



Training Course Report

Impact assessment and decision making in the BCLME Region

Deutsches Haus, Swakopmund, Namibia

23-26 March 2007



Prepared and delivered by the
Southern African Institute for Environmental Assessment (SAIEA)

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Introduction

This training course was commissioned by the Benguela Current Large Marine Ecosystem (BCLME) programme, through the BENEFIT office. BCLME funded the participation of 14 participants while the NACOMA project sponsored an additional 6 participants. The list of persons who attended the course is presented below.

The course was prepared by the Southern African Institute for Environmental Assessment (SAIEA) and presented jointly by Peter Tarr and Zeka Alberto. The materials were drawn from a number of other courses prepared and presented by SAIEA over the past 6 years, but customized for the audience and the need for focus on the coastal and marine environments in the BCLME region.

All logistical arrangements, including venue hire, participants travel and other logistics were made by the BENEFIT office, and overseen by their Training Coordinator, Ms Pavs Pillay.

Attendance

Domingos da Silva Neto	INIP
Isabel Rangel	INIP
Theressa Akkers	MCM
Emá Gomes	Ministry of Petroleum
Helena André	Ministry of Petroleum
Ana Yolanda Gonçalves	Ministry of Urbanism and Environmental Affairs
Alwyn Engelbrecht	NACOMA
Aunie Gebardt	NACOMA
Berdine Potgeiter	NACOMA
Francis Samtambwa	NACOMA
John Paterson	NACOMA
Petrus Sunny Shuuya	NACOMA
Anja Kriener	NatMirc
Anja van der Plas	NatMirc
Deon Louw	NatMirc
Heidi Currie	Independent
Heidi Skrypzeck	NatMirc
Janine Basson	NatMirc
Kolet Grobler	NatMirc
Paloma Ellitson	NatMirc

Course methodology

The overall theme of the course was 'decision maker's dilemma' – the challenges faced by mid-level decision makers in the BCLME Region. The majority of participants were relatively senior with an average of approximately ten years experience each. For this reason, the course was designed to improve leadership around the use of sustainable development tools such as Impact Assessment. It was assumed that the participants would either contribute towards the setting of Terms of Reference for EAs or comment on completed EAs as part of their normal work. In some cases, they would play a pivotal role in issuing a decision on a project on the basis of having reviewed an EA report. This assumption proved correct.

The course combined lectures based on powerpoint slides, group activities on prepared case studies, a 'mini EIA' conducted partly in the field and an excursion to view development issues along the coastline between Swakopmund and Walvis Bay. The field excursion focused on a controversial housing estate in the above area, and included an *in situ* presentation by the company that conducted the EIA and a response by a local NGO opposed to the project. This enabled participants to consider both sides of the argument whilst viewing construction activities first hand. They were given the opportunity to pose questions to the 'for' and 'against' camps and so draw their own conclusions about the merits of both. The methodology was designed to

achieve maximum participation by all participants and as much 'learning by doing' as possible. Also, participants were expected to share their knowledge so that course-goers could benefit from the collective experience within the group.

Groups were selected by the facilitator to ensure a mix of persons from the three countries represented. This prevented colleagues from forming their own group and facilitated networking and the establishment of new relationships between participants.

From the discussions that were generated during the course, it became evident that the countries in the BCLME region share a number of common problems. A concluding 'brainstorm' session suggested that a number of improvements need to be made to ensure better implementation of Impact Assessment. These include:

- Passing of draft legislation (in the case of Namibia)
- Combating corruption (there is a perception that political considerations – some linked to corrupt practices – undermine Impact Assessment and governance in development planning)
- More consistent use of EA (current situation is ad-hoc use)
- More use of independent guide-and-review services – both to improve quality and governance
- More training – especially for higher level people
- Improve post-implementation monitoring.

Course Review

It is evident from the evaluation by participants that the course was successful as 33% felt it exceeded their expectations whilst the remainder (67%) said their expectations had been met. It was pleasing to note that no-one felt that their expectations had not been met.

