



Guidebook for assessing and improving social equity in marine conservation

Mark Andrachuk, Nathan J. Bennett, Jessica Blythe, Joachim Claudet, Neil Dawson, Elena Finkbeiner, Juno Fitzpatrick, Phil Franks, David A. Gill, Georgina G. Gurney, Timur Jack-Kadioğlu, Stacy Jupiter, Jacqueline Lau, Priscila F. M. Lopes, Shauna L. Mahajan, Ella-Kari Muhl, Josheena Naggea, Katina Roubbedakis, Samiya Selim, Gerald G. Singh, Mia Strand, Kira Sullivan-Wiley, Sebastian Villasante



INTERNATIONAL UNION FOR CONSERVATION OF NATURE





About IUCN

IUCN, International Union for Conservation of Nature, is a membership Union uniquely composed of both government and civil society organisations. It provides public, private, and non-governmental organisations with the knowledge and tools that enable human progress, economic development, and nature conservation to take place together.

Created in 1948, IUCN is now the world's largest and most diverse environmental network, harnessing the knowledge, resources and reach of more than 1,400 Member organisations and some 17,000 experts. It is a leading provider of conservation data, assessments, and analysis. Its broad membership enables IUCN to fill the role of incubator and trusted repository of best practices, tools, and international standards.

IUCN provides a neutral space in which diverse stakeholders including governments, NGOs, scientists, businesses, local communities, indigenous peoples' organisations, and others can work together to forge and implement solutions to environmental challenges and achieve sustainable development. Working with many partners and supporters, IUCN implements a large and diverse portfolio of conservation projects worldwide. Combining the latest science with the traditional knowledge of local communities, these projects work to reverse biodiversity loss, restore ecosystems, and improve people's well-being.

www.iucn.org



About the IUCN Commission on Environmental, Economic and Social Policy (CEESP)

CEESP is a unique network of approximately 1,500 volunteers representing disciplines from biology and anthropology, economics and law, to culture and Indigenous peoples – among many others. Our work represents the crossroads of conservation and development. CEESP contributes to the IUCN Mission by providing insights and expertise and promoting policies and action to harmonise the conservation of nature with the crucial socio-economic and cultural concerns of human communities – such as livelihoods, human rights and responsibilities, human development, security, equity, and the fair and effective governance of natural resources. CEESP's natural and social scientists, environmental and economic policy experts, and practitioners in community-based conservation provide IUCN with critical resources to meet the challenges of 21st century nature and natural resource conservation and the goal of shaping a sustainable future.

www.iucn.org/commissions/commission-environmental-economic-and-social-policy

Guidebook for assessing and improving social equity in marine conservation

Mark Andrachuk, Nathan J. Bennett, Jessica Blythe, Joachim Claudet, Neil Dawson, Elena Finkbeiner, Juno Fitzpatrick, Phil Franks, David A. Gill, Georgina G. Gurney, Timur Jack-Kadioğlu, Stacy Jupiter, Jacqueline Lau, Priscila F. M. Lopes, Shauna L. Mahajan, Ella-Kari Muhl, Josheena Naggea, Katina Roubledakis, Samiya Selim, Gerald G. Singh, Mia Strand, Kira Sullivan-Wiley, Sebastian Villasante



CC BY-NC 4.0 Attribution 4.0 International. This work is licensed under <https://creativecommons.org/licenses/by-nc/4.0/>.

The user is allowed to distribute, remix, adapt, and build upon the material in any medium or format. The user must give appropriate credit to IUCN as the source of the material and indicate if changes were made to the original content. Only non-commercial uses of the work are permitted. Use of the name and logo of IUCN is not permitted in connection with adaptations, translations, or other derivative works.

Adaptations/translations/derivatives should not carry any official logo, unless they have been approved and validated by IUCN. Please contact IUCN (logo@iucn.org) to obtain permission.

When copyright of content published by IUCN, such as images, graphics or logos, is held by a third-party, the user of such content is solely responsible for clearing the rights with the right holder(s).

The designation of geographical entities in this work, and the presentation of the material, do not imply the expression of any opinion whatsoever on the part of IUCN or other participating organisations concerning the legal status of any country, territory, or area, or of its authorities, or concerning the delimitation of its frontiers or boundaries.

The views expressed in this work do not necessarily reflect those of IUCN or other participating organisations.

IUCN is pleased to acknowledge the support of its Framework Partners who provide core funding: Ministry of Foreign Affairs, Denmark; Ministry for Foreign Affairs, Finland; Government of France and the French Development Agency (AFD); Ministry of Environment, Republic of Korea; Ministry of the Environment, Climate and Sustainable Development, Grand Duchy of Luxembourg; the Norwegian Agency for Development Cooperation (Norad); the Swedish International Development Cooperation Agency (Sida); the Swiss Agency for Development and Cooperation (SDC) and the United States Department of State.

This publication has been made possible in part by funding from Blue Nature Alliance to WWF Global Science Team for the project “Developing Social Equity Metrics to Monitor and Improve Marine Conservation”.

Published by: IUCN, Gland, Switzerland

Produced by: IUCN Commission on Environmental, Economic and Social Policy (CEESP)


Copyright: © 2025 IUCN, International Union for Conservation of Nature and Natural Resources

Recommended citation: Andrachuk, M., Bennett, N.J., Blythe, J., Claudet, J., Dawson, N., Finkbeiner, E., Fitzpatrick, J., Franks, P., Gill, D.A., Gurney, G.G., Jack-Kadioglu, T., Jupiter, S., Lau, J., Lopes, P.F.M., Mahajan, S., Muhl, E-K., Naggea, J., Roumbedakis, K., Selim, S., Singh, G.G., Strand, M., Sullivan-Wiley, K. and Villasante, S. (2025) *Guidebook for assessing and improving social equity in marine conservation*. Version 1.0. Commission on Environmental, Economic and Social Policy, IUCN, Gland, Switzerland. 105p.

Cover design: Estudio Relativo

Layout: Estudio Relativo | www.estudiorelativo.com

Table of contents

↘ Lists of boxes, tables, figures	IV	↘ Contributors.....	VIII
↘ Executive summary	V	↘ Glossary of terms	IX
↘ Acknowledgements.....	VII		
↘ Introduction.....	1		
Why assess equity in marine conservation?	2		
What is equity?.....	4		
How and when to apply an equity assessment?.....	6		
Why is this guidebook needed?	7		
Who is this guidebook for?	8		
How to use this guidebook.....	9		
↘ Overview of the three equity assessment options.....	10		
Introduction to the three equity assessment options.....	11		
Development of the equity assessment options.....	12		
A framework to guide equity assessments	13		
Key features, benefits, and limitations of each assessment option.....	17		
Three approaches for assessing equity.....	17		
Rapid equity assessment	18		
Stakeholders and rightsholders equity assessment	20		
Co-produced and customised equity assessment.....	22		
↘ Considerations for all equity assessments	25		
Choosing an assessment option.....	26		
Preparing for an assessment	29		
Carrying out an assessment	34		
Moving from assessment to action.....	39		
↘ Conclusion	43		
References cited.....	44		
↘ Supplementary materials	49		
 Assessment option 1: Rapid equity assessment	50		
 Assessment option 2: Stakeholders and rightsholders equity assessment	78		
 Assessment option 3: Co-produced and customised equity assessment	97		

Lists of boxes, tables, figures

↘ List of boxes

Box 1: Defining marine conservation initiatives for the purposes of this guidebook3

↘ List of tables

Table 1: Overview and features of each assessment approach. 11

Table 2: Dimensions of equity in conservation (from Bennett et al. 2021), along with attributes related to each dimension (adapted from Bennett et al. 2025) and brief examples that illustrate potential descriptions of indicators.14

Table 3: Examples of potential actions that can be taken for each dimension of equity.....41

↘ List of figures

Figure 1: Six interrelated and interactive dimensions of equity that are important for conservation (framework adapted from Bennett et al., 2021).5

Figure 2: Key steps in developing an equity assessment to support moving from assessment to action to improve social equity.....6

Figure 3: Steps and timeline in the development of the three assessment options. 12

Figure 4: Features, benefits, and limitations of the rapid equity assessment approach. 18

Figure 5: Features, benefits, and limitations of the stakeholders and rightsholders equity assessment approach.20

Figure 6: Features, benefits, and limitations of the co-produced and customised equity assessment approach. 22

Figure 7: Five main phases for a co-produced and customised equity assessment.23

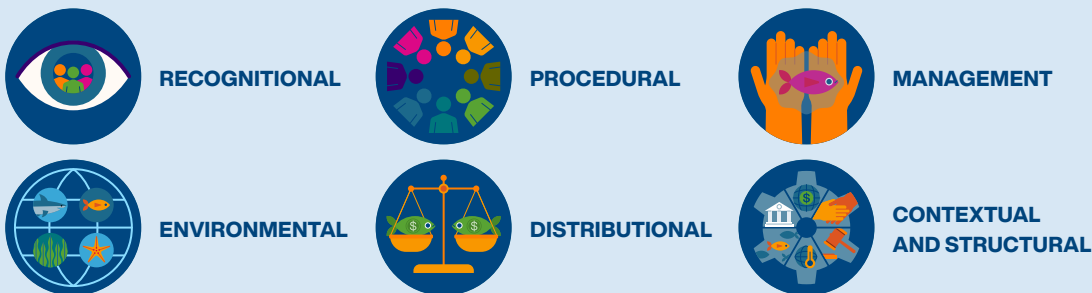
Figure 8: Considerations when conducting an equity assessment.26

Figure 9: Options for presentation of results of equity assessments.....38

Executive summary

The pursuit of social equity must guide marine conservation. Past marine conservation initiatives have varied substantially in the extent that they incorporate participatory planning and governance processes, and in the impacts that they have on local populations, Indigenous Peoples and coastal communities. Positive social impacts have included economic benefits related to small-scale fisheries and tourism, greater involvement in environmental decision-making, improved food security and wealth, and protection of culturally important species. Negative social consequences have included displacement and evictions of local populations, exclusion from decision-making, loss of rights, as well as numerous other impacts on livelihoods and culture. These social exclusions and impacts have arisen, in part, because many initiatives have primarily been designed and managed to achieve environmental objectives. Attention to social considerations, participation and equity have not received as much attention during design, decision-making, or within management plans and activities. However, the Convention on Biological Diversity Kunming-Montreal Global Biodiversity Framework now recognises the necessity of addressing equity as an integral part of the planning, establishment, governance and management of conservation initiatives.

Assessing social equity in marine conservation is a fundamental action to enable governments, institutions, managers, communities, rightsholders, and other stakeholders to reflect on and improve governance and management practices. This guidebook is based on an understanding that social equity refers to fairness and justice with respect to the ways that people are recognised, treated, or impacted by conservation initiatives. It is also grounded on a common framework for assessing equity that includes six dimensions: recognitional, procedural, management, environmental, distributional, and contextual and structural equity.



Marine conservation initiatives around the world operate in diverse governance contexts. Managers have different levels of capacity and resources to carry out monitoring and reporting on topics such as equity, and the situation may necessitate more or less participatory approaches to assessments and monitoring depending on the interests and needs of local managers, stakeholders and rightsholders. Recognition of this diversity of contexts, capacities, and needs led to the development of three approaches or options for assessing equity that require differing levels of resources, expertise, time, and collaboration as follows:



1. RAPID EQUITY ASSESSMENT

↳ involves the use of a survey with a single or small group of marine conservation managers and/or practitioners. The goal is to gain quick insights into equity-related topics in order to facilitate reflections to identify and potentially address key issues.



2. STAKEHOLDERS AND RIGHTSHOLDERS ASSESSMENT

↳ involves surveying a broader group of stakeholders and rightsholders who are adjacent to and potentially impacted by a marine conservation initiative. The aim is to understand a wider range of perspectives, and differences across groups, on issues and improvements needed to improve social equity.



3. CO-PRODUCED AND CUSTOMISED EQUITY ASSESSMENT

↳ involves engaging in a collaborative and participatory process of co-developing equity indicators and assessment methods, and analysing results. It is intended to have inclusivity and equity built into its process, in addition to actively generating collective learning and ongoing dialogue to improve equity in a marine conservation initiative.

To support teams interested in carrying out an equity assessment, this guidebook provides specific guidance and tools for each approach. It also reviews key considerations in choosing an assessment option, preparing for an assessment, carrying out an assessment, and moving from assessment to action. These considerations emphasise how the process of doing and reflecting on the results of an assessment can be as important as the assessment outputs.

Ultimately, the aim of all three equity assessment options is to improve equity by promoting learning, raising awareness about key issues and providing insights for marine conservation initiative managers and other actors to drive action. Evaluating the status of equity is a first step towards addressing past issues with meaningful involvement of local stakeholders or rightsholders. This guidebook is intended to support local, case-specific assessments and learning, but benefits are most likely to arise through continued engagement and a commitment to action.



Acknowledgements

The “Developing Social Equity Metrics to Monitor and Improve Marine Conservation” project was co-led by Nathan Bennett from WWF Global Science and Mark Andrachuk from ReConnect Consulting. This publication was developed in collaboration with an international group of experts who are all contributing authors.

The co-leads and co-authors greatly appreciate the many people who contributed to, guided, and enriched the development of this publication.

We thank the co-authors on two previous papers that were precursors to this work, “Advancing social equity in and through marine conservation” and “Ocean equity: from assessment to action to improve social equity in ocean governance”. Their thinking captured in those papers has fed into this process and guidance.

We thank the group of expert advisors of marine conservation leaders, practitioners, and managers who participated in virtual workshops in May 2024 (‘Aulani Wilhelm, Athline Clark, Felipe Paredes, Lihla Noori, Maria Prebble, Nai’a Lewis, Scott Atkinson, Tarita Holm, Teresa Ish, Mael Imirizaldu, Sean D. Macduff, Alifereti Tawake, Hoyt Peckham, Kame Westerman, Maria Honig, Tess Geers, and Renu Mittal). This advisory group was instrumental in providing direction about the format that the equity assessment guidance should take.

We thank conservation professionals and researchers in South Africa, Palau, and Canada who assisted with testing and refining the approaches for assessing equity (Kholofelo Ramokone, Nazleigh Hercules, Jade Garridigan, Craig Smith, Ella-Kari Muhl, Willem Malherbe, Robin George, King Sam, Eric Baron, Niisii Guujaaw, Rayne Boyko, Brady Yu, and Tana Hooper). We also thank local conservation managers and participants who contributed to the case study assessments.

We are also grateful to the comments and critiques provided by three reviewers from IUCN CEESP who helped to strengthen the final version of this publication (Helen Suich, Melanie Zurba, and Jess Campese).

Finally, we acknowledge financial support from the Blue Nature Alliance and institutional support from the People and the Ocean Specialist Group and the Commission on Environmental, Economic and Social Policy (CEESP) of the International Union for Conservation of Nature (IUCN). We are particularly grateful to Kristen Walker Painemilla (Chair of CEESP), Ameyali Ramos (Deputy Chair of CEESP), and Iben Munck (Executive Officer for CEESP) for their enduring support for the mandate of the People and the Ocean Specialist Group as well as this project.

Contributors

Lead Authors

Mark Andrachuk (ReConnect Consulting), mark@reconnectconsulting.ca

Nathan J. Bennett (WWF Global Science), nathan.bennett@wwf.org

Contributing Authors

Jessica Blythe (Brock University, Canada)

Joachim Claudet (CNRS, CRIOBE, France)

Neil Dawson (University of East Anglia, IUCN CEESP, UK)

Elena Finkbeiner (Conservation International, USA)

Juno Fitzpatrick (Conservation International, USA)

Phil Franks (International Institute for Environment and Development, UK)

David A. Gill (Duke University Marine Laboratory, USA)

Georgina G. Gurney (James Cook University, Australia)

Timur Jack-Kadioğlu (Arcus Foundation, UK)

Stacy Jupiter (Wildlife Conservation Society, Fiji)

Jacqueline Lau (James Cook University, Australia)

Priscila F. M. Lopes (Universidade Federal do Rio Grande do Norte, Brazil & University of Bucharest, Romania)

Shauna L. Mahajan (WWF-US, USA)

Ella-Kari Muhl (Centre for Sustainability Transitions, Stellenbosch University, South Africa & University of Waterloo, Canada)

Josheena Naggea (Stanford University, USA; Charles Telfair Centre, Mauritius)

Katina Rumbedakis (Centro de Investigación y Estudios Avanzados (Cinvestav), Unidad Mérida, Mexico & Instituto de Investigaciones Marinas (IIM-CSIC), Spain)

Samiya Selim (University of Liberal Arts Bangladesh, Bangladesh)

Gerald G. Singh (University of Victoria, Canada)

Mia Strand (Nelson Mandela University, South Africa)

Kira Sullivan-Wiley (The Pew Charitable Trusts, USA)

Sebastian Villasante (CRETUS-EqualSea Lab, University of Santiago de Compostela, Spain)

Glossary of terms

TERM	MEANING
Assessment	Gathering and analysing information with the aim of increasing understanding.
Co-production	Collecting and producing knowledge and/or fostering action where different groups work together in ways that prioritise equitable partnerships and shared decision-making.
Equity (social equity)	Fairness and justice with respect to the ways that people are recognised, treated, or impacted by conservation initiatives.
Indigenous and local knowledge	Understandings, skills, and philosophies developed by Indigenous Peoples, small-scale fishers, and local communities through long histories of interaction with the environments where they live.
Learning	The processes through which individuals and groups acquire knowledge and develop understanding, especially in ways that can lead to potential changes in attitudes or practices.
Marine conservation initiative	A broad term to refer to any area-based marine conservation measures, including marine protected areas (MPAs), other effective area-based conservation measures (OECMs), reserves, sanctuaries, or parks, as well as place-based stewardship activities, including management or restoration.
Rightsholders	Groups or individuals who hold tenure or access rights in relation to a marine conservation initiative, based on historical or ongoing use and reliance on an area or resources for livelihoods, food or cultural continuity, and/or their specific status as Indigenous Peoples, small-scale fishers or harvesters, or traditional local communities.
Stakeholders	Organisations, groups, or individuals with any type of interest in, and who might be impacted by, a marine conservation initiative.



Introduction



Equity is an essential consideration in marine conservation for ethical, legal, and practical reasons. Assessment of social equity is fundamental to enable governments, managers, practitioners, and other actors to reflect on and improve marine conservation governance and management. This section introduces the why, what, how, when, and who of equity assessments for marine conservation, and provides an overview of this guidebook. The guidebook is intended to be used by any groups who are interested in, and committed to, evaluating and improving equity in marine conservation. The guidance and equity assessment approaches presented can be applied and adapted to different marine conservation initiatives, including marine protected areas and other effective area-based conservation measures.

Why assess equity in marine conservation?

Marine conservation initiatives are intended to support long-term environmental sustainability, which can benefit both the environment and people. However, research has shown that marine conservation initiatives (Box 1) can vary substantially in how inclusive and participatory planning and governance processes are and in the social impacts on coastal populations and communities, including those who identify as Indigenous Peoples¹ and small-scale fishers (Oracion 2015; Chaigneau and Brown 2016; Ban et al. 2019). Positive social impacts have included economic benefits related to small-scale fisheries and tourism, greater local involvement in environmental decision-making, improved food security and wealth, and protection of culturally important species (Ban et al. 2019; Sullivan-Stack et al. 2024). Negative social consequences have included displacement and evictions of local populations, exclusion from decision-making, loss of rights, as well as numerous other impacts on local livelihoods and culture (Outeiro et al. 2015; Sowman and Sunde 2018; Blythe et al. 2023). In the worst cases, marine conservation initiatives can further entrench existing inequities through unfair governance or unequal access to financial support or ocean resources (Österblom et al. 2020). Often, those who are most vulnerable bear further inequities. Some marine conservation efforts have also been criticised for being derived from colonial and racist institutions and continuing colonial and racist legacies, especially when marine conservation initiatives are first established.



© WWF-Pacific / Tom Vierus

1 There are many regional differences regarding how Indigenous Peoples prefer to be referred to. In places where Indigenous Peoples are not recognised by governments, the term “Indigenous People and local communities (IPLCs)” is often preferred because it enables participation in United Nations fora and other processes set up for IPLCs. However, where Indigenous Peoples have received greater recognition and independence, there can be preference towards referring to the names of specific Indigenous groups or communities. In this guidebook, we have tried to remain respectful of all preferences by recognising these differences.

BOX 1

Defining marine conservation initiatives for the purposes of this guidebook

Includes MPAs, OECMs and other area-based marine conservation initiatives

This guidebook refers to marine conservation initiatives as the focal point for equity assessments, which primarily includes marine protected areas (MPAs) and other effective area-based conservation measures (OECMs). However, the assessment options and methods are intended to be adaptable and applicable broadly to other area-based marine conservation measures, such as marine stewardship efforts, restoration initiatives, and nature-based solutions. Many countries and communities use different names or legal instruments for similar place-based marine conservation measures, including reserves, sanctuaries, and parks.

Includes diverse governance arrangements

Area-based marine conservation measures can include a broad array of governance arrangements with different balances of authority and responsibilities among governmental and non-governmental actors. Governance can include government-led, private sector-led, community-led, and collaborative management arrangements with shared responsibility and/or authority. The particular set of governance relationships and rules can have a large influence on how actors perceive and experience equity, but the level of equity should not be assumed based on governance type.

Marine versus terrestrial conservation initiatives

Although the assessment methods described in this guidebook might be adapted and applied to terrestrial conservation initiatives, the conceptual framework and many of the attributes of equity were developed specifically for marine contexts. Aspects of tenure and rights, for example, are unique in marine settings. Differences also arise in relation to histories of resource use, relationships of communities with marine environments, and the ways that benefits and risks impact people. Although the broad dimensions and many of the attributes of equity discussed will be applicable in any conservation setting, the attributes and survey templates included in the assessment packages at the end of this guidebook are tailored to marine conservation.

These social exclusions and impacts have arisen, in part, because many past marine conservation initiatives were primarily designed and managed to achieve environmental objectives. In many places, a legacy of the fortress conservation mentality (where people are seen as separate from ‘pristine’ environments) is that some marine conservation initiatives have excluded and displaced local communities (Blythe et al. 2023; Sowman and Sunde 2018). Attention to social considerations and equity may not have been included during design of the marine conservation initiatives or within management plans and activities.

Moving ahead, there are three reasons – ethical, legal, and practical – for assessing and addressing equity in the context of marine conservation. First, the conservation community has a moral obligation to take meaningful action to enable participation, and to do no harm to – or, better, to improve the lives of – those potentially impacted by marine conservation initiatives.

Second, with respect to legal reasons, marine conservation must align with international and national commitments related to human rights. Human rights law necessitates that states and other entities promote, protect, and respect both procedural and substantive human rights in all activities, including marine conservation actions (Smallhorn-West et al. 2023). Further, the United Nations Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples (UNDRIP) draws attention to the overlap of conservation with territories of Indigenous Peoples (United Nations 2007). Indigenous Peoples and civil society organisations have

long advocated for approaches to marine conservation that centre local and Indigenous rights, needs, livelihoods, self-determination, and leadership in management. For this reason, the Kunming-Montreal Global Biodiversity Framework recognises human rights as a mandatory foundation of conservation practice (CBD 2022).

Third, there are practical reasons for assessing and addressing equity in marine conservation initiatives. Equitable governance tends to support the achievement of more effective and enduring outcomes (Saif et al. 2022; Sandbrook et al. 2023). Equitable governance and positive social impacts improve the legitimacy of, support for, and long-term success of conservation. Equitable governance also aims to recognise and support the contribution of Indigenous Peoples and local communities, and their deep knowledge, customary institutions, and practices, to conserving nature (Bennett et al. 2019; Hampton-Smith et al. 2024b; Jones 2024). In other words, increasing equity leads to stronger allies for conservation with groups who are known to be effective stewards of nature (Dawson et al. 2021).

What is equity?

In the context of conservation, equity refers to fairness and justice with respect to the ways that people are recognised, treated, or impacted by conservation initiatives (Österblom et al. 2020; Bennett et al. 2021; Blythe et al. 2023; de Vos et al. 2023). Understanding (in)equity necessitates consideration of historical and contextual conditions and power relationships (e.g., institutional structures that systematically promote inequities) that maintain unfair or unequal conditions for groups of people (Singh et al. 2023).

The literature on equity is extensive and provides further insights on how to understand equity in practice. Various authors advocate for attention to multiple dimensions in relation to effective and equitable governance (e.g., Pascual et al. 2014; Zafra-Calvo et al. 2017; Gurney et al. 2021; Bennett et al. 2021). Following Bennett et al. (2021), the assessments presented in this guidebook are based on a set of six interrelated dimensions of equity – recognitional, procedural, management, environmental, distributional, and contextual and structural equity (see Figure 1). These can be defined as follows:

- **Recognitional equity:** The acknowledgment and incorporation of the rights, tenure, cultural identities, practices, values, visions, knowledge systems and livelihoods of local groups into conservation governance, planning, and management.
- **Procedural equity:** The inclusion and effective participation of all relevant actors and groups in rule- and decision-making for conservation policies and programmes, which requires good governance practices such as transparency and accountability.
- **Management equity:** The extent to which local people are able to participate in, carry out the work of, or be responsible for and have a leadership role in management activities.
- **Distributional equity:** The level of fairness in the distribution of benefits and burdens between different groups, including current and future generations, of the outcomes of conservation actions.
- **Environmental equity:** The quality of the local environment and nature's contributions to people based on the effectiveness of actions taken to maintain ecological sustainability, health and productivity that people depend on for food security, livelihoods, cultural anchoring, health, and well-being.

- ▾ **Contextual and structural equity:** The surrounding social, economic, and political conditions that influence people’s pre-existing status (in terms of wealth, social capital, assets/ capabilities, and power), as well as the structures that enable or undermine people’s ability to achieve recognitional, procedural, distributional, managerial, and environmental equity in conservation initiatives.

Taken together, these six dimensions of equity are part of a complete framework. The different dimensions are also interrelated and can influence each other. A marine conservation initiative can lead to impacts within each dimension, as well as produce impacts that span across dimensions. Each dimension will apply in unique ways in different contexts, because how equity is experienced is dependent on specific social, economic, ecological and political circumstances and dynamics, and individuals’ perceptions of them. This means equity assessments need to be adapted based on local interpretation of the six equity dimensions and their related attributes.

