



SocMon/SEM-Pasifika strategic planning and more

By Peter Edwards

Hello SocMon and SEM-Pasifika Colleagues! Greetings from your somewhat busy Global Coordinator!

Firstly let me apologize for being late with the completion of the draft Strategic Plan. It is still a work in progress but I promise you it is more than 65% drafted and I will complete it by the end of August (2014).

Some encouraging news is that we are very hopeful that a small pool of NOAA Coral Reef Conservation Program (CRCP) funds may become available to support follow-up assessments (i.e. monitoring) exercises in a few nodes. This is not yet finalized, so no celebrations just yet, however, keep your fingers crossed!

With regards to other possible sources of funding, I was recently invited to give a presentation at the 16th Consultative Committee Meeting on Large Marine Ecosystems and Coastal Partners in Paris, France. This effort is supported by a number of large organizations including the Global Environment Facility and other UN agencies. These LME projects are typically large and address large scale coastal and watershed issues. My presentation was primarily to highlight the usefulness of incorporating SocMon/SEM-Pasifika and other social science approaches into the work planning and funding

INSIDE THIS ISSUE

SocMon/SEM-Pasifika strategic planning & more	1
BOB LME to support SocMon in South Asia	2
Assessing tour guide practices and knowledge in Mexico	3
New directions for SocMon in the Caribbean	4

process for these projects. The presentation went over well with the audience of project managers and others. It is notable that the Bay of Bengal LME (BOBLME) spoke highly of SocMon/SEM-Pasifika and their use of it in that region. I will encourage individual node coordinators to build relationships with the LME project managers in your region. For more information on the meeting check out this link on LMEs:

http://lme.edc.uri.edu/index.php?option=com_content&view=article&id=47&Itemid=41

See also, a colleague's blog about his experience at the meeting:

<http://ian.umces.edu/blog/2014/07/24/large-marine-ecosystems-an-australian-in-paris/>

Finally it is important to note that we have entered an El Niño period. There are likely to be some impacts to coastal communities in various regions. If there are monitoring efforts planned in any of your regions, it would be good to think about collecting climate and extreme weather relevant impacts to communities and other key stakeholders. Perhaps a way to begin to implement some kind of integrated monitoring with other biophysical and atmospheric science partners.

BOB LME to support SocMon in South Asia

By Vineeta Hoon

The Bay of Bengal Large Marine Ecosystem (BOB LME) Project of the Food and Agriculture Organization (FAO) has given a boost to SocMon South Asia activities this year by agreeing to support three SocMon training workshops in the the region. These training workshops will cover three new sites – Chilika Lake, Odisha, India; St. Martin’s Island, Bangladesh; and Jaffna in Sri Lanka – and one new country (Bangladesh).

The training workshops will be managed by Integrated Marine Management Ltd. (IMM), U.K in partnership with Centre for Action Research on Environment Science and Society (CARESS). Site partners will include IUCN country offices in Bangladesh and Srilanka and the Chilika Development Authority in India. A preliminary meeting was held on the 10 July to discuss SocMon training workshop logistics at Bhubneshwar Odisha.

Chilika lake is the largest brackish water lagoon with estuarine characteristics that sprawls along the east coast of Odisha. It is the largest wintering ground for migratory waterfowl found anywhere on the Indian sub-continent. It is one of the hotspots of biodiversity in the country, and some rare, vulnerable and endangered species listed in the IUCN Red List of threatened animals inhabit the lagoon for at least part of their life cycle. The lagoon is a highly productive ecosystem, with rich fishery resources. The rich fishing ground sustains the livelihoods of more than 0.15 million fisherfolk who live in and around the lagoon.



Fishers selling their catch on the banks of Chilika Lake

St. Martin's Island is a small island (8 km²) in the northeastern part of the Bay of Bengal, about 9 km south of the tip of the Cox's Bazar –Teknaf peninsula, and forming the southernmost part of Bangladesh. There is a small adjoining island that is separated at high tide, called Chhera island. It is about 8 km west of the northwest coast of Myanmar, at the mouth of the Naf River. The first settlement started 250 years ago by some Arabian sailors who named the island ‘Zajira’. During British occupation the island was named St. Martin Island. It is the only coral island in Bangladesh.

Jaffna Peninsula lies on the northeast tip of Srilanka. It borders the gulf of Mannar on the Srilankan side. SocMon has already been conducted on the Indian side of Gulf of Mannar and by including Jaffna we will have a complete picture of how the transboundary ecosystem is being used.

Assessing tour guide practices and knowledge about Isla Mujeres, Punta Cancun and Punta Nizuc National Marine Park in Mexico

By Arie Sanders

(Extracted from 10 July Press Release)

With more than three million visitors annually, the Cancun area is Mexico's largest tourist destination and most popular beach resort. One of the favourite tourist sites is the National Marine Park, especially Isla Mujeres. Located in the northern part of the Mexican state of Quintana Roo, the park was officially decreed on 19 July 1996, many years after a local grassroots organization and the community of Isla Mujeres began lobbying with the Federal Government for the creation of a protected area in its surrounding waters.

"Because of the high number of tourists in the park, snorkeling, diving and boating can cause direct physical damage to reefs. This damage consists mostly of breaking fragile, branched corals or causing injuries to massive corals. Most divers and snorkelers cause little damage; only a few cause severe or widespread damage, explains the park Director Dr. Jaime Gonzalez

During the period of 22 June to 3 July, 2014 a new SocMon assessment related to the national marine park was carried out to measure attitudes, practices and perceptions. Regional SocMon Coordinator (Central America), Arie Sanders, from Zamorano University in Honduras, commented, "In this assessment we are especially analyzing the influence of knowledge and attitudes on the practices of tourist guides working in the marine

park with respect to environmental change and health."

The park is managed locally by the Management Authority, which consists of a group of professionals (mainly marine biologists) and six park guards (local community members) who report to the National Commission of Natural Protected Areas (CONANP). Tourist enterprises need permission of the park authority to operate in the protected area, and tourist guides and dive masters must be certified by CONANP.

"Tourist guides can play an important role in protecting the national park and its coral reefs. The adequate training of tourist guides can greatly help to reduce tourism's negative impacts in the protected area, and our study will help show where and how training should be focused," explained Arie Sanders.

Face-to-face interviews have been held with 150 tourist guides and the results of the study will be available at the end of August 2014.



The training was initiated by the marine national park in partnership with the Gulf and Caribbean Fisheries Institute (GCFI). It is part of a two-year cooperative agreement with NOAA's Coral Reef Conservation Program to build marine protected area management capacity in the Mesoamerican Reef region.

