



REPORT OF THE ASPEN OCEAN COMMUNITY STRATEGY ROUNDTABLE

June 2014

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The Aspen Institute is an educational and policy studies organization based in Washington, D.C. Its mission is to foster leadership based on enduring values and to provide a nonpartisan venue for dealing with critical issues. The Institute has campuses in Aspen, Colorado, and on the Wye River on Maryland's Eastern Shore. It also maintains offices in New York City and has an international network of partners. www.aspeninstitute.org

The Aspen Institute's Energy and Environment Program provides a decidedly neutral forum for constructive civil society dialogue on complex policy issues in the areas of energy and environmental policy, thereby deepening knowledge, broadening perspectives and enhancing the capacity of leaders to solve problems. The Program periodically convenes strategic groups of experts from government, business, academia and nonprofit organizations in dialogue series structured and moderated for discussion, exploration and consensus building around energy or environmental topics.

The Aspen Institute's **Ocean Community Strategy Roundtable** (December 2013) was convened at Aspen Wye River to assess the steps required for scaling investment in and deployment of ocean conservation tools in both small-scale coastal fisheries and large-scale MPAs. This roundtable served as a platform for the ocean community to align socioeconomic and conservation goals, including the promotion of Public- Private Partnerships through a new set of stakeholders, from policymakers to fishermen. The roundtable built on the Institute's previous **Ocean Community Study & Dialogue** (2012-2013) and subsequent ***Ocean Community Report*** (2013), which explored recent marine protection advocacy and policy targeting unsustainable fisheries.

Participants in the Aspen Institute's Ocean Community Strategy Roundtable were invited as experts in their fields and not in their organizational capacities or affiliations. As with all policy dialogues in the Aspen Institute's Energy and Environment program, the format followed the Institute's time-honored approach to intentional, values-based dialogue and adhered to a strict not-for-attribution rule throughout the duration of the dialogue. Individuals who participated in the roundtable are listed for identification purposes only—they are not responsible for, nor do they or their organizations endorse, the report's narrative, conjecture or any errors.

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EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

In 2013, the Aspen Institute published *The Ocean Community Report*, a study based on a 2012 roundtable discussion with oceans leaders at Fort Baker, California on the state of ocean conservation, as well as two research papers on marine protection advocacy, policy and management.

The report's recommendations suggested opportunities for improving the effectiveness of collaboration among ocean conservation advocacy groups, funders and policymakers, including taking advantage of the synergies between conservation tools, reframing ocean conservation as a solution to other national issues, and promoting win-win conservation opportunities.

Building on this report, a second gathering of oceans experts was convened one year later at Aspen Wye River to assess the steps required for scaling investment in and deployment of ocean conservation tools in both small-scale coastal fisheries and large-scale MPAs. This roundtable served as a platform for the community to discuss and develop its alignment of conservation priorities with socioeconomic goals and advance innovative conservation financing opportunities.

Based on these 2013 discussions at Wye River, and Aspen's *Ocean Community Report*, the following recommendations have been forwarded for continued reflection and prioritization by the ocean community:

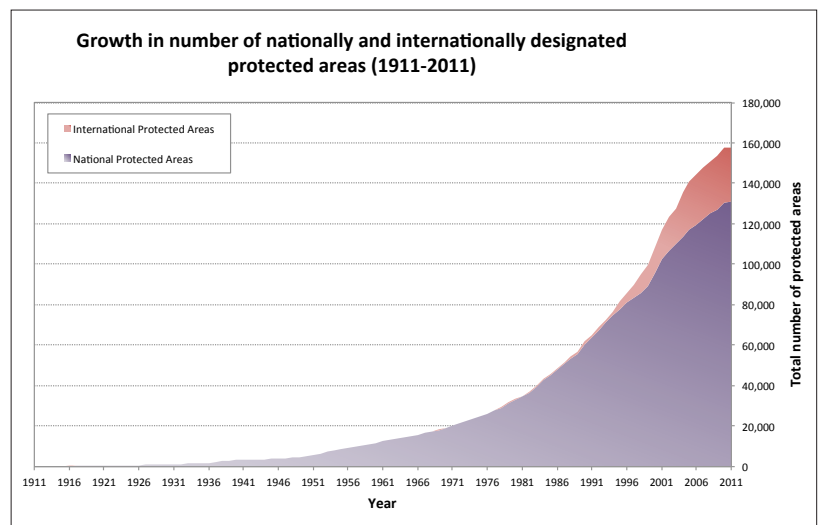
- I. ***Public-Private Partnerships on ocean conservation should be built around the needs of local governments and communities***—rather than solely around MPAs, MSP or biodiversity—and focus on specific local fisheries problems, food security challenges and economic needs. This approach will get at the heart of the particular goals in which that country will be more willing to invest public funds. The global replication of successful marine protection requires the development of a clear and strong value proposition, such that the conservation community becomes an agent for establishing the systems and benefits that local leaders themselves want. Moving forward, the conservation community must apply a nuanced understanding of strategies for inspiring local leadership in this way, especially in the case of initially unreceptive governments.
- II. Scaling marine protection to the levels required for global impact will require ***significant partnership with not only government but with the private sector***, specifically with corporations. Where MPAs, MSP or TURFs may gain little traction, developing a stronger economic development approach of selling a specific goal (in this case, long-term conservation of marine resources) will help coastal communities to ***understand the product being offered and better recognize its value***. The private sector—especially corporations dependent on coastal resilience—is particularly interested in the sustainability of small scale artisanal fisheries, and so will lead the way in creating sustainable ocean economies by ***investing in coastal resilience and implementing technologies*** that make enhanced marine protection and monitoring possible.
- III. An innovative and landscape-changing approach to replicating marine conservation is coordination by NGOs or funders using a ***subcontractor model of partnership and coordination***, whereby a single NGO or funder entity develops the demand and commitment from local political leadership, and then delivers on the goals by establishing partnerships with those best prepared to achieve specific goals.

