

Findings



Africa Region . Number 53 . December 1995

Findings reports on ongoing operational, economic and sector work carried out by the World Bank and its member governments in the Africa Region. It is published periodically by the Africa Technical Department on behalf of the Region.

27158

The Niger Delta: A Stakeholder Approach to Environmental Development

The Niger Delta is one of the world's largest wetlands and includes by far the largest mangrove forest in Africa. Within this extremely valuable ecosystem, oil activities are widespread - Rivers State and Delta State produce 75 percent of Nigeria's petroleum, which represents over 50 percent of national government revenues. However, despite its vast oil reserves, the region remains poor. Gross National product (GNP) per capita is below the national average of US\$280. Optimal resource and land use in the region is constrained by a lack of development, stagnant agricultural productivity, very limited opportunities in urban areas, rapid population growth, the generally poor health of the expanding population and tenuous property rights. Conflicts have developed between local communities and private and public developers over resource ownership and use, particularly tied to oil activities. This study, *Defining An Environmental Development Strategy* for the Niger Delta, attempts to move beyond emotive arguments to provide an analytical basis for substantive stakeholder discussion of the most critical environmental and social issues and possible interventions. It offers a comprehensive assessment of the environmental issues in the Delta and resulting social impacts. The report was developed based on an innovative and highly participatory process which emphasized beneficiary consultation and collaboration to ensure local ownership.

Participatory Approach

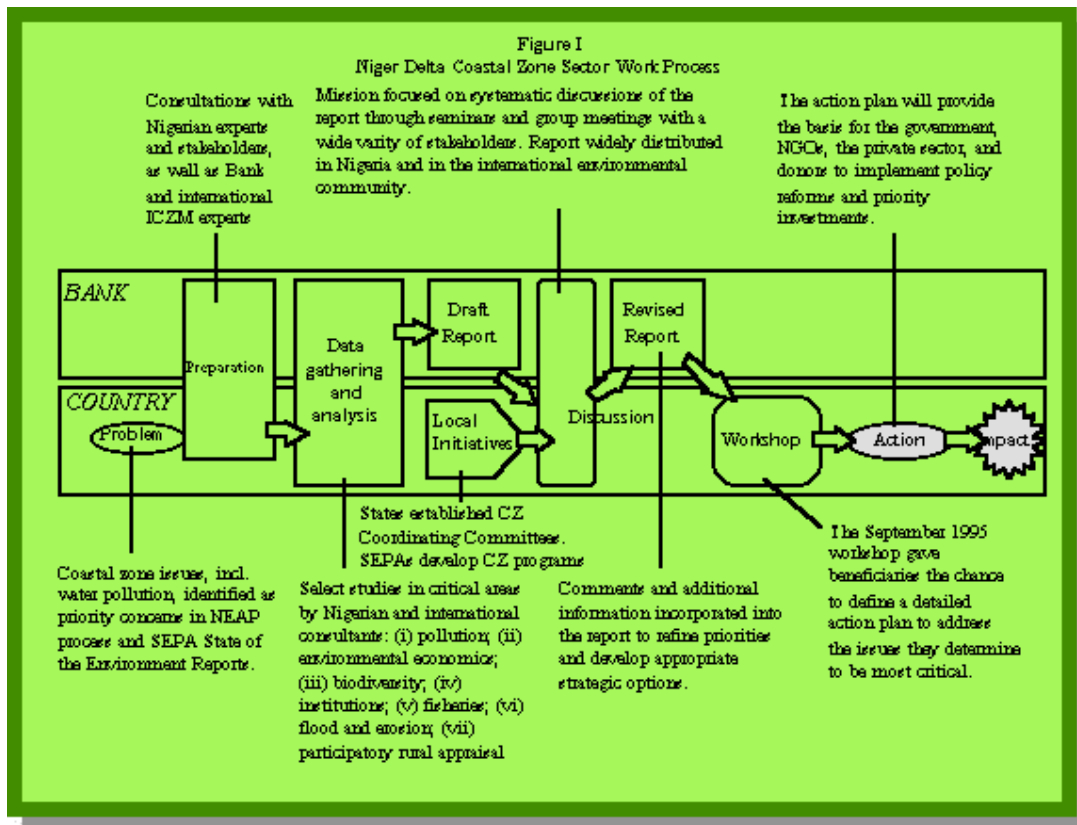
The study was designed as an interactive process between the World Bank team and local stakeholders (see Figure I). Support to implement the participatory program came from the Client Consultation Fund, the Nigerian Environmental Management Project, the Danish and Swedish Consultant Trust Funds and the Global Environment Facility. The major collaborative aspects of the work are as follows:

