

**THE GLOBAL PROGRAMME OF ACTION
COALITION FOR THE GULF OF MAINE**

Lessons Learned to 2000



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Executive Summary

International protocols on environmental management provide an important tool to guide nations in their efforts to advance the principles of sustainable development. Effective implementation of these protocols often requires significant change to existing mechanisms of both governance and business. Implementation of the United Nations Global Programme of Action for the Protection of the Marine Environment from Land Based Activities (GPA) is further challenged since the receiving marine environment is bounded by the shores of two or more nations. For the past two years a unique partnering of individuals from community organizations, business and industry, research and government has been working to implement the UN GPA in the shared watershed of the Gulf of Maine, located on the Atlantic coast of Canada and the United States. Over 350 persons from this Region have assisted the GPA Coalition for the Gulf of Maine (GPAC) in the development of one of the first GPA implementation programs in the world.

In the 1990s, the health of the world's marine and coastal ecosystems continued to decline. Degradation of the marine environment too often is the result of human activities that use resources beyond replenishment, that dispose of wastes in areas unable to assimilate pollutants, and that physically alter or destroy habitats. Worldwide, the loss or destruction of these critical resources is a direct cause of the deterioration of the economic and social well being of coastal communities. These activities may also imperil human health through the contamination of seafood, and the pollution of swimming beaches and recreational waters. It is estimated that 80% of human activities that threaten the health and productivity of the oceans takes place on the land, not on the water. The Gulf of Maine, located between the nations of Canada and the United States, supports one of the richest most diverse marine environments in the world, and is the home to endangered species such as the Atlantic Right Whale. Conservation and protection for this critical marine and coastal ecosystem is of considerable concern to scientists, environmental advocates and resource users throughout the region.

In the summer of 1997, the Global Programme of Action Coalition for the Gulf of Maine (GPAC), a largely volunteer, multi-sectoral, bi-national ad-hoc committee was formed to address the opportunities and constraints affecting implementation of the GPA in this Region. Since its inception, the GPAC has focussed regional attention on the need for consensus on priority issues, strategic planning, and the application of resources to project and program work. GPAC has become a strong animating force, challenging, supporting and inspiring the activities of its members, and others, who come within its sphere of influence. In a little over three years, GPAC has completed the following measurable achievements:

- six cross-sectoral, bi-national meetings of the Coalition;
- two major international, multi-sectoral workshops;
- seven comprehensive scoping papers on conditions in the region related to pollution and habitat disturbance;
- consensus on fifteen priority environmental issues common throughout the Gulf of Maine region;
- development of targeted strategies to address these issues;
- implementation of five pilot projects in response to these strategies;

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- strategic assessment of GPA targets in the Gulf of Maine; and
 - ongoing interaction and information sharing with the Bight of the California's sister pilot project.

As a result of the interactive work by this group of highly committed individuals there has been considerable advancement in the development of four critical elements of the GPA implementation:

- a base of critical scientific information on the Gulf Region's natural systems and built environments;
- strong collegial relationships among key scientists, decision-makers and advocates, both internal and external to the Region;
- consensus on the scope of the GPA in the Region, and the priority issues for action; and
- a base of over 350 persons, from all sectors of the community, who have voluntarily participated in some aspect of the GPAC activities in the Region, representing a considerable resource for future advancement of the GPA.

In the short time frame since its formation, the GPAC has developed into a highly cohesive group, focused on the achievement of common goals and objectives. The building of such productive cross-sectoral relationships is challenging, without the added complexity contributed by bi-national issues. A number of the lessons learned by the GPAC are of value to the implementation of the GPA in other regions and have been described briefly below:

