

Panelist Abstract

Panelist: Stella Maris Vallejo, TRAIN-SEA-COAST Programme

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Presentation Title: TRAIN-SEA-COAST Programme

Summary of Key Issues and Best Practices/Lessons Learned

The focus of the TRAIN-SEA-COAST Programme is building capacity on integrated coastal and ocean management at the local level, through the establishment of Course Development Units (CDUs) associated with a number of GEF IW Projects. These training units are part of the wider TRAIN-SEA-COAST course development sharing network. TSC local teams are trained by the TSC Central Support Unit at UN Division for Ocean Affairs and the Law of the Sea, to prepare and deliver high quality training courses tailored to the specific needs of each GEF project. The courses can be adapted and shared with other GEF associated CDUs as well as with other global partners of the TSC network, thus, avoiding duplication and making the training effort much cost-effective and geared to the specific needs at the local and regional levels.

Issue: Sustainability of the capacity building effort

- The success of an institution building project will not only depend on the "installation" of capacity, via training of personnel and provision of technical resources, but on a firm commitment, on the part of the host institution, to continue working after the Project is finalized. The ultimate aim is to make each host institution a regional training centre. Host institutions require to seek the opportunity and have the vision of their roles within their respective regions. In summing up, the "sustainability" of the effort should be ensured on a long-term basis.
- Establishing Course Development Units (CDUs) within educational institutions provides a secure and stable basis for long-term sustainability. However, not all educational institutions are in a position to appreciate the value of "training", except when the institution has a strong educational extension service of which training is part and parcel.
- After the establishment of a CDU, the host institution should immediately strive for the integration of the CDU within their administrative structure, including the funding sources to sustain the CDU over the long-term. Otherwise, the capacity building effort could have a short-term life and could be unsustainable.
- Capacity building and particularly training, comprises of a long process involving various components (technical, institutional, and managerial). The effectiveness of these components requires careful evaluation over the short and the long-terms. In particular, in the long run, the durability of the institutional set-up will not only depend on commitment on the part of the institution but also on the need of a clear manifestation of a strong work ethic on the part of the CDU manager and his team. When all these elements are in place, the success of the programme will be assured.

Issue: The responsiveness of training to GEF IW priorities

- Sometimes, training activities have not been always designed in direct response to management goals. This is not the case of GEF IW projects. Working with GEF IW Projects provided an exceptional opportunity for the TSC Programme. All courses under development have been chosen by each CTA and they are tailored to the specific needs of each GEF project concerned.
- Training should not be an isolated initiative. In the TRAIN-SEA-COAST project this is seen within the broader perspective and goals of each GEF IW. The benefits of training could be better grasped when: a) the training courses respond to priority issues at the national/regional level; b) they are geared to a substantial target population (minimum 150-200 participants per course) who will benefit from the delivery of each course; and c) the training courses respond to key management goals and priorities (at the project or programme level); all of which justifies the investment in high-quality training.
- High quality training requires strong investments (on the part of the Project as well as national contributions) in personnel, funding and time allocated to the development of the courses. CDUs take time in grasping the benefits of their effort. However, once they have produced their first course, they take pride in their work and are eager to produce similar, high quality courses.

Issue: Teambuilding at all levels of the Project

- Three levels of teambuilding proved to be very beneficial to the project : a) the TSC Project is fully aligned with major GEF IW Projects in each region; b) each CDU creates a strong team of course developers and eventually instructors that are fully identified with both the goals of the TRAIN-SEA-COAST Programme and the objectives of the GEF Project with which they are associated; and c) the TSC Central
- Support Unit keeps an open dialogue with each CDU and provides them with continuous technical and pedagogic support.
- The backing of the CTAs to each of the TSC CDUs has been crucial for the success of the project. They provide an open door to the region as well as key institutional contacts. They act as facilitators as well as providers of opportunities for enhancing the visibility of the TSC Programme in their region.
- Continuous consultation with each CTA and their team resulted in a very fruitful dialogue between the TSC Central Support Unit, the CDUs and the CTAs. Through this informal mechanism, all partners involved are constantly aware of the latest developments affecting the project. These include e.g. joint decisions concerning key course topics; selection of local and regional participants; advertisement of the course under development; suggestions concerning regional and international subject-matter experts that may provide technical input to course development; and continuous update on the constraints and opportunities affecting the project.

Key References

TRAIN-SEA-COAST Web Site:

<http://www.un.org/Depts/los/TSC/TSCindex.htm>

For further information see:

Vallejo, S.M. The UN/TRAIN-SEA-COAST Programme: A Co-operative Training Programme to Build Capacities in the field of Coastal and Ocean Management. In: EEZ Technology, Issue No 5. ICG Publishing Ltd., 1999, 6 p.

Vallejo, S.M. The TRAIN-SEA-COAST Programme: A Decentralized Cooperative Training Network for the Systematic Development of Human Resources. In: Proceedings of the Rhode Island Workshop on Educating Coastal Managers. Alton, Rhode Island, 1998. 5 p.

Vallejo, S.M. Human Resources Development: Challenges for the Year 2000. Paper presented at the Third Regional Meeting of the Brazilian Society for Advancement of Science (SBPC) "Coastal Ecosystem: from Knowledge to Management". Florianopolis, Santa Catarina, Brazil, 1-4 May 1996, 14 p.