



Activity brief (December 2014)

Institute for Security Studies (ISS) ECOWAS Integrated Maritime Strategy (EIMS) Activity

1 December 2012 – 31 January 2014

Background: The Economic Community of West African States (ECOWAS) region comprises 15 countries, covering an estimated land surface of five million square kilometres. Eleven of the 15 countries lie on the coast of the Atlantic Ocean, stretching from Senegal to Nigeria. The maritime zone is well endowed, and rich in biodiversity and natural resources. Therefore, it is a critical life support system for the region, providing a primary source of food for local populations, and supporting wildlife and the marine ecosystem. Furthermore, the zone also provides a source of energy, supports 90 per cent of trade and is one of the main attractions for tourism to West Africa.

The ECOWAS maritime domain faces severe challenges that undermine the ability of the region to maximise the full potential of its maritime resources. These challenges have impeded both national and regional efforts to combat social problems including poverty and hunger. The main threats to maritime security in West Africa include:

- pollution;
- poaching and overfishing;
- increased urbanisation and overpopulation along the coastline;
- deforestation along coastal regions;
- increased human activity on coastal waters; and
- piracy, armed robbery and other human-induced criminality.

The maritime challenges in West Africa are complex and it is recognised that a holistic approach that addresses both the root causes and the prevailing threats is required. As a pioneer political institution in the region, the ECOWAS Commission agreed to prepare and submit a draft ECOWAS Integrated Maritime Strategy (EIMS). The Commission approached the Institute for Security Studies (ISS) in 2011 to request assistance in preparing a draft EIMS. A draft was provided at the end of November 2011.

Objective: The key goal of this activity was to fund a fully developed EIMS. The EIMS was designed as a strategic policy framework document that recommended measures to be undertaken by ECOWAS and its Member States for the regulation of activities and use of the maritime domain, as well as measures for countering threats to it.

Specifically, the objectives of a fully developed EIMS were to:

- raise awareness and knowledge of the threats to the maritime domain;
- provide a common regional framework for regulating maritime activities in West Africa;
- devise strategies for preventing and combating threats to the domain;

- mobilise resources for the prevention and combating of maritime challenges;
- coordinate and strengthen practical cooperation on maritime issues at a national, bilateral and multilateral levels;
- enhance the capacity of ECOWAS Member States to effectively deal with the threat of piracy and other violent acts; and
- identify and establish institutional mechanisms for the monitoring and enforcement of common standards for the use of the maritime domain and for preventing and combating threats.

Activity description: To ensure effective monitoring and enforcement, the EIMS was based on a three-zonal approach with each zone equipped with its own monitoring and enforcement mechanism known as the Multilateral Coordination Centre (MCC), made up of country representatives of the zone. A Maritime Regional Centre (MRC) was established to coordinate the activities of the three zones. An EIMS Unit was established with the Regional Security Division of the ECOWAS Commission.

Sector: Public sector

Outcomes: The activity resulted in the creation and implementation of a fully developed ECOWAS integrated maritime strategy.

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| Date approved: | 24/01/2013 |
| Implementation partner/s: | ISS, ECOWAS |
| Total cost: | USD 188 359 |