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Swedish international cooperation
for sustainable development of
oceans and coasts – In brief

The Marine Initiative



Largest producer of global goods

Collaboration on global common goods is a priority in Swedish international development cooperation. The world ocean is our largest common producer of goods. Wise management of the sea is necessary as a means to combat poverty in many developing countries. The world's coastal areas are of fundamental importance to a substantial portion of the global population. Coral reefs, mangrove forests, seagrass beds, hard bottoms, stands of macroalgae, estuaries, and upwelling areas are productive and vital ecosystems. Coastal fisheries account for almost 75 per cent of global marine fish catches; over 90 per cent of global catches of fish and shellfish are made in the shallow shelf seas. Mangrove forests and other ecosystems provide medical plants, fuels and food. Coral reefs, seagrass beds and mangrove forest also provide protection against natural disasters.

It is a threat to and a violation of the livelihood of poor people when they are made more vulnerable as a result of the destruction of the environment on which they depend. Efforts to obtain sustainable development of oceans and coasts are a means to protect the human rights also of those most exposed.

Two thirds of the global population lives in coastal areas; in the year 2025 this could be the case for three fourths of the population. To a large extent, the rapid urbanisation in developing countries takes place in coastal areas – two out of three mega cities are located in coastal areas. When cities grow due to large population inflows, increasing pollution loads severely affect both ecosystems and the health of the poor.

Sida's marine initiative

Knowledge of the vital resources of the coastal zone is often



The ocean as a global good

The ocean provides transportation routes (shipping), food (mainly fish, shellfish and algae), raw material for industrial production and energy generation (minerals, oil, gas, algae), and medicines (plants and animals containing medically active substances).





Agenda 21, the global UN action programme, contains far-reaching and extensive demands and recommendations on rational and long-term sustainable use and protection of ocean and coastal zone resources, principles of food security, and of maritime safety.

In the *Plan of Implementation* of the UN World Summit on Sustainable Development (Johannesburg, 2002), the need for integrated management and sustainable development in oceans and coastal areas, and strengthened international and regional cooperation, is stressed. More must be done to achieve sustainable fisheries.

One of the *UN Millennium Development Goals* is to ensure environmental sustainability by "integrating the principles of sustainable development into country policies and programmes and reverse the losses of environmental resources".

scarce. Operational national regulatory frameworks are lacking or not implemented. To be able to reverse the trend of severe overexploitation and gradual destruction of marine and coastal resources and habitats in the south, better consistency between political declarations and actual development cooperation efforts is called for. As a Swedish response to this, Sida has developed a marine initiative, with the objective to support and promote a long-term ecologically and economically sustainable development of oceans and coastal areas through development cooperation.

Sida's marine initiative is in line with Swedish policy for global development, according to which Sweden is to contribute to equitable and sustainable global development. Swedish policy is to be characterised by the development perspective of the poor – sustainable use of habitats and natural resources is a prerequisite for a global development that is successful in the long term. The initiative will also allow for a continued build-up of Swedish competence in development issues related to seas and coastal areas. It will provide Sweden with a wider international know-how of marine environment, coastal planning, management and development issues.

Cooperation on global common goods and respect for human rights are two of the pillars of Swedish policy for global development, and they are interwoven in Sida's work for sustainable development of oceans and coasts. In the international Law of the Sea, the rights of individual coastal states to decide about the use of marine and coastal resources are laid down. However, individuals also have rights when it comes to goods and opportunities offered by oceans and coasts. It is considered as a violation of human rights to deprive people of the possibility of sustainable development. Extensive environmental problems and destruction of natural resources in the world's oceans

and coastal areas is a violation of the rights of poor people to exist, to be secure and to have a livelihood. Therefore it is a great challenge to strengthen the economic, social, political and civil rights of people in developing countries. Then they will have a real chance to manage, plan for and protect the environment and natural resources on which they base their existence.

