



PRCM

PARTENARIAT RÉGIONAL POUR LA CONSERVATION
DE LA ZONE CÔTIÈRE ET MARINE
EN AFRIQUE DE L'OUEST

CHARTER

OF THE WEST AFRICAN REGIONAL MARINE AND COASTAL CONSERVATION PARTNERSHIP

PRCM

PREAMBLE

Recalling the efforts for regional cooperation in fisheries resources management initiated in 1989 by Mauritania, Senegal, Cape Verde, Gambia, Guinea-Bissau and Guinea through the establishment of the Subregional Fisheries Commission – CSRP, which Sierra Leone joined in 2007;

Recalling the founding in 1997 of the Regional Coastal Planning Network aimed at fostering exchanges of experience and pooling of expertise in marine and coastal biodiversity conservation in West African countries;

Taking note of the Cooperation Agreement signed in 2001 by IUCN, FIBA and WWF, and subsequently by Wetlands International in 2003, on the conservation of marine and coastal biodiversity in Mauritania, Senegal, Cape Verde, Gambia, Guinea Bissau and Guinea;

Recalling the adoption in 2003 of the Regional Strategy for MPAs in West Africa by all the Ministers of Protected Areas and Fisheries of these countries;

Recalling the launching of the PRCM in 2004 in these countries at the initiative of IUCN, WWF, FIBA and Wetlands International, in cooperation with the CSRP;

Considering the Memorandum of Cooperation and Partnership entered into by the Subregional Fisheries Commission – CSRP and the founding institutions of the West African Regional Marine and Coastal Conservation Programme and signed in 2004 in Dakar;

Noting that Sierra Leone joined the countries of the PRCM upon its accession to the CSRP;

Highlighting the progress achieved in biodiversity conservation measures, fisheries resources management mechanisms and integrated coastal zone management processes through the action of the PRCM during its two programme phases from 2004 to 2012;

Stressing the significant improvements made since 2004 by the PRCM in regional cooperation, in cooperation between neighbouring countries and between different groups of stakeholders, from governments to community-based organisations, and including local elected officials, technical and academic institutions, the media and civil society organisations;

Recognising the wide range of approaches developed by the actors and the complementarity of their actions in the field aimed at responding to the challenges of coastal conservation and sustainable coastal development in the countries of the PRCM area;

Bearing in mind the Nouakchott Declaration signed in 2010 by the Ministers of the Environment of the States in the PRCM area, which advocates the continuation and strengthening of the PRCM following the end of its second phase;

Following on the Statement of Commitment adopted by coastal zone stakeholders at the 6th Regional Marine and Coastal Forum held in Banjul in February 2012, and the provisions of the Regional Strategy of the West African Regional Marine and Coastal Conservation Partnership, which provide for the establishment of a Charter for the PRCM;

Conservation and sustainable development actors, members of the West African Regional Marine and Coastal Conservation Partnership,

Observing the rapid pace of change in the West African coastal zone in recent decades; significant population growth, urban sprawl covering larger and larger areas and generating high levels of waste, increasing pollution and declining natural resources. Once a vector of hope and development, the coastal zone has now become a source of concern: if the degradation of ecosystems and resources is not halted, species will become extinct, landscapes will be disfigured, the well-being of populations will decline, conflicts will arise and the potential for development of tourism, fisheries and agriculture will be reduced.

Appreciating that the PRCM has worked effectively since 2004 to consolidate initiatives and has been instrumental in the emergence of a coherent vision. Together, coastal zone stakeholders have become stronger, and measures to slow the degradation of West Africa's marine and coastal environment have become more effective. However, much remains to be done in this setting where pressure on the environment can only increase...

Cognisant of the fact that the coastal zone is, and must remain, the demographic and economic hub of West Africa, that it is diverse, complex, rich, but also swiftly-changing and fragile and must therefore be governed with care and managed prudently.

Convinced that the future of the coastal zone and sustainable and equitable development for coastal communities depend on the conservation and appropriate utilisation of biodiversity.

