

# **Intergovernmental Oceanographic Commission of UNESCO**

## **Lessons learned from 15 years of focussed capacity enhancement**

**Henrik O. Enevoldsen, Jacob Larsen, Monica Lion**

**IOC Science and Communication Centre on Harmful Algae**

**at**

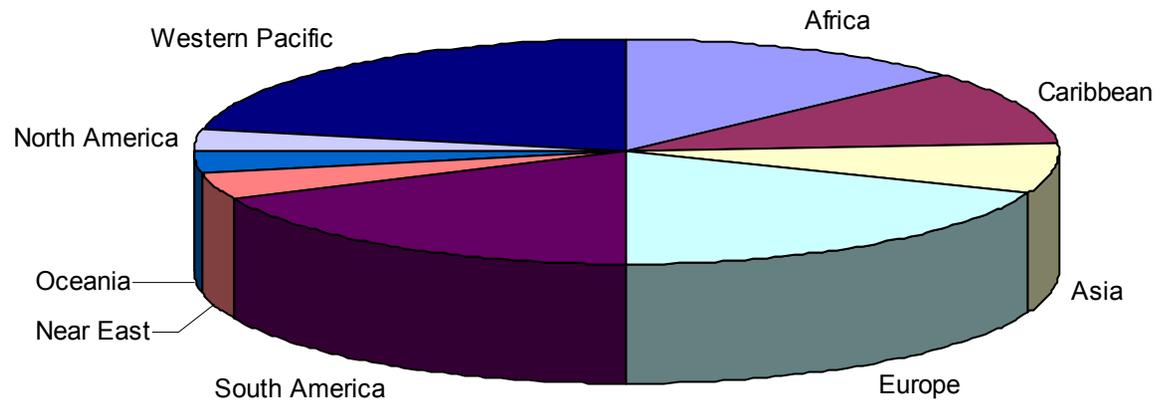
**University of Copenhagen & the Spanish Institute of Oceanography**



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# Harmful Algal Bloom Programme

## Background and our experience:



Over the past 20 years the IOC has by itself or with partners organised more than **60 training courses** in species identification, toxicity testing and monitoring and management strategies. The figure shows the geographical distribution of the approximately **800 trainees**. Emphasis has been in the regions most unprepared to meet HAB impacts, such as South East Asia and Latin America, but the need for upgraded skills has been global and systematic.



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Recognition of that:

- capacity is composed of capacity at different levels:
  - Individual researcher or manager
  - Institution/national
  - Region
  - International
- capacity development interventions are diverse



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## Key issues:

### Significance of partners?

- Partners in organization and implementation in the entire lifecycle of a CD activity contributes to:
  - Higher degree of serving national needs as more sectors of society become stakeholders in design of activity → increased impact
  - Facilitates participation of institutions regardless of their sector affiliation (science, management, health, food etc)
  - Co-funding
  - We have worked with IAEA, FAO, WHO, PICES, EU, ASEAN, APEC, ROPME, HELCOM, ISSHA, etc



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## Key issues:

### Lessons learned

- Too often interventions at different levels are not coordinated or stand alone
- There are strong synergies from a programmatic approach recognizing capacity development at different levels
- Relations and networks arising from having attended training together has shown essential to trainees
- Partnerships in organization of CD is insufficient at all levels from ONE UN context to cooperation UN-bilateral CD activities.



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## Key questions:

This long term endeavour has offered all the classical challenges of capacity development provided by international organisations:

- *How to ensure the appropriate selection of trainees? Who are the trainees?*
- *How to ensure institutional commitment?*
- *How to provide training that is acknowledge and gives competences?*
- *How to measure impact?*
- *How to convince donors that capacity building is a long term endeavour?*



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## Key questions:

*How to ensure the appropriate selection of trainees?*

*Who are the trainees?*

- The combination: correctly identified issue+good strategy+adequate funding+good trainers+**wrong trainees**

is too common

Subsequent attempts to assess impact may then lead to the false conclusion that issue, strategy, or trainers were wrong



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## Harmful Algal Bloom Programme

### Key questions:

*How to ensure the appropriate selection of trainees?*

*Who are the trainees?*

- Do we want to do it right or to do the right?
  - Is main beneficiary the recipient nation or the institution that happens to be focal point?
  - Formal recruitment mechanisms are not giving the sought after impact.
- Alternative announcement and recruitment
  - What is asked for in application form?
  - Well defined selection criteria
  - Consolidate chosen trainees
- Regional and professional networks are key
- → **time consuming but worthwhile!**



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## Key questions:

*How to ensure institutional commitment?*

- Course fees – stipends in combination
  - More commitment
  - Better networks
  - Better courses
- MoUs as basis for cooperative research/TTR where partner institution commit to contribute



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## Key questions:

*How to provide training that is acknowledged and gives competences?*

- We have used e-learning in combination with hands-on to increase level and to make training interactive
  - Trainees come well prepared
  - Trainees come with more equal background knowledge
  - Very positive feedback
- We have introduced accreditation by examination
  - Has changed courses fundamentally
  - Has increased acknowledgement
  - Has become reference in national accreditation of labs conducting regulatory monitoring and training



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## Key questions:

*How to measure impact?*

Principle: ..capacity development interventions which have enduring long-term impacts.

- We wish to measure it to know if we do the right, to document to constituency and donors
- Can we, or do we have to pretend?



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## Key questions:

*How to measure impact?*

Challenges:

- Capacity and competencies are dynamic not static (time)
- When is competence or capacity lost?
- Adjustment of impact expectations to reality
- Cost of doing assessment
- Etc..

**We lack standardized indicators or frameworks for assessing impact of capacity development interventions**



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## Key questions:

*How to measure impact?*

There is a community working with this

F.ex.: Danish Institute for International Studies:

'Evaluation of capacity development- a Learning Approach', Capacity Development Evaluation, Step 1: Contributions to an Analytical Framework. Nils Boesen, Peter F. Christensen, Ole Therkildsen, 2002.

A systematic framework for describing and understanding why observed organisational capacity changes have taken place during a given period of time.



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## Key questions:

*How to measure impact?*

- Focus on output of institutions
- Analytical identification of causal linkages between output changes and multiple factors inside and outside institutions
- No assumptions about efficiency of CD initiatives compared to other factors that may cause capacity changes
- Integrate the political realities and constraints for CD inside and outside organisations – incl those related to the manner in which agencies /donors provide support/opportunities.



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## Key questions:

*How to measure impact?*

The guidelines identify four major stages in the (qualitative!) evaluation process:

1. *Organise the evaluation process with the target institutions for support* (to enhance acceptance and learning aspects from evaluation).
2. *Get the facts: **what** has changed from T0 to T1?*
3. *Begin analysing: **how** have changes occurred?* (what is the relative importance of relevant CD support activities from all sources compared to other internal and external factors that have influenced institutional capacity?)
4. *Reach conclusions: **why** have changes occurred, what can be learned?* (assess the degree to which observed capacity and output changes can be attributed to support; assess its effectiveness and relevance, draw lessons).



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### **Our last key question and perspective:**

*How to convince donors and stakeholders that capacity building is a long term endeavour?*

- Analytical impacts assessment a help?
- Donor preference for projects rather than programmes a challenge to longer term CD. Coordinated donor approach?
- If investment in CD is not medium to long term it is probably not important as most CD needs are not 'fixed' and do not go away