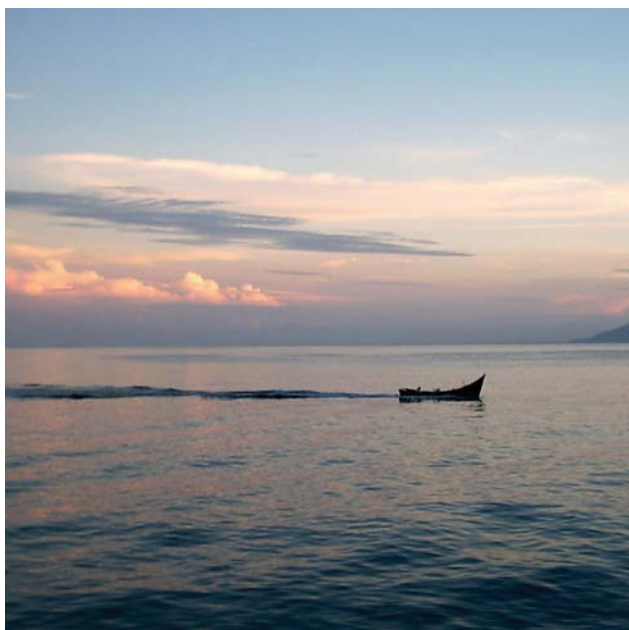




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Improving information sharing after the tsunami



recovery interventions, catalogues of actions and lessons learned, practical and policy-relevant information, readily available summaries for planners and decision-makers, as well as identification of key knowledge gaps, were critically needed.

In this newsletter we present a summary of resources currently available in the Asian region for coastal ecosystem managers, that attempt to address these needs. The World Conservation Union (IUCN) has set up an Regional Information Hub (RIH) to facilitate effective and efficient post-tsunami reconstruction and sustainable coastal ecosystem management across the South and Southeast Asia

This newsletter is the second in a two-part series which looks at lessons learned in coastal ecosystem management after the tsunami and examines the consequences of ignoring environmental safeguards in coastal development. The previous issue (Newsletter #2) discussed issues related to ignoring the incorporation of environmental safeguards and the lack of clear regulatory frameworks.

Much has been written about the lack of coordination in relief efforts in the immediate aftermath of the tsunami. Less discussed but equally important, was the scarcity of necessary information. This was particularly true in the environmental sector where on-the-ground, site-specific information was woefully inadequate and often resulted in further damage.

Information - in various forms - was needed in post tsunami coastal ecosystem management. Firstly, basic data on species that should be used for greening, and baseline data for damaged ecosystems were needed. Secondly, in order to ensure that funds were spent wisely and in a manner that leveraged the best possible result, updated information on the situation in the field was of paramount importance. Thirdly, access to experts in different areas of expertise was essential. Fourthly, access to information on ongoing reconstruction projects and published resources was often required. Fifthly, documentation and data

region. This hub contains reports and data on rapid assessments, best practice guidelines, and searchable databases on available resources, and ongoing projects. The United Nations Development Programme (UNDP) has set up an on-line database system (DAD) that functions as a customised strategic tool to support coordination, planning, implementation and reporting, and allows for enhanced monitoring capability and which promotes wider accountability and transparency. The United Nations Environmental Programme (UNEP) hosts an Environmental Knowledge Hub (eKH) that aims to build a virtual storehouse of information about the environment in the Asia and Pacific region.

It is only through efforts such as these that key lessons and best practices in integrating environmental concerns into post-tsunami reconstruction efforts will be shared and an active process of reflection and activation of analysis and thinking initiated for long term management. It is only through this kind of information sharing, that environmental success stories can be multiplied, and mistakes minimised.

Photograph: Banda Aceh © Nishan Perera. Thumbnails top and bottom © Nishan Perera; middle © IUCN

IUCN's Regional Information Hub on post-tsunami coastal ecosystem management

After the Indian Ocean tsunami of December 26, 2004, it became apparent that there was weak knowledge and coordination with respect to coastal ecosystem management in a post-tsunami context. To address this issue The World Conservation Union (IUCN) has undertaken the task of establishing a regional information hub that will facilitate effective and efficient post-tsunami reconstruction and sustainable coastal ecosystem management across the South and Southeast Asia region. The Regional Information Hub works with the Unions' two tsunami coordination centres in Sri Lanka and Thailand, who are undertaking work to mainstream ecosystem concerns into post-tsunami reconstruction and coastal development policy and practice, as well as to foster dialogue, coordination and capacity in environmental matters among the many agencies and sectors working in coastal areas. This project, funded by the Federal Ministry for environment, nature protection and reactor safety (Bundesministerium für Umwelt, Naturschutz und Reaktorsicherheit -BMU), commenced in October 2005 and will continue for two years.

