

The Regional Strategic Analysis : A Tool for Planning and Zoning Marine Protected Areas

L'analyse Stratégique Régionale, Un Outil d'aide à la Planification des Aires Marines Protégées

El Análisis Estratégico Regional: Una Herramienta para Facilitar la Planificación de las Áreas Marinas Protegidas

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EXTENDED ABSTRACT

The French Marine protected Areas Agency has been undertaking for several years Regional Strategic Analyses in each French marine region in order to propose strategies for the planning, zoning and management of marine protected areas adapted to each territory. Recent analyses were in particular carried out in French territories in the Caribbean (Martinique, Guadeloupe, French Guyana).

Regional Analyses proceed in successive steps. The first stage consists in getting a comprehensive overview of existing knowledge on the marine area that is spatially localized and of relevance for the study. All existing and available information (data, expert opinions) is centralized and interpreted in order to identify key elements in terms of ecological functionalities, remarkable ecological features and cultural heritage, human activities and pressures that apply on the considered marine area. A GIS database is established that contains all the gathered elements and synthetic maps are produced.

The second stage involves crossing of synthetic information in order to identify and spatially localize the different stakes observed (ecological conservation, lack of knowledge etc...). Areas concerned by common stakes can be delineated and the stakes themselves can be ranked inside each homogeneous area. This step requires particular close consultation and collaboration with the decision-makers and all stakeholders. Finally, strategic proposals with regard to the design or management of MPAs, management and protection of marine environment in general and acquisition of knowledge, and tailored to the specific needs of the territory concerned emerge collectively.

We will aim to present the methodology used in Strategic Regional Analyses on the basis of examples of such studies carried out at different scales, as well as their results in several territories studied.

KEY WORDS: MPAs, MPA design, planification, zoning, stakes, consultation, management