- A considerable number of environmental conservation and protection organizations and activities are currently at work in the Gulf of Maine Region, resulting in significant progress towards sustaining marine and coastal resources. Notwithstanding the work of governments, communities, environmental organizations and the private sector, marine and terrestrial ecosystems continue to be degraded by land based activities. Within the Region, there are mixed opinions on the need for new initiatives, such as the GPA. Through its research on the state of the environment in the Gulf, the GPAC has been convinced that much more work is required to achieve progress on the GPA and to insure the sustainability of the ecosystems of the Gulf of Maine.
- The GPA implementation methodology provided an effective guideline for the development of a multi-stakeholder approach.
- GPAC has achieved an enviable measure of success in involving a broad spectrum of the community, but recognizes the need to improve participation by municipalities, industry, and Native American Tribes.
- Despite the obvious similarities in language, cultures and governance that exist between the United States and Canada, the GPAC encountered unexpected cultural and operational differences that contributed to difficulties in communication, and in cooperative efforts. Differences exist in federal/state/provincial legislation and enforcement measures, in the scope of work and methods of community based organizations, and in the structure and roles of First Nations and the Founding Tribes.
- Previously established international and/or inter-jurisdictional working relationships were both a benefit and constraint to GPAC operations, and in some instances, worked as either an

active, or a passive obstruction to new ideas and initiatives, or viewed the GPAC as a competitor for already strained human and fiscal resources.

- The financial support of the Commission for Environmental Cooperation was a cornerstone for the establishment of the GPAC. As that funding source is removed, and without some other source of core financial support for coordination and administration, the ability of the GPAC to influence progress on the GPA objectives appears bleak at best.
- The large geographic area covered by the Gulf of Maine Region necessitates innovative approaches to communication. The GPAC quickly developed a reliance on the electronic medium, using email, an Internet web page and a list server to provide efficient and cost effective access to documentation and to facilitate communications among the forty members.
- All the members of the GPAC were considered to participate as volunteers. The GPAC recognized that NGO staff, academics, and government and private sector representatives added GPAC responsibilities to already overloaded schedules. Despite this demand on individuals, the GPAC has developed a record for performance that could be the envy of many agencies with full-time staff resources.
- Effective implementation of the GPA in a regional sea requires strong, compelling *shared* international priorities for action to galvanize local attention, commitment and resources. In such a diverse geographic area as the Gulf of Maine, with differing levels of urbanization and resource use, issues of concern related to the effects of land based activities can, and did, vary between sectors, states and provinces, and even local areas. In its search for regionally significant priorities, the GPAC took care to ensure that issues of importance to local areas but not universal in all areas of the Region, were not lost, overlooked, or over-generalized.
- The GPAC has concluded that implementation of the principles of the GPA in the Gulf of Maine will require a sustained long-term commitment from all participants. It is important for all individuals working to advance the GPA not to judge progress too harshly in the short term. Planning horizons should establish longer time frames (20 years) with achievable short term milestones.

In its short history, and with its level of fiscal and human resources, the GPAC has achieved significant and notable successes. This relatively small group of dedicated individuals has provided a badly needed linkage between established partnership organizations in government, private sector, research and the community. If recognizable change is to be achieved in reducing the impacts of land based activities on the Gulf of Maine ecosystem, much more work is needed. The GPAC has identified the need for focussed action on a suite of specific GPA management targets and objectives, whose progress can be measured against realistic criteria for effectiveness.

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CHAPTER 1 INTRODUCTION

1.1 Background

In the 1990s, the health of the world's marine and coastal ecosystems continued to decline. Degradation of the marine environment too often is the result of human activities that use resources beyond replenishment, that dispose of wastes in areas unable to assimilate pollutants, and that physically alter or destroy habitats. Worldwide, the loss or destruction of these critical resources is a direct cause of the deterioration of the economic and social well being of coastal communities. These activities may also imperil human health through the contamination of seafood, and the pollution of swimming beaches and recreational waters. It is estimated that 80% of human activities that threaten the health and productivity of the oceans takes place on the land, not on the water.

Most of the pollution load of the oceans, including municipal, industrial and agricultural wastes and run-off, as well as atmospheric deposition, emanates from land-based activities and affects the most productive areas of the marine environment, including estuaries and near-shore coastal waters."