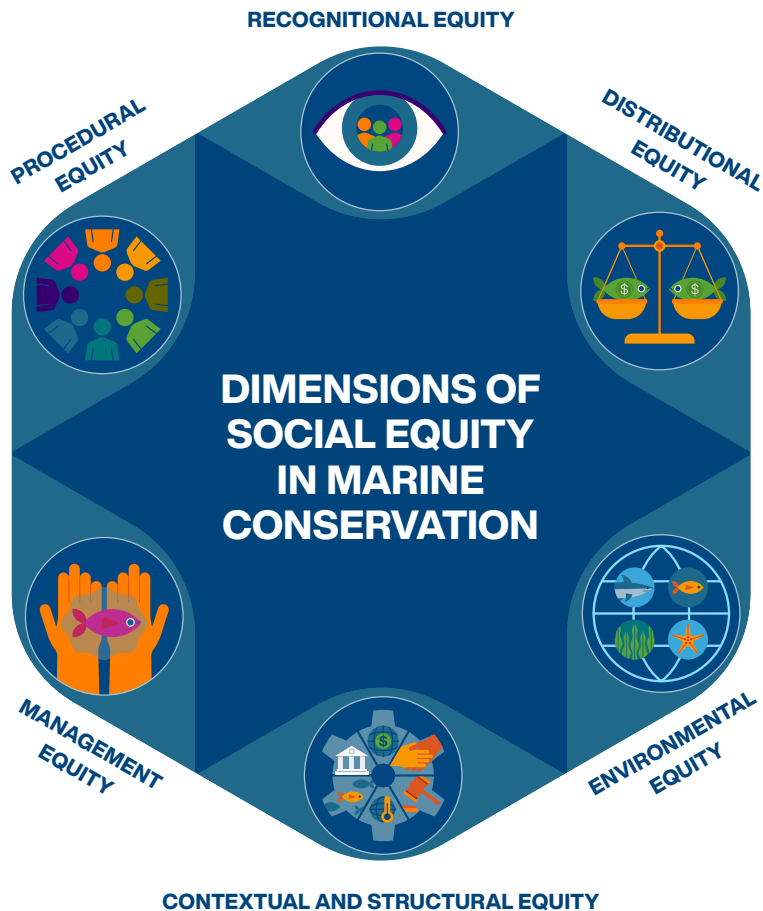


FIGURE 1: SIX INTERRELATED AND INTERACTIVE DIMENSIONS OF EQUITY THAT ARE IMPORTANT FOR CONSERVATION (FRAMEWORK ADAPTED FROM BENNETT ET AL. 2021).

How and when to apply an equity assessment?

All environmental policies and practices are imperfect and have room for improvement. Conservation practitioners and managers must continually learn, grow, and adapt. This means that humility and willingness to change are needed for a team conducting an equity assessment. Rather than a pathway to rapid change, an equity assessment should be viewed as part of an iterative and continuous learning journey that helps to generate more awareness around problematic conditions and how they affect people. Key steps to ensure that an equity assessment supports learning and action are shown in Figure 2.

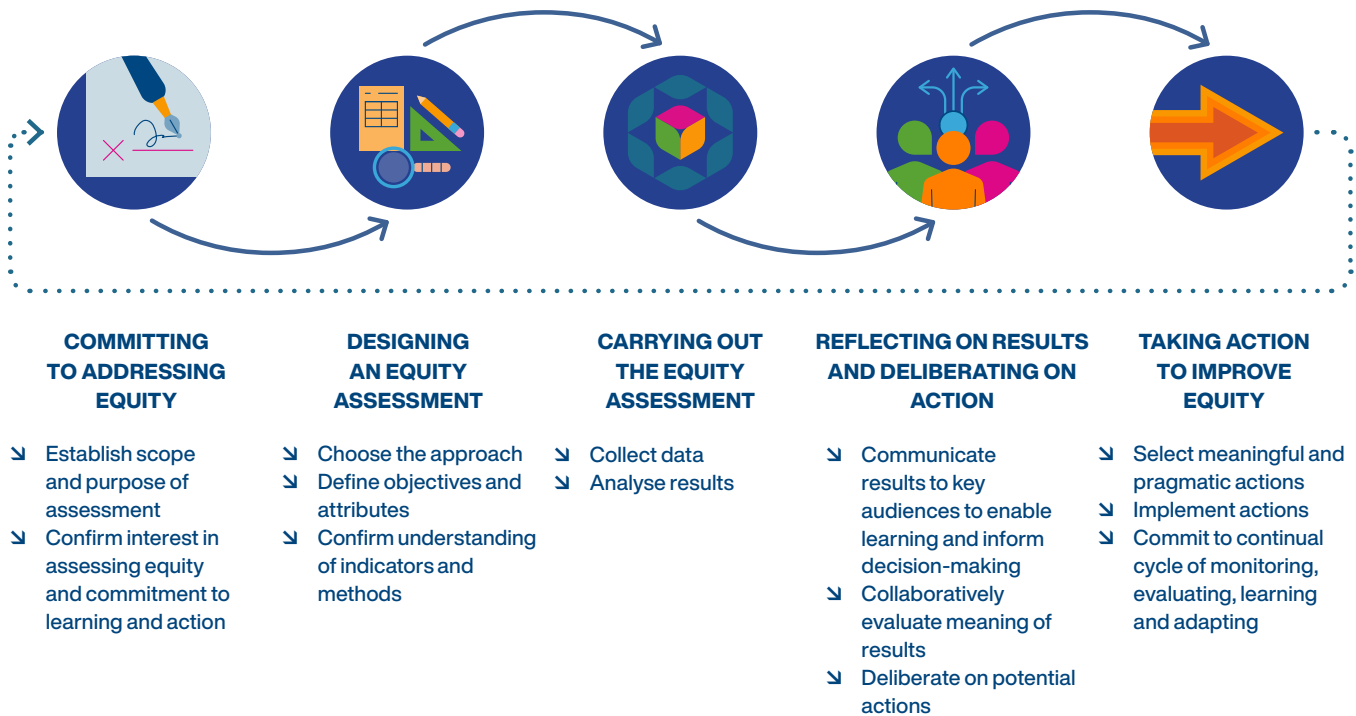


FIGURE 2: KEY STEPS IN DEVELOPING AN EQUITY ASSESSMENT TO SUPPORT MOVING FROM ASSESSMENT TO ACTION TO IMPROVE SOCIAL EQUITY.

Viewing an equity assessment as a learning journey can lead to pressure to ‘get it right’ – especially if results are shared publicly. However, it is important that everyone on the learning journey accepts that it will be challenging to make improvements. It is important to build processes and spaces for actors – especially those who have a history of disagreement or conflict – that are founded on long-term commitments to equity and justice. Sharing stories and experiences can be helpful for building trust and mutual understanding as actors spend time deliberating assessment results and consider potential pathways forward.

Inviting more people into the assessment process and including their perspectives helps generate awareness, legitimacy, and agreement with outcomes. In some cases, this may be the first time different groups have expressed their diverse views on sensitive topics, whereas in others there may be a long history of reconciliation of past issues or conflict between groups. An assessment conducted publicly and transparently is likely to be more successful. Success is also most likely when lawmakers, decision-makers in conservation, and other groups in powerful and influential positions commit to equity.

Another consideration is when an equity assessment should be applied during the life cycle of a marine conservation initiative. The assessment options in this guidebook can be applied during the planning phase, after full implementation, or at regular intervals. An equity assessment during planning can provide early insights into anticipated equity issues that could arise and help identify ways of mitigating negative impacts. An equity assessment carried out after implementation will be useful for documenting actual experiences of stakeholders and rightsholders and identifying specific interventions to improve equity. Applying an equity assessment at regular intervals would be in line with the learning and adaptation cycle emphasised in Figure 2. External pressures and circumstances – as well as internal dynamics – can lead to the rise of inequitable conditions for certain stakeholders or rightsholders. Regular reflection on potential issues and maintaining open dialogue are important for long-term equity.

Why is this guidebook needed?

Global conservation policy agreements, documents and organisations increasingly recognise the importance of advancing social equity in marine conservation planning and management (Bennett et al. 2021; Hampton-Smith et al. 2024a). Notably, the Convention on Biological Diversity (CBD) Kunming-Montreal Global Biodiversity Framework has references to equity throughout its goals, targets and implementation advice (Gurney et al. 2023), with Target 3 stating (emphasis added):

“Ensure and enable that by 2030 at least 30 per cent of terrestrial, inland water, and of coastal and marine areas, especially areas of particular importance for biodiversity and ecosystem functions and services, are effectively conserved and managed through ecologically representative, well-connected and *equitably governed* systems of protected areas and other effective area-based conservation measures, recognizing indigenous and traditional territories where applicable.” (CBD 2022)

Globally, states that are signatories to the CBD are committed to the pursuit of all elements of Target 3, and the other equity directives in the Global Biodiversity Framework addressing issues such as those related to human rights, gender equity, Indigenous and traditional knowledge, and benefit-sharing.

The need to monitor and evaluate conservation initiatives against criteria such as management effectiveness, equitable governance, and ecological outcomes is widely recognised. However, there are shortcomings in the extent to which protected and conserved area governance and management are evaluated – and adaptively managed.

Many marine conservation initiatives have been established with commitments and requirements related to equity. Yet few have assessed equity in relation to conservation. Assessing equity can help to emphasise shared learning and improvement, which are essential for adaptive governance and management. Assessment insights can be a useful starting point for understanding how equity and inequity play out in specific marine conservation initiatives, and designing effective interventions to improve equity in governance and management (Singh et al. 2023).²

There is a need for broad guidance for marine conservation practitioners and actors to evaluate and progress towards equity. Although this guidebook does not provide a comprehensive literature review, key references and resources related to equity and conservation are referred to.³ A few insights from this growing body of literature include:

- (1) There is a need for improved equity assessment guidance that is practical and effective.**
- (2) There are multiple dimensions of equity that can be important to understand.**
- (3) Different groups experience different inequalities and perceived inequities.**
- (4) Not everyone will be supportive of conducting equity assessments or committed to actually improving conditions.**

Preparing to assess equity leads to many questions, such as whether there is sufficient interest in and commitment to the process, who will lead the assessment, how results will be used, what the logistical and capacity requirements are, and what type of equity assessment is most suitable for a given context. For instance, on one hand, an assessment that is quick to implement can be appropriate for identifying or confirming key equity concerns. On the other hand, there are also important roles for more complex and costly in-depth and/or repeated assessments that track progress over time.

This guidebook is designed to provide a range of approaches for assessing equity in marine conservation – including a rapid assessment option, a stakeholders and rightsholders assessment option, and a co-produced and customised assessment option – and to provide clear yet conceptually informed guidance about how to assess equity using each approach.

Who is this guidebook for?

Anticipated users of this guidebook include managers and governance boards or committees of marine conservation initiatives, community organisations, government agencies, NGOs, and researchers, among others. A combination of any of these groups could form an assessment team to lead and carry out an assessment. The guidebook aims to provide a means for various groups to work together to identify ways to improve social equity in and through marine conservation. Assessment teams are encouraged to reflect carefully on their own intentions and objectives from the outset.

² The use of ‘governance’ in this guidebook refers to the policies, institutions and processes (both formal and informal) that shape who participates in decision-making, how decisions are made, what decisions are taken, and to what effect for the environment and people (Lockwood 2010; Bennett and Satterfield 2018). This differs from ‘management’, which refers to the resources, plans, rules and actions that result from applied governance (Lockwood 2010; Bennett and Satterfield 2018).

³ For more in-depth literature and conceptual reviews see Zafra-Calvo et al. 2017; Bennett et al. 2021; Gurney et al. 2021; Ruano-Chamorro et al. 2022; Adams et al. 2023; Smallhorn-West et al. 2023; Dawson et al. 2024; Hampton-Smith et al. 2024b.

It is also important to distinguish between who are the assessors and who is being included as a participant in the assessment. If a co-production approach is used, the lines between ‘assessor’ and ‘assessed’ may be blurred – the aim is to ensure that all decision-makers, stakeholders, and rightsholders feel included and part of any proposed interventions.

This guidebook uses the terms rightsholders and stakeholders to refer to actors who may have links to or interests in marine conservation initiatives. We define stakeholders as organisations, groups, or individuals with any type of interest in or who might be impacted by a marine conservation initiative. Rightsholders are groups or individuals who hold tenure or access rights, based on historical or ongoing use and reliance on an area or resources for livelihoods, food or cultural continuity and/or based on their specific status as Indigenous Peoples, small-scale fishers or harvesters, or traditional local communities.

How to use this guidebook

As there is no singular, ideal way to assess equity, this guidebook provides three options or approaches that assessment teams may choose to employ with increasing levels of complexity, expertise, time, and costs required. The aim for all three assessment options is to promote learning and to improve equity by raising awareness about key issues and generating dialogue and deliberations about potential changes and action. It is not to provide scores or to enable comparison of different places. The flexibility to choose different assessment options reinforces that it is critical to tailor assessments to different timelines, budgetary constraints, socio-cultural contexts, and governance contexts.

Further details about the key features, benefits and limitations of each assessment option are provided in the following section. After the overview of the three assessment options, we summarise key considerations for carrying out an equity assessment. These include ethics, feasibility, understanding local history and context, analysing and presenting results, and limitations. Following a brief conclusion and references cited, the main body of the guidebook is supplemented with three ‘packages’ of materials for carrying out each assessment option, providing additional guidance and templates (e.g., a form for consent to participate, preliminary questions, main survey questions). This format is intended to make it easier for assessment teams to choose an option, extract step-by-step instructions and materials for each assessment option, and adapt the options and methods to different contexts.



© WWF-US / James Morgan



Overview of the three equity assessment options









Marine conservation initiatives around the world exist in diverse governance contexts, and managers, stakeholders and rightsholders have different levels of capacity and interests for engaging in equity assessments. Recognising this diversity of contexts, situations and needs, this section introduces three options for assessing equity in marine conservation that require differing levels of resources, expertise, time and collaboration: (1) rapid equity assessment, (2) stakeholders and rightsholders equity assessment, and (3) co-produced and customised equity assessment. This section also provides further information about how these assessment options were developed and presents the common equity framework that guides all three assessment options.

Introduction to the three equity assessment options

The choice of which assessment option to use is site and context specific, with the first option being the simplest, and the depth and complexity increasing with each option (Table 1). The rapid equity assessment is best suited when there are strict limitations on budget or time (e.g., when MPA managers are already overburdened with responsibilities). It might also be used in situations where there are high levels of conflict to allow conservation initiative managers to reflect on the status of equity prior to engaging stakeholders and rightsholders. The stakeholders and rightsholders equity assessment can be an effective way to engage a range of actors and generate awareness of key issues, while the co-produced and customised option can ensure measures of equity reflect local understandings of what constitutes equitable marine conservation.

An assessment team may use one assessment option and repeat an assessment at regular intervals. Alternatively, an assessment team may take a stepwise approach by using an initial assessment to gather momentum, gain support from more stakeholders and rightsholders, and then build resources to pursue a more in-depth assessment.

TABLE 1: OVERVIEW AND FEATURES OF EACH ASSESSMENT APPROACH.

	RAPID EQUITY ASSESSMENT	STAKEHOLDERS AND RIGHTSHOLDERS EQUITY ASSESSMENT	CO-PRODUCED AND CUSTOMISED EQUITY ASSESSMENT
 Outputs	Quick insights into key equity issues based on reflections from a small group of managers	Increasing awareness of equity issues through engagement of stakeholders and rightsholders	In-depth insights into equity based on a reflexive and adaptive approach that is co-designed with stakeholders and rightsholders
 Participants	Managers and/or key experts with knowledge of the marine conservation initiative(s)	Representatives from all stakeholder and rightsholder groups	Managers, key experts with knowledge of the marine conservation initiative(s), representatives from stakeholder and rightsholder groups
 Methods	Surveys with key informants	Surveys with stakeholder and rightsholder groups representatives	Co-production workshops, surveys, focus groups
 Time required for participants	Introductory meeting with all participants (1 hour), one-on-one survey with each participant (1-2 hours), debrief and follow-up meeting with all participants (1-2 hours)	Introductory meeting with managers (1 hour), surveys with stakeholder and rightsholder group representatives (1-2 hours each), debrief and follow-up meeting with managers and other key actors (1-2 hours)	Series of meetings, workshops, surveys, and focus groups over 3-6 weeks (or longer)
 Use this approach if	Local capacity and funding for assessments is very limited	Managers have capacity to participate and there is support for engaging stakeholders and rightsholders about equity issues	There is sufficient expertise on assessment team, managers are fully engaged, and stakeholders and rightsholders are fully engaged
 Limitations	Not designed for capturing perspectives or concerns directly from stakeholders and rightsholders	Based on a limited number of people's perspectives	Requires larger budget and commitment to a longer process

In addition to the three assessment options included in this guidebook, other equity and governance assessment approaches are available and may be suitable for different situations and assessment goals (e.g., Zafra-Calvo et al. 2017; Engen et al. 2021; Springer et al. 2021; Franks 2023; Mahajan et al. 2024; Ruano-Chamorro et al. 2024; Anariba et al. 2025).

Development of the equity assessment options

Development of this guidebook and the three assessment approaches was motivated by the need for practical guidance on how to evaluate and improve social equity in marine conservation. This was an iterative and collaborative process that began with a literature review of dimensions, attributes, and indicators that have been used in equity assessments (see Bennett et al. 2025). Following the completion of the literature review, we convened a working group of international experts in social aspects of marine conservation, seeking feedback from marine conservation practitioners and managers, and field testing the options in several MPAs around the world.⁴ The steps and timeline in Figure 3 show the evolution of thinking that led to the development of the three assessment options. A notable turning point was the decision to create multiple options for equity assessments, rather than a single tool or approach. The rationale for taking this approach was that there are multiple ways to carry out equity assessments.

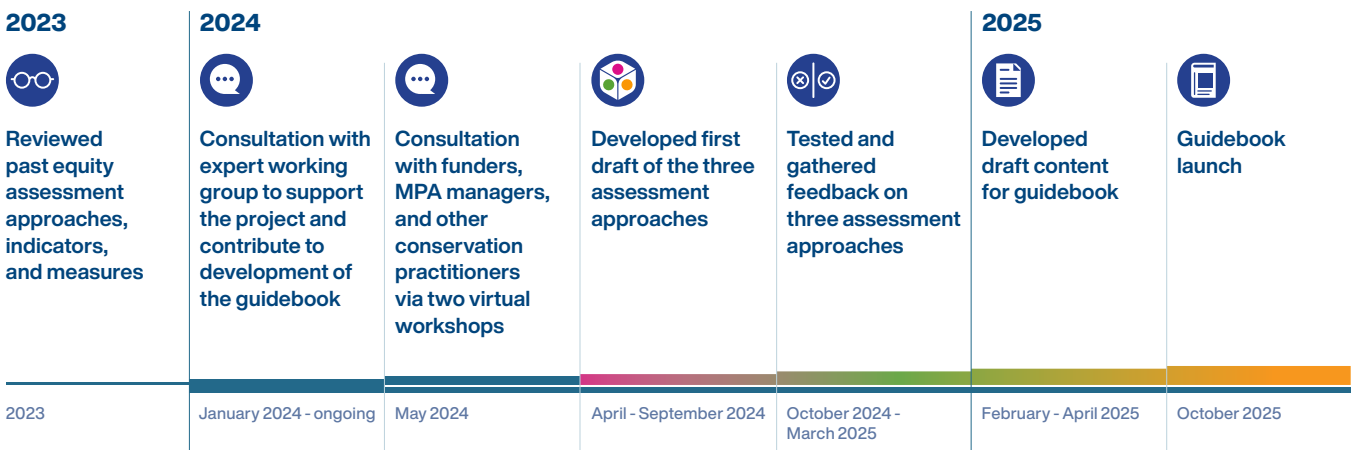


FIGURE 3: STEPS AND TIMELINE IN THE DEVELOPMENT OF THE THREE ASSESSMENT OPTIONS.

⁴ The co-produced and customised assessment has not been tested in the field yet for this draft of the guidebook.

A framework to guide equity assessments

In developing the three equity assessment options, we built on the six dimensions of equity – recognitional, procedural, management, distributional, environmental, and contextual or structural – to identify common attributes and indicators to guide measurement. The outcome of the initial literature review, including the identification of a broad set of attributes and almost 600 indicators of equity, was published as supplementary material in Bennett et al. (2025). The next steps were to narrow down the attributes to a number that would be more practical, and then develop relevant indicators for each remaining attribute. Notably, the methods for assessing social equity using each approach should be developed through a logical, stepwise, relational flow from dimensions to attributes to indicators and then ultimately to measures (this framework is also explained in Bennett et al. (2025), Figure 3). The resulting attributes and related indicators are included in Table 2. These sets of attributes and indicators, along with methods for measuring equity in marine conservation, are included with the assessment option descriptions and templates at the end of the guidebook (note that a set of indicators is not repeated for the co-produced and customised equity assessment since users of this option can create their own from the other two sets of indicators and broader review in Bennett et al. (2025)). Assessment teams are encouraged to review each indicator prior to commencing data collection. This is an important step, where the set of indicators can be changed, adapted, and reworded as needed to best suit local contexts, language, and understandings.





© Jonathan Caramanus / Green Renaissance / WWF-UK

TABLE 2: DIMENSIONS OF EQUITY IN CONSERVATION (FROM BENNETT ET AL. 2021), ALONG WITH ATTRIBUTES RELATED TO EACH DIMENSION (ADAPTED FROM BENNETT ET AL. 2025) AND BRIEF EXAMPLES THAT ILLUSTRATE POTENTIAL DESCRIPTIONS OF INDICATORS.

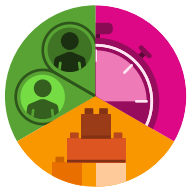
 DIMENSIONS OF SOCIAL EQUITY	 RELATED ATTRIBUTES	EXAMPLE DESCRIPTIONS OF INDICATORS
 <p>RECOGNITIONAL</p>	Stakeholders and rightsholders	All relevant rightsholder and stakeholder groups are recognised
	Human rights	Basic human rights are respected
	Tenure and access rights	Marine use, tenure, and access rights are recognised and incorporated
	Resource users	Resource users are recognised as rightsholders
	Small-scale fishers' rights	Small-scale fishers' rights are respected
	Indigenous recognition	Indigenous Peoples are recognised as rightsholders
	Indigenous rights	Indigenous rights are respected
	Culture	Cultural identities, values, and practices are acknowledged
	Groups experiencing marginalisation	Consideration is given for people who receive fewer opportunities
	Indigenous and local knowledge	Value of Indigenous and local knowledge are acknowledged
 <p>PROCEDURAL</p>	Local participation	Local people are able to participate and provide feedback
	Representation of stakeholders and rightsholders	Stakeholders and rightsholders have representation and influence on decisions
	Effective participation processes	Processes are in place to enable local people to influence decisions
	Information about decisions	Information about decision-making is easy to access
	Raising concerns	Stakeholders and rightsholders are able to raise concerns about management
	Dispute resolution (management)	Satisfactory processes to resolve disputes with managers
	Dispute resolution (stakeholders/rightsholders)	Satisfactory processes to resolve disputes with other stakeholders/rightsholders
	Free, prior, and informed consent	Decisions are made after free, prior, and informed consent

 DIMENSIONS OF SOCIAL EQUITY	 RELATED ATTRIBUTES	EXAMPLE DESCRIPTIONS OF INDICATORS
 <p>MANAGEMENT</p>	Local authority for management	Local groups share or hold management authority
	Local agency in management	Local groups have agency to carry out management activities
	Local employment in management	Local people are employed in management (staff) roles
	Local representation in leadership	Local people are represented in leadership roles
	Sufficient funding	Sufficient funding to support local participation in management
	Secure funding	Secure funding to support local participation in management
	Fair enforcement	Enforcement of marine conservation initiative rules is fair for all people
 <p>ENVIRONMENTAL</p>	Location of conservation initiative	Marine conservation initiative is in a good location to produce environmental benefits
	Management capacity	Adequate management capacity to support environmental goals
	Effective management (environment)	Management plans are effective for achieving environmental goals
	Environmental improvements	Marine conservation initiative has led to environmental improvements
	Stakeholders and rightsholders benefits	Stakeholders and rightsholders benefit from environmental improvements
 <p>DISTRIBUTIONAL</p>	Positive impacts for local people	Marine conservation initiative has been positive for local people
	Effective management (social)	Management has been effective at achieving social goals
	Positive livelihood and economic impacts	Livelihood and economic impacts have been positive
	Distribution of livelihood and economic opportunities	Livelihood and economic opportunities are shared fairly
	Positive social impacts	Social impacts have been positive
	Distribution of benefits and opportunities	Social benefits and opportunities are shared fairly
	Distribution of negative impacts	Negative impacts (risks, burdens) are shared fairly
	Understanding of impacts on local people	Engagement or studies are in place to understand material and non-material impacts on local people
	Programmes to increase positive impacts	Programmes and efforts are in place to help increase positive impacts
Support for people experiencing marginalisation	Support is delivered for people who are most in need	

 DIMENSIONS OF SOCIAL EQUITY	 RELATED ATTRIBUTES	EXAMPLE DESCRIPTIONS OF INDICATORS
 <p>CONTEXTUAL AND STRUCTURAL</p>	Basic needs for local people	People living near the marine conservation initiative are able to meet basic needs
	Reliable coastal livelihoods	Coastal livelihoods provide a steady and reliable income
	Political views	Political views do not prevent groups from being involved in and benefiting from the marine conservation initiative
	Social norms	Social norms do not prevent groups from being involved in and benefiting from the marine conservation initiative
	Colonisation	Colonisation does not have ongoing impacts on local people
	Support for marine livelihoods	Laws and policies support people who rely on the ocean
	Environmental changes	Environmental changes do not negatively impact local people
	Recognition of customary resource users	Laws and policies recognise customary resource users
	Recognition of Indigenous Peoples	Laws and policies recognise Indigenous Peoples
	Support for equitable marine conservation planning	National policy supports equitable marine conservation initiative planning
	Law enforcement treats all people fairly	The law treats all people near the marine conservation initiative fairly



© Meredith Kohut/WWF-US



Three approaches for assessing equity

Key features, benefits, and limitations of each assessment option

Which option to select will depend on an assessment team’s goals, funding, capacity, and the support of local managers and other stakeholders and rightsholders. Decisions may also depend on rules and requirements for a specific MPA or OECM, such as obligations to carry out social and economic evaluations. With these differing needs and interests in mind, this section provides an overview of each equity assessment option. Additional information for each option and templates to support assessments are provided at the end of the guidebook.