Further convinced that each coastal stakeholder, whether a government, a national or local elected official, a member of civil society, or individual citizen, shares in the responsibility for the future of the coastal zone, and that if all concerned agree to work together within a long-term multi-scale perspective, sharing information, helping one another, showing solidarity and taking care to avoid damaging it, humankind can continue to use and to pass on to future generations a coastal zone which remains beautiful, bountiful, productive and rich in preserved nature.

have agreed upon the following:

CHAPTER I: PURPOSE AND SCOPE OF APPLICATION

Article 1: Purpose of the PRCM Charter

The purpose of the Charter of the West African Regional Marine and Coastal Conservation (PRCM) is to lay down the values, principles and rules on which the members of the Partnership rely for building and guiding the collaborative efforts which will enable them to reach their shared aims.

Article 2: Eligibility for PRCM membership

The following types of organisations may be members of the PRCM:

- Intergovernmental organisations,
- Governmental organisations (state administrations, technical agencies, academic and research institutions, etc.),
- Global environment organisations
- International and regional non-governmental organisations,
- National civil society organisations (national NGOs, associations, socioprofessional groups, community-based organisations, etc.) which have been legally recognised for at least two years,
- Thematic national and regional stakeholder networks,
- Technical and financial partners, development partners,
- Private enterprises whose activity contributes to promoting the conservation and sustainable management of marine and coastal natural resources and which meet the specific membership criteria set by the PRCM Regional Steering Committee.

All organisations wishing to join the PRCM must be recognised for their work in marine and coastal zone conservation in West Africa, and more specifically for their role in the governance and management of the marine and coastal zone and its resources, in building the capacity of coastal stakeholders, in combatting poverty, in the social development of coastal communities, or in environmental communication and education, research, scientific and popular publications consistent with the aims of the PRCM.

Article 3: Membership procedure

Becoming a member of the PRCM requires an act by the legal representative of an organisation wishing to become a member of the Partnership: he or she must submit an official PRCM Membership Application to the Mobilisation and Coordination and Unit along with the documents required to establish the eligibility of the applicant.

The decision to admit the applicant will then be taken by the Regional Steering Committee based on consideration of the application file submitted and on the membership criteria set out in the PRCM operational manual. The minutes of the Regional Steering Committee meeting stating the acceptance of the application will be deemed to be the official decision of admission.

Adherence to the Charter and to the values and principles enshrined therein is a condition for membership in the PRCM, and the Partnership rules laid down in the Charter are binding upon all its members.

Article 4: PRCM operating procedures and methods

The PRCM charter does not determine the operational methods of the governing and management bodies of the Partnership, nor the procedures for fundraising activities, which are to be set out in an operational manual which shall serve as the rules of procedure, to be submitted to the PRCM Regional Steering Committee for approval,

CHAPTER II : VISION AND MISSIONS OF THE PRCM

Article 5: Vision

The members of the PRCM share the vision of **"a healthy and productive marine and coastal environment for the well-being of West African populations"**.

Article 6: Missions of the PRCM

The primary missions of the Partnership are:

- To mobilise and engage a wide variety of stakeholders who together will develop policies, build collaborative relationships and undertake initiatives with a view to preserving the ecological and cultural heritage of the West African coastal zone;
- To offer a service platform to West African coastal zone actors in the areas of documentation, communication, pooling of know-how and expertise, sharing experiences and building the knowledge base on coastal zone conservation in West Africa;
- To act as a watchtower on emerging issues affecting the coastal zone, conservation and the enhancement of marine and coastal ecosystem services in the region;
- To guide and influence policy processes and public policies in order to gain greater consideration for coastal environment issues and ensure effective implementation of international agreements and environmental agendas;
- To encourage research, the valuing and utilisation of local knowledge, and knowledge dissemination by way of decision-making tools for better management of coastal ecosystems;
- To promote greater environmental responsibility, capacity and skills among coastal zone stakeholders, including those in the private sector, by disseminating lessons learned and best practices in development, conservation, restoration and utilisation of the coastal zone;
- To seek to harmonise and coordinate the initiatives taken by members of the partnership and development partners supporting these initiatives;

- To improve the profile and reputation of West African actors among decision-makers, development partners and regional and international institutions;
- To support fundraising to enable the members of the Partnership to work toward their common goals.

