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CLME+ Strategic Action Programme (SAP) Experience Note

Applying the Governance Effectiveness Assessment Framework (GEAF) indicators to the CLME+ SAP

Abstract: The CLME+ SAP specifies the development of a comprehensive Monitoring and Evaluation (M&E) plan to track progress towards achieving its objectives, and to facilitate adaptive management. The monitoring aspect of the M&E plan for the CLME+ SAP is based on the Governance Effectiveness Assessment Framework (GEAF) which has been used to develop indicators for monitoring governance within the region. An assessment of these indicators gives insight into needed improvements that can be applied across all categories of the GEAF framework and for the successful implementation of an ecosystem based approach to the sustainable management of the CLME+ region. This experience note highlights the lessons learned from applying the GEAF in the CLME+ region.

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Learning from best practices in CLME+ SAP implementation

Applying the Governance Effectiveness Assessment Framework (GEAF) indicators to the CLME+ SAP

Experience of the GEF - sponsored

GEF/UNDP: Catalysing Implementation of the Strategic Action Programme for the Sustainable Management of shared Living Marine Resources in the Caribbean and North Brazil Shelf Large Marine Ecosystems
GEFID: 5542; 2015-2020

PROJECT DESCRIPTION

The Caribbean Large Marine Ecosystem and Adjacent Areas (CLME) Project (2009-2014) was designed to begin the process of building a Regional Ocean Governance Framework for the Large Marine Ecosystems (LMEs) within the Wider Caribbean Region (WCR). Funded by the Global Environment Facility (GEF) with additional financial support from countries and multilateral agencies, the CLME Project facilitated the adoption of a 10-year Strategic Action Programme (SAP) for the sustainable management of the shared Living Marine Resources (LMR) of the Caribbean and North Brazil Shelf Large Marine Ecosystems (CLME+). This SAP provides a roadmap for sustainable LMR management, which is to be achieved by targeted interventions supported by strengthening and consolidating cooperative governance arrangements at regional and subregional levels.

The SAP specifies the development of a comprehensive Monitoring and Evaluation (M&E) Plan to track progress towards achieving its objectives, and to facilitate adaptive management. The approach to LME governance within the CLME+ region recognizes the realities of geographical and organisational scale, which are prevalent in the WCR. The process of conceptualising, operationalising, testing, learning and adapting this framework is expected to span several years as it involves over three dozen countries and territories in the WCR and several ecosystems (e.g. continental shelf, pelagic and reef). A systematic and incremental approach is required.

The monitoring aspect of the M&E plan for the CLME+ SAP is based on the Governance Effectiveness Assessment Framework (GEAF)[1] which has been used to develop indicators for monitoring governance within the region. This experience note highlights the lessons learned from applying the GEAF in the CLME+ region.

THE EXPERIENCE

Issue

The Transboundary Diagnostic Analyses (TDAs) conducted during the CLME Project identified weak governance as a root cause of the problems associated with the management of shared LMRs within the WCR. Along with weak governance, three priority transboundary threats (i.e. unsustainable fisheries, pollution and habitat degradation) were also identified; these threats are negatively impacting the societal benefits obtained from the CLME+ and its living resources.

[1] Mahon, R., L. Fanning and P. McConney. 2017. Assessing governance performance in transboundary water systems. Environmental Development. 24: 146-155. http://dx.doi.org/10.1016/j.envdev.2017.06.008

Many countries in the CLME+ lack capacity. Rarely are there clear mandates by national, subregional, or regional level institutions for management policies that address sectoral integration at levels up to the ecosystem scale. Effective governance hinges on having effective governance arrangements at the appropriate geographical scale that involve actors at multiple organisational levels: local, national, sub-regional and regional.

Ocean governance in the Caribbean comprises a diversity of networks of actors serving various purposes and have competing and conflicting interests. There is a need for functional interactions among these stakeholders. Having a LME governance framework in place that is robust enough to handle the current and emerging governance arrangements in the CLME+ is critical to resolving issues.

