

**REGIONAL COOPERATION SCIENTIFIC EXCHANGE
IN THE CENTRAL ESTUARINE ATLANTIC REGION
(RECOSIX-CEA)**

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ABSTRACT: The January 1993 Intergovernmental Oceanographic Commission (IOC) Conference in Dakar, Senegal, recommended the creation of a documentary network on aquatic sciences and more particularly on marine sciences. This project, called the Regional Cooperation Scientific Information Exchange in the Central Estuarine Atlantic Region (RECOSCIX-CEA) will be composed of 16 countries from Morocco to Angola and was begun in April 1993. This paper presents the activities for the pilot project and operational phases.

GENERALITIES

The coastal African communities from Mauritania to Angola have a large marine surface, numerous lagoons fed by rivers and numerous artificial and natural lakes.

These aquatic ecosystems have relatively low primary and secondary productivity (except in certain countries such as Mauritania, Senegal and Angola. In effect, the aquatic resources, marine brackish water and continental are naturally limited.

Also, most African states depend on exterior sources for fisheries products and this dependence is certain to grow noticeably if supplementary interior sources are not found.

It seems then that the African countries take into consideration the importance of resource management for improved resources exploitation and better management of existing stocks, while protecting the environment. Certain countries having understood the danger have established research institutes to study these aquatic ecosystems.

To respond to this need in Cote d' Ivoire, the Oceanographic Service of Abidjan was created in 1959. The Service was renamed the Oceanographic Research Center in 1961 and in 1991 became the Oceanologic Research Center of Abidjan (CRO).

In the first years of its existence, the CRO based its work on the physical, biological, and geological study of the coastal marine environment, but more recently, activities are oriented toward developmental themes. These themes include:

- Coastal oceanographic and sedimentologic studies.
- The lagoon environment.
- Lagoon aquaculture
- The rational exploitation of living marine , brackish water and continental resources.

In order for the CRO to fulfill its assigned role, which is to contribute to the economic and social development of Cote d' Ivoire, it was found necessary to collect, process, and diffuse the results of completed research, which is to say, manage scientific information.

Like other institutes in the subregion, since its creation, the CRO continues to produce a considerable quantity of articles, periodicals and reports and has a very rich documentation center.

Unfortunately, this highly specialized aquatic sciences information is not sufficiently diffused. In consequence, it is poorly known, and under-utilized by the scientific community and the public in general throughout the subregion. This is closely linked to the lack of financing for material and training for the staff of the various documentation centers of the subregion.

The direct consequences of this situation are:

- Poor exploitation of research results;
- Wasteful repetitions of certain research themes, particularly in fresh water fish culture;
- Difficulties in satisfying the users of this documentation;
- Excessive expenditures for information acquisition.

In order to best solve these problems the CRO has addressed this request to the Intergovernmental Oceanographic Commission for technical and financial aid to create the Oceanologic Documentation Network for coastal countries from Mauritania to Angola.

OBJECTIVES

This project is in line with a global trend to establish regional documentation networks. The regional network will consist of the approximately 15 members of the COI, ranging from Mauritania to Angola having research institutes and documentation centers whose activities focus on the marine (aquatic) sciences.

This project was designed to reinforce existing structures and to promote various exchanges.

The specific objectives of this project are to:

- Better respond to the needs of its users by supplying bibliographic documents, article and/or publication summaries;
- Promote communications in and amongst the national, subregional and international scientific communities;
- Edit and distribute various products concerning marine sciences in the subregion;
- Elaborate and diffuse updates information on scientific activities in the subregion.

EXPECTED PRODUCTS AND SERVICES

The project will offer its users a well balanced group of products and services concerning marine and limnologic sciences, technology and management.

Two types of services will be offered by the network:

- An information search service: this will provide users with a resume of publications in marine and limnologic science according to a predetermined profile completed by the user.

In order to accomplish this, the service will use the ASFA (Aquatic Sciences and Fisheries Abstract) on CD-ROM, Current Contents on diskette and several international databases such as DIALOG and QUESTEL.

Output will be hard copy or magnetic media will be sent to the user. Magnetic media are preferred because of reduced costs for the scientist of the subregion.

- A document search service: this service, due to national, regional, and international collaboration will offer copies of requested documents (monographs, periodicals and reports). In all cases, copies of documents will be held at the coordination center as well as sending a copy to the documentation center for the user.