OCEAN COMMUNITY STRATEGY ROUNDTABLE READ-OUT

INTRODUCTION

At a 1.5-day roundtable at the Aspen Wye River Conference Center in Maryland, in December 2013, a group of ocean experts gathered to assess the steps required for scaling investment in and deployment of ocean conservation tools in both small-scale coastal fisheries and large-scale MPAs, building on the Aspen Institute's 2013 *Ocean Community Report*. This discussion served as a platform for the community to discuss and develop its alignment of conservation priorities with socioeconomic goals and advance innovative conservation financing opportunities.

Segments of the ocean community now recognize a strong turning point in approaches to marine conservation and the rate of their implementation. (See chart of growth in number of marine protected areas over the past decades.¹) This is a unique moment in the history of ocean conservation, in which the community has developed an effective approach that both engages political leaders and integrates financial strategies and Public-Private Partnerships; has the technologies to show the incredible richness of marine wildlife to key decision-makers; and can provide evidence of the severe impacts of long-term trends like climate change and overfishing on sovereign natural resources.



Source: IUCN and UNEP-WCMC (2012) The World Database on Protected Areas (WDPA); February 2012. Cambridge, UK. UNEP-WCMC.

Taking advantage of this turning point, this report focuses on several key areas that surfaced during the Ocean Community Strategy Roundtable as potential keys to the success of new conservation models being used to scale efforts:

- I. Understanding the “Public” in PPP: Inspiring Government-Led Change;**
- II. Engaging Corporate Investment through Shared Agendas; and**
- III. Funders and NGOs: Honing the Subcontractor Model of Implementation.**

Central to these new models of collaboration is the Public-Private Partnership, which offers the ocean conservation community opportunities to increase efficiency and effectiveness, develop attractive win-win proposals, and collaboratively generate plans that achieve broad societal goals, maximize representation, and preserve natural resources in the public domain.²

1 The World Database on Protected Areas (WDPA): February 2012. IUCN and UNEP-WCMC. Cambridge, UK: UNEP-WCMC. (Online: <http://www.wdpa.org/Statistics.aspx>)

2 Brinkerhoff, Derick W. and Jennifer M. Brinkerhoff. “Public-private partnerships: Perspectives on Purposes, Publicness, and Good Governance.” *Public Administration and Development*. Volume 31, Issue I, pages 2-14, February 2011.

This overview explores these partnership opportunities and the community's response to key questions as we move from 1% of the oceans protected to more significant biodiversity and biomass recovery:

- *How do we define success, based on our experiences to date?*
- *What types of ocean PPPs and investments have been attempted, and what are the common factors of success between case studies?*
- *What were the varying roles of the private sector, government, and funders in these PPPs?*

While not always achieving intended public benefits (and at times incurring unintended consequences), PPPs are powerful conservation tools, as they can create the space for science-based decision making, transparency and accountability (often linked with funding), adaptive management, multi-stakeholder participation, and clear goals and processes. Depending on the partnership and regional conservation needs, when implemented with well-defined roles, PPPs can be used to develop policy, deliver a specific service or infrastructure, build capacity, or invest in economic development and poverty reduction.

Each partner brings to the table a unique and valuable set of abilities. Governments have the legal authority and expertise, while the private sector offers expanded financial capacity and business experience. NGOs and funders have strong outreach and training capabilities, can coordinate activities on the ground and garner trust with the local community where the government or business may not have as strong a presence or positive relationship with a community.

The following three sections examine the elementary role of these various public and private players in ocean conservation PPPs, and best practices in using these frameworks to scale conservation work. As the Aspen Ocean Community Strategy Roundtable at Wye was limited in scope and time, each of these areas would benefit from further discussion and input from various segments of the ocean conservation community.

I. UNDERSTANDING THE “PUBLIC” IN PPP: INSPIRING GOVERNMENT-LED CHANGE

Whether conservation groups work directly with government or aim to circumvent policymakers in their implementation strategies, rule of law prevails as the foundation upon which most conservation practices depend. While various levels of government from municipal to federal may, at times, work against conservation efforts, the ocean community must address the need for inspiring government leadership to support conservation activities.

