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# Management planning for protected areas

a guide for practitioners and their bosses



**A management plan is:**  
An easily understood set of principles in an accessible form by which a defined area (small or large) may be managed.



## foreword

Welcome to this Management Planning Guidance. Its purpose is to provide the managers of Protected "nature" Areas with the tools necessary to produce a good Management Plan, which will meet the full range of uses they require.

The Guidance is divided into 5 sections or stages. Each section or stage has:

- an introduction or background,
- a series of summary information boxes,
- Sub-divisions for clarity and ease of use.

Summary boxes and diagrams have been used frequently within the Guidance. These may be copied and used freely by Protected Area managers to help with the production of their Management Plans.

Management Planning will continue to evolve to meet the needs of Protected Area managers, so feedback from users of this Guidance would be useful for future revisions. Comments on potential improvements are welcome and should be sent to Eddie Idle & Tim Bines – see annex 4 for addresses.

This Guidance clarifies the steps which "management planners" should take to deal with these matters. It tries to answer the question, "What makes a successful Management Plan?" The Guidance does not lay down a set of rules or a blue-print for a Management Plan, but recommends important principles for what should be done and how to do it, so that the rationale for the management of Protected Areas is clear.

The Guidance is not a recipe book to be followed in order from beginning to end, but rather a "pick-and-mix" approach in which appropriate sections may be adapted to the particular circumstances of the Protected Area for which a plan is being prepared. We consider that most of the Guidance will be useful in many situations. Organisations often find it helpful to specify the minimum steps to be undertaken in the production process. Indeed in some countries detailed guidance on preparation procedures is already available.

This new Guidance has some similarities to the Eurosite Toolkit, though it represents a different approach to management planning arising from the need to involve stakeholders and the advent of the European Habitats Directive and the European Convention on Biodiversity. In summary these state that, "The objectives of management of land, water and living resources are a matter of societal choice". The Habitats Directive also provides a simplified way of identifying the objectives of management of Protected Areas.




The Guidance was developed and tested during the 3-year Darwin Initiative project awarded to Eurosite in 2001. It covered the preparation of Management Plans for Wetlands in 5 countries, Estonia, Latvia, Lithuania, Poland and Russia. Much of the content of this Guidance is derived from experience of the participants from each of these 5 countries.

In the first of the Darwin Initiative workshops the participants identified several personal goals and expectations from the project:

- To identify the essential/ obligatory elements of a management plan.
- To clarify the barriers to good management planning.
- To gain reassurance and credibility for management planning.
- To learn about management planning as a process.
- To identify the advantages and disadvantages of a participatory approach to management planning.
- To learn how to involve and activate local landowners and to establish long-term communication with partners in the management of Protected Areas.
- To learn how to get positive results for site managers
- To understand how to define and implement the monitoring and evaluation requirements of Protected Areas.
- To learn to manage expectations – and be realistic!

The Protected Areas ecosystems managed by the participants varied enormously from relatively small sites managed by NGOs, through to very large National Parks owned and managed by State Agencies. This means that the managers of many different kinds of Protected Areas (large or small, State-managed or NGO-managed, designated formally or informally, actively managed and/or unmanaged) should be able to adapt this Guidance to their own use.

### Acknowledgements

We wish to thank the following people for their participation, comments and advice in the production of this Guidance: Stewart Lane & Dick Lambert (English Nature), Jill Matthews (Scottish Natural Heritage), John Harvey (The National Trust for England, Wales & Northern Ireland), Michal Miazga (REC Poland), Mike Deegan (Staffordshire Wildlife Trust), John Vaughan (Northumberland National Park), 

We are particularly grateful to the U.K. Darwin Initiative for their agreement to include this revision in the Management Planning for Wetlands project and to the participants in the project who are listed in Annex 4.

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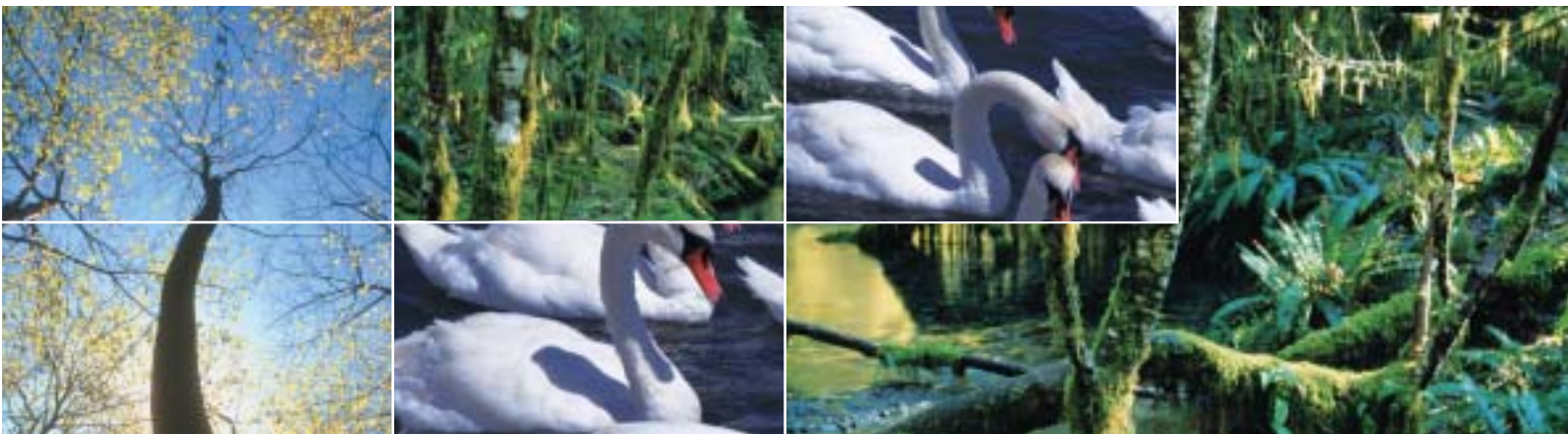
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June 2005



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## introduction

Written plans and maps for the management of land and/or water have been in existence probably for hundreds of years. Originally they seem to have arisen because of the need to manage landscapes and large areas of land owned by royalty or the nobility, in a coherent and financially successful way. Such plans have continued to the present day in many countries where plans for estates and farms are accepted as normal practice. It was natural for Management Plans to begin to be used in forestry, which had already been part of the land planning process. State forestry developed Management Plans as a way of bringing order to the business of long-term forest management, from planting through to harvest. This was particularly useful when there were dangers of **losing** the continuity which characterised large estates in a single private ownership. These forest plans became the basis of the early Management Plans adapted for use in Protected "nature" Areas. The adaptation for use in Protected Areas brought natural science into the planning process, so that the descriptions of the volume and type of forest, that were part of forestry management, changed to a description of the natural resources and ecological processes of Protected Areas. These Management Plans were mostly initiated, written and implemented by scientists. This resulted in these plans being strong and long on the descriptive aspects of the Protected Area, but often weaker on business and organisational aspects such as costs, resources and results.

In recent years there has been a growing recognition that Protected Areas represent a mechanism for the conservation of biodiversity through an ecosystem approach and with a wider public benefit/service than simply for those people with a scientific background or interest in nature conservation. This means that, in contrast to the past, people must be involved in the decisions that need to be made about the management of "their" Protected Areas. The participation of "stakeholders" in the management planning process, and how this can be organised, is one of the new features identified in this Guidance. Involving others who are "outside" nature conservation has wide implications for the structure and content of Management Plans. If a wider group of people need to use the plan it needs to be accessible to them and in language they can understand.

**Stakeholders are people - who are interested in or are affected by the management of the Protected Area for which the plan is being prepared.**

Traditionally, Management Plans have been produced through what has been essentially a linear process, controlled by the person responsible for drafting. These plans have gone through several stages of consultation with specialists with varying degrees of stakeholder involvement, which has usually taken place towards the end of Management Plan production. See Annex 1:



## introduction continued

In contrast, consensual or participative management planning means that the process of preparation is shared by all of those interested in or affected by the Management Plan. See Annex 1. The steps in this process are further expanded in section 3.iv pages 20 and 21 and in Annex 2 page 35.

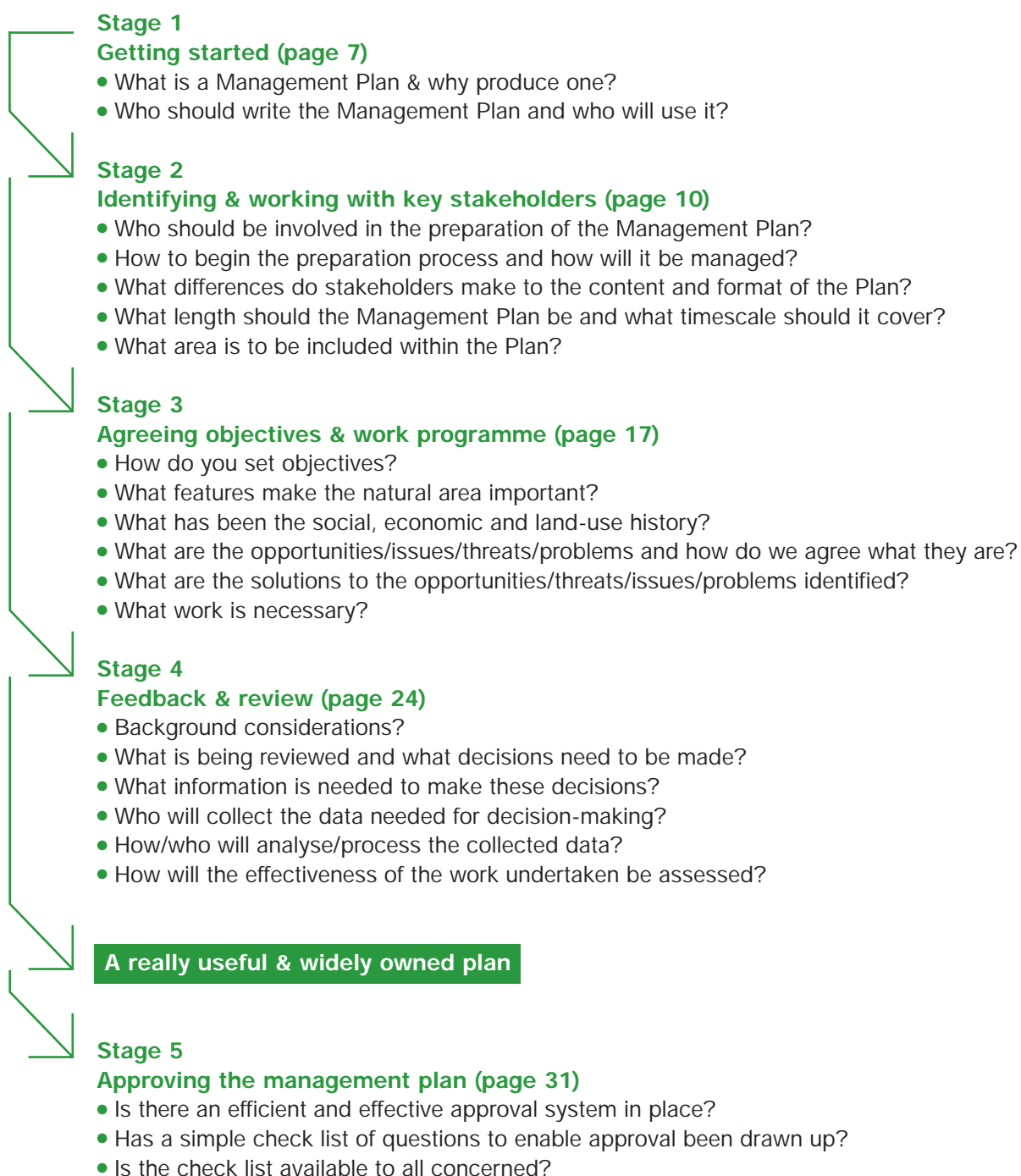
In the participative approach, overall responsibility for and co-ordination of the Management Planning process should lie with one person designated by the managing organisation to take the work forward. It is not necessary for that person to conduct all of the working meetings that are needed to achieve the production of a useful Management Plan, nor to be fully skilled in all aspects. A professional facilitator will add to the way in which the plan is developed, especially in ensuring sensitive and effective management and the involvement of stakeholders. However the person responsible must ensure that at the end of the process a written or "hard copy" Management Plan has been prepared which is widely owned and shared by stakeholders in as open a way as possible - with no hidden agendas!

