Defining MPAs and their Stage of Establishment

Version 1

This Guide is intended to help you determine the Stage of Establishment of your MPA or MPA zone. If you have questions about whether your area is an MPA (i.e., if it is instead an OECM, a Fisheries Management Area, or another area-based management tool), please refer to the IUCN Global Conservation Standards for MPAs¹. This Guide is specific to MPAs, as per the IUCN definition.



Proposed/ Committed

The intent to create an MPA (i.e. set forth an area for protection) is made public.

- Site of importance identified for conservation
- Conservation is a primary objective
- Announced in some formal manner
- Announcement is non-binding



Designated

MPA is established/recognized through legal means or other authoritative rulemaking. MPA has:

- Defined boundaries
- Legal gazetting or equivalent recognition
- Established for the long term
- Clearly stated goals and process to define allowed uses and associated regulations or rules to control impacts



Implemented

MPA is acknowledged to be operational 'in the water' with plans for management activated.

- MPA has plan for regulating activities
- Existence of management body/ team
- Resource user awareness of MPA regulations



Actively Managed

MPA management is ongoing, with monitoring, periodic review and adjustments made as needed to achieve biodiversity conservation and other ecological and social goals.

There is active:

- ongoing monitoring
- community engagement
- management evaluation