The role of government in conservation is especially important in its responsibility for developing and enforcing relevant policy and in supplementing the limited capacity of philanthropy to sufficiently fund marine protection. It is ultimately the government of any country's responsibility to invest in the future of that country, including in the use of innovative strategies to ensure food security, economic development and national security, and in the support of its fisheries and tourism sectors.

Based on decades of experience in testing conservation approaches, ***it is now recognized that financial incentives for the development of marine protection are of central importance in gaining government support.*** Long-term, sustainable marine protection can only be accomplished through collaborative and resilient country-level initiatives. In this section, we touch upon just a few of the best practices and case studies demonstrating effective government engagement that incorporates financial incentives.

The diverse needs for conservation tools—varying based on geography and types of industry present in each country—create complexity for governments looking for straightforward ocean-based solutions to challenges of economic development, food security, etc. Therefore, ***a global scaling of marine protection requires the development of a clear and strong value proposition, such that the conservation community becomes an***

agent for establishing the systems that local leaders themselves want. Proposed management actions must also be simplified and focus on the short-term benefits in addition to long-term stability.

At this time, the ocean community already recognizes a strong demand from local leaders for marine protection, but notes that the demand is not for the tools themselves (e.g., TURFs, MPAs, or otherwise), but rather **for achieving food security, economic development, and other national goals.** As communities worldwide experience declines in fisheries productivity (i.e. declining catch per unit effort), they begin to prioritize investment in livelihoods and future generations, creating opportunity for seasonal closures, temporary spatial closures, and other protection measures aimed at long-term sustainability.

Building on these developments, the ocean community is now honing its understanding of which government leaders have made these types of commitments to long-term sustainability, and the motivations that made the investments possible. It is from these bright spots of commitment and cross-sector collaboration that the community can build its understanding of the approaches needed to significantly scale conservation efforts.

The key element common across political marine protection commitments to date is an economic approach that shifts investment models from ongoing support (i.e. support from international foundations and NGOs) to local-level funding and income generation (i.e., wealth creation). By creating a business plan for protections up front, and collaborating with enlightened experts in finance and business, the ocean community can shift its language and approach to focus on jobs, GDP, and business development—in other words, biodiversity as economic and sociocultural wealth.

“You have to think about the ocean with a product mentality. Define it, figure out how to make people value it, and sell them the idea that it’s important to invest in it.”

Roundtable Participant

A key piece of shifting to this economic approach, rather than focusing on ‘saving the oceans,’ is changing the universal measure of success from area protected to total fish biomass increase. Biomass is the variable in economic success most pertinent to the local community, and a large MPA or an EEZ converted to a marine park are not true successes unless they achieve the needed biodiversity or biomass recovery targets.

Therefore, ***rather than approaching government leaders with target percentages of waters to protect, NGOs should aim to address the specific local fisheries problems, food security challenges and economic needs, and by this approach get at the heart of the particular goals in which that country will be more willing to invest public funds.***

The more biodiversity, the more services (from seafood quality to recreational opportunity) an ecosystem produces. Therefore, to shift the current ocean language to focus on finance, we can look to the idea of treating biodiversity as the principal of the investment:

“Fish banks are areas we set aside without fishing—reserves where we allow marine life to come back. They are like the principal on a savings account we set aside that produces the interest we live on.”³

-Enric Sala, National Geographic Explorer-in-Residence

To address the challenge of implementing protection without forcing a country to take on additional debt, NGOs and funders must approach government leaders with specific tax revenue estimates or other income opportunities made possible by conservation measures. To date, most conservation strategies have proposed that leaders take on the risk of a loan without a known source of revenue with which to pay back the loan—a fiscally irresponsible position for the leader.

³ Interview with Enric Sala, “Can We Eat Our Fish and Protect Them Too?” *Forbes*, 2/21/2012. Online: <http://www.forbes.com/sites/terrywag-horn/2012/02/21/can-we-eat-our-fish-and-protect-them-too/>

To emphasize the true economic opportunity of conservation measures, specific case studies are required.

For example, it must be demonstrated that giving fishermen the right to manage their own resources does not result in fish being dumped on the market but rather greater coordination, with tremendous profit potential as a result. Leaders will need to see these examples in order to move forward with their own investments.

While governments may not be able to fully fund high potential investments in marine conservation, significant protection can be attained through public-private collaborations between local industry, philanthropy, and NGOs supplementing public resources. Financial opportunities for supporting marine conservation are various (see chart on the next page), and so funders and NGOs must play a role navigating these options and national-level goals effectively, in partnership with local government.

**“What does GREAT look like?
If we shared mechanisms for
getting the job done better,
how can great be better?”**

Roundtable Participant

Successful collaborations with government leaders also require an initial level of inspiration to motivate the leaders to collaborate and adopt protective measures. Moving forward, the conservation community must apply a nuanced understanding of strategies for

developing this inspiration, especially in the cases of initially unreceptive governments. Part of this strategy will be the central role of the fishing industry and tourism sector benefiting from country leadership on these issues, and leaders’ political motivations in supporting these groups.

