Final Report to the: -

MARÉ Project

Recommendations concerning approaches for promoting relevant authority and stakeholder participation in Marine SACs in the Azores

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Introduction

This document reports the findings of a small consultancy project, the key objective of which was to make recommendations as to how the participation of stakeholders and relevant authorities (RAs) might be developed to support the management of marine SACs in the Azores. It was commissioned as part of the MARÉ project and based on the findings of a visit to the Azores (9th – 15th September 2001) during which the author became familiar with the cultural, political, institutional and ecological context of the marine SACs in the Azores. A number of presentations were also made to the MARÉ team based on the author's analysis of issues related to participation in marine protected areas (MPAs) and the merits of different approaches were also discussed. These discussions were focused on the five marine SACs on which the MARÉ project is focused:-

- Ilhéus Formigas e Dollarbat (Canal Santa Maria – São Miguel)
- Ilhéus de Madalena (Pico)
- Baixa do Sul (Canal Pico – Faial)
- Monte de Guia (Faial)
- Costa e Caldeirão (Corvo)

The discussions were particularly focused on the Corvo marine SAC, as this was the subject of a two day visit during which the author met with a number of stakeholders and relevant authorities. The discussions and recommendations in this report will therefore be focused on this site, though most of them will be transferable to other sites as Corvo is reasonably representative. A number of discussions and recommendations will concern marine SACs in the Azores in general.

This report draws very heavily on a previous report (Jones et al. 2001) and it is stressed that certain sections of this report are attributable to the other author's of the previous report, particularly the section on different levels of participation and the concept of social capital, the main author of which was Professor Jacquie Burgess (ESRU, UCL).

Background

This report is informed by a growing literature on the importance of participation in the management of Marine Protected Areas (MPAs) (including Jones et al. 2001, Jones 1999 and Jones under review). Milton (1991) argues that MPA conflicts are based on fundamental differences between the ways in which marine resource users and marine conservationists perceive the issues. In particular, she argues that conservationists often fail to recognise that their initiatives to conserve marine habitats and species will have fundamental impacts on the culture and economy of coastal communities: in effect, nature conservation equates to social change in quite fundamental ways. For these reasons, Milton recommends that the diversity of perspectives and the complex interactions between RAs, users and Non-Governmental Organisations (NGOs) should be recognised from the outset in MPA designation processes. In this way, conflicts may be avoided or addressed early in the process before positions have hardened.

Fiske (1992) also emphasises that establishing MPAs involves the negotiation of bio-ecological and socio-cultural processes. This is illustrated through two examples under the US National Marine Sanctuaries program. One marine sanctuary in Puerto Rico was selected and designated through a 'top-down' process which provoked fierce opposition from stakeholders, particularly fishermen. Feelings ran so high that armed guards had to be provided to protect officials at public hearings on the MPA proposal. The situation was exacerbated by the federal approach to the Marine Sanctuary that had been adopted by the US. Eventually, the Puerto Rican Governor announced that he would not support the Marine Sanctuary and the proposal was abandoned.

By way of contrast, another Marine Sanctuary proposal in American Samoa was more sensitive to national and local concerns. Meetings at both levels were held to discuss the possible designation. At

a local level, particular attention was paid to discussing how the Marine Sanctuary and related conservation measures might be integrated with traditional marine property rights and the concerns of local subsistence cultures. Local stakeholders began to support the Marine Sanctuary, as they wanted younger and subsequent generations to be able to appreciate the reef and its resources. Following a compromise whereby the commercial fishing ban was lifted in one zone, the Marine Sanctuary was successfully designated. Though the two case studies are in different contexts, they do illustrate the importance of taking account of political sensitivities, and of taking account of the traditional practices, concerns and priorities of local stakeholders.

The introduction of MPA designations should be seen as a type of planned social change involving national and sub-national organisations to restructure peoples' behaviour towards resources they customarily use. The process of bottom-up or participatory planning is thus recommended; local people's perspectives are understood, their concerns valued, and their knowledge employed so that the proposed designation may be adapted and integrated with prior customary use patterns (Fiske, 1992). Beyond this general principle, when reviewing the literature on MPAs around the world, it is not possible to produce a definitive and universally applicable typology of approaches to providing for participation in MPA management. The management regime for each MPA is influenced by the ecological, cultural, political, socio-economic and institutional contexts in question. However, from the wide range of MPA cases that have been published, it is possible to identify two different management approaches (Figure 1).

