THE IUCN PROTECTED AREA MANAGEMENT CATEGORIES

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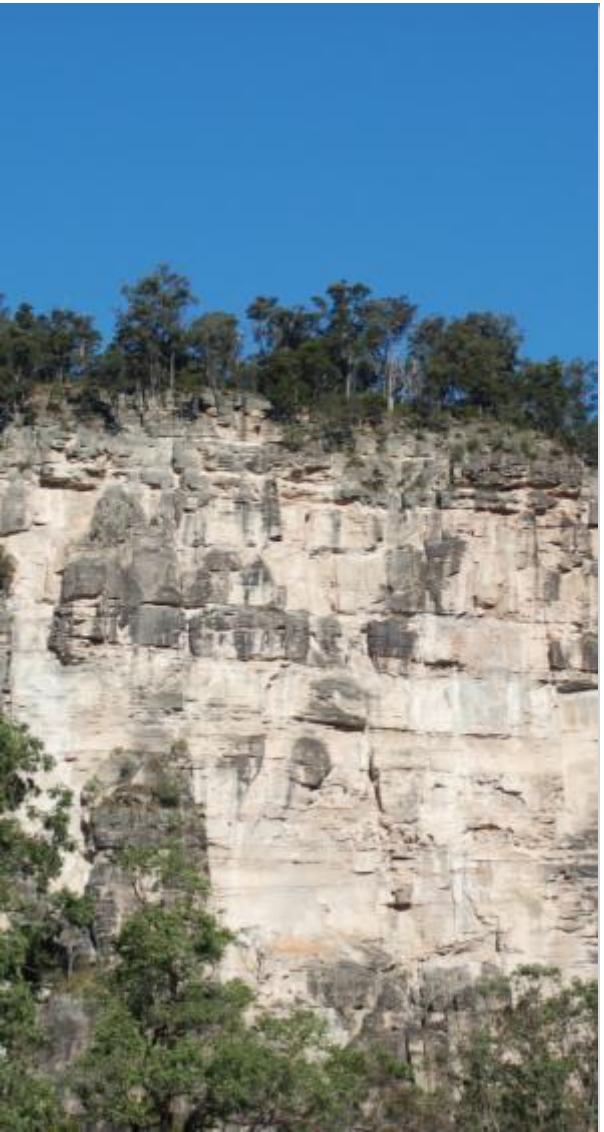
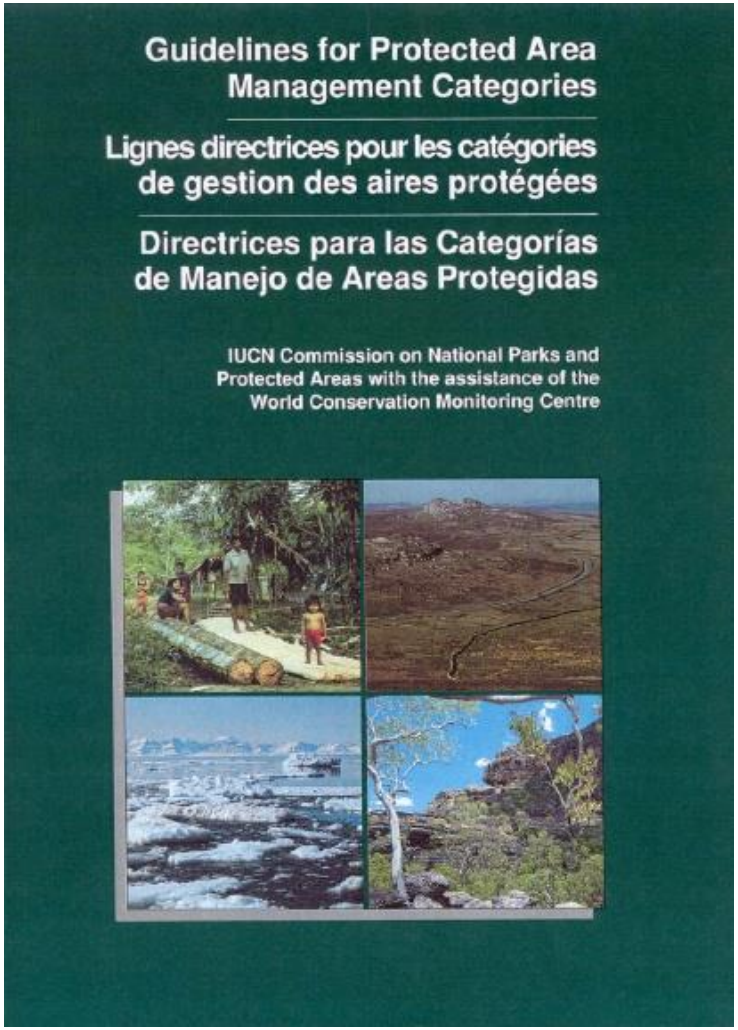
International Context

