

Global learning for local solutions: Reducing vulnerability of marine-dependent coastal communities (GULLS)

Call: Coastal Vulnerability

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Amount: €1.378K

Time period: 36 months

Many coastal communities rely on marine resources for livelihoods and food security. As populations

increase, so does pressure on coastal resources already under stress from pollution, coastal development, and habitat degradation. Climate change and variability (including extreme events) will also impact coastal systems and the vulnerability of dependent communities, but may also bring

opportunities. This project will contribute to improving community adaptation efforts by characterizing, assessing and predicting the future of coastal-marine food resources through the provision and sharing of knowledge across regional "hotspots", defined here as fast-warming marine areas and areas experiencing social tensions as a result of change. Hotspots are likely to include the priority areas for adaptation and also represent laboratories for observing change and developing adaptation options and management strategies. Comparing hotspot regions will extend existing collaborations and connect local adaptation research and outcomes to improve global learning. Focusing on adaptation options and strategies for enhancing coastal resilience at the local level will contribute to capacity building and local empowerment.

Current weaknesses in marine coastal management include limited integration of natural and social

studies, poor translation of scientific understanding into adaptive management mechanisms, and few guidelines for policy development. A holistic system approach will be piloted within one hotspot region (western Indian Ocean) through an existing Alliance of experts and researchers, prior to application in other hotspot regions (India, Brazil, South Africa, Australia). Integration of natural, social and economic studies will identify a range of options for management and policy reform.

These alternatives will be delivered as briefing materials to managers and decision-makers in coastal communities and society at large. There are existing strong partnerships within and between the focal regions in this project, and strong scientific and political support for the development of effective science-based governance approaches. This project will deliver a comprehensive set of options to reduce coastal vulnerability and position vulnerable coastal communities for an improved future.