

Incorporating SocMon with the Sustainable Livelihoods Approach

An addendum to the Global Coral Reef Monitoring Network (GCRMN)
Socio-economic Manual for Coral Reef Management

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This addendum, *Incorporating SocMon with the Sustainable Livelihoods Approach*, is an update to the Global Coral Reef Monitoring Network (GCRMN) Socio-economic Manual for Coral Reef Management (Bunce et al. 2000).

Technical advice and guidance

The Global SocMon initiative (www.socmon.org) can provide technical advice, guidance and share experiences on incorporating SocMon into the Sustainable Livelihoods Approach. Contact Peter Edwards at peter.edwards@noaa.gov for further information.

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Downloadable copies

Copies of *Incorporating SocMon with the Sustainable Livelihoods Approach* can be downloaded from the global SocMon website (www.socmon.org).

Comments and feedback

Comments on this addendum and feedback on how it was applied would be most appreciated. Please send to Maria Pena at maria.pena@cavehill.uwi.edu.

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Background

The Global Coral Reef Monitoring Network (GCRMN) Socioeconomic Manual for Coral Reef Management (Bunce et al. 2000), known as the GCRMN SocMon Manual, outlines a set of methods for conducting social and economic assessments of communities who make use of and depend on coral reefs and coastal resources. The information generated by using these approaches can help those tasked with the management of these systems to develop appropriate management approaches that take into account resource users' dependence on the resources they aim to manage and preserve. Importantly, the manual encourages approaches that promote close engagement and collaboration between local communities and the agencies conducting the assessment. This engagement during the assessment process lays the basis for establishing collaborative co-management approaches that both protect coastal resources and support sustainable livelihoods for local coastal resource users.

Since this field methods guide was published (and has been used in conjunction with region-specific socio-economic monitoring guidelines), worldwide experience in co-management of natural resources has expanded and important new lessons have been learned, both in the field of conservation and in development practice in general. This experience has been distilled into new approaches and frameworks that have gained widespread acceptance among practitioners in the field over the last decades.

In this addendum to the GCRMN SocMon Manual, the relevance and implications of some of the most important of these approaches for socioeconomic assessment of coral reefs and other coastal resources are discussed. It is impossible to specifically mention all the new approaches that have been developed over the past 20 years, but attention is given to one of the most influential approaches that coastal management practitioners are likely to encounter in their work – the **Sustainable Livelihoods Approach (SLA)** and by extension the **Sustainable Livelihoods Enhancement and Diversification (SLED)** approach.

The key point to note is that SocMon is a reference strategy that can be combined with and incorporated into many approaches including SLA (and SLED) for expanding and enhancing data collection, monitoring and evaluation needs.

The SLA (and SLED) help to understand and address the broader context within which coastal resource and coral reef management take place. Like the tools and techniques suggested in the GCRMN SocMon Manual, the SLA is underpinned by the importance of developing participatory, shared solutions to issues surrounding natural resource use. All the tools recommended as part of SocMon can be used to support SLA, just as it can be combined with other tools. SocMon can be integrated into a sustainable livelihoods program and vice-versa, the SLA can provide SocMon practitioners with new ways of understanding the communities and environment they are working in and help them to develop better outcomes from their work. There are **no** contradictions between SocMon and SLA (and SLED).

It would be impossible here to give a complete description of the SLA but there is an extensive literature about it that readers are encouraged to look at some of the materials that are referenced below. A few specific tools that have been developed as part of the SLA are described as they may be of particular relevance for SocMon users or have been successfully used in the field already. Again, these are not described in detail but references are given where users can find more information.

SocMon and the Sustainable Livelihoods Approach (SLA)

What is the SLA?

The Sustainable Livelihoods Approach (SLA) evolved out of the practice and experience of people and organizations worldwide working on the eradication of poverty in the 1990s. It is an approach that aims to place people – with their specific characteristics, strengths and needs – at the centre of the development process.

The SLA is an inherently adaptable and “open” approach - every organization that has worked with it has developed their own “version” of the approach, adapting it to the specific circumstances where they work and the people who they work with. The key elements of the SLA are a Sustainable Livelihoods **framework** to guide understanding of people’s livelihoods, and a **set of principles** that underpin **how** to work with those people. There is no specific SLA “**tool-kit**” but the techniques used during implementation of the approach should be guided by the demands of the framework and the principles.

