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**MAKING MAINSTREAMING WORK**

**An Analytical Framework for the Mainstreaming of Marine and Coastal Issues into  
National Planning and Budgetary Processes**

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The present document was commissioned by the UNEP Global Programme of Action for the Protection of the Marine Environment from Land-based Activities (GPA) to Mr. John Soussan (Stockholm Environment Institute), as part of the implementation of the approved GPA Programme of Work for the period 2007-2009.

## 1. Introduction

People care about coasts. Around the world, hundreds of millions of people live their lives on and derive their livelihoods from coasts and coastal resources. Hundreds of millions more people who don't live on the coast use them for recreation or depend on the resources and environmental services they produce. The damage caused by human activities, whether it is from habitat loss, pollution damage or increased exposure to natural disasters caused by things such as mangrove destruction, attract great political and public concern.

The damage caused by land-based activities to coastal and marine resources matters. But society's response is usually reactive and after the event, when it is too late. And the attention span is too often short-lived. Few countries have a coherent and comprehensive approach to the planning and management of coastal areas, despite their importance in the lives of their people and the functioning of their economies.

Issues associated with the management of marine resources and coastal areas are particularly fundamental to the development of many of the poorer nations of the world. For these countries, the coasts are often where both the most intense development pressures and some of the most acute pockets of poverty are found. This is an extremely broad set of issues, covering almost all aspects of development and environmental conservation.

The establishment of an analytical framework for this range of issues needs to be focused, with the specific context of the framework discussed here being the scope and mandate of the United Nations Environment Programme Global Programme of Action for the Protection of the Marine Environment from Land Based Activities (or GPA for short). The focus of the GPA is on the protection of the marine environment from land-based activities through "*facilitating the realization of the duty of States to preserve and protect the marine environment*"<sup>1</sup>.

The emphasis in the GPA structure on action being achieved through states fulfilling their international obligations means that the achievement of GPA objectives is contingent upon the effectiveness of actions by individual countries in acting upon the support and advice of the UNEP GPA Coordination Office (GPA CO). This in turn will depend on two factors. The first is the quality of the support provided by UNEP GPA CO along with the effectiveness of the UNEP GPA CO in ensuring that this support is known and understood by national decision-makers.

The second, and the particular focus of this framework, is the extent to which the actions promoted by the GPA fit within, the overall **national sustainable development policy framework** and are prioritised by key national decision makers. This is the point of departure: in the approach set out here mainstreaming refers to the integration of coastal and marine resource issues into *national* development frameworks, rather than into the policies and strategies of the UN system and other international development partners.

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<sup>1</sup> UNEP GPA Programme Document, 1995, page 7.

The assessment of the national development framework includes two inter-related elements: (i) the specific development goals and targets as expressed in national development plans (including PRSPs and national MDG strategies); and (ii) the wider policy and development environment, including over-arching reform and development trends such as decentralization, the balance sought between economic growth, social equity and environmental sustainability and moves towards integration into regional (e.g. SADC or ASEAN) and global (e.g. WTO) political and economic systems. There are two overall challenges in the mainstreaming process:

- National planning and budgetary processes tend to focus on factors that will stimulate growth and development, whereas the natural focus of measures to protect marine resources from land-based activities is on regulatory and safeguard measures that are restrictive in character: they are intended to modulate development activities and limit the impacts of different sectors on the resource base. Reconciling development pressures with protection objectives is a fundamental requirement of any framework for these issues.
- The character of measures to protect marine resources from land-based activities is that they are not a bounded sector in themselves, but rather relate to aspects of a wide range of other sectors: fishing, tourism, coastal transport, environmental conservation, water management, coastal zone development and so on. This means that such measures need to be translated into a set of sectoral measures and will involve a wide range of institutions and stakeholders. Establishing the policy and institutional context of any approach to mainstreaming is consequently a challenge in itself.

The identification of how marine and coastal resources issues can be mainstreamed into national planning and budgetary processes must reflect these twin challenges, developing national strategies to balance development and conservation needs and creating mechanisms that ensure effective integration across sectors. The nature of development planning and budgetary processes and institutional mandates in relation to coastal and marine resources are both variable from country to country, with responsibilities often fragmented across a number of agencies.