The Regional Information Hub aims to:

- Provide an information resource to the many agencies working in post-tsunami reconstruction, and in development and conservation in coastal areas, to facilitate more environmentally sustainable coastal zone development.
- Strengthen linkages among those undertaking restoration in different areas to share ideas, learning, and results, as well as resources, as efficiently as possible.
- Work in collaboration with other regional databases and information sharing initiatives to ensure that environmental information is provided.

Through a website, the Regional Information Hub maintains electronic databases of

- Resources dealing with environmental conservation and post-disaster ecosystem rehabilitation, from within and outside IUCN;
- Ongoing projects, interventions and lessons learned relating to coastal ecosystem management;
- An electronic documentation centre of key technical references relating to coastal ecosystem management.

Through an email list, the Regional Information Hub disseminates

This newsletter is published by the Regional Information Hub on Coastal Ecosystem Management created and managed by the World Conservation Union (IUCN) in Asia—it is an information resource for people and agencies involved in development and conservation activities in coastal areas of Asia. It has been enabled by the generous financial support of the German Federal Ministry for the Environment, Nature Conservation and Nuclear Safety (BMU) through a grant made to IUCN for the Coordination of the Indian Ocean Tsunami Recovery Effort to Ensure Adequate Consideration for Ensuring Sustainable Livelihoods. A list of reference documents for this newsletter is available at <http://www.iucn.org/places/asia/coastalinfo/>

- Up-to-date information and discussions on topical issues in a bi-monthly newsletter.
- Technical information on coastal ecosystem management and projects.

<http://www.iucn.org/places/asia/coastalinfo/>

Databases on coastal information:

Database	URL	Focus	Countries
Humanitarian information	http://www.humanitarianinfo.org/srilanka/catalogue/Catalogues.aspx?CatID=19	Humanitarian assistance, maps, (districtwise)	Sri Lanka
GLOMIS	http://www.gloemis.com/	Mangroves	Global
FAO	http://www.fao.org/waicent/portal/statistics_en.asp	Agriculture, fisheries, forestry - production	Global
WRI databases	http://earthtrends.wri.org/#	Many themes: including coastal and marine ecosystems, biodiversity	Global
Louisiana State University	http://www.lib.lsu.edu/	Database of 332 journals as well as many web links	Global
Census of Marine Life	http://www.coml.org/	A network of researchers documenting diversity, distribution and abundance of marine life.	Global
UN Atlas of the Oceans	http://www.oceansatlas.com	An information system for use by policy makers, scientists, students and resource managers.	Global
UNO SAT - database of maps	http://unosat.web.cern.ch/unosat/	Satellite images of coastlines in the region	Thailand, Sri Lanka, Nicobar Islands, Sumatra, Maldives
UNEP Geo Data Portal	http://geodata.grid.unep.ch/	Statistics and maps on freshwater, population, forests, climate, disasters etc.	National, sub-regional, regional and global
FAO - Tsunami reconstruction map resource and satellite images	http://www.fao.org/geonetwork/srv/en/main.home	Tsunami related information collected from FAO databases and other sources.	Global
ISDR Tsunami Early Warning Information System	http://unisdr.unbonn.org/	Contains documentation on all of the initiatives that are part of the multi-partner, multi-donor UN project titled "Evaluation and Strengthening of Early Warning Systems in Countries Affected by the 26 December 2004 Tsunami"	Thailand and Southeast Asia
International tsunami information centre	http://www.tsunamiwave.info/	Information about tsunamis.	Global
ISDR Library on disaster risk reduction	http://www.unisdr.org/eng/library/lib-index.htm	Information on disaster risk reduction and related issues such as sustainable development, and climate change.	Global
Disaster Reduction Gateway	http://www.disasterreductiongateway.org/	Information about disaster reduction	Global
Eldis Gateway to Development Information	http://www.eldis.org/	Information on development, policy, practice and research issues	Global
Asian Disaster Preparedness Centre - Document library	http://www.adpc.net/infores/doc.html	Information on disaster preparedness	Asia region
Ocean Portal	http://oceanportal.org/	A directory of ocean data and information related web sites	Global
Fishbase	http://www.fishbase.org/home.htm	Fisheries related information	Global
Global information system on coral reefs	http://www.reefbase.org/	An information system on coral reefs and coral reef professionals	Global
OneFish Community Directory	http://www.onefish.org/global/index.jsp	A portal and gateway for the fisheries and aquatic research and development sector	Global

(Note: excludes databases described in the newsletter)

Getting information to decision makers: the UNDP Development Assistance Databases (DAD)

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Following the tsunami disaster, the governments of Sri Lanka, Maldives, Thailand and Indonesia requested support to develop a tool to support them in the enormous aid coordination challenges they faced. To address this, the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP) undertook, through a partnership with Synergy International Systems, the establishment of several database systems customised to meet each country's needs and promote the effective, transparent and accountable use of all tsunami assistance. This project commenced in April 2005 and was handed over to the respective governments by July 2006, with UNDP providing continued technical support into 2007 with co-financing provided by the Asian Development Bank.

