



# Capacity Action Planning For Protected Areas

A Quick Guide  
FOR PROTECTED AREA PRACTITIONERS

## ELEMENTS OF A PROTECTED AREA SYSTEM MASTER PLAN

### BACKGROUND

- introduction to the master plan
- linkages to national and regional plans
- process for developing and approving the plan
  - mechanisms for reporting

### VISION

- overall vision of the protected area network
  - desired future conditions
- short and long-term goals and objectives
- range of benefits of the protected area system

## PLANS TO STRENGTHEN

### PROTECTED AREA NETWORK

- representativeness
- connectivity and corridors
- ecological processes
  - restoration
- monitoring progress

### PROTECTED AREA MANAGEMENT

- threat abatement
- management effectiveness
- protected area capacity
- distribution of benefits
- monitoring progress

### PROTECTED AREA ENABLING ENVIRONMENT

- protected area policies
- sectoral laws and policies
- protected area governance
- existing and future costs
  - monitoring progress

### IMPLEMENTATION PLAN

- integration into governmental budgeting and planning
  - a description of key strategies and priorities
- an action plan with steps, responsibilities, timeline, costs

### ASSESSMENT RESULTS AND APPENDICES

- gap assessment
- threat assessment
- management effectiveness assessment
  - capacity assessment
  - benefits assessment
  - governance assessment
- sustainable finance assessment
- policy environment assessment

# Introduction

In February of 2004, 188 countries committed to the Convention on Biological Diversity's "Program of Work," an ambitious set of activities aimed at establishing and maintaining comprehensive, effectively managed, and ecologically representative national and regional protected area terrestrial systems by 2010 and marine systems by 2012. As part of their commitment to this "Program of Work," signatory countries are developing comprehensive protected area system master plans, including plans to improve their protected area network, management effectiveness and enabling environment. A capacity action plan is one aspect of improving protected area management effectiveness.

## WHAT IS PROTECTED AREA CAPACITY?

Capacity is generally defined as the ability and means to achieve a given end. When applied to a protected areas system, capacity can be defined at three broad levels (GEF, 2005; Hough, 2007; Booth et al., 2003):

**Individual level** The degree to which protected area staff have the skills, knowledge and competencies needed to effectively manage a protected area site or system.

**Institutional level** The degree to which a protected area institution has the internal and external structures and processes in place needed to enable the effective management of a protected area system.

**Societal level** The degree to which the laws, policies and practices of a range of environmental, social and economic sectors provide a favorable environment for the establishment and management of a protected area system.

## **WHAT IS PROTECTED AREA MANAGEMENT EFFECTIVENESS?**

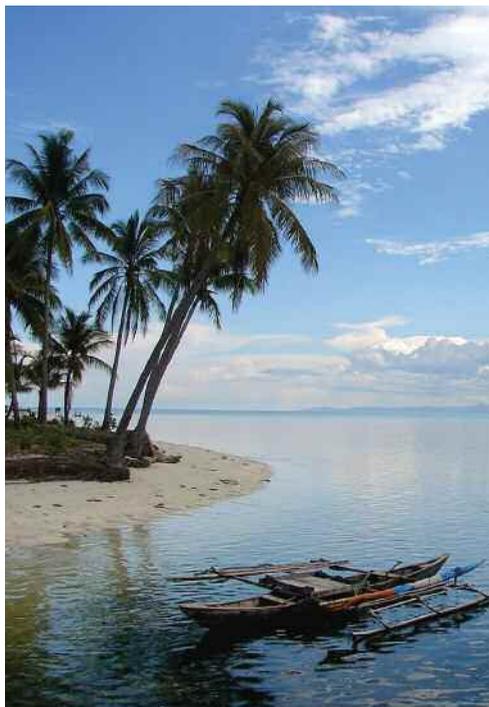
Protected area management effectiveness is defined as the degree to which protected area management protects biological and cultural resources, and achieves the goals and objectives for which the protected area was established. The World Commission on Protected Areas describes the elements of protected area management effectiveness as:

- Context - protected area significance, threats and policy environment
- Planning - protected area design and planning
- Inputs - the resources needed to carry out protected area management
- Processes - the way in which management is conducted
- Outputs - the implementation of management programs, actions and services
- Outcomes - the extent to which objectives have been achieved.