Figure 1: Different stances concerning approaches to the selection, design and management of MPAs

Top-down: based primarily on strategic scientific priorities

Emphasis on enforcement	Executive cross-sectoral authority	Education to justify restrictions and promote compliance	Reliance on comprehensive scientific information	Little scope for compromise
↓	↓	↓	↓	↓
↑	↑	↑	↑	↑
Emphasis on stakeholder participation and cooperation	Community-based partnership	Education to promote support and participation	Science used for guidance where appropriate and available	Greater scope for compromise

Bottom-up: based primarily on socio-economic priorities guided by science

In order to combine strategic scientific and resource management objectives such as those under the Habitats Directive with the need to promote stakeholder cooperation, recognition is growing of the need to combine 'top-down' and 'bottom-up' approaches (Kelleher and Recchia 1998). This process is not easy, given the different rules, norms and practices associated with different styles of decision-making (Bryson and Crosby 1993; Burgess et al. 1999). 'Top-down' approaches tend to be driven by statutory regulations, international agreements, bureaucratic styles of decision-making and enforced by the legal apparatus of the courts. These 'hard' processes of environmental decision-making contrast strongly with the ways in which 'bottom-up' processes work. At the local level, customary rights and responsibilities hold sway, and these informal rules are (re)negotiated informally between local people within a range of social, cultural and political institutions. A duty of compliance is recognised through collective commitment and maintaining a social standing in the community rather than through the threat of external enforcement.
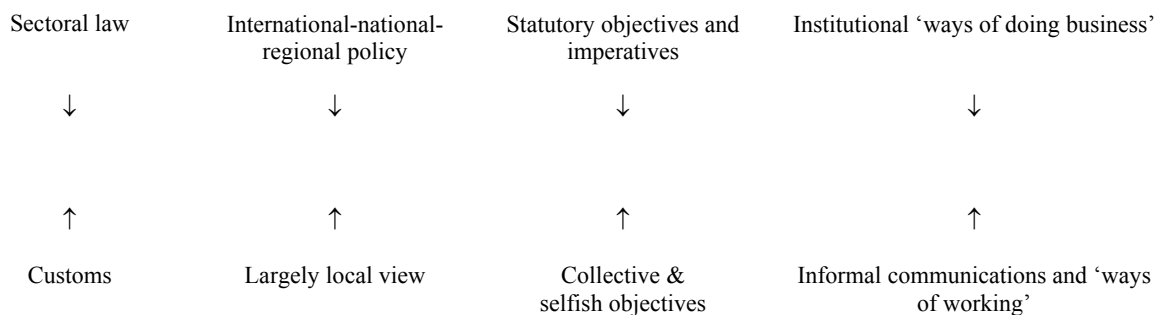
Failure to recognise these different styles of environmental decision-making or take account of them in the selection, design and management of MPAs is likely to exacerbate conflicts and thus undermine

the potential of a MPA to achieve its objectives (Jones, under review). In the UK context, experiences with voluntary and statutory MPAs indicate that cautious approaches which provide for the meaningful participation of stakeholders can be successful in both achieving nature conservation objectives and promoting cooperation, whereas reliance on statutory powers can exacerbate conflicts and undermine the potential for cooperation (Jones 1999).

Promoting a bottom-up participative approach to the design and management of MPAs is therefore becoming increasingly recognised as being beneficial in that it promotes stakeholder cooperation and minimises conflicts. It is also important to recognise, however, that Marine SACs are a top-down response to the EC's Habitats Directive, and that their selection in the Azores was undertaken with little, if any, stakeholder consultation. Once designated, the management of these marine SACs is ultimately accountable to the EC to whom it must be demonstrated that specified conservation objectives are being achieved. As such, the management of marine SACs in the Azores (as elsewhere throughout the EU) involves a combination of top-down and bottom-up processes, in that the bottom-up processes are of critical importance in achieving an agenda dictated, to a degree, in a top-down manner. It is thus not a question of which approach is most appropriate, but one of how the two approaches can be combined in order to provide for a more symmetrical management approach.

It is therefore argued that a key overall challenge is to manage the interface between relatively 'hard' top-down infrastructures and relatively 'soft' bottom-up infrastructures as is illustrated in Figure 2. Failure to recognise these differences and to take account of them in the design and management of marine SACs is likely to exacerbate conflicts and thus undermine the potential of the marine SACs to achieve their objectives.

Figure 2 Differences between top-down and bottom-up infrastructures

Sectoral law	International-national-regional policy	Statutory objectives and imperatives	Institutional 'ways of doing business'
↓	↓	↓	↓
↑	↑	↑	↑
Customs	Largely local view	Collective & selfish objectives	Informal communications and 'ways of working'

Different Levels of Participation and the Concept of Social Capital

A widely accepted definition of 'participation' is that of *a social process through which people are able to influence and share control over the decisions which affect them.* Different kinds of participatory techniques engage different stakeholders to a greater or lesser degree in decision-making, and the objectives of the lead organisation promoting participation are fundamental to the kinds of processes deployed (Table 1). Each stage identified in the table encompasses those that precede it. In other words, it is not possible to achieve greater empowerment of stakeholders without effective information, consultation and collaboration activities also being undertaken.

Reviewing participatory experiences around the world, Aycrigg (1998) concludes that there is a general failure to evolve sustainable institutional mechanisms. Too often the emphasis is on discrete bits of process rather than on developing arrangements for the 'afterlife' of the project. So, the extent to which the institutional arrangements put in place to manage a marine SAC will meet their

obligations 'after-LIFE' will be an excellent, longer term indicator of the effectiveness of the partnership-building process.

