

# Emerging lessons for LMPA stakeholders

Integrating human dimensions into large-scale marine conservation efforts is challenging. Research across five sites identified several common lessons that may support both new and ongoing efforts to establish or manage LMPAs.



- **Recognize** that even remote, uninhabited, seemingly 'unused' sites have stakeholders. Large-scale conservation efforts will necessarily involve multiple government agencies as well as Indigenous owners, various industries, NGOs, and the general public.
- **Engage** stakeholders early in LMPA planning efforts; genuine consultation should integrate stakeholder input, not simply inform the public about a predetermined LMPA plan.
- **Consider** the context in which the LMPA is being discussed, including colonial histories, indigenous rights, political conflicts, pre-existing uses and values, legacies of other conservation initiatives, and the meaning of terms like 'park' and 'conservation.'
- **Monitor** the long-term social, cultural, economic, and political impacts of LMPAs, alongside ecological impacts.
- **Evaluate** the success of LMPA efforts based on a full range of criteria, including social and economic as well as biological factors. People expect social benefits as well as conservation benefits.
- **Build support** for LMPAs by aligning LMPA goals and implementation with traditional values and customs, respect for indigenous rights, economic development priorities, and multiple stakeholders' interests. While key individuals (e.g. Presidents) can play an important role in establishing LMPAs, long-term success will depend on broader support.
- **Ensure** resources are provided to deliver on promises made in conjunction with LMPA establishment; unfulfilled promises can undermine support in the long-run.
- **Balance** the mobilization of external support (e.g. from international NGOs) with respect for domestic sovereignty and control.
- **Be aware** that *perceptions* of LMPA processes and impacts are *actual* impacts and will determine whether people support or oppose them.

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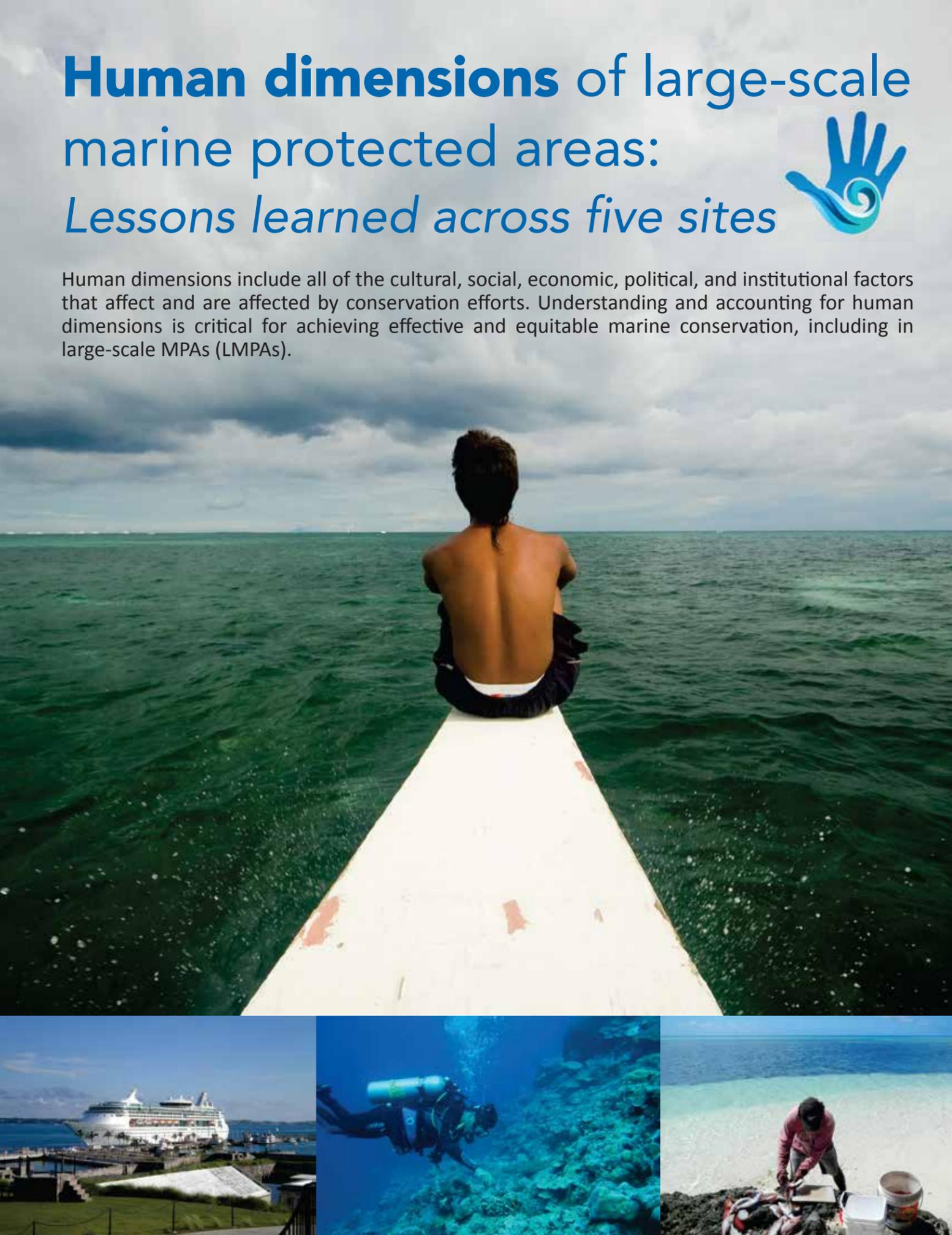
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# Human dimensions of large-scale marine protected areas: Lessons learned across five sites

