental and socioeconomic impacts

➢ Risk assessment: consequence/impact and likelihood (5 and 50 year timeframes)
The SOME Report Production Process in Sierra Leone

- Identified stakeholders, Institutions, selection of peer-review team
- Established working groups
- A synthesis of expert elicitation and Literature review methodologies were applied
- Defined roles and beating administrative protocols
- This method was found to be cost- and time-effective,
Making Communication effective throughout the process

➢ Developed possible communication scenarios for a fruitful assessment
➢ Determined the main elements of the communication and outreach strategy
➢ Identified target audience at each level of the process
➢ Determined number of activities/events that were undertaken
➢ Consideration on accessibility (due to electricity, internet connectivity problems)
Challenges

• Data problems
• Funding constraints
• Lack of interest from other groups
Roadmap for integrated ocean management (Initiative by ABC)

➢ Following the successful production of the SoME report, EPA Sierra Leone was designated Center of Expertise

➢ In April 2018, an MoU was signed between Grida Arendal and EPA-SL for cooperation on advancing science for conservation and sustainable use in the marine and coastal domain in the framework of the Mami wata project
Mami wata Project concept

➢ Four years project – an initiative by the Secretariat of the Abidjan Convention and GRID-Arendal,

➢ Financed by the German Ministry of Environment

➢ Aim: to improve conservation of marine and coastal ecosystems and biodiversity, sustainable resource use and long-term provision of ecosystem services is supported by integrated ocean management (IOM) approaches adopted and applied by countries of the Abidjan Convention.
Key activities of the mami wata project

➢ Train Centre of Expertise staff in conducting capacity development activities,
➢ Provide technical capacity development to Centre staff,
➢ Conduct joint trainings for Mami Wata pilot countries at the facilities of the Centers and with their staff,
➢ support Centre staff on targeted capacity development and knowledge sharing with pilot project countries;
➢ Work with Centers on long-term funding strategies.
The project aims to achieve this through a dual approach

- Applying IOM tools, namely Marine Spatial Planning (MSP), the use of CBD ecologically or biologically significant marine areas (EBSAs) and State of Marine Environment (SoME) reporting, and

- Developing capacity at the national and regional level for the application of those tools.
Ongoing initiatives of the Center of Expertise and the Mami Wata Project

➢ Mami-wata project working with CoEs on the IOM tools in the region:

➢ Sharing knowledge and expertise with other the countries in the region,

➢ Strengthening the capacity within those Centres, and

➢ Enabling those Centers to continue providing technical support to the region after the duration of the project.
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