

"MPA Scorecard: A Tool for Tracking and Reporting Progress on Management Effectiveness"

by

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Abstract

The World Summit on Sustainable Development adopted a series of targets on priority environmental and natural resource management themes to be achieved through partnerships between developed and developing country members. One of these was for the establishment of representative networks of marine protected areas (MPAs) by 2012. Implicit in this target is the effective management of MPAs so that they achieve their conservation objectives and contribute to the larger scale ecosystem approach for managing coastal and marine resources, also embraced by the WSSD.

The development of a Score Card (SC) to be used by Marine Protected Area managers to assess their progress and to report on this in a standardized way is consistent with the WSSD target and with the reporting needs of institutions like the World Bank. The Score Card will allow evaluating and reporting on the performance of Bank investments in marine protected areas to its shareholders and other partners, such as the GEF. It also may serve as a useful tool to other practitioners and institutions involved in Marine Protected Area management.

Beyond this, however, such a Tracking Tool, along with a companion tool for Terrestrial Protected Areas, may contribute to one of several indicators of Environmental Sustainability under development by the World Bank to report on progress by its clients in achieving the Millennium Development Goals. A nation's overall territory (including terrestrial and marine) under protected area status, in combination with the results derived from the management effectiveness Scorecards could yield an overall index of environmental sustainability related to the functioning of critical ecosystem goods and services. This will be compiled, along with other global indicators, in a set of key countries whose progress toward achieving the Millennium Development Goals will be monitored annually by the World Bank and reported to the larger development community.

The MPA Score Card is a simple site-level tracking tool, built around the application of the WCPA Framework. It has been adapted from a tool developed by the World Bank - WWF Alliance for terrestrial Protected Areas (Stolton S. et Al. 2003) and from other tools (Hocking M. et Al. 2000 ; Mangubhai S. 2003) to facilitate reporting on management effectiveness of MPAs. The Scorecard is useful for assessing gaps in the MPA management process and reporting on progress from one period to the next, but should not replace more thorough methods of evaluating achievement of specific management objectives or outcomes.

The MPA tracking tool has been piloted in four MPA sites within the Mesoamerican Barrier Reef System, the world's second longest Barrier Reef, spanning Mexico, Belize, Guatemala and Honduras. We will be reporting on the experience of MPA managers in using this new tool, its perceived value to them and other stakeholders in measuring management effectiveness, and how it may be improved.

The results of this and future applications of the MPA Scorecard will be available online at www.MPAScorecard.net. Feedback from this forum will also be incorporated into an improved version of the tool for easier uptake by MPA staff.