## **WHAT IS A PROTECTED AREA CAPACITY ACTION PLAN?**

While most protected area management effectiveness studies do identify and prioritize critical threats and key weaknesses, they often do not identify the specific capacities and corresponding opportunities and strategies needed to address them. On the other hand, many capacity plans are based on a generic checklist of potential capacity needs, rather than on a systematic assessment of the actual management weaknesses and threats within the protected area system. Ideally, planners will integrate management effectiveness results into the capacity action planning process, in order to ensure that the results are relevant and are focused on improving the most urgent weaknesses and abating the most prevalent threats. Furthermore, many capacity assessments focus exclusively on individual capacity needs and skill development, rather than on broader institutional and societal capacities. Ideally, planners will consider the range of capacity levels needed to ensure a comprehensive and well-managed protected area system.

In this guide, therefore, a protected area capacity action plan is defined as a suite of strategies and actions aimed at strengthening the individual, institutional and societal capacities needed to create a representative and comprehensive protected area network, address critical management weaknesses, abate key threats and improve the enabling environment within a protected area system.



# Contents

Guiding principles in developing a capacity plan .....	1
Steps in developing a capacity action plan .....	3
Case study from Jamaica .....	7
Case study from Grenada .....	9
Lessons learned from both case studies .....	15
References .....	16
Glossary .....	17



## *guiding principles in* developing a capacity action plan



While the actual process of developing a capacity action plan will vary from country to country, the following are some basic principles that are likely to apply to all cases.

- Build off the results of existing assessments of protected area management effectiveness.
- Focus on capacities needed to address key management weaknesses and abate critical threats as the basis for the action plan.
- Consider individual and institutional capacities, and, depending on the scope of the assessment and available resources, on societal capacities.
- Engage the right actors at the right time; park guards and field level staff can provide one level of input into the capacity plan, while ministerial staff and policy makers can provide another. Often several meetings will be needed to include different levels of expertise.
- Include multiple actors from different sectors, including, for example, tourism, economic development, land use planning, forestry, fisheries and agriculture.
- Emphasize a self-assessment approach, empowering protected area staff and administrators to identify their capacity needs and constraints.
- Ensure the support of senior-level management in conducting the capacity assessment and following up with the results.
- Ensure that the capacity action plan is integrated into national budgetary processes in order to increase the likelihood that the plan will be implemented.

**HEALING IN PROGRESS**

**-Please stay on trail-**

**THANK  
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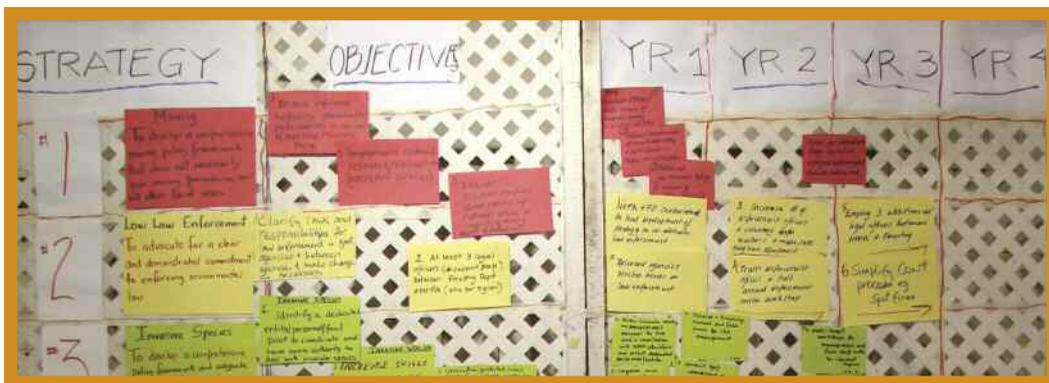


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steps in

# developing a capacity action plan



**1. FORM A WORKING GROUP** One of the very first steps is to form a working group of institutions and individuals who will lead the process. This working group is typically responsible for:

- providing overall direction and guidance.
- designing and coordinating the planning process, including choosing and adapting the methodology and defining the work plan.
- supervising the work of consultants.
- facilitating one or more multi-stakeholder meetings.
- communicating the results with key stakeholders.
- following through on key actions.