Table 1 A four stage classification of participation

Level of participatory activity	Examples of techniques	Objective
1. Information sharing activities	Newsletters; web sites; leaflets; videos, public displays; slide presentation; media briefings	To place information in the public domain
2. Consultative activities	Management group consisting of RAs consults stakeholders through questionnaire surveys; focus groups; public meetings; face-to-face briefings with key individuals/organisations, etc	To encourage a two -way exchange of information
3. Collaborative activities:	Creating hierarchical management groups whereby RAs collaborate with stakeholders through topic groups to scope a problem and discuss solutions, mounting ecological surveys; running site-based events, etc	To engage the knowledge's and resources of stakeholders
4. Empowerment activities	Creating 'flat' management groups combining RAs and stakeholders; co-opting individuals from RAs (and stakeholder groups); devolving budgets and resources, etc	To share power and responsibility for the decisions being made, and their outcomes through a partnership approach

There will be a range of *stakeholders* who live and work in the area, and who have a legitimate interest in the marine SAC. Stakeholders may be defined as anyone with a stake in the outcome of a decision and may, thereby encompass the entire population of the area (and beyond if there are significant leisure activities at the site, for example). Normally, the term 'stakeholder' is limited to those individuals and organisations who have an active role or interest in the area. Their stake may be based on economic, social, aesthetic and /or environmental concerns. For example, typical stakeholders to be found in marine SACs include fishermen; the operators of commercial port facilities; boat-building and marine industries; marine recreational interests such as sailing and diving; and environmental/nature conservation groups.

In terms of Table 1, it is important that marine SAC processes engage stakeholders up to and including stage 3 *ie* bringing stakeholders into collaborative arrangements with the management partnership**.** Whether it is possible to empower stakeholders and so extend participation to stage 4 will depend largely on the political culture of the partnership. The culture of the RAs within the area may or may not be supportive of power sharing and it is unlikely that the project officer will be able significantly to influence that culture, at least in the short to medium term. There are also strong arguments in terms of the efficiency of policy initiatives to support the view that, in particular contexts, it may not be appropriate to provide for the higher levels of participation for wider stakeholders (see Bryson and Crosby, 1993).

The stages of participation identified in Table 1 are distinguished by increasing intensity of communication, and by a shift in power relations from asymmetrical ('top-down') to symmetrical ('equal partners'). Building partnerships with RAs, enabling a range of stakeholders to participate actively in decision-making, and informing/consulting with wider stakeholders are all **social**

processes. That is, individuals with multiple professional and personal concerns come together to discuss their different perspectives, knowledge, values, requirements and concerns. Through these activities, personal relationships may be strengthened; areas of consensus identified; real or potential conflicts exposed; and mutual commitment to a course of action negotiated.

Conservation professionals will be familiar with the metaphor of 'natural capital' which is used both to describe the contributions that nature makes to the well being of society; and as a way of determining the status of habitats and species. An important concept which strengthens understanding of the social processes underpinning participation is that of *social capital* (Coleman 1988, p.98). There is growing consensus that building social capital is an important mechanism for resolving difficult natural resource problems where there is little incentive for collective action (Ostrom, 1990; Pennington and Rydin, 2000)

Social scientists use the metaphor of *social capital* to describe the ways in which social processes in an area contribute to productive outcomes (see Ostrom 1990, Ostrom et al. 1993, Pennington and Rydin 2000). Social capital is an expression of trust and confidence between people and organisations:-

- *Trust* in the honesty, integrity and sincerity of the individuals and organisations who are engaged in a joint project. Trust relationships are strengthened, for example, when there are shared norms about how the work should be done; when there are no 'hidden agendas'; or when individuals are able to admit that they have made a mistake. A vital element in building trust is the notion of reciprocity - that is, individuals and organisations recognise they have mutual obligations and meet them. If there is little or no trust between people, it is impossible to build partnerships and provide for meaningful participation.

- *Confidence* in the knowledge, capabilities and authority of the individuals and organisations engaged in the process. Of central importance to marine SAC processes is the confidence that stakeholders place on the scientific case for the designation. It is equally important that scientific experts demonstrate that they also recognise and value - demonstrate that they have confidence in - the depth and variety of local knowledge about the habitats and their species.

Social capital is produced through the interactions of people in their professional and personal **networks.** The productivity of these networks will depend on two key factors:

- *Extensiveness* - a network may be diverse in its membership or tightly constrained to a particular interest group. An example of the former would be a voluntary organisation supporting local conservation initiatives; an example of the latter often used in the social capital literature is the Mafia. In terms of achieving policy goals, the tight-knit network may be more effective in the short-term but may not be so in the long-term when policies come to be implemented. Also, a tight network will not perform well if one of the objectives is to enhance democratic rights to participate in policy making.

