

GALAPAGOS REPORT 2013-2014

NEW APPROACHES

THE MANAGEMENT PLAN FOR THE PROTECTED AREAS OF GALAPAGOS FOR GOOD LIVING: AN INNOVATIVE TOOL THAT CONTRIBUTES TO THE INTEGRATED MANAGEMENT OF THE ARCHIPELAGO

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The **Galapagos National Park Directorate** has its headquarters in Puerto Ayora, Santa Cruz Island, Galapagos and is the Ecuadorian governmental institution responsible for the administration and management of the protected areas of Galapagos.

The **Governing Council of Galapagos** has its headquarters in Puerto Baquerizo Moreno, San Cristóbal Island, and is the Ecuadorian governmental institution responsible for planning and the administration of the province.

The **Charles Darwin Foundation**, an international non-profit organization registered in Belgium, operates the Charles Darwin Research Station in Puerto Ayora, Santa Cruz Island, Galapagos.

Galapagos Conservancy, based in Fairfax, Virginia USA, is the only US non-profit organization focused exclusively on the long-term protection of the Galapagos Archipelago.



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The Management Plan for the Protected Areas of Galapagos for Good Living: An innovative tool that contributes to the integrated management of the Archipelago

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The *Management Plan for the Protected Areas of Galapagos for Good Living* is a new planning instrument developed between 2011 and 2013, approved by the Ministry of the Environment, and published in July 2014. The plan is presented as an innovative management tool that solidifies the recognition of Galapagos as a socioecosystem, where successful conservation requires integrated management of the protected areas with the populated zones (rural and urban). This includes acknowledging the capacity of ecosystems and their biodiversity to generate services, and contributing to the recovery of those components that have been altered primarily by anthropogenic causes (invasive species, contaminated aquifers, habitat degradation and fragmentation, among others), in ways that guarantee a sustainable human presence and quality of life or good living.

The Management Plan is based on a shared vision: *the Galapagos province achieves good living for the human community by preserving terrestrial and marine ecosystems and their biodiversity through a regional model that integrates protected areas with populated areas* (DPNG, 2014). The achievement of this shared vision is based on general principles (Figure 1), which guide, orient, and prioritize decision-making by natural resource managers as well as all other actors involved in the management of the Archipelago.

Development of the plan began with the formation of a core work group composed of regional and national authorities, who provided significant contributions to the creation of a shared vision for the plan. This group included representatives from: the Ministry of the Environment; the Governing Council of Galapagos (CGREG – Spanish acronym); the Galapagos Provincial Technical Directorate of the Ministry of Agriculture, Livestock, Aquaculture, and Fisheries (MAGAP – Spanish acronym); the Galapagos Provincial Technical Directorate of the Ministry of Tourism; the municipal governments of Santa Cruz, San Cristóbal, and Isabela; parish governments, and in October 2012, the recently created Galapagos Biosecurity Agency (ABG – Spanish acronym).

This is the first time in Galapagos that a single management plan combines two distinct protected areas: the Galapagos National Park (GNP) and the Galapagos Marine Reserve (GMR). This integrated approach seeks to respond to needs identified in the assessments of management effectiveness of the two protected areas. The new plan aims to optimize the management actions of the Galapagos National Park Directorate (GNPD) and to meet the current needs of Galapagos society, as well as respond to the environmental challenges of the Islands.

