



## ***SocMon/SEM-Pasifika in 2015***

By Peter Edwards

Hello SocMon and SEM Pasifika Colleagues! Happy New Year! I wish for everyone a prosperous 2015. This year will hopefully be a productive year for all of us! As I am writing this, some of our partners are busy in the field conducting training and data collection.

In fact, I will be joining our Micronesia partners for a SEM-Pasifika training exercise in Yap. This is part of ongoing efforts in this region to improve capacity and data collection. We should get reports from that exercise in the next *SocMonitor* newsletter. I also know that our South Asia Partners were busy in the latter stages of 2014 and hope to hear more on this work among others!

As many of you are aware, SocMon was able to procure additional funding support from NOAA's Coral Reef Conservation Program. This funding will primarily be used to support REPEAT socio-economic assessments in some of our global regions. It is important to note that we are trying to do follow-up assessments to see if we can track changes over time – that is, actual monitoring rather than one-off assessments. The funds will be administered through Maria Pena and Patrick McConney at the Centre for Resource Management and Environmental Studies (CERMES) at The University of the West Indies (UWI) in Barbados.

You are all encouraged to use the Strategic Plan and the Caribbean sample planning template that was distributed to you all late last year as you move

### INSIDE THIS ISSUE

SocMon/SEM-Pasifika in 2015	1
NFWF grant for SocMon/SEM-Pasifika coordination	1
Social capital of tour guides in Cancún, Mexico	2
Regional coordinators collaborate for SocMon training	3
SocMon goes to Bangladesh	4
Trainig in Yap	5

ahead with your individual planning efforts. Use of the funds to support follow-up assessments will be guided by the expected goals and objectives outlined in that document. As we figure out what regions we will be able to support, the Strategic Plan will be key to that process.

Here is to a great year as we see how best we can implement our respective training and monitoring over the coming months!

## ***NFWF grant for SocMon/SEM-Pasifika coordination***

By Patrick McConney



CERMES will soon begin to implement an 18-month project, grant-funded through the

National Fish and Wildlife Foundation (NFWF), for *Coordination of Global Socio-economic Monitoring*. The initiative is one of the NOAA Directed Projects for 2014 and is linked to NOAA's Coral Reef Conservation Programme. The grant will help to fund SocMon/SEM-Pasifika regional programmes through sub-grants for fieldwork, allow for website

upgrading and maintenance, provide training materials, and enable the development of SocMon along the lines of the strategic plan. Colleagues at NOAA facilitated the grant application process and will continue to be intimately involved in its implementation along with all of the regional SocMon/SEM-Pasifika coordinators.

## ***Social capital of tour guides in Cancún, Mexico***

*By Arie Sanders*

In last year's Jul/Aug issue of the *SocMonitor*, we told you about the socio-economic assessment being conducted to determine tour guide practices in, and knowledge of, the Isla Mujeres, Punta Cancun and Punta Nizuc National Marine Park in Cancún. What follows is a more detailed account of the study and key findings.

Cancún is a tourist area of beach, sun and sand that annually receives about 3.5 million tourists. The West Coast National Park Isla Mujeres, Punta Cancún and Punta Nizuc is located in the area of Cancún. The national park is the most visited marine protected area in Mexico and forms the economic base of tourism in the Cancún area.



The national park is managed by the National Commission of Natural Protected Areas (CONANP), which is responsible for the regulation of the entry of tourists and recreational activities in the area, park monitoring and the collection of an entrance fee. The areas that make up the park are visited primarily for snorkeling, diving and tours through the mangroves. Despite the regulations and the presence of the park rangers, the high intensity of tourism has negatively impacted the state of the protected area.



The SocMon assessment was focused on the measurement of social capital and the attitudes and perceptions of tour guides inside the park, in order to identify the possibility to make them more responsible in protecting the area. There are more than 750 active tour guides working daily in the area whose livelihood directly depends on the national park. The degradation of the national park will have a negative impact on the number of visitors and ultimately on the income of the tour guides. To this end, we took into account the perceptions of 150 active tour guides who work for private tourist enterprises, cooperatives and guides working independently.

We assumed that a more “responsible” tourist guide is likely depending, in part, on social capital (the degree of trust and ability to cooperate) and environmental awareness. In our assessment we developed new indicators to measure the social capital of the tourist guides. By using Putnam’s concepts of bonding, bridging and linking, it was possible to construct indices and to correlate them with control variables like tourist guide’s level of education, environmental awareness, attitude and behaviour (practice).

We found that social capital plays an important role in determining overall tourist guide performance in his/her daily activities. This is particularly useful for park management systems that rely on cooperation between users, in this case tourist guides, and government agencies. Promoting cooperation among tour guides (annual meetings, courses, and social activities) can help build social capital and engage tourist guides with each other and the park management. Having an additional 750 “park rangers” will increase the effectiveness of the current management and will have a positive impact on the environmental status of this important national marine park.

## ***Regional coordinators collaborate***

*By Vineeta Hoon and Michael Pido*

A SocMon training workshop coordinated by the Chilika Development Authority (CDA), was conducted at the CDA’s Wetland Research and Training Center (WRTC) in Balugaon, State of Odisha, India, from 27 October – 4 November 2014.

A total of 21 participants from various state-level government agencies and civil society groups/non-governmental organisations participated. The Food

and Agriculture Organisation (FAO) of the United Nations supported this training through the Bay of Bengal Large Marine Ecosystem (BOBLME) Project. BOBLME Project has already played a role in supporting SocMon activities in Southeast Asia and with the current program of capacity-building activities, aims to extend knowledge and skills in SocMon approaches to new areas in South Asia.

