

International Marine Protected Areas Capacity Building Team (IMPACT)

Building Capacity for Effective MPA Management



National Marine Protected Areas Center

The nation's hub for building innovative partnerships and tools to protect special ocean places.

Capacity Building – An Urgent Need

Marine protected areas (MPAs) are recognized worldwide as a valuable management tools for ecosystem-based conservation. Many countries have committed to the Aichi Targets as part of the Convention on Biological Diversity, calling for 10% of marine and coastal areas to be protected through effectively managed, representative MPA networks. However, many scientists agree that more ambitious targets are needed to conserve marine resources, and that many existing MPAs are not effectively managed.

In order for MPAs to fulfill their potential as tools to protect marine and coastal ecosystems, managers need skills and experience in planning and managing MPAs and MPA networks. Many MPA managers and policy makers, local and indigenous communities and other stakeholders, have insufficient access to new knowledge, information, and guidelines coming out of science, traditional knowledge, and field experience. Moreover, resource managers lack opportunities to share experiences with and learn from other managers and staff.

NOAA's Role

NOAA's Office of National Marine Sanctuaries' (ONMS) International MPA Capacity Building Team (IMPACT) provides a structured framework for resource managers to come together, directly experience and learn from one another, and apply the best available information, tools and skills to the management of MPAs.

This Team is led by the National Marine Protected Areas Center -- an independent center within ONMS that shares science, information and tools across all MPA programs. The Capacity Building Team taps ONMS' 40 years of hands-on expertise in MPA management on a wide range of issues ranging from management plan development to effective enforcement.

The Team has also built partnerships within and outside NOAA, working with the Coral Reef Conservation Program, NOAA Fisheries, the Office for Coastal Management, the National Park Service, as well as international, regional and local NGOs.

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OUR APPROACH

IMPACT brings together current science, MPA management models and lessons learned from around the world to develop tailored programs to support capacity building for MPAs and MPA networks. In partnership with local agencies and NGOs, the team designs and implements multi-year programs utilizing the following components:

- Program development workshops
- Interactive & participatory trainings
- Peer to peer learning exchanges
- Training of trainers
- Skills development

EXAMPLE SUBJECT AREAS

- Introduction to MPAs
- Management planning
- Sustainable fisheries
- Sustainable tourism
- Sustainable financing
- Marine spatial planning
- Climate change adaptation
- Education and interpretation
- Research and monitoring plans
- Conflict resolution and facilitation

A SHARED COMMITMENT

IMPACT works in countries based on the following criteria:

- Prioritized need from in-country government and regional partners
- Strong committed network of in-country partners
- Secured funding from partners including in-country hosts
- Developed legal and management framework in place

PROGRAM DEVELOPMENT

Once support and resources are committed, the team

- Conducts a multi-faceted MPA capacity building needs assessment
- Designs training program structure, curriculum, and follow-up program specifically designed to meet regional management capacity needs
- Develops milestones, performance indicators and completes evaluations
- Creates communication and coordination plans with partners to support management capacity building implementation among participating MPAs to support the scaling up from individual sites to effective networks of MPAs.

CURRENT FOCAL GEOGRAPHIES

Indonesia - Building MPA capacity for national and district level governments and building local leadership through a dedicated mentorship program.

Philippines – Building capacity for national MPA network, developing local leadership and creating small grants incentives program

Gulf of California – Developing management capacity for a network of 11 MPAs and capacity building institutionalization

Latin America – Developing capacity in coastal and marine spatial planning and supporting initial pre-planning spatial planning processes

Western Indian Ocean – Supporting climate change adaptation for MPA networks

Kiribati – Building capacity for managers, educators and local leaders to fulfill the goals of the Phoenix Island Protected Area.