The five key stages in the production of a Management Plan are:

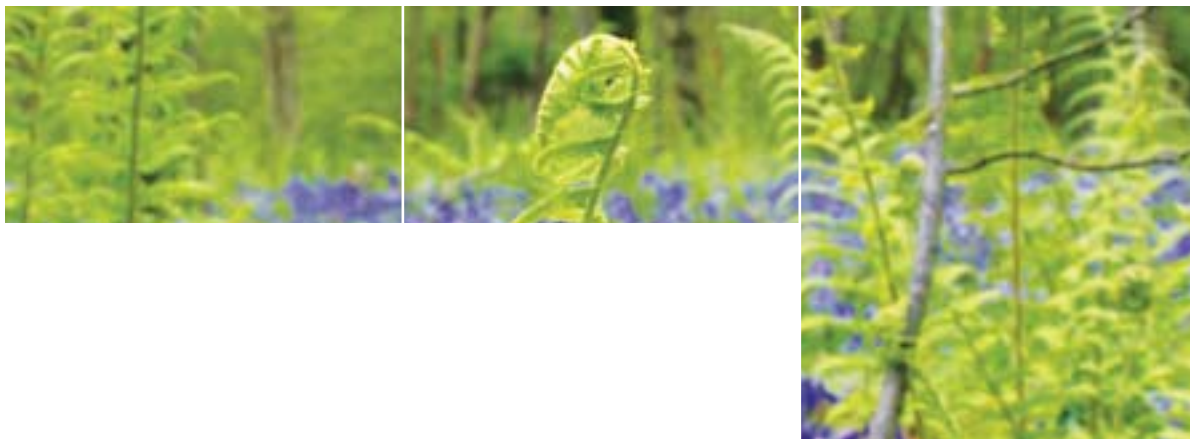
- 1. Getting started; background and assembling "the team".**
- 2. Identifying & working with key stakeholders**
- 3. Agreeing the Main objectives and producing a Work Programme to deliver them.**
- 4. Designing an appropriate Feedback and Review process.**
- 5. Approving the Management Plan.**



## Key stages







## Stage 1 - Getting started

### 1.i. What is a Management Plan and why produce one?

#### Background thinking

Protected Area Management Plans can be compared to other types of plan that aim to produce results from a programme of actions. Examples might be the construction of major buildings or motor vehicle manufacture. The idea behind all of them is that the desired result is clearly defined, understood and supported and will be achieved more successfully if it is planned i.e. it will be more cost effective and more efficient. Preparation for plan production is critical and the time allocated to this will pay real dividends – ‘fail to prepare then prepare to fail’ is the maxim.

Plans may be lengthy or short. Usually they concentrate on what needs to be done, but with sufficient explanation of the background reasoning to explain to and convince others. Clearly the time and effort spent in producing a plan cannot be used on other activities, so it follows that the benefits arising from planning must justify the time and effort spent on it.

Potentially there are many “reasons” given for producing a Management Plan, though often these reasons are part of accepted wisdom, and the benefits are rarely considered or realised. The potential benefits we recognise are listed in Summary Box 1 below.

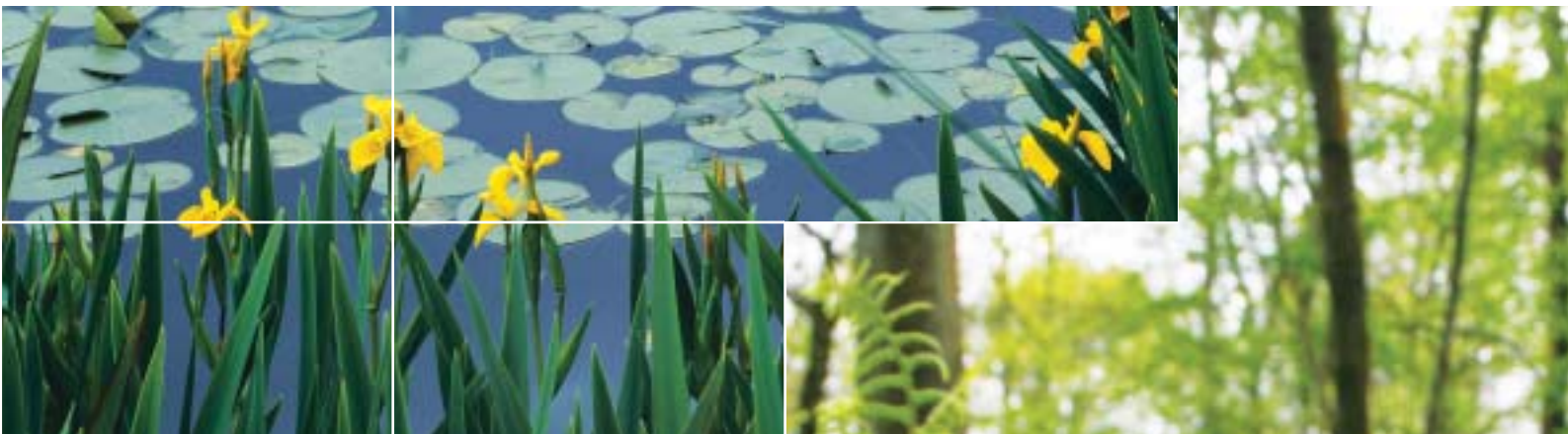
Use this list as a check list for your Management Plan



#### Summary Box 1

##### A management plan will be useful because:

- 1. Legislation** It meets the needs of legislation. (In some countries Management Plans for Protected Areas are a specific legal requirement e.g. Nature Reserves, National Parks or Habitats Directive (Natura 2000) sites.)
- 2. Objectives** It makes clear the role and objectives of the Protected Area e.g. in meeting a range of targets such as national biodiversity & sustainable use targets.
- 3. Condition** It identifies what needs to be done to maintain “Necessary Conservation Measures”. (European Habitats Directive; Natura 2000).
- 4. Practical tool** It is a practical tool for Protected Area managers & staff: • planning work • priority/target setting • resource allocation (staff, time & money)
- 5. Consistency** It provides for consistency and continuity for the managing organisation.
- 6. Rationale** It informs future managers of what was done and why.
- 7. Understanding** The people involved in management can understand the reasons for the work they are doing.
- 8. Credibility** It gives credibility, (particularly political credibility), to the objectives and management activities at all levels within the Protected Area.
- 9. Communication** The preparation process is a means of communication with “Stakeholders” and securing their support and involvement in the Protected Area.
- 10. Progress** It identifies what data and information is needed for evaluating progress, towards the objectives through monitoring and recording.



The list in Summary Box 1 also serves as a check list which can be applied to the ways the plan is used after it is produced. In many cases the Management Plan will serve several of these functions to different degrees.

Responsibility for the way Management Plans are used lies with the parent organisation and with the managers of the Protected Area. Within management organisations:

- consistent procedures are necessary for plan production and approval,
- the planned implementation of annual programmes of work needs to be clear, so that it can be followed easily
- finances (allocation and accounting) and their use must be transparent,
- a periodic review of work plan progress based on a clear monitoring which assesses results is needed.

Unfortunately such procedures are frequently absent or weak. Organisational issues provide the framework for individual Management

Plans and need to be considered at the start of Plan preparation.

### 1.ii. Who should write the Management Plan and who will use it?

Most plans are initiated and drafted by the manager of the Protected Area. Sometimes the organisation responsible e.g. Ministry, Department, Agency, Institute or organisation, has procedures which trigger the process of production of Management Plans e.g. when a new Protected Area or an addition is acquired, or when the time for revision has been reached. See Summary Box 2. These procedures are potentially useful as a way of maintaining consistency, control and responsibility for all of the Protected Areas supervised by the organisation concerned, but they must again involve stakeholders appropriately so that they understand and to a degree own the action arising. **But please note, these same procedures can also be a source of unnecessary bureaucracy!**

#### Summary Box 2

##### When should you prepare a management plan?:

1. **New site** When a new Protected Area has been acquired or designated.
2. **Extension** When a significant extension has been added to an existing Protected Area.
3. **Renewal** Following a 5-year to 10-year review of an existing Management Plan.
4. **Re-orientation** Following clear assessment of the need for a change in objectives or management of a Protected Area or its ecosystems.

Where formal procedures for the approval of Management Plans exist there is a danger that the Management Planning process becomes too narrowly focussed on the interests of the "signing-off" or approving group. The writers of Management Plans in these circumstances understandably concentrate

on completeness rather than utility. If a choice has to be made Management Plans should be useful rather than complete. Indeed in one sense a Management Plan is never complete. What is included should be that which is considered to be useful for the life of the plan.



It is important that responsibility for the overall Management Planning process, including drafting, is clearly defined, and that sufficient time is allocated to complete the task. (Writing the Management Plan need not be a lengthy exercise though the early stages of establishing communication with “stakeholders” are likely to be time-consuming). Clearly those who will use the plan, or be closely affected by it or interested in it, need to be involved in the drafting process. It is therefore critical to identify clearly who the plan is being pre-

pared for and what purpose it serves – see Summary Box 1. This needs to be agreed at an early stage and should be seen as the first step in the Management Planning process. It helps to ensure the best possible outcome for the area involved by a wide acceptance and ownership of the final plan.

Once prepared the Management Plan can be used by a number of stakeholders for different purposes – see Summary Box 3 –and serves as a common accepted document.

### Summary Box 3

#### The management plan will be used by:

1. The Protected Area managers and their “parent” organisations.
2. Resource planners who allocate finances and staff.
3. Scientists who are responsible for monitoring and recording.
4. “Stakeholders” who live in and/or use the Protected Area e.g. farmers, foresters, recreation, visitors.
5. Politicians with responsibility for or interest in national and local biodiversity goals, including designated sites.

For someone to prepare a Management Plan they will need a set of suitable skills and competencies. Summary Box 4 provides a guide to these.

### Summary Box 4

#### Ten key competencies required for preparing plans:

1. Knowledge of the Protected Area & its resources.
2. Scientific understanding of ecosystem function related to the area to be managed.
3. An ability to prepare costed plans.
4. Ability to communicate effectively (both in writing and orally); effective information managers
5. Negotiating/advocacy & managing relationships skills.
6. Political sensitivity & an ability to build rapport; good listening skills.
7. Flexibility/tolerance; willingness to recognise changing circumstances & deal appropriately with them.
8. Realistic & able to achieve the possible.
9. Understanding & use of project management skills.
10. Local background and credibility.

These key competencies also help to identify potential partners in the Management Plan preparation





## Stage 2 - Identifying and working with stakeholders

### 2.i. Who should be involved in the preparation of the Management Plan? Stakeholders – like the writers of the plan - are people.

Stakeholders are interested in or are affected by the management of the Protected Area for which the plan is being prepared.

Traditionally the main stakeholders have been seen as coming from the scientific or nature conservation community as they are the people who want to protect the area, with others being involved in a consultative way at a late stage in the plan production process – see diagrams at Annex 1.

The wider and more modern view of the role of Protected Areas within the concepts put forward by the Convention on Biodiversity, is that the management of land and water and living resources is seen generally as being a matter of societal choice. A landscape-based approach to biodiversity conservation has led to a recognition that most stakeholders need to participate early in the management planning process and cannot be simply consulted towards the end of it with limited opportunity for in-put or modification.

This does not mean that identifying the objectives for Protected Areas is entirely open, so that stakeholders can seek any outcome they please, even one that is negative to nature conservation. Many Protected Areas are covered by legal requirements which must be taken into account and determine the objectives. For example the requirement to maintain or achieve “Necessary Conservation Measures” for Protected Areas which are designated under the European Union Habitats Directive (Natura 2000), is a primary determinant of the objective for these Protected Areas. See <sup>1</sup> and <sup>2</sup>.

<sup>1</sup> “Natura 2000” is a European ecological network established under The European Union’s Habitats Directive (1992) on the conservation of natural habitats and of wild fauna and flora. The network includes Special Areas of Conservation designated by Member States in accordance with the provisions of the Habitats Directive and Special Protection Areas designated by Member States under the Conservation of Wild Birds Directive (1979). Together these areas make up the “Natura 2000” European-wide network. Annexes to the Directives list the habitats and species whose conservation requires the designation of sites. Some of them are defined as “priority” habitats or species (in danger of disappearing). Annex IV lists animal and plant species in need of particularly strict protection.