The integration of coastal and marine issues into overall development processes needs to be based on good coordination between institutional structures that are often fragmented and partial in their coverage of some key issues. This is compounded by the tendency of many people and agencies not to see the maintenance of the environmental integrity of coastal areas as their main concern: they are more focused on tourism development or fish catches or farming production.

This does not mean that they are not interested in preserving the coasts, but more that this is secondary to their main responsibilities, which are often to increase economic development. They are willing to support actions to reduce the impact of their sector on the coastal and marine environment so long as it does not cost too much or disrupt the operation of the sector they are concerned with in an unreasonable way. They are potentially allies for protecting the coasts and will be willing collaborators in ensuring more coherent and strategic approaches to achieving this. The framework presented here build towards creating this “constituency” so that coastal and marine resource issues are championed in the overall national development process.

## 2. Coastal and Marine Issues in National Policy Frameworks

The point of departure for building marine environment issues more effectively into national development policies is to understand what is there already. The majority of development policy frameworks at both national and international levels contain some reference to environmental issues, acknowledging them as an integral part of sustainable development and calling on governments and other stakeholders to take measures to protect the integrity of the natural resource base. The extent to which the recognition of the importance of environmental issues is translated into tangible policy actions is more questionable.

The World Summit on Sustainable Development – Johannesburg Plan of Implementation contains a number of important measures with regard to coastal and marine resources, including a paragraph (para. 32) specifically on the GPA and associated paragraphs (paras. 29-31) on coastal and marine development, sustainable fisheries and the conservation and management of the oceans. The approach to coastal and marine resources in the WSSD – PoI is summarised in the opening sentence of para. 29:

“Oceans, seas, islands and coastal areas form an integrated and essential component of the Earth’s ecosystem and are critical for global food security and for sustaining economic prosperity and the well-being of many national economies, particularly in developing countries.”

This provides a powerful endorsement of any mainstreaming effort and sets the context within which national development efforts should be considered. The WSSD PoI approach reflects and is supported by a number of international laws, conventions and protocols<sup>2</sup>, including documents that both pre-date and are subsequent to the WSSD in 2002. The dominant approach in these international documents is regulatory, with references on the obligations of signatories to “*adopt laws and regulations to prevent, reduce and control pollution*” (UNCLOS) and to take actions to prevent “*the adverse impacts of the marine environment and biodiversity of human activities*” (UNGA Resolution 60/30).

There is a different set of international policy agreements pertaining to poverty reduction and economic development, with in particular the Millennium Declaration, including the Millennium Development Goals, the focus of the global community in addressing poverty. The poverty reduction and growth agenda is the dominant force in both national and international sustainable development processes. This is the agenda into which it is intended to mainstream GPA issues and processes, but unfortunately coastal and marine resource issues are all but invisible in these development policy documents.

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<sup>2</sup> See the details set out in UNEP (December 2006) *Guidance on the implementation of the Global Programme of Action for the Protection of the Marine Environment from Land-based Activities for 2007-2011: Global Programme of Action contribution to the internationally agreed goals and targets for the sustainable development of oceans, coasts and islands*, UNEP, Nairobi.

The same is largely true at the national level in many countries. An assessment of the integration of the environment in PRSPs<sup>3</sup> shows that, in the first round of PRSPs, issues of environmental sustainability were widely neglected (though with some notable exceptions). More recent discussions on second and third generation PRSPs have noted some improvements to this situation, in part because of the pressure from the international community and NGOs that resulted from the earlier neglect.

Where environmental issues are considered in PRSPs, those that are most prominent are the ones more directly related to MDG attainment (especially water supply and sanitation, the urban living environment and deforestation and land degradation), with other (including biodiversity and, crucially for our purposes, coastal and marine resources) still largely neglected. Furthermore, the level of specificity of the environmental references is often weak. As the report by Bojo *et al* says: *“Though programmes related to natural resources management, water supply and sanitation are often described, information on the cost of interventions and schedules for the interventions is often missing”* (page 17).

This does not mean that there is no action on environmental issues in development processes. The most concrete form of policy measures are the environmental safeguards that are now standard practice in all International donors, including the multilateral banks, and are increasingly found in development regulations at a national level. These safeguards require the use of environmental impact assessments or similar tools to identify any potential adverse impacts of major individual development investments and to put in place mitigation and/or compensation measures where such impacts are found. The use of safeguards is an important step, but again is by its nature regulatory and restrictive: they are measures to prevent negative environmental impacts rather than more positive actions to realise the development and poverty reduction potentials of sustainable resource management.

