Co-Design as the basis for collaboration and science to policy uptake in the Western Indian Ocean region

MeerWissen Secretariat on behalf of MeerWissen partnership projects
Western Indian Ocean Marine Science Association

Abstract

Researchers from different disciplines are expected to collaborate among each other as well as with relevant stakeholders and focus more directly on producing knowledge in order to inform society and decision-makers. A framework of co-creation that consists of three stages, throughout which all stakeholders are involved: co-design, co-production and co-dissemination is proposed. The term co-design is often used analogously to co-creation and can comprise all three stages. The UN Decade of Ocean Science for Sustainable Development (Ocean Decade) is supporting such a transformative process and placing emphasis on the importance of co-design. This is seen as a useful step in illuminating how co-design can be used to shape practice in marine research and policy. The paper proposes an adaptive framework to jointly develop research projects and policies based on a common agenda and a shared vision. Such an adaptive approach is the four-step approach developed by Future Earth Coasts – Our Coastal Futures, which aims to engage stakeholders for joint problem definition, goal setting and strategy development. A key point of this approach is the establishment of a reliable partnership among stakeholders, a mandate to act (and an institutional framework for doing so), and joint definition of targets.9 The co-design and co-production will involve scientists, regional decision makers, the private sector, non-government organizations as well as local and indigenous knowledge-holders. The paper recommends that;

- For the implementation of co-design approaches, an institutionalization similar to that of participation processes on a regional level may be considered which requires strong political support and the will to eventually anchor such approaches formally if necessary
- To convey a competence base for co-design methods, a knowledge transfer approach with a (digital-) modular system is conceivable, which can be called upon depending on the scientific problem.