Additionally, conservation language around “protection” can be shifted to a broader concept of “stewardship”, personalizing the idea of conservation for political leaders. While “protection” can set up conflicts between resource-dependent communities (who already see themselves as resource stewards) and conservationists, the notion of “stewardship” is something that political leaders, industry, and conservations can all support.

FINANCIAL OPTIONS FOR SCALING CONSERVATION AT THE NATIONAL LEVEL

Global leaders can choose from an array of financial strategies in implementing marine conservation:

- Entry fees for MPAs and historical / heritage sites
- Membership dues for museums, monuments and other appropriate institutions
- Sale of merchandise (e.g. media, clothing, reproduction of artifacts, etc.)
- Corporate sponsorship, including matching grants
- Debt swaps
- Tax holidays for property owners who invest in heritage site restoration / preservation
- Grants from public and private foundations
- Grants and loans from multi-lateral agencies
- Selling eco-tour packages to cruise lines, resorts, etc.
- Selling private after hours tours
- Fines for legal violations (theft, destruction)
- An appropriation of existing government revenue (probably not viable)
- A special tax assessment (not popular)

One potential platform for motivating government commitments is the **Convention on Biological Diversity and Aichi Biodiversity Targets**, committed to conserving 10% of marine and coastal areas by 2020. The Convention seeks champions for these targets, especially those in geographies highly valued for their biodiversity or ecosystem services. By linking wildlife conservation with ecosystem services and environmental security, the conservation community will create a more attractive proposition for government leaders.

As a next step for the ocean conservation community, a study should be conducted around the 20-30 countries where rapid scaling of marine protection occurred based on economic incentives. In these cases, we should aim to understand how the marine reserves, surrounding fisheries, and rule of law were used to benefit local industry and thereby bolster community support. The economic benefits of specific protection tools to the local communities should also be identified.

Once a clear understanding of these economic opportunities in marine conservation across geographies are established, as demonstrated in a set of developed examples, the community can make a concerted effort to convene Global Ocean Commissioners, new presidents in regions of high biodiversity and ecosystem value, and leaders like former Presidents José María Figueres (Costa Rica) or Bill Clinton, with the purpose of inspiring them to both enact these changes and champion the benefits among their peers.⁴

CASE STUDY: INNOVATIVE FINANCE MECHANISMS FOR MARINE PROTECTION THE SEYCHELLES DEBT SWAP

The Seychelles Debt Swap program was developed by Oceans 5, and entails a significant MPA commitment motivated by the country's need to reduce its debt obligations. Oceans 5 granted \$500,000 over two years to The Nature Conservancy and the Island Conservation Society, a local Seychelles NGO, to help with the mechanics of the financial transaction. The Seychelles has \$80M of public debt, owed largely to European and Asian countries.

The Seychelles established an agreement that the debt would be forgone or refinanced, and a new trust established as a long-term endowment capitalized at \$40M plus \$2M annually, in exchange for converting 30% of their EEZ to MPA (including 15%, or about 2,000 square miles, as No-Take MPA.)

Oceans 5 is now raising the funds to make this debt swap possible, with \$7M yet to be raised at the time of writing. (This amount yields 200 square kilometers of No Take MPA, with permanent trust fund yield of \$2M annually.) Private support of \$15M was additionally secured as loan money.

This approach is effective in countries with high debt ratios where creditors are willing to forgo some debt. In this case, the biggest creditor was the French government (\$30M debt), which forgave the debt by transferring it into aid money, made possible by the type of loan instrument used. The UK and Italy refinanced the debt using Paris Club structures, as used previously in wildlife land conservation.

Commitments to recurrent funding from the government made this negotiation possible, as did presidential support and prioritization. As a large EEZ in the Indian Ocean with significant tuna populations, this project has particularly high potential return on investment.

⁴ A high profile event would help to challenge these leaders to be spokesmen within industry and their own government bodies. In addition to incubating established leaders, investment in specific high-potential individuals is key. This approach was used by the Helmsley Trust and Lindblad Expeditions in the Galapagos Islands, where a leadership vacuum was recognized.

II. ENGAGING CORPORATE INVESTMENT THROUGH SHARED AGENDAS

Scaling marine protection to the levels required for global impact will require significant partnership with not only government but with the private sector, specifically with corporations. However, just as inspiring government leaders to invest in marine protection will require a shift to concepts of financial return and stewardship, engaging the private sector more effectively also requires a shift away from a dogmatic use of banners such as “saving the oceans.”

As one among many causes to which a company may consider donating, marine protection without clear commercial value is not an attractive proposition. Therefore, **in approaching Public-Private Partnerships, the ocean conservation community should shift away from an ocean-centric perspective to instead couching protection in terms of long-term economic investment and resilient communities, rather than around MPAs or biodiversity.**⁵

Corporations dependent on coastal resilience—like BumbleBee, McDonald’s, Sodexo and Walmart—are particularly interested in the sustainability of small scale artisanal fisheries as a core part of their businesses. For these partners, investing in marine protection is not a CSR initiative, but part of their supply chain development and effort to incorporate environmental issues into their strategic planning.

