



PROCESSO DA RECANIDATURA AO PM DA UNESCO  
ARQUIPÉLAGO DE BOLAMA-BIJAGÓS  
Bubaque, 16 e 19 de fevereiro de 2017



# RELAUNCHING THE PROCESS FOR WORLD HERITAGE NOMINATION OF THE BOLAMA-BIJAGÓS ARCHIPELAGO, GUINEA-BISSAU

## WSFI Workshop Report



Tim Dodman

## Summary

The Bijagós Archipelago, a complex of islands, mudflats and shallow waters off Guinea-Bissau, is one of the foremost sites for nature along the western coast of Africa, whilst its islands also have rich and varied cultural traditions. The site has been recognised for its international importance under various mechanisms, including as a Man and Biosphere Reserve. However, Guinea-Bissau's application to nominate the area as a World Heritage Site (WHS, a process that was launched in 2005) was unsuccessful. Although the evaluation team clearly recognised the international values of the site, there were issues with integrity of the site, noting the presence of plantations, shipping lanes and various potential threats, whilst no management plan (a requisite for all WHSs) was presented.

Given that the importance of the site was not in doubt and noting the potential varied benefits of securing World Heritage status, the government of Guinea-Bissau has decided to relaunch the process for nomination of the archipelago as a site under the World Heritage Convention. Various partners are willing to support Guinea-Bissau in this process, including the Wadden Sea Flyway Initiative (WSFI) and the MAVA Foundation, which provided resources for this first relaunch workshop, which was held at the IBAP (Instituto da Biodiversidade e das Áreas Protegidas) Casa do Ambiente e Cultura on the island of Bubaque in February 2017.

The government's commitment to the relaunching process was evidenced by the presence of the Minister of Environment throughout the workshop. Participants listened to valuable presentations about the previous nomination as a WHS and evaluation results, the current status of the archipelago as a biosphere reserve and objectives of a MAVA Foundation project to support the nomination. Examples were also presented from the Wadden Sea and the Banc d'Arguin, both WHSs along the East Atlantic Flyway, highlighting the link between these sites and the Bijagós through migratory birds – one of the key nature values of the archipelago. Both sites clearly valued their World Heritage status.

Participants were also presented with various scenarios for a new nomination as a WHS, which would likely focus in the first instance only on the nature values of the site. There were options to consider to the whole biosphere reserve as a WHS, although this would mean including areas such as plantations and shipping lanes, which could be problematic for the nomination. Alternatives were to nominate the protected areas within the archipelago as the WHS or to focus on the marine areas. No decisions were taken, but there were rich discussions and debates, which will all feed into the nomination process over the coming years. The alternative time schedules and deadlines to reach nomination targets were also presented and discussed.

The importance of involving local communities within the nomination process was noted, an aspect that perhaps did not receive sufficient attention during the first application. The WSFI and MAVA would be supporting a follow-up workshop to inform and gauge the input from communities from all chiefdoms / key islands within the archipelago. All partners are committed to ensuring consensus for the new nomination.

## **Introduction**

This report details presentations and discussions during the workshop to relaunch the World Heritage nomination for the Bijagós. Further information, including participant names, full organisation names and agenda are available in the report prepared by IBAP.

### **Friday 17<sup>th</sup> February 2017**

#### **1. Discussion of WSFI-WHC visit in the Bijagós Archipelago**

After gathering in the centre to meet and see the displays, delegates gathered in the meeting area outside after 10:00 for a discussion about the visiting delegates' trip around the Bijagós immediately before the meeting. Guiomar Alonso Cano (UNESCO) presented a summary of the trip and the group's overall impressions. Gerold added his positive impression of the Bijagós and thanked IBAP for organising this mission. He hoped that the Wadden Sea will have a long-term partnership with the Bijagós, especially under the World Heritage banner. There is already a MoA between the Wadden Sea and the Banc d'Arguin (PNBA), and he hopes this can be extended to the Bijagós. The main relationship between the Wadden Sea and the Bijagós is the migratory birds. Tilman Jaeger (MAVA consultant) believes the Bijagós is of global importance for nature, also with strong cultural importance, such as local taboos and beliefs. The cultural and ecosystem values are linked.

Augusta Henriques (Tiniguena) noted the challenges identified by the team, but we should also put a strong focus on Bubaque, where there is more development, as it's the principal port for the archipelago. There are new communities here that provoke change in terms of culture, religion and other elements. There is a big challenge to the site, including waste management, which presents a problem of pollution, eg batteries, plastic. We need experience from other sites / other models.

Hamilton Monteiro (GPC) explained the visit itinerary, with the island group of João Viera as the first stop. Here the group observed Timneh Parrots, which move between these islands, supporting one of the highest concentrations of this threatened species. We also visited Imbone and saw an important island for breeding Caspian Terns. We went to Orango including Eticoga and Anhor, where we heard but didn't see the famous hippos. We also visited Uno, where we found an important freshwater wetland with a large number of ducks and other birds. Guiomar's greatest impression was to realise the link relating to about one million migratory birds, indicating the high level of connections between the Bijagós and other parts of the world.

#### **2. Opening**

There was an official welcome at 12:00, with presentation of the Minister of Environment, the Director of IBAP and other delegates. Alfredo Simão da Silva (IBAP) noted this important occasion for the Bijagós and presented the representatives from different delegations and islands. We're here to discuss the process of relaunching the Bijagós Archipelago as a World Heritage Site (WHS). 2005 was the first step to apply for World Heritage (WH) status for the Bijagós as a natural and cultural site, and in 2012 we presented a dossier for the first time in Paris. However, although there are 36 mixed nature-cultural WHSs in the world, unfortunately our application was deferred. We need now to deal with the questions that were presented before in order to successfully relaunch the process. We will now apply for a natural WHS in the first instance, to allow the process to be more concise and quick, although the cultural component is still essential, and can be considered in the future. WH status will permit a strong international status for the Bijagós. We need to relaunch the process and reach a successful conclusion.