**2. GATHER EXISTING INFORMATION** This process begins with the collection of existing materials, reports, surveys and other types of information related to both protected area management effectiveness and protected area capacity needs assessments. The following information will be needed to develop a capacity action plan:

- Relative ecological significance of each protected area, based on the results of an ecological gap assessment. This information will help in determining priority geographies.
- Management challenges, based on the results of a management effectiveness assessment.
- Threats to protected areas, based on the results of a protected area threat assessment.
- Institutional challenges, based on an assessment of the policy environment.

If this information is not available, then the working group will need to decide how to gather missing information, either by incorporating an assessment into the workshop, or by using a very rapid assessment using expert opinion.

**3. SYNTHESIZE AND ANALYZE EXISTING INFORMATION** Once the working group has collected the relevant information, the next step is to synthesize and analyze the results. The purpose of this step is to understand the linkages and relationships between threats, management challenges and institutional constraints, in order to better understand how to develop appropriate strategies and assess capacity needs. Some possible analysis techniques include:

- Identifying the underlying root causes behind threats. For example, it would be helpful to understand that changes in fish populations are the result of increased siltation, which resulted from increased forest clearing, which resulted from recent changes in forest policies (see Stedman-Edwards, 2000 for more on root causes).
- Identify which institutional constraints, management challenges and threats are most instrumental in causing biodiversity loss within the protected area. For example, although inadequate park guards and infrastructure may be identified as a major management challenge, the lack of staff to eradicate and prevent invasive species may have far more serious ecological consequences in an area with rapid invasive species encroachment.
- Identify broad themes that unite the constraints, challenges and threats. For example, inadequate compensation to local communities for livestock predation, insufficient guards, and high levels of poaching are all related to a common theme, and solving one aspect in isolation will not necessarily solve the overall problem.

The result of this step should be a comprehensive set of threats, management challenges and institutional constraints facing the protected area.

**4. DEVELOP PRIORITIES** Once the team has identified a list of key issues, the next step is to develop priorities among these. Several ways to accomplish this include:

- Using information about the protected area context, including the ecological significance, socio-cultural significance and/or vulnerability of an area to determine which areas are most significant.
- Using information about the degree of existing and future threat, and therefore relative degree of urgency, of each protected area.
- Using information about the feasibility of addressing each issue and specific opportunities, (e.g., earmarked funds, training programs) to identify practical strategies and capacity action plans.

The result of this step should be a prioritized list which will serve as the basis for developing strategies and capacity action plans. Ideally, the team will tackle around a dozen or so priority issues. These may be individual threats, challenges or constraints, or they may be a complex suite of issues, but the working group should ensure that at least the top three to four threats, challenges and constraints are included in the priority list.

**5. IDENTIFY STRATEGIES AND OBJECTIVES** Once the team has developed a list of priority issues, the next step is to develop specific strategies to address those issues. For example, if one of the priority issues is inadequate management planning, a strategy would likely be to develop management plans. This strategy might have two distinct objectives: 1) to develop management plans for all protected areas within three years; and 2) to revise the existing policy, regulatory and budgetary environment to ensure that site-level management planning is fully incorporated. In developing objectives, it may help to remember to set 'SMART' objectives – specific, measurable, achievable, relevant and time-bound (e.g., develop management plans for all remaining protected areas by 2010). Between one and three objectives is typical for each strategy.