Rapid equity assessment

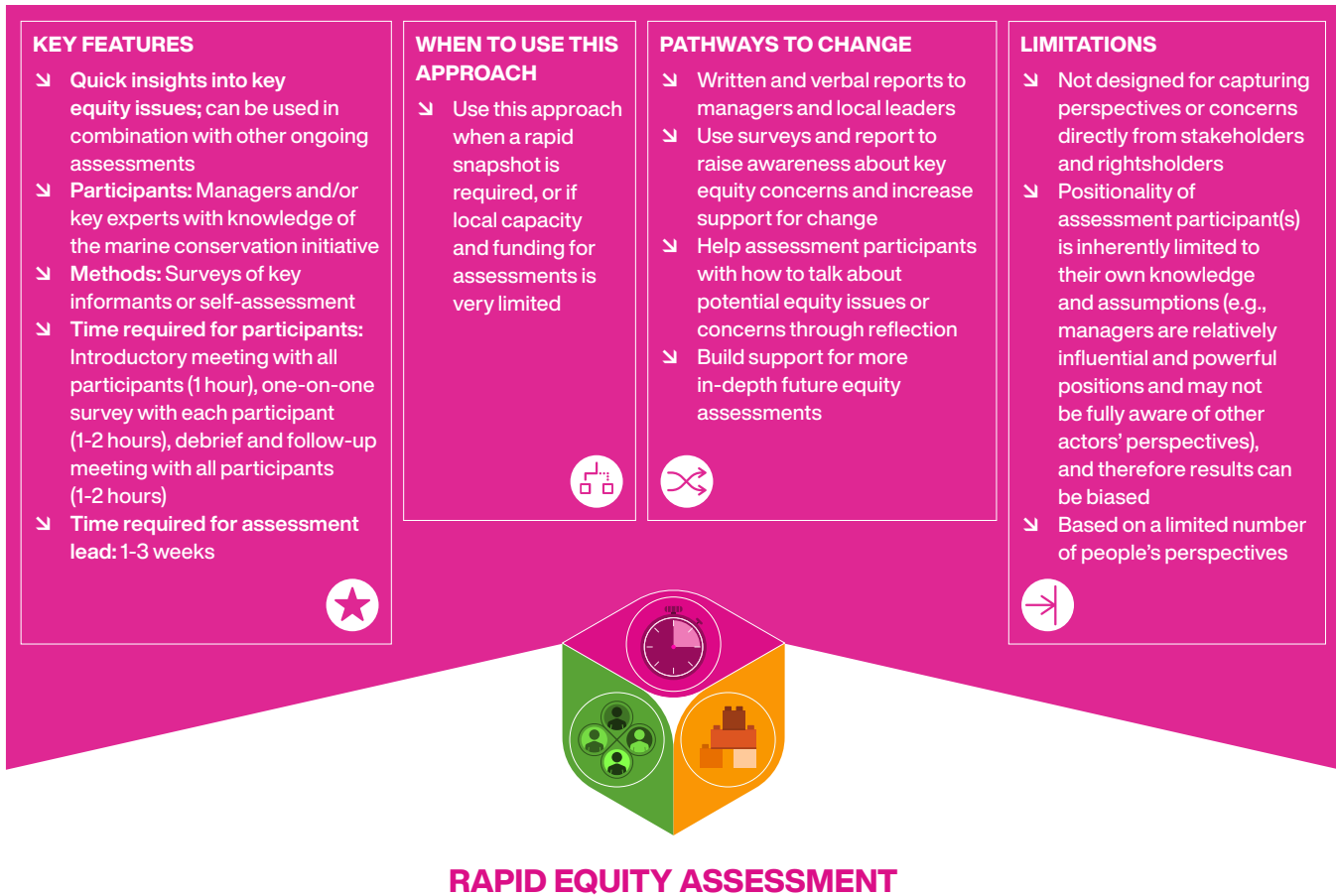


FIGURE 4: FEATURES, BENEFITS, AND LIMITATIONS OF THE RAPID EQUITY ASSESSMENT APPROACH.

A rapid equity assessment requires the involvement of managers or other key individuals who are knowledgeable about the marine conservation initiative in a short process of self-assessment and reflection.

The main goal of a rapid equity assessment is to gain quick insights into a broad range of equity issues that leaders may or may not have already considered, and to encourage management-level reflection on how to potentially address key issues. Assessment teams and marine conservation initiative managers can use the rapid equity assessment reports to showcase what is going well and to identify ways to address challenges.

This assessment will typically involve a series of short meetings (1-2 hours each). The first meeting can be used to confirm the purpose of the assessment and consent for participation, gather background information about the marine conservation initiative (e.g., management plans that might not be available online), and conduct an actor mapping exercise to identify all stakeholders and rightsholders who might be impacted (the actor mapping will provide a basis for thinking about the full range of stakeholders and rightsholders during the assessment). The second meeting can be used to carry out a structured survey focused on questions related to the six dimensions of equity. (Note that if a rapid equity assessment is led by managers of a marine conservation initiative, these meetings may be structured as discussions with other people involved in management or key knowledge holders).

The relationships linking each of the six equity dimensions to relevant attributes (and to corresponding questions), and the full set of materials for conducting a rapid equity assessment, is provided in the supplementary section *Assessment option 1: Rapid equity assessment*. Similar to other expert-based assessments, responses for the survey questions are based on a four-point scale ranging from 0 to 3, where 0 represents absent and 3 represents fully implemented (e.g., Lockwood et al. 2010; Zafra-Calvo et al. 2017, 2019). The range of this scale is meant to indicate the extent to which each attribute is present, although it does not provide an indication of negative impacts. For each response, users are also encouraged to explain the rationale for the score and provide examples. This qualitative information is equally if not more important and useful for identifying changes and improvements to equity.



© WWF-Malaysia / Mazidi Abd Ghani



Stakeholders and rightsholders equity assessment

KEY FEATURES

- ↳ Increasing awareness of equity issues; engagement of key stakeholders and rightsholders
- ↳ **Participants:** Managers, key experts with knowledge of the marine conservation initiative, representatives from all stakeholders and rightsholders groups
- ↳ **Methods:** Surveys of key stakeholders and rightsholders
- ↳ **Time required for participants:** Introductory meeting with managers (1 hour), approximately 20 surveys with rightsholders and stakeholders (1-2 hours each), debrief and follow-up meeting with managers and other key actors (1-2 hours).
- ↳ **Time required for assessment lead:** 2-4 weeks, plus time to arrange and travel if required

WHEN TO USE THIS APPROACH

- ↳ Use this approach if managers have interest and capacity to participate, there is support for engaging stakeholders and rightsholders about equity issues, and there is a willingness to engage with insights and take action to improve equity

STAKEHOLDERS AND RIGHTSHOLDERS EQUITY ASSESSMENT

PATHWAYS TO CHANGE

- ↳ Written and verbal report to local leaders, managers, and key stakeholders and rightsholders.
- ↳ Participation and outputs increase awareness of equity concerns among managers, stakeholders, and rightsholders to promote empathy and share insights and potential equity issues or concerns
- ↳ Use report to generate discussions about potential changes to improve equity
- ↳ Build support for more in-depth future equity assessments

LIMITATIONS

- ↳ Based on a limited number of people's perspectives
- ↳ Positionality of assessment team is inherently limited to their own knowledge and assumptions (e.g., managers are relatively influential and powerful positions and may not be fully aware of other actors' perspectives)
- ↳ May or may not use representative sampling of rightsholders and stakeholders

FIGURE 5: FEATURES, BENEFITS, AND LIMITATIONS OF THE STAKEHOLDERS AND RIGHTSHOLDERS EQUITY ASSESSMENT APPROACH.

A stakeholders and rightsholders equity assessment will involve surveying key stakeholder and rightsholder groups about their perceptions of the level of equity in relation to a marine conservation initiative. This option was designed to provide relatively fast insights into equity while gathering a wider range of perspectives than in the rapid equity assessment.

An assessment will typically begin by meeting with marine conservation initiative managers to confirm the purpose and consent for participation, gather background information about the marine conservation initiative, and conduct an actor mapping exercise to identify all stakeholders and rightsholders. The mapping exercise will be used to select people and organisations who will be

invited to participate in the assessment (e.g., 15-30 participants based on including 2-3 individuals per stakeholder and rightsholder group identified). Similar to a rapid equity assessment, a stakeholders and rightsholders equity assessment will involve a survey structured around a set of questions based on the six dimensions of equity.

The relationship linking the six equity dimensions to relevant attributes (and to corresponding survey statements), and the full set of materials for conducting a stakeholders and rightsholders equity assessment, is provided in the supplementary section *Assessment option 2: Stakeholders and rightsholders equity assessment*. Responses for the survey questions are based on a five-point scale ranging from -2 to +2, where -2 = strongly disagree, -1 = somewhat disagree, 0 = neutral, +1 = somewhat agree, and +2 = strongly agree. This format was developed based on methods used in other assessments that draw on actors' perceptions (Bennett et al. 2020; Engen et al. 2021; Franks 2023). The range of this scale is meant to provide some indication of directionality and allow participants to provide responses that show negative or positive impacts related to the equity attributes. For each response, users are also encouraged to explain the rationale for the score and provide examples. Depending on availability of participants, surveys will take place over approximately 1-2 weeks conducted in the field and/or virtually.

A stakeholders and rightsholders equity assessment is still relatively quick and is a good way to begin engaging stakeholders and rightsholders about how they are impacted by a marine conservation initiative. A central goal is to increase awareness among managers, stakeholders, and rightsholders about specific equity concerns, which should lead to further discussion and actions (including with decision-makers).

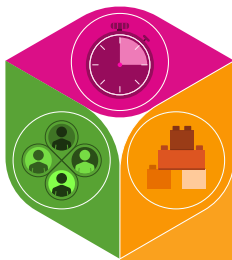


© WWF-Malaysia / Mazidi Abd Ghani



Co-produced and customised equity assessment

CO-PRODUCED AND CUSTOMISED EQUITY ASSESSMENT



KEY FEATURES

- In-depth insights into equity; full and inclusive engagement of all stakeholders and rightsholders; provides additional time and opportunity for a reflexive approach where assessment team can consider their own biases, assumptions, and blindspots
- **Participants:** Managers, key experts with knowledge of the marine conservation initiative, representatives from stakeholders and rightsholders (including those who may not be recognized officially by management or government)
- **Methods:** Co-production workshops, surveys, and/or focus groups
- **Time required for participants:** Series of meetings, surveys, and/or focus groups over 3-6 weeks or longer
- **Time required for assessment lead:** 3 months or longer, to allow for planning and thorough follow-through



WHEN TO USE THIS APPROACH

- Use this approach if there is sufficient expertise on assessment team to facilitate indicator co-production process, and when managers, stakeholders and rightsholders are willing and able to be fully engaged



PATHWAYS TO CHANGE

- Collaborative workshops and co-production processes increases knowledge of equity, and perceived legitimacy of results
- Written and verbal report to local leaders, managers, and key stakeholders and rightsholders
- Discussion and deliberation of results with all stakeholders, rightsholders, and decision-makers
- Increases awareness of equity concerns among managers, stakeholders, and rightsholders
- Identification of actions and changes as part of assessment process



LIMITATIONS

- Requires larger budget, commitment to a longer process, and higher level of expertise
- Participatory processes can be captured by more vocal or powerful individuals if not carefully facilitated
- Raises expectations of participants, which can lead to frustration if there is no follow-through with meaningful improvements to equity



FIGURE 6: FEATURES, BENEFITS, AND LIMITATIONS OF THE CO-PRODUCED AND CUSTOMISED EQUITY ASSESSMENT APPROACH.

The co-produced and customised equity assessment offers a comprehensive yet flexible approach for assessing equity. Any equity assessment approach that is derived from an externally developed framework may not reflect local worldviews or understandings of equity, so may overlook important equity issues. For instance, the equity dimensions and attributes provided in the supplementary materials (at the end of this guidebook) are based on a thorough review of equity literature, but it is inevitable that they will not capture all possible equity concerns and issues that matter to people in different contexts. Through a fully collaborative approach, a co-produced and customised equity assessment provides opportunities for all managers, stakeholders, and rightsholders to raise additional questions and bring context-specific insights into an assessment.

The co-produced and customised equity assessment involves a series of steps or phases (Figure 7). These phases are broadly similar to the rapid and stakeholders and rightsholders equity assessments, but they are articulated here for a co-produced and customised equity assessment because assessment teams and their partners will need to engage in reflection and design during each phase.

- **Phase 1 – Establishing the process** involves convening an advisory group, articulating the purpose and objectives of the assessment, confirming funding and allocating budget, and identifying the assessment team and roles.
- **Phase 2 – Designing the assessment** involves identifying actor groups, confirming local definitions of equity and key dimensions, and selecting attributes, indicators and methods (this may require adapting and adjusting attributes and indicators to better suit local worldviews, language and contexts). This phase might draw from the attributes, indicators and methods contained in the rapid and the stakeholders and rightsholders equity assessment options or elsewhere.
- **Phase 3 – Conducting the assessment** involves collecting data on the dimensions, attributes and indicators of equity co-developed and agreed upon during the design phase, which may require using quantitative and/or qualitative methods.
- **Phase 4 - Analysing and communicating results** involves analysis of data using qualitative and quantitative methods, as well as design, visualisation, and communication of results to all actor groups.
- **Phase 5 - Reflecting and deliberating on actions** convenes all actor groups to reflect on findings, brainstorm adaptations and deliberate on interventions to improve equity in governance processes or outcomes.

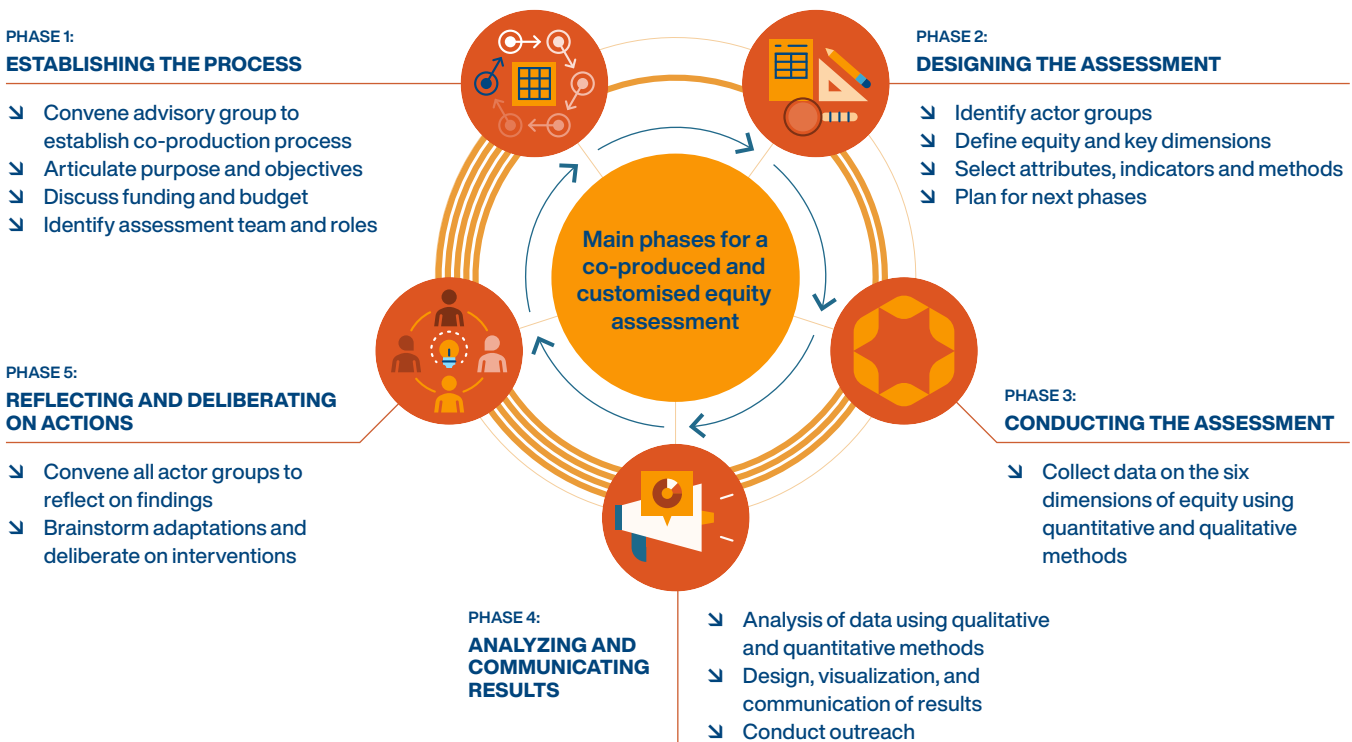


FIGURE 7: FIVE MAIN PHASES FOR A CO-PRODUCED AND CUSTOMISED EQUITY ASSESSMENT.

A co-produced and customised equity assessment will require the inclusion of team members who are experienced with facilitation and assessment methods, and who appreciate the importance of multiple and diverse perspectives. It will also require a greater commitment of time and resources than the other two options. This guidebook cannot provide an accurate timeline for a co-produced and customised equity assessment but they are likely to require several months to carry out all of the phases. This time investment is intended to generate a product that is representative of the local context and has a high level of legitimacy and support for planned interventions to improve equity. Regular check-ins will be important to ensure that all stakeholders and rightsholders continue to feel that they are able to participate in and influence the assessment process.



© Alejandro Gonzalez



© Jürgen Freund / WWF

Considerations for all equity assessments



The process of choosing, doing and reflecting on assessments can be as important as the results and outputs. This section reviews key considerations in choosing an assessment option, preparing for an assessment, carrying out an assessment, and moving from assessment to action.

There are numerous considerations that an assessment team should take into account at all stages of an equity assessment. The process of doing an assessment can be as important as the assessment outputs, or even more so. The considerations discussed here are important for all types of equity assessments: choosing an assessment option, preparing for an assessment, carrying out an assessment, and moving from assessment to action (Figure 8).



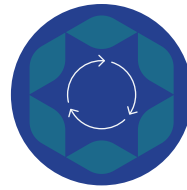
CHOOSING AN ASSESSMENT OPTION

- Consider for whom and by whom the assessment is being done
- Identify potential for a co-produced process
- Understand both strengths and limitations of each type of equity assessment
- Evaluate feasibility



PREPARING FOR AN ASSESSMENT

- Evaluate skills and capacities of the assessment team
- Review ethics
- Discuss data ownership, sharing, and control
- Maintain flexibility and tailor to context
- Plan for logistical factors
- Foster appreciation for diverse knowledge systems



CARRYING OUT AN ASSESSMENT

- Employ principles for community engagement
- Include desk-based research
- Understand local history and context
- Identify and recruit assessment participants
- Analyse and visualise results



MOVING FROM ASSESSMENT TO ACTION

- Communicate results to end-users and participants
- Deliberate on results and select actions
- Commit to actions and ongoing learning

FIGURE 8: CONSIDERATIONS WHEN CONDUCTING AN EQUITY ASSESSMENT.



Choosing an assessment option

Consider for whom and by whom the assessment is being done

The primary motivation for carrying out these assessments is to drive action to improve social equity and protect against further entrenching inequities. From this understanding, it is important for assessment teams to consider the involvement and roles of marine conservation initiative managers and other decision-makers and leaders. An equity assessment will be most legitimate and effective when the people involved with, and impacted by, a marine conservation initiative feel that they have contributed to the assessment process. The extent that any groups ultimately benefit from an equity assessment will be influenced by who is leading an assessment, who is involved on the assessment team, which stakeholders and rightsholders groups are engaged (and how they are engaged), and who is included in follow-up deliberations and decisions about actions. Key questions for early reflection include: Who will use the results of the equity assessment? How will the assessment team manage conflicts and differences of opinion or perception? Who will need to be involved to improve equity? Who will benefit from any actions and changes?

In some cases managers and decision-makers may be directly or indirectly part of the assessment team. In other cases, an assessment team may be led by an NGO or community-based organisation. This guidebook does not specify what is necessary or ideal: the emphasis should be on understanding the benefits and drawbacks of directly involving end-users such as managers. Directly involving managers and decision-makers from the outset can help ensure support and buy-in for the results and commitment to a journey of learning and action. However, there are inherent power relationships and

biases that can affect how an assessment is carried out, and thus its results. Relationships and trust are closely linked with people's perceptions about equity and fairness, and if certain powerful individuals are seen to influence the assessment process unduly, it may be detrimental for the outcomes. To reiterate, there is no golden rule to specify how an equity assessment should be carried out, but assessment teams should carefully consider decisions about how and when assessment end-users are engaged.

Identify potential for a co-produced process

Co-production refers to the relationships between assessors and other societal actors in the process of collecting and producing knowledge, often with an inclination towards societal change and sustainability (Wyborn et al. 2019; Petriello et al. 2022; Zurba et al. 2022). It often involves recognition of contextual diversity, pre-emptive, and intentional engagement with Indigenous or local knowledge-holders, formation of shared understanding of the purpose of knowledge co-production, and empowerment of knowledge-holders (Zurba et al. 2022). Indigenous approaches to co-production may involve concepts such as Two-Eyed Seeing or creating ethical space (Ermine 2007; Reid et al. 2021). In the context of an equity assessment, co-production requires relationships between an equity assessment team and other stakeholders and rightsholders that are based on joint and collaborative decision-making and insight generation with an emphasis on fostering change. Local understandings and interpretations of what equity means in practice can vary widely across socio-cultural contexts (e.g., Sterling et al. 2017, Gurney et al. 2021). Equity assessments that are founded on co-production of knowledge and collaboration with diverse groups will be better positioned to understand local meanings and understandings of equity in practice, and can increase legitimacy of the process and outcomes.

Co-production aims to reframe power, avoid extractive practices, and ultimately help to generate mutually beneficial processes. There are instances, however, where efforts towards co-production fail and backfire (e.g., an assessment team uses the language of co-production but is not fully trained or able to build the relationships required for true co-production) or serve non-local interests (e.g., an assessment team uses the language disingenuously only to fill information gaps or gain consent to carry out its assessment). Assessment teams need to consider how collaboration with diverse stakeholders and rightsholders may take shape, and whether a knowledge co-production approach is suitable given the needs, users, feasibility, and other factors.



Understand both strengths and limitations of each type of equity assessment

While each of the assessment options has different features and benefits, it is important that those choosing different assessment options are aware of potential limitations. Regardless of which assessment option is selected, assessment teams should ensure that the methods employed are thorough and meet high standards, while also being locally relevant and adapted for socio-cultural needs. Selection will depend on an assessment team's goals, funding, capacity, and the support of local managers and other stakeholders and rightsholders. Decisions may also depend on rules and requirements for a specific MPA or OECM, such as obligations to carry out social and economic evaluations. It is important to consider the value and strengths of each option, which can be summarised as follows:

- The rapid equity assessment involves the use of a survey with a single or small group of managers. It is not meant to be representative of stakeholders' or rightsholders' views (and can be biased for this reason). The goal is to gain some quick insights into equity-related topics in order to facilitate reflections to identify and potentially address key issues. This approach can be used on its own, as a first step in building understanding of equity issues, or in combination with other assessments.
- The stakeholders and rightsholders equity assessment involves engagement and sampling of stakeholders and rightsholders using a combined quantitative and qualitative survey to ensure that a wider range of perspectives are included. However, it is still limited by which stakeholders and rightsholders are engaged (or not), and by the relatively rigid structure of the survey used. This approach is suitable when there is a demand for relatively fast insights into equity and engagement of key stakeholders and rightsholders is a priority.
- The co-produced and customised equity assessment involves engaging in a participatory process of co-developing equity indicators and assessments methods, and analysing results. It is intended to have inclusivity and equity built into its process, in addition to actively generating dialogue about potential changes to improve equity. This approach is most suitable when gaining in-depth insights into equity is a priority, and to fully and equitably involve all stakeholder and rightsholder groups.

Involvement of stakeholders and rightsholders in an equity assessment can raise their expectations about the potential for positive changes and more equitable outcomes. If an equity assessment doesn't lead to action, it can result in frustrations and disappointment for local communities and organisations. It is important to set clear expectations about what may and may not be possible as outcomes of an equity assessment. For instance, using the co-produced and customised option and engaging participants in dialogue about potential actions is more likely to lead to change than a rapid equity assessment that did not engage stakeholders or rightsholders early in the assessment process.

As one of the six equity dimensions, assessing contextual and structural equity helps to uncover broad political, economic, and environmental factors at national, regional and global levels that can impact equity locally. While these are important factors to consider, some stakeholders and rightsholders may find that an assessment only points to issues that are beyond the influence and control of local people; or that governance structures themselves may be further entrenching inequities. This can potentially be a source of frustration that assessment teams should be prepared to discuss and address.

Evaluate feasibility

A range of factors affect the ease or difficulty of carrying out an equity assessment in a particular place. These factors can include the strength of the assessment team’s relationships with marine conservation initiative managers and other rightsholders and stakeholders, levels of trust, and willingness and ability of potential partners to participate. Assessment teams should also consider the expertise needed to carry out the different types of assessment and the required processes, data collection and analysis, whether training is needed, and whether additional people will need to be hired or consulted.

Teams preparing to lead an assessment will also need to evaluate potential costs and budget for each assessment option. Due to high variability in contexts and potential expenses, this guidebook does not provide estimated costs. On a cursory level, assessment teams should understand that as assessment processes become more in-depth and complex, they require greater time commitments and financial costs. Some of the factors that will affect overall budgets for assessments include (but are not limited to): geographic location and travel requirements to reach participants; total number of participants in the assessment; size and skills of the assessment team; time required for data collection, analysis and report writing; commitments for reporting assessment results back to managers and assessment participants; and currency conversion (if assessment teams are not locally based).