Embalmó (Minister of Environment) indicated that we need to analyse the issues and share information between ourselves and with the public to proceed with the reclassification of the Bijagós as a WHS. The Bijagós has great natural and cultural values and is very beautiful, and we need to guard it well for future generations. The area is already a Biosphere Reserve and a Ramsar Site. I'm convinced that through our different sectors and the mobilisation of different partners, establishing the Bijagós as a WHS will be assured. The involvement of the local population will be vital for the whole process. The quality of the Bijagós is high, it's an exceptional site in the country, and listing it on

the WH list will help to guarantee its values. However, it's a big challenge for Guinea-Bissau, and we welcome the input and support of our partners, at technical, financial and other levels. I'm convinced that the process will be followed seriously. Thanks to UNESCO, MAVA, the Wadden Sea, IUCN and all other partners who have contributed so far to this process. The Minister then declared the workshop open.

### **3. Bijagós-Bolama Biosphere Reserve: Experiences and expectations - Justino Biai (12:45-13:20)**

The Archipelago became a Biosphere Reserve (BR) in 1996, with an area of 10,272km<sup>2</sup> (submerged area: 1,200 km<sup>2</sup>, intertidal area: 1,600 km<sup>2</sup>, mangroves: 350 km<sup>2</sup>). The principal functions of BRs are:

- Conservation of biodiversity, ecosystems & species
- Development: association of environment with development
- Logistics: international network for research & monitoring

These different functions are largely achieved through zoning, with a transition area (human establishments, research / experimentation), a buffer zone and a core area (protection).

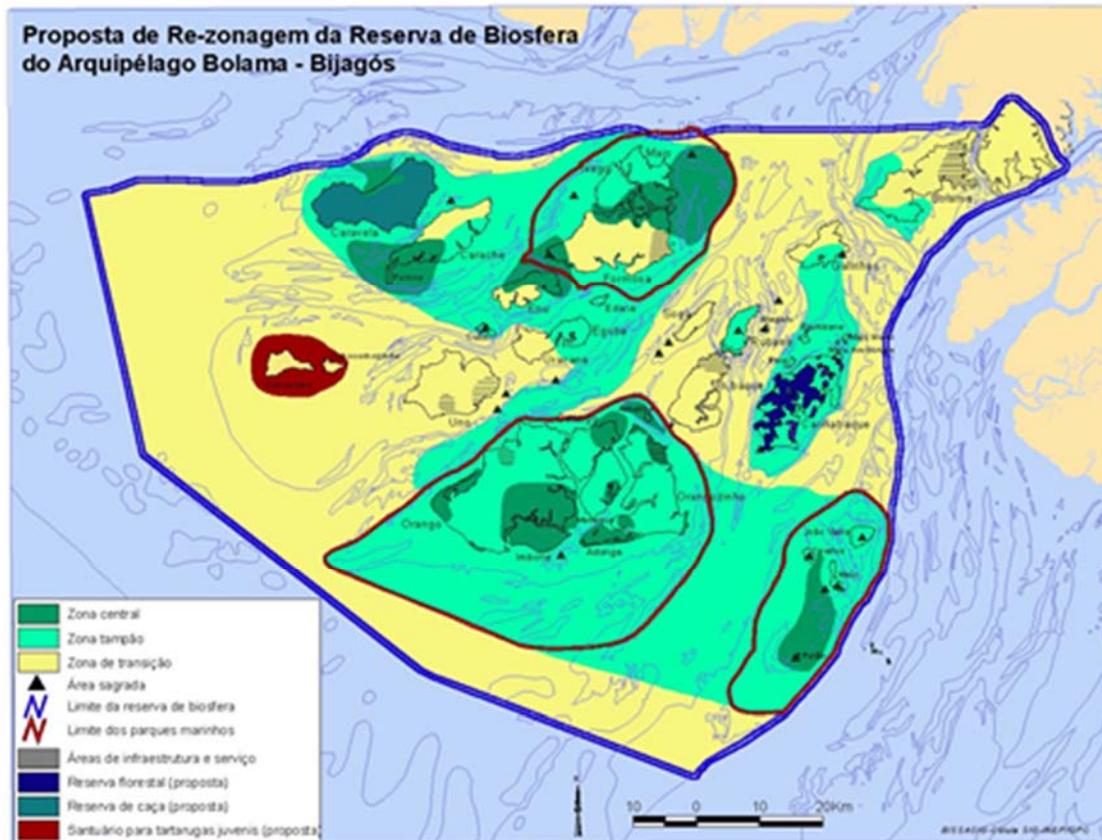
#### History of evolution of the Bijagós-Bolama Biosphere Reserve (RBABB)

- 1989: initiation of coastal planning programme through DGFC-MDRA, with support of IUCN & DDA; inventory of fauna
- 1990: Debate on proposal to create 4 NPs & BR; project with INEP
- 1991: Conclusions of faunal inventory, ecological characterisation of each group of islands & proposals for zonation; conclusions from socio-economic studies (INEP & PNUD)
- 1992: Decision to establish the Casa de Ambiente in Bubaque, with official opening in 1993. Presentation to 4<sup>th</sup> World Congress of NPs & PAs for creation of BR & NPs
- 1995: First meeting of representatives of Bijagós ... village by village, high local involvement
- 1996: Creation of committee MAB G-B
- Official approval of scientific council of UNESCO for Bijagós as a BR. Conference in Bijagós.
- 1997: Negotiations & fund-raising. 1<sup>st</sup> assembly
- 1999-2001: 1<sup>st</sup> implementation phase of management plan; RBABB assembly & set-up of local radio Djan Djan; NPs officially approved.

