

## **NGOs and Community Based Organizations (CBOs) in ICAM Programmes in the Gulf of Guinea (West Africa)**

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The coastal zone of the Gulf of Guinea, whose definition stays complex considering the physical and anthropological criterias that characterize it, is a whole spreading from the shoreline to about forty kilometers northwards on an inshore sedimentary basin greatly influenced by the sea. This zone covers 35,000 km<sup>2</sup> thereabouts, either 2,5% of the total surface of each country, and account more than 25% of each national population. Lung economic of the country, it contains a good financial resource part (more than 90% of the piscatorial resources, more than 75% of the industrial and commercial activities,...).

The human activities very varied (intensive agriculture, fishing, various industries, tourism, transport...) generate some direct effects on the natural resources and offer to provoke some important deteriorations.

Vis-a-vis this serious persistent environmental problem, the researchers of the various university institutions began research on the subject, and the extremely interesting results, remain unfortunately without application. The national administrations adopted a certain number of laws and signed international agreements which are not respected, sometimes unknown, for lack of relay towards the various users.

The Integrated Management of the littoral supposes especially a participative approach where new external actors (for example NGOs) must be able to play the role of relay between the internal administration and actors (or stakeholders) who are the communities and the economic agencies.

Because of their close connections with the especially rural and stripped urban populations, and because of their good knowledge of the environment and the effectiveness of their methods of intervention, these NGOs can and must play an essential role to ensure the participation of the populations in the various phases of the Integrated Coastal Zone Management (ICAM).