Figure 1: Rating by participants on the quality of various aspects of the course (based on anonymous completion of the evaluation questionnaire).

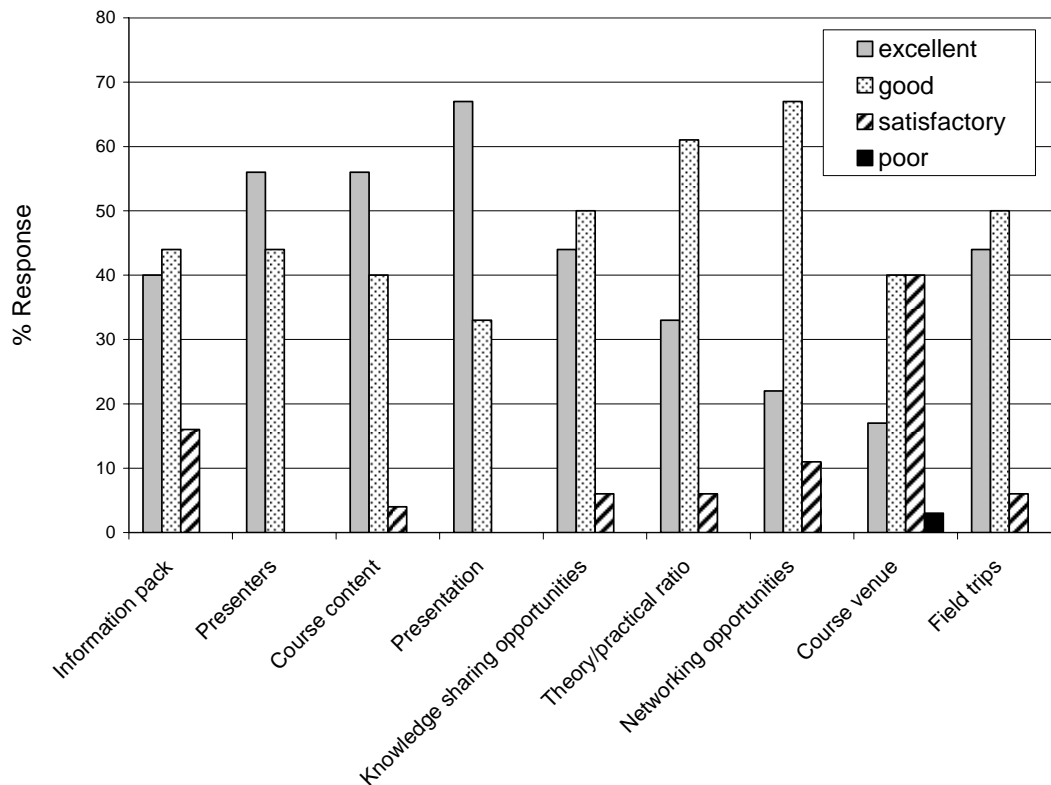


Figure 1 shows that the presentation of the course and the presenters themselves were very well received (100% excellent or good) and that all other aspects (except the venue) received an overwhelming satisfaction rating amongst participants. The venue was generally 'satisfactory' but the room was perhaps a bit small given the fact that the course included a number of exercises that required people to move around and interact with each other. Breakaway areas were far from the main room and it was rather awkward to carry boards and flip charts up and down stairs.

Most participants commented that the course was extremely relevant to them in their work and that they felt more confident to perform their duties as a result. The main suggestions for improvements (in random order) were:

- Present the course in Portuguese (in Angola)
- Distribute course materials ahead of time so people can familiarise themselves with the contents
- Present the course to higher level decision makers
- Include more information on environmental law
- More information about monitoring
- Include more case studies.