#### Zonation

- Central zones: Priority areas for conservation and areas for traditional activities. JVP, Orango as NPs, addition of Formosa in 2005 as a PA.

- Buffer zones: sustainable development. JVP (PNMJVP): very important for breeding turtles; ca. 2000 along with Orongo. Urok; Formosa / Nage & Chediã. Large river delta, high avifauna. High variety of molluscs, fauna & birds. Unicomensho for turtle breeding and other areas for natural forest added in later phase.
- Transition areas: Orongo. Some key species, including hippo, areas of savannah & mangroves. High ecological value. Key species include Olive Ridley Turtle, hippo, monkeys, dolphins, otter, antelopes, breeding & migratory birds.



Economic activities include seasonal agriculture, fishing and collection of natural products (eg palm, honey). Participative management is achieved through awareness, stakeholder meetings, local initiatives, local radio, training, transfer of technologies, support to local agricultural groups. There is active participation of local populations in decision-making & co-management.

The Management system includes the BR assembly, NP management, scientific committee, development support committee, business plan and various planning directives.

#### Problems:

- Lack of solutions negotiated for impact of commercial foreign fisheries, cutting of mangroves & big trees, capture of animals and over-exploitation of cartilaginous fish.
- Insufficient scientific information to support management
- Lack of return for collection of local resources
- Poverty and poor governance.

The perspectives for WH status are promotion of conservation in situ of large areas for biodiversity and the mobilisation of new partners for conservation and sustainable development.

#### **4. Consolidation of capacity for management and conservation of the Bijagós Archipelago - Tilman Jaeger (13:25-13:55)**

The objective of the new project is to consolidate capacity for conservation and to consider the intention to nominate the Bijagós, also to reach consensus.

##### *4.1 MAVA & the Bijagós*

- Coastal ecosystems are a priority issue for MAVA; the Bijagós is one of the most important areas.
- Maintain the productivity of the zone and prevent the damaging exploration of natural resources, contribute to conservation of natural resources & prosperity
- Contribute to global strategy
- Regional MPA network (RAMPAO)
- Regional partnerships (PRCM)
- International partnerships (PNBA, Wadden Sea etc)
- Project directly relates to 'priority species' & 'key habitats' of MAVA, including marine turtles, birds, mangroves, fish etc
- Relates to threats identified in MAVA's regional strategy, including disturbance, industrial fishing, accidental capture / bycatch, infrastructures, pollution (petrol)
- Bijagós thus meets all the main criteria for MAVA support / intervention

##### *4.2 Basic info of MAVA's support*

- 400,000 euros, 36 months for IBAP to manage in cooperation with GPC, INEP, regional administrations & others
- Steering committee & principal forum for communication

##### *4.3 Objectives & thematic areas*

- Objective: consolidation of participative management for conservation of Bijagós
- 6 specific objectives & themes: coherence, coordination, participation, analysis, finance & re-candidature

##### *4.4 Specific Objectives*

- a. Consolidate coherence of the spatial approach, with zoning, management of whole BR
  - Elaborate, approve & disseminate management plan
  - Approve legal status
  - Reconsider totality of the marine area as one large MPA
  - Identify systems for priority coastal & intertidal areas
- b. Strengthen coordination between sectors, institutions & stakeholders
  - Functional operationalization
  - Development of a strategy to institutionalise a multi-actor platform for duration of project
- c. Consolidate the participative management
  - A shared vision for a model of development based on consultation & negotiation with stakeholders
  - Mechanisms for participative management are built into the system of management & planning
- d. Consolidate analyses with respect to the threats due to tourism, excessive use of resources, marine traffic & exploration/extraction of offshore petroleum & issues in the high sea
  - Master plan & tourism map to orient the planning & development of tourism activities in the whole reserve
  - Consolidate marine monitoring, control & vigilance

- Risk assessment for increasing marine traffic and for possible offshore oil and gas exploration and extraction and options to enhance risk preparedness
- e. Consolidate funding streams for conservation in the long term
- Define the needs & deficiencies (financial)
  - Identify the opportunities for support & follow-up to project
- f. Present a dossier of re-candidature taking into account the former decisions of the WH committee that deferred the original dossier and the technical recommendations of IUCN
- 30/9/18: aim to present the draft dossier
  - 1/2/19: Submit the final dossier of inscription

#### *4.5 Consideration of risks*

- Political volatility
- Incentives to take decisions are inadequate
- Uncontrolled, unregulated & poorly planned tourism
- Preconceptions of assurance in relation to illicit activities

Local benefits and negative impacts need to be considered. Fishing is one key issue. Specialised tourism could be a good strategy. The values of birds should also be considered, as a key biodiversity component.

### **5. Analysis of the Dossier for Bijagós – Motom Morangadjogo - Yussuf Djedjo (15:35-16:40)**

IUCN is involved in the evaluation of natural WH sites.

#### *5.1 VUE: Universal Exceptional Value*

There are 3 pillars of VUE: criteria fulfilled / integrity & authenticity / protection & management. You need a functional relationship between these three pillars: need habitats of good quality, and for this need a good system of management & protection. All three conditions need to be filled.

##### *5.1.1 Criteria:*

Need to meet a number of 10 criteria: 6 cultural criteria (ECOMOS) and 4 natural criteria, of which criterion 7 is very important, it's for sites that show exceptional beauty. Criterion 8 is geological, including sites where there's a historical phenomenon of importance. Criterion 9 refers to the ecological process, eg for Bijagós it would concern ecosystem functioning of the archipelago. Criterion 10 refers to sites of high biodiversity value (flora & fauna), with existence of species that are listed on the IUCN Red List. Endemism is also important under this criterion. There is not however an obligation for sites to support these species. Given this diversity of criteria, need a multi-disciplinary team when evaluating nominations.