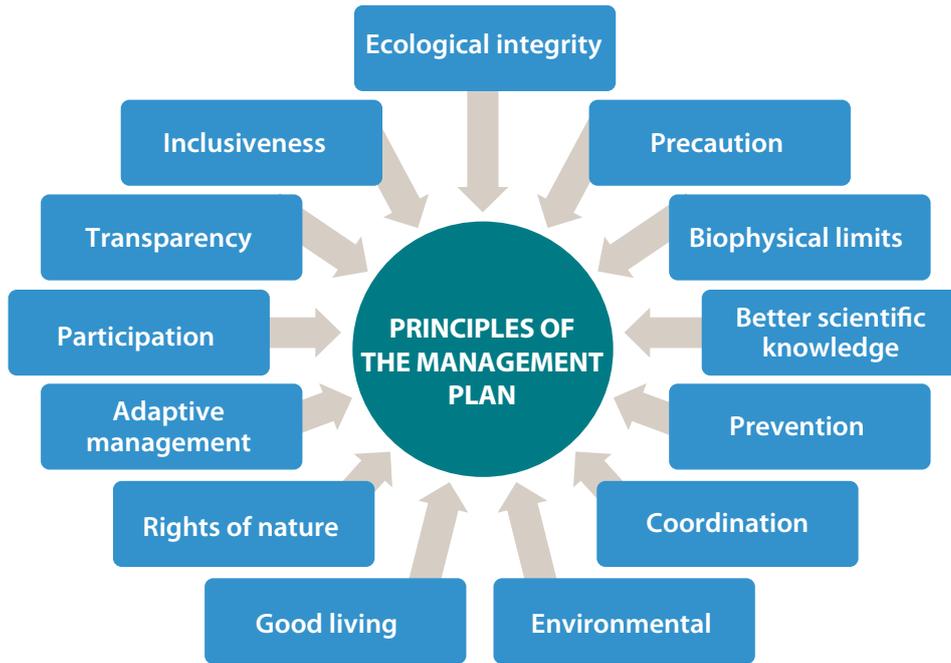


Figure 1. Principles of the 2014 Management Plan for the Protected Areas of Galapagos for Good Living.

The conceptual foundation: An integrated and integrating territorial model

The ecological dynamics of Galapagos are complex. So too is its socioeconomic system, which depends entirely

on the environmental services provided by the terrestrial and marine ecosystems. Understanding Galapagos as a socioecosystem is essential; it is vital to deepen our understanding of the interactions of the natural and human systems rather than analyze them separately (Figure 2).

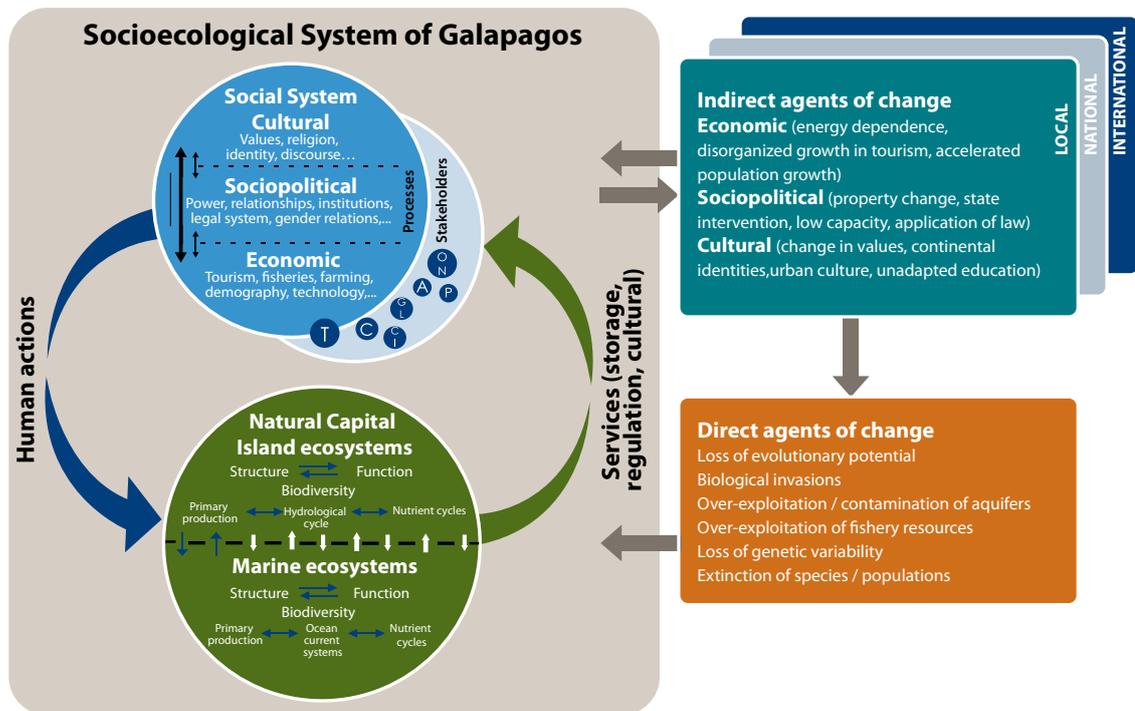


Figure 2. Conceptualizing Galapagos as a socioecosystem helps in understanding the dependent relationship between the social system and the terrestrial and marine ecosystems (protected areas), as well as to identify the actual causes of problems, which are related to the indirect drivers of change (taken and modified from Tapia et al., 2009).



Photo : ©John Garate

The Management Plan rejects the paradigm of constant conflict between conservation and development and accepts that development in Galapagos is not possible without conservation and that effective conservation depends upon the development model chosen. This approach makes it unnecessary to choose between conservation and development and instead recognizes that the two are closely related. Management of the protected areas cannot be separated from management of unprotected areas (urban and rural zones), as many of the direct and indirect drivers of change originate in the populated zones.

