

# Policy Perspectives

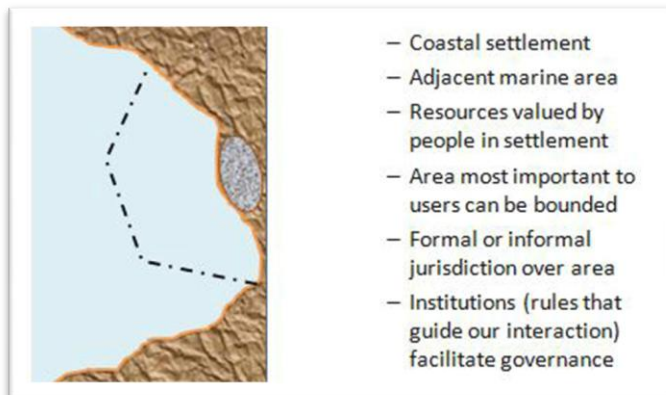
*Perspectives on resource management and environmental policy from the Centre for Resource Management and Environmental Studies (CERMES), Faculty of Pure and Applied Sciences, University of the West Indies, Cave Hill Campus, Barbados.*

The Centre for Resource Management and Environmental Studies (CERMES) has initiated this occasional outreach publication, **Policy Perspectives**, primarily in order to share some of the lessons learnt from ongoing research. The interdisciplinary applied research at CERMES emphasizes learning-by-doing through the collaboration of researchers, beneficiaries and other interested parties. The information in these policy briefs may be used by policy-makers and their advisers to strengthen the linkages between research outputs and policy-making in the Caribbean. This connection is often weak in marine resource governance, but is especially important to develop in complex adaptive social-ecological systems.

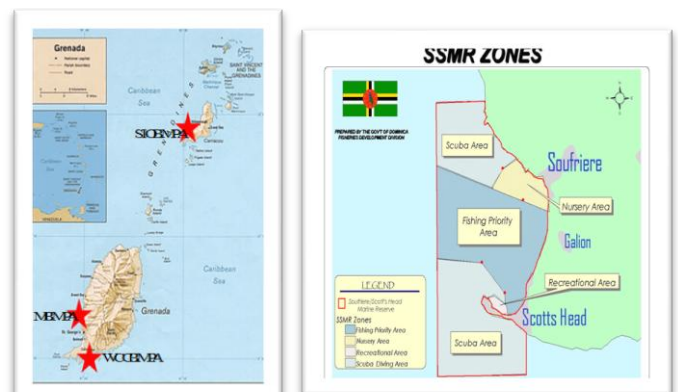
## The importance of local area management for MPA and other sites

### What is Local Area Management?

In the context of marine areas, local area management is when stakeholders with an interest in successfully managing a nearby well-defined geographic area get the responsibility and authority to manage it. This power is often vested in stakeholders via a formal legal agreement with the State. But it can also be an informal customary or traditional practice as in many Pacific islands (see Govan et al 2009).



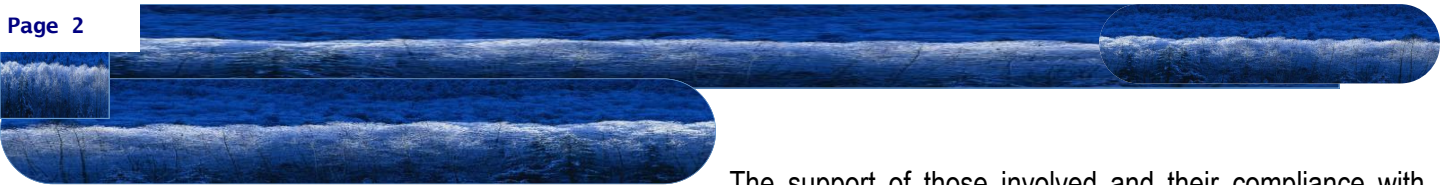
Several forms of local area management exist. One is local level collaborative management or co-management. Co-management is defined as “an approach in which two or more social actors negotiate, define and guarantee amongst themselves a fair sharing of the management functions, entitlements and responsibilities for a given territory, area or set of natural resources” (Borrini-Feyerabend 2000). An example is the MPA co-management being tried by the Government of Grenada with stakeholder collaboration at three marine protected areas (MPAs).



*Sandy Island Oyster Bed (SIOBMPA), Molinere Beausejour (MBMPA), and Woburn Clarkes Court Bay MPAs in Grenada; Soufriere Scotts Head Marine Reserve (SSMR) in Dominica showing zonation*

Another local area management governance structure is used in Dominica. Here, authority over the Soufriere Scott's Head Marine Reserve (SSMR) is vested in their Local Area Management Authority (LAMA) comprising stakeholders who lead community-based organizations or own and operate businesses nearby.

In non-MPA sites resource users may employ informal management measures to ensure a sustainable supply of resources. Within some communities social norms are used for reinforcing the sustainable use of marine resources. For example “skilled Barbadian divers use several traditional management techniques when harvesting sea eggs. One such technique referred to as ‘chubbing’ entails leaving large individuals throughout the fishing area as breeders” (Mahon and Almerigi 1999). Measures such as these may, over time, grow into more complex institutions of local area management if associated with a particular territory.



An example of how powerful social norms are is seen in Laborie, a small community in St. Lucia. In Laborie, some fishers have adopted the principle 'the sea is our garden' also referred to in Creole as 'Lanmè-a sé jaden nou'. This principle was a project slogan created by George Wilfred, a prominent and highly respected fisherman from Laborie. The Caribbean Natural Resources Institute (CANARI), researched, from 2000-2003, institutional and technical options for improving coastal livelihoods in Laborie (CANARI 2003). The principle suggests that just as one would tend to a kitchen garden to produce food, the sea should be treated similarly by employing appropriate and effective management measures.

These social norms provide a good foundation for local area management. If informal arrangements are evident in a community this can encourage stakeholders to participate in a more organized system. In the absence of MPAs these arrangements can contribute to the availability of resources for future generations.

### The Significance of Stakeholder Involvement and the Benefits of Local Area Management

The involvement and participation of stakeholders in decision-making is important to the success of local area management. Studies show that a top-down management approach to development is less effective than a participatory one. Development communication supports the shift toward a more participatory approach, and its inclusion in development work often results in the reduction of political risks, the improvement of project design and performance, increased transparency of activities, and the enhancement of people's voices and participation. Other studies support this school of thought stating that the key to the success of any MPA is the participation of local communities, the full support of local user groups' result in a highly effective management tool.

When user groups and other stakeholders are consulted initially and involved in the process of selection, establishment and management of the MPA there are usually fewer conflicts and management problems. These groups may grow into taking management responsibility in the areas closest to them...local area management.

The support of those involved and their compliance with existing rules governing the site is likely to increase if stakeholders both as individuals and as a group know that:

1. They have been informed
2. They have been part of the decision-making process
3. They have been permitted to actively participate in and influence the process

### Why Local Area Management is Important

The world's oceans are under more pressure than ever before. Fish stocks are being overfished and important habitats are being lost or degraded at an unprecedented rate. Tools such as MPAs seek to restore the balance in the use of our oceans by safe guarding valuable fish stocks and important habitats. In addition, they offer a range of benefits for fisheries, people and the marine environment. However, only 0.5 % of the world's oceans are protected and the large majority of that is inadequately managed. Within the Eastern Caribbean approximately 4% of the marine shelf is under some form of protection but less than 20% of that small area is judged to be effectively managed Taking into account these issues the need for alternative or supplementary strategies such as local area management is evident.

### References:

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