An estimated 60% of the seafood supply coming from artisanal fisheries goes to these large seafood companies, creating significant dependence on the health and sustainability of local fisheries and communities. In these cases, innovations in Public-Private Partnerships are being used, including the Fishery Improvement Project (FIP) model, where new financing mechanisms can ensure sustainable fisheries over time. *But corporations should not self-define environmental sustainability in isolation of dialogue with legitimate environmental stakeholders, as many now do.*

“The ocean community comes at this problem from the perspective of people who’ve spent years studying the oceans, as the need to ‘save oceans.’ But ... that doesn’t appeal to people.”

Roundtable Participant

In addition to these partners focused on coastal fisheries protection, other companies (e.g., those in the insurance industry) are strong candidates for *developing coastal resilience*, through partnerships

with NGOs like Wetlands International that can strengthen the stability of coastal resources. A third distinct set of potential conservation partners are those companies sourcing from limited marine resources, including Tiffany’s and Chanel, as they invest in long-term sourcing of inputs like botanicals for cosmetic ingredients or coral, shell, etc. for jewelry. Other potential partnership opportunities for the conservation community to pursue include those with shipping companies and unions—such as The Seafarers International Union—and apparel companies (both groups being specifically interested in trafficking and IUU), as well as educational companies like Semester at Sea.

Corporations will also lead the way in creating sustainable ocean economies through the development of key technologies that make enhanced marine protection and monitoring possible. These technologies range from ocean observation tools, to the prediction of harmful algal blooms, to data collection tools that provide a platform for strong governance. Across these examples, human psychology plays a central role as the lever with which to shift decision makers. *Where MPAs, MSP or TURFs may gain little traction with certain sectors, leaders or localities, developing a stronger economic development approach of selling a specific goal (in this case, long-term conservation of marine resources) will help coastal communities to understand the product being offered and better recognize its value.*

5 The same need to prioritize socioeconomic impact holds true for attracting philanthropic support, in addition to corporate partnership. Marine programs recently funded through the Clinton Global Initiative, for example, specifically approached conservation with the lens of local economic development: Paso Pacifico (through its focus on empowering women to protect coastal communities) and the Mesoamerican Reef Foundation or MAR Fund (through its Community Fisheries Programs).

This will require a rethinking of the ocean conservation proposition, as well as investment in marketing of the service more effectively. The individual components that may make up the service—the various NGOs or marine protection tools used—are less important from a customer perspective than emphasizing the value proposition, as with any business entity.⁶

CASE STUDY: PRIVATE SECTOR LEADERSHIP ON SUSTAINABLE FISHERIES FINANCE FISHERY IMPROVEMENT PARTNERSHIP FUND

Walton Family Foundation (WFF), in collaboration with Darden Restaurants, announced plans in fall 2013 to create a Fishery Improvement Partnership Fund as an investment model to address overfishing, one of the biggest threats to the global seafood supply. Developed as a Clinton Global Initiative Commitment to Action, the Fund will leverage philanthropic, industry and government resources to help develop and advance Fishery Improvement Projects (FIPs) worldwide.

The National Fish and Wildlife Foundation (NFWF) will manage the Fishery Improvement Fund, while WFF and its partners will develop a structure for matching contributions to the Fund, select projects that the Fund will support and evaluate the effectiveness of funded projects. Darden Restaurants, with New England Aquarium as its advisor, is an initial contributor, and WFF and its partners plan to identify and recruit other contributors to the Fund.

It is estimated that more than 400 FIPs are needed to meet buyer demand for sustainable seafood supply. The Fund's first project will support the spiny lobster fishery in Honduras. This fishery is worth nearly \$50 million in annual exports to the U.S. and provides direct employment to more than 4,000 people from coastal communities. Despite its economic importance, national management strategies and weak fisheries governance have made the fishery unsustainable.*

* Source: <http://www.marketwired.com/press-release/walton-family-foundation-darden-restaurants-announce-collaborative-commitment-action-1834766.htm>

III. FUNDERS AND NGOS: HONING THE SUBCONTRACTOR MODEL OF IMPLEMENTATION

An innovative and landscape-changing approach to scaling marine conservation is being tested in the ocean community, with significant successes to date. This approach entails ***coordination by NGOs or funders using a subcontractor model of partnership, whereby a single NGO or funder entity develops the demand and commitment from local political leadership, and then delivers on the goals by establishing partnerships with those best prepared to achieve specific objectives.***

This strategy can be used both in areas with high potential for tourist industry development and where enhancement of fisheries would be a net benefit. As governments commit to providing the needed governance structure so that local enterprises can create their own management systems, the NGO or funder can create a custom package using the various marine protection tools available, as appropriate. Avoiding short-term losses, and ensuring government commitment prior to launching protection efforts, are key to the success of these contractor partnerships.

