

Hɛn Mpoano Policy Brief Series

A nested coastal and marine governance system

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Coastal Resources Center, University of Rhode Island



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A nested coastal and marine governance system

SUMMARY

THIS BRIEF PUTS FORWARD OPTIONS FOR A NESTED COASTAL GOVERNANCE SYSTEM. THESE IDEAS WILL BE REFINED AND AUGMENTED BY IDEAS INTRODUCED BY OTHER PAPERS IN THE SERIES. THE PAPERS WILL FOCUS ON COASTAL AND FISHERIES ISSUES IN THE WESTERN REGION TO IDENTIFY THEIR CAUSES, SOCIAL, ECONOMIC AND ENVIRONMENTAL IMPLICATIONS AND HOW THEY MIGHT BE ADDRESSED BY A STRENGTHENED GOVERNANCE SYSTEM. THESE BRIEFS DRAW UPON HEN MPOANO'S "LEARNING BY DOING" PROCESS AS IT WORKS WITH COMMUNITIES, DISTRICTS, GOVERNMENTAL AGENCIES AND OTHER STAKEHOLDERS TO PRACTICALLY ADDRESS PROBLEMS AND SPECIFIC OPPORTUNITIES ALONG THE COAST AND WITHIN THE FISHERY. THE PROCESS AND PROPOSAL IS SUPPORTED BY THE ADVISORY COUNCIL OF THE HEN MPOANO INITIATIVE.

THE UNIQUE VALUE OF THE WESTERN REGION'S COASTAL ZONE

the production of oil and gas from offshore reserves. This is compounded by major expansion in oil palm and rubber plantations, record high prices for gold and cocoa and an emerging coastal tourism industry. In addition, fisheries and coconut plantations, which have been primary sources of livelihood for many coastal communities, continue to decline.

There are tremendous potential benefits, however, in restoring degraded environments, sustaining renewable natural resources and wisely investing oil and gas revenues. If fishing effort is reduced to allow the natural processes of reproduction and growth the Region's fishing grounds have the potential to produce abundant harvests for many future generations. Similarly, if investment in infrastructure meets the needs of the population and new industries; appropriate investment is made in education; and land-use decisions consider the well-being of the region as a whole, the future of the Region is bright.

CURRENT COASTAL AND MARINE GOVERNANCE SYSTEM LIMITATIONS

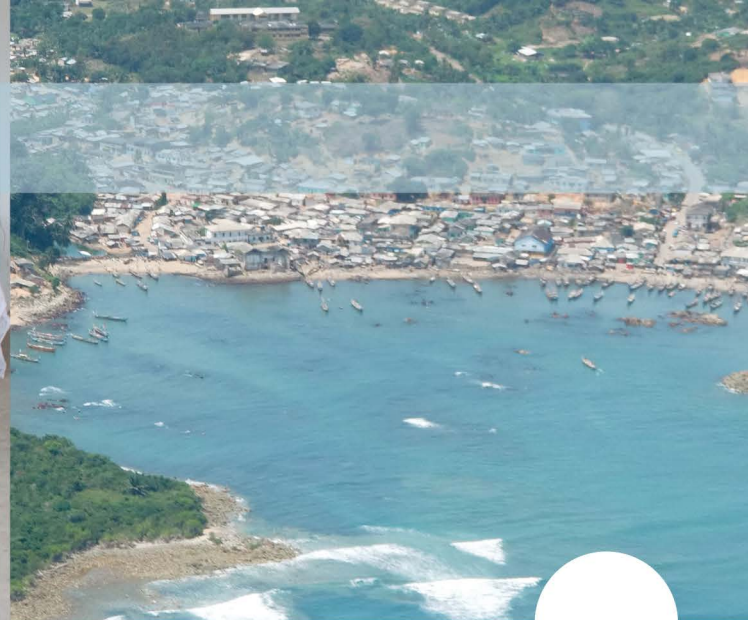
upon the establishment of Metropolitan, Municipal and District Assemblies (MMDAs)

The Western Region's coastal districts are experiencing huge ecosystem change driven, principally, by

and the delegation of major roles and responsibilities to district governments vested with broad authority to direct development, resolve conflicts and provide social services. The major instruments articulating district responsibilities are the Medium Term Development Plans (MTDPs). These are four yearly plans which follow National Development Planning Commission (NDPC) guidelines.

It is widely recognized that the districts have been unable to make full use of the responsibilities and authorities provided to them because they have neither the necessary technical capacity nor adequate financial resources. Although the Environment, Agriculture, Health and Education Ministries maintain a staff in each district these officers have not been fully integrated into the district level system so take their lead from their home ministries.

