

An action programme for Swedish international cooperation for sustainable development of oceans and coasts

The Marine Initiative



More about Sida's marine initiative

News about the marine initiative, the various projects, information about and links to Sida's global and regional partners, information about Sida's Marine Advisory Group and contact information for the Marine Programme Group within Sida's department for natural resources and the environment can be found on the web site www.sida.se

The Marine Advisory Group acts as a forum for discussion and advice on a comprehensive and strategic level on the focus of the efforts made within the framework of Sida's marine initiative, particularly concerning the international/regional development of issues and cooperation related to fisheries and coastal and marine environment.

The Marine Advisory Group also functions as support to Sida in the review process of proposals for Swedish positions on issues related to marine and coastal environments to be discussed within the European Union and the United Nations. The Group includes the Swedish partners in the initiative – the Swedish National Board of Fisheries, the Swedish Environmental Protection Agency, the Swedish Maritime Administration, the World Wide Fund for Nature WWF Sweden, and the Fisheries Secretariat (through which the Swedish Society for Nature Conservation, Swedish Anglers Association, and WWF, with government support, contribute in the efforts to influence international and EU fisheries policies).

The Marine Programme Group gives advice on different issues related to fisheries, oceans and coasts, and has an operational responsibility to participate in various efforts within international organisations. The Group prepares and is in charge of most of Sida's marine programmes and projects, and acts as secretariat for the marine initiative.

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The largest common global good

Despite many years of international development cooperation efforts, severe environmental and natural resource problems remain in oceans and coastal areas in most developing regions. In many regions, the situation has continued to deteriorate and the problems have grown worse in recent years.

The objective of Sida's marine initiative is to support and promote long-term ecologically and economically sustainable development of oceans and coasts.

The blue planet

The earth is to a very large extent covered by oceans and seas. Together, the Pacific Ocean, the Atlantic Ocean, and the Indian Ocean, and their many adjacent seas, and the Arctic Ocean and the Antarctic Ocean, cover some 72 per cent of the earth's surface. Deep-lying seabeds that are never reached by sunlight constitute almost 60 per cent of the earth's surface.

The earth, the blue planet, is bluer to the south than to the north. There is, proportionately, more of seas (about 81 per cent seas) and less of land in the southern hemisphere than in the northern hemisphere (about 61 per cent seas). Over 96 per cent of all water on earth is seawater, and only less than half of the 2.5 per cent of freshwater is available to man. Indeed, ours is a planet characterised by oceans and seas.

Shallow rich coastal seas, narrow coastal strip

The continental shelf, the transitional zone between dry land and the large deep-sea areas, surrounds the continents. The essential and usually shallow coastal seas are located on the shelf. The mean depth of the world ocean is almost 4,000 metres, with a maximum depth of well over 11,000 metres. However, the water depth in coastal (shelf) seas seldom exceeds some 200 metres and is in many places much less than that. The width of the continental shelf varies considerably off different land areas, and so does the extension of the shallow coastal seas. Off the northern Siberian coast, the continental shelf extends about 1,200 km from land, whereas there is only some single kilometre of shallow continental shelf off the western coast of the Latin American continent.

The shallow coastal seas constitute less than one tenth of the entire surface water area of the world ocean. What we refer to as coastal areas, i.e., the strip of land where people live and the shallow coastal seas off that strip, only constitutes one fifth of the entire surface of the earth. Nevertheless, this narrow zone between land and the deep sea is of vital importance to life on earth and to life for a very large proportion of the earth's population.

Life on earth started in the ocean and life still depends fundamentally on oceans and seas. There is a much larger total number of species of plants, animals and other organisms in terrestrial habitats than in the sea – about 15 per





cent of all known species on earth are found in marine habitats – but it is an oversimplification only to calculate numbers. Habitats and species are not exchangeable. The resources and services offered to man by marine species cannot be replaced by the resources and services offered by other life forms, for example those found in rainforests or an inland wetland area. If the biological wealth of the productive habitats in the coastal zone is lost, there is nothing to replace it with.

