



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

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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.

New directions for SocMon in the Caribbean

By Maria Pena

Jehroum Wood, MSc student at the Centre for Resource Management and Environmental Studies (CERMES) at the University of the West Indies, Cave Hill Campus, Barbados, recently investigated the development of a practical method, 'SocMon Spatial', for integrating SocMon and participatory Geographic Information Systems (GIS) for his MSc Research Paper. The aim of the study was to explore the applicability and benefits of merging GIS and socio-economic monitoring as well as to assess its effectiveness in enhancing stakeholder engagement and stewardship and to inform decision-making in the context of coastal, marine and fisheries management. Methods of collecting, analyzing, storing, representing and sharing SocMon data were analyzed and two demonstration geodatabases were created along with recommendations for further development of 'SocMon Spatial'. Visit the SocMon Spatial demonstration site at <https://sites.google.com/site/socmonspatialdemo> for more information.

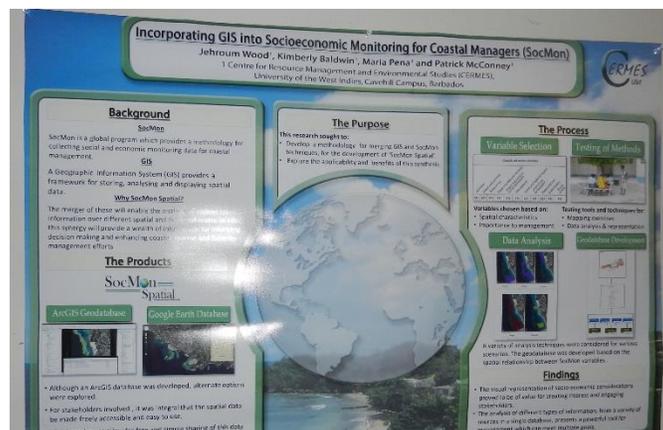
Eight suitable SocMon Caribbean variables were chosen – based on frequency of use, spatial characteristics and importance for management – for incorporation into a GIS (for Pile Bay in Barbados) as well as spatial representation of existing data (for the South Coast Marine Conservation Area in St. Vincent and the Grenadines). The variables chosen for analysis were

study area, community infrastructure and business development; activities; goods and services; types of use; levels/types of impacts; perceptions of resource conditions; and perceived threats.



Sample of the Pile Bay geodatabase developed during the study

One of the main aims of 'SocMon spatial' is to offer alternative visualization of socio-economic data that may be more useful for decision-making. It is hoped that in the future the demonstration module will be for further developed and used in training.



Poster presentation of the research presented at the 66th Gulf and Caribbean Fisheries Institute (GCFI), Corpus Christi, Texas. November 2013



For regional information contact the regional SocMon coordinators:

Caribbean: Maria Pena, CERMES, The University of West Indies, Cave Hill Campus, Barbados maria.pena@cavehill.uwi.edu

Central America: Arie Sanders, University of Zamorano, Honduras asanders@zamorano.edu

Micronesia: Brooke Nevitt, Pacific Marine Resources Institute, Saipan sciencecom@pacmares.com

South Asia: VineetaHoon, CARESS, Chennai, India vineetahoon@gmail.com

Southeast Asia: Michael Pido, Palawan State University, Puerto Princessa, Philippines mdpido@yahoo.com

Western Indian Ocean: Brigid Mibe, CORDIO East Africa, Mombasa, Kenya bmibe@cordioea.net