EXAMPLE OF KEY ISSUE AND RELATED CAPACITIES

KEY ISSUE	STRATEGIES	CAPACITIES NEEDED TO STRENGTHEN MANAGEMENT EFFECTIVENESS
Invasive alien species	Prevent the introduction of new invasive species	Individual capacity
		Detecting new encroachments
		Institutional capacity
		Developing monitoring and detection program
		Societal capacity
	Educating plant nurseries, park visitors	
	Eradicate or control existing invasive species	Individual capacity
		Improving eradication and control techniques
		Institutional capacity
		Developing comprehensive policy framework on invasives
Societal capacity		
Developing national invasives strategy plan		

**6. IDENTIFY CAPACITY NEEDS AND DEVELOP ACTION PLANS FOR EACH OBJECTIVE**

Once the team has determined strategies and objectives for each priority issue, the next step is to develop a capacity action plan. This phase involves identifying and prioritizing specific capacity-building actions to achieve each objective. Planners should consider human, institutional and societal capacities needed to

achieve objectives when identifying capacity-building actions. The second step is developing a plan with responsible individuals and institutions, timeline, costs, and success indicators for each action.

**7. IMPLEMENT AND INSTITUTIONALIZE THE ACTION PLAN** All too often, a working group develops a comprehensive, creative, and realistic plan for improving protected area management and strengthening capacity, only to have the plan gather dust on a shelf and not be implemented. Implementing and institutionalizing a plan is one of the most important steps in the entire process.

To encourage full implementation of the plan, working group members should:

- Insure that all relevant stakeholders support the actions in the plan – obtain written support from each key institution or agency
- Delineate roles and responsibilities for key actors and agencies, both leading and supporting, and ensure that these roles are then incorporated into their own annual work plans and budgets. Having these institutional work plans shared among all working group members may help improve accountability.
- Clarify the process for reviewing progress and adapting actions over time.
- Designate one institution to be responsible for providing support, particularly logistical support in setting up meetings, reviewing materials, monitoring progress with key actors, taking minutes and writing reports.
- Designate one person within the coordinating institute to be responsible for overall coordination. Choosing the right person with the right skills is critical for success.
- Identify and stick to target dates for taking action and reviewing progress.
- Use the results of the capacity action plan as a springboard for raising funds – having a comprehensive, well constructed and realistic plan to strengthening protected area management, particularly a plan that multiple agencies support, is invaluable when approaching donor agencies.
- Periodically reporting progress is a critical step for maintaining momentum after workshops are over, reports are completed and inertia sets in. Specifying the frequency of reporting, using progress reports to highlights both successes and challenges, and following up with telephone calls and in-person meetings can all bolster the reporting process.
- Ensure that capacity action plan reports aimed at policy makers are concise. Typical reports include 1) a summary of the process and participants; 2) main weaknesses, threats and constraints; 3) the priority issues, strategies and objectives; 4) a table summarizing the key capacity-building actions, timelines, responsible individuals and institutions, costs and success indicators; and 5) next steps for implementation.



# case study from jamaica



## Protected area context

Jamaica has a range of protected areas, including forest reserves and forest management areas under the Forest Act, national parks and under the Natural Resources Conservation Authority Act, heritage sites under the Jamaica National Heritage Trust Act, and fish sanctuaries under the Fishing Act. Protected areas included in the assessment were Montego Bay Marine Park, Ocho Rios Marine Park, Negril Environmental Protection Area (including Negril Marine Park), Portland Bight Protected Area, Palisadoes—Port Royal Protected Areas, Blue and John Cros Mountains National Park, Mason River Protected Area, Mount Diablo, Cockpit Country Forest Reserve and Dolphin Head Forest Reserve.

In late 2006, Jamaica developed an ecological gap assessment, a management effectiveness assessment and a capacity action plan for its system of protected areas. These steps supported many of the country's internal and external obligations, including the Convention on Biological Diversity, the 2005 five-year strategic plan, and the National Biodiversity Strategy and Action Plan.