Most of the marine life under the water surface is found in the narrow, shallow coastal zone. The sunlit zone is sometimes referred to as “the rainforest of the ocean”. Marine primary production (growth of phytoplankton, microalgae and other organisms which make up the first and vital component of the marine food chain) takes place in that section of the shallow coastal waters that can be penetrated by sunlight.

Coral reefs, mangrove forests, seagrass beds, hard bottoms, stands of macroalgae, estuaries, and upwelling areas are examples of productive and vital ecosystems found in the narrow coastal zone. These environments are spawning grounds, nurseries, food stores, and shelters, for most fish species and for numerous other marine organisms, which in turn constitute the basis of entire ecosystems. Coral reefs, seagrass beds and mangrove forests also provide protection against natural disasters.



Coral reefs and mangrove forests are among the essential, highly productive ecosystems found in the narrow tropical coastal zone. They also provide protection by mitigating the effects of natural disasters.

Largest producer of global goods

Thus, the coastal areas and their specific environments are important for the conservation of biodiversity, which, in turn, is a fundamental prerequisite for sustainable use of renewable resources in seas and coastal areas. Since these ecosystems are globally among the most productive ones, a substantial portion of the global population depends on them for food and livelihood. 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 shelf seas.

Mangrove forests provide medical plants, fuels and food. Fish, shrimps, crabs, snails, frogs and limpets living in the root system of mangrove trees constitute an important source of food proteins as well as incomes for poor people in these areas. That is only one example of the importance of productive coastal environments, without which people in the coastal zone are deprived of the fundamentals of life.



The rich life under the water surface along marine coasts – stands of macroalgae, sea-grass beds, and a wealth of life forms. Some 80 per cent of the over 13,000 known marine fish species can be found in coastal areas. Less than two per cent of the seabed is made up of hard materials like gravel, rocks and stones. These hard bottoms are found close to the coasts and account for the without comparison largest species diversity in the ocean – they are spawning and feeding grounds and habitats for about 80 per cent of marine bottom-living species.



In a wider perspective, the world ocean – all oceans and sea areas – makes up the largest global good on earth, i.e., our largest common producer of goods. The oceans provide us with transport routes for 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). Wise management of the sea is necessary as a means to combat poverty in many developing countries.

Concentration of people along the coasts

Not only marine organisms gather in the rich coastal zone, it also attracts a majority of the global population. Today, two thirds of the global population live in coastal areas (in a wide sense). Half of the global population lives within a maximum of 200 km from the coast. In the year 2025, approximately 6.4 billion people, an estimated 75 per cent of the global population, is expected to be living in the coastal zone worldwide.

Presently, the average population density in the world's coastal areas is 80 people per km², which is twice the average global population density. To a large extent, the rapid urbanisation in southern developing countries takes place in coastal areas – over 70 per cent of the world's mega cities (each with a population exceeding 10 million inhabitants) are located in coastal areas.

... and deteriorating life conditions in the coastal zone

In several parts of the world, many of the productive coastal ecosystems are currently very rapidly being destroyed. Over half of these ecosystems have already been destroyed or deteriorated as a result of human activities. The destruction of habitats and water quality, combined with overexploitation of resources, severely affects the survival of both ecosystems and humans.

When cities grow due to large population inflows, it results in increasing demands for food and other consumer products to be provided, which results in an increased pollution load. For example, as many large cities have no systems for sewage treatment, untreated sewage is discharged into coastal waters. Besides leading to pollution and damage to ecosystem productivity, these discharges pose a serious threat to the health of poor people. People are forced to a life in shanty areas, where clean drinking water and acceptable sanitation are





