



United Nations
Educational, Scientific and
Cultural Organization

UNESCO Chair in Integrated Analysis of Marine Systems
Institut des sciences de la mer de Rimouski
Université du Québec à Rimouski (Canada)

CHAIRES UNESCO CHAIRS

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UNESCO Chair in Integrated Analysis of Marine Systems

Research areas

UNESCO Chair in Integrated Analysis of Marine Systems

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This UNESCO Chair offers a training and research program in the integrated analysis of marine systems. The approach taken by the Chair with its partners is to integrate natural, economic, and social sciences with emerging ideas in fisheries and ocean science. Thus the Chair contributes to the development of new scientific policies on marine environments at the national level that are based on new scientific paradigms. Current projects address research topics such as the establishment and governance of marine protected areas, ecosystem analysis related to threatened fisheries, eco-certification of fisheries, and integrated analysis as a new approach to understanding ecosystems. Representing a North–South partnership between Canada and West Africa (mainly the countries of Senegal, Cape Verde, and Mauritania), the Chair is working towards creating environmental observatories to serve as the basis for monitoring and understanding the dynamics of marine ecosystems and the human activities dependent on them.

The originality of the Chair’s role lies in its two primary activities:

- A training component that offers guidance in ecosystem analyses integrating sociological and anthropological factors and including other elements that depend on the ecosystem. The purpose of this component is to improve the expertise of institutions in Canada and the West African partner countries through two approaches: formal training using media and professional training using seminars and workshops. Both these approaches are designed to provide flexible training that can be adapted to differing needs and regional realities.
- A research component specifically aimed at the integrated study of marine ecosystems using comparative analyses. This component is designed to build the capacities of partner countries to conduct ecosystem research oriented toward ecosystem protection.

Objectives

The UNESCO Chair in the Integrated Analysis of Marine Systems meets the fundamental objective of UNESCO’s Chairs Programme, which is to mobilize knowledge and scientific policy with the aim of supporting sustainable development. In this case, this means ensuring that scientific knowledge is used to protect the environment, manage marine resources, and promote policies and capacity-building in science, technology, and innovation.

The Chair’s training component is designed to build institutional capacity in Canada and the West African partner countries through the use of the most modern information technology tools to develop modular teaching methods accessible to as many people as possible.

The partners can then use these tools to develop their own training courses adapted to their specific needs. Specialized workshops and seminars involving exchanges of expertise, experience, and skills will offer training exchanges between Canada and its West African partners. As a complement to this training, the Chair’s research component will offer opportunities for professional development among researchers from different institutional and geographical backgrounds as well as expertise exchange. The establishment of environmental observatories will serve as a basis for monitoring and understanding the dynamics of marine ecosystems and the human activities dependent on them. This component will also be the basis for transmitting knowledge of these ecosystems to an extensive audience of scientists, administrators, and other community stakeholders. Comparative studies of the marine systems concerned will be an opportunity for exchange among researchers of different backgrounds that will give them a stronger grasp of the impacts of the current rapid changes in marine environments caused by multiple anthropogenic pressures and the overall changes the planet is presently experiencing.

Partnerships in Canada

This UNESCO Chair is the result of intergovernmental collaboration between the government of Quebec (represented by three provincial departments – Sustainable Development, Environment and Parks; Agriculture, Fisheries and Food; and Natural Resources and Fauna) and the Canadian government (represented by Fisheries and Oceans Canada). The Chair’s other Canadian partners include the University of British Columbia’s Fisheries Centre, the Sea Around Us project, and the David Suzuki Foundation.

International impact

The purpose of the Chair is to use exchange and knowledge-sharing in a spirit of international solidarity to build and develop capacities in higher education and research. The Chair promotes North–South and South–South cooperation and networking as its strategy for institutional development. The Chair’s two components primarily involve collaboration between Canada, Mauritania, Senegal, and Cape Verde to facilitate knowledge exchange and international or inter-institutional training. On the basis of the leveraging effect of this collaboration, the Chair will become a major focal point of international Francophone expertise, thereby reinforcing Canada’s contribution to international cooperation.