## Key partners

Key partners in the process included the following:

- The Ministry of Local Government and Environment
- The Nature Conservancy's Jamaican office
- The Natural Environment and Planning Agency
- The Forestry Department
- The Fisheries Division

- Jamaica National Heritage Trust
- Institute of Jamaica
- Urban Development Corporation
- Parish Councils
- National Lands Agency
- Negril Coral Reef Preservation Society and Environment
- Negril Environmental Area Protection Trust
- Jamaica Conservation and Development Trust
- Caribbean Coastal Area Management Foundation
- Friends of the Sea
- Southern Trelawny Environmental Association
- Dolphin Head Trust
- Montego Bay Marine Park Trust
- Local Forest Management Committees
- A National Protected Area Committee
- Ministry of Agriculture and Lands
- Ministry of Local Government

## Outline of the process

Prior to the workshop, a consultant reviewed four main sources of information in a literature review: Caribbean Natural Resources Institute Review from 2001; TNC's Institutional Self-Assessment and Development Report from 2004; Center for Park Management Situational Analysis from 2005; and Strategic Action Plan for Protected Areas from 2005. Based on that review, the consultant identified nearly two dozen major challenges.

The working group then convened a workshop of 56 participants, including protected area site managers, policy makers, and agency representatives, among others. The participatory workshop, in which participants worked individually, in small groups and in plenary, covered the following topics:

- An assessment of protected area threats, pressures and vulnerability.
- An assessment of site-level management challenges.
- An assessment of system-level institutional constraints.
- A determination of linkages between these strategies.
- An identification of capacity requirements and actions.
- The development of a detailed action plan.

The working group used the World Wildlife Fund's Rapid Assessment and Prioritization of Protected Area Management (RAPPAM) methodology for the first three steps. This resulted in a suite of issues and challenges, for which participants then developed specific strategies and actions. Following this workshop, working group members then held a meeting with site-level managers and staff from three protected area to discuss additional site-level capacity needs. This smaller working group provided more detail to the capacity action plan, identifying synergies, overlaps and linkages. The working group then developed a national report that summarized all of the key findings and resulting action plan. Since this was a pilot process for linking capacity-building actions with the results of protected area management effectiveness, the working group also documented lessons learned.



## Main findings

### MAJOR THREATS

The assessment identified the primary threats to marine areas as global climate change, pollution, tourism, shoreline development and over-fishing, and primary threats to terrestrial areas as forest clearing, invasive species, fire and encroachment.

### MAJOR MANAGEMENT WEAKNESSES

The assessment identified weaknesses in protected area 1) planning, including zoning and boundary demarcation, community relations and dispute resolution, and law enforcement; 2) inputs, including staffing, finances and transportation; 3) processes, including management planning and inventorying, ecological and social research, and threat monitoring; and 4) outputs, including site restoration, management plans, and staff training.

### INSTITUTIONAL CONSTRAINTS

The assessment identified the following as critical system-level issues: 1) lack of demonstrated commitment to creating a representative and comprehensive protected area system; 2) lack of a comprehensive biodiversity inventory; 3) inadequate training programs at multiple levels; 4) lack of routine evaluation of the effectiveness of the protected area system; 5) insufficient law enforcement at multiple levels; 6) inadequate funding for the protected area system; and 7) lack of conservation mechanisms (e.g. incentives for private protected areas) to promote broader conservation practices and land uses across the landscape.

## Strategic directions for strengthening capacity

The assessment process identified the following strategic directions for strengthening capacity:

- develop a sustainable finance plan and mechanism for implementation.
- improve collaboration and coordination among national-level agencies, particularly in regard to resource harvesting, tourism, and land use planning.
- examine, revise and where necessary establish new laws, policies and guidelines for sectors that have an impact on protected areas, such as mining and fisheries.
- establish a national level training program tailored to site- and system-level personnel needs.
- develop a policy framework and adopt monitoring standards and protocols for research and monitoring, particularly for invasive species, and the valuation of ecosystem services of protected areas.
- improve boundary demarcation and zoning to abate multiple threats.
- increase public education and awareness efforts, targeting public engagement in protected area planning and management.
- improve infrastructure, especially for law enforcement and monitoring activities.

## Additional site-level capacity needs

The deeper site-level capacity assessment focused on additional areas for strengthening capacity, including staffing, training, infrastructure and threat abatement (for further details see Hayman, 2007).