Article 6 states that:

For Special Areas of Conservation, Member States shall establish the Necessary Conservation Measures involving, if need be, appropriate management plans specifically designed for the sites

<sup>2</sup> IUCN has distinguished six categories of protected areas:

1.
  - a. **Strict Nature Reserve:** protected area managed mainly for science
  - b. **Wilderness Area:** protected area managed mainly for wilderness protection
2. **National Park:** protected area managed mainly for ecosystem protection and recreation
3. **Natural Monument:** protected area managed mainly for conservation of specific natural features
4. **Habitat/Species Management Area:** protected area managed mainly for conservation through management intervention
5. **Protected Landscape/Seascape:** protected area managed mainly for landscape/seascape conservation and recreation



This is why Protected Area managers must begin the preparation process by developing a good understanding of what they see as the nature conservation objectives. These may well not be the same as the objectives of other stakeholders.

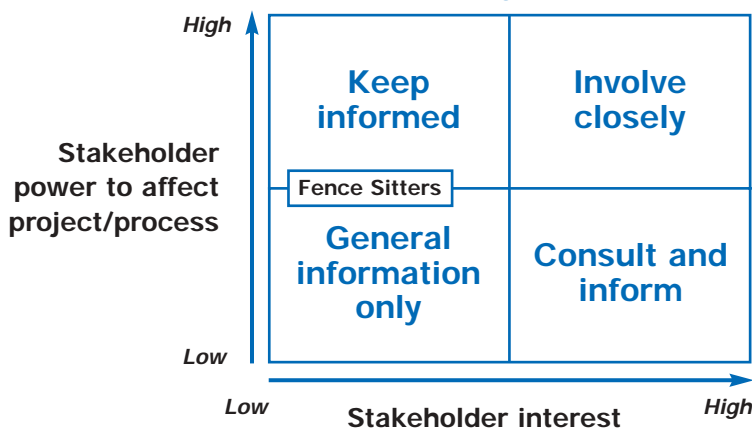
There are many reasons why stakeholders need to be at the heart of Management Plan preparation. See 3. They may live within the Protected Area, or close by. They are often tax- payers, visitors or supporters. Their businesses probably benefit from ecosystem resources and services and their activities may be required to maintain features. They are also potentially the cause of major degradation and depletion of natural resources. They may consume to such a degree that they threaten biodiversity and they are part of future generations for whom opportunities for personal fulfilment are needed.

<sup>3</sup> see Aarhus Convention, June 1998 & El Teide Declaration, May 2002

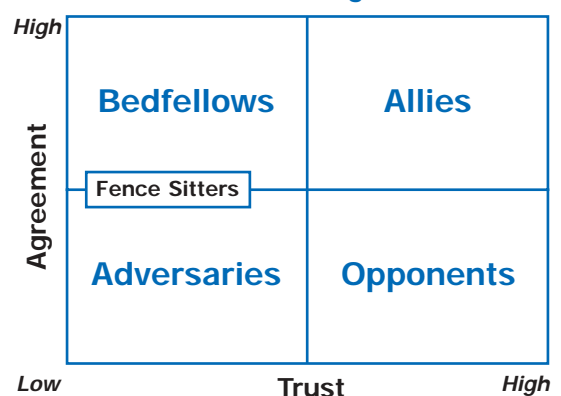
Most stakeholders wish to be involved in Management Plan preparation from the start. However some may be more important and influential than others in the management of Protected Areas. A process for identifying those who are crucial to the success of the Management Plan may be needed. Various simple methods are available for doing this, usually involving the division of all stakeholders into smaller more cohesive groups – involving key stakeholders. For instance stakeholders can be grouped into those who are primarily political, economic, social, technological, legal or environmental. Such an analysis provides the environment in which the Management Plan is to be produced and enables the key stakeholders – those who are both powerful and influential - to be identified. An appropriate relationship with each of them can then be planned and managed. This also raises the difficult problem of how to ensure that stakeholders represent their group well and communicate with them effectively. It is important to control the size and scale of stakeholder involvement so that the Management Plan preparation process does not get out of hand.

**In a real sense managing Protected Areas is about managing people.**

**Stakeholder power/interest in the area of the Management Plan**



**Stakeholder agreement/trust in the area of the Management Plan**





**This list should be used to identify all of the important participants in the Management plan process. It is not necessary that all stakeholders be involved in every Management Plan. Some may be involved in only part of the Plan.**



The important point about these methods, and the check list in Summary Box 3, is that in the preparation phase, Protected Area managers must know something about their stakeholders before they begin to identify those who are the most important for the production of the Management Plan. Often it is the case that the staff of the Protected Area are already familiar with the stakeholders and can quickly identify those who are vital to the success of the Management Plan. The check list in Summary Box 5 indicates the likely main groups of stakeholders who need to be involved, but there will be variations in this list depending on the range of

habitats/species/ecosystems, size and location of the Protected Area. Changes can be made during the Management Planning process as the need for more or less involvement of stakeholders becomes clearer. However it is important that numbers do not become so large as to make constructive discussion and agreement difficult. Those who are opposed to or sceptical of the Management Plan and the Protected Area should not be excluded. They may be vital to the production of an effective Management Plan, though they present specific communication problems that need to be faced.

#### Summary Box 5

##### Production of the Management Plan should involve:

**Managers** The managers of the Protected Area.

**Stakeholders** The people who use the Protected Area for various reasons (The "Stakeholders"): Neighbours; Residents; Farmers & foresters; Hunters & fishermen; Visitors; Local Authorities; Others

**Organisational Representatives** Representatives of the "parent" or managing organisation & national bodies/institutions.

**Scientists** Those with scientific/ecological expertise which is necessary to identify sound objectives.

#### 2.ii. How to begin the preparation process and how will it be managed?

The first step in the process of Management Plan production requires careful preparation and thought.

#### Remember 'Fail to prepare; prepare to fail.'

This means:

- Identifying Key Stakeholders and finding

ways of encouraging their participation.

- Being clear about nature conservation requirements and ecosystem function.
- Selecting an independent facilitator or manager of the preparation process.
- Recognising that the early stages of preparation will be time consuming.
- Understanding that the final plan will include other objectives than nature conservation.
- Retaining flexibility



Some countries have detailed legal procedures covering the Management Plan preparation process which are designed to incorporate principles of stakeholder participation. Where these procedures are not available (i.e. in most countries), experience has shown that it is often better to begin the plan -preparation process with one or more informal meetings. These meetings must establish agreed rules by which subsequent discussions will be conducted, i.e. what is open to discussion and what is not. This process is likely to be eased by an independent facilitator whose role is concerned with the process of dialogue and preparation rather than the content of the Management Plan. (see Summary Box 10 and Annex 2)

It is not appropriate to face stakeholders with a list of hard (ideal) objectives from the start. That will simply lead to confrontation and a lack of ownership. It is better to identify simply what is required to maintain biodiversity and what should be done to fulfil the obligations flowing from designation. These explanations need to be presented clearly and simply (see paragraph 3.ii) using simplified

problem tree analysis (see Annex 5), photographs or maps if necessary. However it is important that the stakeholders are not submerged in a wealth of data especially when they may have little understanding of natural features or processes. Also stakeholders' perceptions are often based on impressions rather than "facts." This does not make them any less real to the stakeholder, and the provision of "facts" may not change the stakeholders' opinions of the Protected Area or the parent organisation.

The objective should be to ensure that stakeholders begin to share the conservation requirements, and that the Protected Area managers begin to share the other objectives for "sustainable management", which will arise from the discussions.

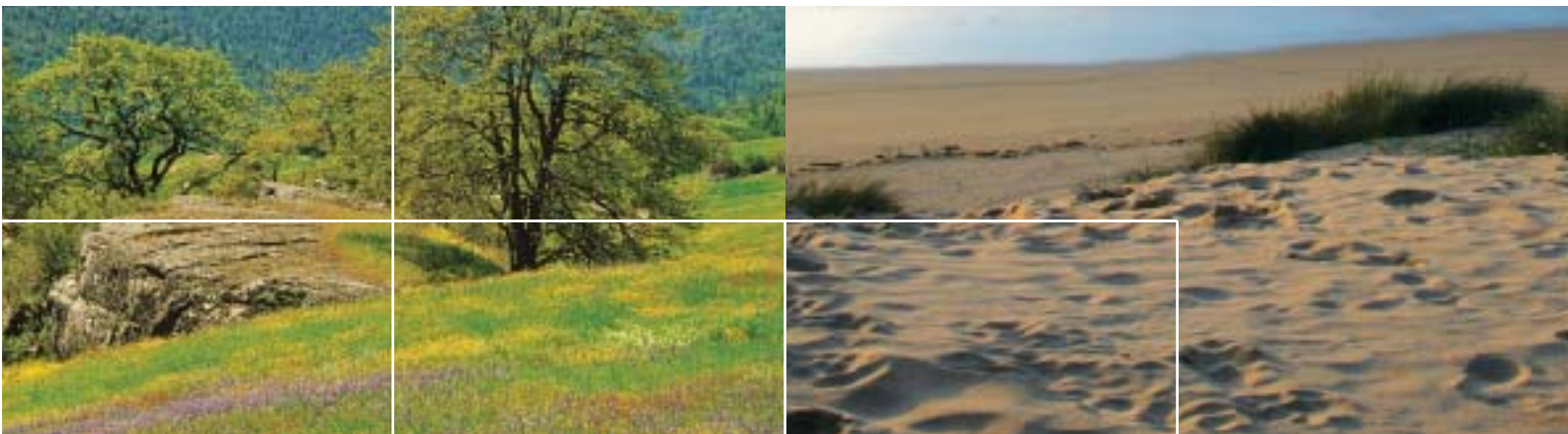
It is useful to consider what potential stakeholders may know or think about the Protected Area and the parent organisation, so that their perceptions and questions can be rehearsed and addressed. A check list of how to approach some stakeholder perceptions / opinions is given below in Summary Box 6.

#### Summary Box 6

##### Useful questions to consider about stakeholders:

- **How much do they know about you and your Protected Area?** (Start always from what they know and speak their language - quite often that means the language of non-experts)
- **What is their attitude towards you and your Protected Area?** (Are the stakeholders strongly for or against your Protected Area and its objectives? Listening and understanding is often more effective than arguing)
- **Where do they get their information about your Protected Area?** (Try to provide non-technical information which addresses their concerns)
- **What makes your stakeholders "tick"?** (Are they very traditional, or concerned about their income or safety; are they cautious and reticent?)

**Answers to these questions are an important basis for meetings with stakeholders**



One of the purposes of these meetings is to dispel uncertainties and suspicions among the participants, many of whom will know each other and may even be opponents over local issues. Informal meetings should include some more social “getting to know each other” opportunities, even where participants may feel they already know each other. The venue for these meetings is important and wherever possible should be “neutral” so as to reduce fears of “territoriality”. Food and drink provide real opportunities for conversations, which should lead to a summary of the values the participants share. It may be that the same conversations can also identify shared perceptions of the

issues and problems of the Protected Area. These also should be summarised.

These processes will require careful and skilful facilitation which is often better carried out by someone outside the detailed planning process which will follow these early stakeholder meetings. Following the initial discussions, it should be possible to form a group of up to 12 people who are prepared to commit themselves to a series of meetings which can move on to defining the objectives – social, economic and environmental – leading to the production of the work plan for the Protected Area. See Summary Box 7.

