

PILOT PROJECT FOR SUSTAINABLE COASTAL ZONE MANAGEMENT IN SIERRA LEONE

“Together we protect our coastal and marine resources”



THE PILOT PROJECT

Sierra Leone's coastal and marine biodiversity faces many threats ranging from habitat destruction, climate change (coastal erosion, flooding and droughts), hunting, collection of sea turtle eggs, to land use change as a result of agriculture and settlement and fish stock overexploitation. However, there are initiatives already addressing some of these issues for some time.

In addition overfishing using bad fishing methods, pirate fishing, mangrove harvesting for fuel wood and habitat destruction are among the major causes for the loss of our marine and coastal resources. Sources in Sierra Leone confirm that fish stocks have been reduced to such an extent that at certain times of the year, national demand is not met. Fishing companies insist that piracy in the north has forced many boats south, exacerbating over-fishing in this region.

However a more robust pilot project has been initiated to address these issues. The pilot project for sustainable coastal zone management in Sierra Leone is implemented by Wetlands International in close collaboration with Conservation Society of Sierra Leone. In this project, a partnership

between PRCM, Wetlands International and Sierra Leonean partners has already been launched, and this initiative has the support of different institutions in the country like the Ministry of Fisheries and Marine Resources, Forestry Division and the Institute of Marine Biology and Oceanography.

The project will focus on the establishment of Marine Protected Areas and demonstration of small scale pilot activities, supported by communications and capacity building components. The lessons learned and best practices in at least one MPA will be promoted around the country for the improvement of coastal and marine resources management. The project also will engage local and national stakeholders, through their participation, capacity building improved knowledge and biodiversity conservation issues.



Priority Areas of Immediate Intervention:

The Yawri Bay for the pilot phase and any other threatened coastal areas of Sierra Leone.

Project Duration:

August 2008 – December 2011

Aim:

The aim of the project is to support Sierra Leone in its efforts for sustainable marine and coastal zone management, but also to promote the benefits that PRCM involvement can bring to its member countries (like Sierra Leone) and generate further participation in the programme.

Objective:

To support Sierra Leone in its efforts for sustainable coastal resources management and biodiversity conservation through the establishment of a Marine Protected Area, a tool for fisheries management and coastal zone and marine resources management .

Expected project results and corresponding indicators

Four main result areas have been identified and their indicators are as follows :

Project Result	Indicators (all to be completed by December 2011)
1. Sierra Leone's critical sites for the conservation of marine and coastal resources are identified and a development plan is in place and being followed to enhance their protection status	1.1 At least two key sites identified in conjunction with populations and decision makers 1.2 An MPA action plan is developed for Sierra Leone 1.3 At least one MPA created and integrated in the regional MPA network
2. Aspects of coastal and marine management in the selected MPA s are improved through small-scale direct activities at local level	2.1 At least 1 activity completed for the benefit of conservation of species and habitats 2.2 At least 1 activity completed for the benefit of sustainable fisheries 2.3 At least 1 research project
3. PRCM activities and the benefits of the regional approach are better known and taken into consideration by national decision makers and actors concerned in marine and coastal Conservation in Sierra Leone	3.1 Decision makers from at least 3 national institutions recognize the results and best practices of the pilot activities 3.2 At least 2 target community groups within the sites identified for protection show awareness of the benefits of MPA creation and actively participate in the process 3.3 Partners from elsewhere in the PRCM integrate Sierra Leone into at least 2 new initiatives
4. Capacity to conserve the nation's marine and coastal area is strengthened in target stakeholders at MPA and national level	2.1 capacity needs analysis drawn up for target groups/ institutions 2.2 Based on needs identified, at least 2 training courses provided in pertinent PRCM/ MPA protection issues 2.3 Actors in Sierra Leone develop at least 2 coastal and marine management related project concepts

The project will link to the five strategic axes of the PRCM as follows:

- **Capacity Building** will be a key focus since capacity has been identified as a major barrier to effective coastal zone management in Sierra Leone through training and knowledge transfer.
- **Integration of research and development of knowledge.** The site(s) will provide a testing area to apply knowledge developed elsewhere, such as for the characterisation of reference situation(s) and the application of MPA management tools. There are many potential topics for new research to be carried out under the project (effects and impacts of inland mining and phytoremediation of selected surface waters, tourism, urbanization, etc).
- **Communication.** This project has a demonstration quality and integrate communication efforts to raise awareness in local communities and beyond for fisheries management, species conservation and mangrove protection).
- **Governance.** The designation and set up of Sierra Leone's first MPA will be a process of participatory governance.
- **Lobbying.** In sensitive areas such as tourism, hydrocarbons and overfishing, information garnered as part of the project will provide a solid basis for influencing relevant authorities and organisations to encourage more sustainable practices.

What has been achieved so far?

The baseline studies have been carried out in the Yawri bay with the exception of the desk review that covers all the four river systems. These baseline studies include:

- Desk review
- Hydrological analysis
- Ecological dynamic
- Socioeconomic studies
- Governance frame work analysis

Moreover, key stakeholders in the entire Yawri Bay have been consulted and sensitized about the pilot project.

Expected Changes

- Sierra Leone's more practical integration and efforts for the conservation and sustainable management of coastal resources at regional level will grow strong due to the development and implementation of pilot activities at selected sites.
- Key habitats will be designated as MPA to improve their conservation status and enhance the representativeness, coherence and functionality of regional MPA network.
- Tangible benefits will be received after participating in the PRCM backed by the development of new initiatives and partnerships for which this first project will serve as catalyst.

"There is an urgent need to conserve our coastal and marine environment"



For more information about our programme in Sierra Leone, please contact us directly at:

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