- *Density of relationships* - a network contributing high social capital in a locality would be one where its members meet one another in many different contexts; and where there is widespread knowledge of what is happening elsewhere in the network.

Networks indicate the structure of social capital in a locality, and there are simple processes through which policy networks can be mapped out (Rhodes 1990). To build networks and thereby, to build social capital in terms of marine SAC processes, means that effort must be devoted to:

- *Face-to-face communication* - that is, opportunities for discussion and debate between people. Being able to talk together, explore the viewpoints of others, and gain understanding of 'where they are coming from' is a vital element of building partnerships, providing for participation and moving towards consensus about what should be done.

- *Time* - all social processes require time in order for individuals to build trusting relationships, gain confidence in each other's expertise, and understand each other's perspectives. Having the time to do this vital social 'work' is often compromised: (i) by shortage of resources (money, people), and (ii) by pressures to deliver schemes within tight deadlines which are most often imposed from above rather than negotiated between individuals at the local level. At the same time, if individuals or organisations are 'not playing fair', delay can be used as a means of undermining the process. Points of closure, *ie* deadlines beyond which decisions must be taken, are essential.

In summary, the following factors are proposed as being particularly important in recognising and then building social capital for marine SAC processes. First, involving RAs and stakeholders in the initial design process demonstrates confidence in the expertise and knowledge of stakeholders, and builds trust in commitment to share power and responsibility. Second, by bringing them into partnership throughout the life of the project, continuity can be achieved which allows time to build social relations and strengthen networks between stakeholders/RAs. It also introduces the project officer into existing networks. Third, if there is an ongoing open process of innovation, negotiation, modification and change, it will help to build consensus based on a better understanding of divergent positions, and help secure legitimacy for decisions. Finally, by building social capital to support the marine SAC, there will be greater mutual accountability among RAs and stakeholders. This will increase the legitimacy of the scheme and develop/demonstrate genuine commitment to making it a success.

The effectiveness of marine SAC processes in building social capital is strongly related to the specific contexts in which they are carried out: *participatory processes are context-dependent processes*. The old adage of 'horses for courses' is nowhere more appropriate than in the selection and application of particular participatory processes. There are no techniques/approaches which have universal applicability. The impacts of processes and their effectiveness in achieving their objectives are always the consequence of context-specific interactions. Particular people engaged in particular activities in particular places will determine the success of the marine SAC process.

Key Challenges

The following were initially identified as particular challenges in developing and employing approaches and techniques for developing social capital through the promotion of RA and stakeholder participation in the management of marine SACs in the Azores. They will be set out here and some preliminary recommendations concerning how they might be addressed and overcome will be discussed, though aspects of these points may be further considered in the good practice recommendations.

Under-resourced relevant authorities: too busy fire-fighting to become involved in proactive initiatives such as marine SACs → this could be addressed by devolving many of the activities and responsibilities to stakeholder groups, which will be beneficial in both promoting their participation and in relieving over-stretched RAs of unmanageable workloads.

Stakeholders are not formally organised into groups/associations which can be employed to represent their interests and provide negotiation vehicles, *eg* commercial fishermen → whilst the local stakeholders may not be formally organised and represented, there do seem to be quite tight informal social networks which marine SAC processes can work with. Groups/associations are just a formal representation of such informal social networks, and whilst involvement in marine SAC processes may lead to the formalisation of such networks, *eg* through the selection of a representative, it may be perfectly adequate to work with informal networks. Interestingly, a fishermen's representative on Corvo stated that he felt that were they to become organised as a fishermen's association, he would

prefer it if they were represented by a non-fisherman who was used to working in official circles and who the fishermen trusted.

Geographical dispersion of islands, *ie* expense if all islands are represented on an Azores-wide management group, or problem if small islands/all stakeholders are not represented → a balance will need to be achieved between the development of a devolved management structure for each island and the need for an overarching management structure in order to promote a common approach and to promote the sharing of good (and to be avoided) approaches. Provided stakeholders have trust and confidence in the overarching management structure, there should not necessarily be the need for the representation of every stakeholder group from every island at every meeting.

Lack of vertical integration between regional and national policies, the links between which are informal/fragile; this can lead to false expectations of the potential for collectively agreed measures to be implemented in national policies and a lack of back-up for local marine SAC project officers → the key to addressing this issue is *honesty:* false expectations are only raised if the potential for local initiatives to be reflected in national policies is over-stated. Presumably this is an issue in various policy fields in the Azores, so many stakeholders may be familiar with this problem. Whilst it may be a disincentive to participation, particularly where national policies may potentially conflict with local/regional SAC policies, if you are open and honest about this issue and endeavour to formulate polices which do not necessarily require translation into national policies, this need not be an insurmountable hurdle. Furthermore, the EC may take the national government to task where this lack of integration causes conflicts in marine SACs in the Azores.

Lack of horizontal integration between regional sectoral agencies, the links between which are informal/fragile → marine SACs in the Azores may present an opportunity to informally strengthen the links between such RAs through the development of management partnerships with a shared common objective. In addition, the statutory obligation to comply with the Habitats Directive and the national legislation which transposes it may serve to catalyse and encourage integration between RAs.