There are many threats to the seas and the vital, vulnerable coastal areas. Habitats are altered or destroyed and biodiversity is deteriorated. Coastal areas are transformed through various constructions, and competition is hard for land and resources, as here in Port Harcourt in Nigeria (aerial view), and harbour development in Jamaica. Productive habitats are devastated and vanish. Soil erosion leads to coastal water siltation (here an aerial view of the mouth of the Rufiji river in Tanzania). Discharges of untreated, health-damaging sewage and hazardous substances cause increased pollution. Nutrient leakage from arable land causes eutrophication resulting in algal blooms and oxygen deficiency. Seagrass beds are destroyed by shipping and trawling. Climate change and ozone depletion cause disturbances of natural processes in the ocean.

not provided. According to UN estimates, contact with polluted coastal water causes an annual 250 million cases of gastrointestinal diseases and respiratory diseases.

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. In developing countries, aquatic animals and plants often constitute the most important source of proteins and vitamins for poor people. For the physical and mental development of children, these foods are essential. Consequently, efforts to obtain sustainable development of oceans and coasts are a means to protect the human rights also of those most exposed.

Much but not enough is being done

Regrettably, knowledge of the vital resources of the coastal zone is often scarce, particularly in terms of resources found in near-shore areas. Operational national regulatory frameworks are either lacking or not implemented. Often, competition is hard between different categories of fishermen, with the catches and livelihood of poor coastal fisherman threatened by large-scale, international industrial fisheries.

Agenda 21, the global action programme adopted in 1992 by the world's nations at the UN Conference on Environment and Development (UNCED, at Rio de Janeiro), contains far-reaching and extensive demands and recommendations (Chapter 17) to come to grips with the ongoing marine and coastal environmental destruction. Chapter 17 of Agenda 21 addresses norms and frameworks for a rational and long-term sustainable use and protection of ocean and coastal zone resources, as well as principles of food security, maritime safety, environmental security, and investment safety.

These calls for action were followed up and enforced ten years later in the Plan of Implementation adopted in 2002 at the World Summit on Sustainable Development (WSSD, at Johannesburg). The need for swift implementation of the proposals and measures laid down in Agenda 21 was emphasised in the Plan, as was the need for integrated management and sustainable development in oceans and coastal areas, and the need for international and regional cooperation to be strengthened.

In the Plan, the world's nations stress the importance of all donors allocating increased resources for measures addressing the ongoing marine and coastal zone environmental destruction. It is also emphasised that in order to achieve sustainable fisheries, actions are required at all levels, including to "maintain or restore stocks to levels that can produce the maximum sustainable yield with the aim of achieving these goals for depleted stocks on an urgent basis and where possible not later than 2015". Furthermore, the Plan contains calls for the elimination of destructive fishing practices, and for the estab-



Extensive and destructive fisheries and aquaculture cause overexploitation of living resources and damage to the environment. Mangrove forests are devastated in order to give room for large-scale shrimp farming – or as in this case, where a destroyed mangrove area at Mombasa (Makopa Creek) is covered by a waste dump, extending over tens of hectares. Coral reefs are damaged by discharges leading to eutrophication and other detrimental effects. Reefs are also damaged by climate change, mechanical impact and poisoning (dynamite fisheries, extraction of lime for construction purposes) and of unsustainable tourism. This blasted reef is located off the Indonesian coast.



lishment of marine protected areas “based on scientific information, including representative networks by 2012 and time/area closures for the protection of nursery grounds and periods, proper coastal land use and watershed planning and the integration of marine and coastal areas management into key sectors”.

In 2000, the UN General Assembly adopted the Millennium Declaration with eight Millennium Development Goals (MDG) – milestones to be reached by 2015. These goals are, in turn, made up of 18 targets. The seventh MDG, “Ensure environmental sustainability”, includes the target to “integrate the principles of sustainable development into country policies and programmes and reverse the losses of environmental resources”.

However, in order to be able to reverse the trend of severe overexploitation and gradual destruction of marine and coastal resources and habitats, better consistency between political declarations and actual development cooperation efforts are called for. As a Swedish response to this, Sida has developed its marine initiative, with the objective to support and promote a long-term ecologically and economically sustainable development of oceans and coastal areas through Swedish development cooperation in Africa, Asia and Latin America/the Caribbean.