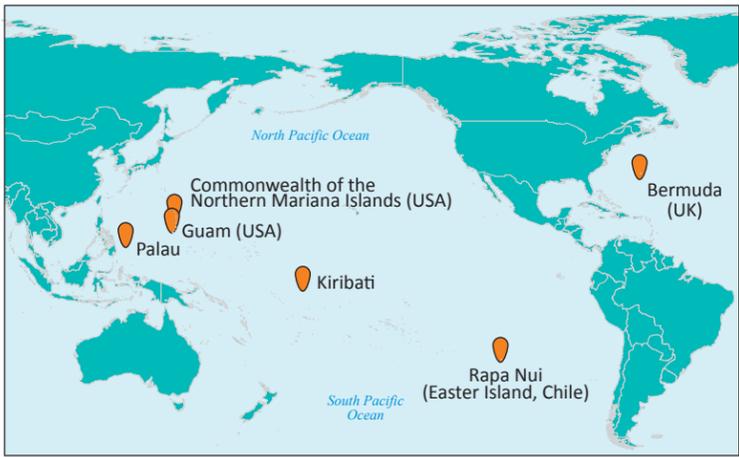


Human dimensions include all of the cultural, social, economic, political, and institutional factors that affect and are affected by conservation efforts. Understanding and accounting for human dimensions is critical for achieving effective and equitable marine conservation, including in large-scale MPAs (LMPAs).



For additional details on project findings, please see videos, academic publications, reports, and popular press pieces at: [www.humansandlargempas.com](http://www.humansandlargempas.com)

# Understanding stakeholders, motivations, perceptions, and social outcomes of LMPAs



This research relied on case studies in five places where a large-scale MPA has been established or considered: Bermuda, Rapa Nui (Easter Island, Chile), Palau, Kiribati, and the Commonwealth of the Northern Mariana Islands & Guam. These sites include variation in stage of development, governance approach, and geopolitical context. Data were gathered between 2014-2017, using semi-structured interviews, Q-sort interviews, document collection, and participant observation.

## Who are LMPA stakeholders?

LMPAs have many stakeholders, including: governments (including multiple jurisdictions and agencies); resource users (artisanal and industrial fishers, tour operators, others); non-governmental organization (NGOs) – local, national, and international; local communities and community-based organizations; scientists and contractors; and citizens ('the public'). Indigenous people may also be important *rights* holders.

