

Government of The Gambia



Coastal and Marine Environment (C&ME) Programme



Background information

The Gambia Environment Action Plan (GEAP) defines the Coastal Zone as “an important natural and economic resource which if utilized in a sustainable manner will yield important economic, social and environmental benefits”. In view of the different issues at stake and the different actors operating within this coastal zone, the Coastal and Marine Environment (CME) program was established with a view to coordinating activities in this area and minimizing conflicts.

Goals of the Program

The overall goal is sustainably managing the rich animal and plant life of the coastal and marine areas

Coordination of CME

The CME program is responsible for coordinating and monitoring of coastal and marine related activities of The Gambia’s 81 kilometres of open Atlantic coastline and about 200km of sheltered coast along the River Gambia. The programme serves as a clearinghouse and

collection point for CME issues. Through the Programme, institutional partners are brought together to solve problems. They monitor trends and adjust on-going programmes to take these trends into account. It coordinates these activities under the auspices of CME Working Group whose membership entails government and non-government institutions with major stake in coastal zone management. The Group facilitates coordination of activities related to the management of the coastal and marine environment and is the advisory body to the National Environment Management Council (NEMC).

The Need for CME

The territorial sea of the Gambia extends to 12 nm with an EEZ extending to 200 nm. The seas off Gambia are located where two major oceanic currents converge along the coast of West Africa. One is the highly productive upwelling zone of the Canary Current Large Marine Ecosystem (CCLME) which is cold and nutrient rich water flowing southward. The other is the eastward-flowing warm Guinea current. The effects of these currents together with the trade winds which blow dominantly from the Sahara Desert westerly out over the Atlantic create intermittent upwelling along the coast of The Gambia. These upwelling, combined with the outflow of the Gambia River provide the nutrients that fuel a bountiful marine ecosystem. The CME are a rich source of animal & plant life which are used daily.

Activities

Routine/regular coastal monitoring and Bi-annual bio-physical beach and backshore monitoring

- To survey the shape (morphology/gradient or slope) of a beach
- To identify change over time on a particular beach
- To identify, document and map areas of intense erosion and accretion along the entire shoreline
- To identify, document and map areas of intense economic activities along the entire shoreline
- To examine the effects of management interventions on beach processes and morphology
- To investigate seasonal changes in the beach profile and compare that with long term changes to the beach
- To identify potential impacts from development activities on a target beach

Monitoring ongoing coastal dynamics including coastal erosion and recommend the appropriate interventions

The CME Working Group members

- National Environment Agency (Chair)
- Office of the President
- Ministry of Environment, Climate Change and Natural Resources
- Ministry of Works
- Ministry of Finance and economic Affairs
- Ministry of Tourism and Culture
- Ministry of Petroleum
- Ministry of Information
- Gambia Tourism Board
- National Disaster Management Agency
- Gambia Ports Authority
- Gambia Maritime Administration
- National Roads Authority
- Department of Fisheries
- Department of Forestry
- Department of Parks & Wildlife Management
- Geological Department
- Department of Agriculture
- Department of Physical and Housing
- Department of Lands and Survey
- Local Government Authorities (BCC, KMC, BAC)
- Gambia Hotel Association
- National Assembly Select Committee on Environment
- University of the Gambia
- Fire and Rescue Services
- Coastal communities (if need arise)
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Mandate

- Formulates, reviews and revises policies relating to all coastal, marine and fluvial (rivers, streams, ponds) activities
- Supports decision-making by advising NEA and government agencies regarding the sustainability, protection, development and monitoring of the coastal, marine and fluvial environment
- Convenes and guides task forces on issues that may arise relating to coastal and riverbank erosion, the marine and fluvial environment, sand mining and planning for oil spills.

- Facilitates coordination of activities of all actors, drawing upon expertise in each core area to promote, monitor and assess the management of the coastal zone.
- Develop a sustainable financing mechanism for CME working group's existence
- Support the setup and operation of thematic networks and coastal community groups for advocacy on coastal zone conservation and integrated management

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