1.2 United Nations Global Programme of Action for the Protection of the Marine Environment from Land Based Activities (GPA)

In 1995, 109 nations of the world adopted the United Nations Global Programme of Action for the Protection of the Marine Environment from Land Based Activities (GPA) (United Nations Environment Programme, 1995). The GPA, which is the culmination of 13 years of efforts by the international community, is coordinated by the United Nations Environment Programme (UNEP), in close cooperation with intergovernmental and non-governmental organizations (NGOs).

The GPA is expected to assist in the implementation of the recommendations of Agenda 21 and the 1992 Rio de Janeiro Earth Summit, and will also address the principles and commitments arising from other established global conventions and regional instruments such as:

- the 1985 Montreal Guidelines for the Protection of the Marine Environment against Pollution from Land Based Sources;
- the United Nations Convention on the Law of the Sea (UNCLOS);
- the Convention on the Prevention of Marine Pollution by Dumping of Waste and Other Matter;
- the Basel Convention on the Control of Transboundary Movements of Hazardous Wastes and their Disposal;
- the Convention on Biodiversity; and
- the United Nations Framework Convention on Prevention of Pollution from Ships (MARPOL)

1.2.1 Guiding Principles of the GPA

The GPA is intended to assist national actions and regional cooperation in the identification of problem areas and issues, the setting of priorities, and the development of measures to prevent, reduce

and control the degradation of the marine environment. The GPA also addresses the need to assist the environment in its recovery from the impacts of land-based activities.

The GPA re-emphasizes the role of preventive and precautionary approaches to avoid degradation of marine environments, the need for integrated coastal and marine area management programs in the development of national and regional efforts to protect marine environments; and the necessity for economic incentives, such as the 'polluter pays' principle.

Under the GPA, regional and subregional cooperation is crucial, particularly when the marine area is a shared jurisdiction, such as enclosed or semi-enclosed seas. The GPA recommends identifying, sharing, and making readily available existing knowledge and experience and declares that:

“...cooperation allows for more accurate identification and assessment of the problems in particular geographic areas and more appropriate establishment of priorities for action in these areas. Such cooperation also strengthens regional and national capacity-building and offers an important avenue for harmonizing and adjusting measures to fit the particular environmental and socio-economic circumstances. It, moreover, supports a more efficient and cost-effective implementation of the programmes of action.” (United Nations Environment Programme. 1995. Chapter III).

The GPA supports a pragmatic and integrated approach to coastal area management, including as a key tool, the identification and assessment of problems and priorities. Problems may include sewage, persistent organic pollutants (POPs), heavy metals, hydrocarbons; nutrients, marine debris, physical alterations and destruction of habitats. The ecosystems of concern often include watersheds, estuaries, wetlands, littoral environments, offshore reefs and small islands. The establishment of management objectives, priorities for action, and criteria to evaluate effectiveness, should take into account the interests of all stakeholders including governments, NGOs, aboriginal groups, women and others.

1.2.2 GPA Implementation

The GPA provides a process for developing programs of action that can be used by all countries; those which are highly industrialized and those with developing economies; and is applicable at the regional, national and more local levels. The GPA methodology has six recommended steps:

1. identification and assessment of problems
2. establishment of priorities
3. setting management objectives for priority problems
4. identification, evaluation and selection of strategies and measures, including management approaches
5. adoption of criteria for evaluating the effectiveness of strategies and programs
6. program support elements such as integration with existing sustainable development objectives and programs, enforcement and financial mechanisms, education and training, research, contingency planning, and public participation.

1.3 Commission for Environmental Cooperation

Canada, Mexico and the United States were among the 109 nations signatory to the GPA. Implementation of the GPA in these countries is being carried out through a number of initiatives, one of which is under the sponsorship of the Commission for Environmental Cooperation (CEC).