COP10 – CBD Strategic Plan Target 11

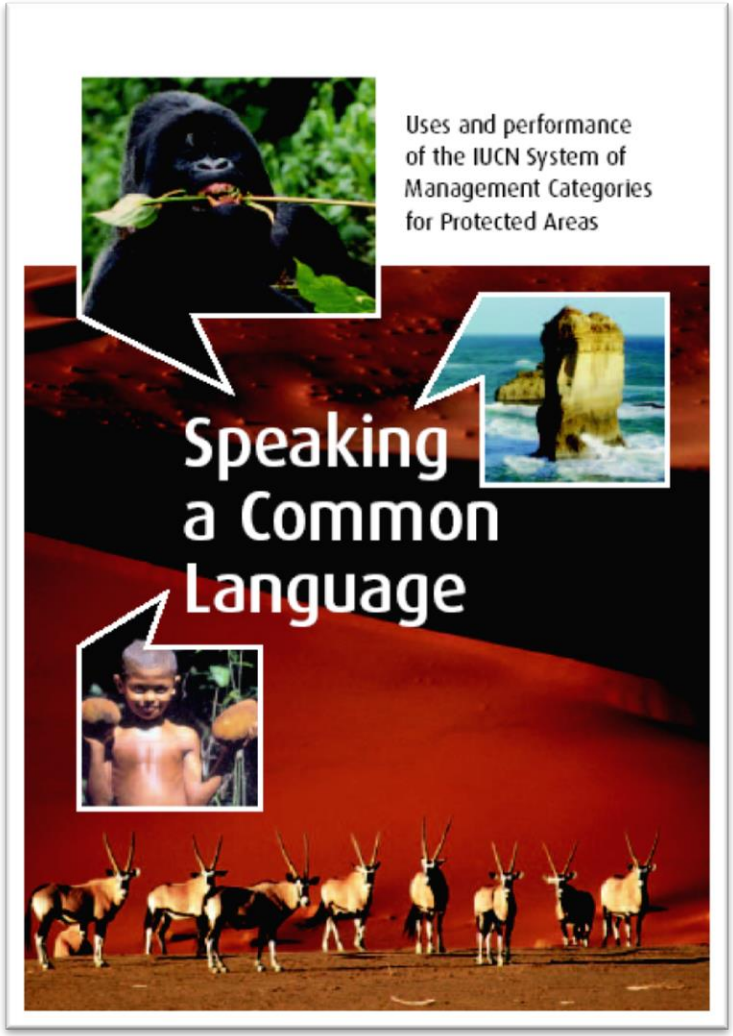


By 2020, at least 17 per cent of terrestrial and inland water areas and 10 per cent of coastal and marine areas, especially **areas of particular importance for biodiversity** and **ecosystem services**, are conserved through **effectively and equitably managed**, **ecologically representative** and **well-connected** systems of protected areas and other effective area-based conservation measures, and **integrated into the wider landscape and seascape**.

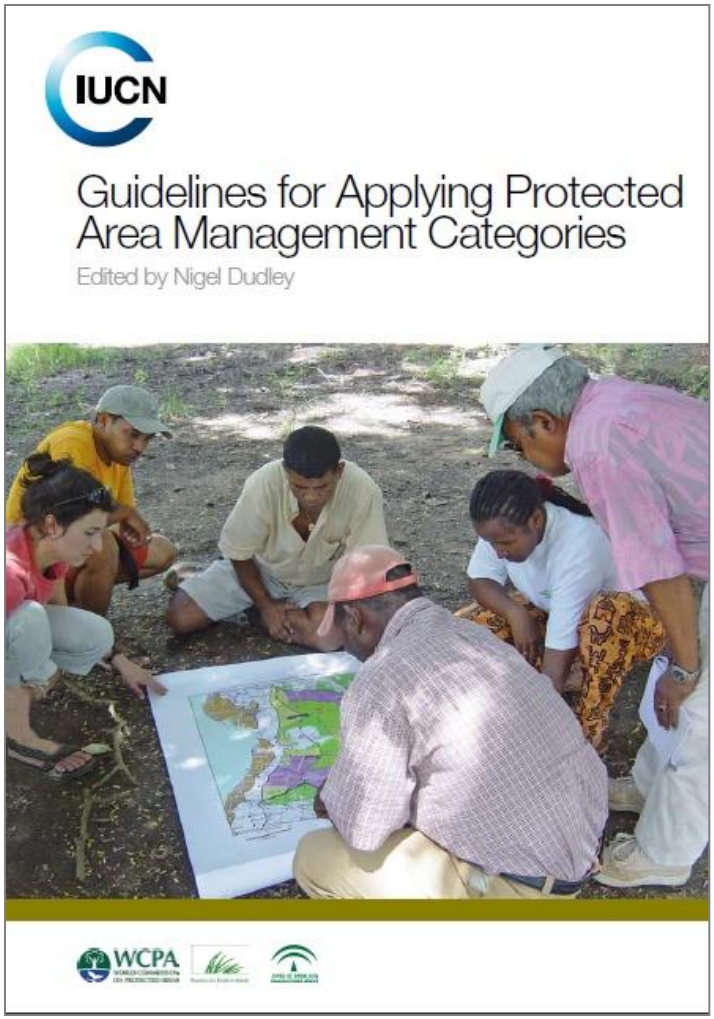
IUCN has spent the last two decades reviewing and to a certain extent rethinking the question of what defines a “protected area” and how and what protected areas contribute to human society



In 1975 IUCN began to develop a categories system based on management objectives and this was eventually published as a set of six categories in 1994.