### Summary Box 7

#### Organising the management plan preparation process

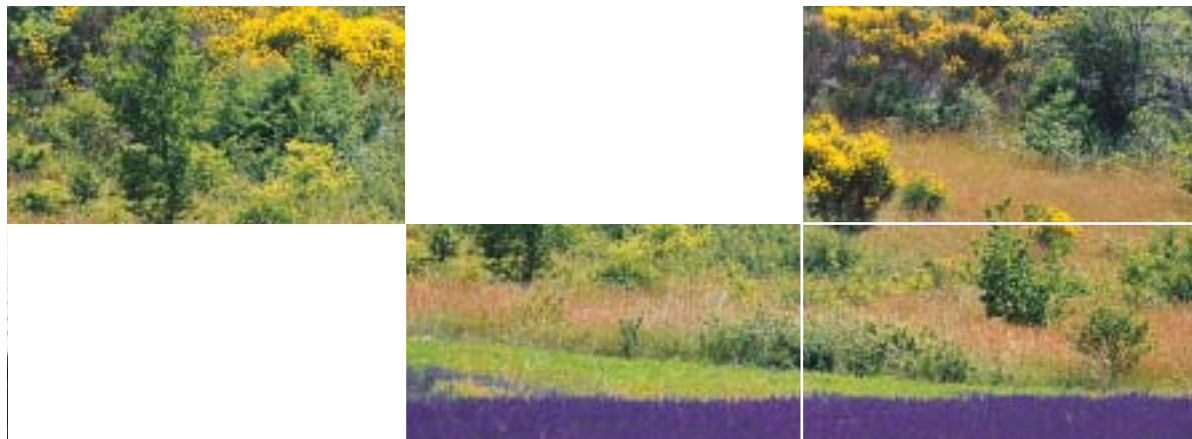
- Identify, invite and involve Key Stakeholders
- Clarify understanding and knowledge about Key Stakeholders
- Identify a Facilitator for the preparation process
- Establish agreed “Ground rules”
- After initial meetings allocate roles and identify time scales
- Use “team-work” to follow steps shown in summary box 10

#### 2.iii. What differences do stakeholders make to the content and format of the Plan?

Decisions on what is useful to include within a Management Plan may be difficult, but the inclusion of traditional elements of Management Plans, particularly lengthy descriptive sections, should be avoided. Lengthy descriptions may satisfy some writers but may also present difficulties to readers and often take considerable time to produce. They may also hide the real agenda

in the length of the text. Stakeholder participation in the preparation of the Management Plan means that they have a role in determining what should be included and what can be left out or placed in a series of annexes, which can be consulted by those who have the interest or need. Often the more descriptive elements of the Protected Area can be included in these annexes, which can be added to as additional research and survey data and information become available.





This Guidance does not recommend any pre-set format – the plan needs to be in the best format to deliver its purposes. It needs to be as short and simple as possible. However, experience suggests that for many organisations a standard format including essential elements is often useful so as to ensure common standards and facilitate training. Summary Box 7 gives a list of possible contents for a Management Plan.

**It should be stressed that the final list of contents should be that which is most useful.**

Some organisations produce their Management Plans as annotated maps making use of GIS systems. This may be particularly useful on large Protected Areas and when working with stakeholders. Maps and diagrams – such as a problem tree analysis (see Annex 5) - may be followed more easily by some stakeholders acting as both summaries and conveying information succinctly. Also the storage of information in a GIS on a map base can help greatly with the preparation of action plans and in monitoring and review. However it is likely that a written account will be necessary for some of the Management Plan and a map-based GIS system will still require careful thought about the data and information to be collected and used.

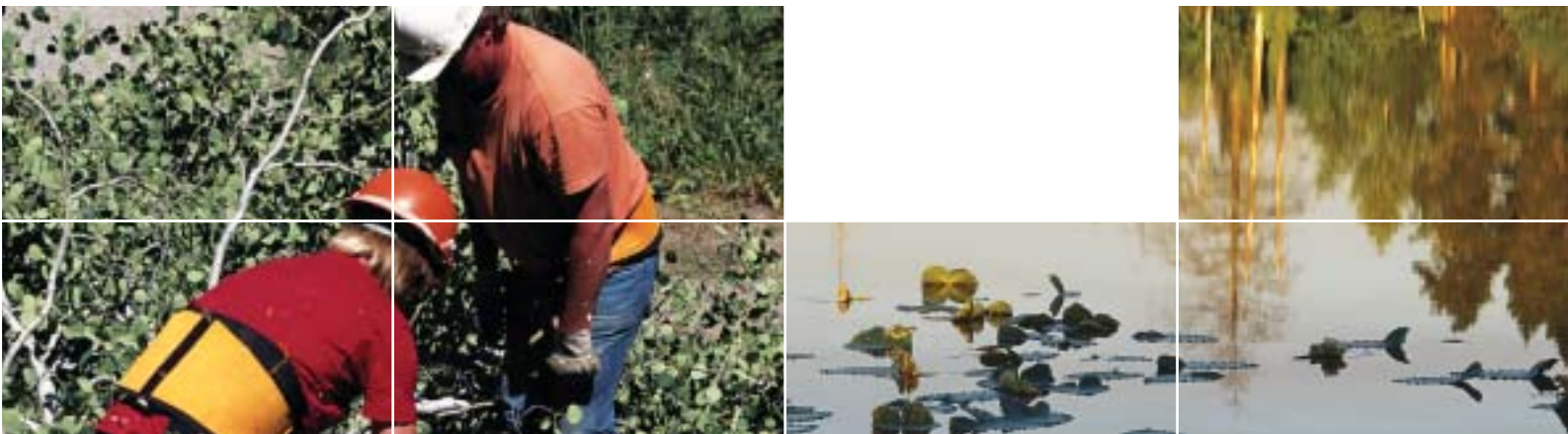
#### **2.iv. What length should the Management Plan be and what timescale should it cover?**

The dialogue between stakeholders during the production of the Plan will help to define its content, format and, above all, its length. In the past Management Plans have often been bulky documents with limited practical use. The length of the Plan being prepared

should be as short as possible without **losing** its coherence, credibility and usefulness. For large Protected Areas it may be difficult to produce a short, 15-20 page Management Plan, which would apply to many small or medium-sized Areas. The main principle is that for a Management Plan to be of use to all those who are interested in it, it must be sufficiently short to retain the attention of most of its readers.

There is considerable debate among Protected Area Managers about the timescale to be covered by the Management Plan. In some countries it is included within national guidelines. Often it is argued that because the timescales of ecological processes are lengthy (though often unknown), so should be the objectives for the Management Plan. For example forest and woodland habitats generally change slowly. Also there is an inherent dislike of “short-termism.” This leads to Plans with  $\leq 10$  year timescales. Alternatively, it is argued that changes may be quicker than expected, both in ecological processes e.g. eutrophic fens and bogs, and in the socio-political world outside the Protected Area. This leads to Plans with a 5-year timescale. This Guidance does not recommend any particular period, except that a minimum time-scale for a Management Plan should be 5 years.

In contrast, the time-scale for the Plan of Work to be carried out, should be not longer than 5 years. It can be argued that even that length of time is too long to be of practical use to the Protected Area manager. Changes in the political and financial climate, staff changes and slippage in management work over a period of 3 years, can be considerable, so that Work Plans which go much beyond that time scale are often meaningless.



### Summary Box 8

**As a minimum it is useful to include the following:**

#### 1. Introduction

#### 2. Description of the Protected Area

2.1. Statement of reasons for the selection of the Protected Area

2.2. Location, boundaries, administrative distribution, land ownership

2.3. Social-economic situation & history & land-use, including recreation, tourism, forestry, hunting etc

2.4. Natural values

2.4.1. Birds

2.4.2. Other Fauna

2.4.3. Flora and vegetation

2.4.4. Geology

2.4.5. Cultural history & objects (archaeology)

**3. Designations** Responsibilities and obligations arising from the designation

**4. Opportunities/Threats** Identification of the opportunities, threats & constraints in maintaining/enhancing the Protected Area

**5. Objectives** Management required to meet the “necessary conservation measures”

**6. Work Plan** Work timetable, resource and time allocations, monitoring and staff responsibilities

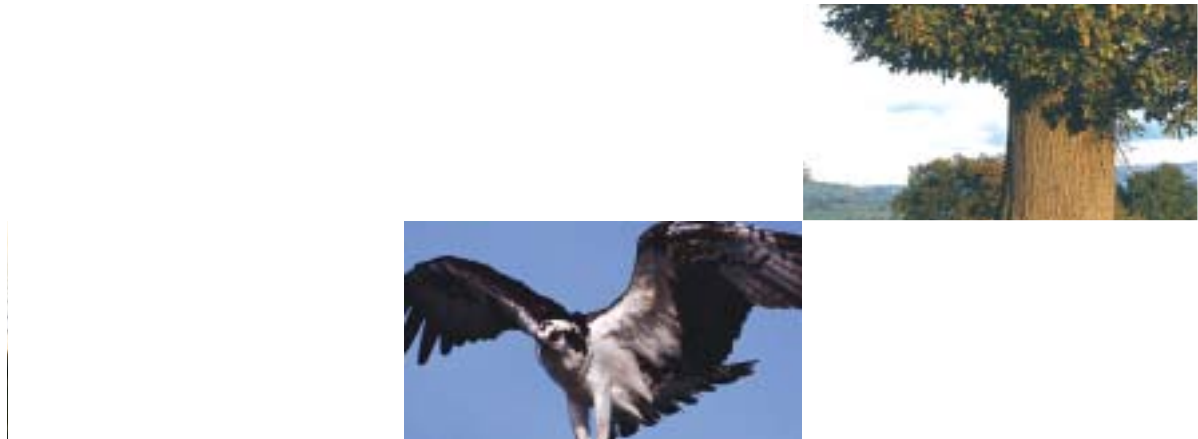
**7. Monitoring and Review** Data collection requirements and review procedures

**8. Appendices** A range of maps of the Protected Area- showing: boundaries, ownership, geology, soils, habitats, species locations etc; Species lists; Detailed accounts/papers on natural values; Ecosystem function; Stakeholder lists and Working Group composition; Brief, formal record of meetings; significant outcomes.

#### 2.v. What area is to be included within the Management Plan?

Many Protected Areas are covered by a series of designations which need to be catered for within the Plan. Each designation may have its own specific set of regulations, policy constraints and opportunities and Management Plan preparation procedures. In the EU the Natura 2000 suite of sites is a designation required of member states and for which there is need to ensure Necessary Conservation Measures for the features for

which the area has been designated. This may involve land or water neighbouring the Protected Area e.g. when the water table is an important factor in the distribution and character of fauna and flora within the Protected Area. RAMSAR sites and Biosphere Reserves have different requirements. For very large Protected Areas there may be no need to extend the Management Plan coverage to land outside the boundary. For small and medium-sized areas this may not be the case.



The principle to be adopted is that the area to be included in the Management Plan should, if possible be that which maintains the ecological integrity/continuity of the habitats within the Protected Area and enables the ecosystems in the Protected Area to function effectively.

Extending the area to be covered by the Management Plan may add to the list of stakeholders who need to be involved in preparation. However a sensible balance needs to be reached on how far the

Management Plan should extend beyond the boundaries of the Protected Area. In many countries such an extension is not possible; in others it may not be practical.

Biosphere Reserves incorporate the principle of Buffer Zones into their three-tiered structure. Internal Zones within Protected Areas can apply in both time and space. Both Buffer Zones and Internal Zones within Protected Areas (spatial or time) are used as management tools. They have at least five potential uses as shown in Summary Box 9.

#### Summary Box 9

##### Potential uses of buffer zones and internal zonation in management planning:

- **Different regime management** A useful way of separating different management regimes and maintaining strict non-interference areas
- **Gaining stakeholder support** A means of maintaining support from local stakeholders and demonstrating relevance to political authorities and fund allocators
- **Resource prioritisation** As a way of prioritising areas for the expenditure of resources
- **Securing protection** As a means of protecting vulnerable areas from potentially harmful activities
- **Management prioritisation** As a way of making clear the priorities for management of a "natural site"

Where the Plan is broken down into Internal Zones or Buffer Zones it is critical that production is carefully planned and that the whole Plan fits together i.e. with all the elements working together.

The various categories of Internal Zones which have been found to be useful within Management Planning are listed in Annex 3.



## Stage 3 - Agreeing objectives and work programme

### 3.i. How do you set objectives?

The traditional method has been to set objectives for Protected Areas by working through a process of evaluation of the nature conservation importance of various characteristics, such as rarity and diversity i.e. those that are often used in site selection. Not only is this often lengthy and time-consuming but also may not be easily understood by stakeholders. Moreover it may not provide adequate objectives from a social and economic perspective. A more pragmatic approach may be helpful, though the process of dialogue with stakeholders should incorporate the same intellectual elements. To be truly effective this may require socio/economic or environmental expertise working alongside the facilitator.