- Critical staffing requirements included increasing the skills of protected area rangers, who are on the front line of protected area management, including public communication, law enforcement, monitoring and threat detection. Additional rangers, with broader skill sets, will be required across the entire network.
- Critical training requirements included proposal writing, report writing and monitoring techniques and sampling for field-level staff, and strategic planning and leadership for senior-level staff. In addition, training

in community relations, particularly in participatory planning, implementation and monitoring, is important.

- Critical infrastructure requirements included both capital and maintenance costs for core infrastructure, including both office equipment (photocopiers, printers, fax machines, telephones and computers) and transportation equipment (boats, vehicles and related maintenance).
- Critical threat-abatement capacities included plans for abating pollution (by developing plans for addressing oil spills and implementing stream water quality monitoring processes); invasive alien species (by improving monitoring and field assessments); law enforcement (by improving boundary markings and signage, and increasing enforcement officers); tourism (by developing ecotourism guidelines); forest degradation (by improving forest restoration methods); and over fishing (by improving fishing policies).

## Institutionalizing the results

The working group recommended the following steps for ensuring that the capacity action plan is fully implemented and institutionalized across multiple actors and agencies:

- Promote the need for continued capacity assessment and action planning at both site and system levels.
- Garner support among agencies and donors for the results of the capacity action plan.
- Refine the assessment approach to focus more specifically on marine protected areas and develop a manual for step by step assessments in the future.
- Develop a more specific assessment tool for site-level capacity assessments.
- Commit to undertaking system-level assessments at least every five years, based on the implementation of the capacity development plan.

The working group subsequently convened a workshop for determining roles and responsibilities and institutional arrangements for stakeholders involved in protected area management. The workshop targeted participants from key agencies, including the National Environment and Planning Agency, Forestry, Fisheries, Jamaica National Heritage Trust, Ministry of Local Government and Environment, Ministry of Finance, Institute of Jamaica and the Urban Development Corporation. Based on the steps outlined in the capacity action plan, this group assigned clear roles and responsibilities, and developed a structure for a coordinating body to ensure that the plan was fully implemented. This structure and supporting roles were then presented to the Cabinet for approval.



# case study from grenada



## Protected area context

In 2006 during the 8th Conferences of the Parties on the Convention on Biological Diversity in Brazil, the Government of Grenada publicly announced the “Grenada Declaration,” in which they committed to conserving 25 percent of its critical marine and terrestrial environments by the year 2020. In the same year, it also established a formal partnership agreement with The Nature Conservancy to collaborate on activities related to the Program of Work on Protected Areas. In 2006, the Grenada/TNC working group completed an ecological gap assessment, highlighting the critical need to protect dry forests, freshwater and marine ecosystems.

The management effectiveness assessment and capacity development workshops were designed to contribute to the ecological gap assessment by highlighting management gaps, as well as to contribute to the activities of Program of Work, including conducting an assessment of management effectiveness and developing a plan to improve capacity.

The capacity action planning process included an assessment of the following protected areas: Grand Etang, Annandale, Mount Saint Catherine, Mount Hartman, Perseverance Sanctuary, Mount Moritz, Richmond Hill, Molinere/Beausejour Marine Protected Area, Woburn/Clark’s Court Bar Marine Protected Area, High North National Park, Grand Anse, Sandy Island/Oyster Bed Marine Protected Area.

## Key partners

- Ministry of Agriculture, Lands, Forests, and Fisheries, Department of Forestry and Department of Fisheries
- Ministry of Tourism, Civil Aviation, Culture and the Performing Arts, Tourism Department
- Ministry of Health, Social Security, the Environment and Ecclesiastic Relations
- Ministry of Foreign Affairs and International Trade, Legal Affairs and Carriacou and Petit Martinique Affairs
- Physical Planning Unit
- RARE
- Sustainable Grenadines Project
- St. George's University
- The Nature Conservancy
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- The Nature Conservancy

## Outline of the process

The working group undertook a protected area management effectiveness assessment in late 2006, involving a one-day workshop, and multiple stakeholders. During the second workshop, held in early 2007, participants first discussed and confirmed the results from the first assessment. They then prioritized threats, management weaknesses, and institutional constraints across the system. The next step was to develop a set of strategies and related objectives that addressed these key issues, along with an outline of action plans for each objective.