The training’s global objective was to improve the lives of coastal populations through better regional management of the Bay of Bengal environment and its fisheries; while the development objective was to ensure that socio-economic monitoring contributes to improved decision-making processes for coastal management in Odisha and, specifically, around Chilika Lake.



A pool of SocMon experts from four organisations served as trainers and facilitators. Mr. Philip Townsley, Senior Consultant, represented the lead training organisation, Integrated Marine Management (IMM), Inc., (UK); The Centre for Action Research on Environment Science and Society (CARESS) from India was represented by Dr. Vineeta Hoon, Trustee and SocMon South Asia Regional Coordinator, who shared her expertise in SocMon procedures and visualisation techniques; Dr. Michael Pido, SocMon SEA Regional Coordinator and Vice President for Research and Extension at The Palawan State University (PSU) provided expertise on integrated coastal management and

rapid appraisals; and Ms. Marie Saleem, Environmental Consultant, Systems Engineering & Marine Consulting (SEAMARC) in Maldives, shared her expertise in coastal assessments and marine protected areas.



SocMon workshop trainers and facilitators. L to R: Vineeta Hoon, Michael Pido, Marie Saleem and Philip Townsley

There is considerable potential for developing a more complete SocMon program around Chilika Lake and it is clear that the participatory approaches recommended for implementing SocMon are appropriate for the work that CDA and their partners are proposing in the future.

SocMon can make an important contribution to setting up a network of communication and consultation between concerned agencies and local stakeholders, in addition to providing key data to facilitate monitoring of changes in resource use in the area.

This training is a good example of on-the-ground collaboration between SocMon regional coordinators and is the second occasion in which there has been collaboration between SocMon South Asia and Southeast Asia. We hope that regional coordinators from other parts of the globe may participate in our SocMon activities in South

Asia and Southeast Asia, and we hope also that we can do the same for them.

## ***SocMon goes to Bangladesh***

*By Vineeta Hoon*

A SocMon training workshop was held at Cox's Bazar, Bangladesh from 2–11 January, 2015. The workshop was organised by Marine Life Alliance (MLA) and the trainers were from The Centre for Action Research on Environment Science and Society (CARESS), India and Systems Engineering and Marine Consulting (SEAMARC), Maldives. It was supported by the Bay of Bengal Large Marine ecosystem (BOBLME) Project. Mr. Arne Andreason of BOBLME attended the valedictory function and distributed the participants certificates.

Fourteen participants from various government and non-government organisations active in St. Martins Island, were trained in using the SocMon guidelines. The training was spread over ten days and included four days of fieldwork in St. Martins Island. We followed a learning-by-doing approach.

Participants conducted a survey to assess the local communities perceptions of the MPA and understanding of ecological value statements. They learnt to conduct PRA and use visualisation techniques during a focus group discussion. They prepared a resource activity map and seasonal diagram for marine and coastal activities of St. Martin's Island and collected oral histories. A Bangladesh SocMon team has been formed to complete the study for St. Martins Island! Mr. M. Zahirul Islam will serve as the coordinator for SocMon Bangladesh. With the inclusion of a site from Bangladesh, SocMon South Asia will now be represented in four South Asian countries.



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Visit the SocMon website at [www.socmon.org](http://www.socmon.org)

## ***Training in Yap, Micronesia***

*By Brooke Nevitt and Supin Wongbusarakum*

The Micronesia SEM-Pasifika team is presently conducting a two-week workshop in Yap, Micronesia from 19–30 January, 2015. The training, led by Supin Wongbusarakum, National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration (NOAA), Brooke Nevitt, Micronesia Islands Nature Alliance (MINA), Peter Edwards (NOAA) and Betty Sigrah, Micronesia Conservation Trust (MCT), is working closely with the Tamil Municipality of Yap in the Federated States of Micronesia to plan, implement, analyse, and report back to the community a socio-economic assessment. The assessment will help the Tamil Resource Conservation Trust to gather data to inform their management plan. The Tamil Municipality recently implemented a Marine Protected Area and is home to 1,200 people.

Prior to the start of the workshop, trainers, Brooke Nevitt and Supin Wongbusarakum met with Betty Sigrah, Berna Gorong, Sean Gaard and Bertha Reyuw from the Tamil community to discuss workshop and logistical arrangements for field assessment in Tamil.



SEM-Pasifika trainers and workshop organisers meet to discuss plans for the next two weeks

The workshop got off to a good start on 19 January with 17 participants, including four off island participants from Guam, CNMI, and HI. The morning session was used to go over workshop objectives, expected outputs, the workshop agenda, and introduce socio-economic monitoring and the SEM-Pasifika guidelines. After lunch all groups gave a brief presentation about their sites and current projects (Kodeb on Managaha Marine Conservation Area, Marybelle on Manell Geus, Erin on Community-based Subsistence Fishing Areas in HI, Kawaika on Ha'ena, and Sean and Vitt on Tamil. Supin gave a presentation on defining human well-being objectives. The last activity of the day was three small groups working on developing socio-economic assessment objectives for each of the three management objectives on the Tamil Municipality Marine Management Plan. Check the next issue of the SocMonitor for more on the training and its assessment activities.

The SEM-Pasifika training is a result of partnerships with the Micronesia Conservation Trust, Pacific Island Managed and Protected Community (PIMPAC), Micronesia Islands Nature Alliance, the National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration, the Tamil Resource Conservation Trust, Yap Community Action Program, and local partners.



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