

Strategic Plan, 2010 – 2014

Introductory statement

CORDIO East Africa is a research organisation focused on marine and coastal ecosystems in the Western Indian Ocean. We specialise in generating knowledge to find solutions that benefit both ecosystems and people.

Aims

CORDIO East Africa's primary objectives are to:

- 1) conduct research on coastal and ocean ecosystems relevant to conserving, sustaining and restoring healthy and productive marine environments;
- 2) strengthen social and economic assessment and research to support Integrated Coastal Management, poverty alleviation and sustainable development;
- 3) foster integration of science, practice and policy at local, national and regional levels;
- 4) educate and build the capacity of coastal people to improve their livelihoods and long term well-being;
- 5) build human and technical capacity, and foster networking and partnerships, to achieve our objectives.

Problem statement

The challenges faced by developing countries in the 2010s dwarf those of previous decades as the footprint of the world's population exceeds the size of the planet. Global climate change is one of the most pressing illustrations of this, signaled clearly by degrading coral reefs. Challenges facing the marine environment can be summarized into three broad areas:

Biophysical challenges – habitat fragmentation, loss of species and reduced productivity;

Social challenges – overpopulation and high consumption, poverty, lack of alternatives, low awareness and poor governance;

Contextual drivers – low technical capacity, synergistic problems, globalization and perverse economic and political incentives.

Values

As an organisation and as individuals, in our work, and dealings with stakeholders, colleagues and partners we value:

the search for and application of knowledge, with objectivity and scientific rigour;

integrity, honesty and ethical behaviour;

equal opportunity, non-discrimination, and a secular approach;

equity and social justice, and a focus on the needs of less fortunate sectors of society.

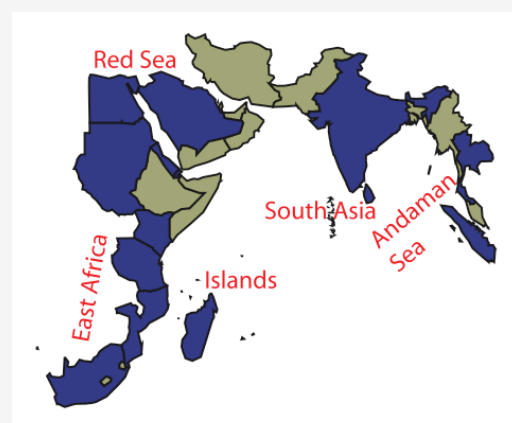
Mission

To generate and share scientifically sound knowledge for developing solutions to the problems and challenges facing coastal and marine environments and people in the Western Indian Ocean.

Vision

Healthy coastal and marine environments in the WIO providing for improved livelihoods and well being of coastal people supported by good governance.

CORDIO started in 1999 as a regional network with coordination nodes in Sweden, Kenya, Sri Lanka and Seychelles. From 2006 CORDIO East Africa took over as the main coordination node, and now hosts the overall CORDIO program. CORDIO East Africa was registered in 2003 in Kenya as a not-for-profit research organisation.



Strategies for success

Achieving our objectives requires a strategy based on three broad pillars, which we apply in all projects and activities:

Research and knowledge

Our primary expertise is field-based research, generating knowledge “at the coal-face” to address the key issues that need solutions. All of our projects center on the need to generate and use the best available knowledge to understand the linked environmental and social problems facing developing countries.

Management and policy

Research does not achieve outcomes, so actions and supporting policies are needed, across multiple scales from local to regional. To achieve this we work with relevant stakeholders, including resource users, management authorities, national governments and international organisations.

Investment and development

Successful use of information, action and policy are only possible when people and institutions have developed the requisite awareness and capacity – human, financial and technical. All projects include some level of capacity building – in us, our partners and/or the beneficiaries – representing investment in and development of human resources. Fund-raising is also necessary to invest in the activities and people required to achieve our vision.

Program structure

Our primary research and work is focused in two objectives – natural and human systems, with integration of the two being the ultimate goal for all projects and outcomes. Cross-cutting objectives and actions may occur within in each project, according to the design and funding of the project.

Primary objectives

Natural systems – ecological and biological research, including on ecosystems, species and natural resource dynamics. This and a focus on coral reefs was the core of CORDIO’s initial work from 1999.

Human systems – social, economic and cultural research and assessments, focusing on the foundations of peoples’ lives on natural resources and the environment in which they live, and their attitudes and perceptions that influence livelihood strategies.

Cross-cutting themes

Management/Policy – All projects address some aspect of management and policy, indicating the degree to which they meet specific objectives.

Education – Education, whether through formal or activity-specific areas empowers people to make active choices that affect their lives and the sustainability of their livelihoods.

Capacity building – technical and human capacity are necessary ingredients for responsible decision-making by all interested parties - the public, scientists and the authorities.

The present

From 1999 to 2009 CORDIO has built up a range of projects that address different aspects of these themes, areas as the organization and network matures. Most projects are focused on either natural or human systems, with some overlap in those focused on resource use and fisheries.

Natural systems projects – climate science and impacts, species and animal biology, ecosystem processes and dynamics

Human systems projects – marine resource use and practices, social, cultural and economic dynamics and sustainable livelihood research and support.

Cross-cutting projects – capacity building for students and management officers, environmental education, provision and training in ICT and adult education, GIS and spatial planning.