⁶ With this need in mind, the annual BLUEMIND Summit is a current initiative exploring the intersections between human neuroscience, psychology and the ocean, and how healthy waters can influence and improve our emotions and our lives.

“We’re not talking about adding up people who do the same thing. It’s about aligning people who do different things.”

Roundtable Participant

As part of the contractor model, BINGOs work through local groups on the ground, rather than highlighting their brands. In this way, the BINGOs play a facilitator role in support of local NGO leadership, as well as a catalyst for change. Similarly, funders play an important role in developing strategic blueprints for for-profit conservation development in new territories, including financial management across geographies, case models for establishing conditions for microfinance, and a framework for the role of NGO’s in partnering with communities to establish the protections.

CASE STUDY: TARGETING POLITICAL OPPORTUNITIES BARBUDA BLUE HALO

Through its Barbuda Blue Halo Initiative, the Waitt Institute developed comprehensive ocean zoning in Barbuda in partnership with the local governments, turning 35% of the surrounding waters to No Take fishing reserves, banning of all destructive fishing process, ending parrot fishing, and establishing a license system, among other successes. Key characteristics underlying the success of this initiative include:

- A contractor model was used, including subcontracting with many NGOs on the ground, lawyers to assess the extent of the government’s geographic authority, scientists to conduct a biological assessment, SeaSketch for mapping / zoning, and the Environmental Law Institute to evaluate and write new policies. Government commitment was established prior to implementing this package of services.
- A short timeline was established in order to very quickly identify a target site, work with the local government to establish protections, and ramp down the NGO/Foundation presence. These commitments were achieved within one year, and no long-term NGO or funder capacity was established on site beyond a temporary staff director on the ground for the ramp-up year.
- The proposal to the local government focused on economics, rather than MPAs or fisheries management. Emphasizing potential improvements to local citizens’ livelihoods and addressing degradation of fisheries and its impact on the fishermen was the selling approach.
- A staff member on the ground ran, in essence, a political campaign to inspire the local community, organizing parties, kissing babies, strategically buying beer at the right places, and purchasing dive gear for the fishermen who would otherwise be opponents to the protections.
- Oversight of the marine management activities was kept with local leaders (e.g. the Waitt Institute did not join the management board when invited), with the funder’s role being one of facilitation and providing the initial capital needed to become sustainable. Strong local leadership in the form of the Codrington Lagoon director was leveraged to initially engage the town council and to ensure long-term support for the initiative.
- The post-ramp up budget includes funding for continual updates on progress, mechanisms for early warning of political change, and a graduate student assessment after 5 years.

CASE STUDY: SUCCESSFULLY COORDINATING CONSERVATION RESOURCES LEGACY FUND FOUNDATION (RLFF)

Resources Legacy Fund Foundation (RLFF) supports conservation donors in goal setting, strategy development, capital development, building expertise and executing initiatives. What can the ocean conservation community learn from this approach to backseat coordination?

Key attributes of success – RLFF:

1. Represents a network of foundations.
2. Has strong governmental and NGO connections.
3. Is willing to invest in stakeholder and governmental capacity building.
4. Adds content/domain knowledge to exceptional strategic planning and ongoing project management.
5. Conducts “under the radar” complementary research (e.g., public surveys).
6. Keeps an exceptionally low profile and lets others take credit/shine.
7. Understands and effectively facilitates public private partnerships, personnel sharing, and other ways to fill capacity gaps and/or institutional needs.
8. Is and understands the importance of being nimble.
9. Conducts substantial due diligence prior to activating a “campaign.”
10. Develops and/or possesses deep local knowledge.
11. Makes genuine use of social science, law and policy, business analysis, and economic analysis alongside strategic grant making.

To successfully commit governments, an economic analysis of potential short-term and long-term benefits of marine protection is essential. The cost/benefit analysis of conservation efforts is often a weak point in strategies to date, and yet a business plan and demonstration of business as usual vs. what could be achieved is paramount, and is what garners the most interest from local communities and political leaders.

In addition to coordination and contractor-type roles, funders also provide the opportunity to enable higher risk investment than companies and governments. While funders value short-term impacts, they will also invest in below-market opportunities with low upfront returns. This can include local micro-finance initiatives, where the funder serves to de-risk the process by leveraging investment across multiple geographies.

Strategic planning and economic analysis must include short-term returns, and there are several options already tested for achieving these goals. Direct value can be added to catch by developing cold storage capacity, so that fishermen can sell at optimal times in the market curve, or light-processing to develop new markets and demand (e.g., fillets). In partnership with NGOs, philanthropic investment can be used to enable the development of these new areas of growth. (Another example of this potential for philanthropy to take on risk is the Prince’s Charities’ Blue Bond initiative to finance sustainable fisheries. In this case, philanthropy provides the capital needed to eliminate short-term risk.)