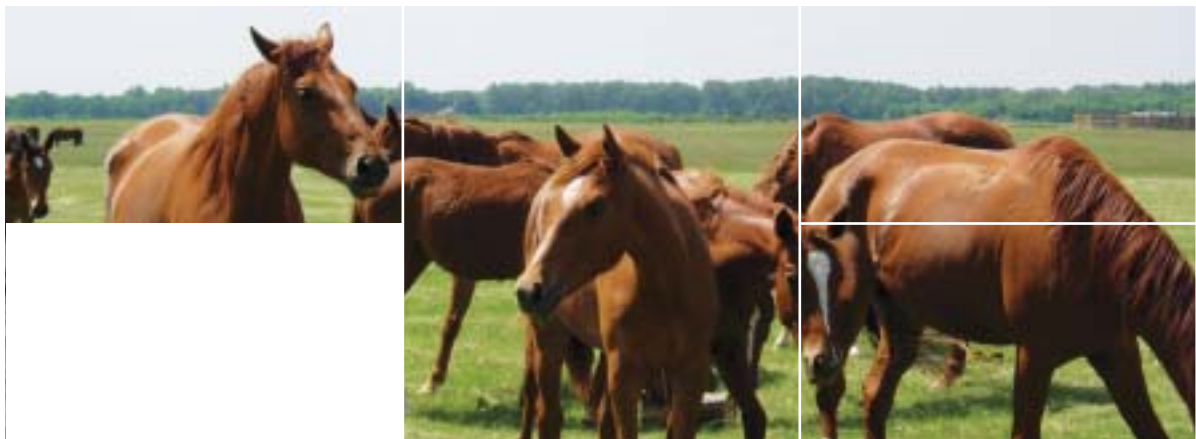
The advent of the European Habitats Directive and Natura 2000 means that objectives for the Protected Areas are largely set by that designation. The requirement to maintain Necessary Conservation Measures means that Natura 2000 sites must be managed so as to maintain the features for which the site was designated. This therefore becomes the primary nature conservation objective for these areas. Perhaps equally importantly - as stakeholders are going to be involved in the preparation of the Management Plan - is how to find a simpler way to define the agreed objectives. These may extend beyond the primary nature conservation objective, and may include:

- public enjoyment and awareness;
- site interpretation and educational use;
- recreation; ● research;
- domestic and economic activities.

The stakeholders are very unlikely to have the same views as the nature conservation managers about what the Protected Area objectives should be, or what management

needs to be done. Furthermore, if managers are serious about stakeholders participating in the preparation of the Management Plan, they must recognise that the process should be more than a simple "rubber-stamping" or involvement exercise. The process of reaching agreement on objectives needs to recognise the constraints imposed by the objectives of the other stakeholders within the boundaries of discussion, including consideration of social and economic objectives alongside those for nature conservation delivery. (In the case of Natura 2000 sites this must include the need to maintain Necessary Conservation Measures.) However when objectives for various partners are identified clearly, it is often the case that they turn out to be different aspects of the same basic problem(s).

For example, it is common to find that stakeholders and managers have a similar admiration and respect for the Protected Area and its flora and fauna. Indeed in many cases stakeholders have lived their lives in or near the Protected Area, and may depend on it for their livelihood. Conversely it is rare that stakeholders wish to destroy elements of the biodiversity of their "home" area, so that discussions about objectives to maintain populations of rare species are often (though not always) less contentious than managers may fear. This emphasises again the need to establish an ongoing good working relationship with stakeholders and a professional approach towards dealing with the preparation process. Where there is strong and continuing opposition to the Protected Area and its management, a longer process of stakeholder dialogue will be necessary and the difficulties addressed specifically within the working group in a special effort.



### 3.ii. What features make the natural area important?

Everyone involved in the Management Plan preparation process (and everyone who uses the Plan later) needs to understand why the Protected Area and its ecosystems are important and why loss or degradation should be avoided. The description of the Protected Area section included in the Management Plan (see Summary Box 8), must include simple, easily understood statements which make the value of the Protected Area clear to the reader. For example,

*Protected Area A is “probably the richest site in Britain for invertebrates and fungi. More than half of the total native beetle species of Britain is found there.”*

**Protected Area B is “an important wintering site of one of the most important internationally endangered bird species – Steller’s Eider (*Polysticta stelleri*) – in the Baltic Sea.”**

Wherever possible, the descriptive part of the Management Plan, should include a simple account of the features or factors which bring about the biodiversity value of the Protected Area. For example, ‘the presence of an abundant supply of dead timber reflecting centuries of parkland management’ or ‘the shelving rocky shore which supports a rich mollusc food supply available during winter’ or ‘the mosaic of grassland, scrub and woodland habitats’. It is these factors which management actions aim to influence. They need to be explained and understood by the participants in the preparation of the Management Plan and an appropriate diagrammatic explanation may help.

This is a **principal** role for the ecologists involved in the preparation process and the discussion/issue groups which are established – see Annexes 1 and 2. These short statements are often hard to derive but the simplicity of communication and weight attached to them when influencing stakeholders is well worth the effort they require.

### 3.iii. What has been the social, economic and land-use history?

Understanding how the Protected Area came to be the way it is an important step towards understanding any present day issues or problems that there may be. In many cases Protected Areas have been influenced and shaped by human activities, even if it has only been around their boundaries. Rural areas in many countries have seen major social changes over the last 50 years which will affect the composition of stakeholder groups and options for management of Protected Areas. For example if the population related to a Protected Area is falling and ageing, it may be difficult to find stakeholders who can play an active part in both the preparation of the Management Plan and subsequent management actions. In these circumstances the Management Plan becomes a document which promotes rural regeneration as well as management of the Protected Area.



The descriptive part of the Management Plan should summarise in simple terms the main social, economic and land-use changes of the Protected Area, and the implications of these for the future. As with natural values in the previous section, these summaries need to be expressed in simple, easily understood terms which help the reader to grasp the significance of what has happened in and around the Protected Area over perhaps the last 50 years. A longer period may be helpful, but may not be possible. It is important that these statements are not lengthy or academic in their presentation. The emphasis should be on clarity and shared understanding rather than comprehensiveness.

### 3.iv. What are the opportunities/issues/threats/problems and how do we agree what they are?

It is very unlikely that all the stakeholders will have the same perception of "opportunities/issues/threats/problems." Each will have his/her own ideas and what should be done about them. The process of reaching a working agreement among key stakeholders will require expertise, patience and flexibility. Entrenched and unmovable positions are likely to produce trench warfare. Again, the team preparing the Management Plan needs to have given careful thought to those factors which are having the greatest negative and positive effects on features and ecosystems within the Protected Area.

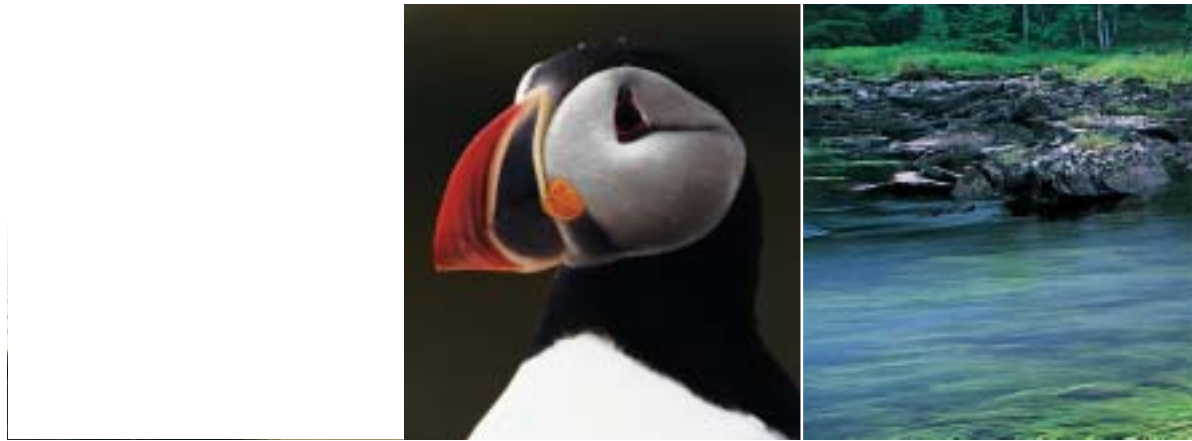
The process has been divided here for ease of explanation into six steps which build on one another.

#### Step 1

is to establish rapport among the members of the group preparing the Management Plan. This will not occur as a result of a single meeting. Mutual respect and confidence will develop as discussions continue during Management Plan preparation. This does not mean that there will be no disagreements or difficulties, but the process of dialogue between participants will tend to build team-work and feelings of ownership for the Management Plan.

#### Step 2

Information and values about the Area can begin to be shared and the opportunities/threats/issues/problems, as each stakeholder sees them, begin to be identified. The opportunities/issues/threats/problems should be stated simply and specifically and always related to or derived from the natural features of importance and the ecosystems that support them within the Protected Area. It is important that this linkage is clearly established and identified from the outset. For example, *"there is not enough grazing to prevent invasion by scrub and woodland, leading to the loss of habitats and species"* or *"water tables are falling as a result of drainage or water extraction for irrigation purposes"*. Each of these should lead back to identified features being affected by scrub encroachment or water extraction. When some of the problems have been identified they can be brought together in the discussion groups so that perhaps four or five main opportunities/threats/issues/problems are finalised. These will cover all of the interests and concerns of the stakeholders, sometimes grouped together or summarised.



### Step 3

is for Issue groups to be established to consider each of the objectives that have been identified. The brief given to each of these groups should be for them to produce an improved statement of the problem they are considering, taking account of the objectives the other groups will have. These discussions should take place within a “problem-solving” workshop atmosphere and end with a plenary session in which the results of each group are shared with the others. The purpose here is to get the various stakeholders, and the groups they are part of, to reduce the opportunities/threats/ issues/problems to as small a number as possible. The result should be a list of opportunities/issues/threats/problems which are recognised and widely shared among the stakeholders.

### Step 4

Having agreed a set of opportunities/ threats/issues/problems this step involves building a series of solutions. Here again an open-minded and flexible approach is necessary so that good ownership of the solutions is achieved. Preconceived solutions or answers, the “one-I-made-earlier” approach, are not likely to be successful, though clearly knowledge of resources, timescales and realities is vital.

**Please note** that the various steps in this process may overlap, with several being achieved in a single meeting in parallel sessions. In other cases it may be necessary to proceed more slowly. It is important to be flexible and prepared to modify the process in the light of progress or lack of it. This requires project management skills and professional understanding of communication processes. Annex 3, summarises the steps to be taken in Stage 3 of Plan preparation.

### 3.v. What are the solutions to the opportunities/threats/issues/problems identified?

#### Step 5

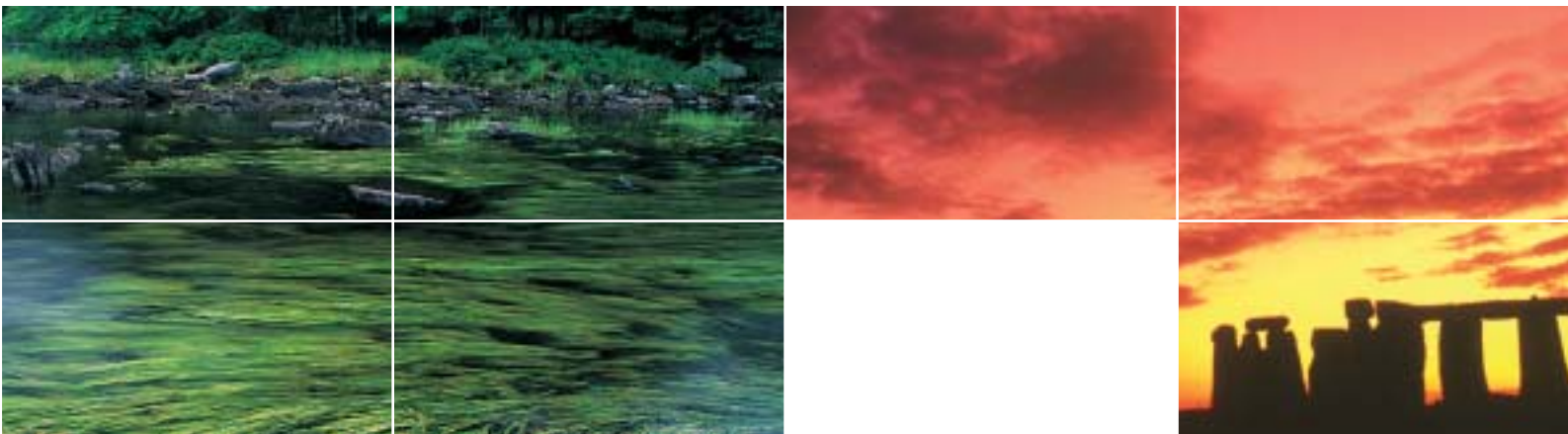
If the opportunities/threats/issues/ problems have been identified taking account of the various stakeholder views and constraints, the solution is to find ways of turning them 180°.