From 2000-2004 an analysis of the scope and impact of categories, was carried out for IUCN. The results were published in the report *Speaking a Common Language* and a resolution at the 2004 World Conservation Congress called for a thorough review of the categories and production of new guidelines



IUCN published a new edition of guidelines to the IUCN protected area categories at the World Conservation Congress in October 2008 following a major global consultative process.

Supported by IUCN Resolution – Barcelona

Additional guidance and resolutions***

The category guidelines have three main elements:

1. Definition of a protected area
2. Definition of six management categories of protected areas
3. Definition of four governance types of protected area

Plus guidance on understanding, using and reporting these three elements.

The definition of a protected area: A clearly defined geographical space, recognised, dedicated and managed, through legal or other effective means, to achieve the long-term conservation of nature, with associated ecosystem services and cultural values

The key principle is: For IUCN, only those sites where the **main goal or outcome is conserving nature** should be considered protected areas.

- Note that this would include many sites which can have other goals as well, at the same level, such as cultural or spiritual, but in the case of conflict nature conservation has to be the priority

The process for applying the IUCN categories starts with the definition of a protected area and should include assigning both a category and governance type and will depend on site and system specific issues

Protected area definition

- Legal documentation on purpose of designation
- Overall management aims and goals

Management category

- Overall aims and goals of protected area type (i.e. nature reserve)
- Site management plan and management objectives

Governance type

- Legislation
- Management structures and decision making processes

Governance

Who has responsibility and is held accountable for decisions about a given protected area?

A. the government (and its agencies at various levels)

B. various parties (co-management)

C. owners of the concerned land and natural resources (private individuals, corporate actors…)

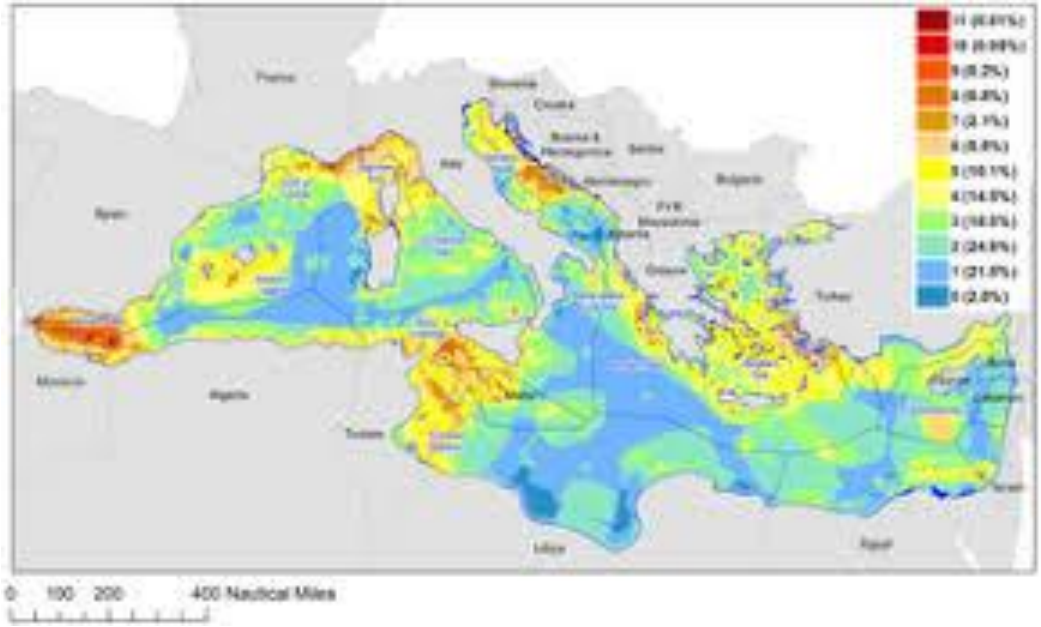
D. indigenous peoples and local communities

Now includes equity

PA Categories and Governance Types

Governance types / Protected area categories	A. Governance by government			B. Shared governance			C. Private governance			D. Governance by indigenous peoples and local communities	
	Federal or national ministry or agency in charge	Sub-national ministry or agency in charge	Government-delegated management (e.g., to an NGO)	Transboundary management	Collaborative management (various forms of pluralist influence)	Joint management (pluralist management board)	Declared and run by individual land-owners	... by non-profit organizations (e.g., NGOs, universities)	... by for-profit organizations (e.g., corporate owners, cooperatives)	Indigenous peoples' protected areas and territories – established and run by indigenous peoples	Community conserved areas – declared and run by local communities
Ia. Strict Nature Reserve											
Ib. Wilderness Area											
II. National Park											
III. Natural Monument											
IV. Habitat/ Species Management											
V. Protected Landscape/ Seascape											
VI. Protected Area with Sustainable Use of Natural Resources											