Preparing for an assessment

Evaluate skills and capacities of the assessment team

This guidebook does not prescribe who should carry out any of the types of equity assessments. However, it is important for (some or all) members of an assessment team to have or get training in conducting social science research and/or community-based research. Skills that are important for assessment teams include community outreach and engagement, facilitating workshops, conducting surveys, and data analysis. Teams also need familiarity and expertise with equity concepts and ethics for conducting research, as well as knowledge about the local area. If leaders of an assessment team do not possess such skills and knowledge, it is advisable to partner with additional researchers or evaluators or hire consultants who can support the equity assessment process from inception to action.

Including local researchers on an assessment team is an essential consideration since they will be better positioned to converse in local languages, interpret and explain equity concepts in meaningful ways, and recognise and understand verbal and non-verbal feedback from participants. Given the importance of encouraging honesty and transparency from assessment participants, it is recommended that assessment teams include individuals who will be trusted as neutral and respect the importance of anonymity.

Review ethics

The ability for individuals to choose whether and how they would like to participate in an equity assessment is of critical importance. Respecting human dignity, honouring privacy, and minimising risk for participants are key principles. Particular attention is required with respect to vulnerable and equity-deserving groups that have been subject to historical or structural marginalisation within communities. Their perspectives are very important to include in an equity assessment and they often face the greatest risks, but they can easily be overlooked by treating the community as a uniform or homogenous group.

To ensure ethical principles are respected, local approvals and permits are often required in places where assessments are conducted. Particular countries, regions, or protected areas may have approval requirements before assessment activities can begin with local people. Examples include institutional review boards (IRBs) or research ethics boards (REBs) that are set up to review and approve research or assessment projects (including methods) in line with national and/or local ethical standards. The boards are primarily intended to protect the rights and safety of people who participate in assessments. Depending on the composition of a team carrying out an equity assessment, it may be possible to get assessment protocols reviewed by an institutional review board or research ethics board via a university, NGO, or other research institution. Where possible, it is preferable to follow the guidance of institutions within the country where an assessment will be conducted.

This guidebook assumes that anyone who leads an equity assessment has a basic understanding of ethics related to the involvement of people in assessments. This includes knowledge of the following:

- Free, prior, and informed consent (FPIC) is recognised in the UN Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples as a right for Indigenous Peoples with respect to self-determination (United Nations 2007). It is essential that any equity assessments – whether with Indigenous Peoples or other populations – ensure that prior to giving consent, participants know that their participation is voluntary and they can withdraw at any time with no consequences, and are fully informed about the intent and goals of the assessment process.
- Confidentiality (protection of personal information and data) and anonymity (ensuring that personal identifying information is not linked to individuals' responses) should be considered as part of any assessment activities. As an equity assessment may involve groups or communities who have been marginalised or unfairly impacted by conservation initiatives, it should maintain (as far as possible and desired by assessment participants) the confidentiality of all participants to ensure that they are not subject to further harm. Participants' perspectives and data should be kept anonymous, for example through removing all identifiable information or sharing only aggregate data and anonymous quotes, unless they specify their willingness or preference to be identified.

Underlining all of these concepts is respect for local rules and norms – and ensuring that an assessment does not cause harm to individuals or groups. It is critical for any teams involved with equity assessments to be familiar with the ways that communities and organisations prefer to engage in assessment processes.

The assessment materials included at the end of this guidebook provide multiple options for obtaining consent. In some places and for some participants, verbal (oral) consent will be the appropriate and preferred approach for confirming that participants understand the intent and process of an assessment. This can be common when participants are not able to read or are part of cultures that emphasise oral traditions. In other cases, it will be important for participants to be able to read and review a consent form and then provide their name and signature as an indication of their understanding and consent.

In addition to the resources provided in this guidebook, the Conservation Social Science (ConSoSci) Partnership has developed resources on ethics that are openly available to anyone working in conservation (<https://consosci.org/en-us/Research-Ethics>). These resources outline key principles of beneficence, non-maleficence, and justice. They include a resource library, videos on ethics concepts, tools for ethical methods, and a research ethics decision tree.

Discuss data ownership, sharing, and control

Data ownership and sharing is another key consideration that should be negotiated at the start of an equity assessment process. Data sovereignty is the concept that data is owned by the places and people where they are collected, and refers to the ability of local communities or organisations to retain control over how their information is collected, stored, and used. For example, the First Nations principles of ownership, control, access, and possession (OCAP® principles) offer a standard for ensuring that Indigenous Peoples have control over the ways that data are collected and used (<https://fnigc.ca/ocap-training>). Similarly, the CARE Principles for Indigenous Data Governance (www.gida-global.org/care) were designed to complement trends towards open access data that ignore assertions from Indigenous Peoples to have greater control over the application and use of their information in light of historical contexts and power differentials.



Maintain flexibility and tailor to context

Assessment teams should consider all aspects of their methods and how they can be tailored to meet the needs and interests of local participants. Considerations include the timing of meetings, length of meetings, languages used, location of meetings, whether local assistants need to be employed for making introductions or facilitating meetings, how confidentiality may or may not be maintained, cultural or political sensitivities, and the economic or financial position of communities and participants that may influence how people respond to the assessment. In some cases, the most marginalised people may not even be aware of a marine conservation initiative or specific terminology (e.g., MPA or OECM). They may be aware of conservation or management work in their area, or the presence of scientists, but they may not have knowledge of the marine conservation initiative itself because they were not included in any of the design or implementation processes. As it is critically important to include groups who are subject to structural marginalisation within an assessment, assessment teams should reflect on whether they need to include educational components within their project.

Additionally, we strongly encourage assessment teams to include all dimensions and attributes of equity within their assessments (Table 2). At the same time, it is important to recognise that not all dimensions and attributes of equity will have the same meaning and relevance for all social contexts and every marine conservation initiative. Though the questions in the guidebook have been tested in case studies, the specific wording of survey questions may need to be adapted (or translated) to suit local conditions. If any questions seem to be ill-fitted to a particular context, it is advised to modify the question based on the corresponding attribute, rather than simply omit the question. Preliminary testing of survey questions is an important step for understanding levels of awareness and subsequently adapting assessment methods.

Plan for logistical factors

Logistical considerations include the need to identify suitable meeting locations and ensure access for all participants. Timing is another important consideration, both in terms of the time of the month or year (e.g., it is often best to schedule the assessment outside of peak livelihood activities) and how long participants are expected to commit to the process. It is also important to consider how an equity assessment will intersect with other assessments that managers or other stakeholders and rightsholders may be engaged in. Burnout and fatigue can be an important consideration for communities who have many requests placed on them for assessments and/or research.

Another practical consideration relates to how the assessment team will document and store responses from participants. If laptops or handheld tablets are available, it may be helpful to make use of technologies for recording responses (e.g., Excel spreadsheets or Google forms). In some places and contexts, it may be most appropriate to print questions and record all responses on paper. Assessment teams should plan for such details early on so that they are prepared once their assessment begins.

Foster appreciation for diverse knowledge systems

Recognising plural knowledge systems and diverse worldviews, and taking steps to ensure these are respectfully integrated, can bring a lot of value to an equity assessment. The norm is often to try to integrate pieces of local or traditional knowledge systems into an assessment dominated by a 'Western' knowledge system. This can serve to reproduce ongoing harms, disengage Indigenous Peoples and local communities from an assessment process, and miss opportunities to gain important insights and perceptions (Tengö et al. 2014). Where Indigenous knowledge systems and local knowledge systems occur that are distinct from Western knowledge systems, appropriate processes and forums should be established to build understanding of their characteristics, for example the worldviews at their core, how people–nature relations are perceived and how customary governance functions, and to bridge those knowledge systems (Orlove et al. 2023). Resources for further reading about the value and importance of diverse knowledge systems include Berkes (2017), Brondizio et al. (2021), and Reid et al. (2021). Literature on decolonising methodologies can also be helpful for assessment teams who would like to learn more about approaches that challenge and de-centre Western approaches and knowledge (e.g., Smith 2021).



© Green Renaissance / WWF-UK



Carrying out an assessment

Employ principles for community engagement

When engaging marine conservation initiative stakeholders and rightsholders it is important to approach those relationships with genuine humility, respect, and commitment to learning. Conducting a good community-based assessment involves listening more than speaking, valuing participants' knowledge and experiences, and being transparent about goals, methods, and how participants' information will be used. It also means being patient and remaining flexible as potential participants have their own livelihoods and commitments that affect their availability to participate in an equity assessment. Building trust and good relationships can take time and depends on mutual respect, transparency, and accountability. It is important to carefully explain the intent, goals, and expected outcomes of an assessment, and how the assessment relates to the marine conservation initiative, and community needs and priorities.

Include desk-based research

Each assessment option can and should be paired with desk-based research (e.g., reviewing reports and websites). Before communicating with participants, assessment teams should have a sound understanding of governance contexts, economic and political history of the area, marine conservation initiative management plans, and other social dimensions that intersect with marine conservation initiative policy and management. Desktop research related to stakeholder and rightsholder groups will also be valuable for ensuring that research teams are familiar with the participants who will be involved in an assessment. Additional desk-based research can also be conducted throughout the assessment process in order to follow up on important information and review additional materials identified by participants.

Understand local history and context

The contextual and structural dimensions of equity require teams conducting an equity assessment to have an understanding of local history and context. Knowledge of local history and context may be derived through team members who are from the local community, past research or employment experience in the area, desk-based research, or a combination of these. This understanding could include, for example:

- Socio-political history, including economic exploitation and colonial and racial influences on local and national governments and economy.
- History of conservation initiatives within the country and locally, and how conservation has been supported or opposed by local communities.
- Indigenous and local knowledge systems at a site and implications for a respectful, inclusive assessment process.
- The process of establishment and the ongoing governance of relevant marine conservation initiatives, including knowledge of the drivers, proponents and funders of those initiatives and

how different initiatives may have overlapped in space and time. For instance, it is important to understand the role of international NGOs in establishing or managing a marine conservation initiative. It is also important to understand the level of community support for, and involvement in, the establishment and ongoing management of a marine conservation initiative.

- ▾ Any social, economic, or political conditions that influence the status of local people and those who have been impacted by a marine conservation initiative. These conditions might include local levels of poverty and access to basic needs, factors that constrain or prohibit the ways that people are able to participate in customary livelihood activities, and how national politics and governance affect local people’s ability to engage in decision-making processes. Understanding these issues and factors can help an assessment team make decisions about disaggregation of data during analysis (e.g., separation of important subgroups for analysis, such as cultural, spiritual, or livelihood relation to marine resources).

Understanding local history and context – especially for historically marginalized or equity-deserving groups – can help assessment teams appreciate if and when follow-up questions may be helpful during surveys. For instance, a participant may not initially share personal or sensitive information about their experience or perspectives, or they may not think that it is valuable to share certain types of information. If an interviewer is familiar with local contexts, they can provide helpful prompts (e.g., “What about ... ? Can you tell me more about your experiences with ... ?”).



© Green Renaissance / WWF-UK

Identify and recruit assessment participants

Identifying all relevant rightsholders and stakeholders is essential for an inclusive assessment process. Equity assessments will typically include a rightsholder and stakeholder mapping exercise (or actor analysis) to identify groups who should be invited to participate. Even for the rapid assessment, it can be useful to identify all stakeholders and rightsholders so that those completing the assessment can consider the different perspectives of these diverse groups.

The following list is a starting point for identifying diverse stakeholder and rightsholder groups during an actor mapping exercise:

- People living within and adjacent to the marine conservation initiative's boundaries.
- People who have been directly or indirectly impacted by the marine conservation initiative.
- People who were displaced due to the establishment of the marine conservation initiative (and may no longer be living in the area).
- Rightsholders – including Indigenous Peoples, small-scale fishers, and other traditional resource users in and near the area of the marine conservation initiative.
- Resource user groups who do not have specific resource use rights – including fishers or aquaculture cooperatives, and people engaged in activities such as shellfish collection.
- Groups representing special interests – including religious groups, ethnic minorities, youth, women, and elders.
- Government and non-governmental organisations with responsibilities related to the marine conservation initiative.
- Government and non-governmental organisations with interests related to the marine conservation initiative.

Assessment teams should work collaboratively with several key informants who are able to help identify all relevant stakeholders and rightsholders (Franks 2023).

Once stakeholders and rightsholders have been identified, the next step will be to select individuals who will be invited to participate in the assessment. For a rapid equity assessment, the selection process is not necessary since only managers will be directly involved; however, it can still be useful to conduct a mapping exercise to ensure that the assessment considers the interests of all important actor groups. For a stakeholders and rightsholders equity assessment, as well as the co-produced and customised option, the selection process will take into consideration the total number of participants that the assessment team wants to reach, as well as potential methods for selecting individuals such as simple random sampling, cluster sampling, or stratification (for further reading on these topics see Glew et al. 2012; FishForever 2019; WWF 2022). It can be helpful to consult with local leaders who can advise on any potential conflicts within or between groups, as well as how to manage representation among groups. As issues during sampling and selection of participants can lead to biased responses during the equity assessment, we recommend that the assessment team be trained and knowledgeable about sampling strategies. The co-produced and customised equity assessment, as a comprehensive and in-depth approach, is likely to include a larger number of stakeholders and rightsholders (within the limits of budgets and resources).



Recruitment (invitations) for individuals to participate in an assessment can occur via direct conversations, telephone calls, emails, or other locally relevant communications. Recruitment should be clear and transparent about the purpose of an assessment, methods that will be used, and anticipated outcomes. Potential participants should be given full information about expectations for their participation, how their contributions will be used, and whether their participation will be anonymous or not (in most small communities it can be very difficult to ensure anonymity). Assessment teams need to explain any anticipated benefits or risks for individuals who participate in an assessment. Incentives for participation (e.g., small cash honorariums or gift cards) have become common in some places but the assessment team should also be aware that monetary incentives can have perverse effects (e.g., participants giving answers that they believe the assessment team or managers want to hear). Any incentives should carefully be considered by an assessment team and decisions should be made in consultation with local authorities and key partners in the assessment.

Analyse and visualise results

Assessment teams often emphasise the data collection aspects of an assessment. However, the analysis and presentation of results are equally important for moving towards actions and changes. This guidebook is not prescriptive about how to carry out analyses or present results but several ideas are included here. Visualisation of results can be especially helpful and important where people are not able to read full reports, or simply are not willing or interested to read an assessment report. Graphics and charts can be effective ways of sharing main results and generating discussion (e.g., at a community meeting where assessment results are presented).

Although a rapid equity assessment is based on only one or a few participants' perspectives, it can still be helpful to visually display the results (e.g., comparing scores across the six equity dimensions to show areas of strength and areas of concern). While a stakeholders and rightsholders equity assessment will include more responses, the sample size will likely not be large enough to necessitate statistical analyses. (An assessment team may choose to apply a random sampling technique and larger sample size to make inferences about a larger population, although this is not described within this guidebook).

Figure 9 shows a variety of ways to present data:

- Bar charts (top-left) are useful for showing total values across basic categories.
- Line graphs (top-middle) can be used to display changes over time.
- Radial graphs (top-right) and spider graphs (bottom-left) can be useful to display data across categories in interesting ways.
- Compound diverging stacked bar charts (bottom-middle) are a useful way to display data that includes range and frequency of responses.
- Box plots (bottom-right) help understand variations in responses and levels of agreement across categories.



FIGURE 9: OPTIONS FOR PRESENTATION OF RESULTS OF EQUITY ASSESSMENTS.

Assessment teams should consider the potential to disaggregate their data across gender or other demographic groups in order to gain a deeper understanding of differences or similarities between groups. Disaggregated and intersectional analysis of the data can be particularly instructive in understanding whether historically or structurally marginalised, or equity-deserving, groups are being treated equitably. This may only be possible with methods that include the collection of information about different groups (e.g., age, gender, occupation).



Moving from assessment to action

While the collection of data and carrying out analyses are important for learning, an assessment on its own does not inherently lead to action or change. Conducting an equity assessment and analysing the results are critical steps, but learning and using the results to improve equity is an ongoing process. We recommend reconvening participants to validate, clarify, and interpret results, coordinating discussion to identify and prioritise potential actions, and designating roles and responsibilities to determine next steps for those prioritised actions.

Communicate results to end-users and participants

Communication of results is a key path to enable adaptive management. Results of the equity assessments should be communicated in a format that is accessible to end-users, participants, and other audiences. Communication efforts can include written reports and summary documents so that people can review the results at their own pace. A suggested table of contents for an assessment report could include:

- ▾ Summary
- ▾ Introduction
 - What is social equity?
 - Why it is important to assess social equity
 - Marine conservation initiative description and management plan
 - Steps in the assessment
- ▾ Assessment results
 - Who participated in the assessment
 - Participants' level of satisfaction and support for the marine conservation initiative
 - Recognitional equity
 - Procedural equity
 - Management equity
 - Environmental equity
 - Distributional equity
 - Contextual and structural equity
- ▾ Conclusion
 - Summary and implications of findings
 - Potential next steps

Verbal presentations of results can also be very important for people who do not read, and to provide opportunities for audiences to ask questions and clarify results. While some people will be drawn towards quantified results and figures, it is most important to emphasise the conversations that need to happen in light of the summarised results.

Regardless of which assessment option was used, bringing together rightsholders and stakeholders, key decision-makers, managers, and other interested parties can promote validation of results, identification of solutions, legitimacy of those solutions for affected actors, and development of a plan for action. Discussion can also help to explain any unexpected or apparently contradictory results, especially related to the stakeholders and rightsholders or the co-produced and customised equity assessments. In the case of a rapid assessment, results can be presented as a reflection of managers' perceptions, providing an opportunity to ask if other actors agree, disagree, or have additional perspectives to share, generating further discussion on important topics.

Deliberate on results and select actions

As introduced earlier in Figure 2, equity assessments need to emphasise the learning journey and the importance of bringing people together to reflect and deliberate on results and then consider potential actions to improve equity. It is important to (1) communicate and learn to support learning and inform decision-making, (2) set up forums for deliberation and selection of potential actions, (3) ensure that actors are able to implement those actions, and (4) commit to ongoing cycles of monitoring, evaluation, learning, and adapting to respond to evolving conditions (Bennett et al. 2025).

Meaningful deliberation among participants about equity assessment results and potential actions to address key equity gaps or weaknesses is a critical step in improving actual social equity outcomes. Encouraging all participants to join in a learning journey and maintain curiosity about each other can help generate meaningful and constructive dialogue. Table 3, while not comprehensive, provides some examples of types of actions that may be considered in response to the results of an equity assessment. As some potential actions can be taken that address issues across dimensions, assessment teams and participants (e.g., managers, stakeholders, rightsholders, decision-makers) should think broadly. Discussions can include the costs of action or inaction, as this is important for exploring multiple ways forward. There is also an element of pragmatism, where participants should consider what actions may be feasible, practical, and enduring, given available capacities and resources. As different groups participating in this process will have differing priorities and capacities, it can be helpful to collaboratively generate a matrix with urgency-importance-feasibility criteria for each potential action to help set priorities. This type of matrix, in combination with assigning actions, can help groups to 'own' specific actions. At the same time, pragmatism needs to be balanced with courage to take bold actions that can lead to meaningful changes and improvements to equity.



TABLE 3: EXAMPLES OF POTENTIAL ACTIONS THAT CAN BE TAKEN FOR EACH DIMENSION OF EQUITY.

 DIMENSIONS OF SOCIAL EQUITY	 EXAMPLE ATTRIBUTES OF CONCERN	POTENTIAL ACTIONS
 RECOGNITIONAL	The value of Indigenous and local knowledge are not acknowledged	Explore potential to further include Indigenous and/or local knowledge in monitoring and planning through advisory groups or engagement about specific topics.
	Not all local groups are recognised as legitimate stakeholders or rightsholders	Review the ways that each rightsholder and stakeholder group is recognised and respected within management plans; evaluate potential to update management plans with stronger recognition.
 PROCEDURAL	Not all actors feel that they are represented and/or have an influence on decisions	Develop new processes that ensure specific actor groups (or subgroups, such as women or youth) are able to influence decisions that affect them.
	Stakeholders or rightsholders are not familiar with mechanisms to raise concerns related to managers of conservation initiative	Put dispute resolution processes in place and ensure that all stakeholders and rightsholders are aware of them.
 MANAGEMENT	Local people are not represented in marine conservation initiative leadership roles	Increase capacity-building and training that can enable greater management authority for local groups.
	Enforcement of marine conservation initiative rules is not seen as fair for all people	Evaluate why certain groups may receive more infractions and penalties. Determine if adjustments can be made to rules or enforcement that will ensure greater fairness.
 ENVIRONMENTAL	Management agency does not have sufficient capacity to support environmental goals	Advocate to government agencies to provide additional resources (funding) and training to ensure that the management agency can fulfil its mandate.
	Uncertainty about whether marine conservation initiative has led to environmental improvements	Work with academic researchers to develop monitoring programmes.
 DISTRIBUTIONAL	Uncertainty about whether marine conservation initiative has been positive for local people	Conduct assessments of local livelihoods and well-being to determine whether and how local people are being affected (benefits and costs).
	Livelihood and economic opportunities are not shared fairly	Engage groups who have been negatively impacted by conservation to jointly determine fair compensation. Determine what constitutes a fair distribution of benefits for local actors and implement an appropriate benefit-sharing mechanism.
 CONTEXTUAL AND STRUCTURAL	Environmental changes negatively impact local people	Prepare climate change adaptation plans to ensure that managers are able to anticipate potential risks and develop transformative actions.
	Colonisation continues to have impacts on local people	Broaden awareness about historical and ongoing injustices that impact local people, especially those who are stakeholders and rightsholders in relation to the marine conservation initiative.

Commit to actions and ongoing learning

Regardless of which assessment option is pursued, it is important to commit to actions that can improve equity. It is important to ensure that all involved actors have the resources and skills to implement the selected actions. Designating roles and responsibilities (who will be taking on each action and how accountability is determined) helps to clarify this for the group. Since potential actions are context-specific and can range from a change in future distribution of benefits to advocacy for policy change to capacity-building for alternative livelihoods, it is not possible to specify here exactly what resources and skills will be needed.

It is also critical to commit to ongoing cycles of monitoring, evaluation, learning, and adapting to respond to evolving conditions. Informal insights and learning are likely to be ongoing (e.g., by a manager who observes or listens about impacts on certain actors), but formalised assessment processes help to document learning that is shared across actor groups. If possible, integrating equity assessments with ongoing adaptive management exercises can reduce strain on limited resources, and make it easier to see linkages between equity and other aspects of marine conservation initiative management (including potential actions).



© Green Renaissance / WWF-UK

Conclusion



© Nicolas Axelrod-RUOM / WWF-US

Assessment teams – who can include any combination of managers of marine conservation initiatives, community organisations, government agencies, NGOs, researchers, or other organisations – should feel empowered to use and lead equity assessments based on any of the options introduced in this guidebook. At the same time, they should ensure that they have the capacity to carry out an equity assessment thoughtfully, and that stakeholders and rightsholders are both willing and able to participate. We have attempted to provide guidance by building from the extensive literature on equity.

Evaluating progress towards equity is a first step towards addressing any past issues with meaningful involvement or negative consequences of marine conservation initiatives. This guidebook is intended to support local, case-specific learning in ways that lead to action and change. A single assessment only provides an indication of the status of a marine conservation initiative's impacts at a given moment in time, while repeated assessments over time can better support long-term improvements.

Benefits from this guidebook are most likely to arise through meaningful collaboration and effective communication. When teams lead equity assessments in a way that is inclusive and respectful, they are more likely to lead towards action to address inequities. Communication through all phases of an assessment is important for ensuring that all actors feel included and part of the assessment process. A willingness to learn and a commitment to action will ultimately bring about improvements that lead to more equitable and effective marine conservation.

References cited

- Anariba, S.E.B., Sanders, A. & Canty, S.W. (2025). Promoting gender equity in marine protected areas: A self-assessment tool. *Marine Policy*, 173, p.106526.
- Adams, V.M., Chauvenet, A.L., Stoudmann, N., Gurney, G.G., Brockington, D. & Kuempel, C.D. (2023). Multiple-use protected areas are critical to equitable and effective conservation. *One Earth*, 6(9), pp.1173-1189.
- Ban, N.C., Gurney, G.G., Marshall, N.A., Whitney, C.K., Mills, M., Gelcich, S., Bennett, N.J., Meehan, M.C., Butler, C., Ban, S. & Tran, T.C. (2019). Well-being outcomes of marine protected areas. *Nature sustainability*, 2(6), pp.524-532.
- Bennett, N.J., Cisneros-Montemayor, A.M., Blythe, J., Silver, J.J., Singh, G., Andrews, N., Calò, A., Christie, P., Di Franco, A., Finkbeiner, E.M. & Gelcich, S. (2019). Towards a sustainable and equitable blue economy. *Nature Sustainability*, 2(11), pp.991-993.
- Bennett, N.J., Calò, A., Di Franco, A., Niccolini, F., Marzo, D., Domina, I., Dimitriadis, C., Sobrado, F., Santoni, M.C., Charbonnel, E. & Trujillo, M. (2020). Social equity and marine protected areas: perceptions of small-scale fishermen in the Mediterranean Sea. *Biological Conservation*, 244, p.108531.
- Bennett, N.J., Katz, L., Yadao-Evans, W., Ahmadi, G.N., Atkinson, S., Ban, N.C., Dawson, N.M., de Vos, A., Fitzpatrick, J., Gill, D. & Imirizaldu, M. (2021). Advancing social equity in and through marine conservation. *Frontiers in Marine Science*, 8, p.711538.
- Bennett, N.J., Relano, V., Roubledakis, K., Blythe, J., Andrachuk, M., Claudet, J., Dawson, N., Gill, D., Lazzari, N., Mahajan, S.L. & Muhl, E.K. (2025). Ocean equity: from assessment to action to improve social equity in ocean governance. *Frontiers in Marine Science*, 12, p.1473382.
- Bennett, N.J. & Satterfield, T. (2018). Environmental governance: A practical framework to guide design, evaluation, and analysis. *Conservation Letters*, 11(6), p.e12600.
- Berkes, F. (2017). *Sacred Ecology*. Routledge.
- Blythe, J.L., Gill, D.A., Claudet, J., Bennett, N.J., Gurney, G.G., Baggio, J.A., Ban, N.C., Bernard, M.L., Brun, V., Darling, E.S. & Di Franco, A. (2023). Blue justice: A review of emerging scholarship and resistance movements. *Cambridge Prisms: Coastal Futures*, 1, p.e15.
- Brondízio, E.S., Aumeeruddy-Thomas, Y., Bates, P., Carino, J., Fernández-Llamazares, Á., Ferrari, M.F., Galvin, K., Reyes-García, V., McElwee, P., Molnár, Z. & Samakov, A. (2021). Locally based, regionally manifested, and globally relevant: Indigenous and local knowledge, values, and practices for nature. *Annual Review of Environment and Resources*, 46(1), pp.481-509.