Enforcement problems due to geographical dispersion and lack of resources, which can lead to false expectations/frustrations where some non-compliers amongst stakeholders benefit, as well as obstacles to achieving conservation objectives → again, the key to addressing this problem is honesty in order to avoid raising false expectations whilst avoiding this being a disincentive to participation; marine SACs in the Azores may present an opportunity to address this problem, *eg* the maritime police on Corvo could make the case for a fast patrol boat through the enforcement challenges posed by the marine SAC. Also, the potential for self-enforcement amongst and between stakeholder groups may be important in addressing this (though the EC and RAs may well not condone bombing limpet gatherers with rocks from cliff tops!)

Reluctance to inform on other stakeholders/relevant authorities due to tight social networks → informing on people within your social network could be regarded as an absolute last resort, in that primary emphasis should be placed on promoting voluntary cooperation and on peer enforcement where such cooperation is not being realised. Such a tight social network presents many opportunities for participation, which arguably outweigh problems related to reluctance to inform.

Risk that nepotism could compromise marine SAC policy processes and enforcement → again, this is a symptom of small, tight social networks, and may be addressed by increasing the transparency of processes where nepotism may compromise initiatives, thus increasing the peer pressure not to be nepotistic.

Lack of knowledge/experience of marine issues amongst relevant authorities and stakeholders, leading to a lack of willingness/motivation to address such issues → the problem of the marine environment being largely 'out of sight, out of mind' is a common one, and can be addressed through

awareness raising initiatives to increase people's knowledge of marine issues, whilst participation in marine SAC processes will increase their experience..

Over-expectations of fishermen about short-term benefits of closures → this can be minimised by avoiding over-selling such benefits, *ie* stressing the long-term and uncertain nature of such benefits; the wider benefits of such closures to other users should also be stressed as this may be enough of a motive in itself. This is demonstrated by the willingness of the fishermen in Corvo to close the Ponta Negra area to fishing for dusky groupers due to the commercial benefits derived from the population of large fish by a local dive company.

Fishermen generally want closures in other nearby grounds rather than in their grounds so that they get spill-over benefits whilst others have the closure → this can be addressed by stressing the likely localised nature of such spill-over benefits, and the need for the local fishermen to invest through closures in their grounds in order to potentially realise such benefits. Avoiding the over-selling of these benefits may also minimise over-expectations as to the geographic extent and magnitude of such potential benefits.

Different stakeholder groups are not aware of each others concerns and priorities, *eg* fishermen and recreational groups → this can addressed by participative discussions whereby stakeholder groups can outline their concerns and priorities and discuss them with other stakeholder groups; this not only raises awareness of the concerns and priorities amongst different groups, but may also identify shared concerns and priorities (**:** building consensus) as well as areas of potential conflict (**:** important in moving towards resolution)

Fishermen often think that stock depletions are caused by other fishermen (for different fisheries), so generally want other fishing techniques restricted rather than theirs → the problem that fishermen often blame other fishermen or environmental factors for stock depletions is a very common one, and can be addressed through awareness raising in order to make fishermen more accepting of their own potential role in stock depletions. Of course, where some fishermen, *eg* pole fishermen and hand-liners, have potentially good grounds for suspecting other fishermen, *eg* long-liners, of being responsible for depletions, this needs to be recognised and addressed by marine SAC management initiatives.

Disruption of customary fishing territories if grounds are closed, thus displacing fishermen → the impact on fishermen that use grounds that are proposed for closure is a critical factor that needs to be considered, and it must be accepted that customary fishing territories may need to be revised in order to provide for access by displaced fishermen. There is no way of avoiding this common issue**:** the impacts, including ramifications, must be openly considered and addressed.

Certain stakeholders have entrenched negative views about conservation, *eg* illegal spear fishermen and mollusc collectors, who yield recreational and commercial benefits**:** how can they be persuaded or made to stop? They do not perceive their activities to be a problem and perceive MPAs to be from radical conservationists → most MPAs have a 'hard core' of rogue stakeholders whose activities can only ultimately be stopped by statutory enforcement, recognising that it is critical that they are stopped otherwise they will undermine the willingness of other stakeholders to comply. Some apparently rogue stakeholders may, however, be more responsive than was envisaged to awareness raising as to the potential benefits of the marine SAC to other users, and to peer pressure to stop their damaging activities. Failing this, statutory enforcement is the only option, though it is recognised, for the reasons discussed above, that such enforcement may itself be problematic.

