

Managing coastal & marine ecosystem services to support the wellbeing of the poor?

Proposal for a full day special session in conjunction with the 10th WIOMSA Symposium.

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Background

The concept of ecosystem services (ES), and the contributions they make to wellbeing, seeks to put people at the center of conservation and management initiatives. However, different people across multiple geographical scales are able to benefit from ecosystems in different and often complex ways. An understanding of the linkages that exist between ecosystems and human wellbeing should help guide management to maximize wellbeing whilst minimizing ecosystem degradation. Over the past four years the Ecosystem Services for Poverty Alleviation (ESPA) program has funded three projects in the Western Indian Ocean Region that seek to disentangle these connections and synthesize findings across related projects. This session will draw on the experiences and findings of three ESPA funded projects; ESPA synthesis of fisheries-related projects; Sustainable Poverty Alleviation from Coastal Ecosystem Services (SPACES) project in Kenya and Mozambique; and Coastal Ecosystem Services for East Africa (CESEA) project in Kenya and Tanzania, to identify and communicate key lessons, practical tools, and policy guidance emerging from this work.

Session objectives and design

This session will be co-hosted by the ESPA program impact advisor. The three ESPA funded projects will present their broader findings; the session participants will discuss specific and overarching policy implications; and the SPACES 'Ecosystem Service and Wellbeing Intervention Screening Tool' (ESWIST) will be used to show how SPACES data can be used to help develop and explore possible intervention scenarios.

Introduction

The day will open with an introduction to the aims and future directions of ESPA.

Session 1

The morning will begin with a presentation on the broader ESPA findings on fisheries and coastal and marine ecosystem services, more specifically, the role of ecosystem services to poverty alleviation and wellbeing in the context of an ecosystem approach to fisheries. Drawing from a synthesis of ESPA fisheries projects, this part of the session will showcase the complex nature of poverty alleviation, especially in light of changing climate, and how the ecosystem services framework can help identify and design appropriate conservation and management measures, including adaptation measures, and relevant policies from global to local levels. In this connection, this session will also highlight how the [multiple dimensions of poverty](#) relevant to the achievement of the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) have been addressed by these ESPA fisheries-related projects, including by, informing and strengthening participation in decision-making processes and identification of trade-offs. These findings will be contextualized in light of a broader ecosystem approach frame due to their multi-scalar implications, while shedding light on how the ecosystem services framework can bridge [biodiversity law and human rights](#).

Session 2

The second half of the morning will involve a session focused on the policy relevant research findings from SPACES, under three broad themes: 1) Poverty, wellbeing, and ES benefits are multidimensional; 2) ES benefits are unequally distributed across social groups; 3) Lessons from the co-production of ES knowledge. These themes will be used to explore key policy relevant messages co-produced through dialogue processes with key stakeholders and community members. The session will be facilitated by the session chairs to maximize participation and will make use of speed presentations, breakout discussions, and interactive polling. This session is particularly relevant for managers and policy makers in the WIO as well as researchers engaging with policy making, the interactive session format will facilitate multi-way learning between SPACES team members and stakeholders.

Session 3

Participants will be taken through a step-by-step approach of developing successful Payments for Ecosystem Services (PES) projects. This will be anchored with the award winning Mikoko Pamoja project, where questions of additionally, leakage control, replicability, benefit sharing, institutional capacity, and bundling marine ecosystem services will be discussed. This will be an interactive opportunity for people interested in developing small scale marine PES projects in their areas. The session will also feature issues related to measuring, reporting and verification of blue carbon.

Session 4

The final session of the day will introduce and demonstrate the SPACES 'Ecosystem Service and Wellbeing Intervention Tool' (ESWIST). The tool will use the SPACES data to animate the links between ecosystem services, ecological condition and wellbeing, so that decision makers can explore the implications of proposed interventions on multidimensional poverty. The tool enables decision makers to explore the links between ecosystem services and wellbeing for different groups of people to identify tradeoffs and develop interventions that are likely to inclusively support wellbeing. The tool will be demonstrated during the session

to show how different scenarios can be modelled and how it can be used to screen possible interventions. Finally, there will be the opportunity for participants to try the tool.

Session Speed Talk abstracts

ESPA findings on fisheries and coastal and marine ecosystem services, more specifically, the role of ecosystem services to poverty alleviation and wellbeing in the context of an ecosystem approach to fisheries will be explored. This presentation will be followed by discussion, and complemented by the break out group exercises throughout the day.

Wellbeing and poverty are experienced in multiple dimensions beyond income. Different aspects of wellbeing do not necessarily correlate with income so that income-only evaluations of wellbeing give only a partial picture of people's lives and identify only certain types of poverty such as income poverty and overlook basic needs and life satisfaction.

Ecosystems provide benefits to people through monetary income, direct use as well as the experience of participating in ecosystem-linked activities. Non-monetary benefits such as the cultural attachment of people to places are hard to quantify and easy to overlook. Basing decisions only on monetary mechanisms may undermine non-monetary benefits, drive less sustainable extraction of resources, and may lead to failure of interventions if cultural attachments to place are ignored.

ES are not equally shared amongst coastal populations. The distribution of benefits is determined by gender, ethnicity/migrant status, wealth/assets and other factors. For example access to, perception of and aspirations for the use of ecosystem services are highly gendered. Culture and context influences how benefits are experienced and distributed. These changes occur naturally through time but these changes can also be directed and accelerated by the focus of governance regimes.

People's own satisfaction with life varies through the population and is influenced by a range of factors. For example, women in Kenya and Mozambique tend to be generally more satisfied than men who may face pressures of providing and who have different aspirations to change. Rural/urban differences are also interesting – urban people have access to more infrastructure but are often less satisfied.

Co-produced knowledge was created during dialogues and workshops with community members and other stakeholders. A) Consistent messages in terms of people's priorities and ideas across Kenya and Mozambique. Key differences between the sites. B) Key drivers of change in coastal and marine ecosystem services and possible future trends and interventions.

'Ecosystem Service and Wellbeing Intervention Tool' The ESWIST will be demonstrated and shown how it can be used to screen possible future interventions. Then there will be an interactive opportunity for audience members to use the tool. During this portion of the presentation, SPACES team members will walk around and assist audience members with the tool and answer questions.

Key questions for discussion

1. *How can decisions take account of non-income aspects of wellbeing like relationships, autonomy, and respect, and do we have the monitoring data to evaluate the impact of interventions on multidimensional poverty?*

2. *How can the value of non-monetary benefits of ecosystem services be supported in policy?*
3. *Do existing policies and governance reinforce or address unequal distribution of benefits?*
4. *What can be done to increase people's satisfaction with life?*
5. *How can community members continue to be part of the dialogue on ecosystem services and poverty alleviation?*
6. *What policies and tools are needed to effectively engage communities, tackle inequalities, and maximize non-monetary benefits?*
7. *How can WIO countries incorporate blue carbon ecosystems in their national determined contributions (NDC) to Paris Agreement*