

An update on the process and outcomes of the 2013 review of the BCC TDA, SAP and IP

Sandy Davies and Dave Boyer

ABSTRACT

The framework for guiding the Benguela Current Commission (BCC) to achieve its objectives is set out in three core documents, namely, the Transboundary Diagnostic Analysis (TDA, 1999), the BCC Strategic Action Programme (SAP, 2001) and the BCC Science Programme (SP, 2007). In early 2012 the BCC Management Board initiated a review process for this framework that is almost complete. The revised documents reflect the objective, principles and functions for the BCC as set out in the Benguela Current Convention and reflect changes in the operating environment that have occurred at local, national and regional levels. These have included governance and policy changes, developments in capacity, and improvements in the understanding of the functioning of the ecosystem. The review process has been guided by a team of experts and based on inputs from: a regional stakeholder workshop held in Windhoek, Namibia in February 2013; a desktop review of reports, documents and papers; the dialogue and outputs of three national workshops held in Cape Town, Luanda and Windhoek in March 2013; and a regional validation workshop held in Cape Town in July 2013.

The process identified six core themes for the BCC: living marine resources; non-living marine resources; productivity and environmental variability; pollution; biodiversity and ecosystem health; and human dimensions. Within the revised TDA the threats or problems, causes, ecological impacts, socio-economic impacts, external risks or uncertainties and transboundary concerns were identified for each theme. This led to key challenges of transboundary concern and relevance to the mandate of the BCC being identified for each theme in the SAP, and the inclusion of a seventh cross-cutting theme for governance. In order for the BCC countries to address these challenges ecosystem quality objectives (EQO) were developed that reflect the long term ideal state once the challenge is overcome. Policy actions and activities were identified for each EQO in the Implementation Plan (IP); the activities were prioritised with respect to their relevance to the mandate of the BCC and the urgency for their implementation. The new framework, through the TDA, SAP and IP provides a basis for developing detailed scientific or management projects and it demonstrates why activities at the local, national or regional level are required for the BCC to achieve its objective and thus overcome the transboundary challenges.