Attendance of the course dinner was disappointing and it was evident that participants preferred saving their per diems rather than going out as a group. This was a pity as a course dinner usually helps to foster group spirit. A better idea in future is perhaps to host the dinner as a compulsory activity – though this is obviously a controversial issue given the costs and the fact that these are ultimately deducted from the per diems. It was further disappointing to note that the fully funded ice-breaker was also not attended by many of the participants. This event was meant to introduce the participants to each other and start the inklings of group spirit.

Annexes

Annex 1: Course Agenda

DAY 1: Monday 23 April 2007

- 08h30 Coffee and registration
09h00 Official opening of the course (Minister of Fisheries and Marine Resources)
09h30 Purpose of the course, introductions and participant expectations
10h00 Course outline, methodology, house rules, administration.
10h30 *TEA*

Part 1: Threats and development options for the BCLME

- 11h00 ***Group work***- key threats to the BCLME
12h00 Plenary discussion
12h30 Taking stock and discussion/suggestions
13h00 *LUNCH*
14h00 Overview of fisheries, coastal development, tourism, etc.
15h00 *TEA*

Part 2: Environmental Law

- 15h30 Overview of environmental law, international conventions and key principles
16h15 ***Group work***: *Strengths and weaknesses of policy and practice in the BCLME countries*
17h00 End Day 1

19h00 Course reception: cocktails and drinks (venue to be announced)

DAY 2: Tuesday 24 April 2007

- 08h00 Overview Day 1 and planning for day 2
08h15 Plenary feedback on policy and practice
Part 3: Decision making for sustainable development
09h00 Responsibilities of decision makers in the BCLME countries
10h00 ***Group work***: Decision making challenges in BCLME countries
10h30 *TEA*
11h00 *Group work continued*

11h30 Plenary feedback on decision making challenges

Part 4: Impact Assessment

12h00 Strategic Environmental Assessment (SEA)

13h00 *LUNCH*

14h00 Environmental Impact Assessment (EIA)

15h00 *TEA*

15h30 **Group work:** Scoping exercise using a local case study

16h30 Plenary feedback

17h00 Closure

DAY 3: Wednesday 25 April 2007

08h00 Overview Day 2 and planning for day 3

Part 5: Impact Assessment practice

08h15 Public participation in impact assessment (including exercise)

10h00 Introduction to case study

10h30 *TEA*

11h00 Excursion to case study site. Participants walk to site. Briefed on site about the Project. Return to venue for lunch

13h00 *LUNCH*

14h00 **Group work:** Mini-EIA relating to the case study

15h00 *TEA*

15h30 Group work continued

17h00 Closure

19h00 Course dinner (venue to be announced)

DAY 4: Thursday 26 April 2007

08h00 Overview Day 3 and planning for day 4

Part 6: SEA/EIA wrap-up

08h15 Field excursion: Bus trip to various illustrative case studies to show examples of best and poor practice. Lunch in the field.

15h00 *Tea (at lecture venue)*

15h30 Course evaluation

16h00 Wrap-up discussion

17h00 Closure

Annex 2: Course materials

See separate file

Annex 3: Evaluation questionnaire

- Please be honest and frank in your evaluation – the purpose of the evaluation is to find ways of improving future courses
- You can remain anonymous, so that you are free to speak your mind!
- Please tick the appropriate boxes and / or write comments in the space provided
- Please hand in your completed evaluation to the course facilitator.

	Excellent	Good	Satisfactory	Poor
1 The information pack that you received was				
2 The presenters of the course were				
3 The content of the course was				
4 The presentation of the course was				
5 The opportunities for you to share your knowledge with other participants were				
6 The ratio of theoretical presentations to group/practical exercises was				
7 The opportunities for you to network with other participants attending the course were				
8 The course venue was				
9 The field trips were				

	Exceeded expectations	Met expectations	Did not meet	Unsure
To what extent did this course meet your expectations?				

How relevant was the course and how will you use the knowledge you have gained?

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What should we do to improve the course?.....

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General Comments and Recommendations:.....

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Thank you