The existing coverage of environmental issues in both international poverty reduction documents (such as those linked to MDG reporting) and national development processes (typified by PRSPs) is consequently limited with regard to coastal and marine resource issues. This represents a challenge to mainstreaming, as there is at present not a resonance with the understanding of issues that should be considered under an environmental heading in poverty reduction and development processes.

A key part of any mainstreaming strategy for the GPA and their national level partners must be to enhance the understanding of key stakeholders on the potential contribution that coastal and marine resources can make to attaining national development targets. This in turn will generally necessitate a significant effort to compile and analyse the evidence to support the contentions made that such potentials exist. The generation of this evidence base is an integral part of the strategy set out below and should be a focal area for GPA activities in the immediate future.

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<sup>3</sup> Bojo, J. *et al* (2004) *Environment in Poverty Reduction Strategies and Poverty Reduction Support Credits*, World Bank working paper no. 102, World Bank, Washington D.C.

### 3. A Framework for Mainstreaming

#### 3.1. The Setting

The framework for mainstreaming coastal and marine resources set out here uses overall national development goals, targets and objectives as a point of departure. The choice to start at the development goals, rather than the coastal & marine resource challenges, is a deliberate and important one. A key to mainstreaming is to demonstrate the relevance of the actions advocated to the overall national development policy framework in their terms: in other words, to show how these actions will contribute to the attainment of *their* goals and objectives.

Mainstreaming will work if and when actions will not just achieve their immediate and sector-specific goals, but that they will also contribute to overall national development objectives. The importance of providing a coherent and evidence-based assessment of how this can be achieved cannot be overstated. This assessment should be developed in conjunction with key actors for those sectors identified as priorities in the mainstreaming process, which means that the ministries that act as the GPA focal point will need to build strong constituencies of support, particularly in relation to engagement with institutions representing productive sectors such as tourism, agriculture and aquaculture. The strategy outlined here is premised on the engagement of such sectoral stakeholders.

The issue of incentive for sustainable practices is of critical importance in defining the actions that can link the reduction of land-based impacts on coastal and marine resources with national development policies and strategies. Effective incentive systems can provide the link between development processes and protection goals in ways that balance economic goals with the minimising of land-based impacts on coastal resources and ecosystems. There are a wide range of incentives that can be used, including financial incentives, market access, demonstrating the benefits of long-term sustainability of production, publicity and public opinion and even regulatory measures that reduce risks for investors. A key part of the approach to mainstreaming is to create an effective balance between different types of incentives.

#### 3.2. Steps in the Mainstreaming Process

Figure 1, below, sets out a sequence of steps that can be followed in the mainstreaming process in any particular country. The identification of the details for each step need to be established through a process of analysis and dialogue with key national level stakeholders.

**Step 1: the institutional mechanism:** a first critical issue will be who, and in particular which agency in the government system, will lead this process. The establishment of the institutional mechanisms for mainstreaming can be facilitated by UNEP and/or other international development partners but strong national ownership is a pre-requisite for an effective mainstreaming process. The selection and mandating of a **Lead Agency** that will be the focus of mainstreaming is essential for this. Where such support already exists or has been developed, then mainstreaming can take place through following the five steps set out in the following paragraphs. Where it does not then a policy dialogue, based on strong evidence and broad stakeholder participation, is needed to catalyze it.

Once established, the Lead Agency should form an **Inter-Agency Working Group** that brings together key stakeholders from the different sectors relevant to coastal and marine resources management. Initial consultations should be followed by the formation of the Working Group that will be an essential mechanism for consultation and decision-making in the mainstreaming process. It provides a means for the dissemination of information, discussion of priorities and trade-offs in coastal development and building the essential constituency of support for mainstreaming.

The institutional framework should also define the context within which support from international development partners can be channelled. The setting for this is to reflect the principles of the Paris Declaration on Aid Effectiveness, and in particular to ensure a harmonized approach that works through government systems. With regard to support from the UNEP GPA and other UN agencies, this should include ensuring that support is structured into and provided through the Development Assistance Framework (UNDAF). The Lead Agency should enter into a dialogue with the local UN agencies leading the UNDAF process to ensure that coastal and marine resource issues are included within this framework.