For example: if **the problem** is, “*there is not enough grazing to prevent invasion by scrub and woodland leading to the loss of habitats and species*”, **the solution** is, “*to ensure that there is sufficient grazing to prevent invasion by scrub ...*”; or - if **the problem** is “*water tables are falling as a result of drainage or water extraction for irrigation purposes*”, **the solution** would be, “*to ensure that water tables do not fall*”.

This simple process of inverting the opportunities/threats/issues/problems to identify a solution, depends on a clear statement of them. It may seem that in some Protected Areas the opportunities/threats/issues/problems are far from simple, yet work within the issue groups can often reduce them to an agreed set of solutions, despite their differences. It is again important to maintain the linkages between the solutions and the feature which will benefit from the proposed management. These solutions can then be improved to give a set of what can now be considered as **Objectives for the Protected Area**.

#### Step 6

Throughout the process it is essential that stakeholders viewpoints are accepted and managed so that at the end of the process the various views and aspirations are understood. **As** much common ground and



support as possible **should be** established for the objectives **and a** clear programme to deal with any outstanding matters **is agreed**.

Summary Box 10 summarises the steps to be taken in identifying problems and developing solutions – see also Annex 2.

A facilitator can help with these aspects



### Summary Box 10

#### Stakeholder steps in agreeing problems and developing solutions:

1. Establish rapport and mutual respect among stakeholders (See Annex 2 - Building **Steps** towards agreed objectives).
2. Share perceptions - the values and feelings for the Protected Area which members of the group share; what do they see as problems and difficulties; how do they see the future and what would they like to see?
3. Share problems - reach agreement on the four or five major opportunities/issues/threats/problems or which need to be addressed.
4. Share solutions/objectives - establish Issue Groups to discuss and improve clarity of the opportunities/issues/threats/problems recognising the constraints of the objectives of the other Issue Groups. Agree a final list of opportunities/issues/threats/problems.
5. Invert solutions - invert the opportunities/issues/threats/problems to identify solutions; convert the solutions into objectives and improve within discussion in Issue Groups and plenary.
6. Gain support - ensure that the final list of objectives has the Support of all stakeholders participating in the preparation of the Management Plan.
7. Develop work programme – prepare the timetable and project plan for the Management Plan with stakeholders

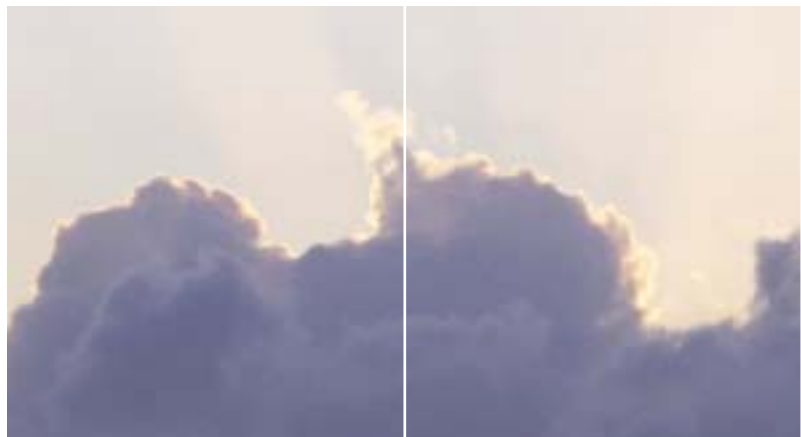
A number of points need to be made about this process as listed in Summary Box 11:

### Summary Box 11

#### Points to note about the process of agreeing problems and developing solutions:

1. The process is time-consuming and will take several meetings to establish the team-work needed to achieve an agreed set of opportunities/threats/issues/problems and solutions.
2. The process must be handled with care and sensitivity - listening is as important as speaking.
3. It is important to be flexible wherever possible – do not abandon vital biodiversity objectives.
4. “Compromise” is not the objective; “Collaboration and agreed solutions” is!
5. Everyone needs to understand the limits imposed by legislation e.g. Necessary Conservation Measures for Natura 2000 sites.





### 3.vi. What work is necessary?

**Step 7** is to develop a programme of work that will bring about the solutions which have been identified. This is the **Work Plan**. It will identify priorities for work, timing of work, funding requirements and responsibilities for carrying out the work. As with the previous stages, it is better if preparation continues through the stakeholder workshops, though it

may be useful to re-arrange the composition of the groups according to their interest or expertise. It is also useful to have a written draft of the conclusions reached so far in the preparation process.

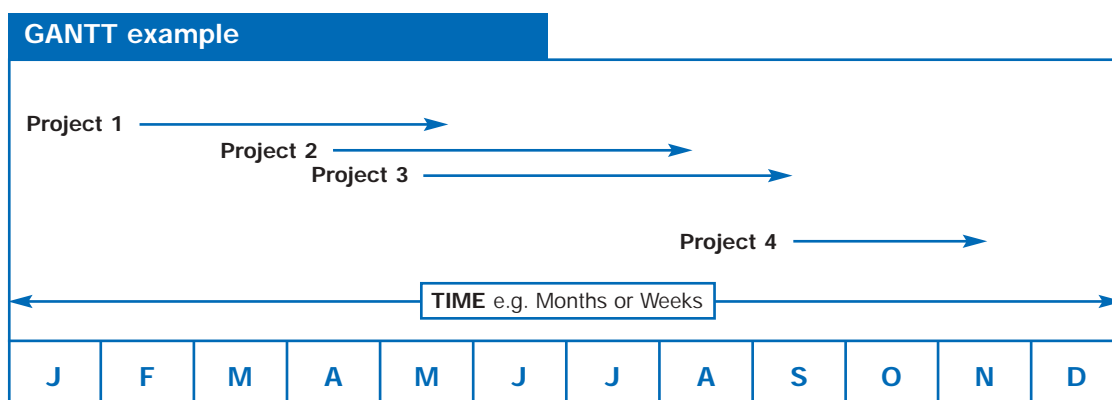
Experience has shown that the Work Plan is best presented in tabular format as shown below:

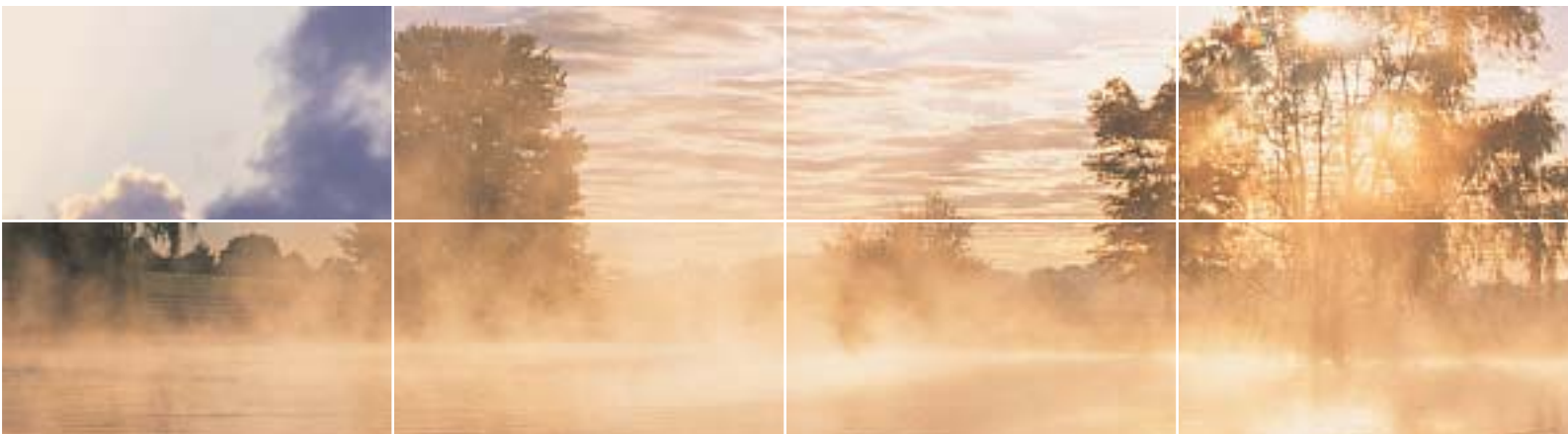
Objective (Solution)	Work Project	Year/timing	Responsibility	Cost

Some re-arranging of the table will probably be useful with objectives/solutions being grouped, for example according to the needs of biodiversity, or recreation, public enjoyment, site interpretation, educational use, research and public awareness and economic/social.

The timing of work may be important particularly when 1 project is dependent on the completion of another or there are difficulties

in securing resources (funds and staff time). It is often the case that funds are not available to complete the work on the time scale shown in the Work Plan. It is therefore necessary to adjust the timescales according to the resources that are made available. In other words the final Work Plan needs to be seen as flexible, deliverable and reflecting reality. In these situations it is often useful to prepare a GANTT chart to demonstrate the relationship between various projects - see below:





## Stage 4 - Feedback and review

### 4.i. Background considerations.

Several Key principles need to be considered as part of the Feedback & Review stage of the Management Plan. They are summarised in Summary Box 12.

#### Summary Box 12

##### Feedback and review: key principles

**Clarity:** Understand who will use the outcome of the review, why and how

**Focus:** Have a mixture of key information on core objectives (long-term) which is complemented by more routine information (short-term)

**Alignment:** Ensure the information fits directly into the management process for the Protected Area, so that it becomes a necessary and integrated step

**Balance:** Ensure that the information is not too costly to collect and reflects the range Protected Area objectives

**Still relevant:** Undertake regular appraisal to check that the information is still necessary or have the objectives changed?

**Robust:** Ensure that the indicators can be audited by external bodies and that they are SMART (Simple, Measurable, Achievable, Realistic, Timely)

#### Remember

- if you don't measure results, you can't tell success from failure;
- if you have no measure of success, you can't learn from it;
- if you can't recognise lack of success you can't correct it;
- if you can't demonstrate success, it is more difficult to win public support.



**4.ii. What is being reviewed and what decisions need to be made?**

There is need to separate the review of delivery of work achieved (its quality, cost etc) and the possible/probable impact of the work. It is therefore necessary to review both aspects. The work undertaken to date is the short-term review whilst the review of the impact of the work is the long-term review.

In both cases the fundamental questions to be asked are, "Have all the results which were sought/expected been achieved on time and within resources?" If they have not, why not?" In other words whatever the effect or change, what has caused it?

Answers to these questions may lead to management decisions such as, "Is it necessary to change the management which the Management Plan has identified? and if so, on what basis i.e. is it necessary to increase,

decrease, maintain or change the existing management regime? Are more resources required?"

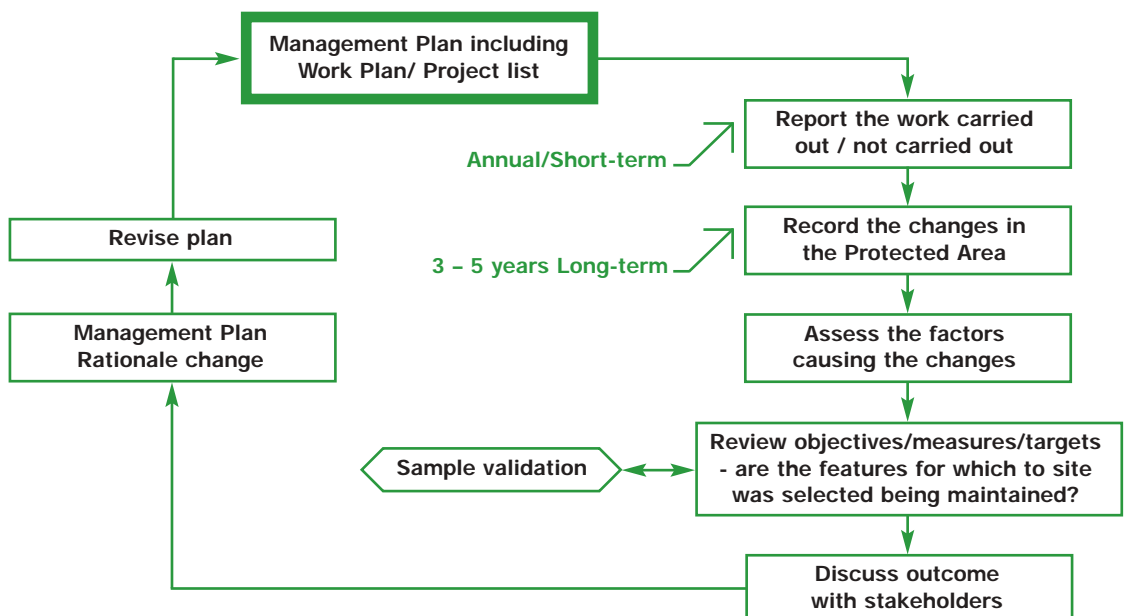
**Please note - The reasons for not achieving the desired results may not be management or the lack of it, and may be outside the remit of the plan.**

The review should take place at 2 levels:

- issues related to changes in habitats and species in relation to management, and/or the achievement of the other objectives such as visitor satisfaction or educational/ recreation objectives i.e. long-term
- issues related to carrying out the Work Plan, i.e. short-term.


