

## **Management Effectiveness – where we have come from**

### **10 minutes on the history of the topic**

*Notes for an introductory presentation by Adrian Phillips  
Day 1, Session 1 of the Management Effectiveness Workshop*

Effective management has been defined as “the efficient and orderly use of human and material resources on a planned basis directed to achieve management objectives” (Deshler 1982 in Hockings et al, 2000).

In plain English, it is about doing what we say we have planned to do. In the case of protected areas, it is about making progress towards achieving the results which we have set ourselves in a management plan and elsewhere. And evaluation of this is about making informed judgements about achievements against objectives, or progress against targets.

Looked at like this, the exercise of evaluation or assessment of management effectiveness is no more than common sense. To ask yourself if you are making progress toward any declared target in any area of public or private endeavour is rational and necessary. There may be jargon to overcome and technicalities to master, but at root there is nothing mystical about assessing management effectiveness. As protected area managers, indeed, I believe we are obliged to do this. I should be astonished indeed if anyone here disagrees.

So it is a surprise to find how recently the topic has emerged at the international level among those concerned with protected areas. If we look back to the Bali World Parks Congress, 1982 – an event which was in other respects quite a breakthrough – there was no systematic review of the question: how do we know if we achieving what we set out to do? Nor was there a recommendation on the topic, but the Bali Action Plan did at least recognise the importance of monitoring and ecological evaluation

(McNeely and Miller, 1984) and called for the development of “tools and guidelines to evaluate the ecological and managerial quality” of existing protected areas.

At Caracas, 1992, the discussion was rather more focused, with a workshop on monitoring and another on site management – though neither really got to grips with the need for an overall framework for assessing management effectiveness. But Recommendation 12 called for a number of actions relating to monitoring and evaluation and Recommendation 17 called on IUCN to develop further a system for monitoring management effectiveness and threats to protected areas, for application by management authorities. It also asked the World Conservation Monitoring Centre (WCMC) to include information on management effectiveness in the UN List.

The Caracas Action Plan (Action 3.3) included the key requirement to “... improve the capacity of protected area managers to monitor their own performance through indicators of management effectiveness<sup>2</sup>. (IUCN, 1993).

The charge to follow up on Caracas passed to the Commission on National Parks and Protected Areas, now WCPA. But in fact some excellent pioneer work was underway in several parts of the world, for example that of WWF and CATIE in Central America and The Nature Conservancy’s Parks in Peril programme in Latin America. WCPA’s role was to bring this and other work together, but progress in this depended – as always - upon the energy and commitment of individuals. It was not until 1996 that anyone came forward to give leadership to the work on management effectiveness. In that year, Marc Hockings, who had spent a year at WCMC looking at systems for assessing management effectiveness and had undertaken some pioneer work at Frazer Island in Australia, offered to lead a WCPA task force on the topic. It was an offer that the Steering Committee and the then Chair of the Commission were very pleased to accept.

Marc put together a globally representative task force and began to develop a programme of work. Within a year Marc and his team had produced a draft framework for assessing management effectiveness. This reflected their initial findings:

- There was a wealth of experience in assessing management effectiveness around the world. Many of you here in this workshop had already pioneered evaluation approaches at site and system levels. Lots of lessons had therefore been learnt about how to answer such questions as: why evaluate effectiveness? how should this be done? how should it relate to planning? and who should be involved? (see also Hockings and Phillips, 1999).
- There was a need to prepare from this distilled experience some common lessons about management effectiveness, while allowing for a great degree of flexibility in a world where both capacity and circumstance vary immensely. The requirement therefore was not for a standardised approach to assessing management effectiveness but for a generalised framework.
- Ideas need continuous testing in the field and refining – an adaptive approach to the process of developing this framework was required, just as adaptive management is a desirable way to go about on-site management.

Based on feedback on the draft framework, the Management Effectiveness Task Force oversaw the production of the final framework document “Evaluating Effectiveness” three years ago (Hockings et al, 2000). This ground-breaking report showed how evaluation is essential in promoting adaptive management, improving project planning and promoting accountability. It sets forth an internationally endorsed approach to assessing protected area management effectiveness, and relates this to the management cycle. It includes a wide range of examples from many countries.

The work on management effectiveness has benefited greatly from a partnership between the volunteer network of WCPA and the forest and marine programmes of WWF. At a WWF-convened conference in Bangkok, Claude Martin WWF/DG and myself - as then WCPA Chair - agreed to collaborate on a programme of work around management effectiveness. Also the WWF Forests for Life programme and the World Bank/WWF Alliance for Forest Conservation and Sustainable Use have been enthusiastic supporters of the initiative and provided most of the funding needed to conduct workshops and pilot test the WCPA Framework during its development.

Subsequently, they have used the Framework to develop specific evaluation methodologies which they are applying in sites around the world.

Since the publication of the guidelines, a major programme of on-site testing of the framework has been supported by the UN Foundation on World Heritage sites. The results of that work will further inform the workshop's deliberations.

The core work on assessing management effectiveness does not stand alone, but relates closely to other work underway within the WCPA programme. Some of this is on the agenda of this workshop:

- Assessing the impact of the protected areas management categories (since this is all about securing greater international consistency in relation to determining and pursuing protected area objectives)
- Exploring the case for a protected area verification, or certification procedure
- Assessment of ecological integrity

Beyond these areas of work that connect closely to the theme of management effectiveness, the topic links to a great deal else on the WPC agenda – from financing protected areas to ensuring that local communities are able to make their full potential contribution to protected areas management. The task we have is not a stand alone one but an essential building block in making sure that protected areas do indeed bring Benefits beyond Boundaries.

## References

Hockings M., Stolton S., and Dudley N. (2000) *Evaluating Effectiveness: A Framework for Assessing the Management of Protected Areas* IUCN, Gland, Switzerland and IUCN, Cambridge UK

McNeely J. and Miller K (1984) *National Parks, Conservation and Development: the role of Protected Areas in Sustaining Society* Smithsonian Institution Press, Washington

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