

MPAs: How can they be designed to address SSF access, equity and sustainability

In considering the use of MPAs, some questions that should be considered include:

- How do we determine whether or not they are the best tool?
- Are they producing the desired biological, social and economic results?
- What was the participation process for their establishment?
- How do we ensure that those who pay the costs get the benefits?
- What institutional coordination is required?
- How can cases of violation of human rights be addressed and redressed?

Major Conclusions

- Different people had different interpretations of what an MPA is, causing confusion in implementation. However, most important is to be clear on the objectives – once objectives known, a suitable management system can be designed.
- There was widespread dissatisfaction with percentage targets being promoted by some agencies without any scientific foundation.
- There is a lot of information available on how much area is protected by MPAs but very little on how many people have been affected, or the gender implications of MPAs.
- There was general agreement that properly designed and implemented MPAs would produce benefits for biodiversity conservation but their benefits for fisheries management were much less certain.
- There must be adequate legislation and enforcement in place or illegal fishing, attracted by higher abundance of fish, can cancel the benefits of an MPA.

- MPAs are frequently established through a top-down process with no consultation with fishers; but
- in Brazil, some MPAs, referred to as extractive reserves have been established by communities, with government support, that protect the biological resources and also the access of the community to those resources.
- Departmental responsibility for MPAs is important. There are many examples of MPAs being established by Ministries or Departments other than fisheries that have no knowledge of or concern for fishers.
- Often fishers pay the costs of establishment of MPAs because they are excluded from fishing grounds but others benefit e.g. tourism interests or society at large. More work is needed on who pays and who benefits: requires monitoring costs and benefits over time.
- MPAs should provide protection for the water as well by preventing dumping and pollution – oceans perspective needed.