

INSURING THE FUTURE – INTEGRATED MANAGEMENT OF WORLD COASTAL AREAS

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Thanks to the dynamic leadership of Dr. Agni Vlavianos-Arvanitis, the Biopolitics International Organisation once again allows us to bring together our various fields of expertise in order to share our experiences as much as possible and have them translated into action in the best interests of future generations.

Captain Cousteau was in the oceans and waters of the world for 50 years. This unique expertise, led to the production of 120 movies, more than 500 scientific publications and countless interviews around the planet. He achieved his work with a *Charter for the Rights of Future Generations*, having realised that the future of our environment was at stake due to the foreseeable population explosion to 11 billion, the scarcity of water and careless use of natural resources.

The market economy has endangered the environment but we also observed that when the iron curtain rose, the planned economy did the same thing. Today we have to understand that only a dynamic economic system can succeed, while at the same time turning the environment into a profitable resource and protecting it. For this to happen, industry has to be motivated by an attractive return on investments. Under the pressure of legislation, public opinion and various constraints, industry has made efforts that were costly but necessary, but returns have been negligible, if not non-existent. This is not encouraging! On the other hand, some have found "niches" like bio-agriculture that are profitable businesses, but which cannot feed the population of the world. In fact, The Cousteau Society strongly believes that environmental associations fighting for a better environment must be the ones to research and propose new directions in development for industry. We cannot fight and propose nothing more than obligations!

Cousteau Areas Network and the Cousteau Label: two complementary tools

Since its creation by Captain Cousteau in 1981, and in accordance with its statutes, Equipe Cousteau has devoted particular attention to the balance between Man and Nature on the world's shorelines. However, coastal areas, which act as an interface between marine and terrestrial habitats, have increasingly been subjected to the pressure of human activity. This situation has led to the degradation of coastal areas, depriving present and future generations of environmental assets that contribute to their quality of life and to local development.

In the 1990s, following the Rio Conference, the concept of "integrated management of coastal areas" was considered essential and many projects based on scientific and legal studies were tested at all levels. Despite these initiatives, the world's shorelines continue to deteriorate. Concerned by these developments, Equipe Cousteau wants to make its own contribution. As such, it has decided to implement a campaign in 2001 that is aimed specifically at coastal habitats.

Our strategy stems from the following observations: the lack of attention afforded environmental tools and stakeholders, and the under-utilisation of local natural heritage as the driving force for awareness and development campaigns. By becoming a vehicle for communication, heightening awareness and mediation, Equipe Cousteau, because of its experience and know-how, will be able to provide assistance to communities and local stakeholders who have risen to the challenge that is the protection and development of their coastal environment.

It is within this framework that Equipe Cousteau proposes two complementary tools: the Cousteau Areas Network (CAN) and the Cousteau Label.

The CAN is an international network run by Equipe Cousteau together with local coastal community members. These communities are committed or are willing to adopt a progressive approach to protecting the quality of their environments, and are desirous to communicate their experiences as they endeavour to enhance the specific assets of their local heritage. The CAN also monitors coastal area management practices and is a forum for collaboration and the exchange of ideas between member communities and between their different partners (scientists, associations, institutions, etc.).

When a community joins the CAN, it is subjected to a clearly defined and equitable certification process that lasts three years. An environmental "seal of approval," the Cousteau Label, is awarded to member communities that have implemented measures for achieving environmental progress and promoting respect for the wealth and specificity of local heritage in the long term.

Some advantages of joining the Cousteau Areas Network and the Cousteau Label include:

- *Insurance:* The new Cousteau territories are protected by an insurance company that will allow the immediate payment for repairs in case of major pollution and will set all legal procedures against polluters.
- *Shared quality:* This system invites all users of coastal areas to be obligation-bound in a process that improves the quality of each territory, which increases its real-estate and touristic value immediately.

- *Social*: The works linked to cleaning, maintenance and visiting the sites create new, non-specialised jobs for the unemployed, leading to a new economic dynamic.
- *Certification*: The quality of Label Cousteau territories is controlled and certified every year by Bureau Veritas Quality International (BVQI).
- *Communication*: Under these conditions, all users of the coastal territory are motivated to invest. The name "Cousteau" is an international environmental icon, and territories generate publicity through *The Cousteau Guide* and *The Cousteau Guide On Line*.

Today, in France, The Cousteau Society is working in the Brittany region; in Honduras, on a programme on the Island of The Bay; and two territories have just been established in Thailand.

Applicable to all kinds of coastlines, the Cousteau Label is one of many possible answers to reconcile profit and environment, the environment considered and managed as our common heritage, transmissible from generation to generation.