##### *5.1.2 Integrity:*

All sites proposed for inscription must meet conditions of integrity, which is an appreciation of the whole intact character of the site and /or its cultural attributes. Need to examine 3 elements:

- a. Does the site have all necessary elements to indicate the VUE?
- b. Is it of sufficient size to permit complete representation of characteristics that give it importance, ie all values need to be included within the limits of the site.
- c. Not subject to negative effects linked to development and/or lack of maintenance.

Despite the existence of threats / pressure there should be a mechanism to mitigate / minimise them. All projects within the site should not have negative impacts.

All these points must be present for a declaration of integrity. An example is shown for Mount Nimba, where the state of the forest in Guinea and Côte d'Ivoire is far better than the state in Liberia, which suffered from 30 years of mining for iron, with no natural habitat remaining. When the countries tried to classify the site as a WHS, the dossier did not pass because of Liberia.

### 5.1.3 Protection & Management

- a. Protection: Judicial papers protecting the site, international conventions, traditional system of protection
- b. Management: Presence of a functional management body, a management plan & mechanism of sustainable financing.

Check out the document on VUE published by IUCN.

## 5.2 Lessons learned from the analysis of the Bijagós – Motom Morangadjogo dossier

### 5.2a Justification of the criteria

The dossier proposed in 2012 met criteria 5, 7, 9 & 10. IUCN decided that the site could meet these criteria, but the integrity of their attributes was not sufficient.

Criteria	Argument to strengthen	Tools / data
vii	Show that human activities do not affect the natural beauty	Satellite images
ix	Show integrity of the marine processes	Marine transport, sediments, interactions (N-S currents)
x	Marine values, ecological links (Wadden Sea / Bijagós / PNBA), eg migratory birds & turtles	Indicators: species-habitat dynamics

### 5.2b Justification of the integrity

Major problems identified:

- Bolama and the continental part are largely covered by cashew plantations
- Ricefields are subject to fire
- The limits must exclusively concern the parts that support the natural criteria

### 5.2c Development projects and threats

Construction project of the port of Rio Grande de Buba (for bauxite exploitation / transport) would result in regular passage of large ships. There are a lot of other question marks and unknowns concerning future potential projects. Need to exclude sites of exploitation, eg of petrol from the site. It's completely forbidden to have destructive industries within the site. If such an activity is outside the site, need to prove that it won't have an impact on the site.

### 5.2d Justification of the system of protection & management

Protection:

- Despite initiatives to reinforce protection, there was no legal status in place for the site (a WH requirement)
- The 3 protected areas each had a clear individual status of protection, but there was no act consecrated to protection of the overall natural area
- It's important to consolidate the MAB approach to protect high biodiversity zones

Management:

- Existence of an overall management body (IBAP) and partners
- Sustainable finance mechanism (Fondation Bio-Guinée)
- Absence of a management plan, which is an obligatory annex to an application.

### 5.2e Comparative analysis

- Emphasize the marine and coastal values of the Bijagós archipelago and their specificities in relation to comparable sites
- Terrestrial values are important but should not be part of the first plan

### 5.3 Conclusion

- Natural values are retained; management body performing OK
- The natural values of the Bijagós Archipelago are proven (criteria vii, ix & x)
- The management body is performing well
- The sustainable financing mechanism is promising;

These elements are important for inscription on the World Heritage List

Proposal for Bijagós inscription was deferred following the IUCN evaluation in October 2012, due especially to the following shortcomings, which need to be corrected:

- Absence of an act of protection of the site
- Site boundaries include certain non-priority areas in terms of natural values
- Absence of a management plan
- The comparative analysis did not highlight the specificities of the richness in terms of marine and coastal biodiversity of the site

Need to implement a two-year roadmap to correct these shortcomings in the dossier. The particularities are more relevant than the similarities.

### 6. Decision: 37 COM 8B.17. Committee PM – Alfredo Simão da Silva (16:45-16:55)

- a. Strengthen the status of legal protection in order to guarantee that all zones have adequate legal and/or customary protection
- b. Consider the possibility to modify the limits of the proposed zones to the BR interior in its entirety to meet obligations of integrity and to exclude strongly modified zones that don't contribute to its exceptional value; use of buffer zones
- c. Deepen the comparative analysis to examine the potential to demonstrate outstanding universal value on the basis of cultural criteria
- d. Assure a management plan with resources to implement it
- e. Clear strategy for sustainable tourism integrating policy, programmes & appropriate infrastructure
- f. Put in place management plans for the protected areas
- g. Establish the measures & efficient activities of protection / management that minimise the effects of non-native species etc.
- h. Ensure that new shipping routes are not established within the property
- i. Ensure that Oil & Gas operations are not authorised in the area, and that the impact of Oil & Gas operations outside the area do not impact the property
- j. Ensure that sufficient human & financial resources are available to maintain the integrity of the site and protection in the long term.

Additional recommendation:

The State Party takes measures to include either the National Parks or the entire Biosphere Reserve as a Ramsar Site to strengthen national and local protection and management and international recognition.

## **7. Question / Answer session (17:00 – 18:30)**

A: Including Bolama was too ambitious. It's important to engage youth and conduct training. Community development is essential in conservation. Thanks to IBAP/IUCN for development in the islands, eg schools, hospitals & infrastructures in Orango and other islands.

Pierre Campredon: There is development in the isles, eg tourism, but also a loss of youth from the islands. The process should take good account of development and culture. How to integrate the marine issues? There is no real infrastructure in several islands, some areas are nearly 100% natural. We need to build capacity for management and research and to better manage the site.

