The Worldwide Governance Indicators (WGI) is one of three indicators used to assess Social Resilience and Social Pressure. The others are the Global Competitive Index (GCI) and Sector Evenness, a measure of the breadth of a region's marine sector employment and economy. They are are used in various goal-specific combinations. The score in each of the measures is used for Resilience and its inverse (1-score) is used as Pressure. More information on Social Pressure/Social Resilience is found here.

Effective governance is a major contributor to the social integrity of any country. It includes the social structures and processes internal to a community that form the foundation upon which all economic and environmental progress relies. The Ocean Health Index uses the Worldwide Governance Indicators (WGI) (Kaufman et al. 2010) as the main indicator of social integrity and Resilience for all goals, but also draws on GCI and Sector Evenness where relevant.

WGI is a project of the World Bank and the Brookings Institution that assesses the quality of governance in more 213 countries and territories worldwide. 'Governance' is the word used to describe what a government does and 'governance effectiveness' describes how well the government exercises its powers to create and enforce policies that benefit its citizens. Effective governance is essential to both successful development and maintaining environmental quality. "To achieve their environmental commitments and goals, States need strong legislative, political and judicial systems" (UNEP 2010).

WGI rates every country's governance status for (a) the process by which governments are selected, monitored, and replaced; (b) the government's capacity to effectively formulate and implement sound policies; and (c) the respect of citizens and the state for the institutions that govern economic and social interactions among them.

Categories evaluated by WGI are:

1. Voice and Accountability - captures perceptions of the extent to which a country's citizens are able to participate in selecting their government, as well as freedom of expression, freedom of association, and a free media. By enabling society to vocalize issues and participate in selecting their representatives forces government to respond to public concerns including ocean and environmental priorities.

2. Political Stability and Absence of Violence/Terrorism - captures perceptions of the likelihood that the government will be destabilized or overthrown by unconstitutional or violent means, including politically motivated violence and terrorism. Violence and instability shift government's priorities and diminish the opportunity to devote resources to important ocean and environmental policy initiatives.

3. Government Effectiveness - captures perceptions of the quality of public services, the quality of the civil service and the degree of its independence from political pressures, the quality of policy formulation and implementation, and the credibility of the government's commitment to such policies. An effective government is important to promoting and achieving improvements in ocean health.

4. Regulatory Quality - captures perceptions of the ability of the government to formulate and implement sound policies and regulations that permit and promote private sector development. Sound regulations protecting marine resources are important to sustaining coastal livelihoods and preserving ecological biodiversity.

5. Rule of Law - captures perceptions of the likelihood of crime and violence and the extent to which members of the public have confidence in and abide by the rules of society, respect contract enforcement, property rights, the police, and the courts.

6. Control of Corruption - captures perceptions of the extent to which public power is exercised for private gain, including both petty and grand forms of corruption, as well as "capture" of the state by elites and private interests. (Kaufman 2010). Corruption ensures that only a privileged class of leaders is served whereas it is important to include all interested parties in policy creation or marine policies will not be balanced and sustainable.

HOW WAS IT MEASURED?

Data for WGI are gathered through surveys and other evaluations conducted in collaboration with more than 30 international organizations, including information from individuals, non-governmental organizations (NGOs), think tanks, aid donors, public officials and corporations doing business in the countries being assessed. The resulting data (more than 40 different data layers) are used to evaluate six dimensions of governance: Voice and Accountability, Political Stability and Absence of Violence, Government Effectiveness, Regulatory Quality, Rule of Law and Control of Corruption. WGI is updated annually.

WGI scores each dimension from approximately -2.5 to 2.5. The Ocean Health Index rescales those scores to a range of 0 to 1, then averages the six rescaled scores to produce a single WGI score (range 0 to 1) for each country.

The full composite score for all six WGI indicators is used to evaluate social resilience for all Ocean Health Index goals, with the exception of Livelihoods. The Livelihoods goal only uses the WGI's Regulatory Quality data layer (number 4, above), because it also uses the Global Competitiveness Index, which duplicates, but improves, the remaining WGI layers for this purpose.

This score is a measure of social integrity and social Resilience, and was used to calculate a measure of social Pressures. A score of 1 means that social Resilience is the best it can be, and a score of 0 means that governance is completely ineffective, so that the country has no social Resilience.

However, lack of social Resilience is itself a pressure, because it will make social, economic and environmental conditions worse in the future. Therefore, the Index uses (1 – WGI score) as a measure of social pressure. A WGI score of 0.5 indicates that social resilience and social pressures are in balance. Scores above that suggest that the country is able to respond to pressures relatively successfully, but scores below that suggest that it is less likely to do so.

See Raw Data

WHAT ARE THE IMPACTS?

The more effective a government, the healthier its surrounding ocean is likely to be (Juda and Hennessy 2001). Mariculture, which is one of the more controversial fishery industries owing to its potential environmental effects, provides one example. The 10 countries with the most sustainable mariculture practices, including Germany, the Netherlands and Spain, have relatively strong WGI scores, whereas the 10 countries with the lowest mariculture practices, including Guatemala, Cambodia, and Bangladesh, have low governance effectiveness (Trujillo 2007).

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THE WORLD BANK GROUP (WBI)

Worldwide Governance Indicators (WGI)

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Factsheet on Environmental Governance

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A guide to environmental governance and the importance of having good structures; produced by the United Nations following the Earth Summit in 1992.

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UNITED NATIONS ENVIRONMENT PROGRAMME (UNEP) AN INTRODUCTORY GUIDE TO MARINE AND COASTAL ECOSYSTEM-BASED MANAGEMENT

This guidebook is produced by the UNEP for policy makers looking to implement sound management techniques for the coastal ecosystem.

Learn More

A HANDBOOK ON GOVERNANCE AND SOCIOECONOMICS OF LARGE MARINE ECOSYSTEMS (LMES)

This guidebook is produced by scholars at the Coastal Resources Center at the University of Rhode Island and outlines the history and best structures for governance of LMEs (2006).

Learn More

REFERENCES

Kaufmann, Daniel, Kraay, Aart and Mastruzzi, Massimo. (2010). The Worldwide Governance Indicators: Methodology and Analytical Issues. World Bank Policy Research Working Paper No. 5430.

Trujillo, P. (2007). A Global Analysis of the Sustainability of Marine Aquaculture. M.Sc. Thesis published by The University of British Columbia.