The SL framework needs to be adapted to local circumstances but its key features include:

- A focus on **people**, either as individuals, households, groups or communities.
- An understanding of the **characteristics** of those people with attention to gender, age, ethnicity, background and history, caste or class.
- An analysis of the **assets and resources** that those people have access to and can use to build their livelihoods. Importantly this analysis needs to include both tangible assets - like infrastructure, housing, land, water, fuel, and natural resources – and more intangible assets, such as their social relations, their knowledge and skills, their attitudes and experience, their spiritual perspectives, and their level of organization and influence.
- An understanding of the different **institutions, organizations and sets of rules and relationships** that make up the context within which people live and work. These include the private and public service providers that people make use of, the mechanisms that determine policies, laws and resource distribution, and the more “structural” aspects of this context, such as markets, traditions, values and power relations. In this part of the framework, the **quality** of the relationships that people have with these external institutions, structures and processes is particularly important.
- The **vulnerability context** – those external influences that cannot easily be changed but that people need to cope with, or adapt to, in order to create a viable livelihood - climate, exposure to natural disasters, conflict and insecurity, and long-term trends like population growth or climate change.

The way these different elements interact will determine people’s aspirations, their perceptions of the opportunities available to them, and the choices they make about their livelihoods. An important part of a Sustainable Livelihoods framework is that it analyzes not just what is **missing**, but what people have and use already – their assets, capacities, knowledge and experience – and helps to identify people’s **strengths** that can be built on to create better and more resilient livelihood strategies.

The definition of **principles** to guide action aiming at improving people’s livelihoods is also a key part of the SLA. These principles need to be broad but they also need to be applied as a means of assessing the appropriateness of any intervention within the SLA. Different organizations might emphasize different principles but ones that are widely accepted include:

Table 1. Key Principles that Guide the Sustainable Livelihoods Approach

<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Being people-centered • Building on people’s strengths • Empowering people to make their own choices • Encouraging equitable solutions 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Building environmental, social, economic and institutional sustainability • Being holistic • Encouraging adaptability and flexibility
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How SocMon and SLA complement each other

Like **SocMon**, the SLA is a people-centred, participatory and holistic approach. While SocMon was developed with a more specific focus on natural resource management issues, SLA takes people’s relationships with the natural resources they depend on as **one** of a broader set of factors and issues relating to their well-being and development. In practice, SocMon practitioners have often found themselves addressing many of these broader issues in their work and the SLA can provide them with a useful framework for linking their analysis of people’s natural resource use with wider issues of access to key assets, relationships with institutions, and governance arrangements. In particular, some of the tools that have been developed in relation to SLA approaches, such as the Sustainable Livelihoods Enhancement and Development (SLED) approach, can help those involved in SocMon use their analysis to start working with communities to develop interventions and mechanisms for positive change.

For those involved in the implementation of SLA, SocMon can provide a useful set of tools for understanding the role of natural resources in people’s livelihoods and clarifying the linkages between people’s use of those resources and other choices they make about their livelihoods. Particularly where change is required in the governance arrangements for natural resources, and the institutional mechanisms that may be required to facilitate better governance, the complementarity of the two approaches is particularly important.

How to incorporate SocMon into SLA

SocMon approaches can be incorporated into the SLA on several levels.

- **Incorporating SocMon tools into the “toolkit” of SLA practitioners**

While many SLA practitioners will be familiar with at least some of the participatory tools that are proposed by SocMon, their familiarity with all of the methods cannot be taken for granted and SocMon provides an extremely useful participatory toolkit, not only for discussion and analysis of natural resources but also of other areas included in the broader analysis of livelihoods. For example, the seasonal calendar is a powerful technique for gathering detailed information on how household income is derived and fluctuates throughout the year. Divided according to the months of the year, seasons in terms of weather and climate are usually highlighted and the researcher can determine what livelihood activities people are involved in terms of resources and income per season. The seasonal calendar highlights seasonality in employment. See GCRMN SocMon Manual, pages 125-127 for more information on this useful and engaging tool. Related to the seasonal calendar are daily and seasonal time use patterns (GCRMN SocMon Manual, pages 125 and 128). These tools are used to describe events over a much shorter time period to gather information on how different household members contribute to household livelihoods. They can be used to provide detailed information on differences in livelihoods by gender. SocMon also provides techniques for addressing key issues specifically relating to the use and governance of natural resources and coastal resources in particular that can help SLA programs to understand these more effectively. Where SocMon is being introduced to an “SLA” initiative, the discussion of how these tools can be adapted to broader application could provide a useful approach to building the capacity of the field teams involved.