The 2014 district MTDPs will, for the first time, require that the budget allocation received by the technical offices be integrated into a composite district budget. The districts receive only a portion of the budget listed in their approved MTDPs, often receiving this at the end of a budget period. Revenues to the coastal districts of the Western Region from locally generated taxes and fees are currently small. In reality the financial resources, technical capacity and, most importantly, decision-making on major development proposals remain within the agencies of central government. The current system is further complicated by lack of clarity about the way in which the traditional authority system contributes to governance at the regional and district levels.



A FRESH APPROACH TO COASTAL AND MARINE GOVERNANCE

The absence of a spatial plan and supporting development policy and plan in the districts and at regional level is producing an often chaotic situation. This is likely to result in an unnecessary number of poor infrastructure siting decisions with major negative social and environmental impacts. The Government of Ghana, several international organizations, local non-governmental organizations and business leaders are therefore working to strengthen the processes of governance in the Western Region to steer the development process more effectively and efficiently. The NDPC has called for the sustainable management of natural resources, particularly marine and coastal resources. The Norwegian Oil for Development initiative is supporting the preparation of the Western Region Spatial Development Framework (WRSDF). Another USAID-funded programme is supporting Western Region districts in strengthening their revenue-generating capacity linked to spatial planning. The District Development Facility, with funding from the World Bank and the Danish International Development Agency (DANIDA) provides districts with additional funding for the implementation of their MTDPs based upon rigorous standards of performance codified as the Functional Organization Assessment Tool (FOAT). Such initiatives provide resources and a positive context for the design of a nested marine and coastal governance system.

FIGURE 1: THE CURRENT GOVERNMENTAL SYSTEM FUNCTIONS PRIMARILY IN A TOP-DOWN MANNER WHERE AUTHORITY IS CONCENTRATED IN SECTORAL MINISTRIES AND DECISION-MAKING ON NEW FORMS OF DEVELOPMENT OFTEN BYPASSES REGIONAL AND DISTRICT GOVERNMENT.

ROLES AND RESPONSIBILITIES AT COMMUNITY, DISTRICT, REGIONAL AND NATIONAL LEVELS

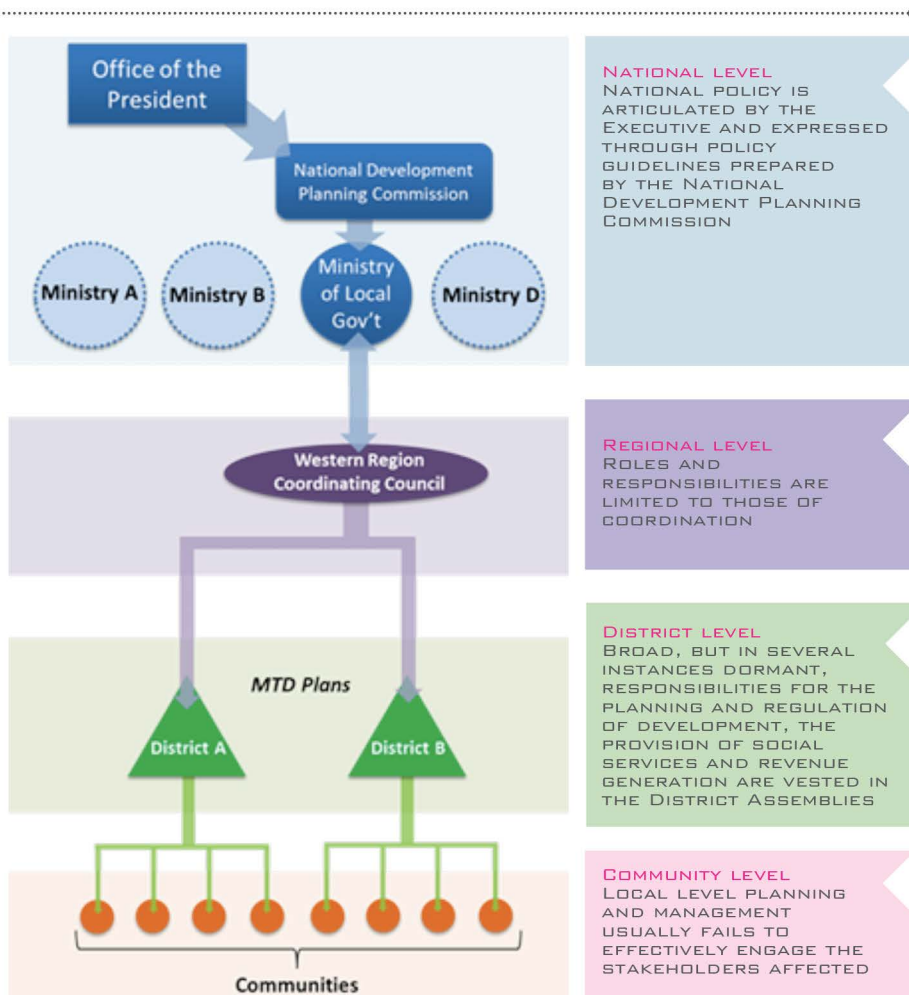
Experience in other countries suggests collaboration and formulation of national policies to guide marine and coastal management requires leadership from the executive branch of government. This could be a Coastal and Marine Management Commission (Figure 2) that would draw together the ministries with major roles and responsibilities for coastal and marine matters. Such a commission might be chaired by the president or vice president of Ghana or their designee. It would formulate the national marine and coastal policy that would guide planning and decision-making in the regions and districts.

