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Using Socio-environmental report cards in the Coastal Ocean Assessment for Sustainability and Transformation (COAST Card) framework

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Abstract

The Coastal Ocean Assessment for Sustainability and Transformation (COAST Card) framework provides a mechanism for regular reporting and accounting of global change impacts through indicators that are monitored and assessed periodically. It merges three tools: socio-environmental report cards, system dynamics modeling, and social network analysis. This presentation will give a brief overview and evolution on the use of report cards in socio-environmental management and present case studies of how they've been used in iconic locations all over the world. Report cards are stakeholder-driven assessment and communication products that provide numeric grades based on the performance of environmental, social, and economic indicators against predefined goals or objectives. Report cards have been a flagship of the University of Maryland Center for Environmental Science (UMCES) for 15 years. They are developed through intensive stakeholder workshops that identify values and threats from diverse perspectives. They are developed through subsequent iterative workgroup activity that results in: (1) stakeholder consensus of the main values and threats in socio-ecological systems, (2) indicators to measure these values and threats, (3) thresholds that define the desired condition of these indicators, (4) delivery of results, findings, and recommendations in a concise and easily understood format, and (5) engagement that results in improved scores. Repeated enables tracking of results in response to management actions, investments, new developments, and climate change. A challenge for report cards has been the ability to provide quantitative recommendations to improve conditions reflected by report card grades. Introduction of system dynamics modeling and social network analysis in the COAST Card framework will bridge this gap by converting qualitative information into quantitative recommendations and determining how actions should be implemented in the most cost-effective manner and by whom.

Keywords

COAST Card, report cards, socio-environmental, sustainability