For sustainable oceans and coasts

During the last 20–25 years, oceans and coastal zone issues in developing countries have constituted an underprovided area of low priority in Swedish international development cooperation. Although Sweden has been involved in development cooperation with a number of countries around the world and supported different international and regional organisations in their work on issues and problems related to oceans and coastal zones, these efforts have not been based on a thoroughly considered and coherent vision or strategy.

At the request of the Swedish Government, Sida has now developed a marine initiative – an action programme for sustainable development, with the marine environment and coastal zone development as priority areas.

The marine initiative, which includes a programme plan and various projects, has been developed in dialogue with Swedish Ministries (Foreign Affairs; Agriculture, Food and Fisheries; and Environment), as well as with Swedish government agencies (Swedish National Board of Fisheries, Swedish Environmental Protection Agency). One major objective has been to achieve better coherence between the political statements made at different occasions and the actual magnitude and focus of the development cooperation efforts.

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 experience and know-how of marine environment, and coastal planning, management and development issues.

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, and the needs, interests and conditions of the poor are to be the point of departure in efforts to achieve equitable and sustainable development.

Furthermore, Sweden should contribute to the fulfilment of the UN Millennium Declaration and the Millennium Development Goals. Swedish efforts are to be made within the framework of ecosystem yield. Non-renewable resources should be safeguarded, since sustainable use of habitats and natural resources is one of the prerequisites for a global development that is successful in the long term. As poverty originates and is maintained when environmental degradation undermines people's livelihoods and health, it is essential to break the link between economic growth and the negative impact on environment, natural resources and human health.

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, rules are laid down regarding what is our common world ocean with common goods, and what are sea areas where individual coastal states have the right to decide about the use of marine and coastal



ASEAN:	Association of Southeast Asian Nations
CBD:	Convention on Biological Diversity
CECAF:	Committee for the Eastern Central Atlantic Fisheries
CEP:	Caribbean Environment Programme
COBSEA:	Coordinating Body on Seas of East Asia
FAO:	Food and Agricultural Organization
GEF:	Global Environment Facility
GIWA:	Global International Waters Assessment
GPA:	Global Programme of Action for the Protection of the Marine Environment from Land-based Activities
GWP:	Global Water Partnership
IOC:	Intergovernmental Oceanographic Commission
	IOC CARIBE: IOC Sub-Commission for the Caribbean
IMO:	International Maritime Organization.
	IMO-ROCRAM: Operative Cooperation Network Among South American Maritime Authorities
IPOA-IUU:	International Plan of Action to Prevent, Deter and Eliminate Illegal, Unreported and Unregulated Fishing
LC:	London Convention
MARPOL:	International Convention for the Prevention of Marine Pollution from Ships
MRC:	Mekong River Commission
NEP:	Northeast Pacific Regional Seas Programme
NEPAD:	New Partnership for Africa's Development
OSPESCA:	Central American Organization of the Fisheries and Aquaculture Sector
RAP:	(FAO) Regional Office for Asia and the Pacific
SEAFDEC:	South East Asian Fisheries Development Centre
SWIOFC:	Southwest Indian Ocean Fisheries Commission
UN:	United Nations
UNCED:	United Nations Conference on Environment and Development
UNCLOS:	United Nations Convention on the Law of the Sea
UNESCO:	United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organisation
UNEP:	United Nations Environment Programme
WECAFC:	Western Central Atlantic Fishery Commission
WMU:	World Maritime University
WSSD:	World Summit on Sustainable Development
WW2BW:	White Water to Blue Water Partnership



resources. However, people also have rights when it comes to the goods and opportunities offered by oceans and coasts. In a world of continuous population growth, substantial differences in the standard of living, and an exposed marine and coastal environment, the links between issues of environment and natural resources and human rights are becoming increasingly important. It is more and more 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 also 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.