**Step 2: the strategic framework:** the second stage in mainstreaming is to assess the national development framework in terms of the specific goals and targets to which mainstreaming will contribute and define a strategy on how mainstreaming will be accomplished. The analysis will ultimately need to demonstrate to national decision-makers, including ministries of finance, planning etc, responsible for steering the overall development trajectory of the country, that the management of coastal and marine resources can make specific and significant contributions to the national development goals and targets. The scope and character of these national goals and targets varies from country to country, but in most cases they will include the MDGs and, for poorer countries, will also include a PRSP or its equivalent.

The strategies to promote the integration of coastal and marine resources in overall development planning should reflect wider reform and development policies and strategies such as decentralisation, public sector reform, strengthening private sector involvement, balancing growth, equity and sustainability in national development and subsidiarity in government administration. Mainstreaming will be easier and more effective where it is seen to be contributing to, rather than running counter to, these wider policy priorities.

A part of the discussion of the strategic framework should be with international development partners, both from the UN system and others, to ensure that there is consistency between their strategic frameworks and the national priorities and goals. This should be based on the implementation of the principles of the Paris Declaration and within the context of the UNDAF.

**Step 3:** identification of **sectoral policy priorities** and the institutional context of mainstreaming efforts. Coastal and marine resource issues touch upon almost all aspects of national development in many countries. An effective mainstreaming effort will not try to cover too many sectors in one go, but will rather prioritise on those areas where the potential for mainstreaming in poverty reduction and national development processes is greatest. The



identification of the **focal sectors** for mainstreaming should be discussed and verified through the Working Group.

The most promising sectors will vary from country to country, but the criteria for prioritisation should include selecting (i) those sectors that are most significant in the livelihoods of poor communities; (ii) sectors where the relationship between coastal and marine resources and growth is most obvious; and (iii) sectors with more straightforward institutional structures (and especially avoiding areas where there are multiple ministries involved).

The poverty reduction – coastal and marine resources links are more obvious and easier to demonstrate for water supply and sanitation, tourism, aquaculture/shrimp production and agricultural sub-sectors that are directly dependent upon coastal and marine resources. These are sectors that are often already present in national development and poverty reduction strategies, though this rarely has a coastal/marine focus. The mainstreaming strategy should concentrate on these key sectors.

There is also a compelling case for integrating climate change adaptation as one of the mainstreaming focus issues. Climate change (including increasing climate variability and extreme events: storms, floods, droughts) adaptation has emerged in recent years as a priority in almost all national and international development processes, but as yet most countries do not have well-established strategies on how to deal with it. Demonstrating that climate change adaptation can be an integral part of the overall strategy for the management of coastal and marine resources will be a compelling selling point for many national policy makers.

The mainstreaming process must be rooted in the **policy and institutional context** of the selected focal sectors, reflecting the development priorities of these sectors and, crucially, demonstrating how the management of coastal and marine resources can contribute to achieving these development priorities. The past focus of GPA activities has been limiting pollution impacts, mostly through a combination of knowledge development and regulatory controls. Whilst this area of activity is indeed essential, it is inherently negative in character: it places restrictions on development activities that are seen as unsustainable in terms of their impacts on coastal and marine resources.

Effective mainstreaming needs to balance this with a more **positive message** concerning the poverty reduction, growth and development potentials of these resources where sustainable strategies are introduced. Such strategies are also an essential element of impact reduction approaches, as they provide the incentives and generate the resources for the actions essential for mitigating negative impacts.

These strategies have meaning in terms of actions at a sectoral level, where the key investments on resource management, investment and development priorities are made. The policies and strategies for the key sectors, along with the institutional structure through which the sector works, need to be analysed in terms of their implications for the management of coastal and marine resources.

**Step 4:** the assessment of the existing and potential future **negative impacts** of land-based activities on coastal and marine resources. This has been the main focus of GPA work to date and is indeed an important part of the strategy set out here. The approach to mainstreaming is to build on what is already going on within the GPA and associated processes, not to abandon and replace them. The recognition of the negative impact of land-based human activities is the ‘entry point’ for GPA to engage with national stakeholders, and these issues are of inherent interest and importance.

The mainstreaming process needs to demonstrate, through the National Plans of Action and other mechanisms that there are practical and affordable solutions to reducing and preventing the key pollution impacts that are threatening the integrity of key coastal and marine resources. This includes as a central component of this stage in mainstreaming the development of an effective policy and regulatory framework to address the key sources of pollution as well as activities to better understand the scale and impacts of these key pollutants and to raise awareness of these issues amongst key national stakeholders.

