Effective Organizations for Management Effectiveness: Another View of Protected Areas Development

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Introduction

In the Caribbean, protected areas development has been driven primarily by funding from external sources, mainly bilateral and multilateral agencies. In such cases, it is customary for management interventions to focus on conservation strategies, with the explicit assumption that the national government or management entity will subsequently develop funding mechanisms to support institutional development.

The reality in the Caribbean is that protected areas management institutions have generally foundered with the termination of project financing, constantly searching for new funding, struggling to keep staff, and generally failing to protect the resources within the protected areas for which they are responsible. To complicate matters, protected areas in the Caribbean are increasingly being designated to meet multiple objectives, in which community livelihood issues are given as much weight as conservation issues. Without the resources to develop and maintain the institutional structures and support systems necessary to achieve effective management, these sites appear to be stuck in an early phase of development.

Status of protected areas in the Caribbean

The status of protected areas development in the Caribbean can be summarized:

1. Institutional arrangements—most countries operate management systems wherein protected areas are managed by central government agencies, though there is a growing tendency towards delegation of management responsibilities to non-government organizations. Even in centralized management systems, protected areas are typically designated under different laws and managed by different agencies. Some agencies are responsible for only one site, while others are responsible for multiple sites. Stakeholder and community involvement varies widely, though there is a growing tendency towards more structured involvement in planning and operations. Institutional coordinating mechanisms are generally lacking, though there is increased awareness of the need for protected areas management institutions to develop working relationships with regulatory agencies.

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2. Management status—sites vary in size from one acre to thousands of acres. There are a large number of sites without active management, and most sites have only minimal management activities. The status of the natural resources in most sites is generally unknown.
3. Major issues—there is typically an inadequate management framework (policy, legal, and institutional), inadequate financial resources, inadequate institutional capacity, and minimal support from adjacent communities. There is generally a high level of threat from anthropogenic sources, and an increasingly high level of threat from natural causes.
4. Institutional capacity—management teams range from large professional teams to small, inadequately-resourced teams. The majority of management teams are small, and funding is available mainly on a project by project basis. Staff is usually dedicated, but inadequate to meet obligations identified in national thematic, or sector, development strategies and multilateral environmental agreements.

Development stages of protected areas in the Caribbean

Protected areas development in the Caribbean is influenced by a range of factors, such as political demand, level of influence of the protected area management institutions, level of use for tourism activities, and availability of financing. However, the main factor driving designation and establishment of new protected areas is external financing.

Conditions attached to financing from such sources usually dictate that site development activities are focused primarily on conservation strategies. Such conditions therefore shape the design of the institutional arrangements, the type and number of personnel, the management activities, and ultimately, the long-term development of the protected area.

In addition to financial resources, the level of management intervention is usually dependent on the degree of political and community support, and the capability of the management institution. Five stages in protected areas site development can be identified: stage 1, paper park; stage 2, start-up; stage 3, mature; stage 4, senescent/stagnant; and stage 5, discarded.

Each stage can be characterized by factors identifiable in both the internal and external environments of the management entity. In stage 1, the site is legally designated, but not actively managed. Any protection measure is implemented through other land management processes, such as land use planning. Stages 2 and 3 exhibit the most intense and broadest range of management interventions, and in fact are the stages where the issue of management effectiveness is most relevant. A site usually enters stage 4 when there is organizational failure in the management entity. The management team reverts to a small staff complement with limited skill sets and resources. If the management entity is only responsible for one site, activities may become focused on institutional survival, having minimal impact on the status of the resources within the site. Where the management entity has other responsibilities, the site may slip further, into stage 5. In this stage, the site reverts to the status of a paper park, is used to support other development initiatives, or is formally delisted.

Most protected areas in the Caribbean appear to be stuck in the start-up phase; characterized by under-developed management systems, inadequate public engagement processes, unsustainable financing arrangements, and general inability of the management institution to adequately address threats to site integrity (Table 1). Only a small number of protected areas can be said to have entered a mature stage of development (Table 2), and these are sites that are the singular focus of an institution, sites that are heavily used for tourism, or sites that are part of a larger central management system.