- **Management objectives** – overview of long term aims
- **Management actions** – day to day interpretation
- **Categories** – a description of management objective

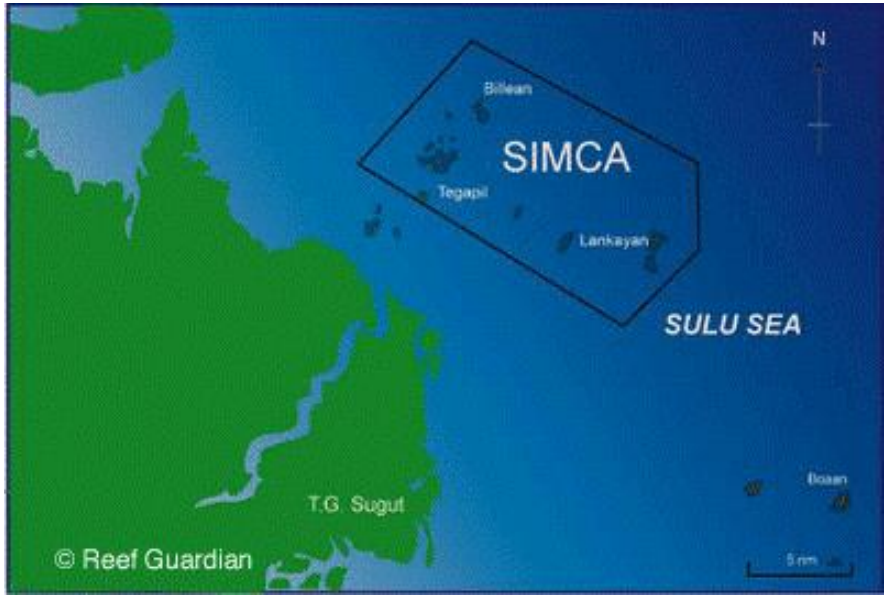


An important note: The names of the categories used by IUCN do not necessarily reflect the names used at national or sub-national levels

Category Ia (strict nature reserve) set aside to protect biodiversity and also possibly geological/geomorphological features, where human visitation, use and impacts are strictly controlled and limited to ensure protection of the conservation values

Category Ib (wilderness area) usually large unmodified or slightly modified areas, retaining their natural character and influence, without permanent or significant human habitation, protected and managed to preserve their natural condition.

Category II (national park) protect large-scale ecological processes, along with the complement of species and ecosystems characteristic of the area, which also provide a foundation for environmentally and culturally compatible spiritual, scientific, educational, recreational and visitor opportunities



Category III (natural monument or feature) protect a specific natural monument, which can be a landform, sea mount, submarine cavern, geological feature such as a cave or even a living feature, such as an ancient grove

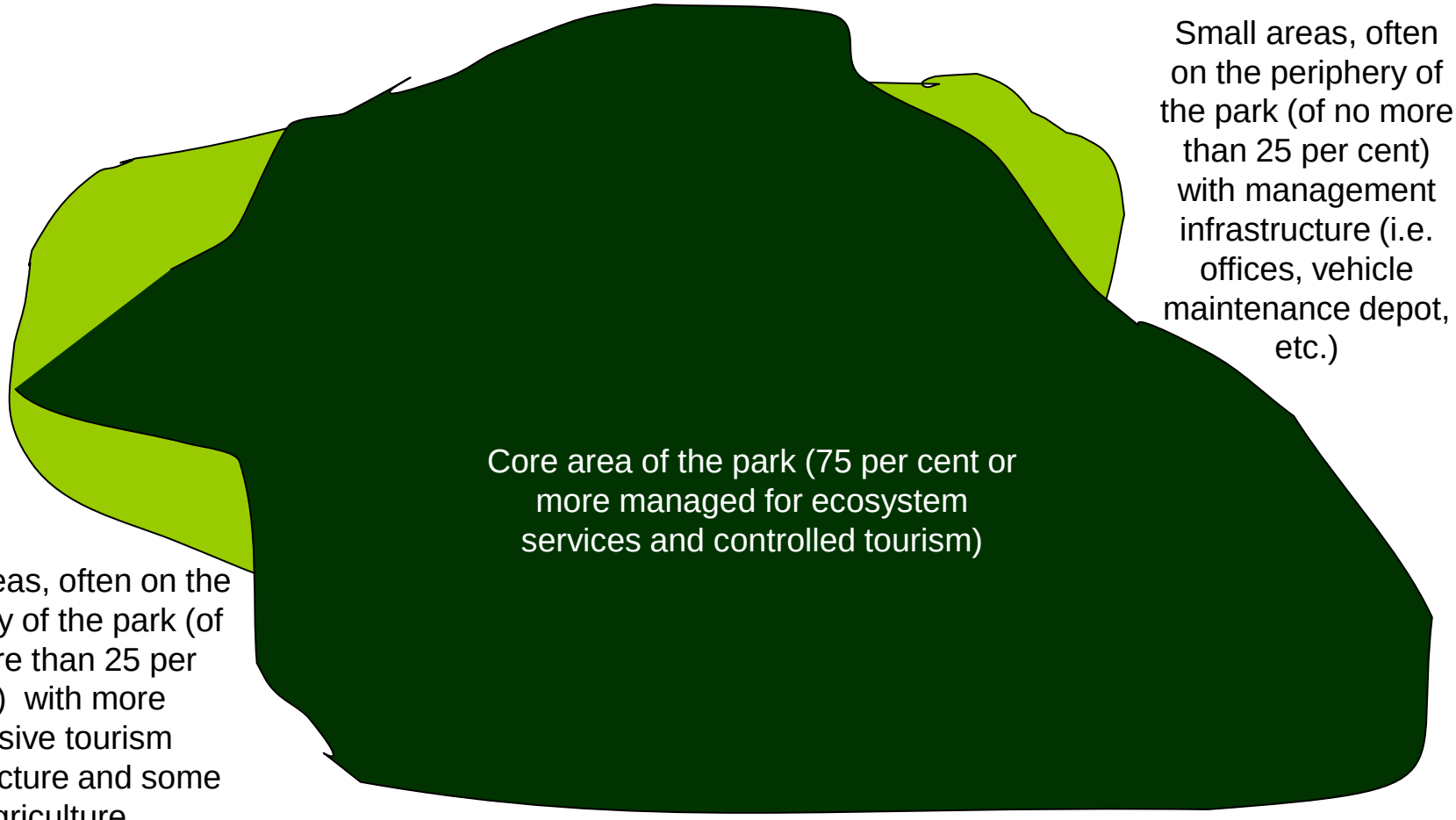
Category IV is aimed at protection of particular stated species or habitats, often with active management intervention (e.g., protection of key benthic habitats from trawling or dredging). MPAs or zones aimed at particular species or groups can be classified as category IV, e.g., seabird, turtle or shark sanctuaries. An MPA with seasonal protection, such as turtle nesting beaches that are protected during the breeding season, might also qualify as category IV.