The GEAF indicators provide a broad strategic, long-term perspective on the effectiveness of interventions undertaken to implement the SAP.

Addressing the Issue

The process of building the Regional Ocean Governance Framework for the WCR is through a series of targeted activities. These interventions are aimed at strengthening components of the framework to produce tangible results with respect to LMR governance. Additionally, testing the framework approach can provide guidance on how it may be improved, redesigned, and made more effective—a learning component.

The governance assessment approach of the shared LMR for the CLME project builds on the methodology developed by Mahon et al (2011b, 2011c) for the Transboundary Waters Assessment Programme (TWAP). TWAP is a GEF project that developed indicators for monitoring all aspects International Waters (IW) focal area. The indicator scheme was updated so that it would be in accord with the current thinking regarding LME governance. The update includes new categories of indicators for governance (Figure 1) in the IW portfolio.

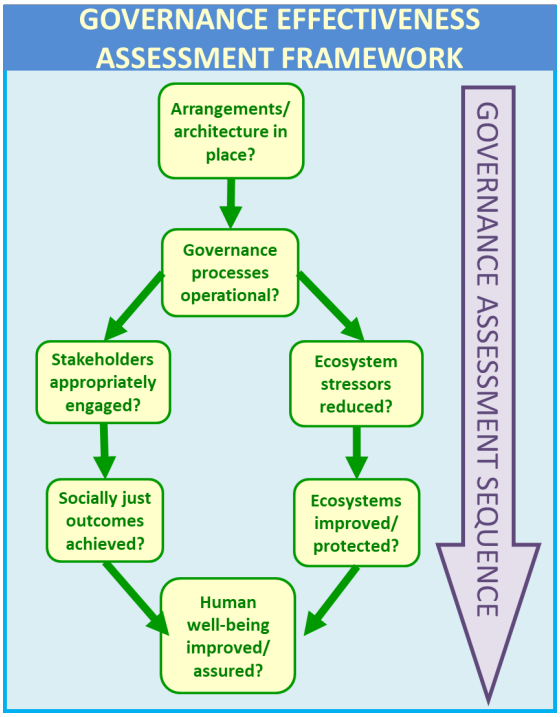

Figure 1: GEAF indicator categories used in monitoring the CLME+ SAP, showing the temporal sequence for assessing governance. *Adopted from source: Mahon et al, 2012.*

The GEAF comprises seven categories of indicators aimed at assessing whether good governance arrangements are in place and whether they are effective in achieving what they set out to do. The seven categories are: governance architecture; governance process; ecosystem pressure; ecosystem state; stakeholder engagement; social justice; and human well-being.

An assessment of these indicators gives insight into needed improvements that can be applied across all categories of the GEAF framework and for the successful implementation of an ecosystem based approach to the sustainable management of the CLME+ region. The following sections present a summary of the major findings and lessons learned from applying the GEAF indicators.

RESULTS AND LEARNING

An assessment of the seven indicator categories of the GEAF was completed for the baseline period (2011-2015). The data were provided by the countries in the CLME+ Region and by the relevant intergovernmental organisations addressing fisheries, pollution and habitat degradation/biodiversity. In some cases, data and information from third party sources were used. Acquiring data from countries presented a challenge and response rates were less than desired: 71% for fisheries, 57% for pollution and 62% for biodiversity/habitat degradation.

Table 1 provides a summary of the major findings for each of the GEAF categories.

Table 1: Summary of the major findings/ results of the GEAF assessment (using the 7 indicator categories) covering the baseline period 2011-2015.

