Beyond the MPA (Marine Protected Area) MEAT (Management Effectiveness Assessment Tool): The NEAT (Network Effectiveness Assessment Tool) and SEAT (Socio-Economic Assessment Tool)

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Abstract

The MPA Support Network (MSN) is a network of over a dozen organizations that have bonded together to share lessons learned and derive ways to help improve the effectiveness of MPA in the Philippines. Over the 8 years that MSN has been established the network has developed tools to help gauge the MPA governance performance and also help provide incentives for best practices through the Parallel MAR (MPA Awards and Recognition). These biannual events afforded opportunities to draw insights as to how scaling up mechanisms can be enhanced at various scales e.g. at the local level such MPA networks from villages to municipalities and provinces within a range of social and ecological governance regimes. The Network Effectiveness Assessment Tool (NEAT) was utilized to gauge how network planning and management might be better coordinated and contextualized. In this symposium, the use of the MEAT as an entry point to link with some of the indicative benefits on the social and economic arena. Both the MEAT and the SEAT allows us to identify critical gaps and surprises in the interplay of governance and societal dynamics interact. When MPA practitioners and managers join together in networks a wide array of combinations of context ridden experiences allow lessons on a range of challenges and benefits that are derived from working together and learning from the use of these tools. The need to utilize the ACT NOW (an acronym referring to objectives to Accelerate effective actions, Continue to connectivity, Threat reduction, Network design improvements, Organizational development, and Win-win solutions) strategies contribute to the vibrant growth of MPA as an important development tool of marine stewardship.