With the goal of self-sustainability of projects established—i.e. minimizing the long-term role of non-profits in any project location—the priority should be to replace community expectation for unlimited, long-term funding with investment in increasing the ecosystem services produced by a reserve, which will benefit the users and establish long-term funding and community support.

CASE STUDY: STRATEGIC ALIGNMENT WITHIN THE CONTRACTOR MODEL FISH FOREVER

Fish Forever is a collaborative initiative managed by Rare, Environmental Defense Fund (EDF) and the University of California at Santa Barbara (UCSB), and funded by the Waitt Foundation. The group aims to curb overfishing in the developing tropics by working directly with communities to implement TURFs and No Take Reserves, and empower fishermen to implement effective solutions to local-level challenges.

The Fish Forever team is developing strong rights-based management approaches to fisheries based on their ability to speak directly to the target audience—the local community. While the NGOs may have the goal of increasing No Take Zones, they do not approach the communities with proposals around protected areas. They aim to achieve 20% of the coastline (i.e. fishing area) managed as TURFS, as that is the tipping point for adoption, but the first step is to establish traction with the local leaders.

The collaboration began with a strategic value alignment by the organizations, and the design of prototype sites in the Coral Triangle. Those in the initiative describe a lack of label among those collaborating, and the key challenge being where credit and money will play a role among those not on the ground level of the project.

Another significant opportunity for marine conservationists is in matching ecosystem vulnerability and biological value with political opportunity, based on an analysis of political opportunity at a global level. Rather than building proposals based on scientific assessments of biodiversity, etc., funders are most interested in the intersection between political will, ease of implementation, and valuable wildlife or ecosystem services.

This type of analysis at a global level has yet to be conducted, and to date has been done only on an ad hoc, individually-driven basis as funders receive proposals with unclear political opportunities and conduct independent investigations into political feasibility.

In situations where local governments cannot accomplish these conservation outcomes independently, some millions of dollars from philanthropic entities for these straightforward wins are valuable. In this way, philanthropists play a central role in developing, socializing and implementing these subtracted conservation plans where economic return is insufficient to attract traditional investors. Developing the back office or internal capacity for these contract projects, and having highly effective representatives on the ground, are key to success.

Private players—whether NGOs, funders, or otherwise—also play an important role in sustaining political commitment through administration changes. An example initiative that has been successfully sustained across administrations is Echo Island in the Philippines, where protections have been maintained for almost 40 years because of continuing

“Where we work is limited in scalability by the number of foundations / BINGOs/ amount of philanthropic money. How do we get coastal communities to self-select and be willing to spend their own money?”

Roundtable Participant

efforts by the local Silliman University. The University plays an ongoing supporting role and responds to any local crises with people on the ground. Other non-governmental entities like NGOs and local churches can also play this catalytic watchdog role in long-term stewardship.

Importantly, collaborations of this nature require a natural fit of value added by organizations, and clarity around comparative advantages within the community. This includes shared knowledge around which organizations excel at specific geographies, ecosystems, species, or issues. Funders require clarity around these varying offers of value as well, in order to successfully coordinate projects across organizations.

To improve coordination across agencies, new models for collaboration from other sectors should be explored, including business models for sharing technology and distributor or customer relationships, and lessons from the food and agriculture industry in partnership.

CASE STUDY: INNOVATION ON THE HIGH SEAS SARGASSO SEA ALLIANCE

The Sargasso Sea Alliance is a partnership led by the Government of Bermuda, in collaboration with scientists, international marine conservation groups and private donors, who all share a vision of protecting the unique and vulnerable ocean ecosystem of the Sargasso Sea, a gyre around Bermuda beyond national jurisdiction.

The Alliance aims to build an international partnership around the ecological significance of the Sargasso Sea and the threats that it faces; use existing regional, sectoral and international organizations to secure protective measures; and establish a management regime for the Sargasso Sea. This initiative, if successful, will offer an example of the capabilities of partnership on areas beyond national jurisdiction and what existing institutions have the capacity to accomplish.

Through the auspices of an intergovernmental meeting with the countries of Bermuda, the Bahamas, the Dominican Republic, the Azules, the UK and countries interested in the eels that breed there (e.g. Portugal, Netherlands), the Alliance is confirming political commitment to establish a Sargasso Sea Commission and implement protective measures. To date, the initiative has built a \$3.5M fund over 5 years sponsored by the UK and private partners, with some governments considering long-term support.

Key learnings from the Sargasso Sea Alliance:

- Uses “stewardship” language, as it does not have a strong management component.
- Engages existing sectoral organizations – e.g. fisheries managers, NAFO, ICAT—to put protections in place.

CONCLUSION AND NEXT STEPS

As highlighted in this report, the ocean conservation community has taken great strides towards shifting its approach to government leaders, Public-Private Partnerships, and funder and private sector engagement in ocean conservation. To further the community's goals and promulgate the use of these innovative approaches, the ocean community should focus on the priorities and recommendations highlighted below.