e.g. South Ari Atoll MPA in the Maldives protects important Maldivian aggregation areas for the whale shark

- In a marine situation category V would apply to areas where local communities live within and sustainably use the seascape, but where the primary objectives of the areas are nevertheless nature conservation protection.
- Category V is aimed at protection of landscapes, a concept that is more difficult to apply in the marine environment although the idea of protecting seascapes is gaining currency.

Category VI (protected areas with sustainable use of natural resources) protects ecosystems and habitats, and associated cultural values and traditional natural resource management systems. Generally large areas, with most of the area in a natural condition, where a proportion is under sustainable natural resource management with low-level non-industrial use of natural resources compatible with nature conservation.

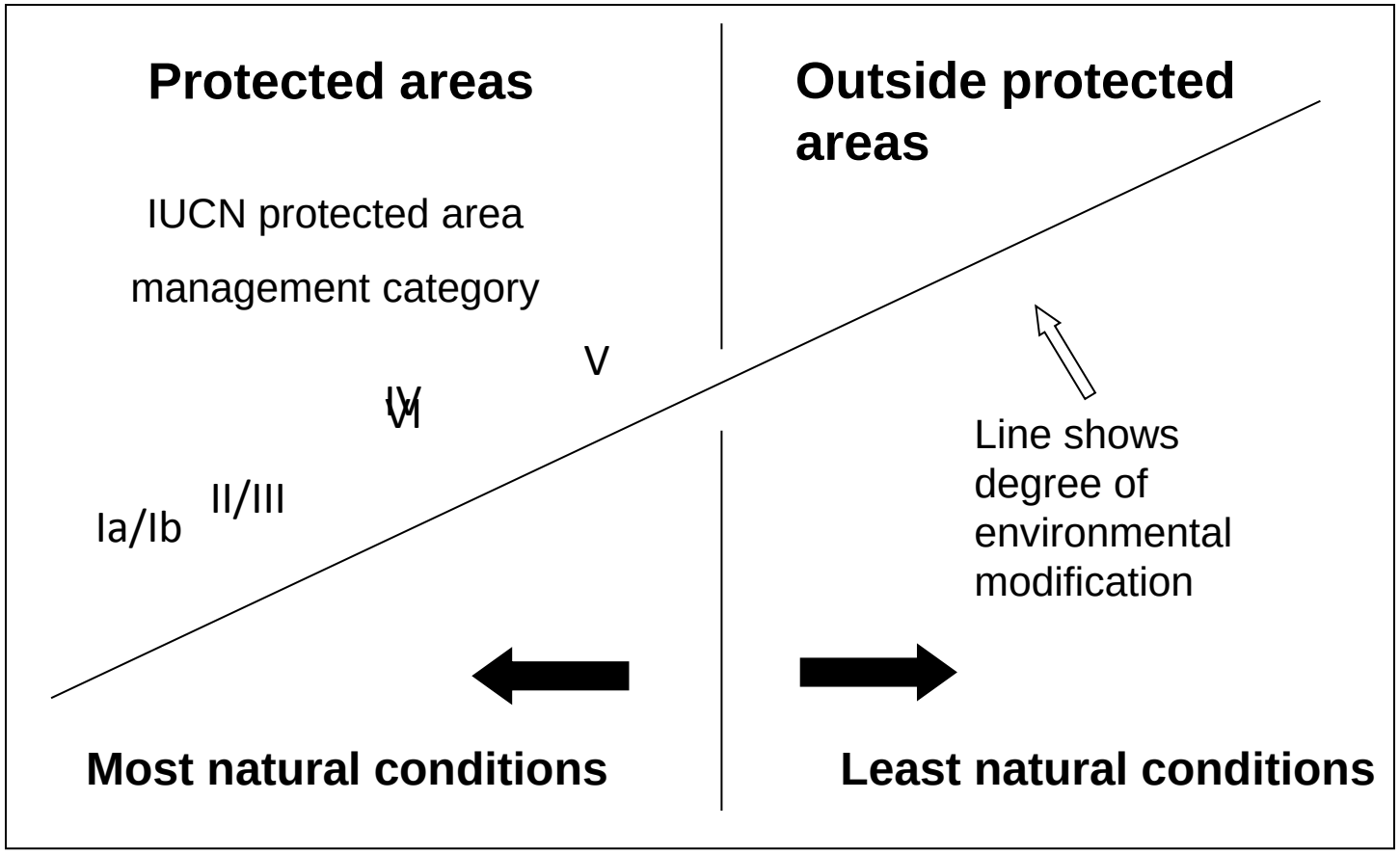
The 75% rule


Small areas, often on the periphery of the park (of no more than 25 per cent) with management infrastructure (i.e. offices, vehicle maintenance depot, etc.)
Core area of the park (75 per cent or more managed for ecosystem services and controlled tourism)
Small areas, often on the periphery of the park (of no more than 25 per cent) with more intensive tourism infrastructure and some agriculture

Size and protected area category

Cat.	Size	Explanation
Ia	**Often small**	Strictly protected, no-go areas are always difficult to agree except in sparsely inhabited areas: therefore although large Ia areas exist (e.g., in) they are probably the exception.
Ib	**Usually large**	Part of the rationale of wilderness areas is that they provide enough space to experience solitude and large-scale natural ecosystem.
II	**Usually large**	Conservation of ecosystem processes suggests that the area needs to be large enough to contain all or most such processes.
III	**Usually small**	Larger sites containing natural monuments would generally also protect other values (e.g., ecosystems and/or wilderness values).
IV	**Often small**	If the site is set up to protect only individual species or habitats this suggests that it is relatively small.
V	**Usually large**	The mosaic of different approaches adding up to conservation gains in landscape approaches suggests a larger area.
VI	**Usually large**	The extensive nature of management suggests that it will usually be a large area.