Potential for certain issues to dominate discussions, *eg* long line ban zone**:** 3 nm (brought in by RA), then 1 nm (in response to local long-line fishermen: otherwise too deep for some), then 3 nm again (coastal hand-liners pressure); this tends to dominate discussions about marine SACs → the most constructive means of addressing such issues as to provide for them to be aired during initial

marine SAC discussions, and then to try and move on and focus back-in on specific marine SAC issues. In this case, the designation may be a vehicle for reconciling this conflict between coastal hand-liners and long-liners, as the aims of the former may be convergent with those of the marine SAC. If this is not the case, or if it is decided to avoid drawing the marine SAC into this conflict, efforts should be focused on trying to move the discussions on. It may, however, be best to try and reconcile such conflicts through the marine SAC, though it is critically important to ensure that the marine SAC does not become 'captured' by either long-liners (who may prefer localised closures as an alternative to the blanket 3 nm closure) or by hand-liners (who may try and utilise the marine SAC to try and maintain the blanket closure)**:** the discussions need to be kept impartial and focused on marine SAC priorities.

Long line fishermen going further and further out as inshore stocks depleted, including the Formigas offshore bank, which is a marine SAC that is poorly enforced) this is also dangerous → the impacts of this may be reduced by improving the state of inshore stocks through the designation of closed areas and effort/gear restrictions. This is, however, likely to lead to the displacement of fishermen who will the still be pressurised to move offshore. Similarly, if enforcement is improved on the Formigas offshore bank, this is also likely to lead to closures and effort/gear restrictions, which will further displace certain fishermen. In the final analysis, it must be recognised that some basic fisheries management problems, such as overcapacity, cannot necessarily be addressed through marine SACs, but related discussions must recognise fisheries management problems and wider solutions sought in partnership with the relevant fisheries authorities.

Key Recommendations for Good Practice

These recommendations are largely derived from a previous and similar study for the UK (Jones at al. 2001), following discussions concerning their validity and adaptations with the MARÉ team.

Geographical contexts

In rural sites where there are fewer potential stakeholders, there is a much higher expectation and need for participation by a greater proportion of stakeholders (Edwards et al. 1997). This needs to be taken into account when considering the appropriateness of participation techniques.

Pre-marine SAC management history

Where social capital has been generated through a previous management initiative, *eg* the Ponta Negra dusky grouper closure, this is more likely to be maintained and enhanced if the marine SAC is sensitively integrated with the previous initiative through adoption/adaptation of the management approach. The integration of this voluntary initiative must be particularly sensitively handled, as a fishermen's representative expressed a fear that the dusky groupers may be fished for at Ponta Negra if fishermen feel that 'their' initiative has been taken from them through the statutory marine SAC, as they resent government interference.

Marine SAC Management structures

- It is beneficial if the management structure that should be adopted is openly discussed at the outset with the full participation of stakeholders and RAs, and agreed with them.

- Flat management structures, involving both RAs and stakeholders in the same group, would appear to be particularly appropriate for areas such as the Azores where stakeholder numbers are relatively low and their stakes are relatively high. Such a structure is beneficial in that the tasks can be shared amongst RAs and stakeholders, which is particularly important given the lack of RA resources in the Azores, and in that it provides for the constructive and ongoing participation

of stakeholders who are likely to be very significantly affected by marine SAC management decisions.

- Such flat management groups often benefit from having a core group of RAs and key stakeholders who take responsibility for moving forward and coordinating the implementation of decisions and initiatives reached by the main management group. It is important, however, that this implementation group does not assume or develop executive powers, *ie* their role is purely one of implementing decisions and driving initiatives forward, and they should not take on a significant decision-making role, as this will lead to the development of a two-tier management structure which it is argued is not appropriate for small rural communities.

- A variety of RAs have adopted a lead role and this is very much a case-by-case decision depending upon the local political context; in Corvo the City Hall has indicated that it must take the lead, and this would seem to be appropriate, though it has recognised that it will need the support of the marine SAC team and other RAs in order to promote involvement.

There is also clearly a need for a coordinating body which encompasses all of the marine SACs and SPAs in the Azores, in order to (a) promote an appropriate level of common practice/procedures, (b) ensure that each sites management strategy will fulfil obligations to the EC, (c) coordinate reporting to the EC, (d) provide for the dissemination of good/bad practice to promote mutual learning between the sites, and (e) present a larger representative body which can liase with the national government and the EC. As is discussed above, it may not be feasible for every stakeholder group and RA from each island to be represented, so this coordinating body may best function in a supporting and networking manner, rather than in a higher level executive decision-making manner. It is important that each site's management group is reasonably autonomous, at least as far as is possible given the commitments to the EC. As such, it is recommended that the Azores marine SAC/SPA body provides a networking, coordination and support role, rather than an overarching management role. It is probably most appropriate for this coordinating body to be hosted and funded by an appropriate RA, but as with the core implementation group discussed above, it is important that it does not develop or assume executive decision-making powers, as this will disempower local management groups and drastically undermine the potential for participation and cooperation at a site-specific level.

Initial Consultations

- It is advantageous to have as many face-to-face meetings with RAs and stakeholders as early in the process as is feasible in order to personally engage/recruit people and build trust and confidence in the process. In a community such as that of Corvo where it is know where different stakeholder groups can be found, it is feasible to go and see them individually or in places where they collectively gather to discuss the marine SAC and its implication/opportunities, rather than expecting them to come to your meetings. Going to see them will indicate respect and is more likely to develop the potential for their participation and cooperation.