The project will also compile a series of products to be freely distributed to users during the preparatory phase:

- A directory of establishments (politics, themes of research, formation) and scientists (diplomas, specialties and themes of research) in the subregion;

- A directory of scientific and technical reviews;
- A directory of libraries and documentation centers;
- A catalog of each documentation center in the subregion;
- A trimestrial bulletin with information concerning scientific activities in the subregion. This bulletin will be distributed to scientists in collaborating institutions, documentation centers, and all national, subregional and international network partners. The bulletin will cover the following:
 - *Ongoing projects;
 - *Research and other activities in the subregion;
 - *Surveys;
 - *The calendar of events in the subregion;
 - * A view of extension and mass diffusion of information etc....

This bulletin is aimed at reinforcing the bonds between scientists in the subregion and the end-users of the products and by-products of scientific research.

ACTIVITIES PROGRAMMING

Activities will be programmed in two phases: a preparatory phase and an operational phase. The project submitted deals mainly with the preparatory phase that will last two years from 1993 to 1994 and is composed of the following activities.

Annex 1 presents the programming activities for 1993 and 1994.

COORDINATION CENTER INSTALLATION

- Identification of office space
- Identification of local staff
- Identification of office equipment

COOPERATING INSTITUTIONS

- Circular letter
- Letter for inviting institutions for collaboration
- Identification of cooperating institution
- Memorandum of understanding between RECOSCIX-WIO and CEA

SERVICES

- Query handling
- Document delivery

PRODUCTS

- Newsletter or bulletin of information
- Directories

CONFERENCES, SEMINARS AND STAGE OF INFORMATION

- IAMSLIC in WASHINGTON (USA)
- Stage of formation at Mombasa in Kenya

Coordination center installation

To ensure the proper functioning of the network once it is operational. local personnel available and able to perform the required work must be identified.

The CRO already has the competent personnel required for the present project. The following persons have professional profiles that meet the needs of this project and can be made available for that.

Project Head: Mr. Yacouba SANKARE; senior scientist and head of the CRO's Scientific and Technical Information Department; Bilingual French/English; Ivories;

Scientific Manager: Mrs. Kaba NASSERE; Scientist; Bilingual French/English; Ivories;

Computer Operations Support: Mrs. Suzanne OTEME; Head of Computer Services at the CRO; Bilingual English/French; American/Ivories;

Librarian: Mrs. Ehui Diakite SARATA

Assistant Librarian: Mr. Nicolas BOKA DATTE

Secretary: Ms. Assi ADONHOU

Although the CRO has the minimum material to start the network, it is important with regard to the scope of the project, the number of the members and the volume of output expected to have the following material:

- Personal Computer, high speed matrix printer and laser printer.
- Flatbed Scanner

- Fax Machine
- Direct telephone line for voice communication
- Direct telephone line for X.29 connection
- Electronic communication: OMNET, INTERNET, DIALOG
- Photocopy Machine

Cooperating Institutions and Documentation Centers

It is necessary to identify, contact and establish the memberships of all likely national, subregional, and international candidates using all available means of communication, with possible missions to various countries in the subregion. These missions will help establish direct communications among the documentation professionals and provide a sound basis for cooperation among member documentation centers.

These missions can also be used to collect reference documents not currently available at the CRO.

Products

Several products in the aquatic sciences are foreseen, destined for network users.

Field searches will be used to inventory the various institutions, current projects, available scientific material, existing laboratories, and active scientists. Because of difficulties in identifying and localizing these elements, missions to potential sources will be conducted. These missions will be conducted during the member identification period. This additional information will be used to produce several directories and databases to be distributed to network members and scientists.

The project will also produce and maintain several catalogs with varying themes. These catalogs will aid in the distribution of research and development results which until now have not been exploited or have been under exploited outside of the originating countries.

Also, on a trimestrial basis, the Project will produce a news bulletin containing current information pertaining to the aquatic sciences in the subregion.

Services

Bibliographic Search Services will be provided upon written requests (using predetermined forms) made by the user or member institution. Completed request forms will be returned to the member institution or directly to the coordination center. To complete this search, besides references provided by the network, the Project must access

the ASFA and SESAME CD-ROM collections. Output returned to users on magnetic media will be encouraged because of reduced mailing costs when compared to paper listings.

Document Search Services providing photocopies of requested documents (books, periodicals, etc.) will be available on demand.

Conferences, seminars and stage of formation

The major conferences and seminars given by IAMSLIC and other international organizations concerning new technologies for information management and especially scientific information management and oceanology will be attended by the network. During these encounters, new contacts for member institutions and contributing organizations will be pursued.

[Note: flow chart follows]

