

**MPAs employ a range of personnel for several duties. Management of these staff is very important and can be time consuming. This sheet outlines some of the key elements in day-to-day management of MPA personnel: assessing capacity and skills needs; recruitment; use of temporary staff; motivation, incentives, and performance appraisal; training (courses, workshops, on-the-job; study visits); and elements of effective teamwork.**

The personnel of an MPA are one of its key resources and an important task for the manager is to put in place a group of staff who are capable of working together as a team. The operational part of the management plan (or the operational plan if this is a separate document) should identify the activities and tasks that are needed to meet the objectives of the MPA. These will range from issuing permits and patrolling, to research and monitoring, education and interpretation, community consultation and facilitation, and a range of support duties. Each task will need to be broken down into a set of roles and responsibilities, with individual goals that can be assigned to different staff members. In this way the needs in terms of capacity and skills can be assessed. In reality, some tasks may be carried out by several people; conversely, individual staff members may have several responsibilities.

The number of permanent staff employed by MPAs in the WIO is highly variable and can range from one or two to over 50. MPA staff are usually a combination of professional and technical staff with skills in key programme areas (e.g. fisheries, monitoring or community

activities) and support staff with more general skills, but there tends to be much overlap in jobs. Important staff positions include field staff or rangers, boat crews, MPA manager, communications officer, research personnel, community development coordinator and law enforcement officer. Support staff such as cooks, mechanics, cleaners and security guards may also be needed. In general, the larger the area of the MPA and the greater the number of visitors (e.g. involved in recreational or commercial activities), the higher the staff levels. The work force can be increased by using seasonal staff or volunteers, as well as consultants or contract staff.

In large MPAs, there may be sufficient funding to appoint a human resources manager who would be responsible for management of personnel. However, this is not possible in most WIO MPAs, and this responsibility often falls to the senior manager and/or the overall management agency (whether government or NGO). A good manager will be in touch with and approachable by employees and will be aware when there are problems relating to performance, job satisfaction or working relationships.

## RECRUITMENT

This involves preparing job descriptions, advertising, selecting candidates for interview, selection of an interview panel, interviewing (including development of interview questions), obtaining references, deciding on the most appropriate candidate, and appointment (preparing a letter of appointment). Recruitment is often best carried out in a phased manner, with a small number of staff being recruited initially to carry out the core tasks involved in setting up the MPA. Additional posts can be filled later. It is important to be aware of the following when embarking on any recruitment activities:

- Recruitment can be costly, both financially (e.g. costs of travel and accommodation for interviewees and selection panel), and in terms of time;
- There may be legal requirements (e.g. working conditions, provision of holidays, conditions for dismissal) that affect employment of staff and it is important that these are observed;
- Attempt to employ staff on as equal terms as possible, whilst recognising that employees rights and benefits may vary according to whether they are permanent or temporary, full-time or part-time, and their skills and qualifications.



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The Warden of Kisite Marine Park, Kenya discussing issues with stakeholders.

It is also important to ensure that all aspects of recruitment are carried out as fairly, efficiently and transparently as possible. Following appointment, a probationary period (usually 3-6 months) may be appropriate to see if the new employee performs well. The new staff member should be given the necessary training or induction course and helped to settle in.

### DAY-TO-DAY STAFF PERFORMANCE

All staff must have clearly assigned roles and responsibilities, laid out in their Terms of Reference and individual work plans. These should relate clearly to the job description, and set realistic and time bound targets or measurable standards that must be accepted by both employer and employee. 'Output' rather than 'input' related work standards should be set, e.g. 'MPA vehicles must not break down as a result of lack of engine oil', rather than 'check the engine oil once a week'; 'the beach by the guest houses must be clean' rather than 'clean the beach every morning'.

Staff often prefer to wear uniforms rather than their own clothes, as it saves on wear and tear, and provides them with the necessary status when dealing with visitors, stakeholders and particularly those who may be causing problems for the MPA.

### PERFORMANCE APPRAISALS

An annual performance appraisal for each staff member is increasingly common in many organisations. It is used to set and review performance objectives and to determine training and development needs, and it can be a valuable tool for maintaining motivation. Other ways to motivate staff are to hold regular staff meetings to discuss progress and concerns, and to organise social events (preferably outside work hours!).

### STAFF TRAINING

Periodically it will be necessary to carry out an assessment of capacity and skills among the staff and organise training where particular skills are lacking. Training can take many forms, from formal courses, exchange visits and study tours, to on-the-job training which might involve participation in workshops and meetings, and increasing responsibility. WIOMSA's training course for MPA managers which takes place every two years is one useful option for increasing staff skills.



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Visitor engaging with staff in Curieuse Marine Park, Seychelles.

### KEY POINTS FOR THE MPA

- Make sure all staff have clear and well understood job descriptions, a line manager, clearly defined annual work plans and that progress is assessed on a regular basis.
- Hold regular staff meetings, preferably at least one a week.
- Ensure that performance appraisals are carried out on a regular basis, and in a participatory manner.
- Conduct a capacity building needs assessment before launching into training.
- The manager should regularly evaluate how best to deploy staff and make sure that they are willing and able (through training) to be flexible, given that management priorities may change over time.
- Become familiar with local labour law, statutory minimum pay and conditions of employment, disciplinary and dismissal procedures.
- If staff are not 'government employees' have a local labour lawyer draw up a standard employment contract.
- Remember the key to good staff management is ensuring staff work together as a team.

### Sources of further information

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<http://www.toolkit.cch.com/text/p05-0000.asp> – gives practical details on recruitment and staff motivation.

<http://www.ee.ed.ac.uk/~gerard/Management/index.html> – information on basic management skills.

<http://www.jimcollins.com/> - good articles on management.

[http://economist.com/surveys/PrinterFriendly.cfm?Story\\_ID=770819](http://economist.com/surveys/PrinterFriendly.cfm?Story_ID=770819) – good articles on management.

<http://www.wiomsa.org> – or [secretary@wiomsa.org](mailto:secretary@wiomsa.org) – for information on the WIOMSA training courses for MPA personnel.