Main projects, 2008-10

	Objectives			3/4/5 Cross-cutting					
	1 Natural systems			2 Human systems					
	Focal areas								
	Climate	Species	Ecosystems	Resources	Social dynamics	Livelihoods	Management/Policy	Education	Capacity building
Projects									
Is there a western Indian Ocean Coral Triangle?	XX	XX	XX				*		*
Assessing reef resilience to climate change	XX		XX	XX			XX	*	*
Western Indian Ocean Genetic Connectivity		XX	XX	*					*
Reef Fish Spawning Aggregations		XX		XX			*		*
Kiunga lobster fishery				XX			XX		
Socio-economic monitoring - SocMon WIO				XX	XX		*		XX
Migrant fishers in East Africa – sources and issues				XX	XX		XX		
ICT and education in support of livelihood security					XX	XX		XX	*
Sustainable fisheries – assessment and guidelines				XX			XX	XX	
Environmental Education – student and teacher training								XX	XX
Professional training and tertiary education									XX

The future

CORDIO is heading into the 2010s developing a new range of innovative projects integrating across disciplines and program themes. We will extend our experience of the last decade to other marine and coastal environments, broader aspects of societal dependence on the environment and broader aspects of education, livelihood security and governance. Meanwhile, capacity building and education – of CORDIO, our partners and beneficiaries – will be an increasing focus, as will sustained and increased funding. The future program will focus on the following areas:

- **integrating** our experience and activities across natural and human systems through two approaches:
 - understanding the **resilience of social and ecological systems** and how these are linked through the provision and use of **ecosystem services**
 - understanding the interplay of **climate impacts and adaptive capacity** of social and ecological systems
- within **natural systems research**, build our expertise and understanding in:
 - **population and species genetics**, connectivity of marine populations, and the linkages between regional biogeography and oceanographic processes
 - deepen scientific contributions towards **fish and fisheries science**, in particular basic sciences such as fish community structure, age, growth, & reproduction
 - broaden our scope of work from coral reefs to include other ecosystems, in particular **seagrasses, mangroves and nearshore pelagics**, through partnership with relevant specialists and institutions
- within **human systems research**, build our expertise and understanding in:
 - **social resilience and vulnerability** assessments, to provide key information for management decisions and to integrate with ecological information
 - understanding **sustainable livelihoods**, and the degree to which these are affected by the environment, cultural and political context, and education.

- developing and building our **capacity to deliver outcomes** from the results of research and project activities, through:
 - a **comprehensive education program** with components that deliver environmental education for adults and school children, participatory adult education targeted at local needs, and draws content from research projects to diversify dissemination
 - a comprehensive program for **professional capacity building** through tertiary degrees, short courses and seminar programs
 - a focus on generating **policy and management recommendations** and guidelines to support mitigation of key problems
 - developing a platform for **spatial analysis and data management** as core tools in integrating projects, disseminating findings and participating in regional knowledge networks
 - strengthening our **geographic coverage and scope**, to replicate project activities through the WIO and extend to adjacent seas such as the Red Sea, Gulfs of Aden/Arbia and Indonesian/Pacific regions
 - building our ability to **raise project and core funding** to support the delivery of our mission.

We will continue to build on core strengths of the CORDIO structure, which have included:

- **Working through partnerships.** This will be expanded through identifying key partners for particular roles, such as IUCN (technical/policy), WIOMSA (capacity building), ecoregion research and conservation (WWF, CI) and relevant universities (technical, capacity building).
- **Core management and organizational capacity** – as a non-profit organization, CORDIO's internal procedures and accountability must be at the highest level. Organizational development and competence to manage growth will be a core strategy.
- **Funding** – support for the research and interventions necessary to achieve our objectives is rarely available within the region, and must be sourced from the international community. A core task is to maintaining competitiveness, competence and accountability to continue to raise funding to meet our mission.
- **Communications** play an essential role for demonstrating effectiveness and to express the outcomes of reporting and internal monitoring and evaluation systems. Innovative communications through print and electronic media will be done, including publication of an annual highlights report.
- **Adaptability**, flexibility and responsiveness to changing conditions is a cornerstone for our main objectives to deal with growing human populations and climate change. As an organization, CORDIO will maintain the same properties to enable us to respond to changing real-world conditions and opportunities, and to respond to any environmental or social crises that deserve attention.

Human capacity

CORDIO staff and partners cover a range of backgrounds from biological to social sciences, management and education practitioners and students at differing levels.

CORDIO East Africa – Directors

David Obura (corals and climate change)
Melita Samoilys (fish and fisheries)
Olof Linden (coastal management)

CORDIO Network representatives

David Obura (CORDIO East Africa)
Olof Linden (World Maritime University)
Jerker Tamelander (IUCN Switzerland)
Rolph Payet (Seychelles, Presidential Advisor)

CORDIO East Africa staff

Senior researchers: Shakil Visram (PhD, genetics), Innocent Wanyonyi (MSc, Phd Cand, social science), George Maina (MSc, fisheries), Sarah Ater (MPhil, education)

Junior researchers/project managers: Stephen Oluoch, Brigid Mibei, Susan Mugo, Stella Kulecho

MSc Students: Paul Tuda, Victor Mwakha, January Ndagala, Majambo Jarumani

Project assistants: Jane Oluoch, Violet Njambi

Administration: Irene Kioi (finance), Farheen Khandwalla (grants), Jason Mwamidi, Eliachim Ouko

CORDIO Partners

IUCN – Global Marine Programme and East and Southern Africa Regional Office, Kenya Wildlife Service