CHAPTER III : VALUES SHARED BY THE MEMBERS OF THE PRCM

Article 7: Moral and human values

The members of the Partnership identify with moral and human values including respect for cultural diversity, the status of women, children and vulnerable communities and also the quest for equity in conducting the Partnership.

Article 8: Respect for legitimate and legal rights

The members of the Partnership seek to implement solutions for preserving marine and coastal biodiversity and for safeguarding development potential which do not impinge on any recognised legitimate or legal right.

Article 9: Rights of indigenous peoples

The members of the PRCM also recognise the fundamental rights of indigenous peoples and traditional landowners to take part in the governance of natural habitats and resources and to enjoy preferential access to the ecosystem services their homelands provide;

Article 10: Promotion of local knowledge

The members of the PRCM seek, in order to support marine and coastal biodiversity conservation and management actions, to value local know-how and local capacity to adapt to global change, and to support natural and environmentally-friendly solutions to the problems stemming from human development in the coastal zone.

Article 11: Good governance

The members of the PRCM are guided in their work and action by the principles of good governance and compliance with existing legislation. Furthermore, they refrain from engaging in acts of corruption and misappropriation of funds, and from subjecting others to unfair treatment and to illegal retaliatory measures.

Article 12: Transparency and accountability

The members of the PRCM recognise that they have a duty to act transparently and accountably both toward other members and toward PRCM partners. With this in mind, they take special care to use and manage funds properly and to ensure that evaluators and auditors have access to relevant information.

Article 13: Environmental and social justice

The members of the PRCM promote environmental and social justice by supporting practices which further the implementation of national laws and regulations, as well as the principles enshrined in relevant international conventions.

CHAPTER IV: PRINCIPLES BY WHICH PRCM MEMBERS ARE BOUND

Article 14: Subsidiarity

The PRCM upholds the principle of subsidiarity and recognises the primacy of national legislation.

Article 15: Contributing to the goals of the PRCM

The members of the Partnership strive to ensure that their programmes, their initiatives and their investments contribute to achieving the common goals they have set together, as described in the regional strategy documents and work plans of the PRCM; they seek in particular to enhance all possible synergies of action. They are committed to attaining the highest professional standards in all activities carried out under the Partnership.

Article 16: Increasing cooperation between members

In implementing their initiatives for marine and coastal zone conservation, the members of the PRCM give precedence to cooperation with other members and to harmonisation of their interventions, in particular by availing themselves of the services offered by the Mobilisation and Coordination Unit of the Partnership.

Article 17: Supporting regional integration

The members of the PRCM, convinced of the effectiveness of an integrated approach both in terms of geographical scale and thematic area, develop regional solidarity and give precedence to regional, transboundary and intersectoral collaboration to which they strive to link local initiatives and approaches with a view to achieving greater coherence.

Article 18: Solidarity between members

If a member of the Partnership or a natural site in the region is exposed to a threat, the other members of the PRCM will, to the best of their ability, provide their assistance in finding and implementing an appropriate solution.

Article 19: Building a shared knowledge base

In order to ensure that full and lasting benefit is derived from the outcomes of work and initiatives, and to ensure that marine and coastal biodiversity conservation moves forward on strong foundations, the members of the PRCM will together build an effective shared knowledge base which incorporates their outcomes and products, especially with a view to improving governance and management frameworks and to building the capacity of field practitioners.

Article 20: Support for conservation policies

The members of the PRCM recognise the need to make their action sustainable and also recognise that public policies are important for the convergence of the all stakeholders' efforts; they therefore work to gain greater consideration for conservation and the environment in national policies.

