



SEYCHELLES MARINE SPATIAL PLANNING (MSP) INITIATIVE

A ZONING PROCESS FOR MARINE USES WITHIN THE SEYCHELLES EXCLUSIVE ECONOMIC ZONE

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1. Introduction

Zoning allocates marine uses and activities in space and time (Agardy 2009). Zoning is a process that has two components: spatial and non-spatial. The spatial aspects of zoning are often what people think of first - a map. Sometimes a map may be the only component developed however zoning generally requires more than geographic boundaries – zoning requires management directions and/or objectives to address how the zones is used or its purpose. Management directions answer questions from users such as: what is the objective(s) of the zone? What activities are permitted, allowable or recommended in the zone? Are there any activities that are excluded?

Zoning is very common on land, and most people are familiar with terrestrial zonation. For example, protected zones (parks), commercial zoning (businesses), residential zoning (housing). Zoning can occur at many geographic scales, from metres to hundreds or thousands of kilometres. It can also be done at many jurisdictional levels, from local to national and international governments. In the coastal and marine areas, zoning has been present for a very long time and includes many existing uses - shipping lanes, military zones, ports and harbours, protected areas.

Marine Spatial Planning (MSP) provides a practical, transparent way to create and establish a more sustainable use of the Seychellois marine space and the interactions between its uses; to balance demands for development with the need to protect the environment; and to achieve social and economic objectives in an open and planned way.

The benefits of zoning are many, and include reducing spatial and temporal conflicts between existing and future uses, increasing business certainty, increasing business efficiencies for tenures, permits or licenses, and protecting social, cultural and ecological values or areas.

2. Draft zoning objectives for the Seychelles



- Reduce spatial conflicts between, and identify spatial compatibilities among, marine users by identifying locations and management directions for uses
- Provide overall guidance for resource managers to increase business certainty and increase business efficiency in the Seychelles marine environment.
- Identify areas for enhanced management for cultural, ecological, and social objectives.

3. Zoning process

The zoning process proposed for the Seychelles includes both spatial and non-spatial components. Geographic boundaries of zones are captured and the non-spatial management directions for uses and activities within the zone are developed.

While the zoning process steps appear sequential (listed below), it is intended to be an iterative process as the steps do not always progress linearly. Several steps may be completed simultaneously, some steps may be only partly completed because information is missing, and steps will need to be repeated or revisited as new information becomes available.

Draft process for zoning:

1. Review existing plans, literature, guidelines for the Seychelles
2. Review global “lessons learned”
3. Gather and review data layers for environment, existing human uses and activities, future potential uses and activities, cultural heritage, historical marine artifacts, governance and administration, and other sources relevant for the planning boundary
4. Develop zoning scheme or framework, that is, names and types of zones
5. Clearly articulate criteria for defining the spatial extents of the zones
6. Develop spatial and non-spatial tools to support development of zones (e.g., compatibility matrix for uses and activities, web-based or interactive spatial tools to display data and sketch zone boundaries)
7. Analyse information and data for existing and future uses and activities
8. Draft zones, with management objectives and directions for each zone
9. Review and discuss with government, stakeholder and public
10. Assess, review and adjust zones and management directions.

4. References

- Agardy, T. 2010b. Ocean Zoning: Making marine management more effective. Earthscan. London.
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