The Commission for Environmental Cooperation (CEC) is an international organization whose members comprise Canada, Mexico and the United States. The CEC was created under the North American Agreement on Environmental Cooperation (NAAEC) to address regional environmental concerns and to promote the effective enforcement of environmental law, as a complement to the environmental provisions established in the North American Free Trade Agreement (NAFTA). The CEC facilitates cooperation and public participation to foster conservation, protection and enhancement of the North American environment for the benefit of present and future generations, in the context of increasing economic, trade and social links among Canada, Mexico and the United States.

Through its Cooperation on the Protection of Marine and Coastal Ecosystems Project, the CEC is assisting in the implementation of the GPA through its support for the establishment of bi-national co-operative partnerships among all sectors operating in the coastal zone. These sectoral partnerships are intended to form the basis for ongoing regional co-operation and joint actions in marine and coastal areas.

The CEC Marine and Coastal Ecosystems Project seeks to:

- establish an organizational structure, independent of the CEC, for multisectoral binational cooperation in the implementation of the GPA;
- assist the development and implementation of regional action plans for the protection of the marine environment in each of the two areas;
- facilitate the exchange of information, enhance understanding of the GPA, and broaden involvement and participation in each region;
- consolidate long-term commitment for GPA implementation in both regions; and
- summarize regional experiences as a model of GPA implementation to share with other regions in North America and worldwide.

The CEC has focussed its current efforts on the development of sectoral partnerships in two bi-nationally shared coastal regions of North America, the Bight of the Californias (United States and Mexico) and the Gulf of Maine (United States and Canada).

1.4 Sectoral Partnerships in the Coastal Zone

Environmental management within the coastal zone is a dynamic process in which decisions are made for the sustainable use, development and protection of coastal areas and resources. Coastal zones are a complex mixture of resources and activities that do not exist in isolation, but form an integral part of a larger system of ecological processes and human interactions. Integrated approaches to coastal zone management seek to overcome the traditional fragmentation caused by differing jurisdictional responsibilities and sectoral interests. Integrated management attempts to build partnerships among the private sector, governments, communities, scientists and managers. The overall aim of these

partnering initiatives is to harmonize decision making and to ensure that resultant action is consistent with agreed upon coastal priorities.

Sectoral partnerships in the coastal zone integrate diverse coastal and marine industries, (fisheries, tourism, port development, industry and conservation), with land based industries (agriculture, forestry, and mining), and community developments that also have the potential to affect coastal and marine environments. Sectoral partnerships can also integrate levels of government (national, provincial/state and municipal), and/or departments or agencies within one level of government (environment, fisheries, transportation, etc.). This complicated array of jurisdictional authorities at work in coastal areas may share few common interests. Each of these governance structures address different public needs, answer to different responsibilities, and have different perspectives, all of which can pose problems in achieving harmonized policy development and co-ordinated implementation.

Sectoral partnerships also increasingly involve research and management organizations, including community-based organizations. The development and communication of new knowledge generated by research in the sciences and the humanities is increasingly essential to informed and effective decision-making in the coastal zone, but there has traditionally been a gap between research and the application of its findings by management. Partnerships between science, management and the community, formed by community based organizations, are increasingly active and effective in the influence and implementation of local decision-making in the coastal zone.

Sectoral partnerships are known to assist in the ready communication of information, in priority setting, in increased support for ongoing research and monitoring, and in the effective and timely implementation of knowledge. The fostering of sectoral partnerships is an especially effective tool when directed at understanding and curbing the negative effects of land based activities on marine and coastal environments.

CHAPTER 2 THE GULF OF MAINE PILOT PROJECT

2.1 Need for the Project

The coastal regions of the Gulf of Maine are home to some 3.6 million people who live and derive benefit from their proximity to this relatively healthy and productive marine environment. Traditional livelihoods in the region were first dependent on the harvest of the rich resources found on both the land and in the sea. The marine and coastal environment has also supported initiatives in transportation, commerce, the shipping of goods and the assimilation of wastes. The beauty and diversity of the Gulf's coastal landscapes attracts thousands of tourists each season, providing significant economic benefits to local communities.

