

SocMONITOR

An electronic bulletin about the Global Socio-economic Monitoring Initiative
Editors: Maria Pena and Peter Edwards



New Year's Greetings!

By Peter Edwards



Hello SocMon Family and Friends! Happy 2019! This new year, like many others, begins with many challenges but optimism that we can tackle the problems and provide solutions to sustainable coastal resource management

that benefits the environment and the people who depend on it.

For the coming year I would like us to committ to improving our networking. We don't hear enough from some of our regional partners. We would like to see more stories and updates and even requests for assistance where needed.

We have entered the final year of our [SocMon 2015-2019 Strategic Plan](#). I encourage us all to read it again and assess how many of the activities have been achieved and what more needs to be done. Perhaps it is time to think about a follow-up global strategic planning meeting. Given funding limitations we may need to think creatively about how this could be done including virtual meetings and other methods.

I urge all our regional partners who are doing work, conducting trainings and other activities to send us your reports, newsletters, updates - no matter how basic - so we can share the good news via our webpage or on social media.

We need to hear from all of you!

As we head into 2019, the challenges for coastal resource management including coral reefs and small-scale fisheires remain. The need for integrating social and economic sciences with biophysical and ecological will continue to be relevant. Let us press on with the work!

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NFWF grant for global SocMon coordination

By Maria Pena

The Centre for Resource Management and Environmental Studies (CERMES) at the University of the West Indies, Cave Hill Campus, Barbados, has been awarded a US\$ 54,000 grant from the National Fish and Wildlife Foundation (NFWF) for continued facilitation of the coordination and enhancement of six regional Socio-economic for Coastal Management (SocMon/SEM-Pasifika) programs around the world.

This 18-month project, *Coordination of a Global Socio-economic Monitoring Initiative for Coastal Management (III)* will build on previous SocMon/SEM-Pasifika activities and NFWF-funded projects #46208 and #52998. In Phase III, the award will (1) support the development of regional capacity in socio-economic monitoring, (2) facilitate monitoring activities at established or new sites, (3) disseminate information on global status, trends and prospects of SocMon, (4) support integrated coral reef monitoring efforts of the Caribbean node of the Global Coral Reef Monitoring Network (GCRMN-Caribbean); supported through NFWF obligated CRCP funding and (5) assist in information exchange and promotion of SocMon. The project furthers efforts towards achieving major 2015-2019 SocMon Strategic Plan goals.

More on project progress in future *SocMonitor* issues.

Active promotion of SocMon by the South Asia node in 2018

By Vineeta Hoon

2018, the International Year of the Reef, has been one for consolidating and spreading awareness on how SocMon can be easily incorporated for gathering data for almost any purpose in coastal and marine areas.

In June, I attended the 5th International Marine Conservation Congress (IMCC 5), 23-29 June, 2018 in Kuching Malaysia and made a presentation on efforts to integrate community based socio-economic monitoring with biophysical monitoring in a session on social sciences and human well-being, organised by Supin Wongbusarakum (SEM-Pasifika coordinator).



Additionally Naveen Namboothri, from Dakshin foundation, Vardhan Patnakar, Nature Conservation Foundation-India and I (Centre for Action Research on Environment Science and Society) took the opportunity to organise a symposium and focus group discussion on *Prioritising Marine Conservation in South Asia*. Participants from Bangladesh, India, Maldives and, Sri



Lanka attended this session and revived our old Global Coral Reef Monitoring (GCRMN) South Asia network.

In October, I had the opportunity to present an electronic poster on SocMon South Asia, and participate in the panel discussion on integrating the human dimension into coral reef research at the International Conference on Status and Protection of Coral Reefs (STAPCOR – 2018) held at Bangaram Island, Union Territory of Lakshadweep, 22-24 October 2018. The theme of the conference was “Reef for Life”. It was inaugurated by Union Minister of Environment, Forest and Climate Change.

The Bay of Bengal Program (BOBP) invited us to give two lectures on *MPAs and Management* and *Information Needs in Managing Marine Protected Systems* at a capacity building course on Sustainable Development Goal (SDG 14) for officials from Sri Lanka. We discussed SocMon variables and explained how the variables could be used for collecting appropriate data and be used for adaptive management.



We are striving for our south Asia voluntary network to become more solid so that we can create a platform for sharing ideas and experiences.

For information on the Global SocMon Initiative contact:

Dr. Peter Edwards, Global Socio-economic Monitoring Coordinator (NOAA) peter.edwards@noaa.gov
Visit the SocMon website at www.socmon.org

SEM-Pasifika with the Woun Kepin Soamwoai in Pohnpei, Federated States of Micronesia

By Supin Wongbusarakum



With support from the Conservation Society of Pohnpei, the Pacific Islands Managed and Protected Area Community (PIMPAC) and the Ecosystem Sciences Division of the NOAA Pacific Island Fisheries Science Center, and the Micronesia Conservation Trust, a new socio-economic assessment started in September 2018 with the communities of Woun Kepin Soamwoai (WKS) in the Kitti Municipality of the Pohnpei State in the Federated States of Micronesia. Four villages around the Nahtik MPA, (including Enipein Pah, Enipein Powe, Mwoakot and Soamwoai) participated in the SEM-Pasifika assessment. The objectives of the assessment are to examine the communities' use of and dependence on natural resources for sustainable livelihoods; and to better understand people's perceptions of the habitat health and conditions of the natural resources, the effectiveness of the community-based surveillance and monitoring program, and the perceived threats to the natural resources that come from both anthropogenic and climate-related causes. The information will help the WKS communities and their partners to better manage the protected area in a way that it can benefit people in the long run.