To face the management challenges in the protected areas of the archipelago, it is necessary to develop strategies specifically geared toward the conservation of ecosystems and their biodiversity. But management actions must also have a socioeconomic component. It is important to implement a development model that recognizes the dependence of the province on natural ecosystems, and the fact that the resilience capacity of marine and island ecosystems has limits that must not be exceeded.

The Management Plan recognizes the authority of various entities in the province, and seeks greater coordination and collaboration to make their actions more effective.

Developing the Plan

The evaluations of the management effectiveness of the GMR (2011) and the GNP (2012) generated a series of recommendations that highlighted the urgent need for a single management tool to guarantee effective and integrated management of the two protected areas, to optimize planning efforts, and to ensure that those efforts are part of province-wide land management strategies.

The design of this comprehensive Management Plan was launched in 2012 with the creation of two working groups: an internal group consisting of GNPD rangers (referred to as the “technical group”) and the second comprised of provincial authorities (referred to as the “core group”). The technical group generated draft proposals related to territorial planning, science and technology, public use and eco-tourism, communication, environmental education, and participation, which were then debated and analyzed by the core group. Once the core group agreed on the conceptual framework, the technical group proceeded to design specific strategies and action plans to implement the shared vision, including basic objectives and management programs.

Action strategy: The management programs

The main areas of intervention of the Management Plan are determined by six basic objectives, which correspond

to the objectives of the National Plan for Good Living (SENPLADES, 2013). To achieve the objectives, an action strategy was developed, which encompasses all of the individual management programs (Table 1).

Table 1. Objectives and programs of the *Management Plan for the Protected Areas of Galapagos for Good Living*.

OBJECTIVE 1	Manage the conservation of Galapagos marine and terrestrial ecosystems and their biodiversity to maintain their ability to generate services.
Programs	1.1. Conservation and restoration of ecosystems and their biodiversity 1.2. Monitoring ecosystems and their biodiversity 1.3. Control and surveillance
OBJECTIVE 2	Incorporate and articulate conservation policies for the protected areas into the Plan for Sustainable Development and Regional Planning of the Special Regime of Galapagos to achieve sustainable use of ecosystem services and terrestrial and marine biodiversity.
Programs	1.1. Conservation and restoration of ecosystems and their biodiversity 1.2. Monitoring ecosystems and their biodiversity 1.3. Control and surveillance
OBJECTIVE 3	Improve and strengthen the management capacity of the GNPD, providing it with the necessary resources for the effective and efficient administration of the protected areas.
Programs	3.1. Organizational development 3.2. Management of environmental information
OBJECTIVE 4	Promote participatory and inclusive social processes to promote good living and an island culture that exhibits environmental responsibility.
Programs	4.1. Environmental communication, participation, education and interpretation
OBJECTIVE 5	Increase and integrate interdisciplinary scientific-technical knowledge focused on the management of the interaction between marine and terrestrial ecosystems with the socioeconomic and cultural systems of Galapagos, within the context of global change.
Programs	5.1. Science of sustainability
OBJECTIVE 6	Promote national and international cooperation for the conservation of the ecosystems and biodiversity of Galapagos, according to the priorities established by Ecuador in the Plan for Sustainable Development and Regional Planning of the Special Regime of Galapagos.
Programs	6.1. International relations and cooperation

There are 11 programs based on the conceptual framework of the plan and its management principles. These programs define conservation and/or restoration actions for terrestrial and marine ecosystems in the Archipelago in an integrated, coordinated fashion. These actions are compatible with the rational use of the environmental services generated by the ecosystems for the benefit of all Ecuadorians and of society in general.

Recommendations

At the start of the design process for the Management Plan, the institutions participating in the core work group signed an agreement containing the following points, which are still valid and serve as recommendations:

- Work collaboratively on the Management Plan, with each participating institution contributing to its content.
- Integrate all Galapagos planning tools.
- Link the development of the Management Plan to development and land use planning of the Galapagos Province.
- Take advantage of the planning process to encourage all entities to work together for the sustainable future of Galapagos.
- Agree that the Management Plan is one of the

drivers of fundamental change to collectively build a sustainable future for Galapagos.

- Recognize that the relationship between conservation and development must be complementary in order to achieve good living.
- Maintain good living in Galapagos respecting environmental limits of the terrestrial and marine ecosystems.
- Achieve a shared vision for Galapagos based on a unique regional model that integrates protected and unprotected areas (urban and rural zones).

Immediately following the approval of the *Management Plan for the Protected Areas of Galapagos for Good Living*, the GNPD carried out a process of socialization of the plan

within and outside the institution, initiating a chapter of momentous change in the management framework for protected areas in Ecuador.

Acknowledgements

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