Although the Region may be seen as relatively undamaged, there are undeniable indications that the health and productivity of the Gulf marine ecosystem is being compromised by the wide range of human activities that take place on its waters and along its coasts. Little quantitative information is available on the pre-European conditions of the Gulf ecosystem, however it is clear from the reading of historical documents, that coastal populations of fish and wildlife have been decimated, and that large tracts of important habitats such as coastal saltmarshes have been lost or severely degraded. Not enough information is available on continuing changes in the sources and quantities of persistent chemicals and nutrients that continue to be discharged in this watershed. Although much of the

environmental damage in the Gulf Region appears to be largely confined to coastal areas and harbours, we have a limited scientific capacity to predict the effects of these changes on the larger Gulf ecosystem.

It is critical that prompt and concerted efforts be initiated to stem the rate of habitat loss in the Region, to reduce the loadings of persistent pollutants and chemicals, and to support the restoration of important damaged ecosystems. Beginning in 1996, in Durham, New Hampshire, the CEC has assisted a group of individuals from an array of coastal sectors (including environmental advocacy and community action groups, research and educational institutes and organizations, business and industry, three levels of government, and aboriginal peoples) in the formation of a bi-national cross-sectoral partnership, the Global Programme of Action Coalition for the Gulf of Maine (GPAC).

2.2 Goal

The goal of the GPAC is to establish a collaborative bi-national, cross-sectoral organization dedicated entirely to the implementation of the GPA in the Gulf of Maine Region. Primarily volunteer based, the GPA Coalition for the Gulf of Maine (GPAC) has worked to develop a consensus on priority land based activities that are contributing to the deterioration of marine habitats in this critical ecosystem, and to take action, or encourage others to take action to curb their impacts.

2.3 Organization

The GPAC determined that successful implementation of the GPA could only be achieved through the participation of all sectors of the community. It was clear that those 'without (effluent) pipes' could not successfully proscribe and implement significant change in existing environmental performance without the cooperation and voluntary participation of those 'with pipes.' Within the Gulf Region, large industry is only one of the potential sources of pollution. Much damage results from the pipes and activities of small industry, municipalities, and other resource users. To ensure that all aspects of land based activities are addressed GPAC has reached out to proponents, managers and users from municipalities and other agencies of government, First Nations and Founding Tribes, resource industries (agriculture, forestry and fishing), land developers, transportation and communication, and the recreation and tourism sector.

Throughout its course the GPAC struggled to gain participation from sectors such as business and industry, research, municipalities and First Nations and Founding Tribes. GPAC is one of the first cross-sectoral, bi-national organizations that has included the representation of aboriginal peoples from both the United States and Canada. Throughout its short history, the GPAC has continued to evolve and to refine its membership, and to draw on additional participation from the wider community.

The GPAC was established with approximately forty members, a group size that has remained relatively stable. Task Groups, chaired by a GPAC member, but open to others, were created to assist with specific activities and issues. Bi-national workshops were convened to poll the resources of larger, more diverse groups. To date, over 350 persons have been directly involved in some aspect of GPAC activity.

2.4 Guiding Principles

Development and implementation of the GPAC and its activities was based on the following strategic principles:

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- Cross-sectoral, multi-disciplinary, binational consensus is needed on the identification and ranking of significant habitat issues and toxic contaminants in the region.
 - Strategic identification, synthesis and integration of existing work in the Gulf of Maine should reduce overlap and needless repetition of effort.
 - Integration of effort can be achieved through collaborative partnering with existing institutions, organizations, communities and the private sector that are already at work in environmental management in the region, or can be encouraged to participate.