- CBD. (2022). Kunming-Montreal Global biodiversity framework. Convention on Biological Diversity. Montreal, Canada. <https://doi.org/10.5281/ZENODO.3831673>
- Chaigneau, T. & Brown, K. (2016). Challenging the win-win discourse on conservation and development: analyzing support for marine protected areas. *Ecology and Society*, 21(1).
- Dawson, N., Coolsaet, B., Sterling, E., Loveridge, R., Gross-Camp, N., Wongbusarakum, S., Sangha, K., Scherl, L., Phan, H., Zafra-Calvo, N., Lavey, W., Byakagaba, P., Idrobo, C. J., Chenet, A., Bennett, N., Mansourian, S., & Rosado-May, F. (2021). The role of Indigenous peoples and local communities in effective and equitable conservation. *Ecology and Society*, 26(3). <https://doi.org/10.5751/ES-12625-260319>
- Dawson, N.M., Coolsaet, B., Bhardwaj, A., Booker, F., Brown, D., Lliso, B., Loos, J., Martin, A., Oliva, M., Pascual, U. & Sherpa, P. (2024). Is it just conservation? A typology of Indigenous peoples' and local communities' roles in conserving biodiversity. *One Earth*.
- de Vos, A., Cambroner-Solano, S., Mangubhai, S., Nefdt, L., Woodall, L.C. & Stefanoudis, P.V. (2023). Towards equity and justice in ocean sciences. *npj Ocean Sustainability*, 2(1), p.25.
- Engen, S., Hausner, V.H., Gurney, G.G., Broderstad, E.G., Keller, R., Lundberg, A.K., Murguzur, F.J.A., Salminen, E., Raymond, C.M., Falk-Andersson, J. & Fauchald, P. (2021). Blue justice: A survey for eliciting perceptions of environmental justice among coastal planners' and small-scale fishers in Northern-Norway. *PLoS One*, 16(5), p.e0251467.
- Ermine, W. (2007). The ethical space of engagement. *Indigenous LJ*, 6, p.193.
- FishForever. (2019). Household Surveys: A guide for planning and implementation. Vance, C., Cox, C., and Valdivia, A. (Eds). Rare, Inc. Arlington, Virginia, 30 pp. Updated Apr 02 2021.
- Franks, P. (2023). Site-Level Assessment of Governance and Equity (SAGE) for Protected and Conserved Areas; Manual for SAGE Facilitators. International Institute for Environment and Development (IIED): London, UK.
- Glew, L., M.B. Mascia & F. Pakiding. (2012). Solving the Mystery of MPA Performance: monitoring social impacts. Field Manual (version 1.0). World Wildlife Fund and Universitas Negeri Papua, Washington D.C. and Manokwari, Indonesia.
- Gurney, G.G., Mangubhai, S., Fox, M., Kim, M.K. & Agrawal, A. (2021). Equity in environmental governance: perceived fairness of distributional justice principles in marine co-management. *Environmental Science & Policy*, 124, pp.23-32.
- Gurney, G.G., Adams, V.M., Álvarez-Romero, J.G. & Claudet, J. (2023). Area-based conservation: Taking stock and looking ahead. *One Earth*, 6(2), pp.98-104.

- Hampton-Smith, M., Gurney, G.G., Morrison, T.H. & Cinner, J.E. (2024a). Equity in global conservation policy varies in clarity and comprehensiveness. *One Earth*, 7(11), pp.1970-1980.
- Hampton-Smith, M., Gurney, G.G. & Cinner, J.E. (2024b). A systematic review of equity perceptions and outcomes in marine conservation. *Biological Conservation*, 289, p.110395.
- Jones, N. (2024). *Self-determination as Voice: The Participation of Indigenous Peoples in International Governance*. Cambridge University Press.
- Lockwood, M. (2010). Good governance for terrestrial protected areas: A framework, principles and performance outcomes. *Journal of Environmental Management*, 91(3), pp.754-766.
- Mahajan, S. L., Obiene, S., Ojwang, L., Olwero, N., Valdivia, A., Wosu, A., ... & Ahmadi, G. (2024). Introducing Elinor for monitoring the governance and management of area-based conservation. *Conservation Biology*, 38(2), p.e14213.
- Oracion, E.G. (2015). "A case study of politics over local knowledge and practices in marine protected area development and management." In *Indigenous Culture, Education and Globalization: Critical Perspectives from Asia*, pp. 81-98. Berlin, Heidelberg: Springer Berlin Heidelberg.
- Orlove, B., Sherpa, P., Dawson, N., Adelekan, I., Alangui, W., Carmona, R., Coen, D., Nelson, M.K., Reyes-García, V., Rubis, J. & Sanago, G. (2023). Placing diverse knowledge systems at the core of transformative climate research. *Ambio*, 52(9), pp.1431-1447.
- Österblom, H., Wabnitz, C.C., Tladi, D., Allison, E.H., Arnaud-Haond, S., Bebbington, J., Bennett, N., Blasiak, R., Boonstra, W., Choudhury, A. & Cisneros-Montemayor, A. (2023). Towards ocean equity. In *The Blue Compendium: From Knowledge to Action for a Sustainable Ocean Economy* (pp. 485-521). Cham: Springer International Publishing.
- Outeiro, L., Gajardo, C., Oyarzo, H., Ther, F., Cornejo, P., Villasante, S. & Ventine, L.B. (2015). Framing local ecological knowledge to value marine ecosystem services for the customary sea tenure of aboriginal communities in southern Chile. *Ecosystem Services*, 16, pp.354-364.
- Pascual, U., Phelps, J., Garmendia, E., Brown, K., Corbera, E., Martin, A., Gomez-Baggethun, E. & Muradian, R. (2014). Social equity matters in payments for ecosystem services. *Bioscience*, 64(11), pp.1027-1036.
- Petriello, M. A., Zurba, M., Schmidt, J. O., Anthony, K., Jacque, N., Nochasak, C., ... & McLaren, M. (2022). The power and precarity of knowledge co-production: A case study of Sakkijânginnaniattut Nunatsiavut Sivunitsangit (the Sustainable Nunatsiavut Futures Project). In *Transdisciplinary Marine Research* (pp. 127-148). Routledge.
- Reid, A.J., Eckert, L.E., Lane, J.F., Young, N., Hinch, S.G., Darimont, C.T., Cooke, S.J., Ban, N.C. & Marshall, A. (2021). "Two-Eyed Seeing": An Indigenous framework to transform fisheries research and management. *Fish and Fisheries*, 22(2), pp.243-261.

- Ruano-Chamorro, C., Gurney, G.G. & Cinner, J.E. (2022). Advancing procedural justice in conservation. *Conservation Letters*, 15(3), p.e12861.
- Ruano-Chamorro, C., Gurney, G. G., Mangubhai, S., Fox, M., Lau, J., Naisilisili, W., ... & Cinner, J. E. (2024). Perceived equity in marine management and conservation: Exploring gender intersectionality in Fiji. *Biological Conservation*, 296, p.110692.
- Saif, O., Keane, A. & Staddon, S. (2022). Making a case for the consideration of trust, justice, and power in conservation relationships. *Conservation Biology*, 36(4), p.e13903.
- Sandbrook, C., Albury-Smith, S., Allan, J.R., Bhola, N., Bingham, H.C., Brockington, D., Byaruhanga, A.B., Fajardo, J., Fitzsimons, J., Franks, P. & Fleischman, F. (2023). Social considerations are crucial to success in implementing the 30× 30 global conservation target. *Nature Ecology & Evolution*, 7(6), pp.784-785.
- Singh, G.G., Keefer, J. & Ota, Y. (2023). An inequity assessment framework for planning coastal and marine conservation and development interventions. *Frontiers in Marine Science*, 10, p.1256500.
- Smallhorn-West, P., Allison, E., Gurney, G., Karnad, D., Kretser, H., Lobo, A.S., Mangubhai, S., Newing, H., Pennell, K., Raj, S. & Tilley, A. (2023). Why human rights matter for marine conservation. *Frontiers in Marine Science*, 10, p.1089154.
- Smith, L.T. (2021). *Decolonizing Methodologies: Research and Indigenous Peoples*. Bloomsbury Publishing.
- Sowman, M. & Sunde, J. (2018). Social impacts of marine protected areas in South Africa on coastal fishing communities. *Ocean & coastal management*, 157, pp.168-179.
- Springer, N., Musengezi, J., Hunter, E.O., Kaiser, C. & Shyamsundar, P. (2021). Using economics in conservation practice: Insights from a global environmental organization. *Conservation Science and Practice*, 3(5), p.e377.
- Sterling, E., Ticktin, T., Morgan, T.K.K., Cullman, G., Alvira, D., Andrade, P., Bergamini, N., Betley, E., Burrows, K., Caillon, S. & Claudet, J. (2017). Culturally grounded indicators of resilience in social-ecological systems. *Environment and Society*, 8(1), pp.63-95.
- Sullivan-Stack, J., Ahmadi, G.N., Andradi-Brown, D.A., Barron, A., Brooks, C.M., Claudet, J., e Costa, B.H., Field, L.C., Giakoumi, S., Gonçalves, E. & Groulx, N. (2024). Assessments of expected MPA outcomes can inform and improve biodiversity conservation: Case studies using The MPA Guide. *Marine Policy*, 170, p.106364.
- Tengö, M., Brondizio, E.S., Elmqvist, T., Malmer, P. & Spierenburg, M. (2014). Connecting diverse knowledge systems for enhanced ecosystem governance: the multiple evidence base approach. *Ambio*, 43, pp.579-591.

United Nations. (2007). United Nations Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples.

<http://www.converge.org.nz/pma/DRIPGA.pdf>

WWF. (2022). Elinor: Assessing equitable management and governance for area-based conservation, Assessment tool and protocol: Version 2022.1. Washington, D.C.

Wyborn, C., Datta, A., Montana, J., Ryan, M., Leith, P., Chaffin, B., Miller, C. & Van Kerkhoff, L. (2019). Co-producing sustainability: reordering the governance of science, policy, and practice. *Annual Review of Environment and Resources*, 44, pp.319-346.

Zafra-Calvo, N., Pascual, U., Brockington, D., Coolsaet, B., Cortes-Vazquez, J.A., Gross-Camp, N., Palomo, I. & Burgess, N.D. (2017). Towards an indicator system to assess equitable management in protected areas. *Biological Conservation*, 211, pp.134-141.

Zafra-Calvo, N., Garmendia, E., Pascual, U., Palomo, I., Gross-Camp, N., Brockington, D., Cortes-Vazquez, J.A., Coolsaet, B. & Burgess, N.D. (2019). Progress toward equitably managed protected areas in Aichi target 11: a global survey. *BioScience*, 69(3), pp.191-197.

Zurba, M., Petriello, M. A., Madge, C., McCarney, P., Bishop, B., McBeth, S., ... & Bailey, M. (2022). Learning from knowledge co-production research and practice in the twenty-first century: global lessons and what they mean for collaborative research in Nunatsiavut. *Sustainability Science*, 17(2), pp.449-467.

Supplementary materials

↳ Guidance, forms, and instruments for three equity assessment approaches





Assessment option 1: Rapid equity assessment



KEY FEATURES

- Quick insights into key equity issues; can be used in combination with other ongoing assessments
- **Participants:** Managers and/ or key experts with knowledge of the marine conservation initiative
- **Methods:** Surveys of key informants or self-assessment
- **Time required for participants:** Introductory meeting with all participants (1 hour), one-on-one survey with each participant (1-2 hours), debrief and follow-up meeting with all participants (1-2 hours)
- **Time required for assessment lead:** 1-3 weeks



WHEN TO USE THIS APPROACH

- Use this approach when a rapid snapshot is required, or if local capacity and funding for assessments is very limited



PATHWAYS TO CHANGE

- Written and verbal reports to managers and local leaders
- Use surveys and report to raise awareness about key equity concerns and increase support for change
- Help assessment participants with how to talk about potential equity issues or concerns through reflection
- Build support for more in-depth future equity assessments



LIMITATIONS

- Not designed for capturing perspectives or concerns directly from stakeholders and rightsholders
- Positionality of assessment participant(s) is inherently limited to their own knowledge and assumptions (e.g., managers are relatively influential and powerful positions and may not be fully aware of other actors' perspectives), and therefore results can be biased
- Based on a limited number of people's perspectives

The following materials can be used for carrying out a rapid social equity assessment of a marine conservation initiative. This package contains the following materials:

1. A reference table that provides an overview of attributes and questions related to different dimensions of equity.
2. An information sheet about the marine conservation initiative to be filled out by the assessment team.
3. A script explaining the purpose of the survey, informed consent, and format of the survey.
4. A script for verbal consent.
5. A form for written consent.
6. The survey tool for the rapid equity assessment.

In many cases, these templates will need to be edited, adapted, and/or translated to suit local contexts. An important starting point will be for assessment teams and key collaborators to review the equity attributes and survey questions in the table on the following pages. Any adjustments to the survey statements should maintain the meaning and intent of the related attribute(s). Assessment teams will then need to apply any changes to the survey questions template and then test the questions with local community representatives.



Table of rapid equity assessment attributes and questions

EQUITY DIMENSION	ATTRIBUTE	SURVEY QUESTION
 RECOGNITIONAL	All relevant groups recognised	Are all relevant people and groups recognised as legitimate actors (rightsholders or stakeholders) in marine conservation initiative planning and management?
	Basic human rights are respected	Are basic human rights (e.g., access to food, education, good health, safety and security) respected within marine conservation initiative planning and management?
	Marine use, tenure, and access rights are recognised and incorporated	Are all rightsholders' marine use, tenure, and access rights formally recognised and incorporated into marine conservation initiative planning and management?
	Resource users are recognised as rightsholders	Are small-scale fishers (SSF) and/or other customary resource users recognised as legitimate rightsholders in marine conservation initiative planning and management?
	Small-scale fishers' rights are respected	Are small-scale fishers' and/or other customary resource users' rights respected within marine conservation initiative planning and management?
	Indigenous Peoples are recognised as rightsholders	Are Indigenous Peoples recognised as legitimate rightsholders in marine conservation initiative planning and management?
	Indigenous rights are respected	Are Indigenous rights respected within marine conservation initiative planning and management?
	Cultural identities, values, and practices are acknowledged	Are the cultural identities, values, and practices of local communities and groups acknowledged and incorporated into marine conservation initiative planning and management?
	Consideration is given for people who receive fewer opportunities	Has consideration been given to the interests and rights of people who often receive fewer economic or livelihood opportunities?
	Value of Indigenous and local knowledge are acknowledged	Is the knowledge of local people (including knowledge that is Indigenous, local, and/or multi-generational) acknowledged in marine conservation initiative planning and management?

 EQUITY DIMENSION	 ATTRIBUTE	 SURVEY QUESTION
 <p>PROCEDURAL</p>	<p>Effective participation and feedback from local people</p>	<p>Are there processes in place to facilitate effective participation and gather feedback from local people to help inform marine conservation initiative decision-making?</p>
	<p>Representation and influence on decisions</p>	<p>Are all actor groups represented and able to participate in decision-making related to marine conservation initiative planning and management?</p>
	<p>Processes are in place to enable people to influence decisions</p>	<p>Are there processes in place that enable people to influence what decisions are made about the marine conservation initiative?</p>
	<p>Information about decision-making is easy to access</p>	<p>Is information about what decisions were made in relation to the marine conservation initiative, how they were made, and why they were made are easy to find and access?</p>
	<p>Stakeholders able to raise concerns about management</p>	<p>Are local people able to raise concerns related to management actions?</p>
	<p>Satisfactory dispute resolution with managers</p>	<p>Are there processes in place for people to resolve disputes that they have with marine conservation initiative management?</p>
	<p>Satisfactory dispute resolution with other stakeholders</p>	<p>Are there processes in place for people to resolve disputes that they have with other people (non-management) in relation to the marine conservation initiative?</p>
	<p>Decisions are made after free, prior, and informed consent</p>	<p>Are decisions that affect rightsholders made after obtaining and documenting free, prior, and informed consent (FPIC), or some form of engagement?</p>
 <p>MANAGEMENT</p>	<p>Local groups share or hold management authority</p>	<p>Have government authorities shared or transferred management authority with/to local communities or groups?</p>
	<p>Local groups have agency to carry out management activities</p>	<p>Do local groups have agency to carry out management activities (e.g., environmental monitoring, stewardship activities, enforcement) based on local knowledge and practices?</p>
	<p>Local people are employed in management (staff) roles</p>	<p>Are local groups and communities employed in marine conservation initiative management (staff) roles and/or in carrying out management activities?</p>
	<p>Local people are represented in marine conservation initiative leadership roles</p>	<p>Are local communities and groups represented (e.g., employed, elected) in leadership roles in marine conservation initiative management?</p>
	<p>Sufficient funding to support participation in management</p>	<p>Is there sufficient funding to support local people's participation, leadership, and working in marine conservation initiative management activities?</p>
	<p>Secure funding to support participation in management</p>	<p>Is there secure funding to support local participation, capacity, and leadership for marine conservation initiative management activities?</p>
	<p>Enforcement of marine conservation initiative rules is fair for all people</p>	<p>Is enforcement of marine conservation initiative rules and regulations fair for all people?</p>

 EQUITY DIMENSION	 ATTRIBUTE	 SURVEY QUESTION
 <p>ENVIRONMENTAL</p>	<p>Marine conservation initiative is in a good location to produce environmental benefits</p>	<p>Is enforcement of marine conservation initiative rules and regulations fair for all people?</p>
	<p>Adequate management capacity to support environmental goals</p>	<p>Does marine conservation initiative management have sufficient capacity to support environmental goals?</p>
	<p>Management plans are effective for achieving environmental goals</p>	<p>Are current management plans and/or actions effective at achieving marine conservation initiative environmental goals?</p>
	<p>Marine conservation initiative has led to environmental improvements</p>	<p>Has the marine conservation initiative led to environmental improvements that benefit local people?</p>
	<p>Stakeholders and rightsholders benefit from environmental improvements</p>	<p>Do all local groups (rightsholders and stakeholders) benefit from environmental improvements that arise as a result of the marine conservation initiative?</p>
 <p>DISTRIBUTIONAL</p>	<p>Marine conservation initiative has been positive for local people</p>	<p>Overall, do you think the marine conservation initiative has been positive or negative for local people?</p>
	<p>Management is effective at achieving social goals</p>	<p>Are current management plans and/or actions effective at achieving marine conservation initiative social goals?</p>
	<p>Livelihood and economic impacts have been positive</p>	<p>Overall, do you think the livelihood and economic impacts from the marine conservation initiative have been positive?</p>
	<p>Livelihood and economic opportunities are shared fairly</p>	<p>How fairly are livelihood and economic impacts that arise through the marine conservation initiative shared among local people?</p>
	<p>Social impacts have been positive</p>	<p>Overall, do you think the social impacts (e.g., on culture, identity, knowledge, education, health) from marine conservation initiative plans and management have been positive?</p>
	<p>Social benefits and opportunities are shared fairly</p>	<p>How fairly are social benefits and opportunities that arise through the marine conservation initiative shared among local people?</p>
	<p>Negative impacts (risks, burdens) are shared fairly</p>	<p>Are negative impacts (e.g., risks, burdens) that result from the marine conservation initiative shared fairly among local people?</p>
	<p>Engagement or studies are in place to understand material and non-material impacts on local people</p>	<p>Have there been studies or public engagement to understand how the marine conservation initiative has impacted local people (e.g., culture, identities, livelihoods, wealth, wellbeing)?</p>
	<p>Programmes and efforts to help increase positive impacts</p>	<p>Are there programmes and efforts in place to help increase positive social impacts from the marine conservation initiative?</p>
	<p>Support is delivered for people who are most in need</p>	<p>Are programmes that are intended to increase positive impacts delivered in ways that support people who are most in need or whose livelihoods are being negatively impacted?</p>

 EQUITY DIMENSION	 ATTRIBUTE	 SURVEY QUESTION
 <p>CONTEXTUAL AND STRUCTURAL</p>	<p>People near the marine conservation initiative are able to meet basic needs</p>	<p>Are people who rely on marine resources and/or live near to the marine conservation initiative able to meet their basic needs?</p>
	<p>Coastal livelihoods provide a steady and reliable income</p>	<p>Do coastal livelihoods provide a steady and reliable income for all people who rely on marine resources?</p>
	<p>Political views do not prevent groups from being involved in and benefiting from the marine conservation initiative</p>	<p>Do political views prevent anyone from participating in and enjoying benefits from the marine conservation initiative?</p>
	<p>Social norms do not prevent groups from being involved in and benefiting from the marine conservation initiative</p>	<p>Do social norms prevent any groups, such as different genders, Indigenous Peoples, fishers or other less fortunate groups, from participating in or enjoying benefits from the marine conservation initiative?</p>
	<p>Colonisation does not have ongoing impacts on local people</p>	<p>Are lives and livelihoods of local people affected by ongoing impacts of colonisation?</p>
	<p>Laws and policies support people who rely on the ocean</p>	<p>Are government laws and policies related to the oceans supportive of coastal communities and groups who rely on the ocean?</p>
	<p>Environmental changes do not negatively impact local people</p>	<p>Are local people affected by environmental shifts related to climate change?</p>
	<p>Laws and policies recognise customary resource users</p>	<p>Are small-scale fishers (SSF) and/or other customary resource users recognised as legitimate rightsholders or stakeholders in national laws and policies?</p>
	<p>Laws and policies recognise Indigenous Peoples</p>	<p>Are Indigenous Peoples recognised as legitimate rightsholders in national laws and policies?</p>
	<p>National policy supports equitable marine conservation initiative planning</p>	<p>Does national environmental policy support equitable marine conservation initiative planning and management?</p>
<p>The law treats all people near the marine conservation initiative fairly</p>	<p>Does the law treat all people in communities near the marine conservation initiative fairly?</p>	



Information sheet for assessment team

Reminders to interviewers:

- Introduce yourself and team
- Explain the project and how long participation will take
- Give the participant the project overview and consent form, or read the verbal consent form
- Document consent via either the verbal or written consent form
- Ask whether they would like to receive copies of project outputs (document email on separate paper)
- Introduce each section of the survey as you go

<p>Name of interviewer(s)</p>	<p>Date of survey</p> <div style="border: 1px solid #ccc; padding: 2px; margin-bottom: 5px; text-align: center;">DD</div> <div style="border: 1px solid #ccc; padding: 2px; margin-bottom: 5px; text-align: center;">MM</div> <div style="border: 1px solid #ccc; padding: 2px; text-align: center;">YY</div>	<p>In which country is the marine conservation initiative that is the subject of this study?</p>
<p>What is the name of the marine conservation initiative that the respondent will be referring to in this survey?</p>		<p>What was the date or year when the marine conservation initiative was established?</p>
<p>What is the nearest town, city or village where this survey is being conducted?</p>	<p>What is the governance type for the marine conservation initiative? (e.g., government-led, co-management, private governance, led by Indigenous Peoples or Local Communities)</p>	
<p>What was the format for documenting the survey?</p> <div style="display: flex; justify-content: flex-end; gap: 20px;"> <input type="checkbox"/> Digital <input type="checkbox"/> Paper </div>		



Explaining the purpose and format of the survey

Thank you for taking part in this assessment about the ways that equity is experienced and influenced by _____ [name of the marine conservation initiative]. The aim of this assessment is to raise awareness and improve understanding about perceptions of equity held by the different groups of users linked economically, culturally, or institutionally to the marine conservation initiative.

Through this survey we will collect information about how you experience equity and inequity in relation to the marine conservation initiative based on your personal experiences. Your participation will involve responding to a series of questions that will take about 60-90 minutes to complete. There are no right or wrong answers. Just tell us what you think.

We will start by asking you some questions related to who you are, how long you have been living in the area, and how you make your livelihood. Then, we will ask questions based on six types of equity related to the marine conservation initiative. As we start each section we will give you a quick summary on what that type of equity will be and then we will go through the questions. You can provide any additional details at any point to help clarify your answer. Lastly we will have some wrap up questions.

We want to ensure that you know that your participation in this assessment is completely voluntary. You can choose to end the survey at any time (and decide whether you want us to remove earlier responses from our records). Data will be stored securely by [assessment team / organisation] but will not include your name. We want you to know that your answers will be kept completely private, and we won't share your personal details with anyone. We will only use the information that you provide to better understand equity related to the planning and management of the marine conservation initiative.

If you have any questions that were not answered today, you can reach the assessment team at the following contacts:

Contact information

Instructions for the survey

For the main survey questions, we will ask you to provide a rating related to various aspects of equity and then ask you to provide an explanation about why you made the rating. The rating will use a scale that ranges from (0) to (3). You will also have the option to indicate if a question does not apply or if you do not know. When we ask you to explain your ratings, you may provide explanations related to why some questions scored low/high and/or steps that have been taken in the past to address certain issues.



Script for verbal consent

This form can be read by the interviewer

Thank you for taking part in this assessment about the ways that equity is experienced and influenced by _____ [name of the marine conservation initiative]. The aim of this assessment is to raise awareness and improve understanding about perceptions of equity held by the different groups of users linked economically, culturally, or institutionally to the marine conservation initiative.

Through this survey we will collect information about how you experience equity and inequity in relation to the marine conservation initiative based on your personal experiences. Your participation will involve responding to a series of questions that will take about 60-90 minutes to complete. There are no right or wrong answers. Just tell us what you think.