Article 21: Promotion of the PRCM

The members of the Partnership will, at every opportunity, promote the PRCM, its vision and its goals to policymakers, opinion leaders, technical and financial partners and representatives of regional and international organisations and multilateral agreements.

Article 22: Acknowledgment of the work of the PRCM and of its members

All members of the PRCM agree to acknowledge the ownership of, and intellectual property rights related to, the actions and work of other members, and agree to mention the PRCM in their communication regarding initiatives or work carried out under the Partnership.

Article 23: PRCM procedures

The members of the PRCM will take care to facilitate, and refrain from impeding, the implementation of PRCM procedures and the smooth operations of its governing bodies as described in the operational manual approved by the PRCM Regional Steering Committee.

Article 24: Participation in the exchange and pooling of information

The members of the Partnership recognise the importance of having good information on the status of and changes in the coastal zone to guide them in their initiatives and interventions and, to this end, take part in producing, making available and sharing the data, knowledge and analyses resulting from their work.

CHAPTER V : RIGHTS OF PRCM MEMBERS

Article 25: Freedom of opinion

All members of the Partnership retain their identity and the freedom to hold their own opinions. They will, however, refrain from adopting positions on behalf of the PRCM which run counter to its principles and aims.

Article 26: Freedom to act and profile of members

The members of the Partnership remain free to develop initiatives and seek funding, and may use action conducted under the Partnership to enhance their own profile, provided that they abide by the principles set out in articles 12, 13, 14, 16 and 20.

Article 27: Participation in PRCM governing and management bodies

All members of the PRCM are entitled to take part in the governance of the PRCM by taking part in the work of the appropriate College, in accordance with the operating methods provided for in the operational manual which shall serve as the rules of procedure, and/or to any other established governing or management body.

Article 28: Participation in the PRCM Regional Forum

The members of the Partnership have the right to attend and to take part in the PRCM Regional Forum, and to use this venue as an opportunity for consultation and communication about their work, their expectations and concerns, with the agreement of the PRCM Mobilisation and Coordination Unit, which is in charge of organising the Forum.

Article 29: PRCM services and products

The members of the Partnership may avail themselves of technical services and products from the PRCM, including:

Technical services: the PRCM Mobilisation and Coordination Unit offers members services such as technical support, communication services (mailing list management, production of reports, Web page management, etc.), monitoring & evaluation and knowledge capitalisation;

Political advocacy: members may, where appropriate, benefit from political advocacy action led by the PRCM when such action is likely to improve the framework for exercising their prerogatives;

Access to activity funding: in selecting an entity to implement activities planned under the Partnership's regional strategy, competent members will be given priority and, if selected, will receive funding for this purpose;

Support for developing projects and initiatives: the PRCM, promoting multistakeholder initiatives of regional or transnational scope and aware of the costs entailed in developing such initiatives, may award project development grants according to criteria set out in the operational manual;

Support for fundraising: the PRCM governing bodies and the Mobilisation and Coordination Unit offer fundraising assistance for projects being developed with the support of, or by, the PRCM;

Sponsored attendance at international meetings: the PRCM offers technical support to its members and, insofar as possible, financial support to enable them to better prepare for and take part in international meetings and events;

Cooperation and coherence of interventions: the Mobilisation and Coordination Unit of the PRCM supports cooperation between its members and with other national and international partners, striving to harmonise their interventions and facilitating the development of synergies to achieve its goals.

Article 30: Resignation from the PRCM

Any member of the PRCM may resign from the Partnership by notifying the Mobilisation and Coordination Unit in writing of its decision. However, a member's resignation will not be accepted if it deprives the Partnership of the benefits of work and initiatives developed using the PRCM's services or in cooperation with other members. Specific provisions on this subject are contained in the PRCM operational manual.