2.5 Progress to Date

Since the formation of GPAC in the summer of 1997, a significant program of consensus building, strategic planning, and project implementation has been accomplished, largely through the voluntary efforts of all members and within a total financial budget of less than \$500,000 CAN. GPAC has become a strong, animating force in the region, challenging, supporting and inspiring the activities of its members and others that come within its sphere of influence. In a little over three years, GPAC has completed the following measurable achievements:

- six cross-sectoral, bi-national meetings of the Coalition
- two major international, multi-sectoral workshops
- seven comprehensive scoping papers on conditions in the region related to pollution and habitat disturbance
- consensus on fifteen priority environmental issues common throughout the Gulf of Maine region
- development of targeted strategies to address these issues
- implementation of five pilot projects in response to these strategies
- strategic assessment of GPA targets in the Gulf of Maine
- ongoing interaction and information sharing with the Bight of the California's sister pilot project

As a result of the interactive work by this group of highly committed individuals there has been in considerable advancement in the development of four critical elements for GPA implementation:

- a base of critical scientific information on the Gulf Region's natural systems and built environments;
- strong collegial relationships among key scientists, decision-makers and advocates, both internal and external to the Region;
- consensus on the scope of the GPA in the Region, and the priority issues for action; and
- a base of over 350 persons, from all sectors of the community, who have voluntarily participated in some aspect of the GPAC activities in the Region, representing a considerable resource for future advancement of the GPA.

In its short history, the GPAC has achieved measurable progress in implementation of the first steps of the GPA methodology in this region. However, much more work is needed in the establishment of regional management targets and objectives; the implementation of directed programs of action, and in the identification of realistic, measurable criteria for the evaluation of progress and effectiveness.

2.6 Lessons Learned

In the short time frame since its formation, the GPAC has developed into a highly cohesive group, focused on the achievement of common goals and objectives. The building of such productive cross-sectoral relationships is challenging, without the added complexity contributed by bi-national issues. Many of the formative steps faced by the GPAC are common to the creation of any new organization, and simply require time and attention. Other issues arising during the past three years appear to be more specific to the Global Programme itself, or to its implementation in a regional seas context. A number of the lessons learned by the GPAC are appropriate for application to the implementation of the GPA in other regions and have been described briefly in the following sections.

EFFECTIVENESS OF THE GPA METHODOLOGY

The United Nations Global Programme of Action is recognizably an instrument of governance, designed primarily to address the role and function of government agencies in effecting change in societal practice. As such, application of the GPA methodology would generally be expected to be a responsibility of government, and would be supported with fiscal and human resources. Working as a cross-sectoral partnership, the GPAC relied only on the financial resources provided by its sponsor, the Commission for Environmental Cooperation, and the voluntary participation of its members. Working in this ad-hoc context, the GPAC focussed on fostering individual relationships and productive partnerships as the primary tool for change. Despite this non-government approach, **it is the consensus of the GPAC that the methodology for implementation of the GPA as laid out in the UNEP document, provides an effective guideline for the development of multi-stakeholder initiatives for change in land-based activities that impact on marine and coastal environments.**

PARTNERSHIP BUILDING

It is generally accepted that the greatest potential for societal change exists when the broadest cross-section of a community participates. Such multi-sectoral partnerships can require considerable time for the development of trust, the appreciation of alternative viewpoints, and the participation in shared initiatives. The number and diversity of backgrounds of participants in the GPAC process has provided a broad view of issues, as well as insight into other regional initiatives and projects. The GPAC has achieved an enviable measure of success in involving a broad spectrum of the community, but members continue to recognize the need to improve participation by municipalities, industry, and Native Americans.

It is obvious that in the Region of the Gulf of Maine, many similarities exist between the United States and Canada, such as a common language, cultural parallels, and similar governmental structures. However, there are also many unexpected cultural and operational differences in the development and enforcement of environmental policies and legislation; in the reporting and recording of environmental protection information; in the emerging roles of the First Nations and the Founding Tribes; and in the focus and activities of community-based organizations. Additionally, there were both benefits and constraints that arose from the existing relationships, policies and programs of the established regional environmental research and management organizations. **Within the GPAC, the sharing of differing perspectives and methods was important to the achievement of collaborative viewpoints and partnership activities.** Successful sectoral partnerships are largely

the product of cooperative, collegial relationships between individuals, an on-going, but highly rewarding experience.

