

'EAPM-CW': an Ecosystem Approach Framework for Planning and Management in Coastal Wetlands

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Abstract

Coastal Wetlands are among the most productive ecosystems in the world (Ruffolo, 2002; Larson, 2009; Ramsar convention 1990). Also, they can be considered the kidney of the earth, for their role of filtering wastes and pollutants, as well as "nature's supermarket" for their ability to provide sources of food and materials (Mitsch and Gosselink, 2000). Moreover, they can be considered the first defence line against some effects of climate change such as sea level rise. On the other hand; Coastal Wetlands are facing serious increased challenges from both sea and land sides; the global warming and the accelerated sea level rise and erosion rates are among the most natural causes of coastal wetlands area loss, currently and in the future (Nicholls et al, 1999). The huge losses and deteriorations of this unique ecosystem on one hand and the rich and wide variety of development potentials on the other hand are requiring a special framework for planning and management to make the balance between objectives of preservation and development in order to reach sustainable development.

The EA '*Ecosystem Approach*' is the most internationally recommended to meet sustainable development especially in such sensitive ecosystems, as it has been recommended by several international organizations such as: CBD, IUCN, UNDP, UNEP, GEF, and Ramsar international convention for wetlands. However EA is still in its initial generic stage, there is a need for developing it into a methodological framework to be applied in such sensitive areas (UNFCCC, 2009; MedWetCoast, 2005). This paper discusses the '*Ecosystem Approach Methodological Framework For Land Use Planning And Management In Coastal Wetlands*' EA-LPMCW, which has been developed as a main part of this PhD research and tested on the Egyptian case using interviews and focus groups techniques (Author,2012). However the suggested EA-LPMCW integrated the Eco-System Services as the recommended assessment technique, GIS & Remote Sensing capabilities were integrated as powerful tools in the suggested Framework. Also, the EA-LPMCW shows high capabilities for wider applications in other sensitive ecosystems.

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