

Island Affairs Summary

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Background

The “Affairs” approach is one format amongst many which permits researchers and practitioners to think beyond their usual topics and to better integrate their work into other activities and other areas. “Affairs” helps to make people think outside their usual realm while bringing together people who would not normally exchange thoughts. Focusing on a theme such as islands provides a common basis for discussion to connect people from diverse backgrounds and viewpoints.

Structure

As a first step, Island Affairs will be an information resource on the topics. Topics addressed will be presented as questions. Answers will be provided at three levels:

1. A one-page summary highlighting policy and practice implications.
2. An article, usually 3-5 pages, in plain language.
3. A detailed, academic approach with formal references, such as peer-reviewed journal papers.

A further possibility is to provide key references and to provide one paragraph regarding further work which might be needed.

As an overall approach to the topics:

- Topics 1 and 2 relate to studies, research, information, analysis.
- Topics 3 and 4 relate to practice, action, implementation, operations.
- Topic 5 links the two areas.

Questions listed here are illustrative, not comprehensive.

Topic 1: Islands

The basic elements for learning about and from islands.

1. Definition: What are islands? Where are islands?
2. Importance: Why are islands important? What do islands offer?
3. Numbers: How many islands and islanders of which categories?

Topic 2: Physical and Social Islands

- Physical: biosphere, hydrosphere, lithosphere, atmosphere, and transition zones.
- Social: culture, history, knowledge, sociology.

1. How does the physical shape the social?
2. How does the social shape the physical?

Topic 3: Island Life

- Livelihoods (including economies), habitats, and their interaction.
 - Changes and transformations.
 - Extremes and variabilities in the physical and social dimensions.
 - Ethics.
 - People, families, communities, societies, networks, and skills.
1. How do links (e.g. bridge, airport, internet) affect island life?
 2. How is inter-island vs intra-island conflict/peace managed?
 3. How are diseconomies of scale advantageous?

Topic 4: Island Governance

- Decision-making, politics, policy, and law at the community, sub-national, national, regional, and international levels.
 - Institutions, processes, methods, people, teams, and leadership.
1. How is sub-national island governance addressed?
 2. How is archipelago governance addressed?
 3. How do islands govern their mainland territories?
 4. How does kinship affect decision-making?

Topic 5: Island Interaction

- Specific examples of interaction amongst the topics, for example how the social and physical characteristics of islands lead to island life (topic 3) and how island governance (topic 4) arises from the what, why, and where of islands (topic 1).
 - Cross-cutting issues which have not been addressed elsewhere, with possibilities being ecodiversity, energy, gender, health, island futures, minorities, natural resource management, sustainability on various time scales, technology, traditional knowledges, and water.
 - Communicating within, across, and outside of islands.
1. How do and should research and practice connect?
 2. What vulnerabilities and capabilities exist for each issue?
 3. What must islands prioritise in order to embed disaster-related activities within broader efforts of the island sustainability process?

Other Possible Outputs

- A book on “Island Affairs”:
 - Chapter 1: Defines and reviews “affairs”.
 - Chapters 2-6: Topics above.
 - Chapter 7: Applying island affairs.
 - Chapter 8: Beyond islands, beyond “affairs”, beyond Island Affairs.
- Manuals, guidelines, instruction toolkits.
- Series of presentations and supplementary training material.
- A formal training and education curriculum.
- Bibliographies.
- Courses, workshops, seminars (with a formal curriculum).
- CDs, DVDs, and websites with the material.
- Flowcharts, checklists, summaries.

All material must remain public domain but recognise islanders' ownership of it. For substantive results, contributions and collaborations are needed.