## Main Findings

### MAJOR THREATS

The assessment identified the following as critical threats: over-fishing and poaching; waste disposal, especially of chemicals and sewage; coastal development and resulting siltation from clearing of natural vegetation; sand mining; invasive species; and vulnerability to climate change, especially coral bleaching and increased frequency and intensity of storms.

### MAJOR MANAGEMENT WEAKNESSES

The assessment identified the following management challenges: 1) inadequate law enforcement, including staffing, infrastructure and policies; 2) improper protected area designation; 3) insufficient staffing levels and capacity; 4) inadequate research and data management systems within each protected area; 5) inadequate infrastructure and equipment; 6) lack of long-term site funding and cost recover; 7) inadequate management planning and implementation of management plans; 8) inadequate assessment, monitoring and abatement of key threats; and 9) lack of stakeholder and community participation and advocacy efforts; and 10) insufficient political will to support effective protected area management.

### INSTITUTIONAL CONSTRAINTS

The assessment revealed the following institutional constraints: 1) inadequate commitment to, and implementation of, a biodiversity vision for the country; 2) overriding legitimate policy by administrative dictates; 3) lack of sustainable resource use and land use policies; 4) inadequate inter-sectoral integration and cooperation; 5) lack of a national-level system for research and data management; 6) insufficient numbers of qualified staff; 7) insufficient infrastructure; 8) lack of provisions for the participation of non-governmental organizations and civil society; and 9) inadequate sustainable financing for the protected area system.



## Strategies for strengthening capacity and improving management effectiveness

Based on the threats, weaknesses, and constraints identified during the assessment, participants identified 13 key issues, along with strategies to address this issue (See table on page 14).

### Institutionalizing the results

Institutionalizing the results of the assessment is likely to be a major challenge for the working group, in part because one of the main constraints is lack of political will and funding to follow through with existing commitments to protected areas. Despite the broad representation of multiple agencies and sectors within the working group, this representation is mostly at lower political levels, and does not reflect similar commitments at higher levels. Furthermore, there are many competing national priorities, including poverty reduction, health and development. The completed capacity action plan will provide a tool for the working group to increase support for the implementation of effective protected area management at national and local levels. One of the major constraints, however, is the critical shortage of staff and funds to implement the plan. This constraint is compounded by low staff morale. The team plans to identify successes and early progress, and report these periodically to maintain focus, keep momentum and build morale.



ISSUE	KEY STRATEGY
Law enforcement	To increase law enforcement capacity and to increase political will to enforce laws
Staffing levels	To increase the number of staff with sufficient capacity and skills at site- and system- levels
Research and monitoring	Develop a comprehensive and viable research and monitoring program for the protected area system
Management plans	To develop eight management plans by 2010
Protected area designation	To ensure elements and processes are in place to implement the proper designation of all protected areas
Implementation of existing plans	To ensure a supportive intent and sufficient resources to implement existing plans
Public awareness and advocacy	To instill a culture appreciative of the importance of the environment and of protected areas
Waste management	To revise waste management plan and ensure adequate disposal of waste, including chemical waste and sewage
Integrated coastal zone management	To develop an integrated coastal zone management plan
Global climate change and resilience	To ensure principles of resilience and resistance are incorporated into the design of the protected area network, and to establish mechanisms for responding to natural disasters
Implementation of public commitments	To ensure that mechanisms and processes are in place for increasing public accountability to, and fulfillment of, commitments related to protected areas
Sustainable use and land use	To strengthen local area planning initiatives and to have comprehensive national land use policies and plans in place
Sustainable finance	To complete and implement a sustainable finance plan by 2010
Inter-sectoral integration	To develop a formal mechanism and processes to promote inter-sectoral integration and share information



