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SANCOR NEWSLETTER

South African Network for Coastal and Oceanic Research

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Accelerated eddies moving around Africa's southern tip

By Bjorn Backeberg[1,2], Pierrick Penven[2,3], & Mathieu Rouault[1,2]

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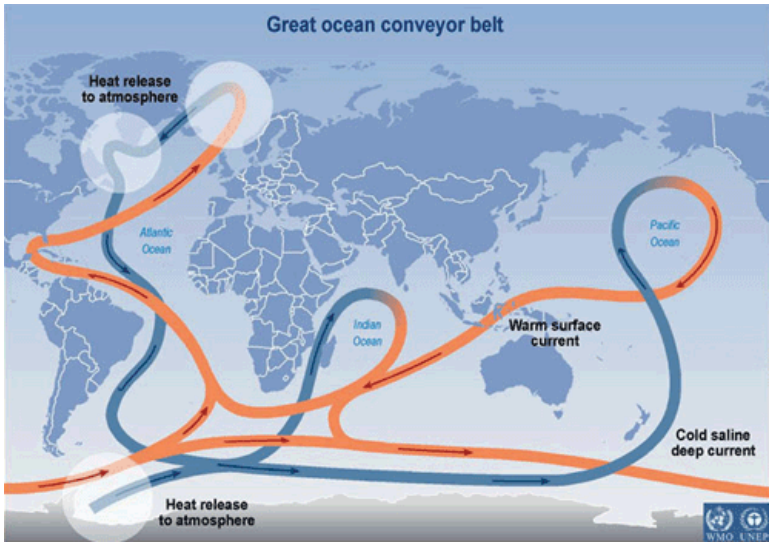
Over the past 10 years, research of the Agulhas Current has received increasing attention from the global scientific community. And recently, the Agulhas has become recognised as a key element in the global climate system. A SCOR working group investigating the climatic importance of the greater Agulhas system was formed and a review paper was published in *Nature* in 2011.

In the Department of Oceanography at the University of Cape Town, researchers from the Nansen-Tutu Centre for Marine Environmental Research, the *Institut de Recherche pour le Développement* under the International Centre for Education, Marine and Atmospheric Sciences over Africa and the Marine Research Institute have been working together to advance our understanding of the Agulhas system.

The Agulhas Current is a western boundary current located at the western edge of the Indian Ocean basin. It flows southward along the East Coast of South Africa, and is counted among the fastest currents in world's ocean.



In the North Atlantic, heat from the ocean causes it to become denser and sink, driving the great ocean conveyor belt that transports heat from the equator to the poles. Freshwater input from the melting glaciers on Greenland may cause the conveyor belt to shutdown.

The negotiation of knowledge for coastal governance

By Louis Celliers[1], Dianne Scott[2], Susan Taljaard[1], Mvu Ngcoya[2] & Michelle Audouin[1]

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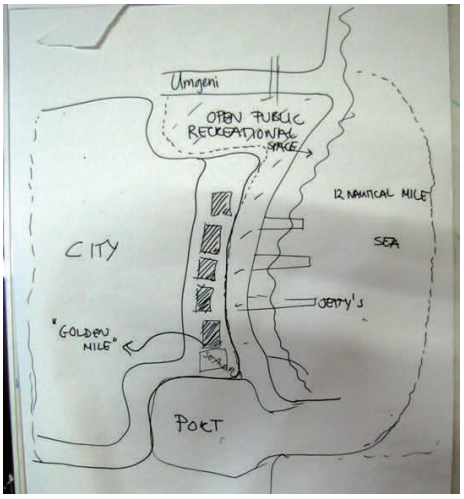
In May 2011, the CSIR (Natural Resources and the Environment), in partnership with University of KwaZulu-Natal's (UKZN) School of Development Studies (SDS, now School of Built Environment and Development Studies – SBEDS) - submitted a proposal to the Department of Science and Technology (DST) within the context of the Global Change Grand Challenge and the Global Change (GCGC), Society and Sustainability Research Programme (SSRP) Knowledge Challenge D: Innovation for sustainability posing the main research question: *How applicable is the 'knowledge negotiation' model for producing appropriate knowledge for coastal governance in the context of a neo-liberal, developing society in the process of transformation?*

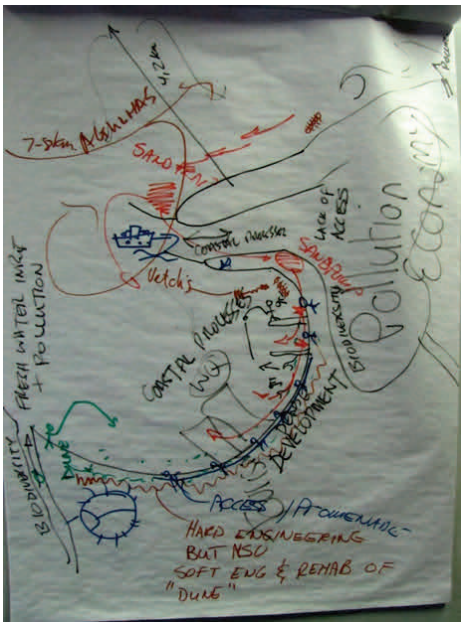
The main objective of the research is the development and testing of an innovative and radical model for (scientific) knowledge production at local (or municipal) levels. The theoretical problem posed in this project, is that in order to create a 'democratic knowledge-society' an alternative model of knowledge production needs to be developed that is appropriate for coastal zone governance in a developing society. The purpose of this model is to inform evidence-based decision-making and management of South Africa's coastal resources, to build competence and to contribute to the theoretical debate around the development of a democratic knowledge-society. The main research question is the following: *How applicable is the 'knowledge negotiation' model for producing appropriate knowledge for coastal governance in the context of a neo-liberal, developing society in the process of transformation?*

The project team is using the Durban Golden Mile as a case study since this area represents a typical relationship at the city-port-environment interface. In Durban, climate change challenges have received much attention and are being actively addressed by the local municipality.

At the core of the project is the convention of a competency group of relevant "knowledge holders" e.g. scientist, managers, beach users and residents that will produce a new type of knowledge for coastal management. During a series of workshops over a period of a year, the competency group will debate the range of conflicts occurring in the study area and combine their knowledge to produce a more comprehensive and richer basis for decision-making. Traditionally, such information is generated by an appointed consultant, focusing on biophysical and management aspects but to date have neglected the inclusion local knowledge, e.g. the underpinning value systems of various actors competing within a specific coastal space. Such information (typically referred to as situation assessment reports or background information documents) is a critical starting point in the development of integrated coastal management programmes.

One of initial research activities of this project was an inception meeting of the research team that was held over two days, directly followed by a key stakeholder meeting. One of the first and obvious observations made during these meetings were the framing of the coastal issues that is at the heart of the project. The manner in which these two groups, i.e. the project team (scientists) and key stakeholders (government official/managers) observed their world and represented their perspective on a two dimensional surface (the Golden Mile of Durban), was conspicuously different. This provides an inkling of the diversity of the expression of knowledge,





and the need to explore ways in which to learn from each other in order to understand the problem and find mutually agreeable solutions for coastal issues.

The project will run over three years and will form the basis for active collaboration between the project team and eThekwini Municipality, the Provincial and National Government.

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