The challenge is to prove that based on robust oceans and coastal areas, it is possible to achieve sustainable development and reduce poverty. *The objective* is to prove that efforts will contribute to poverty reduction, through increased food security based on sustainable use/production in parallel with conservation of the natural resource base. *The vision* is that viable, wisely managed and productive ecosystems in marine and coastal areas contribute to the creation of stable and sustainable economies and thus to the sustenance of coastal states.

Management of oceans and coasts needs to be better coordinated and integrated between different sectors of society. Marine and coastal issues are transboundary in character; thus effective and well functioning coordination between global, regional, national and local efforts is required. The use of marine and coastal natural resources must be sustainable in the long term. Actions to strengthen democracy and human rights, and prevent conflicts, must be given priority, particularly for management of resources shared within or between countries. The concern for the environment and natural resources should go hand in hand with the respect for human rights. Natural resources are more effectively protected when the people who use the resources are also given the opportunity to carry the responsibility for their management. That responsibility should, thus, be transferred to the level of actual resource use.

Strong support for regional cooperation

The marine initiative is a strong venture on regional cooperation on marine environmental, coastal zone and fisheries issues, with an initial primary focus on Latin America/the Caribbean, Southeast Asia, and western and eastern Africa. Cooperation at the regional level creates opportunities for regional adaptation and implementation of the global regulatory framework. Most importantly, regional cooperation constitutes a basis for countries to define and agree on priority environmental and natural resource problems. Based on that, joint action programmes can



Sida's marine initiative has three complementary components:

Support to a limited number of strategically important global, mainly UN organisations.

Support to key regional environmental and fisheries organisations.

Support to institutional strengthening and capacity building.



be elaborated and also function as important instruments for conflict and disaster anticipation and prevention.

Regional seas programmes and conventions need to be further developed. Better coordination and integration between cooperation structures is needed within one and the same region, e.g., through increased cooperation between regional marine and nature conservation organisations and regional fisheries organisations.

Regions need support in their work to implement global agreements and conventions and to define regional priority issues to be included in jointly elaborated action programmes. Regional organisations have often, for different reasons, not been able to live up to their ambitious goals and mandates. Swedish efforts could have an important function by providing mainly economic but also technical support in the building up of more effective regional organisations within environment, fisheries, and shipping.

Sida's marine initiative comprises efforts on exchange of information and compilation and assessment of scientific information as a basis for common regional decisions and measures. It should be ensure that planned working and negotiating meetings can be held and, subsequently, followed up as agreed. The essential cooperative process can then be kept active and gradually develop with the objective to create models and structures for cooperation that are sustainable in the long term.

Sida's marine initiative should be viewed as a long-term effort. The first phase covers the period 2003–2006. However, from experience one knows that it will take a long time, perhaps as much as 20–25 years, to build up reasonably well functioning regional organisations that enjoy political and economic confidence and full support of the member countries.



More information

Read more in the brochure "The Marine Initiative" (SIDA4180en)

Read more about the marine initiative on www.sida.se

Contact the Marine Programme Group at Sida (Dep. of Natural Resources and the Environment)

The world ocean, including the important coastal zones, is our largest common global producer of goods. Today, close to two thirds of the global population live in the narrow coastal strips. The marine and coastal ecosystems are among the most productive ones in the world, and they provide food and livelihood for a substantial proportion of the global population. Coastal fisheries account for almost 75 per cent of global marine fish catches and in all, over 90 per cent of global catches of fish and shellfish are made in the shallow coastal seas.

Today, many of the productive coastal ecosystems are rapidly being destroyed in many parts of the world. Despite comprehensive efforts during many years of development cooperation, most of the environmental and natural resource problems remain in many coastal and marine regions in the south. The objective of Sida's marine initiative is to promote, through strong global and regional efforts, a long-term ecologically and economically sustainable development of oceans and coasts in the world.

Halving poverty by 2015 is one of the greatest challenges of our time, requiring cooperation and sustainability. The partner countries are responsible for their own development. Sida provides resources and develops knowledge and expertise, making the world a richer place.



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