

Social Assessment of Protected Areas (SAPA)

A rapid approach to social assessment
for conservation practitioners



In brief

Despite repeated calls from the international community, there is still little empirical evidence to assess the social, cultural and economic impacts of protected areas (PAs). The methods developed so far to assess these impacts are often limited in their coverage, objectivity, and comparability; they can be resource intensive and beyond the capacity of PAs managers to implement.

This project is intended to develop, test and roll out an approach to assess the social, cultural and economic impacts of PAs that can be used as a standard across all sites, is sufficiently objective and rigorous to inform decision-making, but at the same time cost-effective for PAs managers to implement. Without such an approach, understanding – and acting on – the social impacts of PAs will remain an issue of lively debate but limited progress.



Why now?

- The 5th IUCN World Parks Congress in 2003 was clear that PAs should not cause or exacerbate poverty.
- The Convention on Biological Diversity's (CBD) Programme of Work on Protected Areas (PoWPA) calls for an assessment of the social impacts of PAs.
- The CBD ninth Conference of the Parties called on Parties to ensure PAs contribute to the eradication of poverty and sustainable development.
- Aichi target 11 in the CBD strategic plan, calls for the targets for expansion of PA coverage to be achieved through effectively and *equitably* managed systems of PAs and other effective area-based conservation measures.
- Despite this, progress on assessing social impacts and understanding the trade-offs between conservation, poverty reduction and social equity objectives has been slow.

The SAPA process

The SAPA approach is based on a 10 step process through which users define what they need to assess, select relevant indicators and tools, conduct the assessment, and develop action plans.

PREPARATION

1. *Conduct an initial screening* to decide whether SAPA is appropriate and feasible
2. *Establish the facilitation team* who will organise and facilitate the SAPA process

QUESTIONS AND CONTEXT

3. *Define the questions and approach* to tailor SAPA to stakeholder priorities and constraints
4. *Understand the context* to maximise relevance and build on what already exists

SCOPING AND INDICATORS

5. *Define the scale and scope* to determine assessment boundaries and focus on priorities
6. *Develop indicators and assessment plan* to specify what information to collect, where and how

ASSESSMENT

7. *Collect and analyse information* in a way that optimises relevance and cost effectiveness
8. *Interpretation and verification* by stakeholders to generate findings and recommendations

ACTION AND COMMUNICATION

9. *Action planning* by key actors to enhance benefits and avoid/minimise/mitigate costs
10. *Communication of findings*, action plans and monitoring plans to stakeholders

Our ambitions

Improved understanding

A key challenge in addressing the social dimension of PA management has been the lack of a common understanding of key concepts and terms. This project addresses this need drawing on the expertise of a diverse group of practitioners and scientists.

Information sharing

Through developing a standardised approach the project will enable PA managers and other key stakeholders to generate information in a form that can be more readily shared.

Better management and governance

At the level of a particular PA, the SAPA approach will enable PA managers to make more informed decisions with respect to PA and related community programs, and the governance structures and processes that oversee management.

At the national level, relevant government departments will have the evidence they need to make informed policy decisions about PA governance and management regimes.



Who's who

At the international level the SAPA Initiative is a partnership of IIED, UNEP-WCMC, IUCN, FFI and WCS, and this will be extended over time. In each of the focal countries the partnership also includes national and local organisations engaged in management of the target PAs.

IIED

The International Institute for Environment and Development (IIED) is an international policy research institute working for a more sustainable world. IIED works globally through a wide range of partners, which enable IIED to link local development priorities to national and international policy making.

UNEP-WCMC

The UNEP World Conservation Monitoring Centre (UNEP-WCMC) is a collaboration between the United Nations Environment Programme and WCMC, a UK-based charity. UNEP-WCMC's mission is to put authoritative biodiversity knowledge at the centre of decision-making.

IUCN

The International Union for Conservation of Nature (IUCN) is the world's oldest and largest global environmental organisation. The social dimension of conservation has long been a priority for IUCN, particularly in a PA context.

FFI

Fauna & Flora International (FFI) works to conserve threatened species and ecosystems, seeking sustainable solutions, based on sound science, and contributing to human well-being.

