

**Drafting a new report  
on environmental valuation in Western Africa  
– Lessons learned**

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This report presents a number of lessons learned during the drafting of a new report on environmental valuation in Western Africa.

The consultant was contracted by the West Africa Office of IUCN-The World Conservation Union to undertake this assignment. In turn, the IUCN West Africa Office was contracted by UNEP to undertake produce and deliver this report. The TOR is available upon request.

The lessons learned are presented below in the context of the terms of reference for the assignment.

**a) Become familiar with the GEO-4 background documentation, including the comprehensive annotated chapter outline.**

It was most beneficial for the consultant to review the GEO-4 background documentation including the comprehensive annotated chapter outline, in close cooperation with the IUCN focal point, Oumou Kouloum Ly of the IUCN Senegal Office. By so doing, matters of particular relevance to the Western Africa region were more clearly identified.

Nevertheless, the review of background documents could have been strengthened if the consultant and IUCN focal point had been able to meet with relevant UNEP GEO-4 team members.

**b) Become familiar with the issues selected by policymakers for inclusion in the GEO-4 report.**

Again, it was most beneficial to review the issues selected by policymakers for inclusion in the GEO-4 report in close cooperation with the IUCN focal point. As above, this review could have been strengthened if the consultant and the IUCN focal point had been able to meet with the relevant UNEP GEO-4 team members.

**c) Undertake a comprehensive literature review of the concepts on the valuation of ecosystems goods-and-services, valuation of environmental goods-and-services, and markets for environmental goods-and-services.**

Though a truly comprehensive global literature review of these topics could be a huge undertaking, relevant literature collections – such as the documents available from the IUCN/WWF Biodiversity Economics Library – and relevant recent survey papers – such as the background documents on valuation prepared for 11<sup>th</sup> meeting of the Subsidiary Body of Scientific, Technical and Technological Advice (SBSTTA) of the Convention on Biological Diversity (CBD)—made the task much more manageable. Nevertheless, consultations with the UNEP GEO-4 team could have helped to better shape the focus of this literature review.

The creation of a website (*earthmind.net/values*) for housing the documents identified also proved to be a very useful exercise. During the course of the assignment, as and when new documents became available, these were added to the site. Following the end of this assignment, the site could be maintained by IUCN or UNEP and thus provide a source of relevant literature for the region and elsewhere.

The comprehensive literature review might have also benefited from engaging a small set of environmental economics experts from various regions and sectors to serve as an advisory committee for the identification of a robust set of studies and reports to include in the review.

Finally, more emphasis in the review was placed on the valuation of ecosystem or environmental goods and services than on markets for these goods and services. This focus reflected the relevant development of these topics in the Western African region. As our experiences with environmental markets grows, however, there may be in a later revision to place relatively more emphasis on market studies than on valuation studies.

**d) Identify case studies, mainly in Western Africa, where such concepts have been incorporated in programmes and projects, and have led to a greater understanding of the role of the environment in addressing poverty in Africa in general.**

Working through the IUCN offices in Western Africa and other networks of environmental economics expertise, an attempt was made to collect all available case studies relating to environmental valuation and environmental markets in the region. The consultant believes that most, if not all, of the relevant studies and reports have been identified. Also, by publishing these documents on *earthmind.net/values*, others are able to see what documents have been identified and suggest others which could be added to the collection.

Linking Western African environmental valuation and environmental market studies to “a greater understanding of the role of the environment in addressing poverty in Africa in general,” however, proved to be a more difficult task. The case studies identified generally did not directly focus on poverty reduction in the areas which they addressed, let alone on poverty reduction across the continent.

In an attempt to compensate for this challenge, the consultant explicitly included a selection of case studies from elsewhere in Africa and also from out of Africa. Perhaps the research could have been strengthened by explicating including research from across Africa, especially as relatively less relevant research appears to have been undertaken in Western Africa than in either Eastern or Southern Africa.

**e) Recommend the best way the issues on valuation of environmental goods-and-services in Africa should be incorporated in the GEO-4 report.**

The consultant, in cooperation with the IUCN focal point, identified a long-list of places in the planned GEO-4 report, where the issues of environmental valuation could have been included. This long-list could have become more focused and more substantive, however, if there had been the opportunity to meet with the GEO-4 team.

Also, if UNEP had contracted similar reviews for other regions in Africa and elsewhere, the consultant’s recommendations could have been strengthened by communications with the consultants working on these other reviews.

**f) Draft a report in English on the practical aspects on the valuation of environmental goods-and-services in Western Africa.**

The focus on practical aspects of environmental valuation adopted for the report included a discussion of reasons to undertake valuation studies, the dimensions of environmental valuation and also the techniques of valuation.

An attempt was made to keep the language as clear and non-technical as possible so as to reach a broad, non-economist audience. In the draft report, the review is followed by a survey of relevant valuation case studies and by the recommendations for inclusion of the topic into the GEO-4 report.

The drafting of the report would have benefited from greater clarity from the UNEP GEO-4 team on the intended purpose of this report as a stand-

alone publication as well as an input into the GEO-4 report itself. For example, the section on possible inputs into the GEO-4 report could be omitted from the stand-alone report, but left on the associated website.

The consultant's decision to create an associated website also enabled the report to serve as an introduction to a much broader selection of articles, case studies, reports and relevant websites. In this way, the stand-alone report combined with the website actually serves as an extensive resource tool for use in Western Africa and elsewhere.

**g) Facilitate the layout and printing of the final report for distribution.**

Though the consultant has only indirect responsibility for layout, printing and distribution, it is clear that greater clarity from the UNEP GEO-4 on the intended use of the stand-alone report could have made this step more effective.

Nonetheless, with the additional resource of the [earthmind.net/values](http://earthmind.net/values) website, the stand-alone report could be produced simply as a PDF file and posted on the site. It would then be very cost effective to disseminate a press release on the report with the website address.

The website, of course, should also be backed up with the production of CD-ROMs, available upon request. These are especially needed by individuals in Western Africa and elsewhere lacking reliable, high-speed internet access.

**h) Produce a report on the lessons learnt during the implementation of this activity.**

This task is a most useful addition to such an assignment.