We will start by asking you some questions related to who you are, how long you have been living in the area, and how you make your livelihood. Then, we will ask questions based on six types of equity related to the marine conservation initiative. As we start each section we will give you a quick summary on what that type of equity will be and then we will go through the questions. You can provide any additional details at any point to help clarify your answer. Lastly we will have some wrap up questions.

We want to ensure that you know that your participation in this assessment is completely voluntary. You can choose to end the survey at any time (and decide whether you want us to remove earlier responses from our records). Data will be stored securely by [assessment team / organisation] but will not include your name. We want you to know that your answers will be kept completely private, and we won't share your personal details with anyone. We will only use the information that you provide to better understand equity related to the planning and management of the marine conservation initiative. A summary of the results of the surveys will be analysed and presented in a report that will be given to marine conservation initiative managers. If you want to receive a copy of the results, we will document your name and email separately so that we can share it.

If you have any questions that were not answered today, you can reach the assessment team at the following contacts:

Contact information

By continuing to participate in this survey, we ask you to confirm that:

- You have received adequate and sufficient information by the assessment team above, about (1) the objectives of the assessment and its scope, (2) the type of work to be carried out (survey about perceptions of equity), and (3) that your participation is voluntary and done in support of the aims of the assessment.
- You have received information about the purpose for collecting limited personal information about me and how this information will be used.
- That at any time you can revoke your consent and stop participating (without having to explain the reason) and request the deletion of your personal information.
- You are 18 years or older and are competent to provide consent.

Name of interviewee:

Interviewer to check this box to confirm that participant has given verbal consent



Form for written consent

This form can be given to participants to read or can be read by the interviewer

Thank you for taking part in this assessment about the ways that equity is experienced and influenced by _____ [name of the marine conservation initiative]. The aim of this assessment is to raise awareness and improve understanding about perceptions of equity held by the different groups of users linked economically, culturally, or institutionally to the marine conservation initiative.

Through this survey we will collect information about how you experience equity and inequity in relation to the marine conservation initiative based on your personal experiences. Your participation will involve responding to a series of questions that will take about 60-90 minutes to complete. There are no right or wrong answers. Just tell us what you think.

We will start by asking you some questions related to who you are, how long you have been living in the area, and how you make your livelihood. Then, we will ask questions based on six types of equity related to the marine conservation initiative. As we start each section we will give you a quick summary on what that type of equity will be and then we will go through the questions. You can provide any additional details at any point to help clarify your answer. Lastly we will have some wrap up questions.

We want to ensure that you know that your participation in this assessment is completely voluntary. You can choose to end the survey at any time (and decide whether you want us to remove earlier responses from our records). Data will be stored securely by [assessment team / organisation] but will not include your name. We want you to know that your answers will be kept completely private, and we won't share your personal details with anyone. We will only use the information that you provide to better understand equity related to the planning and management of the marine conservation initiative. A summary of the results of the surveys will be analysed and presented in a report that will be given to marine conservation initiative managers. If you want to receive a copy of the results, we will document your name and email separately so that we can share it.

If you have any questions that were not answered today, you can reach the assessment team at the following contacts:

Contact information

I, _____ **confirm the following and provide my consent to continue participation in this survey:**

- I have received adequate and sufficient information by the assessment team above, about (1) the objectives of the assessment and its scope, (2) the type of work to be carried out (survey about perceptions of equity), and (3) that your participation is voluntary and done in support of the aims of the assessment.
- I have received information about the purpose for collecting limited personal information about me and how this information will be used.
- At any time I can revoke my consent and stop participating (without having to explain the reason) and request the deletion of my personal information.
- I am 18 years or older and am competent to provide consent.

Date:

Signature:



Survey tool for rapid equity assessment

Preliminary questions for participants

This section of the survey asks some questions about who you are, how long you have been living in the area, and how you make your livelihood.

1. How far do you live from the marine conservation initiative now?

- Less than 5 kilometers
- 5-10 kilometers
- 11-20 kilometers
- 21-30 kilometers
- More than 30 kilometers

2. How long have you known the marine conservation initiative and its surrounding area?

- Less than 5 years
- 5-10 years
- 11-20 years
- 21-30 years
- 31-40 years
- 41-50 years
- 51-60 years
- More than 60 years

3. What is your role in relation to the marine conservation initiative?

4. How long have you been involved in management of the marine conservation initiative?

- Less than 5 years
- 5-10 years
- 11-20 years
- 21-30 years
- 31-40 years
- 41-50 years
- 51-60 years
- More than 60 years
- Not applicable

5. Which of the following groups of stakeholders and rightsholders are adjacent to, have an interest in, and/or might be impacted by the marine conservation initiative?

- Artisanal or small-scale fisher
- Industrial fisher
- Recreational fisher
- Aquatic recreational activities (e.g., diving, kayaking, sailing, boating, etc.)
- Local tourism operator
- International tourism operator
- Marine conservation initiative manager
- Local government representative
- National government representative
- Indigenous government representative
- NGO representative
- Academic or researcher
- Business operator
- Local community resident (not part of above groups)
- Identify any other groups that are missing: _____

6. How satisfied are you with the way that the marine conservation initiative is managed overall?

- Very unsatisfied
- Somewhat unsatisfied
- Neutral
- Somewhat satisfied
- Very satisfied
- I don't know

7. Before we get into our specific questions about equity, is there anything that is important for us to know about how the marine conservation initiative is managed? (e.g., regarding the level of resources and funding available for management; regarding the relationships between management and stakeholders and rightsholders).



Questions about recognitional equity

The following group of questions are related to the ways that people's rights, livelihoods, values, and identities are recognised in marine conservation initiative planning and management.

For each of the following questions, are you able to provide an explanation about why you made the rating? You may provide explanations related to why some questions scored low/high and/or steps that have been taken in the past to address certain issues.

1. **Are all relevant people and groups recognised as legitimate actors (rightsholders or stakeholders) in marine conservation initiative planning and management?**
 - (0) Planning and management do not recognise any local people or groups
 - (1) Planning and management recognise some local people or groups
 - (2) Planning and management recognise most local people or groups
 - (3) Planning and management recognise all local people or groups
 - (99) Does not apply
 - (88) Don't know

2. **Are basic human rights (e.g., access to food, education, good health, safety and security) respected within marine conservation initiative planning and management?**
 - (0) Human rights are not acknowledged in any way
 - (1) Human rights are acknowledged informally or implicitly
 - (2) Human rights are recognised in writing and partially upheld
 - (3) Human rights are fully recognised in writing and upheld fully in practice
 - (99) Does not apply
 - (88) Don't know

3. **Are all rightsholders' marine use, tenure, and access rights formally recognised and incorporated into marine conservation initiative planning and management?**
 - (0) Marine use, tenure, and access rights are not recognised or incorporated for any actor groups
 - (1) Marine use, tenure, and access rights are recognised for some rightsholders, but not really incorporated
 - (2) Marine use, tenure, and access rights are formally recognised for most rightsholders, and somewhat incorporated
 - (3) Marine use, tenure, and access rights are recognised for all rightsholders, and well incorporated
 - (99) Does not apply
 - (88) Don't know

4. Are small-scale fishers (SSF) and/or other customary resource users recognised as legitimate rightsholders in marine conservation initiative planning and management?

- (0) Planning and management do not recognise SSF and/or other customary resource users and do not advance rights
- (1) Planning and management recognise and policies advance some rights
- (2) Planning and management recognise and policies advance most rights
- (3) Planning and management recognise and policies advance all rights
- (99) Does not apply
- (88) Don't know

5. Are small-scale fishers' and/or other customary resource users' rights respected within marine conservation initiative planning and management?

- (0) Small-scale fishers' rights are not acknowledged in any way
- (1) Small-scale fishers' rights are acknowledged informally or implicitly
- (2) Small-scale fishers' rights are recognised in writing and partially upheld
- (3) Small-scale fishers' rights are fully recognised in writing and upheld fully in practice
- (99) Does not apply
- (88) Don't know

6. Are Indigenous Peoples recognised as legitimate rightsholders in marine conservation initiative planning and management?

- (0) Planning and management do not recognise Indigenous Peoples and do not advance rights
- (1) Planning and management recognise and policies advance some rights
- (2) Planning and management recognise and policies advance most rights
- (3) Planning and management recognise and policies advance all rights
- (99) Does not apply
- (88) Don't know

7. Are Indigenous rights respected within marine conservation initiative planning and management?

- (0) Indigenous rights are not acknowledged in any way
- (1) Indigenous rights are acknowledged informally or implicitly
- (2) Indigenous rights are recognised in writing and partially upheld
- (3) Indigenous rights are fully recognised in writing and upheld fully in practice
- (99) Does not apply
- (88) Don't know

8. Are the cultural identities, values, and practices of local communities and groups acknowledged and incorporated into marine conservation initiative planning and management?

- (0) Cultural identities, values, and practices are not acknowledged
- (1) Cultural identities, values, and practices are somewhat acknowledged, but not really incorporated
- (2) Cultural identities, values, and practices are well acknowledged, and somewhat incorporated
- (3) Planning and management are fully informed by cultural identities, values, and practices
- (99) Does not apply
- (88) Don't know

9. Has consideration been given to the interests and rights of people who often receive fewer economic or livelihood opportunities?

- (0) No consideration has been given within marine conservation initiative planning and management
- (1) Some consideration has been given
- (2) A lot of consideration has been given
- (3) A lot of consideration has been given and specific actions have been taken to address the interests and rights of these groups
- (99) Does not apply
- (88) Don't know

10. Is the knowledge of local people (including knowledge that is Indigenous, local, and/or multi-generational) acknowledged in marine conservation initiative planning and management?

- (0) Local people's knowledge is not at all acknowledged
- (1) Local people's knowledge is acknowledged, but not well documented or integrated
- (2) Local people's knowledge is well acknowledged, but only partially documented and integrated
- (3) Planning and management are fully informed by local people's knowledge
- (99) Does not apply
- (88) Don't know



Questions about procedural equity

The following group of questions are related to inclusion and effective participation of local people in decision-making for marine conservation initiative planning and policies.

For each of the following questions, are you able to provide an explanation about why you made the rating? You may provide explanations related to why some questions scored low/high and/or steps that have been taken in the past to address certain issues.

11. Are there processes in place to facilitate effective participation and gather feedback from local people to help inform marine conservation initiative decision-making?

- (0) There are no processes in place to allow people to express their opinions
- (1) Processes are in place but they are not being used
- (2) Processes are in place but they are not used consistently to include all actors
- (3) Processes are in place and they are effectively being used by many people
- (99) Does not apply
- (88) Don't know

12. Are all rightsholder and stakeholder groups represented and able to participate in decision-making related to marine conservation initiative planning and management?

- (0) No actor groups are ever represented or able to participate in decision-making
- (1) Some actor groups are represented and able to participate in decision-making
- (2) Most actor groups are represented and able to participate in decision-making
- (3) All actor groups are represented and able to participate in decision-making
- (99) Does not apply
- (88) Don't know

13. Are there processes in place that enable people to influence what decisions are made about the marine conservation initiative?

- (0) There are no processes in place
- (1) Processes are in place but they are not being used
- (2) Processes are in place but they are not used consistently to include all actors
- (3) Processes are in place and they are being used consistently to include all actors
- (99) Does not apply
- (88) Don't know

14. Is information about what decisions were made in relation to the marine conservation initiative, how they were made, and why they were made easy to find and access?

- (0) There is no sharing of information about what, how, and why decisions are made
- (1) There is some sharing about what decisions were made, but not information about how and why decisions were made
- (2) There is a lot of documentation about what decisions were made, how, and why decisions were made but it is not easy to find
- (3) All information about decision-making is made available and is easy to find and access
- (99) Does not apply
- (88) Don't know

15. Are local people able to raise concerns related to management actions?

- (0) There are no mechanisms in place for local people to raise concerns
- (1) There is a mechanism for local people to raise concerns, but it is not tied into decision-making and action
- (2) There is a mechanism for local people to raise concerns, with clear protocols for review and decision-making, but action may not be time-sensitive
- (3) There is a mechanism for local people to raise concerns, with clear protocols for review and decision-making, resulting in timely responses
- (99) Does not apply
- (88) Don't know

16. Are there processes in place for people to resolve disputes that they have with marine conservation initiative management?

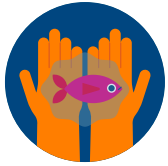
- (0) There are currently no dispute resolution mechanisms in place
- (1) There are dispute resolution mechanisms in place but they are not easily accessible
- (2) There are accessible dispute resolution mechanisms in place but they may not be effectively resolving all disputes
- (3) There are accessible dispute resolution mechanisms are in place, and they are effectively resolving all disputes
- (99) Does not apply
- (88) Don't know

17. Are there processes in place for people to resolve disputes that they have with other people (non-management) in relation to the marine conservation initiative?

- (0) There are currently no dispute resolution mechanisms in place
- (1) There are dispute resolution mechanisms in place but they are not easily accessible
- (2) There are accessible dispute resolution mechanisms in place but they may not be effectively resolving all disputes
- (3) There are accessible dispute resolution mechanisms are in place, and they are effectively resolving all disputes
- (99) Does not apply
- (88) Don't know

18. Are decisions that affect rightsholders made after obtaining and documenting free, prior, and informed consent (FPIC), or some form of engagement?

- (0) FPIC is never obtained and documented
- (1) FPIC is seldom obtained and documented
- (2) FPIC is usually obtained and documented
- (3) FPIC is always obtained and documented
- (99) Does not apply
- (88) Don't know



Questions about management equity

The following group of questions are related to the extent that local people are able to participate in and have leadership in marine conservation initiative management.

For each of the following questions, are you able to provide an explanation about why you made the rating? You may provide explanations related to why some questions scored low/high and/or steps that have been taken in the past to address certain issues.

19. Have government authorities shared or transferred management authority with local communities or groups?

- (0) No transfer of management authority has occurred
- (1) Some transfer of management authority has occurred
- (2) A lot of transfer of management authority has occurred
- (3) Full transfer of management authority has occurred
- (99) Does not apply
- (88) Don't know

20. Do local groups have agency to carry out management activities (e.g., environmental monitoring, stewardship activities, enforcement) based on local knowledge and practices?

- (0) Local groups are not engaged in management activities
- (1) Local groups are minimally engaged in management activities
- (2) Local groups are actively engaged in management activities
- (3) Local groups are fully engaged in management activities
- (99) Does not apply
- (88) Don't know

21. Are local groups and communities employed in marine conservation initiative management (staff) roles and/or in carrying out management activities?

- (0) Local groups and communities are not employed in management work
- (1) Local actor groups and communities are minimally represented in management employment roles
- (2) Local actor groups and communities are well represented in management employment roles
- (3) Local actor groups and communities are fully represented in all management employment roles
- (99) Does not apply
- (88) Don't know

22. Are local communities and groups represented (e.g., employed, elected) in leadership roles in marine conservation initiative management?

- (0) Local groups and communities are not represented in leadership
- (1) Local groups and communities are somewhat represented in leadership
- (2) Local actor groups and communities are fairly well represented in leadership
- (3) Local actor groups and communities are represented to a great extent in leadership
- (99) Does not apply
- (88) Don't know

23. Is there sufficient funding to support local people's participation, leadership, and working in marine conservation initiative management activities?

- (0) Local people are not financially compensated
- (1) Local people receive minimal and inadequate financial compensation
- (2) Local people receive moderate financial compensation
- (3) Local people receive adequate financial compensation
- (99) Does not apply
- (88) Don't know

24. Is there secure funding to support local participation, capacity, and leadership for marine conservation initiative management activities?

- (0) Funding is intermittent or inconsistent
- (1) Funding is secure for short term
- (2) Funding is secure for long term but not controlled locally
- (3) Funding is secure for long term and controlled locally
- (99) Does not apply
- (88) Don't know

25. Is enforcement of marine conservation initiative rules and regulations consistent for all people?

- (0) Rules and regulations are not enforced
- (1) Rules and regulations are applied infrequently and/or inconsistently to different actors
- (2) Rules and regulations are usually applied effectively and consistently to different actors
- (3) Rules and regulations are always applied effectively and consistently to all actors
- (99) Does not apply
- (88) Don't know



Questions about environmental equity

The following group of questions are related to the quality of the local environment that local people depend on, based on the effectiveness of marine conservation initiative protections.

For each of the following questions, are you able to provide an explanation about why you made the rating? You may provide explanations related to why some questions scored low/high and/or steps that have been taken in the past to address certain issues.

26. Is the marine conservation initiative in a good location to produce environmental benefits (e.g., for species, habitats, the ecosystem, or fisheries)?

- (0) No, the marine conservation initiative is not ideally located
- (1) The marine conservation initiative is in a location that provides minimal environmental benefits
- (2) The marine conservation initiative is in a location that provides some environmental benefits
- (3) The marine conservation initiative is in a location that provides many environmental benefits
- (99) Does not apply
- (88) Don't know

27. Does marine conservation initiative management have sufficient capacity to support environmental goals?

- (0) There is insufficient capacity to be able to carry out any aspects of management plans
- (1) There is capacity to carry out some aspects of management plans
- (2) There is capacity to carry out most aspects of management plans
- (3) There is sufficient capacity to carry out all aspects of management plans
- (99) Does not apply
- (88) Don't know

28. Are current management plans and/or actions effective at achieving marine conservation initiative environmental goals?

- (0) Environmental conditions are thought to be worsening
- (1) Environmental conditions are thought to be the same as before
- (2) Environmental conditions are thought to be improving slightly
- (3) Environmental conditions are thought to be improving substantially
- (99) Does not apply
- (88) Don't know

29. Has the marine conservation initiative led to environmental improvements that benefit local people?

- (0) Local people do not experience benefits
- (1) Certain local people experience most of the benefits
- (2) Certain local people experience more benefits than others
- (3) Benefits are experienced equally and for all local people
- (99) Does not apply
- (88) Don't know

30. Do all local groups benefit from environmental improvements that arise as a result of the marine conservation initiative?

- (0) No local people are able to access environmental benefits
- (1) Some local people are able to access environmental benefits
- (2) Most local people are able to access environmental benefits
- (3) All local people are able to access environmental benefits
- (99) Does not apply
- (88) Don't know



Questions about distributional equity

The following group of questions are related to the level of fairness in the distribution of benefits and burdens among local people.

For each of the following questions, are you able to provide an explanation about why you made the rating? You may provide explanations related to why some questions scored low/high and/or steps that have been taken in the past to address certain issues.

31. Overall, do you think the marine conservation initiative has been positive or negative for local people?

- (0) Impacts are very negative
- (1) Impacts are somewhat negative
- (2) Impacts are somewhat positive
- (3) Impacts are very positive
- (99) Does not apply
- (88) Don't know

32. Are current management plans and/or actions effective at achieving marine conservation initiative social goals?

- (0) Social conditions are thought to be worsening
- (1) Social conditions are thought to be the same as before
- (2) Social conditions are thought to be improving slightly
- (3) Social conditions are thought to be improving substantially
- (99) Does not apply
- (88) Don't know

33. Overall, do you think the livelihood and economic impacts from the marine conservation initiative have been positive?

- (0) Impacts are very negative
- (1) Impacts are somewhat negative
- (2) Impacts are somewhat positive
- (3) Impacts are very positive
- (99) Does not apply
- (88) Don't know

34. How fairly are livelihood and economic impacts that arise through the marine conservation initiative shared among local people?

- (0) Certain people receive many livelihood benefits while others receive none
- (1) Certain people receive many livelihood benefits while others receive a little
- (2) Most people receive at least some livelihood benefits
- (3) All people receive a fair level of livelihood benefits
- (99) Does not apply
- (88) Don't know

35. Overall, do you think the social impacts (e.g., on culture, identity, knowledge, education, health) from marine conservation initiative plans and management have been positive?

- (0) Impacts are very negative
- (1) Impacts are somewhat negative
- (2) Impacts are somewhat positive
- (3) Impacts are very positive
- (99) Does not apply
- (88) Don't know

36. How fairly are social benefits and opportunities that arise through the marine conservation initiative shared among local people?

- (0) Certain people receive many benefits while others receive none
- (1) Certain people receive many benefits while others receive a little
- (2) Most people receive at least some benefits
- (3) All people receive benefits
- (99) Does not apply
- (88) Don't know

37. Are negative impacts (e.g., risks, burdens) that result from the marine conservation initiative shared fairly among local people?

- (0) Certain people are heavily impacted while others are not negatively impacted
- (1) Certain people are heavily impacted while others are impacted a little
- (2) Most people are somewhat negatively impacted
- (3) All people receive a fair level of negative impacts
- (99) Does not apply
- (88) Don't know

38. Have there been studies or public engagement to understand how the marine conservation initiative has impacted local people (e.g., culture, identities, livelihoods, wealth, wellbeing)?

- (0) There have been no studies or engagement
- (1) There have been efforts to understand impacts, but there are no processes to manage impacts
- (2) There are ongoing studies and engagement to understand impacts with input from most local people and groups
- (3) There are ongoing studies and engagement to understand impacts, and there are some processes to manage impacts
- (99) Does not apply
- (88) Don't know

39. Are there programmes and efforts in place to help increase positive social impacts from the MPA?

- (0) There are no programmes and efforts in place to increase benefits
- (1) There are programmes and efforts in place to increase benefits but they are only accessed by some people
- (2) There are programmes and efforts in place to increase benefits and they are accessed by most people and groups
- (3) There are comprehensive programmes and efforts in place to increase benefits for all local people
- (99) Does not apply
- (88) Don't know

40. Are programmes that are intended to increase positive impacts delivered in ways that support people who are most in need?

- (0) People who are most in need are not able to access supports
- (1) All local people have the same access to support programmes
- (2) Support programmes are delivered in ways that that recognise some pre-existing inequities
- (3) Support programmes are delivered in ways that that fully recognise and address pre-existing inequities
- (99) Does not apply
- (88) Don't know



Questions about contextual and structural equity

The following group of questions are related to social, economic, and political conditions beyond the community level that influence the ways that people interact with the marine conservation initiative ecosystem and marine conservation initiative management.

For each of the following questions, are you able to provide an explanation about why you made the rating? You may provide explanations related to why some questions scored low/high and/or steps that have been taken in the past to address certain issues.

41. Are people who rely on marine resources and/or live near to the marine conservation initiative able to meet their basic needs?

- (0) Meeting basic needs is a significant issue for most people
- (1) Meeting basic needs is somewhat of an issue
- (2) Meeting basic needs is a minor issue
- (3) Meeting basic needs is not an issue for anyone
- (99) Does not apply
- (88) Don't know

42. Do coastal livelihoods provide a steady and reliable income for all people who rely on marine resources?

- (0) Coastal livelihoods are not economically viable
- (1) Coastal livelihoods are economically viable for some people
- (2) Coastal livelihoods are economically viable for most people
- (3) Coastal livelihoods are economically viable for everyone
- (99) Does not apply
- (88) Don't know

43. Do political views prevent anyone from participating in and enjoying benefits from the marine conservation initiative?

- (0) Being excluded is a significant problem for many people
- (1) Being excluded is a significant problem for some people
- (2) Being excluded is a minor problem for some people
- (3) There is little evidence that people are left out due to social values or political views
- (99) Does not apply
- (88) Don't know

44. Do social norms prevent any groups, such as different genders, Indigenous Peoples, fishers or other less fortunate groups, from participating in or enjoying benefits from the marine conservation initiative?

- (0) Being excluded is a significant problem for many people
- (1) Being excluded is a significant problem for some people
- (2) Being excluded is a minor problem for some people
- (3) There is little evidence that people are left out due to social values or political views
- (99) Does not apply
- (88) Don't know

45. Are lives and livelihoods of local people affected by ongoing impacts of colonisation?

- (0) Colonisation has very significant impacts
- (1) Colonisation has substantial impacts
- (2) Colonisation has minor impacts
- (3) Colonisation does not have any impacts
- (99) Does not apply
- (88) Don't know

46. Are national government laws and policies related to the oceans supportive of coastal communities and groups who rely on the ocean?

- (0) Government laws and policies have huge negative impacts
- (1) Government laws and policies have substantial negative impacts
- (2) Government laws and policies have marginal negative impacts
- (3) Government laws and policies do not have large negative impacts
- (99) Does not apply
- (88) Don't know

47. Are local people affected by environmental shifts related to climate change?

- (0) Climate change and environmental shifts have a huge negative impact on local people
- (1) Climate change and environmental shifts have a substantial negative impact on local people
- (2) Climate change and environmental shifts have a marginal negative impact on local people
- (3) Climate change and environmental shifts do not impact local people
- (99) Does not apply
- (88) Don't know

48. Are small-scale fishers (SSF) and/or other customary resource users recognised as legitimate rightsholders or stakeholders in national laws and policies?

- (0) National laws and policies do not recognise SSF and/or other customary resource users and do not advance rights
- (1) National laws and policies recognise and advance some rights
- (2) National laws and policies recognise and advance most rights
- (3) National laws and policies recognise and advance all rights
- (99) Does not apply
- (88) Don't know

49. Are Indigenous Peoples recognised as legitimate rightsholders in national laws and policies?

- (0) National laws and policies do not recognise Indigenous Peoples and do not advance rights
- (1) National laws and policies recognise and advance some rights
- (2) National laws and policies recognise and advance most rights
- (3) National laws and policies recognise and advance all rights
- (99) Does not apply
- (88) Don't know

50. Does national environmental policy support equitable marine conservation planning and management?

- (0) National environmental policy does not support the pursuit of equitable marine conservation initiatives
- (1) National environmental policy is somewhat supportive of the pursuit of equitable marine conservation initiatives
- (2) National environmental policy is mostly supportive of the pursuit of equitable marine conservation initiatives
- (3) National environmental policy is completely aligned to enable the pursuit of equitable marine conservation initiatives
- (99) Does not apply
- (88) Don't know

51. Does the law treat all people in communities near the marine conservation initiative fairly?

- (0) Law enforcement is not carried out fairly (a lot of corruption or bias)
- (1) Law enforcement is carried out somewhat fairly
- (2) Law enforcement is mostly carried out fairly
- (3) Law enforcement is carried out completely fairly (no corruption or bias)
- (99) Does not apply
- (88) Don't know

Demographic questions

The following questions are optional. However, you are encouraged to answer them because they can help the assessment team fully understand any differences in responses from specific groups.