Long-standing Swedish commitment

The Sida marine initiative could be viewed as a logical follow-up to Sweden's long-standing commitment and involvement in international environmental cooperation on oceans and coasts.

Sweden played an active role in the first UN Environment Conference (Stockholm 1972), when the marine environment was in focus and some 20 decisions and resolutions addressed the need for protection of oceans and regional seas. Sweden was an active party also in the negotiations on Chapter 17, on oceans and seas, of Agenda 21, where it is emphasized that oceans, seas and adjacent coastal areas form an integrated whole. This will require new approaches to marine and coastal area management and development, approaches that are integrated in content and precautionary and anticipatory, and that integrate policies and decision-making processes within all sectors concerned. Also, there is a need for strengthened international and regional cooperation.

Furthermore, Sweden has been a driving force in the development of a number of global and regional agreements and conventions (including the Helsinki Convention, for the Baltic Sea Area, and the OSPAR Convention,

for the Northeast Atlantic) on the protection of the marine and coastal environments and on sustainable fisheries. For many years, Sweden has been supporting the UNEP Regional Seas Programme, including the Caribbean and Eastern Africa, and the FAO programme for the Bay of Bengal. In addition, bilateral cooperation has taken place between Sweden and Tanzania, Thailand and Vietnam. Sweden hosts global and regional programmes and networks for oceans and coasts, including the World Maritime University (WMU), Global International Waters Assessment (GIWA), Global Water Partnership (GWP) and Baltic 21.

Sida's marine initiative: Basic principles and approaches

Points of departure in the elaboration of Sida's marine initiative have been a challenge, an objective and a vision:

- *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.

The initiative is based on the following fundamental principles and approaches:

- *Coordination.* There is a great need for better coordination and integration of management between different sectors;
- *Transboundary cooperation.* Marine and coastal issues are transboundary in character; thus effective and well functioning coordination between global, regional, national and local efforts are required;
- *Long-term use.* The use of marine and coastal natural resources must be sustainable in the long term;
- *Less conflicts, more democracy.* Actions to prevent conflicts must be given priority. This is particularly the case for the management of resources that are shared or common within or between countries;
- *Responsibility for those concerned.* The concern for the environment and natural resources should go hand in hand with the respect for human rights. Natural resources are better and 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 where the resources are being used.



Coastal fisheries in Panama. When resource users are entrusted with resource management, people are more eager to protect and safeguard these resources.

Regional cooperation key to success



Sida's marine initiative has three complementary components:

- Support to a limited number of strategically important global organisations.
- Support to key regional environmental and fisheries organisations in western and eastern Africa, Southeast Asia, and Latin America/the Caribbean.
- Support to institutional strengthening and capacity building.

In order to reach the objective of the Swedish effort, Sida's marine initiative implies a long-term, increased support to a number of strategically important global organisations. The use and protection of the world ocean is a global concern for which the work of a number of UN organisations is of great importance.

Above all, however, the marine initiative is a strong venture on regional cooperation on marine environmental, coastal zone and fisheries issues. In the first phase, efforts will primarily 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 (conventions and agreements). Most importantly, regional cooperation constitutes a basis for countries to define and agree on priority environmental and natural resource problems. Based on such agreements, joint action programmes can be elaborated and also function as important instruments for conflict prevention. An important part of the cooperation is also to build regional mechanisms for preparedness to mitigate, as much as possible, the effects of natural disasters, and to prevent accidents (e.g., oil spills). Joint preparedness is also needed for the rebuilding and restoration phase after a disaster or accident.