The Development Assistance Database (DAD) system

For Government and donors, the Development Assistance Database (DAD) an on-line database system provides a customised strategic tool to support coordination, planning, implementation, enhanced monitoring and reporting. Through its on-line availability, it a) promotes wider accountability and transparency; b) coordination - by providing on-line access to real-time data showing projects by sector, location and partner; c) planning - by analysing needs and gaps between demand and supply – the extent to which support matches the priority needs identified by the Government; d) operations management - by highlighting bottlenecks and factors causing delay and e) results -by tracking pledges, commitments, disbursements and expenditures and displays actual progress against indicators.

The main functionalities of the DAD

The DAD comprises an on-line core module, adapted to country-specific specifications, that includes:

- Details of aggregate pledges, project commitments, disbursements and expenditures;
- Project-specific details, including financing, sectors, location, outputs and implementation status;
- A mapping function that provides detail, by location, of projects supported in a particular sector and/or by a particular partner in a province or district;
- A chart function that provides detail of support by sector, location, partner, status;
- A report function that can provide real-time reports, either pre-formatted or tailored to the specific reporting needs of the user;
- The DAD serves Government, local Government, donor and implementer portfolio management needs through its ability to report and conduct analysis by sector, location, donor, etc.
- Additional functionalities (for example project approval, housing, donor profile, national strategy/unmet needs modules), all on-line and integrated with the core DAD, can be incorporated, tailored to the needs of governments and their partners.

Nationally owned and publicly accessible on the internet, the comprehensive DAD systems enabled ordinary citizens – those affected and those contributing their financial support – as well as governments and their partners – to obtain information in real time.

For obtaining regional information, a Regional Portal was established giving access to country and regional information, as well as being a convenient route into the national and regional DADs. The portal is available at <http://tsunamitracking.org> . Further, a Regional DAD giving access to information on all four countries through a single window has been established. The Regional DAD can be accessed at: <http://tsunamitracking.org/dadregional>

A Private Sector DAD has been developed to help complete the picture. More outreach and stronger NGO participation is needed to ensure each DAD fully captures NGO contributions.

Country	DAD website	General website
Indonesia (927 projects recorded)	http://rand.brr.go.id	http://www.e-aceh-nias.org
Maldives (89 projects recorded)	http://dad.finance.gov.mv	http://www.tsunamimaldives.mv/
Sri Lanka (665 projects recorded)	http://dad.rada.gov.lk	http://www.rada.gov.lk
Thailand (213 projects recorded)	http://dadthailand.mfa.go.th	http://www.tica.thaigov.net/tica

UNEP's Environmental Knowledge Hub: a virtual focal point

Atul Bagai, Regional Coordinator (Networking)

South Asia Network Compliance Assistance Programme, UNEP Regional Office for Asia and the Pacific

UNEP's Environment Knowledge Centre (eKH) is proposed as a virtual focal point, a storehouse of knowledge, information and data about the environment in the Asia / Pacific region. This Centre will endeavour to unify diverse knowledge available with individuals, communities, networks and partner institutions in the region.

In this process of disseminating information useful for capacity building of all concerned stakeholders, the eKH will facilitate debate and discussions on various environmental issues. This will be a major step forward from merely generating awareness to initiating environmental action at local levels. Decision makers in governments can also be guided suitably in areas of assessment, policy, planning and implementation.

Activities

A pilot platform has been set up with inputs from partners such as the World Conservation Union (IUCN), DA, the Asian Development Bank (ADB), Tata Energy Research Institute (TERI), the International Centre for Integrated Mountain Development (ICIMOD), Initial Graphics Exchange Specification (IGES), Clean Air Initiative (CAI-Asia), the Asian Institute of Technology (AIT), Standard Industrial Classification (SIC). The focus is on the south Asian sub region with thematic areas of air, water, land, biodiversity and energy issues. A comprehensive system for collection of information with the support of a management information system (MIS) and standard codes has been developed. Electronic networking capabilities are being strengthened. This centre will also gather all relevant information from the partners in areas of their special interest and integrate into the comprehensive resource base.

On issues relating to biodiversity, an active partnership with IUCN will be developed.

Objectives

- To gather systematically, index, and store the above resources in a way that is easily accessible and useful for the various stakeholders in the region.
- To establish partnerships and network for sharing expertise and information in areas of environmental management.
- To design target-specific awareness generation programmes and help develop management information support systems of local relevance.

The eKH aims to target

- Civil Society groups
- Governments
- General Public
- Partners
- UNEP

After the initial pilot phase, over time, access will be provided to Partners. In the third phase access will be provided to Governments and Civil Society Groups: including the five priority groups: Youth, NGOs, Parliamentarians, Media and the Private Sector.

In the final stage, eKH will be made available to the public at large.

<http://www.ekh.unep.org/>



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