Additionally, SocMon can be used in Participatory Monitoring and Evaluation (PM&E) of a SLA programme or initiative for learning and adaptation. In summary, people’s perspectives on their livelihoods can be fit into a SLA using SocMon tools.

- **Using the SLA framework to enhance understanding of broad linkages**

Approaches for the training of SocMon teams are already well-developed, but the incorporation of a facilitated process where participants “build” their own Sustainable Livelihoods Framework can also be used to enhance SocMon teams understanding of the broader context in which they are operating. This process forces participants to think through all the different elements that contribute to, or hinder, people’s livelihoods. Many of the factors they identify will correspond to the different ‘parameters’ and areas of study that are suggested as part of SocMon, but having an SLA framework at the back of their minds as they carry out SocMon will help teams to seek out linkages between people, their capacities, and their assets, and the institutions and processes that influence what they can and cannot do. An example of an SL Framework developed during a SocMon workshop in Odisha, India is shown below.

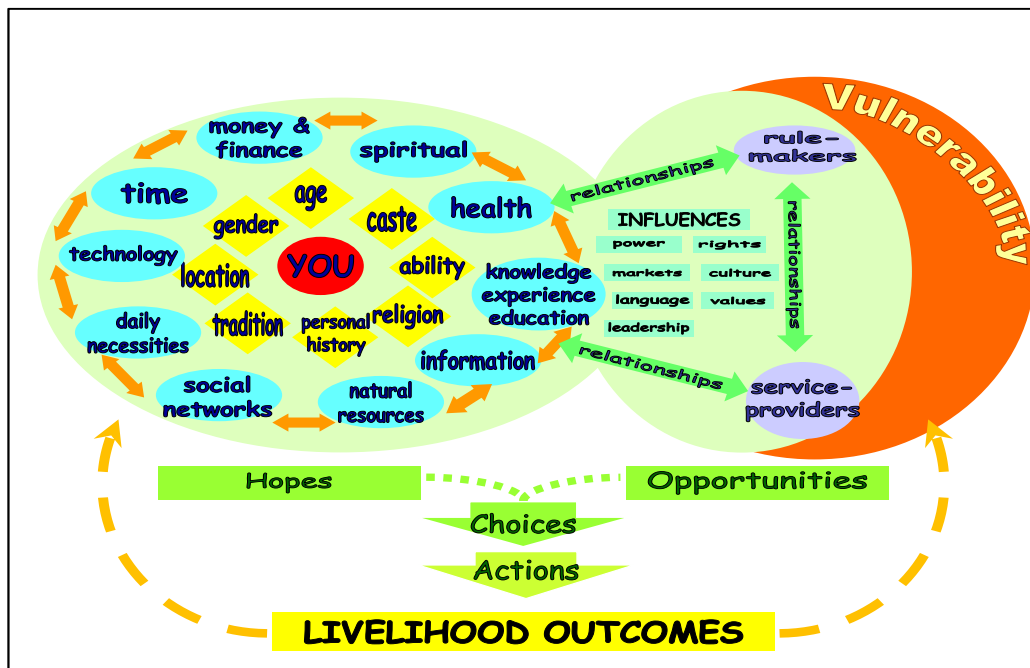


Figure 1. Example of a Sustainable Livelihoods Framework developed during a SocMon Workshop

Putting people at the center of the process and identifying strengths

A key underlying principle of the SLA approach to development is its focus on building on **existing strengths** and **capacities**. SocMon can provide the SLA with a means of understanding these strengths and capacities in relation to the use of natural resources, and particularly fisheries and coastal resources, in more detail. Particularly where the teams involved in SLA interventions are “generalist” or focused on agriculture (as is often the case), SocMon can provide the means for them to analyze what people actually do in relation to fisheries and coastal resource use in significantly greater detail. Key tools such as resource mapping, ranking of use of different methods of resource extraction, and the significance of different resources for food, income and exchange can help to provide a higher level of resolution in their understanding of people’s

livelihoods in coastal communities. SocMon provides a suite of socioeconomic variables that may be used to monitor trends and changes in livelihoods with management interventions and climate changes. New variables have been developed (for example in the Caribbean) that actually monitor pursuit of alternative, supplementary and complementary livelihoods. Measurement and monitoring of key contextual SocMon variables such as *Age, Gender, Education, Occupation, Household Income* as well as *Household Activities, Use Patterns, Household Goods and Services, Household Market Orientation* etc. can all provide detailed information on trends in livelihoods and can be used to engineer change – i.e. enhance and/or diversify livelihoods - based on analyses.