Global regulations and standards

The global community, through the UN system, has a very important role to play in establishing global regulations and standards for the long-term efforts on management of marine resources, environmental protection and coastal development. During recent decades, a number of important conventions, agreements and programmes have been adopted:

- The UN Law of the Sea (UNCLOS), including the Agreement relating to the Conservation and Management of Straddling Fish Stocks and Highly Migratory Fish Stocks;
- Agenda 21, the global UN action programme on sustainable development, as well as the WSSD Plan of Implementation;
- International Convention for the Prevention of Pollution from Ships (MARPOL);
- UN Convention for the Safety of Life at Sea (SOLAS);
- UN Convention on Biological Diversity (CBD);
- Convention on Wetlands of International Importance, especially as Waterfowl Habitat (Ramsar Convention);



Local fish market on Zanzibar.

- Convention on the Prevention of Marine Pollution by Dumping of Wastes and Other Matter (London Convention);
- UN Environment Programme (UNEP);
- Global Programme of Action for the Protection of the Marine Environment from Land-based Activities (GPA);
- UNEP Regional Seas Programme;
- FAO Code of Conduct for Responsible Fisheries, and within the Code, the International Plan of Action to Prevent, Deter and Eliminate Illegal, Unreported and Unregulated Fishing (IPOA-IUU).

Furthermore, the Swedish approach will be integrated in content and precautionary and anticipatory, focusing on poverty issues and taking all aspects into account. The precautionary principle, and the principle of adapting to ecosystem functions, should apply also to development cooperation through UN agencies. UNEP, FAO (Food and Agricultural Organization), the International Maritime Organization (IMO) and the Intergovernmental Oceanographic Commission (IOC) of UNESCO, are important agencies, with regional networks and programmes, in efforts on marine and coastal environment and management of natural resources. Therefore Swedish support to these agencies is an important part of the effort, in addition to the comprehensive regional approach.

... and strong support to regional cooperation

Better and deeper regional cooperation will be needed to solve many of the problems that are defined as being global in character. Further development of the many regional seas programmes and conventions that have been adopted during the last thirty years is needed, both in the north and in the south.

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. This is the case concerning cooperation and exchange of experience between organisations and regions in the south, as well as between regions and organisations in both the north and the south. This kind of cooperation exists, but more is called for.



Global partners

- UNEP: Sida will support the revitalisation, increased efficiency, and visibility of the Regional Seas programmes.
- IMO: The Sida support is intended to facilitate the participation of developing countries in the international work on environment and safety aspects within the shipping sector. Support will also be given to the WMU.
- FAO: Sida's support will be concentrated on supporting FAO's work on having developing countries participate in the global fisheries cooperation, primarily in the implementation of the Code of Practice for Responsible Fisheries and in the implementation of relevant parts of the WSSD Plan of Implementation.
- IOC: Sida's support is aimed at creating opportunities for developing countries to take part in the global observation and monitoring programmes on which assessments of the state of the marine and coastal environment are based.
- WMU: Sida supports shipping-related education (at masters and Ph.D. level).

Partners in Asia

- UNEP Regional Seas Programme for the East Asian Seas (COBSEA): Sida will support the development of a user-friendly database with information on, e.g., environment and natural resources, various ongoing projects and the incorporation in national legislation and institutional structures of regulations set out in various international conventions. Support will also be given to competence building and the strengthening of regional cooperation.
- South East Asian Fisheries Development Centre (SEAFDEC): Sida will support competence building for the implementation in the region of FAO's Code of Conduct for Responsible Fisheries.
- FAO Regional Office for Asia and the Pacific (RAP): Sida's support is targeted at capacity building concerning collection of information of relevance to sustainable fisheries management in Thailand, Cambodia, Vietnam and East Timor.
- Mekong River Commission (MRC): Sida supports the implementation of a socially, environmentally and economically sustainable management of transboundary waters and natural resources associated with the Mekong River.
- FAO Bay of Bengal Large Marine Ecosystem Programme: Sida supports the development of background material for an application to the World Bank/GEF for full-scale funding of plan of action and transboundary diagnostic analysis for a regional ecosystem management programme.