- Holding seminars and meetings with a wide range of Nigerian beneficiaries to understand their development goals, their assessments of problems, and their existing and proposed solutions.
- Pursuing a participatory review process for the draft report. The World Bank team discussed the findings of the draft report in a series of meetings with stakeholder groups. The report was first presented to the group, which studied it for several days before making comments. The draft report was also distributed widely in Nigeria and to international organizations.
- Engaging local consultants from NGOs and universities to prepare studies in areas where they had a clear comparative advantage.
- Working with the local office of the Federal Environmental Protection Agency to inventory and analyze sources of industrial pollution in Port Harcourt.
- Assisting Rivers State stakeholders to establish a representative stakeholder Coastal Zone Coordinating Committee.
- Participating on the Steering Committee of the Niger Delta Environmental Survey. The US\$3.5 million study will attempt to determine the environmental impacts of major economic activities in the region.
- Providing funding and helping to organize the state-level Niger Delta Coastal Zone Workshop held in September 1995 in Port Harcourt. The workshop brought together a wide variety of local stakeholders for the first time to discuss the major environmental and social problems facing the region.

Analytical Approach: Determining Environmental Priorities

To rank the environmental issues of the Niger Delta, an analytical framework focusing on their environmental, human health, and economic significance has been developed. The framework incorporates scientific and economic analysis to evaluate and rank the magnitude of relative

risks to the environment and human health based on the best available information (Table I). The analysis incorporates a risk management component which asks 'What options can be found to reduce the risks identified in the risk analysis?' This aspect of the prioritization process is substantially developed in the report through comparing the potential future costs and benefits of interventions. The methodology places the highest priority on issues that have high environmental or health significance and large net intervention benefits. While the prioritization process utilized in the report represents a first attempt based on the limited information available, it is an effective filter for determining where policy interventions can be most effectively directed given the limited resources and institutional capacity available in the Niger Delta.



Integrating the Two Approaches: Oil Pollution—How Bad Is It?

Risk management also requires intensive stakeholder participation to reach consensus on the priority areas for interventions, since the problems identified in the analytical approach may not always match the priorities of potential beneficiaries. For example, available scientific evidence indicates that oil pollution is not of highest concern relative to other issues. However, this conflicts with perceptions held by local communities. As a result, the stakeholder workshop and continuing dialogue with beneficiaries are critical for ensuring that community concerns are fully incorporated into the priority assessment process. Most stakeholders in the region have concluded that oil companies are the major cause of environmental degradation because oil activities are highly visible and create dramatic local ecological impacts. Many residents assign a direct cause and effect relationship between oil development and declines in fisheries and agricultural productivity because both phenomena began at roughly the same time. Since communities in the Niger Delta, such as those in Ogoniland, obtain few benefits from oil development and are required to shoulder the environmental and social costs, it is not surprising that they have focused on oil activities as the single cause of environmental degradation to the exclusion of other factors. However, the timing may be largely coincidental and other factors such as population growth and migration, as well as the construction of upstream dams, are more likely to be the causes of productivity declines.

Integrated Coastal Zone Management

An integrated resource management approach is required to address such a broad range of social and environmental issues in a sustainable way. Integrated coastal zone management (ICZM) is a holistic planning and coordinating process suited to ensuring that the large economic and social benefits from resources in the Niger Delta are not dissipated by destructive practices or inappropriate use. It is an ecologically and socially based approach to environmental management that is a significant departure from traditional sectoral and technological models which have proven unable to deal with the complexity that characterizes coastal problems. To accomplish its purposes, ICZM requires several actions to be taken at the national and regional level, including the following:

- Establishment of an appropriate policy framework to support coastal resource management and environmental conservation;
- The collection of data and technical information of relevance to the coastal zone;
- An understanding of the resource management and environmental objectives among the various stakeholders, including local

communities;

- Development of an action plan to correct past environmental degradation, to modify ongoing activities that are environmentally harmful, and to establish a system for reviewing and implementing new coastal zone development projects; and
- Development of an effective institutional structure to implement the action plan, initiate future programs, and to oversee environmental monitoring of the coastal zone on a permanent basis.