Management capacity is inadequate in most protected areas in the Caribbean, and the challenges faced by the sites are largely unresolved. The need to improve success of management interventions has increased the call for the use of adaptive management processes. However, successful application of adaptive management approaches is dependent on the availability of ade-

Parameter	Characteristics
Organizational capacity	• Small project team/staff. • Senior staff usually not trained managers. • Detailed policies and operational guidelines generally lacking. • Limited capacity for development or establishment of standard management systems.
Management activities	• Activities designed as projects, and usually undertaken by consultants or mixture of consultants and project staff. • Activities typically include stakeholder consultations, preparation of management plan, public education and outreach, and enforcement. • Monitoring tends to be limited and basic (water quality, coral coverage, bird counts, fish counts, user activities).
Institutional arrangements	• Institutional arrangements identified in project document. • Some start-up activities (e.g., site designation) undertaken by other (non-project) institutions. • Post-project arrangements tend to be informal and opportunistic.
Community engagement	• Stakeholder inputs takes place primarily through initial consultations for plan preparation. • Stakeholder advisory committee, where established, tend to have limited impact on management priorities and activities. • Limited community engagement.
Financing	• Project financing, usually restricted to equipment purchase, monitoring, outreach, and enforcement. • Limited allocation of resources from public budget. • Financing plan not usually developed.
Political support	• Community support varies from hostile to supportive (site specific). • Usually limited support from policy makers.
Integration into local, regional, or national development plans	• Site usually identified in land use plans, but operations not integrated into development planning and development control processes.
Status of resources within the protected area	• Management activities generally have little impact on the status of resources within the site.

Table 1. Characteristics of start-up stage.

quate capacity in the management institution, as well as the responsiveness of the overall management framework. As such, the management institution still has to be an effective organization, which can only result from more attention being paid to its organizational development needs.

Organizational effectiveness

There are many definitions of organizational effectiveness, and the term is often used interchangeably with organizational performance. However, most researchers agree that organizational effectiveness extends beyond organizational performance (market share, profits, return on investment, or efficiency) to embrace measures such as customer service and social responsibility. Campbell (1976) identified thirty possible indicators of organizational effectiveness. While there are several ways to measure organizational effectiveness, selection of the appropriate criteria depends on the primary purpose of the organization—that is, whether it is focused on internal priorities (such as return on investment) or external outcomes (such as contribution to society).

Protected areas management institutions mostly manage public lands (or private lands under agreement with private or community owners) for the production of public benefits. As such, for the purpose of this paper, organizational effectiveness is defined as "*the extent to which an organization achieves the outcomes it is mandated to produce.*"

Parameter	Characteristics
Organizational capacity	• Large, highly trained and specialized staff. • Professional management. • General and operating policies established. • Use of standard operating procedures. • Management systems operational (planning, budgeting, evaluation, reporting, etc.). • Demonstrated ability to respond to threats and emergencies.
Management activities	• Activities directly linked to management plan. • High degree of success in threat mitigation. • Provision of technical assistance to other environmental management initiatives.
Institutional arrangements	• Majority of management interventions undertaken by management institution. • Institutional arrangements include both formal and informal arrangements.
Community engagement	• Demonstrated ability to involve public and community organizations in planning and management interventions.
Financing	• Sustained level of budgetary support. • Financing plan operational. • Established mechanism for community financial support. • Ability to fund capital projects, including infrastructure.
Political support	• Fairly high level of community support.
Integration into local, regional, or national development plans	• Site usually listed as supporting sector development strategies (e.g., tourism). • Site usually identified in physical plans. • Management institution often included in review of external projects that may impact on the site.
Status of resources within the protected area	• Ecosystems generally display higher levels of "naturalness" and integrity than ecosystems outside the boundary of the protected area. • Some attention given to maintaining integrity of cultural and historical resources.

Table 2. Characteristics of mature stage.

Mullins (1989) noted that an organization can only perform effectively through interactions with its external environment. That implies that the organizational structure, management systems, and processes must be designed to cope with the factors that are inherent to that external environment. This principle is at the core of the National Capacity Self Assessment program developed by the Global Environment Facility for its participating countries. The program is based on the understanding that successful environmental management interventions require adequate capacity at the systemic, institutional, and individual levels.

Determination of organizational effectiveness for protected areas management institutions must therefore consider the following:

- Purpose of site designation—such as provision of environmental services, tourism support, community livelihoods.
- Purpose of the management institution—to ensure that protected area resources continue to deliver the benefits for which the site was designated (economic, social, ecological, spiritual).
- Internal environment—appropriate personnel, establishment of appropriate management systems and standard operating procedures, availability of resources for routine or standard operations, mechanisms for maintaining resource values of the protected area, and institutional design.
- External environment—policy and legal framework, institutional arrangements, stakehold-

er/community support and use of resources, input of political and business leaders, development planning processes, physical planning and development control processes, and environmental processes affecting the protected area.