Naturalness and protected area categories

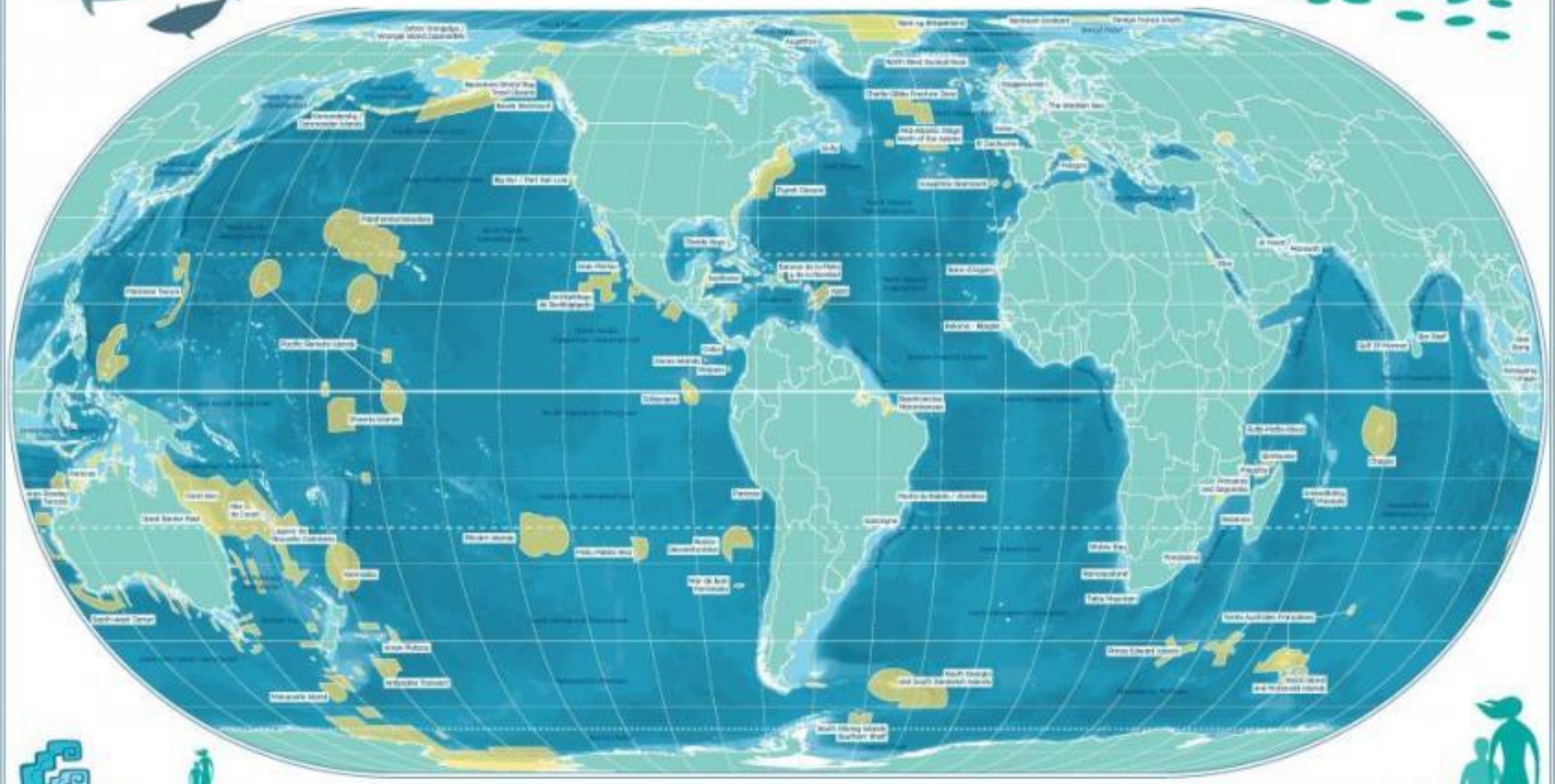


Countries agreed to use the IUCN categories as part of their commitments under the CBD's Programme of Work on Protected Areas and the categories are used to plan and assess both global and national protected area systems

The World Database on Protected Areas (www.protectedplanet.net) managed by UNEP-WCMC uses the IUCN guidelines as a standards to assess what is a protected areas, records protected area categories and governance types