Adopting the ICZM approach has led the Bank team to suggest a range of strategic options in key thematic areas to deal with the most critical problems for inclusion in an action plan (Table II). The options are presented to stimulate debate on how to address environmental degradation, rather than to advocate specific projects and policies. Stakeholders, particularly those attending the workshop, carefully reviewed and modified the options to develop interventions which they felt will contribute most effectively to environmental management in the delta.

Table I
Initial Ranking of Environmental Issues

[Click on this icon to view the table](#)

Table II
Strategic Options Example: Options Targeted to Reforestation and Loss of Biodiversity

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Next Steps

The Action Plan developed at the workshop will be presented to state Military Administrators and the Federal Environmental Protection Agency. Several initiatives designed to communicate the major conclusions of the report to a wide range of stakeholders and provide the basis for possible future activities are being initiated:

- Continued participation on the Niger Delta Environmental Survey Steering Committee;
- Preparation of integrated conservation and development project feasibility studies and community-based technical assistance pilot projects (under the Environmental Management Project);
- Implementation of a dissemination strategy which includes: (a) widespread dissemination of the report; (b) preparation of booklets for communities on key issues; (c) mass media messages for reaching stakeholders throughout the region; and (d) dissemination of background papers.

For the growing number of rural and urban poor in the Niger Delta, a participatory approach that involves them as stakeholders in a dialogue offers better prospects for sustainability than a prescriptive, non-inclusive approach.

J. Singh, D. Moffat, and O. Linden. 1995. *Defining An Environmental Development Strategy for the Niger Delta*. Industry and Energy Operations Division, West Central Africa Department, Africa Region, The World Bank. For copies of this study, please contact David Moffat, The World Bank, 1818 H St. N.W., Washington, D.C. 20433. (202) 458-2310.

SEARCH

FEEDBACK

SITE MAP

SHOWCASE



Table I
Initial Ranking of Environmental Issues

| Category | High Priority | Moderate Priority | Low Priority |
|---------------------------------------|---|--|---|
| Land Resource Degradation | Agricultural land degradation. Flooding (moderate - high). | Coastal erosion. Riverbank erosion. | Sea level rise. |
| Renewable Resource Degradation | Fisheries depletion. Deforestation. Biodiversity loss. Water hyacinth expansion. | Fisheries habitat degradation. | Mangrove degradation. Nypa palm expansion. |
| Environmental Pollution | Sewage. Vehicular emissions. Municipal solid wastes. Toxic and hazardous substances. | Oil Pollution. Industrial effluents. Industrial air emissions. Industrial solid wastes. | Gas Flaring. |

Table II
Strategic Options Example: options Targeted to Reforestation and Loss of Biodiversity

| Options | Regional/State Level | Community Level |
|--|---|---|
| LEGISLATIVE REFORMS | Land and tree tenure reform. Endangered habitat and ecosystem management legislation. | |
| REGULATORY REFORMS - including economic mechanisms | Sound concession and royalty programs. Enforce existing regulations (include EIAs) Land use zoning. Hunting permit system and sanctions. Enforce CITIES. Concession auctions. Include conservation costs in project development. | Support community resource ownership. Provide a framework for small and micro credit mechanisms. Incentives for tree planting. Conservation royalties. |
| INSTITUTIONAL REFORMS | Capacity building of state forestry departments: (a) improve monitoring, enforcement, and revenue collection; (b) forest management, economics, and conservation training; (c) improve forest resource data collection and management. Improve land use zoning capabilities of relevant agencies. | Capacity building of NGOs and communities: (a) training in conservation and silviculture; (b) develop community monitoring, enforcement, and revenue collection programs. |
| DIRECT PROJECTS | Forest reserve support. Smallholder timber and NTFPs programs. Upgrade select reserves to higher protected area status. New protected areas. Alternative sustainable product development. Establish buffer zones around protected areas. Improve timber processing efficiency. | Agroforestry projects and programs. Integrated conservation and development projects and programs. Alternative sustainable product development. |
| EDUCATION PROGRAMS | Environmental education in schools | Conservation clubs. |