Summary Box 13 provides the steps in the review process for both long-term and short-term. The glossary provides a description of the terms used.

**Summary Box 13**





#### 4.iii. What information is needed to make these decisions?

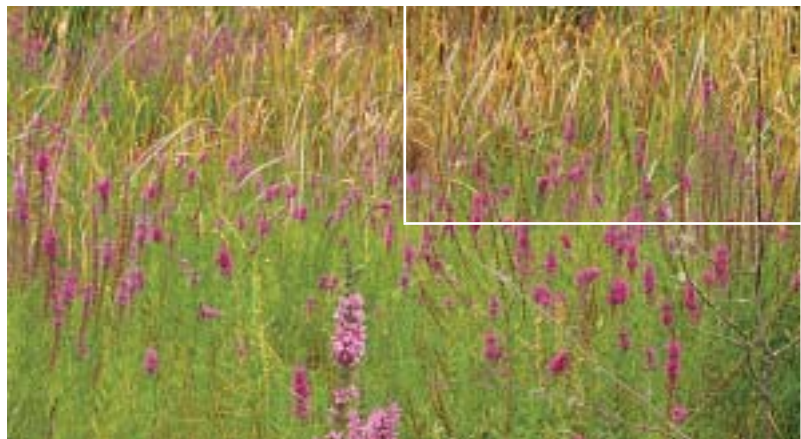
- **Short-term.** There are decisions that are usually made on a year-to-year basis so that the data needed to support these decisions should be collected on an annual basis. This will include financial records, staff time (in broad rather than detailed categories), and notes of completion dates of specific management programme elements as identified within the work programme. This also includes changes or adjustments to the work programme which become necessary because work has not been carried out as planned. There may be many reasons for this, e.g. reduced or inadequate funding, difficulties over conditions for work to be carried out, illness, or failure to attract volunteers. Within-year adjustments may also be required based on this information to keep the plan on track and/or to provide an early warning that the management may need to change to achieve the given objectives. Data to deal with these issues are generally easier to assemble and analyse. 

- **Long-term.** Decisions on whether the defined objectives of management are being met are often complex. They involve consideration of how the management (or lack of it in large Protected Areas) relates to any changes that have been observed or measured within habitats, flora and fauna, or changes related to other objectives such as visitor or educational objectives use. This requires careful thought about the various processes taking place within the Protected Area and possibly its land use context.

Often the relationship is straightforward and relatively simple, e.g. lack of grazing in grasslands arising from the abandonment of land results in invasion by woody species and the reduction of grassland flora and fauna. In this example the data needed to make decisions about changes in management relate to the rate of invasion by woody species and, perhaps, some measure of changes in the distribution and abundance of the indicator species of grassland. Decisions about further action to achieve visitor objectives will require data on numbers and possibly their impact or contribution to the local economy.

Decisions about long-term issues require reliable data of a consistent standard to help make them. This means that significant changes outside expectation need to be measured. This will include distribution and abundance of habitats and species for which the Protected Area is designated, and changes related to other non-biodiversity objectives.

EU Member States are required to ensure that **Necessary Conservation Measures** are maintained on Natura 2000 sites and report their condition to the European Commission. Any changes which take place in the features for which the Natura 2000 site has been designated need to be assessed in the same way as already described, if management action is to be taken to rectify problems. It may be necessary to initiate a more thorough investigation of the reasons for change because of the uncertainties of the effect and cause relationship. These are covered in the Audit and Validation section below.



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#### 4.iv. Who will collect the data needed for decision-making?

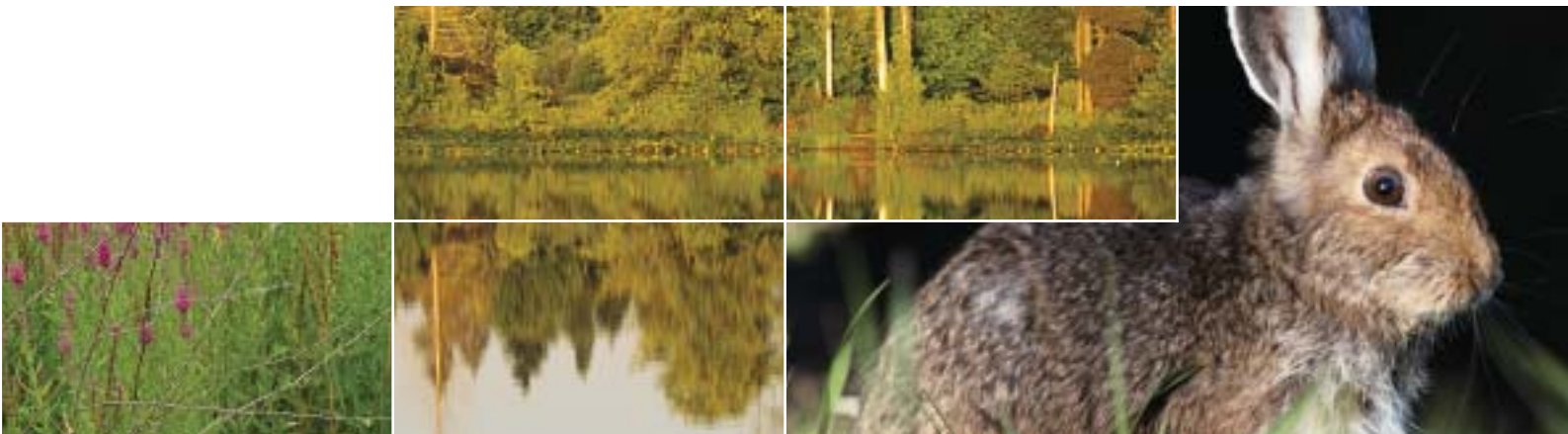
Managers of Protected Areas have usually been, and probably should continue to be, the collector of most of the data needed for decision-making. The manager is best placed to be able to record **short-term data** on finance, time spent and work completed as part of his/her day-to-day work. However it is important that the data are collected as an integral part of the manager's work.

Otherwise data collection and recording will become an additional time-consuming task. In the past more data than is needed has often been collected, so that the manager's duties and responsibilities are heavily weighted towards data collection and "monitoring", with limited thought being given to the time involved or the need for the data. Short-term data collection and recording systems can be streamlined relatively easily, but should be trialled carefully before implementation so as to ensure integration with patterns of work followed by management staff. This may lead to changes in the way Protected Area managers work.

**Long-term data collection** is concerned with changes related to the objectives of the Protected Area. These will be principally concerned with biodiversity, but should also cover other objectives including economic and social use. On Natura 2000 sites the requirement to implement "Necessary Conservation Measures" means that data should be collected on those features for which the Protected Area was selected. Sometimes these changes may occur over a shorter period than 3 – 5 years in which case emergency action may be needed. Otherwise the principles of long-term data collection should be applied. (See comments on 'Standards' below.)

The main purpose of long-term data collection and recording is to provide information which will show changes in the features and elements of the Protected Area for which objectives have been set i.e. biodiversity, education, recreational and others.

The causes of these changes are likely to be complex, though it may be clear that a single factor is responsible. However care needs to be taken to avoid "jumping to conclusions." In many Protected Areas actions taken on the basis of assumed causes have proved to be incorrect. The causes of the changes which are observed in Protected Areas may require a fuller more careful assessment and are covered in the Audit section of this Guidance.



The identification of what data to collect and its analysis must have input from scientific experts from the disciplines related to the objectives e.g. biodiversity, hydrology, education, sociology etc. It is important that Protected Area managers take charge of the discussions on data requirement so that long-term data collection maintains a clear relevance to management and does not become a “hobby exercise”. The disciplines should be selected according to need. The data collected should be as simple as possible to demonstrate changes in the feature being measured e.g. aerial photographs may be the simplest/easiest way of showing significant habitat changes, particularly in very large Protected Areas. The standards required of the data in order to provide reliable information on change should be identified in these discussions. This will include the frequency of data-collection, the collection and recording methodology, and the expertise and level of accuracy required.

The complexity of the long-term data requirement means that data collection may involve more than the Protected Area manager. In some cases, specialists may be needed to assist e.g. with visitor usage, and specialist groups such as bryophyta or micro-lepidoptera. If the data-collection requirement and standards have been clearly identified, it is likely that some of the long-term data collection can be carried out by “volunteers”, provided they can meet the standards. Some of the data arising from monitoring will be new and add to the overall information data base about the Protected Area. In some cases this may require a rethink of the objectives with further involvement of appropriate stakeholders.

#### 4.v. How/who will analyse/process the collected data?

Responsibility for use of the data collected lies with the Protected Area manager and his/her parent organisation. A partnership between the two is necessary with the stakeholder discussion groups being fully involved. Short-term and long-term data/information will show:

- how resources of time and money have been used and what work has been carried out.
- changes in the features which have had management objectives.

The frequency of reports covering these depends on the style of management of the parent organisation. No specific guidance is given here. A key issue in dealing with stakeholders is to make clear what has been achieved in simple terms and what progress along the agreed path outlined in the plan has been made. It will require communication and facilitation skills and an ability to accept criticism for management that has or has not taken place but when successful this dialogue will provide a greater ownership of the plan by stakeholders. As the stakeholders change over time either in person or importance there is need to continually refresh the relationship by the provision of appropriate information



#### **4.vi. Validation: How will the effectiveness of the work be assessed?**

Protected Area managers and their parent organisations need to assess progress at appropriate intervals. This is particularly necessary when changes, or lack of them, are shown from the data collected. A formal system of review - an audit - may be carried out at the initiative of the managing organisation (an internal audit) by those not responsible in any way for the site, or by experts or authorities from outside the managing organisation (an external audit). The frequency and timing of such an audit will depend on the style of management of the parent organisation and the speed of change which is taking place.

The objectives and way in which the audit will be carried out should be clearly set out to the satisfaction of stakeholders including the site manager. It will cover "quality control" i.e. costs, time spent and suitability of management work done on the Protected Area. Where necessary it should also consider the likely causes of any changes which have been identified from long-term data collection. This will require expert scientific input and may lead to more detailed scientific or investigation work on cause and effect. This should cover all of the objectives identified in Stage 3 of the Plan preparation process.

After discussion with the Protected Area manager and others responsible for the site the auditor should make recommendations about possible changes in management practice which might improve performance and achieve objectives more efficiently and effectively. All audits should be recorded and a copy kept with the plan. The audit findings and the forward programme for implementation of agreed action should be built into the forward Work Plan.

#### **Internal audit (by the managing organisation)**

It is recommended that an appropriate person in the management chain of command, who has appropriate knowledge or appreciation of the ecosystems or biotopes, should visit the site with the site manager on a regular basis (annually, every six months or perhaps every four months), to allow for modifications to be incorporated before the end of the year. It may not be possible to cover the whole site in such an audit but distinctive parts of the area can be examined on rotation. It is not recommended that the site manager undertakes these audits.

In addition there will be financial audits in accordance with international, national, organisational or local needs. Safety audits are also essential, especially where visitors are allowed on site, for working practices by staff and contractors.

#### **External audit**

The external audit is a valuable tool which assists the managing organisation in maintaining, or improving its performance. It can also serve to check whether the existing management practice compares with the latest national or international standards. The audit may be commissioned by national or international bodies, and therefore should be undertaken in accordance with the appropriate national/international or organisational 'house' policy. Experts from another organisation, an academic/scientific institution, or from another country may well be involved in providing a neutral but knowledgeable perspective.