This step in the mainstreaming process is particularly important for the pollution sources (especially **sewerage, nutrients and POPs**) that are closely tied to the main economic sectors that are of particular relevance to poverty reduction, economic development and the livelihoods of coastal communities. It was noted, above, that most countries that have prepared NPAs identified these pollution sources as priority issues. The approach to addressing these pollutant sources needs to build on existing initiatives, but also go beyond this to better understand the economic and livelihood implications of actions to limit their occurrence.

In particular, the strategy needs to identify options (such as ecological sanitation for sewerage and low chemical input agriculture for POPs) that are possible “win-wins”: that is, that provide feasible and cost-effective solutions to the reduction of pollution as well as generating higher levels of benefits for the communities and sectors that are the source of the pollution. This can be challenging, as such options need to be carefully tailored to local circumstances. There is often a strong case for demonstration sites to pilot such approaches, and indeed many international development partners are willing and able to support such pilot approaches. Central to this will be to work with the relevant ‘line’ ministries (such as health, agriculture, water) whose mandate covers the sector in question. Engaging with these ministries at the outset will be central to the success of such activities and will also help to build the constituency of support for the wider mainstreaming process.

**Step 5:** this step is focused on the assessment and demonstration of the existing and potential **contributions** of the management of coastal and marine resources to attaining the priority **national development goals**, including those in the PRSP (if relevant) and the MDGs. The key goal here is to turn the message around: to demonstrate that these resources can be part of the solution, in terms of generating major poverty reduction and growth benefits, rather than being a problem that will cost to address in terms of mitigating pollution impacts.

The basis for this assessment is an analysis of the existing management of coastal and marine resources in relation to, firstly, the livelihoods of coastal communities (and especially the poor) and, secondly, overall national development. This should include a full assessment of the

economic costs and benefits of the use of these resources, including multiplier effects and the assessment of the sustainability of the resource use. Following from this, the analysis should then assess the potential scale and value of an expansion of these economic activities, within the constraints of assumptions concerning the long-term maintenance of the ecological integrity of the resource base. The analysis should assess the investment options and costs and benefits of such an expansion, with attention paid to the participation of poor communities who are the target of national poverty reduction strategies.

This assessment should be developed, as far as possible, in close partnership with key sector stakeholders. It was recommended, above, that the first stage of mainstreaming should focus on sectors such as aquaculture/shrimp production and tourism where the resource-livelihood relationships and potential poverty reduction impacts are relatively straightforward to identify. The results of the analysis, including the identification of intervention and investment options that can further the contribution of coastal and marine resources to national development, should be presented to national development and poverty reduction policy makers (including where possible ministries of finance and planning) in easily accessible forms, with clear messages supported by a strong evidence base.

**Step 6:** the final step in the mainstreaming strategy is the identification of **policy options** and specific **action areas** to mitigate impacts and stimulate positive contributions of coastal and marine resources to national development goals. This should reflect the integration of the analysis and conclusions of steps 4 and 5 to produce a **consolidated strategy** that both mitigates negative impacts and optimises the development potentials of coastal and marine resources. The strategy should be realistic, and especially should take account of prevailing governance conditions and institutional capacities, and should demonstrate the full economic costs and benefits of different development options. As noted above, the sectoral development strategies should also integrate climate change adaptation measures and should demonstrate the long-term sustainability of the identified options. The recommendations should specify where policy and regulatory reforms are needed, and should be clear on the roles and responsibilities of different stakeholders at different levels of the administrative system. It should as far as possible seek to advance subsidiarity, decentralisation and the participation of local communities in all aspects of the planning and management processes.

The goals and targets of the strategy should include the specification of the anticipated contribution of the recommended actions to the attainment of the MDGs, PRSP targets and other relevant national development goals. It should specify the role of UN agencies and other international development partners and, as far as is possible, should focus on harmonisation of their contributions in line with the principles set out in the Paris Declaration on Aid Effectiveness and the “One UN” approach. As far as possible, the strategy should work through mainstream government systems for investment planning, budgetary allocation and the management of natural resources and it should take full account of the wider policy and development context identified in step 2, above.

**Figure 1: The Sequencing of Steps in the Mainstreaming Process**