Complementary methods in the field

The methods associated with both SocMon and SLA are not fixed and almost any set of tools can be applied. Both SocMon and SLA were developed out of experience in participatory development and the use of participatory tools for analysis and planning at the community and household level. Participatory techniques, such as those suggested in SocMon, are therefore particularly applicable for implementing the SLA. The wide range of participatory tools available, including some of those not included in the GCRMN SocMon Manual, can be found at: <http://www.participatorymethods.org/>. The specific techniques described and referenced below are some of those that have proved particularly relevant to the SLA.

- **Appreciative inquiry**

Appreciative Inquiry (AI) is a way of facilitating positive change in organizations, groups and communities. It is based on the assumption that every human system has elements that work well – that is elements that work together, even if only occasionally, to make a system vital, effective, and successful. AI begins by identifying this positive core and helping people participating in those systems to build on that energy, sharpen their vision of what they would like to achieve in the future, and inspire action for change. AI lays out a set of techniques and underlying principles for those facilitating this process, a key part of which is helping members of organizations, groups or communities to build a positive vision of their future.

The references provided below provide more detail on the approach. AI has been extensively used in organizational development, but several organizations, notably Myrada in India, have had extensive experience in applying the approach in rural communities in the developing world and this is described in the IISD reference below.

<http://www.iisd.org/library/positive-path-using-appreciative-inquiry-rural-indian-communities>

As with the broader SLA, SocMon can contribute during the conduct of AI by providing field teams with tools for helping them to analyze natural resource use together with local people – focus groups, historical matrices, timelines etc. This analysis can play an important part in enhancing local people's understanding of their own skills, knowledge and capacities, and thus contribute to their development of a vision of future positive change. SocMon teams can also incorporate elements of AI into their own work, particularly some of the methods and approaches suggested in AI for facilitating future change.

- **Sustainable Livelihoods Enhancement and Diversification (SLED)**

The SLED approach, and its associated tools, represents a synthesis between participatory community-level planning for natural resource use, the SLA and AI. It was developed in the context of work with communities dependent on coral reef resources in South Asia and aims to provide an approach that encourages local resource-users to identify their strengths and potential, develop a positive vision for their future, and think through strategies for achieving that vision. An analysis of the different dimensions of people's use of natural resources and how this can be made sustainable is a key part of this process. The SLED effectively transfers experience in AI and participatory planning

to the specific context of communities living in coastal areas and dependent on coastal and marine resources. This is why SocMon as a methodological approach complements the SLED approach. Incorporation of elements of SocMon such as household surveys, focus group techniques, as researchers are working with communities and resource users, enhances the overall effectiveness of SLED and related outputs. Details on the SLED approach are laid out in the manual available at: https://www.reefresilience.org/pdf/SLED_Manual_Final-LowRes.pdf

- **Informing & influencing strategies – what are they? How are they used? How do they contribute?**

The SLA emphasizes the importance of understanding how people and their livelihoods are linked to the institutions, organizations and processes that form the context for their communities and families. Improving the relationships between people and these supporting institutions is often a key part in improving livelihoods resilience and helping them to better manage the natural resources they depend on. Developing a specific strategy for improving these relationships is therefore an important part of the SLA and represents an element that can usefully be incorporated into SocMon. During field experience with community planning, SLA and SocMon in South Asia, these strategies have been called **Informing and Influencing Strategies** as they focus on the **identification** of key institutions and organizations that play a role in shaping people's livelihoods, analyzing the **roles** they play, understanding their **incentives** for changing the ways in which they work, and developing **specific strategies for catalyzing change** in those institutions and organizations that are amenable to change. This process aims to provide both communities and organizations working with those communities with a systematic means of addressing issues relating to supporting institutions, whether these are governmental or non-governmental, formal or non-formal, service providers or policy and decision makers.