Yussuf: Analysis of IUCN recognised tidal influences and natural systems. All areas presented as valuable should be free of threats into the future, and the natural functioning should be safeguarded. Any activity should not disturb this functionality. Concerning Ramsar status in the archipelago; there are a lot of common elements / criteria with WHC. The Archipelago is already on the Ramsar list, but does it meet the WH status? Ramsar has 9 criteria.

Augusta Henriques: There is great concern for the erosion of cultural values in the archipelago, whilst some incoming populations have less reason to value nature.

Hamilton: The pampam phenomenon (clearing of new agricultural land) needs to be taken into consideration. Pollution is also an issue: beaches get rubbish on them, eg empty sacs of water fill up with sand litter our beaches.

F: We need a management plan, but we need to take account of all aspects within the plan, eg to cover turtles, sandbanks & other important issues. We need a practical plan, not just a plan with lots of information. We need to conserve the site but we need to include the buffer zones whilst also respecting anti-poverty actions.

Justinho: The archipelago has a very important role for artisanal fishing and fisheries, especially for fish reproduction. Establishment of a free trade zone in Bolama could have an impact. Issues such as sport fishing and tourism need to be properly integrated.

Alfredo: There are countries in Africa rich in resources but the people have nothing. In Guinea-Bissau if we don't act, then we get left behind.

Nelson Dias: We want to see all the interests of the participants in the Bijagós re-launching process. We need to work together to see how the archipelago will survive through political & NGO input. We have rich resources in Guinea-Bissau, especially in the Bijagós. The archipelago has so many boats, it's like 'Tokyo by night', with all the fishing boats that 'pick & go'. We need strong parliamentary support for our natural resources. The ecosystem needs to be healthy in order to support our resources. 7000km ... We need sustainable development, we need to show that we can change. We need to convince others and have development; eg for tourism, we need a clear tourism plan. We need to make sure that the Bijagós WHS will become a reality. We need to work seriously in this next phase.

Aissa Regalla: The issue of migratory birds is one of our strengths that meets the comparative criterion. Mitigation of Oil & Gas and other threats is essential.

Emmanuel: All the islands of the archipelago are inter-linked.

L: We have 2 years to prepare for the candidature, and we need to use these 2 years in a very concerted manner. Pampam & cashew production and the agro-silvicultural process need to be checked. Too much slash & burn, these systems need to be penalised.

Minister: We need to make sure that we keep time in the process and don't delay. The world needs to know what is happening in Guinea-Bissau and about our tourism and potential. It won't be easy to complete the process, but we will manage it.

## Friday 17<sup>th</sup> February 2017

### 8. WSFI Field Guide - Aissa Regalla & Tim Dodman (9:15 – 9:45)

The WSFI East Atlantic Flyway Guide was presented, with copies handed officially to the Minister, Alfredo, Nelson Dias, Pierre Campredon and Hamilton Monteiro. Aissa Regalla noted that the book was extremely useful to them during the recent January count, especially as all plumages were illustrated and explained. The plates of terns & gulls were much appreciated. It was also good to have the book in three languages, because it meant that the teams of English, French and Portuguese speakers could easily share information about each species.



### 9. Recandidature of the Bijagós Archipelago - Tilman Jaeger (9:50-11:20)

#### 9.1 Impression of the Bijagós

The Bijagós has an exceptional conservation status of a marine-coastal (deltaic) system due to a combination of geography, management and traditional & formal conservation. There are important concerns, especially fishing, petroleum, maritime traffic & tourism. It's impossible to separate conservation from the human dimension (culture, traditions, rights, poverty). Conservation values of international importance:

- Migratory birds (including wintering waders)
- An important site of the East Atlantic Flyway, like the PNBA and the Wadden Sea
- Important breeding colonies of birds
- Very high biological productivity by virtue an extensive shallow marine shelf, sediments from main rivers and dynamic marine currents
- Reproduction of Green Turtle
- Important population of West African Manatee
- Indication of high importance of various cetaceans
- Very high diversity of sharks and rays (to be confirmed)

#### 9.2 The archipelago and the WH Convention

Even though we hear about the 'failure' of the first nomination, this was not related to the importance of the site, more to do with the procedures. The global importance of the archipelago is confirmed. There is a concentration of values of global importance of the marine environment. It's necessary to consider the results of the previous nomination, especially the IUCN evaluation and the decision of the WHC. It's also necessary to work on each one of the recommendations of the committee, and either follow them or at least take them into good account.

It's important to fully understand the three pillars of the convention. It's not just about values and exceptional sites, but integrity and a clear spatial approach are needed, as well as demonstrating capacity to conserve the values.

### 9.3 Implications for the project

Decision 37 com 8B.17 of the WH committee:

- Deferral to allow a deeper evaluation or to make substantial revision
- Potential to meet the various criteria of the convention
- Areas of recommendation:
  - Formal/traditional protection status
  - Management plan or system
  - Configuration of spatial limits
  - Tourism strategy
  - Deeper analysis of threats
  - Adequate resources
  - Consideration as a Ramsar Site

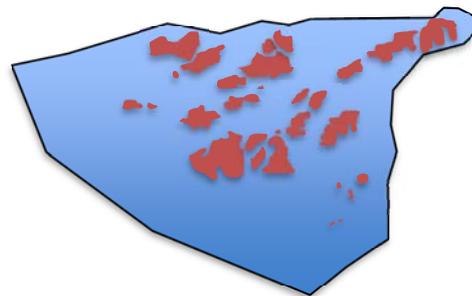
### 9.4 Possible scenarios for spatial configuration

- New configuration for the area as a WHS is indispensable and has direct implications on implementation of other recommendations of the convention
- Implications for the new proposal
- Biosphere Reserve has reference with all scenarios

An example of a poor spatial configuration is from the Pantanal, where only a small part was nominated, and not even the most important part.