1. What is your gender?

- Woman
- Man
- Prefer to self-identify (specify) _____

2. What is your age group?

- 18-29 years old
- 30-39 years old
- 40-49 years old
- 50-59 years old
- 60+ years old

3. What is your highest level of education completed?

- None
- Elementary school
- Middle school
- High school
- University degree – Bachelors or higher

4. Where are you originally from?

- The area nearby the marine conservation initiative
- A different area within the same country
- Another country
- Other (specify) _____

5. Do you consider yourself as belonging to any of the following groups?

- Indigenous Person
- Small-scale fisher
- Local community member
- Immigrant to this country
- None of the above
- Prefer not to say
- Other (specify) _____

6. In comparison with other people in your community, how would you rate your level of wealth?





- A lot less wealthy (in comparison with other people in my community)
- Less wealthy (in comparison with other people in my community)
- About average (in comparison with other people in my community)
- More wealthy (in comparison with other people in my community)
- A lot more wealthy (in comparison with other people in my community)

Wrap-up questions

<p>Are there any notable aspects of equity that were not covered in the earlier questions? Provide an explanation about how these additional aspects contribute to equitable or inequitable conditions.</p>	<p>Describe any actions that have been taken to address inequitable conditions. How have these actions been effective or ineffective?</p>	<p>Do you have any questions for us about this assessment?</p>
---	---	--



Assessment option 2: Stakeholders and rightsholders equity assessment

<p> KEY FEATURES</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ Increasing awareness of equity issues; engagement of key stakeholders and rightsholders ➤ Participants: Managers, key experts with knowledge of the marine conservation initiative, representatives from all stakeholders and rightsholders groups ➤ Methods: Surveys of key stakeholders and rightsholders ➤ Time required for participants: Introductory meeting with managers (1 hour), approximately 20 surveys with rightsholders and stakeholders (1-2 hours each), debrief and follow-up meeting with managers and other key actors (1-2 hours) ➤ Time required for assessment lead: 2-4 weeks, plus time to arrange and travel if required 	<p> WHEN TO USE THIS APPROACH</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ Use this approach if managers have interest and capacity to participate, there is support for engaging stakeholders and rightsholders about equity issues, and there is a willingness to engage with insights and take action to improve equity 	<p> PATHWAYS TO CHANGE</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ Written and verbal report to local leaders, managers, and key stakeholders and rightsholders ➤ Participation and outputs increase awareness of equity concerns among managers, stakeholders, and rightsholders to promote empathy and share insights and potential equity issues or concerns ➤ Use report to generate discussions about potential changes to improve equity ➤ Build support for more in-depth future equity assessments 	<p> LIMITATIONS</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ Based on a limited number of people's perspectives ➤ Positionality of assessment team is inherently limited to their own knowledge and assumptions (e.g., managers are relatively influential and powerful positions and may not be fully aware of other actors' perspectives) ➤ May or may not use representative sampling of rightsholders and stakeholders
---	---	---	---

The following materials can be used for carrying out a rapid social equity assessment of a marine conservation initiative. This package contains the following materials:

1. A reference table that provides an overview of attributes and questions related to different dimensions of equity.
2. An information sheet about the marine conservation initiative to be filled out by the assessment team.
3. A script explaining the purpose of the survey, informed consent, and format of the survey.
4. A script for verbal consent.
5. A form for written consent.
6. The survey tool for the rapid equity assessment.

In many cases, these templates will need to be edited, adapted, and/or translated to suit local contexts. An important starting point will be for assessment teams and key collaborators to review the equity attributes and survey statements in the table on the following pages. Any adjustments to the survey statements should maintain the meaning and intent of the related attribute(s). Assessment teams will then need to apply any changes to the survey questions template and then test the questions with local community representatives.



Table of stakeholders and rightsholders equity assessment attributes and survey statements

EQUITY DIMENSION	ATTRIBUTE	SURVEY QUESTION
 RECOGNITIONAL	All relevant groups recognised	All relevant people and groups are recognised as legitimate actors (rightsholders or stakeholders) in marine conservation initiative planning and management.
	Rights to access marine resources recognised	Your rights to access marine areas and resources are formally recognised in marine conservation initiative planning and management.
	Basic human rights are respected	Your basic human rights (e.g., access to food, education, good health, safety and security) are respected within marine conservation initiative planning and management.
	Does not prevent your preferred activities	Marine conservation initiative policies and management recognise and do not prevent you from carrying out your preferred livelihood and/or recreational activities.
	Resource users are recognised as rightsholders	Small-scale fishers and/or other customary resource users are recognised as legitimate rightsholders in marine conservation initiative planning and management.
	Small-scale fishers' rights are respected	Small-scale fishers' rights are respected and protected in marine conservation initiative planning and management.
	Indigenous Peoples are recognised as rightsholders	Indigenous Peoples are recognised as legitimate rightsholders in marine conservation initiative planning and actions.
	Indigenous rights are respected	Indigenous rights are respected and protected in marine conservation initiative planning and management.
	Cultural identities, values, and practices are acknowledged	Your cultural identities, values, and practices are acknowledged and incorporated into marine conservation initiative planning and management.
	Consideration is given for people who receive fewer opportunities	Consideration has been given to the interests and rights of people who often receive fewer economic or livelihood opportunities.
	Value of Indigenous and local knowledge is acknowledged	The value of your knowledge is acknowledged in marine conservation initiative planning and management.

 EQUITY DIMENSION	 ATTRIBUTE	 SURVEY QUESTION
 <p>PROCEDURAL</p>	<p>Effective participation and feedback from local people</p>	<p>There are processes in place to facilitate effective participation and gather feedback from local people to help inform marine conservation initiative decision-making.</p>
	<p>Representation and influence on decisions</p>	<p>You are represented and feel that you are able to influence decisions related to marine conservation initiative planning and management.</p>
	<p>Information about decision-making is easy to access</p>	<p>Information about what decisions were made in relation to the marine conservation initiative, how they were made, and why they were made is easy to find and access.</p>
	<p>Knowledge of how to raise concerns about management</p>	<p>You know how to raise concerns related to management actions.</p>
	<p>Satisfactory dispute resolution with managers</p>	<p>There are satisfactory processes in place for you to resolve disputes you have with marine conservation initiative managers.</p>
	<p>Satisfactory dispute resolution with other stakeholders</p>	<p>There are satisfactory processes in place for you to resolve disputes you have with other people (non-management) in relation to the marine conservation initiative.</p>
	<p>Decisions are made after free, prior, and informed consent</p>	<p>Decisions that affect you are made after obtaining and documenting free, prior, and informed consent (or some form of engagement).</p>
	<p>Decisions made in the best interest of stakeholders</p>	<p>You trust that people involved in marine conservation initiative planning and management are making decisions in the best interest of you and other people in similar groups as you.</p>
	<p>Planning and management is appropriate and legitimate</p>	<p>Marine conservation initiative planning and management have been carried out through processes that are appropriate and legitimate.</p>
 <p>MANAGEMENT</p>	<p>Local groups share or hold management authority</p>	<p>Government authorities have shared or transferred management authority with local communities or groups.</p>
	<p>Local groups have agency to carry out management activities</p>	<p>Local groups have agency to carry out management activities (e.g., environmental monitoring, stewardship actions, enforcement) based on local knowledge and practices.</p>
	<p>Local people are employed in management (staff) roles</p>	<p>Local groups and communities are employed in marine conservation initiative management (staff) roles and/or in carrying out management activities.</p>
	<p>Local people are represented in marine conservation initiative leadership roles</p>	<p>Local communities and groups are represented (e.g., employed, elected) in leadership roles in marine conservation initiative management.</p>
	<p>Sufficient funding to support participation in management</p>	<p>There is sufficient funding to support people's participation, leadership, and working in marine conservation initiative management activities.</p>
	<p>Secure funding to support participation in management</p>	<p>There is secure funding to support local participation, capacity, and leadership for marine conservation initiative management activities.</p>
	<p>Enforcement of marine conservation initiative rules is fair for all people</p>	<p>Enforcement of marine conservation initiative rules is fair for all people.</p>

 EQUITY DIMENSION	 ATTRIBUTE	 SURVEY QUESTION
 <p>ENVIRONMENTAL</p>	<p>Marine conservation initiative is in a good location to produce environmental benefits</p>	<p>The marine conservation initiative is in a good location to produce environmental benefits (e.g., for species, habitats, the ecosystem, or fisheries).</p>
	<p>Adequate management capacity to support environmental goals</p>	<p>The marine conservation initiative has sufficient management capacity to support environmental goals.</p>
	<p>Management plans effective for achieving environmental goals</p>	<p>Current management plans and/or actions are effective at achieving marine conservation initiative environmental goals.</p>
	<p>Marine conservation initiative has led to environmental improvements</p>	<p>The marine conservation initiative has led to environmental improvements that benefit local people.</p>
	<p>Stakeholders and rightsholders benefit from environmental improvements</p>	<p>You benefit from environmental improvements that arise as a result of the marine conservation initiative.</p>
 <p>DISTRIBUTIONAL</p>	<p>Marine conservation initiative has been positive for local people</p>	<p>Overall, the marine conservation initiative has been positive for local people.</p>
	<p>Management is effective at achieving social goals</p>	<p>Current management plans and/or actions are effective at achieving marine conservation initiative social goals.</p>
	<p>Livelihood and economic impacts have been positive</p>	<p>Livelihood and economic impacts from the marine conservation initiative have been positive in your opinion.</p>
	<p>Livelihood and economic opportunities are shared fairly</p>	<p>Any livelihood and economic opportunities that arise through the marine conservation initiative are shared fairly among local people.</p>
	<p>Social impacts have been positive</p>	<p>Social impacts (e.g., on culture, identity, knowledge, education, health) from the marine conservation initiative have been positive in your opinion.</p>
	<p>Social benefits and opportunities are shared fairly</p>	<p>Social benefits and opportunities that arise through the marine conservation initiative are shared fairly among local people.</p>
	<p>Negative impacts (burdens, risks) are shared fairly</p>	<p>Any negative impacts (e.g., risks, burdens) that result from the marine conservation initiative are shared fairly among local people.</p>
	<p>Engagement or studies are in place to understand impacts on local people</p>	<p>There have been studies or public engagement to understand how the marine conservation initiative has impacted local people (e.g., culture, identities, livelihoods, wealth, wellbeing).</p>
	<p>Programmes and efforts to help increase positive impacts</p>	<p>There are programmes and efforts in place to help increase positive impacts from the marine conservation initiative.</p>
<p>Support is delivered for people who are most in need</p>	<p>Programmes that are intended to increase positive impacts are delivered in ways that support people who are most in need or whose livelihoods are being negatively impacted.</p>	

 EQUITY DIMENSION	 ATTRIBUTE	 SURVEY QUESTION
 <p>CONTEXTUAL AND STRUCTURAL</p>	<p>People near the marine conservation initiative are able to meet basic needs</p>	<p>Everyone who relies on marine resources and/or lives near to the marine conservation initiative are able to meet their basic needs.</p>
	<p>Coastal livelihoods provide a steady and reliable income</p>	<p>Coastal livelihoods can provide a steady and reliable income for all groups.</p>
	<p>Political views do not prevent you from being involved in and benefitting from the marine conservation initiative</p>	<p>Broader political views do not prevent you or other groups from participating in and enjoying benefits from the marine conservation initiative.</p>
	<p>Social norms do not prevent you from being involved in and benefitting from the marine conservation initiative</p>	<p>Social values and norms do not prevent you or other groups from participating in and enjoying benefits from the marine conservation initiative.</p>
	<p>Colonisation does not have ongoing impacts on local people</p>	<p>Ongoing effects of colonisation do not have an ongoing impact on local people's lives and livelihoods.</p>
	<p>Laws and policies support people who rely on the ocean</p>	<p>Government laws and policies related to the oceans are supportive of coastal communities and groups who rely on the ocean.</p>
	<p>Environmental changes do not negatively impact local people</p>	<p>Environmental shifts related to climate change do not negatively impact local coastal populations.</p>
	<p>Laws and policies recognise customary resource users</p>	<p>Small-scale fishers (SSF) and/or other customary resource users are recognised as legitimate rightsholders or stakeholders in national laws and policies.</p>
	<p>Laws and policies recognise Indigenous Peoples</p>	<p>Indigenous Peoples are recognised as legitimate rightsholders in national laws and policies.</p>
	<p>The law treats all people near the marine conservation initiative fairly</p>	<p>The law treats all people in communities near the marine conservation initiative fairly.</p>



Information sheet for assessment team

Reminders to interviewers:

- Introduce yourself and team
- Explain the project and how long participation will take
- Give the participant the project overview and consent form, or read the verbal consent form
- Document consent via either the verbal or written consent form
- Ask whether they would like to receive copies of project outputs (document email on separate paper)
- Introduce each section of the survey as you go

<p>Name of interviewer(s)</p>	<p>Date of survey</p> <div style="border: 1px solid #ccc; padding: 2px; margin-bottom: 5px;">DD</div> <div style="border: 1px solid #ccc; padding: 2px; margin-bottom: 5px;">MM</div> <div style="border: 1px solid #ccc; padding: 2px;">YY</div>	<p>In which country is the marine conservation initiative that is the subject of this study?</p>
<p>What is the name of the marine conservation initiative that the respondent will be referring to in this survey?</p>		<p>What was the date or year when the marine conservation initiative was established?</p>
<p>What is the nearest town, city or village where this survey is being conducted?</p>	<p>What is the governance type for the marine conservation initiative? (e.g., government-led, co-management, private governance, led by Indigenous Peoples or Local Communities)</p>	
<p>What was the format for documenting the survey?</p> <div style="display: flex; justify-content: flex-end; gap: 20px;"> <input type="checkbox"/> Digital <input type="checkbox"/> Paper </div>		



Explaining the purpose and format of the survey

Thank you for taking part in this assessment about the ways that equity is experienced and influenced by _____ [name of the marine conservation initiative]. The aim of this assessment is to raise awareness and improve understanding about perceptions of equity held by the different groups of users linked economically, culturally, or institutionally to the marine conservation initiative.

Through this survey we will collect information about how you experience equity and inequity in relation to the marine conservation initiative based on your personal experiences. Your participation will involve responding to a series of questions that will take about 60-90 minutes to complete. There are no right or wrong answers. Just tell us what you think.

We will start by asking you some questions related to who you are, how long you have been living in the area, and how you make your livelihood. Then, we will ask questions based on six types of equity related to the marine conservation initiative. As we start each section we will give you a quick summary on what that type of equity will be and then we will go through the questions. You can provide any additional details at any point to help clarify your answer. Lastly we will have some wrap up questions.

We want to ensure that you know that your participation in this assessment is completely voluntary. You can choose to end the survey at any time (and decide whether you want us to remove earlier responses from our records). Data will be stored securely by [assessment team / organisation] but will not include your name. We want you to know that your answers will be kept completely private, and we won't share your personal details with anyone. We will only use the information that you provide to better understand equity related to the planning and management of the marine conservation initiative. A summary of the results of the surveys will be analysed and presented in a report that will be given to marine conservation initiative managers. If you want to receive a copy of the results, we will document your name and email separately so that we can share it.

If you have any questions that were not answered today, you can reach the assessment team at the following contacts:

Contact information

Instructions for the survey

For the main survey questions, we will ask you to provide a rating related to various aspects of equity and then ask you to provide an explanation about why you made the rating. The rating will use a scale that includes the following options:

- SA Strongly agree
- A Agree
- N Neutral
- D Disagree
- SD Strongly disagree
- DA Does not apply here
- DN Don't know

When we ask you to explain your ratings, you may provide explanations related to why some questions scored low/high and/or steps that have been taken in the past to address certain issues.



Script for verbal consent

This form can be read by the interviewer

Thank you for taking part in this assessment about the ways that equity is experienced and influenced by _____ [name of the marine conservation initiative]. The aim of this assessment is to raise awareness and improve understanding about perceptions of equity held by the different groups of users linked economically, culturally, or institutionally to the marine conservation initiative.

Through this survey we will collect information about how you experience equity and inequity in relation to the marine conservation initiative based on your personal experiences. Your participation will involve responding to a series of questions that will take about 60-90 minutes to complete. There are no right or wrong answers. Just tell us what you think.

We will start by asking you some questions related to who you are, how long you have been living in the area, and how you make your livelihood. Then, we will ask questions based on six types of equity related to the marine conservation initiative. As we start each section we will give you a quick summary on what that type of equity will be and then we will go through the questions. You can provide any additional details at any point to help clarify your answer. Lastly we will have some wrap up questions.

We want to ensure that you know that your participation in this assessment is completely voluntary. You can choose to end the survey at any time (and decide whether you want us to remove earlier responses from our records). Data will be stored securely by [assessment team / organisation] but will not include your name. We want you to know that your answers will be kept completely private, and we won't share your personal details with anyone. We will only use the information that you provide to better understand equity related to the planning and management of the marine conservation initiative. A summary of the results of the surveys will be analysed and presented in a report that will be given to marine conservation initiative managers. If you want to receive a copy of the results, we will document your name and email separately so that we can share it.

If you have any questions that were not answered today, you can reach the assessment team at the following contacts:

Contact information

By continuing to participate in this survey, we ask you to confirm that:

- You have received adequate and sufficient information by the assessment team above, about (1) the objectives of the assessment and its scope, (2) the type of work to be carried out (survey about perceptions of equity), and (3) that your participation is voluntary and done in support of the aims of the assessment.
- You have received information about the purpose for collecting limited personal information about me and how this information will be used.
- That at any time you can revoke your consent and stop participating (without having to explain the reason) and request the deletion of your personal information.
- You are 18 years or older and are competent to provide consent.

Name of interviewee:

Interviewer to check this box to confirm that participant has given verbal consent



Form for written consent

This form can be given to participants to read or can be read by the interviewer

Thank you for taking part in this assessment about the ways that equity is experienced and influenced by _____ [name of the marine conservation initiative]. The aim of this assessment is to raise awareness and improve understanding about perceptions of equity held by the different groups of users linked economically, culturally, or institutionally to the marine conservation initiative.

Through this survey we will collect information about how you experience equity and inequity in relation to the marine conservation initiative based on your personal experiences. Your participation will involve responding to a series of questions that will take about 60-90 minutes to complete. There are no right or wrong answers. Just tell us what you think.

We will start by asking you some questions related to who you are, how long you have been living in the area, and how you make your livelihood. Then, we will ask questions based on six types of equity related to the marine conservation initiative. As we start each section we will give you a quick summary on what that type of equity will be and then we will go through the questions. You can provide any additional details at any point to help clarify your answer. Lastly we will have some wrap up questions.

We want to ensure that you know that your participation in this assessment is completely voluntary. You can choose to end the survey at any time (and decide whether you want us to remove earlier responses from our records). Data will be stored securely by [assessment team / organisation] but will not include your name. We want you to know that your answers will be kept completely private, and we won't share your personal details with anyone. We will only use the information that you provide to better understand equity related to the planning and management of the marine conservation initiative. A summary of the results of the surveys will be analysed and presented in a report that will be given to marine conservation initiative managers. If you want to receive a copy of the results, we will document your name and email separately so that we can share it.

If you have any questions that were not answered today, you can reach the assessment team at the following contacts:

Contact information

<p>I, _____ confirm the following and provide my consent to continue participation in this survey:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <input type="radio"/> I have received adequate and sufficient information by the assessment team above, about (1) the objectives of the assessment and its scope, (2) the type of work to be carried out (survey about perceptions of equity), and (3) that your participation is voluntary and done in support of the aims of the assessment. <input type="radio"/> I have received information about the purpose for collecting limited personal information about me and how this information will be used. <input type="radio"/> At any time I can revoke my consent and stop participating (without having to explain the reason) and request the deletion of my personal information. <input type="radio"/> I am 18 years or older and am competent to provide consent. 	<p>Date:</p>
	<p>Signature:</p>



Survey tool for rapid equity assessment

Preliminary questions for participants

This section of the survey asks some questions about who you are, how long you have been living in the area, and how you make your livelihood.

1. How far do you live from the marine conservation initiative now?

- Less than 5 kilometers
- 5-10 kilometers
- 11-20 kilometers
- 21-30 kilometers
- More than 30 kilometers

2. How long have you known the marine conservation initiative area and its surroundings?

- Less than 5 years
- 5-10 years
- 11-20 years
- 21-30 years
- 31-40 years
- 41-50 years
- 51-60 years
- More than 60 years

3. Which of the following best describes the group that you belong to? Select all that apply.

- Artisanal or small-scale fisher
- Industrial fisher
- Recreational fisher
- Aquatic recreational activities (e.g., diving, kayaking, sailing, boating, etc.)
- Local tourism operator
- International tourism operator
- Marine conservation initiative manager
- Local government representative
- National government representative
- Indigenous government representative
- NGO representative
- Academic or researcher
- Business operator
- Local community resident (not part of above groups)
- Other (specify)

4. How long have you been a member of this group?

- Less than 5 years
- 5-10 years
- 11-20 years
- 21-30 years
- 31-40 years
- 41-50 years
- 51-60 years
- More than 60 years
- Not applicable

5. How satisfied are you with the existence of the marine conservation initiative overall?

- Very unsatisfied
- Somewhat unsatisfied
- Neutral
- Somewhat satisfied
- Very satisfied
- I don't know

6. How satisfied are you with the way that the marine conservation initiative is managed overall?

- Very unsatisfied
- Somewhat unsatisfied
- Neutral
- Somewhat satisfied
- Very satisfied
- I don't know

7. How has the marine conservation initiative affected your main livelihood or relationship with the marine conservation initiative area?

- Very negatively
- Somewhat negatively
- Neutral, it did not affect
- Somewhat positively
- Very positively
- I don't know
- Not applicable

8. How has the marine conservation initiative affected your main livelihood or relationship with the marine conservation initiative area?

- Very low
- Low
- Neutral
- High
- Very high
- I don't know

9. In two minutes, is there anything you want to tell us about your level of support for the marine conservation initiative and/or the way that it is being managed?



Questions about recognitional equity

The following group of questions are related to the ways that people’s rights, livelihoods, values, and identities are recognised in marine conservation initiative planning and management.

For each of the following questions, are you able to provide an explanation about why you made the rating? You may provide explanations related to why some questions scored low/high and/or steps that have been taken in the past to address certain issues.

	STRONGLY AGREE	AGREE	NEUTRAL	DISAGREE	STRONGLY DISAGREE	DOES NOT APPLY HERE	DON'T KNOW
	SA	A	N	D	SD	DA	DK
1. All relevant people and groups are recognised as legitimate actors (rightsholders or stakeholders) in marine conservation initiative planning and management.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
2. Your rights to access marine areas and resources are formally recognised in marine conservation initiative planning and management.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
3. Your basic human rights (e.g., access to food, education, good health, safety and security) are respected within marine conservation initiative planning and management.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
4. Marine conservation initiative policies and management recognise and do not prevent you from carrying out your preferred livelihood and/or recreational activities.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
5. Small-scale fishers and/or other customary resource users are recognised as legitimate rightsholders in marine conservation initiative planning and management.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
6. Small-scale fishers’ rights are respected and protected in marine conservation initiative planning and management.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
7. Indigenous Peoples are recognised as legitimate rightsholders in marine conservation initiative planning and actions.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
8. Indigenous rights are respected and protected in marine conservation initiative planning and management.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
9. Your cultural identities, values, and practices are acknowledged and incorporated into marine conservation initiative planning and management.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
10. Consideration has been given to the interests and rights of people who often receive fewer economic or livelihood opportunities.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
11. The value of your knowledge is acknowledged in marine conservation initiative planning and management.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>



Questions about procedural equity

The following group of questions are related to inclusion and effective participation of local people in decision-making for marine conservation initiative planning and policies.

For each of the following questions, are you able to provide an explanation about why you made the rating? You may provide explanations related to why some questions scored low/high and/or steps that have been taken in the past to address certain issues.

	STRONGLY AGREE SA	AGREE A	NEUTRAL N	DISAGREE D	STRONGLY DISAGREE SD	DOES NOT APPLY HERE DA	DON'T KNOW DK
12. There are processes in place to facilitate effective participation and gather feedback from local people to help inform marine conservation initiative decision-making.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
13. You are represented and feel that you are able to influence decisions related to marine conservation initiative planning and management.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
14. Information about what decisions were made in relation to the marine conservation initiative, how they were made, and why they were made is easy to find and access.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
15. You know how to raise concerns related to management actions.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
16. There are satisfactory processes in place for you to resolve disputes you have with marine conservation initiative managers.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
17. There are satisfactory processes in place for you to resolve disputes you have with other people (non-management) in relation to the marine conservation initiative.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
18. Decisions that affect you are made after obtaining and documenting free, prior, and informed consent (or some form of engagement).	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
19. You trust that people involved in marine conservation initiative planning and management are making decisions in the best interest of you and other people in similar groups as you.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
20. Marine conservation initiative planning and management have been carried out through processes that are appropriate and legitimate.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>



Questions about management equity

The following group of questions are related to the extent that local people are able to participate in and have leadership in marine conservation initiative management.

For each of the following questions, are you able to provide an explanation about why you made the rating? You may provide explanations related to why some questions scored low/high and/or steps that have been taken in the past to address certain issues.

	STRONGLY AGREE SA	AGREE A	NEUTRAL N	DISAGREE D	STRONGLY DISAGREE SD	DOES NOT APPLY HERE DA	DON'T KNOW DK
21. Government authorities have shared or transferred management authority with local communities or groups.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
22. Local groups have agency to carry out management activities (e.g., environmental monitoring, stewardship actions, enforcement) based on local knowledge and practices.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
23. Local groups and communities are employed in marine conservation initiative management (staff) roles and/or in carrying out management activities.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
24. Local communities and groups are represented (e.g., employed, elected) in leadership roles in marine conservation initiative management.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
25. There is sufficient funding to support people's participation, leadership, and working in marine conservation initiative management activities.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
26. There is secure funding to support local participation, capacity, and leadership for marine conservation initiative management activities.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
27. Enforcement of marine conservation initiative rules is consistent for all people.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>



Questions about environmental equity

The following group of questions are related to the quality of the local environment that local people depend on, based on the effectiveness of marine conservation initiative protections.

