

**The goals and objectives of an MPA must be clearly understood if management is to be successful and achievements measured. This means that they should be defined and worded in such a way that they can be monitored. This sheet gives general principles involved in developing goals and objectives.**

Management of protected areas is increasingly being carried out in the style referred to as 'management by objectives'. This means that it is proactive i.e. designed to achieve a specific aim and set of results, rather than reactive, or simply responding to issues that arise. This management style requires that MPA managers and personnel look critically at the goals and objectives of the MPA (which are often very general), and develop a clear understanding of the values and importance of the site, and thus the reasons why it was protected. There are four important steps in 'management by objectives':

- Establish clear, concise objectives;
- Develop realistic plans for achieving these (see sheet C3);
- Monitor performance and achievement (see sheet G9);
- Take corrective (or adaptive) management.

Project logframes (see sheet C4) also use the terminology of goals and objectives. It is important not to confuse the MPA's goals and objectives with those of specific projects that it is involved with, though they may coincide.

## GOALS

Sometimes also called visions, aims, or long-term objectives, these are general summaries of the desired future state of an MPA. Goals should be:

- **Visionary** – a positive statement outlining the desired long-term state of the MPA.
- **Broad** – a broad and general statement that captures the vision of the MPA.
- **Brief** – short and succinct so that it can be remembered and easily communicated.



IUCN/WCPA-Marine has compiled generic goals (Pomeroy *et al.*, 2004), based on global survey of MPAs: five for biodiversity (e.g. 'individual species protected'); six for socio-economic issues (e.g. 'food security enhanced or maintained'; and five for governance (e.g. 'effective management structures and strategies maintained').

Examples of MPA goals in the WIO are:

**Cousin Island Special Reserve** Seychelles (called a vision): *To make Cousin the best marine and terrestrial small-island protected area in the world*, and:

**Quirimbas National Park** Mozambique (called a long-term objective): *To conserve the diversity, abundance and ecological integrity of all physical and biological resources in the park area, so that they may be enjoyed and used productively by present and future generations.*

## OBJECTIVES

Sometimes called purposes, these are the specific statements that describe how the goal will be reached. They should relate to the key values of the MPA (i.e. important species or ecosystems) or to major areas of management activity (e.g. tourism, education). The objectives help managers with planning, measuring progress, and evaluating success, but this is difficult if they are poorly expressed or provide only vague guidance (e.g. they are sometimes worded more like goals). Two or more objectives are usually required to reach the goal, and should be:

- Specific and easily understood by all stakeholders;
- Written in terms of what will be accomplished, not how to go about it;
- Achievable, being quite clear when the objective has been reached;
- Achievable within a reasonable, defined time period; this should not usually exceed 10 years, although longer may be required for long-lived, slow-reproducing species (e.g. turtles and dugongs), or the recovery of degraded habitats with slow recruitment (e.g. coral reefs);
- Measurable and able to be validated, thus easier to set up a monitoring programme;
- Realistic, practical and appropriate within the local context. For example, an objective to exclude resource use in an MPA would be impractical if local communities depend on this area for food.

WCPA-Marine has compiled generic objectives to help MPAs develop their own. These comprise:

- 26 Biophysical objectives** e.g. Focal species abundance increased or maintained;
- 21 Socio-economic Objectives** e.g. Nutritional needs of coastal residents met or improved.
- 21 Governance Objectives** e.g. Management planning and process effective.

Cousin Island Special Reserve has eight objectives, five covering biodiversity and natural values, two covering socio-economic issues, and one covering governance:

1. To maintain viable populations of endemic land birds and internationally important breeding seabird populations on the island.
2. To maintain or establish threatened endemic plant species where appropriate, so long as this does not conflict with objective 1.
3. To maintain and enhance viable populations of the island's endemic terrestrial vertebrates and invertebrates.
4. To protect and maintain the integrity of the island's coastal and littoral habitats, especially the coral reef and its associated flora and fauna and the internationally important breeding populations of hawksbill turtle.
5. To understand and mitigate long-term and external influences.
6. To use the island's conservation features as a vehicle to raise and maintain education and public awareness.
7. To maintain a safe, effective and sustainable physical infrastructure for carrying out the reserve's management plan.
8. To administer and manage the reserve in a professional manner ensuring that all Nature Seychelles standards are maintained or exceeded

## DEVELOPING GOALS AND OBJECTIVES

In order to ensure that a full understanding of the ecological and socio-economic values of an MPA is used in the development or revision of the goals and objectives, the process should be participatory and involve consultation with all stakeholder groups. Many of the objectives of MPAs in the WIO are worded more as goals, and would benefit from being made more specific (the example of Cousin Island illustrates objectives that are based on a good understanding of the values of the protected area). The generic objectives developed for MPAs by WCPA-Marine, and by Hockey & Branch (1997) for South African MPAs may be helpful when revising or developing those for other MPAs. However, it is essential that the process uses a careful analysis of the specific values and management issues at the site in question.

Sometimes, the need to make objectives 'measurable' leads to objectives being defined with quantitative targets e.g. 'Over the next three years, income from MPA tourism to increase by 4% a year', or 'Average ecological knowledge of visitors to increase by 50% within 5 years'. This approach is not recommended as, even when it is based on good information, unforeseen events could make such objectives unrealistic and inappropriate (e.g. the first example is vulnerable to changes in the global economic situation). Further, such specific parameters may be difficult to measure (e.g. in the second example, there are no simple techniques for quantifying 'ecological knowledge of visitors'). Statements like this may be useful as targets to encourage good performance in an MPA, but objectives are best left open-ended (e.g. 'Income from MPA tourism to show a significant increase within 3 years').

The goals and objectives are generally laid out in the legislation or agreement used in setting up the MPA, and defined in more detail in the management plan. They should be assessed at intervals (preferably when the management plan is reviewed) to see if they need revision. If they have been formalised through legislation, this may not be immediately possible, but it may be useful to identify any weaknesses for future revision opportunities.

Once the objectives have been determined, the MPA can be categorised according to the IUCN system (see sheet A1), and a monitoring and evaluation programme can be developed (see sheet G1), using indicators specifically selected for measuring the objectives.

### KEY POINTS FOR THE MPA

- Ensure that MPA personnel and stakeholders have a good understanding of the current goals and objectives of the MPA.
- Consider whether it would be appropriate to reword them, e.g. for the next revision of the management plan and, if so, initiate a process to do this, bringing in external assistance if required.
- Ensure that monitoring programmes are in place or being developed to measure whether the MPA's objectives are being met.

## Sources of further information

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