### Audit questions and process

The key audit questions to be addressed by the writer of a management plan - to assess his/her own work - are given in Summary Box 14 below:

#### Summary Box 14

##### Key audit questions:

- Have the causes of the changes observed been clearly identified?
- Does the site currently require significant alterations to management regime, including objectives?
- Have the resources (time and money) been used effectively and efficiently to achieve the objectives?
- How is the organisation that is responsible for the site structured to deal with its management? Is it effective?
- Does the policy and infrastructure require review or change?
- Has there been a systematic evaluation of the information available?
- Has the planned management had to change within the plan period?

Finally it is useful to have a short check list of "reminders" about Feedback and Review and these are summarised in Summary Box 15.

#### Summary Box 15

##### Feedback and Review principles

1. **Refine requirements** No need to do everything; be selective
2. **Use indicators** Key species or habitats
3. **Be specific** Be clear about the site problem/issue for which data is being collected
4. **Goals & intentions** Be careful (cautious) about these
5. **Robust** Ensure that the monitoring data is reliable and reputable
6. **Other uses** Financial, management and other data are useful with local people
7. **Don't over-collect** Sometimes general information and observation is enough
8. **Don't forget** Other objectives also require decisions and information
9. **Frequency** More "natural" Protected Areas may need less detailed monitoring





## Stage 5 - Management Plan Approval

Each country or organisation will have a Management Plan approval system which meets its own requirements. It is vital that such a system exists and that parent organisation “own” the results of the Management Plan preparation process. It is also important that the approval process is as non-bureaucratic and as helpful to the operation of the

system as possible. It should also recognise the impact that stakeholder involvement has on the structure, length and content of the Plan. Approval should not take months to obtain. To assist with gaining approval a list of Key approval questions is included Summary Box 16.

### Summary Box 16

#### Key approval questions:

- How was the site selected and the boundaries chosen?
- Is the site described in enough detail, adequate for the management specified?
- What national and international designations does the site hold & what responsibilities follow?
- Are objectives clearly identified and justified?
- Are there management policies in place which are relevant to the site or is a change necessary?
- Have stakeholders been fully involved in plan production?
- Do stakeholders own the plan and assist with its implementation?
- Is the site zoned for management purposes?
- Are there sufficient legal powers to implement the strategies?
- Have management programmes been realistically identified (SMART)?
- Are the monitoring and data collection/analysis procedures appropriate?



## Glossary

### **Assessing**

(or Audit) is deciding on the basis of the analysis of monitoring data whether the plan is delivering the specified objectives in the way and to the level that was expected.

### **A Management Plan**

is an easily understood set of principles in an accessible form by which a defined area (small or large) may be managed.

### **Key indicators**

are the features (and their levels) which have been selected within the plan, on which data is to be collected so as to test the effectiveness in achieving objectives.

### **Recording**

is the collection of long-term data which is required to provide information which will show changes in the features and elements of the Protected Area for which objectives have been set.

### **Reporting**

is the establishment of a process for reporting and processing of short-term and long-term data.

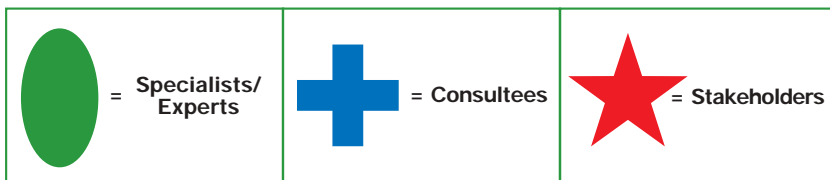
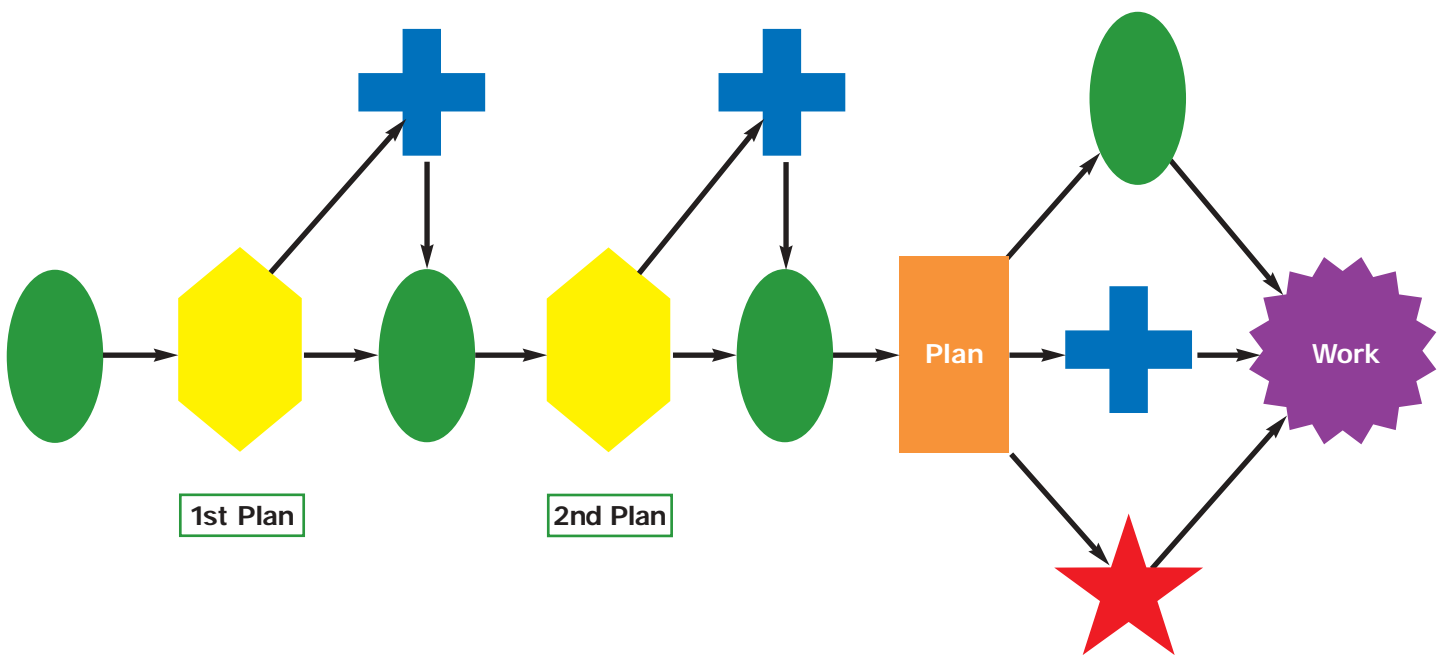
### **Reviewing**

is the process of assembling the results of short-term and long-term data collection and analysis/assessment/audit which may lead to rewriting of the plan to encompass the new requirements.

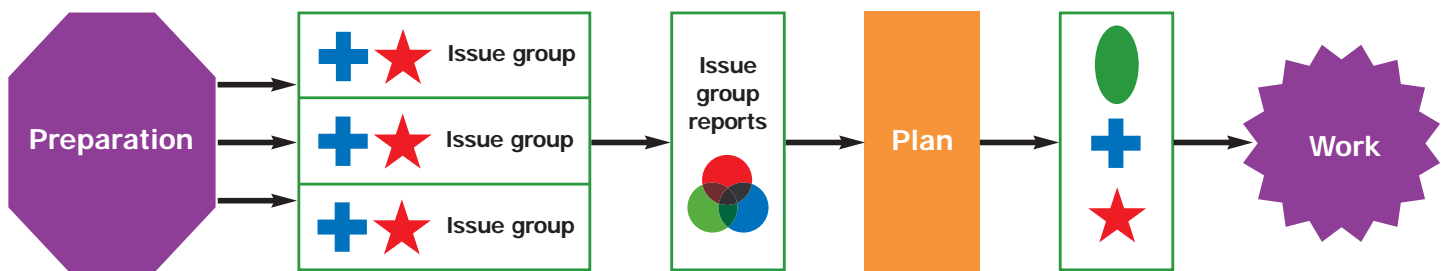
### **Stakeholders**

are those people who are interested in or are affected by the management of the Protected Area.

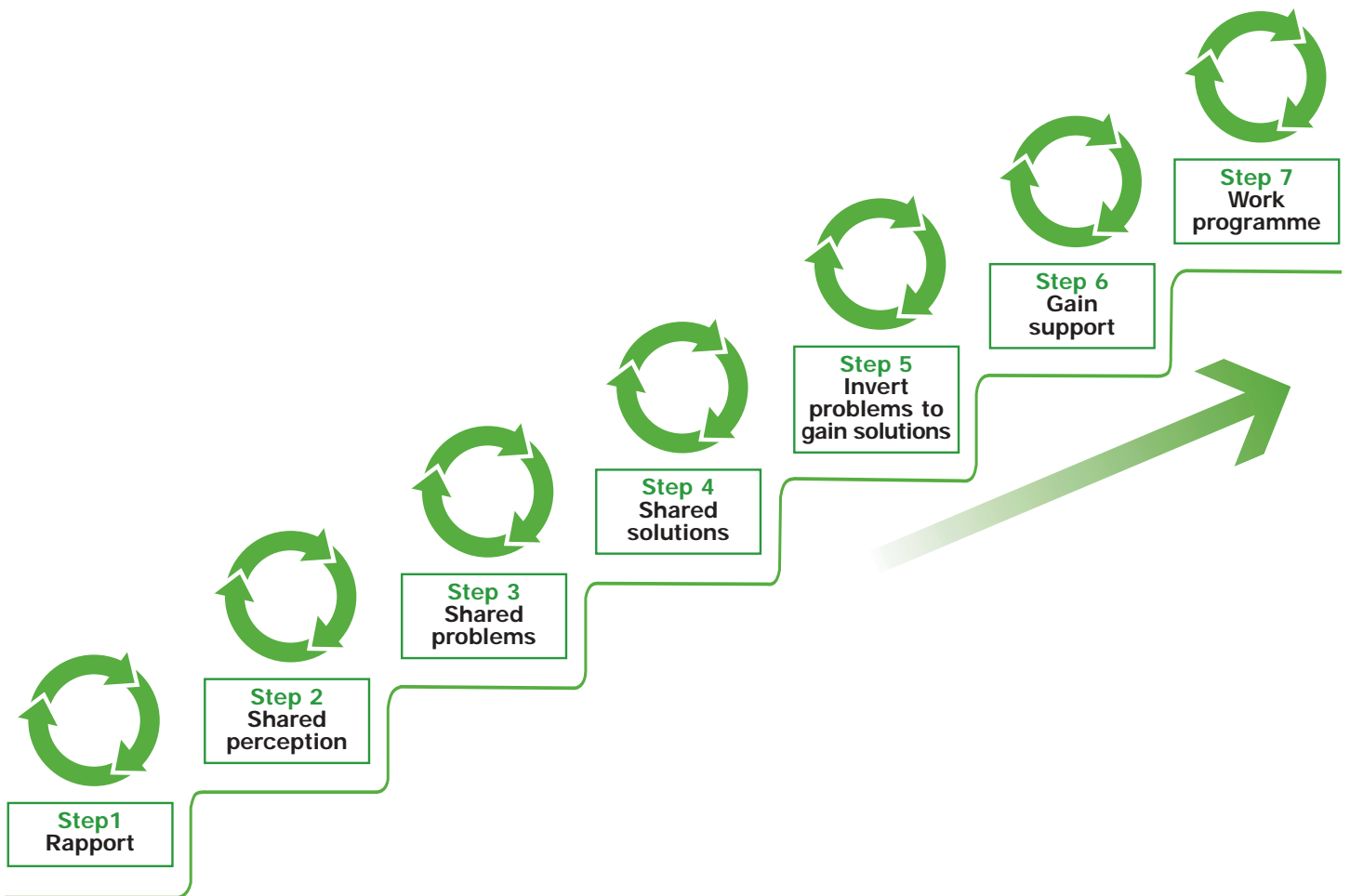
# Annex 1 - Traditional management planning process



# Consensual or participative management planning process



## Annex 2 - Steps towards agreed objectives



## Annex 3

### Useful internal management zones

- Non-intervention zones – areas or parts of Protected Areas where there is no management
- Management zones – where there is:
  - limited or “qualified” management
  - active management to maintain a habitat or species
  - full restoration management to re-create a habitat or re-introduce a species
- Intensive use zones – where public recreation and enjoyment can be promoted and managed
- Research use zones – where disturbance should be restricted and experimental equipment be secure

## Annex 4

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# Annex 5 - An example of problem tree analysis: Mangrove degradation in the Indus Delta

Taken from Ecosystem Management - Lessons from around the World (IUCN) 2000

