

POLICY BRIEF:

Participatory Monitoring

Executive Summary

In order for an MPA to be successful, costs and benefits need to be considered. Approaches that will reach the objective of the MPA and support the local community are favorable. These approaches attempt to synthesize disparate goals, encourage community stewardship and compliance, and overall increase the ecological benefits of an MPA. Participatory management is the management strategy that encompasses all of these factors.

Introduction

To see whether this is an appropriate strategy to use or not, the possible outcomes need to be evaluated. It is often used in small artisanal fisheries and is most successful with thorough planning and a clear framework. Participatory monitoring is necessary in such communities because they may not have the means for successful MPA management and need outside help, along with ownership of their land that they are familiar with and depend on for their livelihoods. By considering both the costs and the benefits associated with this monitoring scheme, it is evident that participatory monitoring will have mostly positive social, economic, and ecological benefits to the communities in which the scheme is implemented.

Costs

- Community conflict that can hinder the effectiveness of the MPA
- High costs associated if there is no framework or planning
- Time consuming, resulting in a lack of interest among potential participants

Benefits

- Environmental enrichment and education for the community
- Goals of the MPA can be reached: ecological benefits
- Low cost if proper framework and planning is achieved
- Gives community a sense of ownership
- Valuable skills to maintain the MPA

“These approaches attempt to synthesize disparate goals, encourage community stewardship compliance, and overall increase the ecological benefits of an MPA”

- Olsen et al., 2014.

Approaches and Results

When considering the implementation of this monitoring scheme, two things need to be considered first being the objectives of the MPA and the interests of the diverse stakeholders. The costs and benefits need to be presented to the participants and need to be considered when designing the framework for the specific MPA. We evaluated positive and negative aspects of participatory monitoring by looking at past examples around the world to come up with recommendations for the future. By carefully researching these examples, the definition of a successful MPA, and looking into what mistakes have been made in the past, we also created a prognosis for what the future of participatory monitoring may look like.

Conclusion

Overall, participatory monitoring schemes are very complex and there are many different factors that will determine the success or the failure of a project. Although the data collected from MPA monitoring may be of better quality when collected by experts, allowing for community members and stakeholders to play a role will increase data collecting capacity, along with the livelihoods of the participants. With this, the use of participatory monitoring can both achieve the ecological goals of the MPA and have lasting positive social and economic impacts as well.



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“Efficient, effective, and socially inclusive”
- Abbot & Guijt (1998)

Implications and Recommendations

For participatory monitoring to work, it is vital to clearly and thoughtfully define and communicate roles of the different stakeholders and how participating in the project will benefit them. Roles need to reflect the interests of the participants and the time they have available. When assigning roles, community relationships need to be considered to avoid conflicts, and appropriate roles should be given to people depending on their interests, skills, but also choose dependable participants. Finally, participants need to be made aware of trade-offs and sacrifices they will be making while allocating time to monitoring to make sure that they are committed.

References: Abbot, J., and I. Guijt. 1998. Changing views on change: participatory approaches to monitoring the environment. SARL Discussion Paper No. 2. IIED, London, UK.

Olsen, E., Fluharty, D., Hoel, A. H., Hostens, K., Maes, F., & Pecceu, E. (2014). Integration at the round table: Marine spatial planning in multi-stakeholder settings. *PloS One*, 9(10), e109964.

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