- Consultation packs on management proposals for marine SAC should include as much information as is feasible concerning potential management implications.

Partnership-building approaches

- Community initiatives to explain the new responsibilities to the EC should avoid over-emphasising the legal duties and the potential consequences of non-compliance, as this is less than optimal in developing a sense of partnership and shared responsibility amongst the stakeholders and RAs.

- Assigning stakeholders and RAs specific, tangible responsibilities related to the development of the management scheme as early as possible in the process helps generate partnership.

- Where a particular RA has taken a strong lead role in the initial development of the management scheme, it is important that they step back and encourage and provide for other RAs and

stakeholders to take collective action in order to promote collaboration and reduce the risk of loss of institutional momentum.

- Asking stakeholders identified through initial efforts whether they might be able to suggest other stakeholders who should be involved appears to be a successful approach to increasing representation.

- Stakeholders are more likely to feel that they are partners in the marine SAC if they are, as far as is feasible, able to work in collaboration with the RAs and are empowered through flat management structures.

- Where the input of stakeholders is restricted to discussion, advice, consultation and information provision, this can lead to apathy, a lack of willingness to cooperate with the management scheme, or even protests/defiance, particularly in rural sites, *ie* stakeholders need to have a substantive and meaningful role rather than a token one.

- Where there have been problems developing stakeholder participation in the management scheme, the use of more participative consultation approaches on the draft management scheme can be used as an opportunity to engage stakeholders, as can a high profile launch of the final management scheme coupled with an event to celebrate the areas marine interests and activities.

- Integrating the identification of opportunities for compatible development and regeneration opportunities in the marine SAC promotes stakeholder (and some RA) participation, *eg* on Corvo the marine SAC management scheme needs to include the promotion of related tourism development opportunities.

- Marine SAC project teams need to be aware of existing, perhaps latent, conflicts amongst stakeholders/RAs which the marine SAC may be drawn into.

- If consulting on a draft document, do not make it look too glossy and finalised as this can give stakeholders the impression that it is a *fait accompli*.

General approaches

- There is a need to achieve a balance between meeting deadlines and keeping the marine SAC moving forward, and not pushing the process too fast in a manner that may alienate some stakeholders/RAs.

- Marine SAC structures and processes need to be designed from the outset as self-supporting in the longer-term absence of a supporting project team.

- It is important that a culture of honesty and trust is developed amongst RAs/stakeholders to provide for a generally positive and constructive political environment.

- It is important to emphasise nature conservation as a partnership process rather than reducing it to matters of science and legal responsibilities.

- In the longer term it is critical that initiatives arising from the marine SAC are seen to be happening on the ground in order to maintain the participation and commitment of RAs and stakeholders.

Role/value of specific participatory techniques

There are a number of techniques which can be applied as part of an overall participatory process. Such techniques can be beneficial in engaging stakeholders and yielding useful information. The following are examples of such techniques that may be useful in the Azore marine SACs.

Likes/dislikes, hopes/fears
This involves asking a gathering of stakeholders to write down three things they particularly like about their marine area, and three things they particularly dislike. Then they are asked to write down

three hopes that they have in terms of what positive things the marine SAC designation may bring, and three fears in terms of what negative things they think the designation may bring. These pieces of paper can then be gathered and the likes/dislikes, hopes/fears listed on a flipchart. Any trends or notable features/issues can then be discussed, with a focus on dispelling any false hopes and fears, and addressing any potentially real hopes and fears that the marine SAC may have to address.. They may subsequently be amalgamated, word processed and distributed as a list amongst stakeholders and RAs. This technique is useful in drawing out key issues and demonstrating that the views of stakeholders are considered important. This technique can also be extended to discussions as to what measures the stakeholders particularly want to see the management scheme addressing.

Participative mapping
This involves tabling a large scale map of the marine area, and asking stakeholders to indicate what activities occur where, using drawn symbols or written text. The tabled map may include some preliminary and fairly widely accepted information on the distribution of certain activities, in order to 'get the ball rolling' and make clear that you are not asking for blatantly obvious information. This technique can considerably enrich the existing knowledge as to the distribution of different activities, and provide for discussions on the relationship between certain activities and sensitive features. There is always a likelihood that certain stakeholders will not participate, withhold information or table misleading information, but this process is important in trying to move towards a more widely accepted and realistic map of the distribution of different activities. It is more constructive than simply tabling a detailed map based on the views of the RAs and project team, and stating that you know what goes on and where.