Ocean Community Strategy Roundtable Recommendations:

- I. **Public-Private Partnerships on ocean conservation should be built around the needs of local governments and communities**—rather than solely around MPAs, MSP or biodiversity—and focus on specific local fisheries problems, food security challenges and economic needs. This approach will get at the heart of the particular goals in which that country will be more willing to invest public funds. The global replication of successful marine protection requires the development of a clear and strong value proposition, such that the conservation community becomes an agent for establishing the systems and benefits that local leaders themselves want. Moving forward, the conservation community must apply a nuanced understanding of strategies for inspiring local leadership in this way, especially in the case of initially unreceptive governments.
- II. Scaling marine protection to the levels required for global impact will require **significant partnership with not only government but with the private sector**, specifically with corporations. Where MPAs, MSP or TURFs may gain little traction, developing a stronger economic development approach of selling a specific goal (in this case, long-term conservation of marine resources) will help coastal communities to **understand the product being offered and better recognize its value**. The private sector—especially corporations dependent on coastal resilience—is particularly interested in the sustainability of small scale artisanal fisheries, and so will lead the way in creating sustainable ocean economies by **investing in coastal resilience and implementing technologies** that make enhanced marine protection and monitoring possible.
- III. An innovative and landscape-changing approach to replicating marine conservation is coordination by NGOs or funders using a **subcontractor model of partnership and coordination**, whereby a single NGO or funder entity develops the demand and commitment from local political leadership, and then delivers on the goals by establishing partnerships with those best prepared to achieve specific goals.

As a next step, the ocean conservation community should conduct economic analyses around the potential short-term and long-term benefits of marine protection, as well as a study of the 20-30 countries where rapid scaling of marine protection occurred based on economic incentives, including how marine reserves, surrounding fisheries, and rule of law were used to benefit local industry and thereby bolster community support. Marine conservationists should also look for areas with three key traits: 1) ecosystem vulnerability, 2) biological value and 3) political opportunity. With this understanding, the community should then convene Global Ocean Commissioners, leaders like former Presidents José María Figueres (Costa Rica) or Bill Clinton, and

new presidents in regions of high biodiversity, ecosystem value and political opportunity, with the purpose of inspiring them to both enact these changes and champion the benefits among their peers. Finally, to improve coordination across agencies and sectors, new models for collaboration from other sectors should be explored, including business models for sharing technology and distributor or customer relationships, and lessons from food and agriculture industry partnerships.

The Aspen Institute intends to continue to provide this roundtable forum to support the community in expanding the efficacy of its conservation efforts, in order to maximize global uptake of key conservation tools, particularly Marine Protected Areas and TURFs. Building on the recommendation of the 2013 *Ocean Community Report* and the above priorities set at Wye River, the Institute—contingent on funding—will again welcome the community to engage on these topics in 2015 in a subsequent roundtable session in La Paz, Mexico.

APPENDIX I: ROUNDTABLE PARTICIPANTS

OCEAN COMMUNITY STRATEGY ROUNDTABLE

*Aspen Wye River, Maryland
December 10-11, 2014*

Jason Babbie, Environment Program, Bloomberg Philanthropies

Meg Caldwell, Executive Director, Center for Ocean Solutions, Stanford University

Elizabeth De Santo, Assistant Professor, Department of Earth and Science, Franklin and Marshall College

J. Charles Fox, Program Director, Oceans 5

David Freestone, Executive Director, Sargasso Sea Alliance

Dale Galvin, Chief Operating Officer, Rare

Kristina Gjerde, Senior High Seas Policy Advisor, Global Marine and Polar Programme, International Union for Conservation of Nature

Lynne Hale, Managing Director, Global Marine Initiative, The Nature Conservancy

Caroline Hermans, Head of Environmental Stewardship, Clinton Global Initiative

Jacob James, Managing Director, Waitt Foundation

Leah Karrer, International Waters Team, The Global Environment Facility

Sven Lindblad, President and Founder, Linblad Expeditions, Inc.

Caleb McClennen, Director, Marine Conservation, Wildlife Conservation Society

Anne McEnany, Vice President and Senior Program Officer, Environmental Conservation, International Community Foundation

Bradley Moran, Acting Director, National Ocean Council, Executive Office of the President of the United States

Lance Morgan, President and CEO, Marine Conservation Institute

Linwood Pendleton, Director, Ocean and Coastal Policy, Nicholas Institute for Environmental Policy Solutions, Duke University

Enric Sala, Explorer-in-Residence, National Geographic Society

David Shaw, Managing Partner, Black Point Group, LP

Mark Spalding, President, The Ocean Foundation

Lisa Speer, Director, International Oceans, Natural Resources Defense Council

Margaret Spring, Vice President, Conservation and Science, Monterey Bay Aquarium

Lauren Spurrier, Director, Marine Program, World Wildlife Fund

Greg Stone, Chief Scientist for Oceans and Executive Vice President, Conservation International

Galen Tromble, Chief, Domestic Fisheries Division, NOAA Fisheries

Ted Waitt, Board Chairman, Waitt Foundation

Emily Woglom, Director, Government Relations, Ocean Conservancy

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