An example of an **Informing and Influencing Framework** from work in coastal communities in Sri Lanka is provided below. This particular framework deals not only with institutions and organizations but with all the stakeholders involved in community-level planning. The example represents just a part of the entire framework which dealt with a complete range of stakeholders involved with or affected by community-level planning.

A key benefit in applying such a framework is that it helps communities and community workers to identify changes in the behaviour of key stakeholders that can actually be leveraged and the actions required to apply pressure for change. It also helps people working in the community to make the difficult distinction between what institutions and organizations are **supposed** to do, and what they **actually** do in practice. Making this distinction is critical in understanding how those institutions work and how to encourage them to be more supportive and positive in their actions.

Part of an Informing and Influencing Framework developed in support of a new Community-Level (People's) Planning Process as part of the ADB-funded North-East Coastal Communities Development Project (NECCDEP), Sri Lanka

KEY STAKEHOLDER GROUPS INVOLVED	WHAT ROLE TO THEY HAVE TO PLAY IN THE PEOPLE'S PLANNING PROCESS?	WHAT WILL ARE THEIR PRINCIPLE CONCERNS REGARDING THE NEW PLANNING PROCESS?	HOW DOES THIS STAKEHOLDER NEED TO CHANGE FROM WHAT THEY DO NOW?	WHAT CAN WE DO TO ENCOURAGE /HELP THEM TO CHANGE? – WHAT INCENTIVES DO THEY HAVE TO CHANGE?	THE BEST WAY TO ADDRSS THEIR SPECIFIC NEEDS
People	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Owners • Participants • Decision makers • Beneficiaries • Implementers • Undertakers 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Highlight their issues • Express their demand 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Change from being observers to participants • Become shareholders • Demand driven agents 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Make them realise their strengths. • Help to create their own visions • Reveal best experiences from past success 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Give clear visualisation for understanding PDP • Awareness of the aims of the process
GN	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Information giver • Agent of DS • (grass roots level govt. service providers) 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Could benefit him • Could think it is a waste of time • Will it be a benefit to the community • Could it create more work for me 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Move from being an informer to a participant / representative of the people and government • Become an effective point of contact between people and govt. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Needs clear guidance about PPP • Demonstrate his status could improve • Demonstrate the differences between this process and previous processes 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Training / workshop. • GN meetings • Circulars
DS / GA (District-level Representatives)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Information giver • Grass roots govt. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Execution • Super guidance 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Move from being inactive to active 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Give clear guidance • Front-line agencies (GA/PD etc) 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Training /workshops • Circulars & manuals • Meetings & presentation
Frontline Government Officers (RDO, CBO, SSO etc...)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Agents of change • Information giver • Service providers • facilitators 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Bring the services to the peoples doorsteps • Encourage and motivate on change of people 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Make the feel part of the change process • Help to adopt PDP process • Make from idle to Active 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Motivations through incentives • Include and key participants 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Hold specific vision meeting for them • Workshops and awareness material
International NGO	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Donors and service providers • To consider the process in their functions 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Conditions set by the funding agency • All ready existing PRA approach – how does this fit with that 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Working methods need to change • Change the attitudes of the NGOs and their staff • Project selection criteria 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Make it as prerequisite • Should work to identify the real situation • Conduct a meeting in the NGO consortium • Train some staff about the PPP 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Leaflets • Brochures • Training programme • Inform of rules and regulations • Circulars • Conditions
Chief Secretary	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Chief executer, motivator 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Prototype in society – he is a role model 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Should follow his guidance and directions 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Document of the ideas in the development process
Community mobilisers	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Encourage people to attend meetings • Coordinate between IPNGO and people • Helping with Presentations 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Process may help them in their work • Coorcinat between IPNGO and people • Process may create more work 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Need to learn the Peoples Planning process • Have to realise that this is a good process 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Provide training in the process • Ask them to participate in the process 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Meeting in the community
NGOs	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • implement and support • provide services 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Easy to implement • Easy to solve problems 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Increase cooperation • Mobilisation • Attitude change 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Awareness • Conditions to undertake the IP role • Identify resources 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Disseminating • Meetings • Discussions
Local Elites	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Initiators 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Process Addresses in Current Problem 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Explain the process and its difference 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Ask them to attend the community meeting as observers 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Discussion – mobilise – get them involved

LAST PAGE