Indicator categories	*Indicators*	*Major Finding/ Result*
Architecture	Presence of an integrating mechanism(s)	Governance arrangements for coordination among regional bodies with a mandate for ocean related issues are a focus of the CLME+ SAP. Ultimately, the CLME+ Interim Coordinating Mechanism (ICM), was, in principle, developed at the end of the baseline period to provide a temporary coordination mechanism for all three transboundary issues. In 2017, the ICM was formally established through the signing of a Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) by 8 Inter-Governmental Organizations (IGO's) with an Oceans-related Mandate in the wider Caribbean. Discussions and actions from countries and regional organizations are currently ongoing for developing a long-termocean Coordinating Mechanism. A fisheries Interim Coordinating Mechanism (IFCM) for the CLME+ region was found to be in place at the end of the baseline period. The MoU for this IFCM was officially signed in 2016. Only fisheries is supported by its ICM which can be considered a sub-mechanism of the overall ICM. An amendment of the MoU was recently signed by participating subregional and regional fisheries organisations to extend the IFCM until 2026.
	Strength of regional/subregional arrangement(s)	There is potential for strengthening these arrangements by improving access to decision making mechanisms and by improving coverage so that the geographical

Indicator categories	*Indicators*	*Major Finding/ Result*
		scope of the arrangements better match the geographical scope of the issue to be addressed.
	Strength of national intersectoral coordination mechanism (NICs)	Many countries were found to have no discernable NIC in place. For those that did, 60-80% were functioning as NICs should. This leaves considerable scope for establishing NICs and for strengthening those that exist. While there is room for improvement regarding all functions that NICs can serve, the prominently weak area is in fulfilling the role of linking national and regional processes.
Process	Regional/subregional policies, strategic plans, management plans, legislation and regulations in place	In terms of governing instruments in place across the three transboundary issues, policies were found to be prevalent at the regional level, although there was considerable variation among the level of attention paid to different fisheries species groups. During the base-line period other types of governing instruments (management plans, strategic plans, legislation and regulations) were rarely used at the regional and subregional level to address habitat and biodiversity and pollution. Now, there are Regional Strategies and Action Plans for Habitats and Nutrients.
	National policies, strategic plans, management plans, legislation and regulations in place	At the national level, the preferred instruments focused on legislation and regulations with limited attention being paid to policies, strategic plans and management plans as a way to address pollution, habitat and biodiversity and fisheries issues.
Ecosystem stressors	Fish stocks or pollution and biodiversity/ habitat degradation issues in each of the following categories: • no agreed level • lower than agreed • at agreed level • higher than agreed level	Several different indicators were required to assess pressure, however, the overwhelming response at both regional and national levels was an absence of any limits or levels set and even when an agreed level was set, due to a lack of monitoring, it was difficult to know if it was being met. The exception to this was mostly found in the fisheries where an agreed level was set for flyingfish and, due to the CITES induced rules, for conch.
Ecosystem state	Indicators falling into the following categories Fish stocks • Under exploited • Fully exploited • Over exploited • Depleted • Unknown Pollution:	In terms of having a good understanding of the current state of the marine environment in the CLME+ region, very little actual information is available. Not surprising, there is considerable variability among fish stocks but overall, the response at the regional and subregional as well as national level is that the status of most stocks is largely unknown or over-exploited, except for flyingfish, lobster and conch where data indicate them to be fully exploited. For pollution, standards and monitoring for marine water quality were present in less than half of the responding 19 countries, with a range of 22% - 39% of the countries

