

FUNDING MARINE PROTECTION AT SCALE

Top Findings from Large Scale Marine Protected Area (LSMPA) Review



The importance of Large-Scale Marine Protected Areas

Marine protected areas (MPAs) are a critical tool in preventing biodiversity and habitat loss, and ensuring the sustainability of critical ocean resources. While small scale MPAs remain a key conservation tool, only well-managed Large-Scale MPAs (LSMPAs) can protect vast or interconnected ecosystems in their entirety. The total amount of ocean protected by all 16,908 MPAs globally is 28,188,975 square kilometers (km²), compared with the amount protected by the 20 largest sites at 17,573,997 km² (Protected Planet, 2019), demonstrating the globally significant contribution of LSMPAs to ocean protection. A recent report by the United Nations Environment Programme-World Conservation Monitoring Centre and IUCN (2019) notes that the ten largest MPAs currently comprise some seven percent of all global MPA coverage, highlighting that the sizeable increase in MPA coverage in the last ten years can be attributed to LSMPAs.

Sustainable financing

A growing body of evidence suggests that, in addition to key factors such as governance, management capacity, and stakeholder engagement, adequate finance is critical to longterm success of MPAs and other area-based conservation and management approaches (Bonham et al., 2014; Emerton et al., 2006). Indeed, one of the most frequently cited causes of conservation programs failing to achieve durable outcomes is a lack of sustained financing. Financial stability is necessary to ensure that on-the-ground practitioners can proactively plan for emerging threats to conservation, effectively recruit and deploy resources for monitoring and enforcement and conduct broad-based outreach and stakeholder engagement activities.

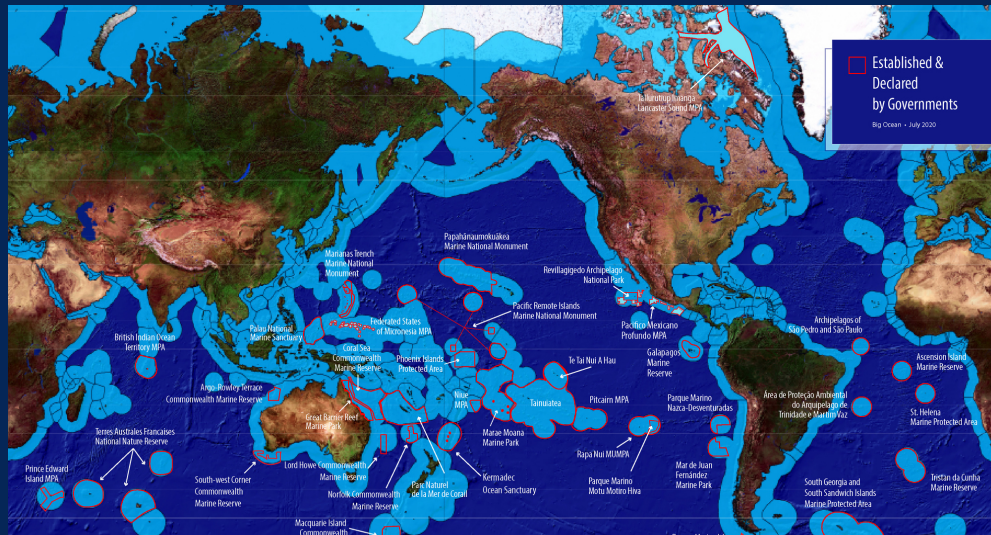
Challenges to LSMPA financing

With few exceptions, governance and management challenges faced by LSMPAs apply to all MPAs. Within LSMPAs, these challenges are inevitably magnified due to the size and scale of the area under protection.

- Across the board, sustainable financing for LSMPAs remains challenging, and widespread examples of LSMPA's FMs remain limited for a number of reasons, including:
- Uncertainty around actual costs: depending upon the amount of existing data prior to or at establishment, the site's location and accessibility, as well as the depth of management and scientific capacity incountry, budget calculations can be vastly different for sites of the same relative size.
- No specific guideline documents or best practices toolkits exist for LSMPA financing.
- Existing financing options do not address the more complex nature of LSMPA management and governance, which often requires collaboration between multiple jurisdictions and disparate government line offices.
- Challenges in acquiring financial support for projects that require much longer timeframes to produce results, as well as managing, often unrealistic, expectations created from outcomes at smaller scale MPAs.
- Unknown future management needs from increasing global threats, such as climate change.

This study takes stock of the current status of LSMPA financing and provides an in-depth discussion of the key challenges faced by LSMPAs in securing financing. This report aims to consolidate currently available material on LSMPAs, provide new insights where possible, and develop recommendations based on lessons learnt to advance the current state of knowledge on LSMPA financing, and further broaden the dialogue on LSMPA management and financing worldwide.

The World's current established LSMPAs



Pacific LSMPAs



Key challenges faced by LSMPA decision makers and managers (Lewis et al., 2017).