WCS

The Wildlife Conservation Society (WCS) saves wildlife and wild places by understanding critical issues, crafting science-based solutions, and taking conservation actions that benefit nature and humanity.

Outputs and outcomes

The SAPA initiative is working to achieve the following three key outcomes:

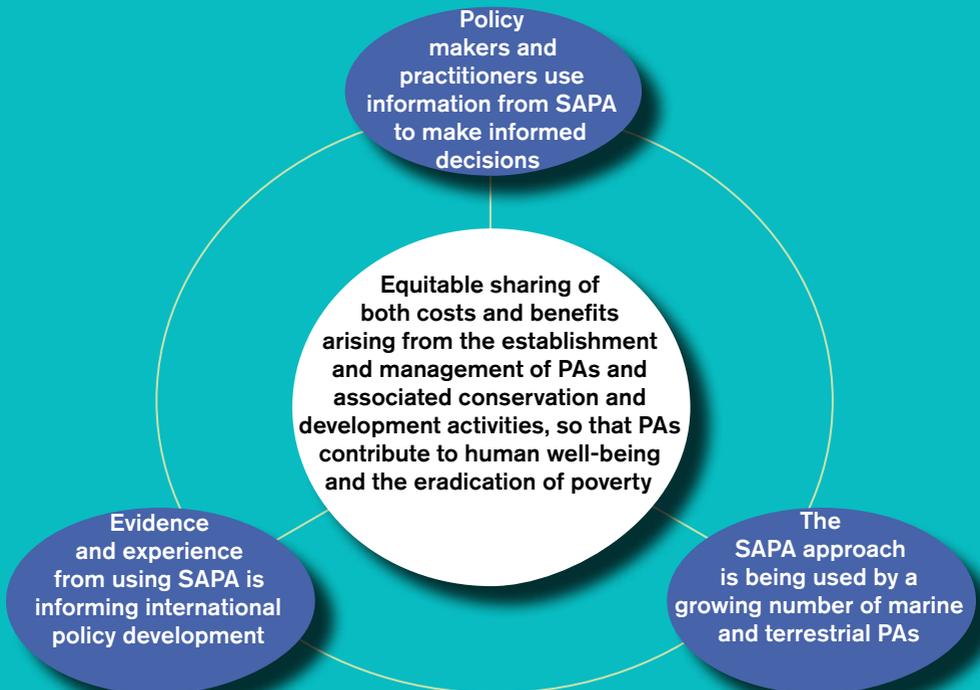
1. Policy makers and practitioners in target countries use information from SAPA to make informed decisions to minimise negative social and economic impacts and maximise positive impacts for indigenous and local communities.

2. Evidence generated from aggregation of the results and experience from using SAPA at a growing number of PAs informs international policy development, including strengthening commitments to social assessment, and acting on the results.

3. The SAPA approach to assessing the social impacts of protected areas, effectively integrated with PA management effectiveness and governance assessment, is used by a growing number of marine and terrestrial PAs.

In terms of specific outputs the project will deliver

- Best practice guidelines for assessing social impacts of PAs – a publication in the IUCN WCPA Best Practice Guidelines series
- Reports from each site documenting the results of the assessment and lessons learned from using SAPA
- A synthesis report compiling and comparing experience using the SAPA process and assessment results from different sites
- Policy brief summarising SAPA process and impacts, and relevant policy recommendations
- Peer reviewed journal article to promote review of the SAPA approach to social assessment methodology by the academic community
- SAPA web pages and a blog within the IIED website (www.iied.org)



Get involved

The current phase of the Social Assessment of Protected Areas (SAPA) Initiative includes two cycles of field testing: January-September 2014 (Kenya, Gabon, Australia), and December 2014-June 2015. For the second cycle we are looking for partners in additional countries who may be interested in conducting an assessment using the SAPA approach.

Please, contact us if you are interested.

A first version of the SAPA guidelines will be produced in October 2014, just before the World Parks Congress, and made available for comment through the IIED website. Following the second cycle of field testing, in December 2015, a full draft of the guidelines will be produced in English, French and Spanish and widely disseminated for comment.

Visit our website for more information:

www.iied.org/assessing-social-impacts-protected-areas

Get in touch with a member of our team to find out more about the project and how you can get involved:

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Project Materials

Biodiversity, Poverty

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