#### Scenario A: MPA within the Biosphere Reserve

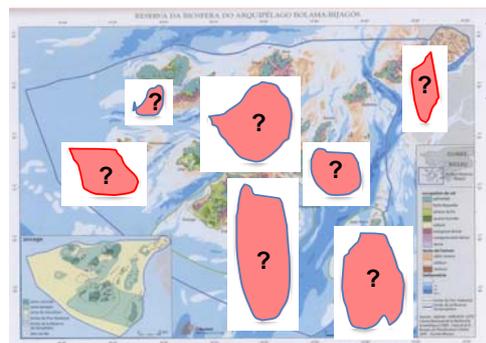
Use the whole Biosphere Reserve and consider as a large Marine Protected Area (MPA). A justification is that for management purposes it's helpful to have the same boundary. There would obviously have to be careful zoning and multiple use. The islands would then be considered as buffer zones, with the marine area being the proposed area of world heritage. All marine species would be catered for (ecosystems of international importance), including the sandbanks, sandy areas / flats and mangroves, beaches and rocky areas.



The beauty of this scenario is that the values of global importance are located in the marine and inter-tidal areas. Multiple use could require new zoning. Additional marine buffer zone might be necessary, eg around the marine area. A good comparison is the Wadden Sea, where the shallow marine areas essentially form the WHS. Here, the islands and continent don't form a part of the WHS. This could be used a possible model for the Bijagós.

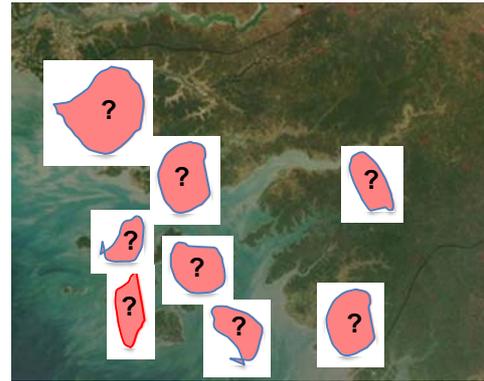
#### Scenario B: Network of priority zones within the Biosphere Reserve

WHS comprises a series of sites within the Biosphere Reserve. The areas of highest importance for marine and terrestrial conservation are identified within the BR. It would be a network of priority zones (PAs and/or traditional protection / sacred sites) within the BR. The new nuclear zone would be the components of a new proposal for a WHS in series. The buffer zone would be the unprotected areas within the BR.



### Scenario C: Coastal zone of Guinea-Bissau

Values of global importance for conservation are distributed in diverse parts of the coastline, with the archipelago as one part of a relatively intact system. The site would represent a functional ecological relationship between the Bijagós and various rivers and coastal ecosystems, at species and population levels - a proposal whereby priority areas of the archipelago are considered together with priority areas of the rest of the coastline as a WHS. There's a comparison with the IBAs of Guinea-Bissau, which are mostly in the coastal zone. There are not so many countries in the world that have a relatively intact coastal system that also represents a high percentage of the country's territory.



#### 9.5 Principal messages for the re-candidature

- a. The MPA approach using the BR boundaries (Scenario A) could be the most promising approach. The spatial concurrence of conservation values would largely be covered.
- b. Prioritisation of non-qualifying areas should not be considered as fragmentation. Coherence of the vast area of the BR maintains the links between the sea and the land.
- c. The recommendation to have a natural nomination should not be taken as a lack of value for the cultural values. The notion of culture under the Convention is somewhat limited, prioritising built structures / ancient sites. The cultural values of the Bijagós are clearly linked with the environment and ecological productivity.
- d. World Heritage is an instrument, not an objective *per se*. The objective should be the consolidation of integrated conservation in the archipelago. This, together with a new spatial configuration, creates the necessary conditions for a promising future. The label itself is important and is a tool to mitigate damaging actions.
- e. In line with the BR concept, a holistic approach should consider the relevant sectors and dimensions, such as culture, tourism, fisheries, agriculture, capacity of resources. The designation as a WHS should serve as an umbrella platform.

#### Questions / interventions (11:25-12:30)

Alfredo: Thinks Scenario A is the most ideal and the easiest / quickest to achieve. However, Scenario B can take account of some terrestrial areas.

João Cordeiro: We have all the islands as buffer zones in Scenario A. The capacity to manage and to control activities within the larger marine zone of the BR would be very difficult. We would need to identify some marine areas as buffer zones. For Scenario B, this is the better solution for me, with all the marine area as a buffer zone. The islands are important for biodiversity.

Tilman: In the concept of WHS, the buffer zones can form part of the proposal, but not legally part of the site, whereas in the BR approach, buffer zones are included within the reserve.

Pierre: Within the islands there are areas of great importance, and we may need a more precise zoning to cater for these areas.

Nelson: The MAVA project will allow us to go more deeply into these questions.

Hamilton: Scenario B allows for a better conservation of the important sites, but we need to consider well the limits. For instance, we should include the most important areas for hippos. Juvenile turtles feed around the island of Unhocomono. This zone should be considered as important, along with other sites that can be identified for each key species.

Moneiro Conte: We need to have a wide communication to involve others, including by radio.

Justino: The scenarios presented are proposals; we could combine elements of Scenarios A and B.

Augusta: Scenario A is probably the easiest; we need to assure the integrity of the site, including the national parks.

Costantino Correia: The political and judicial issues need to be taken into account. Scenario A presents a more realistic option to me, without fragmentation.

Guiomar: It's good to include the islands within the site and to help guard their intact status. There can be mixed use of the islands.