## Why do people support LMPAs?

### They believe LMPAs:

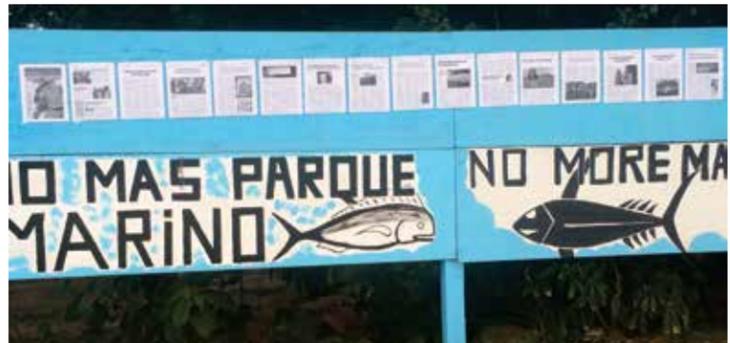
- Address illegal (IUU) fishing and declining fish stocks
- Conserve biodiversity and ecosystem services
- Protect resources for future generations
- Protect national and/or Indigenous rights to marine space
- Provide associated economic benefits (tourism, fisheries)
- Promote cultural connections to the sea
- Gain international recognition for countries

## Why do people oppose LMPAs?

### They believe LMPAs:

- Undermine local control and unfairly restrict access to marine resources
- Benefit foreign NGOs and/or national governments more than local people or the general public
- Direct limited financial resources away from more pressing needs
- Cannot be effectively enforced
- Should be designed differently (e.g. prefer no-take or multi-use)
- Are associated with specific political party or leader, who the oppose
- Have not had adequate public consultation

**WHAT IS A LARGE MPA?**  
 This study defines a large MPA as any ocean area larger than 100,000 km<sup>2</sup> that has been designated for the purpose of conservation, and includes diverse types of large MPAs – those that are 100% no-take and those that allow for use. Depending on the context, a large MPA may be referred to as a marine reserve, sanctuary, monument, park, or conservation area.



**Social Outcomes of LMPAs** include both Social Change Processes and Social Impacts. **Social Change Processes** refer to changes in context or process (e.g. decision-making processes, economic diversification), while **social impacts** refer to specific physical or perceptual impacts on individuals or groups (e.g. changes to revenues, legal rights, cultural values, social conflict, or perceptions of these).

The boxes on this page each illustrate one example of a social outcome for each site. Each site has experienced multiple social outcomes and these outcomes may change over time.

## Restructuring National Economy

The *Palau National Marine Sanctuary* (PNMS) (est. 2015) links conservation and national economic development through social change processes that aim to reduce foreign commercial tuna fishing, reform the tourism sector, and enable a domestic offshore fishing fleet. It will be important to monitor the social impacts of the PNMS as implementation moves forward. Many are hopeful that conservation and development will be realized.



## Desire for Social Benefits

Although the *Phoenix Islands Protected Area* (PIPA) (est. 2008) is remote, far from the population centers of Kiribati, it still has social impacts. Key stakeholders describe it as a 'conservation success, but not a social success.' Although PIPA has generated feelings of national pride for some people, most would like to see more tangible economic benefits for the people of Kiribati, through tourism development, etc.

## Focus on Indigenous Rights

At the time research was conducted (in 2016), an LMPA was under discussion but not yet approved in *Rapa Nui* (Easter Island, Chile). However, discussions of a potential MPA led to significant social impacts and social change processes, including a new political focus on the rights of the Rapanui people to control and manage marine space.



## Concern for Unfulfilled Promises

There is a widespread perception among key stakeholders in the Commonwealth of the Northern Mariana Islands that social benefits were promised prior to the designation of the *Marianas Trench Marine National Monument* (est. 2009), and have not since come to fruition. These include: the construction of a visitor's center, co-management authority, and economic development. The perception of unfulfilled promises has fueled tension and mistrust, and may have implications for conservation in the future.

## Erosion of Trust and Social Conflict

Despite extensive negotiations over a proposed LMPA from 2010-2014, there is no LMPA in *Bermuda*. There is a common perception that the negotiations led to social conflict, strained relationships, and increased distrust of some foreign organizations and government. There are differing views on why the LMPA proposal did not succeed. Social impacts begin the moment an LMPA is first discussed.