The external environment is an over-riding consideration in the Caribbean context, as the islands are too small for protected areas to be isolated from human interference, and the external land management practices and socio-economic needs exert considerable influence on protected areas resources. The regulatory framework for control of that external environment does not reside within the protected area management institution. Hence, management effectiveness is dependent on effective interaction with the external environment.

Unfortunately, most protected areas management teams in the Caribbean consist of a manager, two to four rangers, a public education and outreach officer, and less often, a science officer. This personnel composition suggests a focus on activities within the boundary of the site, and clearly does not include adequate personnel and skill sets to function effectively in the external environment. Two cases are used to illustrate the point.

Case 1: Montego Bay Marine Park, Jamaica

The Montego Bay Marine Park was designated in 1992. The park is 15.3 sq km, and extends from the high water mark to approximately 100 m in depth. The landward boundary of the park is 9 km of coastline, bordering the entire frontage of the city of Montego Bay. Human activities (on land) beyond Montego Bay impact park resources (Montego Bay Marine Park Trust 1998), as non-point source pollution from the city and beyond is transported to the park by storm drains, two large rivers, and a large number of streams.

Montego Bay is the third largest city in Jamaica, and the regional centre for the western half of the country. Social infrastructure inside the park includes a trans-shipment port (with storage facilities for a range of goods, including crude oil) and a cruise ship dock.

The park management institution has no authority beyond the boundary of the park, and due to the location of port facilities within the park, it has limited authority even within its own boundaries. Management interventions are focused on park resources, mainly monitoring (water quality, beach, and ecosystems) and use management (primarily fishing and scuba diving). Public engagement is conducted through education outreach activities and operation of a local advisory committee.

In the case of the Montego Bay Marine Park, the external environment exerts tremendous influence on the state of the park. Effective management of the park is therefore determined mainly by the extent to which the management institution is able to work with regulatory agencies, and economic and political forces, to mitigate the impacts of external land uses on the park.

Case 2: Pointe Sable Environmental Protection Area, Saint Lucia

The Pointe Sable Environmental Protection Area was designated in 2007. The protected area is approximately 1,038 ha, encompassing a narrow coastal strip and adjacent marine space. The designated area is heavily used by the community for livelihood and recreational purposes. The primary purpose for which the site was designated, its mission, is "*protecting the natural beauty or interest in the area*." Additionally, the funding source for site establishment stipulated that the site must have the dual objectives of biodiversity protection and support for community livelihoods. An important aspect of management planning was therefore the definition of "natural beauty" and "interest in the area," as well as identification of community livelihoods.

In addition to identification of issues in the legal and institutional frameworks that needed to be addressed, the management plan also identified the area of influence for management interventions as extending beyond the boundaries of the protected area. Those management interven-

tions required institutional resources and support systems spread across several agencies (Gardner 2009).

However, the site management agency planned to hire only one person, the site manager, for the first two to three years of site development.

The objective of the management institution in this case was clearly to get the site designated and establish a presence. The institutional design required to fulfill the site mission was apparently not a priority. Unfortunately, this approach to protected area development is not uncommon in the Caribbean, and many sites are seemingly stuck in this start-up phase of development.

Conclusion

Evaluating management effectiveness is increasingly used to determine the success of protected areas management interventions. The framework developed by the World Commission on Protected Areas (Hockings et al. 2006) focuses on six defined steps in the management cycle, and provides criteria for assessing each step. The first two steps, understanding the context (diagnosis) and planning, are referred to as the design component of the management process. The evaluation framework also identifies the need to conduct management planning within the context of the external environment.

However, there is little focus on the design of appropriate institutional structures, support systems, and institutional arrangements needed to operate effectively within that external environment. The guide states that "*A protected area that suffers from fundamental design flaws is unlikely to be effective*," (page 18, section 3.3). The same principle applies to the design of the management institution, as an inappropriately designed and staffed institution cannot adequately carry out the assessment and design tasks required in management planning.

We conclude that better understanding of the organizational development requirements would result in improved planning of protected areas, increased mobilization of resources, and increased potential for achieving site and system objectives.

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