CHAPTER VI : DISPUTE RESOLUTION

Article 31: Disputes between members of the PRCM

In the event of a dispute between two or more members of the PRCM, a settlement will first be sought internally through mediation based on the principle of a consensus-based solution, then by requesting the assistance of the Mobilisation and Coordination Unit or a member not party to the dispute and, if necessary, requesting the Regional Steering Committee to act as arbitrator. As a last resort, if the dispute remains unresolved, the dispute will be referred to the judicial bodies of the appropriate place of jurisdiction.

Article 32: Disputes between a member and the PRCM

In the event of a dispute between a member and the PRCM, a mutually acceptable solution will be sought through discussions between the member and the PRCM Mobilisation and Coordination Unit or the Regional Steering Committee; if necessary, a member not party to the dispute may be requested to act as mediator. If the dispute remains unresolved, an organisation which is not a member of the PRCM and is accepted by both parties will be called in as a mediator. If no consensus can be reached, and as a last resort, the parties will refer the dispute to the judicial bodies of the appropriate place of jurisdiction.

Article 33: Sanctions and expulsion

If a member of the Partnership is found to be in breach of the principles of the Charter by committing acts for which there is substantiated evidence and which are deemed to be inconsistent with the undertakings required by terms of the Charter, the Regional Steering Committee may impose sanctions against the member which, depending on the seriousness or the recurring nature of the breach, may range from temporary suspension of the member's rights, to temporary suspension of membership, to expulsion from the PRCM.

CHAPTER VII: OPERATIONAL PROVISIONS

Article 34: Monitoring the implementation of the PRCM Charter

The Mobilisation and Coordination Unit of the PRCM shall be responsible for monitoring the implementation of and compliance with the values and principles contained in the Charter, together with the representatives of the Colleges, and shall make specific reports on this point in annual reports and at regional meetings.

CHAPTER VIII: TRANSITIONAL PROVISIONS

Article 35 : Adoption of the PRCM Charter

The Regional Steering Committee is responsible for approving the PRCM Charter which will be submitted, through the PRCM Mobilisation and Coordination Unit, for acceptance by West African coastal zone stakeholders wishing to become members of the Partnership.

CHAPTER IX: FINAL PROVISIONS

Article 36: Entry into effect

The Charter takes effect on the date of its adoption by the Regional Steering Committee which comprises representatives of each of the Colleges.

Article 37: Revision and amendment of the Charter

The Charter may be revised or amended at the request of at least two Colleges acting through their Regional Steering Committee representatives. The revised version must be submitted to and approved by the PRCM Regional Steering Committee.

Approved by the Regional Steering Committee of the PRCM at its meeting in Dakar, October 09 2012.

GLOSSARY

Civil Society : The aggregate of organisations and non-commercial, non-governmental entities in which individuals pursue common goals and ideals.

Grassroots organisation : A self-organised group of individuals based in communities and working in their immediate surroundings who pursue common aims together on a volunteer, non-profit basis.

National network : A group of people or organisations who agree to work together within a framework governed by a set of rules to achieve agreed aims at national scale.

Regional network : A group of people or organisations working together within a framework governed by a set of rules to achieve agreed aims at regional level.

Indigenous peoples : Peoples whose presence in a given place for many generations can be proven.

Accountability : The manner in which organisations account for their actions to an authority, to populations or to donors and are recognised as and held accountable by them.

Legitimate rights : Universal rights that are independent from all local beliefs and practices and inherent in human nature. They are also called "natural rights" or "inalienable rights".

Legal rights : These are rights which are set out or listed by a legislative authority in legal codes or texts. They are therefore the product of political cultures and regimes.

The principle of subsidiarity : This principle states that a higher-level entity should not do what can be done more effectively at a lower level, in other words, the most appropriate level for the intervention should be found. Its corollary posits that when a problem exceeds the capacity of a small entity, a higher-level entity can support it, within the limits of the principle of subsidiarity.

Environmental justice : This refers both to the equitable sharing of ecological space and to the effort which must be made to avoid causing ecological damage and, if such damage occurs, to provide compensation or reparation.

College: Category of stakeholders working in the coastal zone within the PRCM area and grouped together by type of activity.