## *lessons learned* from both case studies

- A clear champion for the entire process will help ensure that things stay on track. It helps if this person is politically well placed, and has access to human, technical and financial resources.
- A designated staff person or consultant will also be important to ensure timely implementation of the process, smooth logistics, and adequate reporting and follow through on actions.
- It is imperative to involve the right people and agencies from the beginning to ensure the greatest level of support possible. Creating a working group involving multiple agencies is the first step in involvement.
- Identifying mechanisms for following through on actions and monitoring progress should be one of the first tasks of the working group.
- In inviting workshop participants, it is important to ensure that the right level of participants are attending for the task at hand. In identifying priorities and challenges, it often helps to have a dialogue between policy-level and field-level staff.
- The different components of capacity action planning, including assessing management effectiveness (threats, weaknesses and insitutional constraints), prioritizing these issues, and developing strategies, objectives and actions can be a very intensive and time-consuming process. It may be better to separate these two processes, and allow time for reflection and analysis between them. However, too much time will result in lost momentum – one to two months between meetings is probably optimal.
- In analyzing the results of management effectiveness assessments, participants should be sure to include each of the main threats, weaknesses and constraints when identifying strategies.
- There will likely be an exhaustive list of issues and challenges within any protected area system. Narrowing that list to a smaller subset of critical priorities will be important if the capacity action plan is to be realistic and achievable.
- It may be relatively easy to develop objectives and action plans for simple strategies, but others, such as staffing and training, will require a more in-depth capacity needs assessment, focusing specifically on site-level needs. This work will likely need additional staff or consultant time.
- Site-level and system-level capacity needs and action plans are both important, and ideally both levels will be included in the assessment.
- In assessing management effectiveness and developing capacity plans, it may be helpful to identify standards for protected area management, such as defining minimum levels for staffing, management planning, and monitoring, for protected area management. These can then serve as a benchmark for developing sufficient capacity.
- In developing a capacity action plan, the working group should include the capacities and actions needed for ensuring that new protected areas (e.g., those identified through an ecological gap assessment) meet minimum standards, such as staffing, management planning, infrastructure and funding.
- The process of developing a capacity action plan provides a venue for protected area staff to discuss openly the challenges in protected area management among themselves, and with key policy makers and administrators. Many participants have found these discussions to be one of the most useful parts of the process. Although workshop facilitators may be tempted to curtail animated and lengthy discussions, they should recognize that these discussions are a critical step in achieving consensus about management challenges and the capacities and actions needed to address them.

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# glossary

**CAPACITY ACTION PLAN:** a suite of actions aimed at strengthening the individual, institutional and societal capacities needed to create and effectively manage a protected area site or system.

**ECOLOGICAL GAP ASSESSMENT:** An analysis of the extent to which species, natural communities, ecological systems and the ecological processes that sustain them are represented in a protected area network.

**INSTITUTIONAL CONSTRAINT:** institutional constraints include the laws, policies, practices and attitudes that govern the society within which a protected area system is based, as well as the interactions between these. Examples include conflicting land tenure policies and perverse economic incentives.

**MANAGEMENT CHALLENGE:** management challenges include a range of weaknesses and deficiencies within a protected area site or system, including planning, processes, inputs and output. Examples include inadequate staffing, monitoring, management planning, community outreach.

**PROTECTED AREA CAPACITY:** the degree [to which staffing, competencies, structures, processes, resources, laws and policies enable the establishment and effective management of a protected area site or system.

## **PROTECTED AREA MANAGEMENT**

**EFFECTIVENESS:** the degree to which protected area management protects biological and cultural resources and achieves the goals and objectives for which the protected area was established.

## **PROTECTED AREA SYSTEM MASTER PLAN:**

A comprehensive strategic plan for a protected area system that typically includes a vision, the results of protected area assessments, and specific plans to improve the protected area network, management effectiveness, and enabling conditions.

**PROTECTED AREA THREAT:** any human activity or related process that has a negative impact on key biodiversity features, ecological processes or cultural assets within protected areas.

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