OBSTRUCTIONS FROM ESTABLISHED JURISDICTIONAL RELATIONSHIPS

The application of the GPA methodology in the Gulf of Maine Region must be viewed as an overlay to established organizations, mechanisms, and protocols of government and society. Within these two industrialized nations, there are many levels of government responsible for management and enforcement of the activities that would normally fall within the umbrella of the GPA. Consequently, there is a challenge for any new organization focussed on GPA issues to demonstrate the value added by their actions. The value added by the GPAC has been an ongoing debate, as some government representatives have argued forcibly that existing staff, resources and programs are already at work in the Region on GPA related issues, and therefore effective mechanisms for GPA implementation already exist. **Notwithstanding the fact that governments are addressing environmental protection and conservation initiatives in this Region, there is clear evidence that there has not yet been sufficient, significant change in the manner in which land based activities are undertaken in this Region.** The GPAC remains convinced that there is an immediate need for more education, commitment and action to advance the principles of the GPA throughout the Gulf of Maine.

HUMAN AND FINANCIAL RESOURCES IN SUPPORT OF STRATEGIC PLANNING

Time allocated to strategic planning is crucial to the achievement of group consensus, and group ownership of both process and products. Administrative and coordination support for strategic planning, core services, and catalytic funding for projects is critical to the success of both short and long-term objectives. The Gulf of Maine covers such a large geographic area that meetings of the GPAC are costly in terms of both financial and human resources. Government agencies do not universally support travel for staff outside of their jurisdictions, nor can NGO's, small business and researchers absorb additional travel costs in already constrained budgets. In addition to the time and resources volunteered by the GPAC members, or contributed by associated government programs, the GPAC has been fortunate to have been provided with short-term financial support from the Commission for Environmental Cooperation.

The CEC funding was based on a standard government program time frame of three years, after which the GPAC was expected to become self sustaining, or be integrated into existing government and/or community organizations and initiatives. **This three-year window of opportunity supported the establishment of this unique partnership organization, demonstrably efficient in the definition and ratification of strategic objectives, but hindered in its ability to ensure progress on these objectives through a lack of long-term financial resources.** Without recourse to some level of core financial support, the future for the GPAC appears bleak at best.

ELECTRONIC COMMUNICATIONS

Given the size of the geographic area served, the GPAC quickly developed a reliance on the electronic medium, using both an Internet web page and a list server to efficiently and cost effectively provide access to documentation and facilitate communications with forty persons. In addition to serving the members of the GPAC in the region, individuals residing outside the Region (Washington, D.C, Ottawa, and Mexico) could also be included in the communication loop. **Electronic communication technology, although not without its pitfalls, continues to play an important role in the successful implementation of the GPAC initiatives,**

VOLUNTEERISM

Early in the establishment of the GPAC, it became clear that, to some degree, participation by all the GPAC members must be regarded as a form of volunteerism. With few exceptions, the GPAC did not have the resources to recompense members for time spent in organization or implementation. A few members of the GPAC participated as community volunteers. Most of the GPAC members pursued full time careers as environmental staff for government, private sector, and advocacy and community based organizations. Although participation in the GPAC was within the scope of their professional interests, it was not a requirement of their position. Most members added the GPAC responsibilities to an already overwhelming workload. Generally this individual commitment would result in unpaid overtime and increased hours away from family members, a situation that must place GPAC participation in the context of volunteered activities. Despite this demand on the individual, the GPAC has developed a record for performance that could be the envy of many agencies with full-time staff resources.