2017: MPAs cover about 6% of the ocean

Targets: 10% in 2020 and at least 30% in 2030



International
Marine Protected Areas
Congress Chile 2017

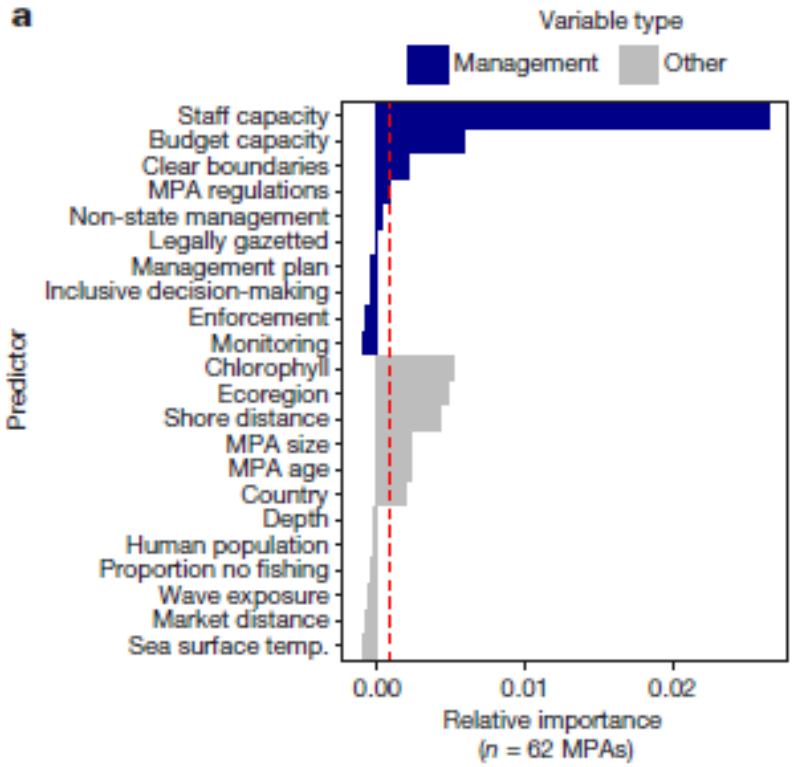
AGENCE FRANÇAISE POUR LA BIODIVERSITÉ

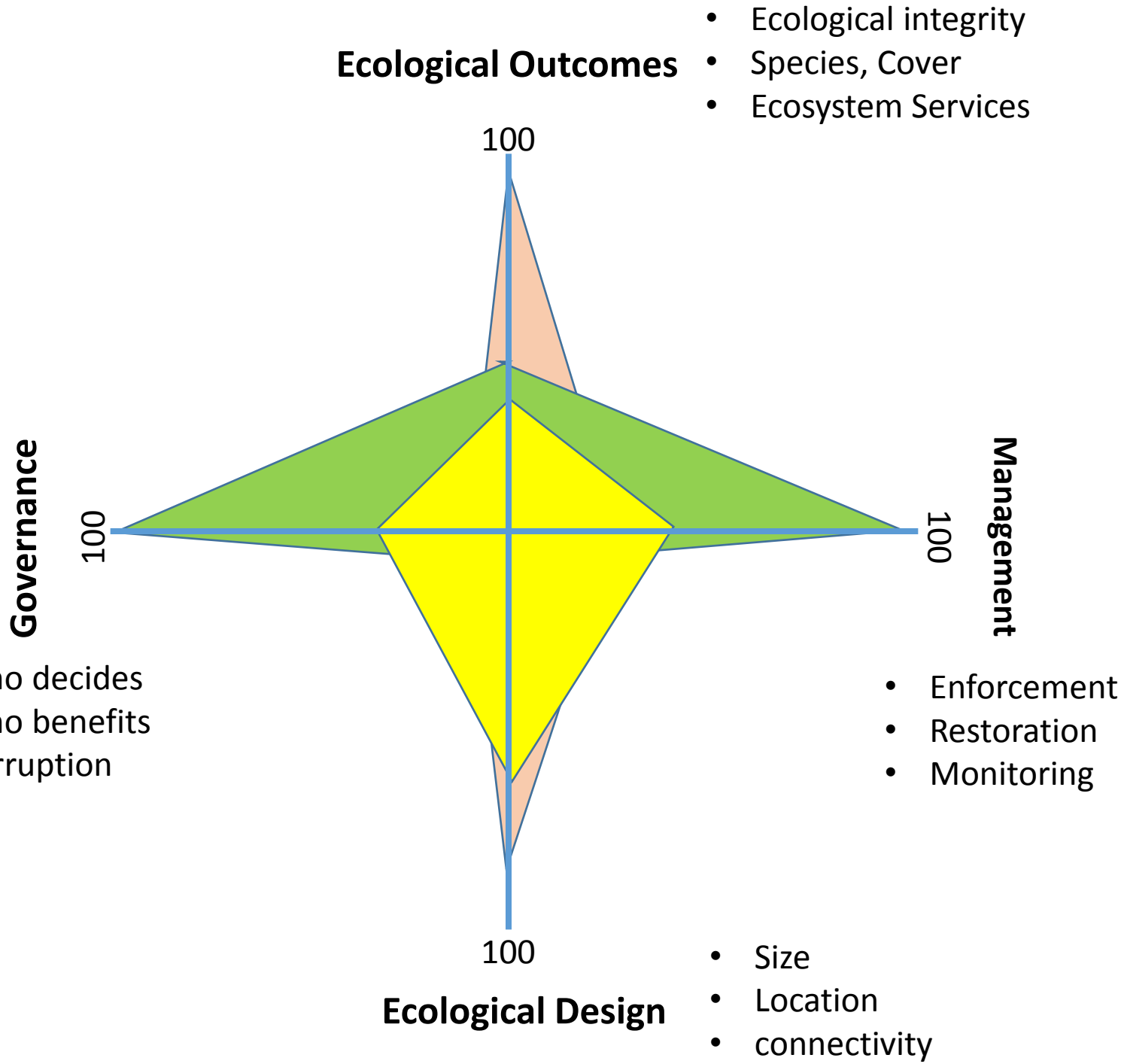
IUCN WCPA UN environment WCMC

Drivers of Marine Conservation Success

(Edgar et al. Nature 2014, Gill et al. Nature 2017)

- Most MPAs are the same as fished areas - with widespread shortfalls in staff and financial resources..
- Some MPAs are extremely effective.
- Conservation benefits driven by five key features – no-take, well enforced, old (>10 years), large (>100 km^2), and isolated by deep water or sand.
- **Management drives MPA effectiveness** – adequate staff and budget capacity yield 3 times greater impact




Ecological Outcomes
• Ecological integrity
• Species, Cover
• Ecosystem Services
100
Governance
100
• Who decides
• Who benefits
• Corruption
Management
100
• Enforcement
• Restoration
• Monitoring
100
Ecological Design
• Size
• Location
• connectivity

Other key issues – see guidance document

1. Large scale industrial activities
2. Large scale commercial fishing
3. Focus on benefits, not losses
4. Vertical zoning – advice is to avoid, presumption against
5. OECMs

Essential characteristics that a MPA needs to have:

- ☑ conservation focussed with nature as the priority
- ☑ defined goals and objectives which reflect these values
- ☑ suitable size, location and design that will enable conservation of values
- ☑ defined and fairy agreed boundary
- ☑ management plan or equivalent, which addresses the needs for conservation of the site's major values and achievement of its social and economic goals and objectives
- ☑ resources and capacity to implement

Proven benefits from MPAs' include:

- **Biodiversity conservation** – species, genes and ecosystems
- **Improved fisheries** – increased biomass and stock replenishment
- **Climate mitigation and resilience** – enhanced ecosystem resilience and carbon storage
- **Disaster risk reduction** – protecting coastlines and coastal populations from extreme weather, tsunamis and coastal erosion
- **Restoration** – providing places to restore ecosystems such as reefs, sea grasses and mangroves
- **Tourism and recreation** – economic and health benefits to coastal communities
- **Protection of cultural and spiritual resources and values** – saving our history and sacred places
- **Research and education** - building an understanding of our ocean and promoting good stewardship
- **Models of fair and open governance** – MPAs can recognise rights and help share benefits through transparent and inclusive decision-making processes