

CIESM Congress Session : Local Ecological Knowledge

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Moderator's Synthesis

Local Ecological Knowledge (LEK) can provide precious information at different scales of space and time, generating new grounds for marine research, while stimulating awareness and education (CBD articles 7 and 13). The potential of LEK just started to be disclosed and participants raised a number of potential applications according to their research interests; e.g. fishing grounds; distribution of essential fish habitats; spawning aggregations; marine litter, participatory mapping, periodical monitoring. Contributors unanimously agreed on the need to consolidate a Mediterranean network for LEK, with potential for geographical expansion. Opportunities for partnership with relevant international organizations (such as FAO, ...) could be usefully investigated.

New concepts, practical needs, challenges and potentialities would deserve to be explored in detail. Collaboration with fishermen and other local communities should be realized in partnership and based on mutual interests. Scientists called on board should have very good contacts with local communities and be able to 'speak their language'. Interesting information may remain anecdotal if not collected under a scientific thinking/design and the collaboration with social scientists and oral historians is highly required to set appropriate research methods. Benefits for all partners should be clearly stated to set long term actions, this also entails appropriate feedback to both collaborating scientists and local communities. A series of technological tools can be used to engage the different community groups according to specific actions. Communication strategies should follow the principle of cross-mediality and be inspired from the real experience of people: 'people talk, scientists hear'. Data policy needs to be discussed but information should be made available as much as possible.