1. Governance
National jurisdictions may overlap or there may be conflicting legal mandates for neighbouring or transboundary LSMPAs.
Effectively and equitably addressing the full range of diverse stakeholders and all legitimate parties, especially Indigenous peoples and traditional or local communities, can be a challenge.*
2. Management
The amount of funding required can be significant.
Enforcement and surveillance can be costly and logistically challenging.
Finding qualified staff with skills and experiences relevant to large-scale MPAs can be difficult.
Political support can change from one political administration to another.
Acquiring and managing data requires a significant, long-term investment.
3. Social considerations
It may be difficult to showcase the contributions of LSMPAs to the social and economic well-being of communities and to highlight differential and secondary impacts of management on segments of the population; this is even more the case for remote areas.
Adequately supporting culturally related access and the perpetuation of key cultural practices and knowledge systems is essential.
Due to a higher public profile, large-scale MPAs can come under a great deal of public scrutiny, be affected by misinformation, and be held to a higher standard.
4. Research and monitoring
A lack of sufficient technical capacity and expertise often arises due to the sheer size of the area and number of priority research questions.
Specialised equipment and technology is costly.
It may be cost-prohibitive and logistically impractical to acquire sufficient sample sizes to characterise the entire MPA
The limited pool of research institutions in any single country can make developing science partnerships challenging, and engaging with international partners is costlier.
5. Cross-cutting issues
There is an inherent uncertainty involved in making informed management decisions.
Additional time and effort are required for nearly every management action.
Ongoing financial constraints are to be expected.
Multiple languages may be spoken.
Sometimes there are few comparable examples from which to derive lessons learned.

*This is a key cross-cutting issue but successfully addressing this issue begins with a governance framework that supports managers in this endeavour

TOP FINDINGS FROM LARGE SCALE MARINE PROTECTED AREA (LSMPA) REVIEW

01 Fully-funded is a myth - None of the LSMPAs within the study reported being fully funded. Moreover, with the ongoing need for innovative research and monitoring, as well as addressing ever-increasing global threats, full-funding was not necessarily the highest priority for a site, nor the bar for identifying a successful management regime. Analysis indicates that securing funding for core management needs (of the moment) and understanding how to increase the scope and scale of financing as well as management and protection over time, is most important. However, as the genre matures and more practical FMs are developed, this assessment may change.

02 Employing multiple FMs, as opposed to a stand-alone FM, leads to better outcomes - Public budget allocations, tourism fees, and donor-supported CTFs are the most commonly employed FMs for LSMPAs. Many LSMPAs implement only one FM, but it is those LSMPAs that combine two or more mechanisms, irrespective of whether they are traditional or innovative, that display strength and long-term portfolio viability.

03 Innovative FMs are too nascent - With a minimal track record, especially in the LSMPA genre, emerging FMs have not yet proven their long-term viability. Additionally, as the financial portfolios of even the most veteran sites remain heavily reliant on government resources and tourism, new options and strategies are not actively being developed and tested. At present there does not seem to be sufficient momentum behind developing new FMs nor customizing existing ones to account for the needs of LSMPAs.

04 Financial plans and strategies are underutilised - A number of the LSMPAs reviewed did not have fiscal plans or strategies in place. Those that did, with the exception of the GBRMP, often only developed these plans and strategies after LSMPA inception and establishment. However, evidence demonstrates that dedicated and well-resourced financial planning from the earliest stages of LSMPA site design and development strongly correlates to the overall strength of the financing portfolio.

05 LSMPA financing generally requires policymaker political support and awareness - vast MPAs rely heavily on government allocations. Weak political relationships or a lack of understanding by politicians can render a management team ineffective during lean budgetary times. As well, due to their high visibility, LSMPAs can experience significant fluctuations in allocated budget as a result of changing political allegiances and administrations.



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- 06** LSMPAs require a substantive political will at the national-level – The relationships and outreach required to facilitate high-quality political leadership can be challenging to develop and maintain. It appears, LSMPA managers who understand their site’s legislation and regulations, who track relevant policy changes and consistently articulate the benefits of LSMPAs to government and civil society, are best able to withstand political change and shifting government interests.
- 07** Successful LSMPA financing generally includes public/private partnerships – At those sites where government funding is insufficient, LSMPAs that establish partnerships with private organisations and institutions are usually successful in securing additional funding. Inclusion of additional FMs has also required government agencies to support the creation of laws and policies that allow for these partnerships to avoid burdensome administrative processes.
- 08** LSMPA performance generally benefits from having managing staff with strong capacity in financial administration– Examples of financially successful LSMPA (e.g. GBRMP) show the importance of robust funding and distribution mechanisms. These are underpinned by institutional and capacity development at the local level.
- 09** Remote LSMPAs struggle to access finance – Tourism or entry/access fees are often cited as the least complex FMs that can quickly provide an ongoing income stream for protected areas (marine and terrestrial). However, many LSMPAs have permit-only or minimal access, and for very remote sites, the geographic location alone makes access nearly impossible unless one has substantive financial resources. FMs that do not allow extractive activities nor access or at least do not require public access need further development.



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