

CONSERVATION  
INTERNATIONAL



Intergovernmental  
Oceanographic  
Commission

# Update from the International Blue Carbon Policy Working Group

1<sup>st</sup> workshop  
12-14 July, 2011



# Working Group objectives

- Provide guidance for “blue carbon” policy development that supports and finances management of coastal ecosystems for climate change mitigation:
  - Identify opportunities, limits and risks of advancing “blue carbon” in different international climate, coastal and ocean fora;
  - Identify activities and stakeholders;
  - Identify important milestones for achieving policy change;
  - Identify areas for streamlining implementation between different international marine and climate change efforts;
  - Identify areas of current policy and economic research gaps.



## Blue Carbon Policy Framework

# Working Group objectives

- Build integrated Blue Carbon Community supporting the implementation of priority activities identified in the Framework by
  - Advancing policy change and implementation (governments, NGOs, ...)
  - Filling current policy and economic research gaps (universities, consultancies, think tanks, ...)
  - Advancing knowledge on best management practices (universities, practitioners, local communities & indigenous peoples, NGOs ....)
    - Strong link with International Blue Carbon Science Working Group
  - Information sharing and best-practice dissemination (Conventions, NGOs, IGOs, ...)
  - Raising awareness of “blue carbon” (NGOs, ... )

# International Agreements and Fora for Blue Carbon

*Climate Change*

*Ocean/conservation*

**UNFCCC**

NAMAs

IPCC

REDD +

CDM

Forest Carbon Partnership Facility

Forest Investment Program

REDD-Plus Partnership

UN-REDD

**Voluntary Carbon Market**

Verified Carbon Standard

**Convention on Biological Diversity**

**Ramsar Convention on Wetlands**

**UN Conference on Sustainable  
Development (Rio +20)**

**United Nations Open-ended Informal  
Consultative Process on Oceans and the  
Law of the Sea**

**UNEP Global Programme of Action for the  
Protection of the Marine Environment from  
Land-based Activities**

# General outcomes

- “Blue carbon” introduced at UNFCCC SBSTA June
  - Coastal vs open ocean
  - Status of scientific knowledge?
  - Market-based mechanism
- Use “blue carbon” conceptually – but not useful in policy context
- Coastal conservation, sustainable use and restoration activities for climate change mitigation
- Different mechanisms available/similar activities needed for the three different ecosystems
- Integration & demonstration rather than big policy change
- Data IPCC & methodologies

# Blue Carbon Policy Objectives

**1. Integrate coastal conservation, sustainable use and restoration activities into existing financial incentive mechanisms for climate change mitigation.**

**2. Getting ready for climate finance and accounting: utilize opportunities of learning-by-doing**

**3. Enhance integration and implementation of coastal conservation, sustainable use and restoration activities for climate change mitigation in international and regional policy frameworks.**

**4. Facilitate the inclusion of the carbon value of coastal ecosystems in the accounting of ecosystem services**

**5. Enhance integration and implementation of coastal ecosystems conservation, sustainable use and restoration activities for climate change mitigation in national, sub-national and sectoral policy frameworks.**

# Blue Carbon Policy Needs

**1. Integrate coastal conservation, sustainable use and restoration activities into existing financial incentive mechanisms for climate change mitigation.**

- **1.1 Build awareness amongst climate change policy community of strength of scientific evidence on reservoirs, emissions and removals of carbon.**
- **1.2 Access carbon finance through UNFCCC mechanisms and related funding streams;**
  - a. Demonstrate implementation of mangrove forests as part of REDD+ 'readiness' activities;
  - b. Develop NAMAs for coastal carbon ecosystems;
  - c. Provide the scientific and technical underpinnings to allow carbon finance to flow.
- **1.3 Access carbon finance for coastal conservation, sustainable use and restoration activities through other carbon markets (e.g. VCS, etc.);**
  - a. Need to develop sound methodologies
  - b. Provide the scientific and technical underpinnings to allow carbon finance to flow.

# Blue Carbon Policy Needs

1. Integrate coastal conservation, sustainable use and restoration activities into existing financial incentive mechanisms for climate change mitigation.

2. Getting ready for climate finance and accounting: utilize opportunities of learning-by-doing

- **2.1 Demonstrate feasibility of activities**
- **2.2 Capacity building at local/national level**



# Blue Carbon Policy Needs

1. Integrate coastal conservation, sustainable use and restoration activities into existing financial incentive mechanisms for climate change mitigation.

2. Getting ready for climate finance and accounting: utilize opportunities of learning-by-doing

3. Enhance integration and implementation of coastal ecosystems conservation, sustainable use and restoration activities for climate change mitigation in international and regional policy frameworks.

- **3.1 Provide broad variety of incentives for coastal conservation through UNFCCC Annex-I country activities.**
- **3.2 Raise recognition, improve management and augment financial flows for the conservation, sustainable use and restoration of coastal ecosystems for climate change mitigation through existing international ocean and coastal fora and mechanisms.**
  - a. Improve implementation and inform financing processes in relevant international and regional ocean and coastal policy frameworks.
  - b. Advance and disseminate technical knowledge on coastal ecosystems management for climate change mitigation.
  - c. Raise awareness of role of conservation, sustainable use and restoration of coastal ecosystems for climate change mitigation.

# Immediate opportunities/needs

- Populate literature cut-off date for publications for IPCC AR5 (July 2012) and IPCC Task Force on supplementary guidelines for wetlands (October 2012)
- Provide overview of currently prepared “blue carbon” articles relevant for IPCC processes; identify gaps and possibility for publication before literature cut-off date
- Science summary for policy-makers
- SBSTA submission on developments in research activities relevant to the needs of the Convention (19 September)
- SBSTA submission on methodological guidance for activities relating to REDD+ (19 September) - Mangrove

# SBSTA research

- Define very shortly what blue carbon is (the three ecosystems) and its relevance for climate change (i.e. mitigation, as carbon reservoirs and sinks, and adaptation)
- Science is already mature for quantifying the contribution of mangroves and salt marshes to the balance of GHG concentration in the atmosphere and therefore their mitigation potential is quantifiable and may included in mitigation policies and measures.
- Significant international attention/activity
- Highlight gap and need for research on quantifying the contribution of seagrasses to the global balance of greenhouse gases in the atmosphere and their mitigation potential; larger efforts on understanding of fate of carbon, ocean and atmosphere interchange
- Increased and strengthened research efforts in developing countries needed

# SBSTA REDD

- What are the specific methodological issues which should be considered for mangroves with regard to
  - MRV: accounting for all carbon pools unless shown that not significant?; different approaches?
  - Forest reference levels: Ongoing emissions by degraded mangrove areas and its impacts of reference levels; soil carbon as part of baseline; others?