Special reference must be made to the work of the GPAC Executive Committee (GPAC Co-Chairs, the CEC Program Manager, and the GPAC Coordinator) and the GPAC Task Group Chairs. These individuals, without exception, took on responsibilities and workloads well beyond that covered by contracts or salaries. Their commitment inspired their colleagues and insured that the major initiatives and day-to-day operations of the GPAC continued in a timely and efficient manner.

THE IMPORTANCE OF ACHIEVING CONSENSUS

Implementation of the GPA in a regional sea can be challenged by the lack of region-wide acceptance of important issues. **Without strong, compelling shared international priorities for action, it is difficult to galvanize local attention, commitment and resources.** In such a diverse geographic area as the Gulf of Maine, with differing levels of urbanization and resource use, issues of concern related to the effects of land based activities can, and did, vary between sectors, states and provinces, and even local areas.

Early in the GPAC process, individual members asserted that priority issues for action in the Gulf of Maine Region had already been identified. On examination, the GPAC found it difficult to confirm either a list of regionally valid and ratified priority issues, or an existing, regionally-based process that could lead to their identification and ratification. It was obvious that certain issues, with value to certain sectors or local areas, had been defined, but there were no instances where these priorities had been widely communicated or ratified throughout the Region. The task of identifying regionally significant shared issues was determined to be a first priority for action by the GPAC.

In its search for regionally significant priorities, the GPAC ensured that issues of importance to local areas but not universally significant throughout the Region, were not lost, overlooked, or over-generalized. Examination of the fifteen priority issues identified by the GPAC will reveal that these issues, though common throughout the Gulf, may be of lesser or greater importance in different areas of the Region. If the GPAC had focussed only on issues universally held as a high priority throughout the entire Gulf region, locally critical issues would be overlooked, and the motivation, conviction and ability of smaller, community based organizations to effect beneficial change would be undermined.

SHORT TERM PLANNING AND EVALUATION HORIZONS

The GPAC has concluded that implementation of the principles of the GPA in the Gulf of Maine will require a sustained long-term commitment from all participants. Successful change in land based activities will only result from changes in societal values and practices that are unlikely to occur in

the short-term. Ironically, expectations for progress on the GPA can be based on unrealistic schedules for achievement, more in keeping with political time frames than with the time needed to effect substantive societal change. When faced with constraints of time and resources, participants in a partnership building process like the GPAC can become understandably distracted by the need for short-term demonstrations of achievement, rather than remaining focussed on long-term, enduring measures of success. **Sectoral partnerships, measured by the successful relationships crafted between individuals, need time to grow before the true measure of their success can be taken.** It is important for all individuals working to advance the GPA not to judge progress too harshly in the short term. Planning horizons should establish longer time frames (20 years) with achievable-short term milestones.

CHAPTER 3 THE ROAD AHEAD

3.1 Summary

In its short history, and with its level of fiscal and human resources, the GPAC has achieved significant and notable successes. This relatively small group of dedicated individuals has provided a badly needed linkage between established partnership organizations in government, private sector, research and the community. Critical interpersonal relationships have been established as beachheads of communication between the sectors of the Region. We must ensure that this integrated approach to understanding and addressing the impacts of land based activities continues. The legacy of sectoral partnership initiatives in environmental management should be the result of decades, not months, of collaborative effort.

3.2 Recommendations

The GPAC recommends the following first steps on the road forward:

- Discussions with like-minded organizations should be undertaken to identify a longer term home for the GPAC.
- The findings and conclusions of the GPAC science based initiatives should be compiled in a Strategic Assessment Report intended to educate, guide and motivate action in the Gulf of Maine, and elsewhere.
- Technical information gained from the GPAC process should be made available to other initiatives in the Region
- The CEC should disseminate the GPAC experience to the international community as there are relatively few documented experiences of regional GPA implementation.
- Continued human and fiscal resources must be applied to the ongoing animation of the committed members and associates of the GPAC, who have through their personal commitment and dedication, built productive relationships, sewn new seeds for cooperative efforts and moved progress on protecting the Gulf of Maine a few small steps forward on the road to sustainability.

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