Carousel
Drawing on the hopes/fears exercise, four key and widely held issues, both positive and negative, can be identified. A facilitator and recorder can then be allocated to each issue and a room (or end of room) set up to discuss these issues. The RAs and stakeholders can then be divided into four groups, who each go to a room and discuss an issue in an open and participative manner for 20 minutes. Each group then move on to the next room to discuss the next issue for 20 minutes, until each group has discussed each issue. Whether the facilitators start each discussion afresh, or table the key issues which were identified by the previous group(s) for further debate is a matter of judgement, but it is far less demanding on the facilitators and can be useful in identifying areas of wide agreement (consensus) if each discussion group starts with a blank sheet of paper. If this approach is taken, it is important that the facilitators try and avoid leading the discussions down the same path as previous groups.

These techniques are practical examples of ways of engaging and drawing out information from stakeholders. Such techniques are much more likely to engage the stakeholders than community meetings which consist 99% of *telling them* and 1% of *asking if anybody has any questions*. Such meetings arguably patronise the stakeholders in that they are essentially expected to listen to presentations which may include a lot of science that they do not understand, and are then asked simply if they have any questions. This approach is less than positive in that it is not an opportunity for discussions and appears to ask the stakeholders to ask questions about anything that they do not understand. Any issues which are raised in such a meeting are more likely to be negative, though the response is most likely to be one of apathy, which may mistakenly be taken as an indication of disinterest in participating.

It must also be stressed that the findings of such techniques must be taken forward and addressed in the participative processes through which the management scheme for the marine SAC is prepared. It is critical that they are not treated as token exercises, the findings of which are quickly forgotten, as this will alienate stakeholders and undermine the potential for cooperation.

The *Environment Council,* based in London, runs courses which develop skills in techniques on the development and application of stakeholder dialogue processes. It may be beneficial if one or more members of the MARÉ project team attended one of these courses to develop such skills (information

available at http://www.the-environment-council.org.uk/), though a great deal can be achieved through a commitment to a participative approach, applying common sense and sticking to basic ideas such as those outlined in this report.

Role of marine SAC project team

Tensions can arise over the role of a project team or officer in the local process of developing a management scheme. These tensions can, to a degree, be minimised by:-

- ensuring that presentations and documents are sensitive to the local RA/stakeholder culture;

- avoiding scientific terms and acknowledging and respecting the knowledge and aspirations of stakeholders;

- ensuring that a positive, constructive approach is taken in order to support local initiatives and engender a sense of local ownership.

Furthermore:-

- The skills and competencies of project officers need to match the social and political culture of sites, *eg* on a rural site with close-knit communities, people skills and local knowledge may be particularly important.

- Project officers with appropriate experience of the local political culture should be employed where possible, particularly for sites which are likely to be politically sensitive or contentious.

- Required project officer skills and training should be balanced between developing social/political capacity and in developing a scientific base for the management scheme.

The role of champions/opponents

- It is important to identify those individuals who have the trust and respect of certain factions of the stakeholder/RA community and to build there support for and understanding of the marine SAC.

Role of science

- Scientific information concerning the site, including the details of why it was selected, should be made available as early in the marine SAC process as is possible, in order to maximise its impact.

- The potency of good, and often existing, scientific information in resolving conflicts should not be under-estimated.

- It should be made clear where there are gaps in the scientific knowledge in order to identify research/monitoring priorities, and where decisions need to be made under a degree of uncertainty.

- RA and stakeholder involvement in scientific assessments and monitoring exercises, including the recognition and utilisation of their ecological and other local knowledge, should be maximised.

Role of interpretation and publicity

- Information sharing activities are a pre-requisite for higher levels of participation and not a substitute.

- Glossy and expensive information sharing initiatives may alienate some RAs/stakeholders.

- Support can be promoted through the *process* of developing interpretive and publicity material by using local people in such initiatives and employing other local resources.

- It is important to achieve a balance between presenting the need for conservation with the need for compatible traditional activities and development opportunities.

- Publicity materials should place considerable emphasis on the importance of traditional marine uses and activities to the area, and should include or make reference to such activities and stakeholders wherever possible.

Reflection

Stakeholder participation is considered by some, especially those who are sympathetic with the top-down perspective (figure 1), as a politically correct notion that has little, if any, importance, in actual marine conservation initiatives. Such people will often look for, and invariably find, reasons why people cannot or will not participate, and will rely on a science and statutory enforcement focused approach.

Others, including the author of this report, consider that stakeholder participation is critically important if the voluntary cooperation of stakeholders is going to be nurtured and supported, particularly where the capacity and potential for statutory enforcement is limited. Such a participative approach can work in partnership with a scientific approach, provide for stakeholders and RAs to work in partnership with each other to fulfil conservation objectives, and provide for compliance with the Habitats Directive. Given the MARÉ team's knowledge of and standing in the Corvo community, and the dependence of this community on the marine environment, it is argued that this is a classic case where a participative approach to the management of an MPA is appropriate.

This is especially so given that the lack of potential for statutory enforcement is so limited that any approach which relies on such enforcement in the absence of a willingness to participate will almost certainly lead to the Corvo marine SAC becoming a 'paper park' which may not result in the EC taking judicial action, but will almost certainly achieve very little for marine conservation.

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