Alfredo: We don't have control of the terrestrial areas used by people, eg cashew plantations and ricefields. It's possible to include parts of the islands within the site, although it will be fragmented.

Emmanuel: Fragmentation is possible, but we need a good zoning.

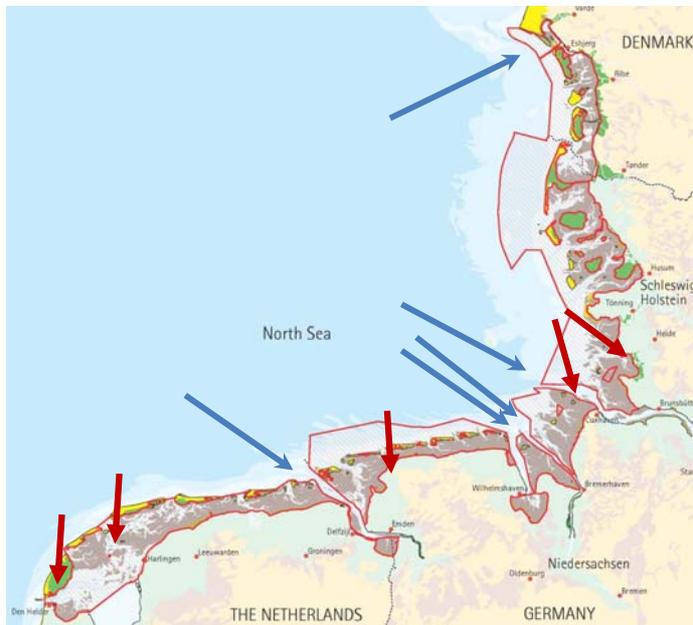
Tilman: All points are legitimate. Direct answers are not possible, because further discussion is needed. Part of the headache with the first nomination can be linked to a lack of communication with the WH system. Recommends Guinea-Bissau to discuss ideas with IUCN or UNESCO, also to find a balance between the different issues, eg overfishing vs no fishing. Need to justify the chosen scenario well and communicate it well to the WH. So we should be a bit more relaxed about the finer details of the nomination and filter out the challenges. Concerning the spatial configuration, we should consider the original proposal that was not successful, which proposed the whole BR without differentiation between areas. We should identify nuclear sites within a wider area.

The core zones identified within the BR are not necessarily the result of a systematic approach, and we can't just apply that to WH, because it's not a systematic result of priority setting, and these zones contain some areas that are heavily degraded. The logic of WH is rather different to the logic of, for example, community development. Since the BR boundary already exists (following probably the water depth around the archipelago), it's useful to use this boundary, which presents a marine spatial planning challenge. But within that, let's see how we can improve management inside, eg management by ecosystems, or other methods. In Scenario B, a clear methodology would be needed to identify the core areas.

### **Wadden Sea World Heritage Site - Gerold Lüerssen (13:20-14:10)**

The Common Wadden Sea Secretariat (CWSS) coordinates activities for the three countries that share the Wadden Sea - Denmark, Germany and The Netherlands. It also coordinated the WH nomination process. It's the largest unbroken stretch of mudflats worldwide. The whole area is highly dynamic and we like to maintain the integrity of the whole site. 10-12 million birds use the area on their migration. The area is well recognised under various protection measures, including under the EU Birds Directive (1979), as a Ramsar site (1984), a cooperation area and a conservation zone (1987), under the European Habitats Directive (1992), as a Particularly Sensitive Sea Area (PSSA, 2002) and WHS (2009-2014). Under the WHC, the Wadden Sea meets the VUE under criteria

viii, ix & x, has integrity (11,500km<sup>2</sup> containing all relevant habitats, i.e. an intact ecosystem) and protection and management, with national parks, natural reserves, transboundary management plan and monitoring under the Trilateral Monitoring and Assessment Programme (TMAP). The monitoring is important for assessing the status of the Wadden Sea and enables us to send status reports to UNESCO.



During the nomination status a lot of decisions had to be made, especially to identify sites to exclude from the site, such as some islands and all inhabited areas. The Wadden Sea doesn't have a buffer zone due to the presence of a sea dyke. However, the villages are integrated into the WHS and benefit from the status, eg from tourism, as well as having pride in their status. We have 7 parts within the WHS, because the estuaries are not part of the site as they are shipping lanes, also the ports (blue arrows, left). Some sites were excluded due to Oil & Gas exploration / exploitation as well as military areas (red arrows, left). However, the nomination had to prove that the Oil & Gas operations would not harm the

WHS. The whole site was not inscribed at once; it was a step-wise approach, allowing a mining modification in 2011 and extension to Lower Saxony and Denmark in 2014.

When the site was inscribed the WHC made some open demands, including:

- A requirement to add the area in Denmark to the site (achieved in 2014)
- Need for a Tourism Strategy, because there are 10 million tourists per year with a turnover of 2.8-5.3m € (PROWAD project 2011-15)
- Need to put in place a surveillance programme for invasive species (underway)
- Due to the passage of migratory birds, the WHC requested the Wadden Sea to strengthen the cooperation along the Africa-Eurasian flyway (WSFI, MoU with PNBA, support to Bijagós)

It's good to take the decisions of UNESCO as a chance to improve the protection of your site.

There was a cooperation initiative between the Wadden Sea and Guinea-Bissau from 1997-2005. The Bijagós has great importance for the flyway and also for the Wadden Sea. Protecting migratory birds requires protection along their flyway, hence the need for cooperation along the flyway. WH is a good tool to improve these efforts. There are other flyways around the world, and we like to be an example of cooperation along a flyway, as well as add value to the WHC through our work. The WH status is seen as a reward for protecting the whole area, and the status improves cooperation between countries. It's also a source of great pride, and highlights prestige of the area, creating synergies and partnerships between sectors, as well as improving income of people living in the area. It also gave us new perspectives, especially to get involved in global flyway issues.