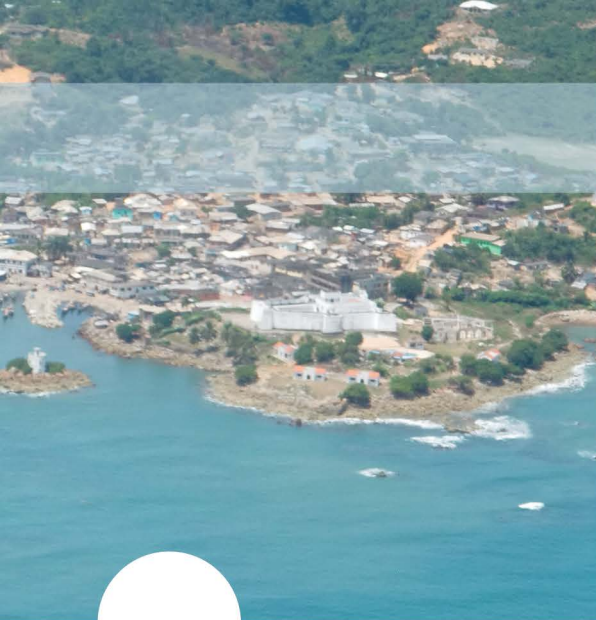
WESTERN REGION LEVEL

The WRSDF is being prepared under the sponsorship of a national technical committee established by cabinet. The funding and implementation of this spatial

NATIONAL LEVEL

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plan could lead to the formulation of a Western Region, or Western Corridor, Development Authority. A coastal and marine management strategy for the Western Region could be designed and implemented as a Western Region Coastal and Marine Board. Funding for the implementation of the marine and coastal component could be provided in part by a Coastal Fund, or Foundation composed of international donor investment and corporate social responsibility funds from oil and gas support companies.

DISTRICT LEVEL

The central mechanism for planning and decision-making at district level will be revitalized MTDPs. These will feature district level spatial development frameworks specifying how development will unfold in accordance with a land use zoning system. The MTDPs will continue to address the provision of roads, schools, clinics and public services. It will be important to ensure that stakeholders from civil society and the business community actively participate in the design, implementation and evaluation of the marine and coastal chapters of future coastal district MTDPs. Such participation could be structured through the appointment of district level Coastal and Marine Committees.