SEM-Pasifika

Socio-economic monitoring strategic planning and training with Micronesia Challenge countries

By Supin Wongbusarakum

On August 27 and 28 2018, a strategic planning meeting for socio-economic monitoring of the five Micronesia Challenge (MC) countries took place in Pohnpei, Federated States of Micronesia. The MC countries include Guam, the Commonwealth of Northern Mariana Islands, the Republic of Palau, the Republic of Marshall Islands, and the Federated States of Micronesia (Yap, Chuuk, Pohnpei, and Kosrae). The country participants updated status of socio-economic assessment efforts for the recent years and presented assessment plans in the next two years. The meeting was followed by a SEM-Pasifika training workshop from 29-31 August. Experienced SEM-Pasifika practitioners served as facilitators to help train new members in the region.



A review of SocMon Caribbean

By Hilary Lohmann

Fulbright Fellow at CERMES 2018

In the August issue of the SocMonitor we published an article on research in progress on SocMon Caribbean being conducted by Hilary Lohmann, Fulbright Fellow with the Centre for Resource Management and Environmental Studies (CERMES), University of the West Indies, Barbados. In this article (published in the December 2018 issue of the CERMES Connections) Hilary, provides a synopsis of her findings.

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Between 2005-2018, baseline SocMon assessments were conducted at 26 sites in twelve Caribbean island nations and territories. A recent review of SocMon Caribbean evaluated the impacts of the assessment activities and results to site and resource management. Thirteen practitioners from eight nations and territories who led SocMon projects were interviewed about their experience with SocMon and the fate of SocMon reports, results and recommendations after project completion.

All thirteen interviewees perceive that decision-makers are compelled by economics, specifically related to livelihoods and revenue. SocMon defines itself as a socio-economic tool but overwhelmingly the information gathered is more social than economic. Within SocMon's menu of 159 total questions to pick from as presented in the GCRMN SocMon Manual (2000) Appendix A, only 23 address economic themes and only 14 address quantitative economics, accounting for less than 15% of SocMon data. If fiscal socio-economics are driving decisions then SocMon should increase its economic focus in order to be more effective, for example quantifying the values of ecosystem services and reporting on costs and gains in specific coastal livelihoods. Greater coverage of these aspects of the coastal zone and its stakeholders would align SocMon results with conversations and priorities that already exist in the realm of influence upon decision-making.

Beyond the lack of available resources to regularly complete socio-economic monitoring, practitioners agree that often there is no customary or obvious leader to follow-up on results and recommendations nor resources allocated to do so.

Practitioners want help improving access and communication channels for use and uptake of research results and recommendations. The individuals conducting SocMon received training for data collection and reporting, so it makes sense to add training and support in follow-up methodology. SocMon could add a final section that describes and exemplifies how to communicate its findings, from visualizations and infographics to policy briefs and presentations.

The results of this study suggest that best practices for social science as outlined by experts are appreciated but not reflected in marine and coastal resource

management. Past socio-economic assessments offer strong baseline data but there is little to no regular monitoring and a chronic lack of uptake of results into management. There is even less evidence of socio-economic data making it into policy discussions, despite the fact that SocMon final report documents were often shared with upper level management like department deputy directors and directors, Parliamentary representatives and Permanent Secretaries.

The current lack of social science expertise in coastal zone and marine protected area management means that SocMon has no leadership at the site level when it comes to planning, implementation, and follow-up. There is a lack of understanding at the institutional and the community levels as to what SocMon is and what it can offer. Two approaches could increase the effectiveness of SocMon Caribbean in the future: a mobile team of social science experts whose priority is SocMon implementation and communication while secondarily building capacity at sites; and/or increased ownership and commitment at the site level through the institutionalization of SocMon as part of management plans, work plans and budgets.

NFWF global SocMon coordination project closed

By Maria Pena

The NFWF-funded, CERMES-implemented, *Coordination of a Global Socio-economic Monitoring Initiative for Coastal Management II*, NFWF Project #52998, officially closed all reporting on 31 December 2018.

Key accomplishments of this poroject included: compilation and central storage of SocMon Caribbean data; the development of eight supplementary updates to the Global Coral Reef Monitoring Network (GCRMN) Socio-economic Monitoring for Coastal Management (SocMon) Manual; an annotated listing of tools, approaches and software for enhancing SocMon application, data analysis and training; advanced statistical analysis of selected SocMon Caribbean and Pacific Islands site data; and SocMon coordinators travel to key conferences in 2017 and 2018.

Look out for highlights of the project deliverables in forthcoming issues of the *SocMonitor*.

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