Partners in Africa

- UNEP Regional Seas Programme for Eastern Africa: Sida will support the strengthening of the coordination function (the secretariat) for the programme, including the Nairobi Convention, and coordination with other conventions and parties, as well as a review and update of the Nairobi Convention.
- UNEP Regional Seas Programme for West and Central Africa: Sida will support the strengthening of the coordination function (the secretariat) for the programme, including the Abidjan Convention, and coordination with other conventions and parties.
- Southwest Indian Ocean Fisheries Commission (SWIOFC): Sida will primarily support the establishment of the Commission with the objective of strengthening regional cooperation for sustainable management of common and shared fish stocks, based on FAO's Code of Conduct for Responsible Fisheries.
- Committee for the Eastern Central Atlantic Fisheries (CECAF): Sida will support the implementation of FAO's Code of Conduct for Responsible Fisheries, as well as efforts to strengthen and develop cooperation with sub-regional fisheries organizations.
- New Partnership for Africa's Development (NEPAD): Sida is also considering support to the new Partnership through the African Process for the Development and Protection of the Marine and Coastal Environment in Sub-Saharan Africa.

Partners in Latin America/the Caribbean

- UNEP Caribbean Environment Programme (CEP): Sida will support the establishment of regional activity centres on Cuba and Trinidad & Tobago for the implementation of the protocol (to the Cartagena Convention) on land-based sources of pollution. Support will also be given to the strengthening of the cooperation with regional fisheries organisations within the framework of the work programme on protected areas and species; and to the programme on education, training and awareness building.
- UNEP Northeast Pacific Regional Seas Programme (NEP): Sida will support studies and investigations on strategic issues for the purpose of strengthening regional and national cooperation.
- Central American Organization of the Fisheries and Aquaculture Sector (OSPESCA) and the Western Central Atlantic Fishery Commission (WECAFC): Sida will support competence-building for the implementation of the FAO Code of Conduct for Responsible Fisheries, and the development of cooperation with UNEP CEP.
- White Water to Blue Water Partnership (WW2BW): Sida will support the development of partnership and networking between national, regional and international actors and organisations (private, public and individual). The objective is to obtain environmentally sustainable development of rivers, seas and coastal areas in Latin America/the Caribbean.
- IOC CARIBE and IMO-ROCRAM: Sida is also considering support to the IOC Sub-Commission for the Caribbean: and to the IMO Operative Cooperation Network Among South American Maritime Authorities (which also includes Cuba, Mexico and Panama).

The regional dimension is a strong component of Sida's marine initiative. Regions need support in their work to implement global agreements and conventions and to define regional priority issues to be included in jointly elaborated and agreed action programmes.

So far, regional organisations have often, for different reasons, not been able to live up to their ambitious goals and mandates. It is a matter of political priorities but also a simple matter of available resources: the economic and human resources that member countries and external sources have been able to make available have often been very limited.

Swedish efforts could, thus, have an important function by providing mainly economic but also technical support in the building up of more effective regional organisations within fields such as environment and fisheries, and also shipping. That way, a platform for the long-term implementation of conventions and action programmes can be established, based on the countries' own resources. Better and more effective coordination between the various regional environmental and fisheries organisations also needs to be highlighted and supported.

The increased realization of the importance of regional cooperation, and of the opportunities created by such cooperation, has in recent years resulted in a revitalisation of the cooperation. Supplementary agreements or protocols, as well as totally new agreements and conventions, have been negotiated and adopted. Furthermore, there is an active movement to develop the regional cooperation, e.g., through a closer cooperation and/or integration between concerned regional environmental and fisheries organisations, respectively.

The efforts focused on Latin America/the Caribbean, Southeast Asia, and western and eastern Africa will mainly be concentrated on strengthening the competence and capacity of the regional organisations. In this way, exchange of information and compilation and assessment of scientific information can be promoted. It can also be ensured that planned working and negotiating meetings can be held and, subsequently, followed up as agreed. The important cooperative process can 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.

Nets drying outside a fisherman's house in a fishing village in Belize.



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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