There are still management challenges and we need to maintain good communication with other sectors to assure good management, which we achieve through different approaches and recognising the different perceptions of the WH status.

## **UNESCO Biosphere Reserve of Lower Saxony in the Wadden Sea WH site - Britta Schmidt (14:15-14:50)**

We have national park and BR status as well as being part of the WH site. The NP has different zones with different management regulations. There are core areas, buffer zones and recreation areas. The Lower Saxony BR (established in 1993) doesn't have the same borders, but we don't really have transition areas. MAB is about people and nature. Our challenges include:

- 1 million people living very close to the NP
- 3 million tourists every year
- A fishery (121 shrimp/crab fishing boats, 5 mussel fishing boats)
- 350km of dykes
- Ports at the site borders
- Recreation, including kite-surfing, which disturbs birds
- New developments, such as wind turbines

Finding solutions together with local stakeholders is very important, e.g. a reduced area for kite surfing was successfully negotiated. We are looking to establish a transition zone behind the dyke through a bottom-up approach. Sustainable tourism is important, also local products, local economy and environmental education. We have a sustainable management plan, regional products and climate change adaptation.

11% of the tourists are coming only for the NP. But 81% are interested to be in an area of nice nature. Our goal is that the tourism has to be sustainable and of a high quality. So we have a sustainable tourism strategy for the whole Wadden Sea, in which nature protection has to come first and in which everyone can benefit. We also have a partners' initiative for the private sector, which they pay for but it gives them a mark of prestige. We also have sustainable agriculture in the NP and 15 information centres in the park and another 3 in the WH site, also organised field trips that carry a high quality label. We have information boards and migratory bird days with a range of activities and events, and a team of park rangers who can provide information. We have a strong environmental programme, including the 'Junior Ranger' programme. There's also a public transportation system. Finally, we also do research and development projects, including climate change adaptation and protection.

Advantages for the community include the image, quality of life, education, tourism, exchange between communities, international cooperation and support to various problems. Several communities have thus chosen to join the BR. The take home message is that nature and people have benefited from the WH status for future generations.

## **Parc National du Band d'Arguin (PNBA) - Dr Lemhaba Ould Yarba (14:50-15:35)**

The PNBA is the largest PA of the West African coast, and largest marine park in Africa on the WH list. It is important for many types of flora and fauna. It was created in 1976, became a Ramsar site in 1982, a WH site in 1989, obtained a specific law for the PNBA in 2000 (until 2024) and a gift to the earth in 2001. The first 5-year management plan was in 2005, with a decree for the law in 2006 and launch of the process as a vulnerable marine site (PSSA) in 2014. There is a village committee (CVCG) and strategic partners (twinning with Wadden Sea) and a funding creation stream (BACoMaB).

An environmental observatory was created in 2007 - a monitoring system and development of ecosystem and socio-anthropological knowledge. The scientific research enabled a zoning of the park, defining which activities can be done in which areas, such as fishing and tourism. There's also a trade zone around Nouadibhou. Different fishing zones have been identified, including areas where

shark fishing is forbidden. There is a conservation and surveillance system to preserve the ecologic integrity of the park and to assure the wise use of resources. Surveillance is carried out with partners including the coast guards and police; means include boats, quads and communication radios. There is also information and education about the restrictions and management rules.

The park has a high biological richness thanks to the positive interactions between different components of the ecosystem. The PNBA has the highest concentration of waterbirds in West Africa, as well as elasmobranchs (sharks, rays, skates) and turtles. The benthic fauna is also very rich, especially in the Iwik Bay. There are also mammals (e.g. monk seals, gazelles and dolphins), shellfish and crabs, and a high diversity of bony and cartilaginous fish. Endemic species include a sub-species of Eurasian Spoonbill and a species of tilapia. The most northerly mangroves also exist here and the most southerly limit for a maritime grass. There are banks of maerl and saltmarshes. There are various ecological interactions, eg between birds and fish, between benthos and waders and between crabs and flamingos. There's a high connectivity of the PNBA with other sites, including the Bijagós and Wadden Sea, also with the Arctic for birds, especially waders (ca. 11,000km migration) and flamingos from the Mediterranean population; 40% of the Wadden Sea spoonbills winter in the PNBA (a 4,200km migration).

There are economic values of the ecological functions of the PNBA, especially for regeneration and reproduction, estimated initially at 250m € per year, although the actual value is higher than this as various factors have not yet been considered. The PNBA has a high economic value, and contributes 23% of the national marine productivity.

The PNBA contributes to harmonious development of populations, including water provisioning, new salinization plants and solar panels, and has provided a 12km water pipe between two villages. Health posts have also been installed as well as an ambulance. Schools and accommodation areas have also been constructed.

Cultural aspects include the fishing of yellow mullet (right), construction of traditional lanches (sailboats) and transformation of fishing products. Ecotourism includes camps, an interpretation centre and hides. Environmental education and awareness is achieved through interpretation centres and a guide, plus various products and activities. There's participative management and development of national and international partnerships. Infrastructures within the park have been improved and two bases are planned, plus 5 surveillance posts. A research station is planned for Iwik.



There are however various threats, including fisheries, offshore Oil & Gas exploitation, climate change, gold mining, Chami town development and a major road through the park. A breach that occurred in 2013 presents an opportunity for climate change research.

Perspectives: Adaptive and participative management to deal with the internal and external pressures and global changes.

Changing the paradigm of conservation, having a long-term vision for ecosystem protection and maintaining services are all essential for the future of the PNBA.