For each of the following questions, are you able to provide an explanation about why you made the rating? You may provide explanations related to why some questions scored low/high and/or steps that have been taken in the past to address certain issues.

	STRONGLY AGREE	AGREE	NEUTRAL	DISAGREE	STRONGLY DISAGREE	DOES NOT APPLY HERE	DON'T KNOW
	SA	A	N	D	SD	DA	DK
28. The marine conservation initiative is in a good location to produce environmental benefits (e.g., for species, habitats, the ecosystem, or fisheries).	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
29. The marine conservation initiative has sufficient management capacity to support environmental goals.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
30. Current management plans and/or actions are effective at achieving marine conservation initiative environmental goals.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
31. The marine conservation initiative has led to environmental improvements that benefit local people.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
32. You benefit from environmental improvements that arise as a result of the marine conservation initiative.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>



Questions about distributional equity

The following group of questions are related to the level of fairness in the distribution of benefits and burdens among local people.

For each of the following questions, are you able to provide an explanation about why you made the rating? You may provide explanations related to why some questions scored low/high and/or steps that have been taken in the past to address certain issues.

	STRONGLY AGREE SA	AGREE A	NEUTRAL N	DISAGREE D	STRONGLY DISAGREE SD	DOES NOT APPLY HERE DA	DON'T KNOW DK
33. Overall, the marine conservation initiative has been positive for local people.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
34. Current management plans and/or actions are effective at achieving marine conservation initiative social goals.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
35. Livelihood and economic impacts from the marine conservation initiative have been positive in your opinion.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
36. Any livelihood and economic opportunities that arise through the marine conservation initiative are shared fairly among local people.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
37. Social impacts (e.g., on culture, identity, knowledge, education, health) from the marine conservation initiative have been positive in your opinion.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
38. Social benefits and opportunities that arise through the marine conservation initiative are shared fairly among local people.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
39. Any negative impacts (e.g., risks, burdens) that result from the marine conservation initiative are shared fairly among local people.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
40. There have been studies or public engagement to understand how the marine conservation initiative has impacted local people (e.g., culture, identities, livelihoods, wealth, wellbeing).	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
41. There are programmes and efforts in place to help increase positive impacts from the marine conservation initiative.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
42. Programmes that are intended to increase positive impacts are delivered in ways that support people who are most in need.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>



Questions about contextual and structural equity

The following group of questions are related to social, economic, and political conditions beyond the community level that influence the ways that people interact with the marine conservation initiative ecosystem and marine conservation initiative management.

For each of the following questions, are you able to provide an explanation about why you made the rating? You may provide explanations related to why some questions scored low/high and/or steps that have been taken in the past to address certain issues.

	STRONGLY AGREE SA	AGREE A	NEUTRAL N	DISAGREE D	STRONGLY DISAGREE SD	DOES NOT APPLY HERE DA	DON'T KNOW DK
43. Everyone who relies on marine resources and/or lives near to the marine conservation initiative are able to meet their basic needs.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
44. Coastal livelihoods can provide a steady and reliable income for all groups.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
45. Broader political views do not prevent you or other groups from participating in and enjoying benefits from the marine conservation initiative.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
46. Social values and norms do not prevent you or other groups from participating in and enjoying benefits from the marine conservation initiative.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
47. Lives and livelihoods of local people are not affected by ongoing impacts of colonisation.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
48. National government laws and policies related to the oceans are supportive of coastal communities and groups who rely on the ocean.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
49. Local people are not affected by environmental shifts related to climate change.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
50. Small-scale fishers (SSF) and/or other customary resource users are recognised as legitimate rightsholders or stakeholders in national laws and policies.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
51. Indigenous Peoples are recognised as legitimate rightsholders in national laws and policies.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
52. The law treats all people in communities near the marine conservation initiative fairly.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>

Demographic questions

The following questions are optional. However, you are encouraged to answer them because they can help the assessment team fully understand any differences in responses from specific groups.

1. What is your gender?

- Woman
- Man
- Prefer to self-identify (specify) _____

2. What is your age group?

- 18-29 years old
- 30-39 years old
- 40-49 years old
- 50-59 years old
- 60+ years old

3. What is your highest level of education completed?

- None
- Elementary school
- Middle school
- High school
- University degree – Bachelors or higher

4. Where are you originally from?

- The area nearby the marine conservation initiative
- A different area within the same country
- Another country
- Other (specify) _____

5. Do you consider yourself as belonging to any of the following groups?

- Indigenous Person
- Small-scale fisher
- Local community member
- Immigrant to this country
- None of the above
- Prefer not to say
- Other (specify) _____

6. In comparison with other people in your community, how would you rate your level of wealth?

- A lot less wealthy (in comparison with other people in my community)
- Less wealthy (in comparison with other people in my community)
- About average (in comparison with other people in my community)
- More wealthy (in comparison with other people in my community)
- A lot more wealthy (in comparison with other people in my community)

Wrap-up questions



Are there any notable aspects of equity that were not covered in the earlier questions? Provide an explanation about how these additional aspects contribute to equitable or inequitable conditions.

Describe any actions that have been taken to address inequitable conditions. How have these actions been effective or ineffective?

Do you have any questions for us about this assessment?



Assessment option 3: Co-produced and customised equity assessment

<p> KEY FEATURES</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ In-depth insights into equity; full and inclusive engagement of all stakeholders and rightsholders; provides additional time and opportunity for a reflexive approach where assessment team can consider their own biases, assumptions, and blindspots ➤ Participants: Managers, key experts with knowledge of the marine conservation initiative, representatives from stakeholders and rightsholders (including those who may not be recognized officially by management or government) ➤ Methods: Co-production workshops, surveys, and/or focus groups ➤ Time required for participants: Series of meetings, surveys, and/or focus groups over 3-6 weeks or longer ➤ Time required for assessment lead: 3 months or longer, to allow for planning and thorough follow-through 	<p> WHEN TO USE THIS APPROACH</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ Use this approach if there is sufficient expertise on assessment team to facilitate indicator co-production process, and when managers, stakeholders and rightsholders are willing and able to be fully engaged
	<p> PATHWAYS TO CHANGE</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ Collaborative workshops and co-production processes increases knowledge of equity, and perceived legitimacy of results ➤ Written and verbal report to local leaders, managers, and key stakeholders and rightsholders ➤ Discussion and deliberation of results with all stakeholders, rightsholders, and decision-makers ➤ Increases awareness of equity concerns among managers, stakeholders, and rightsholders ➤ Identification of actions and changes as part of assessment process
	<p> LIMITATIONS</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ Requires larger budget, commitment to a longer process, and higher level of expertise ➤ Participatory processes can be captured by more vocal or powerful individuals if not carefully facilitated ➤ Raises expectations of participants, which can lead to frustration if there is no follow-through with meaningful improvements to equity

This section provides guidance for a co-produced and customised equity assessment and follows through with information about methods, analyses, and, importantly, how to ensure that the assessment produces practical outcomes, is communicated, and is deliberated on to identify improvements over time.

The phases for an equity assessment that are outlined in the following section are intended to allow for flexibility and locally adapted design. Rather than being prescriptive and rigid, this option is meant to inform a co-design planning process that is fit to local socio-cultural and practical contexts. Some locations - and some teams carrying out assessments - will have ample previous experience with social assessments or research. It will be important to draw on previous experiences about what methods and approaches work well for local participants. For example, in one place it may be appropriate to host separate focus groups according to gender, livelihoods, or socio-economic status. In another place it may be most appropriate to bring all groups together to encourage shared dialogue.

While intended to be flexible, we encourage teams to include all six dimensions of equity (recognition, procedural, management, distributional, environmental, contextual and structural) in the assessment.

In deciding on how to assess all dimensions of equity, assessment teams may draw on the attributes and indicators provided in the supplementary materials provided for the first two assessment options, or identify and co-develop additional indicators that better reflect local socio-cultural and economic contexts.

The guidance provided here emphasises that the process for assessing equity should be inclusive and collaborative at all times. The guidance is intended to include considerations from the onset of planning through information gathering to the identification and implementation actions to improve social equity.

The process outlined here involves five main phases for an equity assessment. Although these phases are described sequentially, the process should be seen as iterative. As there are numerous ways to undertake an assessment, we encourage users of this guide to keep in mind the following:

- Users of this guide are encouraged to adapt the specific steps to local circumstances and the specific purpose and objectives of their assessment process.
- Throughout the assessment process, key decisions will need to be made that will affect time requirements, logistics, costs, and other aspects.
- Although flexibility and adaptability are built into this assessment, assessment teams are encouraged to consider and assess all dimensions of equity for a comprehensive understanding. Omitting any dimensions from the assessment may lead to gaps in understanding inequities and how to address them.
- Remember that the ultimate goal is to improve equity - the assessment should lead to communication, deliberation, and identification of pragmatic actions based on the information uncovered through the assessment.

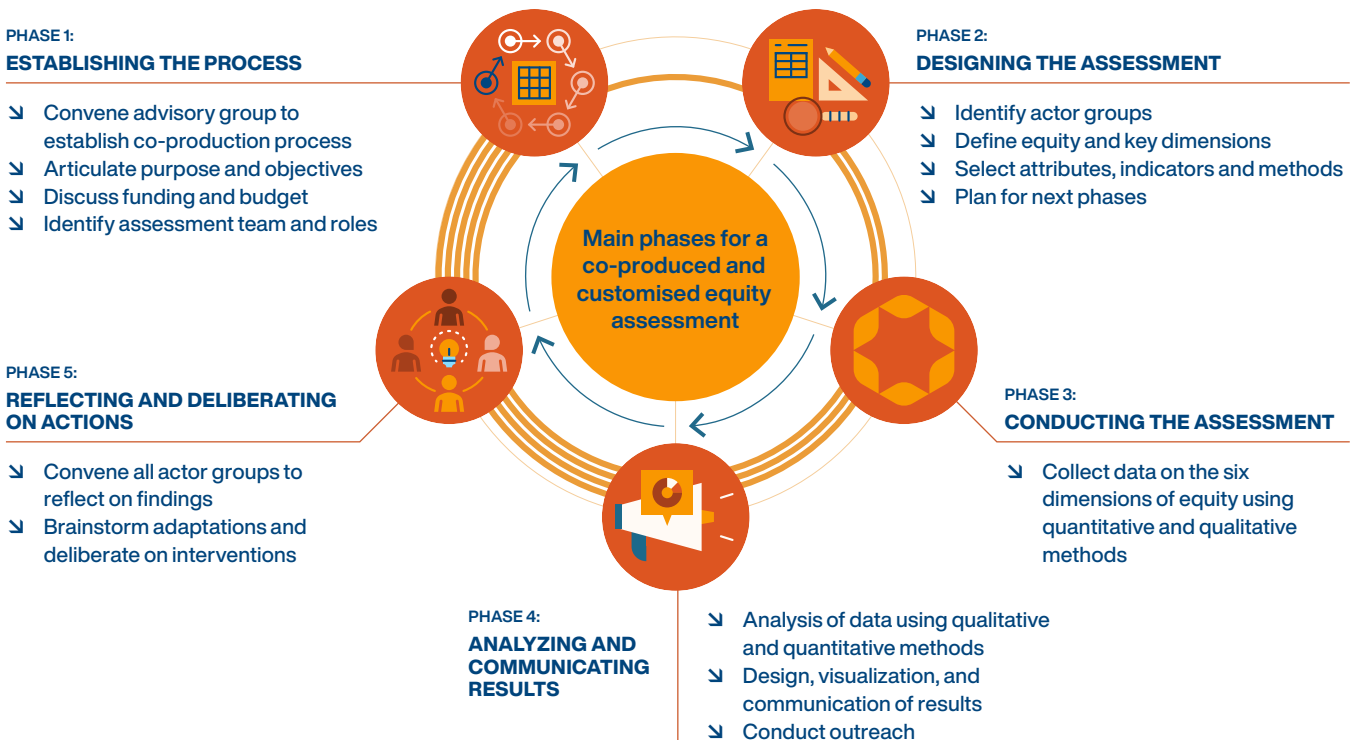


FIGURE A3: FIVE MAIN PHASES FOR A CO-PRODUCED AND CUSTOMISED EQUITY ASSESSMENT.



Phase 1 Establishing the process

Adopting an inclusive approach to team building will be essential for establishing a collaborative process. The first steps in the equity assessment should involve identifying an advisory group with locally relevant knowledge, experience, and relationships to advise on and help design the process and the assessment. Members of the advisory group might include representatives from government, academia, managers, local communities, and key stakeholders and rightsholders groups. Next, the advisory group can be convened through an in-person or virtual workshop - and work together to co-develop the purpose and establish objectives for the equity assessment, how and by whom the process will be carried out, and timelines.

The assessment team will clarify the scope and plan the budget. As this guide will be employed in diverse places, it is impossible to provide a firm estimate of costs for carrying out an assessment. Overall budgets will depend on personnel needs for the assessment team, travel needs for lead facilitators and local actors to attend meetings, local costs for food and accommodation, how long an assessment takes, whether honorariums or refreshments are provided for participants, and numerous other potential expenses related to analysis, communications, and deliberations. In this first phase of the assessment process the assessment team should discuss funding sources, total available budget, and calculate cost estimates. Aligning available funding and an estimated budget will help to ensure feasibility of the assessment and assist with planning during Phase 2.

At this early stage it will also be important to begin discussions about data ownership, use, and sharing. Consideration should be given to who will store and have access to information that is collected about prospective participants (including names and contact information) and of data collected during the assessment. Issues of data ownership and control may be especially important if multiple local organisations and international NGOs are part of the assessment team.

Identifying the team that will lead the designing and conducting of the assessment is also important in this phase. There is not a specified number of people who can be involved in leading an equity assessment but teams should consider the following roles and responsibilities that will be needed as part of an assessment team:

- **Leadership and fostering buy-in to the assessment process**
- **Designing or adapting social science methods**
- **Using social science methods**
- **Facilitation of assessment design and subsequent meetings**
- **Carrying out qualitative and quantitative analyses**
- **Communicating results with a broad range of local actors**
- **Facilitation of reflection and deliberation processes**

As a team is formed, it will be important to clarify roles and responsibilities for each team member.



Phase 2 Designing the assessment

Depending on the composition of the advisory group and the assessment team, it may be appropriate to establish a working group who will support the remaining phases of the assessment. The working group should include representatives from marine conservation initiative management and all major stakeholders and rightsholders groups. For instance, the working group may consist of the assessment team, members of the advisory group, the marine conservation initiative manager, fisheries co-operative member(s), local government official(s), and representatives of other local organisations. This working group can help to define equity definitions and indicators that are locally relevant, provide advice on feasibility of different activities, review methods to ensure they will be understood and effective, and help to communicate updates about the assessment process to their organisations and other constituents. While following the steps described below, the assessment team and working group should continually reflect on the extent that participation will be welcomed and fruitful for different actor groups. Participation in assessment has often been felt as an extractive process and can be a financial and social burden.

1. Identification of actor groups (actor mapping exercise)

Identification of all relevant actor groups - including rightsholders and stakeholders - is essential for an inclusive assessment process. The assessment team and working group should begin with identification of diverse actor groups and consider the following criteria for making decisions about which groups should be included in both the working group and in the assessment:

- **People living within or in areas adjacent to the conservation initiative's boundaries**
- **People who have been directly or indirectly impacted by the conservation initiative**
- **Rightsholders - including Indigenous Peoples, small-scale fishers, and other traditional resource users**
- **Resource user groups (e.g., fishers or aquaculture cooperatives; people engaged in activities such as shellfish collection)**
- **Groups representing special interests (e.g., religious groups, ethnic minorities, youth, elders)**

2. Defining what equity means locally

This guidebook has offered a definition of equity as fairness and justice with respect to the ways that people are treated or are impacted by conservation initiatives. The guidebook also describes how equity can be further understood through dimensions of recognition, procedures, distribution, management, environment, and contexts or structures. Beyond these definitions, the meaning of equity can vary in different social and cultural contexts. When it comes to personal experience, people often perceive inequities more readily than equity. Further, different actor groups may hold opposing views on the equity of conditions that have resulted from conservation initiatives.

To support assessment teams with defining local meanings of equity, the following questions may be useful:

- Do local cultures and customs directly or indirectly refer to equity? (e.g., in relation to rights or ability to participate in marine conservation initiative management)
- Do local cultures and customs directly or indirectly refer to fairness or justice?
- Do local cultures and customs refer to who should have access to lands and resources? Or when lands and resources should be accessed?
- When the marine conservation initiative was introduced, were any groups (e.g., socio-cultural or resource user groups) given restrictions or responsibilities that differ from other groups? How were these differences perceived?
- To what extent has local or Indigenous knowledge informed the formation and management of the marine conservation initiative?
- Are there any negative impacts of conservation? Who bears the costs? Is this a fair way of distributing costs? What is a fair way of distributing costs?
- Are there any positive impacts of conservation? Who benefits? Is this a fair way of distributing benefits? What is a fair way of distributing benefits?
- How have past colonial institutions shaped current conditions? Are there racial and gender distinctions from these histories that are affecting modern institutions?

3. Selection of equity attributes and indicators

A reference set of equity attributes and indicators related to each dimension of equity is provided in Table 2 (with survey questions provided under the rapid equity assessment and stakeholders and rightsholders assessment supplementary materials). These reference indicators provide a broad means for assessing equity. The authors of this guidebook want to emphasise, however, that the reference set of indicators should not be viewed as exhaustive. There are numerous additional indicators that may be useful, especially in light of local meanings and understandings of equity. The assessment team - along with the advisory group - may choose to develop and add their own indicators that will help to fully address local conditions.

When selecting or developing indicators to use as part of this assessment, the assessment team should consider the following:

- Indicators that are directional (i.e., clearly show what is positive or negative) and that capture a whole range of potential outcomes are more effective for evaluating status and progress towards a goal.
- Superficial indicators - such as the number of participants in meetings - are not ideal for evaluating equity. These types of indicators do not meaningfully capture quality or how equity or inequity are experienced.
- Consider a combination of process and outcome indicators. Process indicators relate to ongoing events or activities and may point towards the ways that people feel included. Outcome indicators relate to the extent that changes have been experienced with respect to goals or anticipated changes.
- Avoid aggregate or composite indicators. As the central aim of the assessment is to identify any inequitable conditions that need to be addressed, it is important that specific indicators do not become lost or obscured by other indicators.

4. Selection of methods

Alongside the identification of a suite of attributes and indicators, it is necessary to identify relevant methods that will be used for the assessment. This may be a challenging part of the planning process due to the array of options available - which includes quantitative methods such as surveys or relying on secondary data, or qualitative measures such as surveys, interviews, or focus groups. Assessment teams may choose to draw from the rapid and the stakeholders and rightsholders equity assessment options as part of their overall assessment approach. Decisions about the combination of methods to use may be informed by:

- **Local experiences with research/assessments and familiarity with certain methods;**
- **Applying a mix of qualitative and quantitative methods;**
- **Time constraints;**
- **Logistical considerations for applying certain methods (e.g., distribution of a survey or challenges gathering actors for a focus group); and**
- **The groups included in the assessment sample.**

5. Planning for communications

The best intentions for inclusion will not be realised if all constituents - stakeholders and rightsholders - and potential participants are not fully informed about the equity assessment. Communication plans should consider the technologies available for and used by different actor groups, nuances regarding language (e.g., using accessible language, avoiding possible contentions associated with certain terms, events, or institutions), and their preferred means of communication. Communication plans may include notices within newsletters, email campaigns, posts on social media, announcements via radio, or many other options. Communications from the assessment team should include announcements about the goals of the equity assessment, explanations of the importance of the assessment and how it may be used, and why various actor groups need to be involved. Ongoing communications can help to inform participants about key dates and events, preliminary results, and information for upcoming meetings.

6. Planning ahead for later steps in the assessment

The assessment can use early meetings to lay out a full assessment plan, including timelines and anticipated activities. This early planning can be important for further defining roles and responsibilities of the assessment team and working group, and help to identify where additional resources and support may be required. For example, booking meeting rooms becomes possible once key dates have been selected and the number of participants have been estimated.

Within the project timelines, the assessment team should consider what analyses may be carried out (Phase 4) and how long these may take. Will external support be required for analyses or presentation of findings? Who may be able to fill these roles? How long will external actors need to complete these tasks? The assessment team and working group should also begin to make plans for final meetings where assessment outcomes can be discussed and action plans can be co-designed. Who will need to participate in these meetings? How can all actor groups be supported so that they can participate fully?

Decisions about logistics and costs

Depending on the geographic distribution of assessment participants, there may be multiple options for how to design assessment methods. One approach may involve bringing all participants together for one or two days of meetings and focus groups. This approach can be very effective for generating meaningful dialogue, but it can also be expensive to host and can be a time burden for participants.

An alternative approach may involve the assessment team traveling to conduct interviews and surveys with various groups of assessment participants. This approach will also involve travel costs for the assessment team but may be less of a burden for assessment participants.

Regardless of the approach taken for Phase 3 Conducting the assessment, it is important that representatives of all actor groups come together for Phase 5 when outcomes are deliberated and actions are co-designed.



Phase 3 Conducting the assessment

Gathering information can occur sequentially or concurrently, depending on local geography and logistical options. For example, it may be possible to distribute a survey as a first step for gathering preliminary information, followed by focus groups that allow for in-person conversations. When planning meetings and focus groups, the assessment team should identify any relevant power relationships that may affect how people feel able to participate. For instance, certain people may hold influence within a community due to their socio-economic or political status or other factors. Such individuals may tend to sway the opinions of others or prevent them from sharing their perspectives. In other cases, some groups of actors may have existing feuds or conflicts that prevent them from engaging in meaningful dialogue with each other. The assessment team and working group should be aware of such relationships and may need to make plans to ensure that everyone has the opportunity to participate. In some cases this may mean hosting multiple, separate focus groups or ensuring that facilitators are highly skilled with addressing power imbalances.

All methods should be geared towards collecting information relevant to the chosen indicators during Phase 2, and ensuring that all six dimensions of equity (Figure 1) are addressed. Using a mix of qualitative and quantitative methods will help to triangulate findings. In addition to participatory information gathering (i.e., elicitation of participants' perceptions), it may be useful to also conduct a desk review. A desk review provides an opportunity to review related research reports, historical records, and other relevant information. Assessing and understanding contextual and structural equity in particular may require a combination of in-person information collection with other secondary information.

It can be helpful to think about how information will be recorded for each method. Methods such as surveys are straightforward as information is readily documented quantitatively and sometimes qualitatively through open-ended responses. For focus groups, the assessment team should plan to use group-oriented notes (e.g., sticky notes, chart paper, or a whiteboard) and a notetaker who can document verbal comments. Small-group or individual interviews can also make use of a notetaker and can potentially be audio recorded if consent is given by all participants.



Phase 4 Analysing and communicating results

Analysis and interpretation of information will ideally involve the whole assessment team. As team members will bring unique expertise, some work will be carried out by individuals (e.g., organising and carrying out quantitative analyses). However, discussion of preliminary findings and sharing of emerging insights among the assessment team is important. Depending on time and logistics, analysis could also involve some collaboration with the working group as well.

Most importantly, all analyses need to bring attention to the ways that equity and inequity are experienced. Basic descriptive analysis can show what the information that has been collected shows about the status of each dimension of equity. The data might also be disaggregated by social groups to show the perspectives of different groups.

Another aspect of this phase is communicating the results of the assessment to the different audiences for whom the information might be important. Specific and targeted outreach efforts might be required to make sure that the information reaches these audiences. The information might be communicated in various formats - including reports, websites or presentations - to reach these audiences.



Phase 5 Reflecting and deliberating on actions

This is the most important phase of the assessment. Phase 5 necessarily builds on all of the earlier work in the assessment, but it is particularly important because all insights are synthesised and actionable plans are developed. Several points of emphasis can help to guide this phase:

- **Include all possible actors and decision-makers in these reflections and co-design of actions. Actions are most likely to be adopted when they are ‘bottom-up’, rather than imposed by external actors.**
- **Remind all participants that emphasis should be placed on learning and reflection. It is not ideal to lay blame because this may lead to conflict or further entrenchment of social division.**
- **Cooperation and collaboration are critical during this phase. As diverse actors will be brought together, facilitators need to remind the group that everyone will benefit from cooperation.**
- **Keep the focus on what is realistic and what is possible. Brainstorming possible changes is helpful and important, but ideas will eventually need to be refined. Facilitators can ask the group to keep in mind logistical, funding, political, and other constraints to any proposed actions. These constraints are not meant to put limits on actions - rather they should be discussed in terms of developing realistic and pragmatic actions.**

The following set of steps can be followed for this phase. As this is not an exhaustive list of steps, the assessment team may choose to adjust or add to the steps:

- 1. Begin with a brief presentation to community findings of the earlier steps of the assessment.**
The presentation should include details about the assessment team and working group, funders, the steps taken for the assessment and who participated, and how analyses were conducted. This presentation can set the stage for productive discussions.
- 2. Main assessment findings can be discussed and deliberated with participants (possibly in small groups, depending on the number of participants).** Were any findings surprising or new? What are the main areas of concern? What are the areas of strength of the conservation initiative with respect to equity?
- 3. Through group discussions, identify which areas of main concern can be addressed by the groups who are present and what may not.** This step is not yet about identifying actions or changes. The focus here is about limitations and managing expectations about what may be possible. Some equity concerns will have causes that are beyond the influence of local actors.
- 4. Brainstorm potential actions for each of the main areas of concern.** This may entail actions for each domain of equity, or it may focus on a few key areas of concern. What can happen next to address areas of concern?
- 5. Revisit the brainstorm ideas and try to facilitate some agreement about which changes and actions to implement.** This may mean a prioritised or sequential list of actions and next steps. Chosen interventions should be realistic and feasible.

As part of this process, the assessment team should document why and how decisions were made. It may be important to note which actions were not taken or whether irreconcilable differences emerged between certain groups. All of the findings, actions, and next steps should be documented in a report that is distributed to all participants and relevant actors.



**INTERNATIONAL UNION
FOR CONSERVATION OF NATURE**

WORLD HEADQUARTERS
Rue Mauverney 28
1196 Gland, Switzerland
mail@iucn.org
Tel +41 22 999 0000
Fax +41 22 999 0002
www.iucn.org