Indicator categories	*Indicators*	*Major Finding/ Result*
	• No standard • Within standard • Worse than standard Biodiversity/habitat degradation: • Not monitored • Significant loss • Measurable loss • No change • Measurable gain • Significant gain	indicating the pollutants that were being monitored were "within the standard". For Biodiversity/habitat degradation, indicators showed key habitat types and areas for priority species/groups were either not monitored or were showing signs of measurable to significant loss for quantity and for quality, measurably or significantly degraded.
Stakeholder engagement	Engagement in regional and global agreements	Engagement with both global and regional arrangements was good but there is scope to improve at both levels. There is the tendency for low uptake of the most recent arrangements such as the Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations (FAO) Compliance, FAO Port State and the International Maritime Organization (IMO) Ports State Memorandum of Understanding (MoUs). In particular, there is the need for countries to engage with the Specially Protected Areas and Wildlife (SPAW) and Land Based Sources of Marine Pollution (LBS) protocols both in terms of signing and participating in meetings.
	Engagement in meetings	Non-governmental Organisations (NGOs) and private sector participation in the meetings of some Intergovernmental Organisations (IGOs) was low for all three transboundary issues. This may be due to the lack of structured arrangements for NGOs and private sector (e.g. shipping, oil and gas) that would facilitate their engagement with the work of the IGOs for the three issues.
Social justice	Presence in regional/subregional and national arrangements	Social justice issues are fairly well reflected in regional arrangements for fisheries, but less well so in those for pollution and biodiversity/habitat degradation. Notably absent in all arrangements except the Western Central Atlantic Fishery Commission (WECAFC) is the direct need to ensure that management measures (whether for fisheries, pollution or biodiversity/habitats) take social justice issues into account. At the national level, social justice issues were reflected in policies in about 40-60% of responding countries for all three ecosystem issues. This is an area in which there is a need to review and update policy to align with current norms.

Indicator categories	*Indicators*	*Major Finding/ Result*
Human well-being	Indicators relating to food security, income, malnutrition, cultural identity, amenity value, health, fish loss/waste and safety at sea	The development and application of human well-being indicators is clearly a crosscutting matter and is also a relatively new endeavor globally. Significant challenges were experienced with acquiring the needed information at an appropriate geographical scale. To be meaningful for the CLME+ region, targeted national level surveys will likely be required to acquire the desired information.

Lessons Learned

1. Given the connectivity between fisheries, habitat and biodiversity and pollution, the results from this assessment shows that there is room for greater regional collaboration when developing issue-specific policies that can potentially affect the achievement of objectives. Additionally, at the regional level, expanding the collaborative development and implementation of governing instruments (e.g. coordinating mechanisms) could foster a more consistent approach to addressing these interconnected issues.
2. There is still more information needed for accurately assessing the stressors being exerted on the marine environment from all possible sources that have resulting impacts on habitat and biodiversity, including key fish stocks. The baseline results clearly indicated the need for a concerted effort to determine what stressors should be tracked; this would better inform SAP decision-making.
3. The major findings of this GEAF assessment suggested a need for improved monitoring and evaluation across the different indicator categories, with particular focus on regional and national coordination, the overall state of the marine environment and human well-being.

REPLICATION

An Ecosystem Approach to Fisheries/Ecosystem Based Management (EAF/EBM) requires consideration and integration of all the various factors affecting sustainable use of ecosystems, including human activities and implications for human well-being. There are several indicator-based monitoring and evaluation initiatives within the CLME+ region that relate to the indicators covered in the GEAF assessment, and to which these indicators may be able to contribute.

The current initiative was designed to be as low impact as possible for countries, recognising their low capacity to respond to the numerous regional initiatives of which they are part. Considerable thought would have to be given as to whether reducing the number of indicators used in the current effort would still provide the information needed for the SAP review and revision process envisioned in the SAP M&E Framework.

SIGNIFICANCE

This GEAF baseline information can be used to inform discussions about the indicators and what needs to be done to make progress in critical areas of the identified transboundary issues (i.e. unsustainable fisheries, pollution and biodiversity/habitat degradation). This assessment is useful for the long-term goal because the Regional Ocean Governance Framework can be approached incrementally with interventions targeting specific parts of the framework; aimed at establishing or completing policy cycles and building or enhancing linkages.

REFERENCES

More information can be accessed from the following websites and links:

1. https://clmeplus.org/

2. https://www.cavehill.uwi.edu/cermes/news/technical-reports.aspx
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KEYWORDS
Lessons-learned, Governance, Effectiveness, Assessment, Framework, Marine, Ecosystem