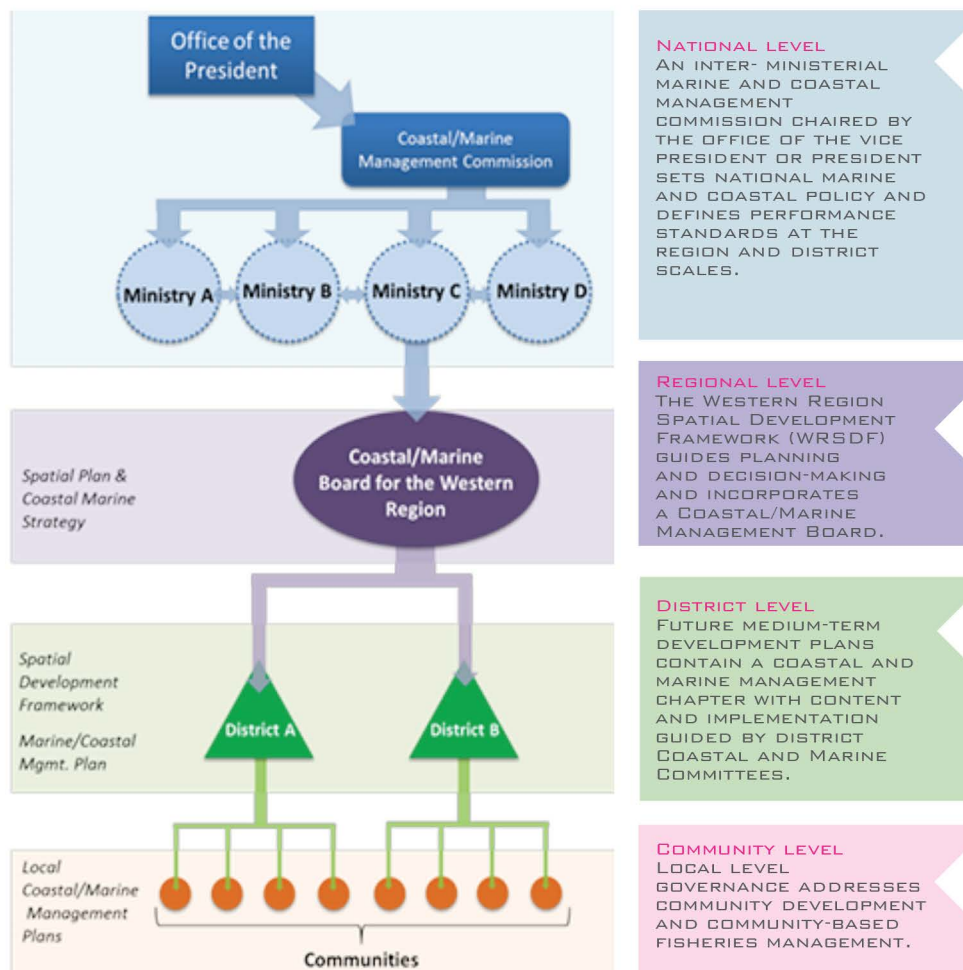
COMMUNITY LEVEL

A fresh approach to the planning and decision-making process can quickly produce tangible evidence of improvements in the coastal and marine coastal governance system at community level. Improvements to fisheries landing sites, protection – and where possible restoration – of critical habitats, directing new infrastructure away from hazardous areas, finding ways to harmonize new developments with the environment and traditional coastal settlements and upgrading urgently needed social services must be evident in coming years. This requires detailed planning and decision-making at community and unit committee level.

LEARNING BY DOING

Various pilot scale activities undertaken by Hen Mpoano and other initiatives have reinforced the value of involving stakeholders and the public in marine and coastal policies and action plans at several spatial levels. Techniques for identifying specific coastal sites prone to erosion and flooding have been identified and bylaws are being prepared to avoid unsuitable forms of development in such areas. This suggests that the necessary integration across sectors such as fisheries and offshore oil and gas activities at sea, and land use and fresh water supply on land, would benefit from district coastal and marine committees providing a forum for issue analysis, policy shaping, prioritizing actions and evaluating outcomes.

FIGURE 2: THE POTENTIAL STRUCTURE OF A NESTED COASTAL AND MARINE GOVERNANCE SYSTEM. IT IS ESSENTIAL AT REGIONAL AND DISTRICT LEVEL THAT CIVIL SOCIETY, MARKET FORCES AND TRADITIONAL AUTHORITIES ARE MEANINGFULLY ENGAGED.



A WAY FORWARD

AT THE NATIONAL LEVEL

1. Full consideration should be given to establishing a Coastal and Marine Management Commission with a mandate to integrate planning and decision-making in the nation's coastal zone and offshore. This would comprehensively address interactions between fishing and petroleum-related activities offshore and the management of currently unplanned and unregulated development in coastal districts. The immediate priority is to develop the guidelines, technical support and sources of funding for effective spatial planning in the coastal districts of the Western Region beginning with the "hot spots" where oil and gas related activity is concentrated.

AT REGIONAL LEVEL

2. The design of a potential Western Development Corridor should incorporate a Joint Development Planning Area comprising the coastal districts of the Western Region that would serve as a pilot initiative for integrated coastal and marine planning and management. A major incentive for performance-based management in the Planning Area could be provided by a Coastal Fund drawing together funds from corporate social responsibility programmes and investments by international donors. The Regional Coordinating Council and, subsequently, the Western Corridor Authority, would promote collaboration among coastal districts on shared resources, harmonization of framework and structural plans, the application of model bylaws and other forms of coordinated action.

AT THE DISTRICT LEVEL

3. The priority for the coastal districts is to prepare and adopt spatial development framework plans and associated structural plans and bylaws addressing their most pressing development issues including the impacts of oil and gas development in the "hot spots" identified by the WRSDF. Future MTDPs should contain a distinct coastal and marine management chapter drawing together the analysis of issues and the actions required to steer the development process to outcomes that benefit coastal communities and avoid the inappropriate placement of new shoreline structures.

AT THE COMMUNITY SCALE

4. Structural plans are urgently needed at fisheries landing sites and where oil and gas development is concentrated. The planning and management must involve local interests meaningfully, respond to community needs, and promote effective community-based contributions to fisheries management, and the protection of coastal wetlands, historic sites and tourism assets.

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