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MANAGEMENT PLANNING GUIDELINES FOR PROTECTED AREAS IN FIJI

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Introduction

The 'Management Planning Guidelines for Protected Areas in Fiji' is an output of a Darwin Initiative project implemented in Fiji by BirdLife International. The project seeks to develop the capacity of Fijian conservation professionals and local conservation groups to undertake protected area management at priority sites in Fiji. A Protected Area Management Planning Workshop was held in Fiji in April 2008, at which time this manual was compiled. Fiji has progressed steadily in the area of protected areas and this manual is aimed to help local conservationists and skilled professionals develop, implement and monitor management plans for protected areas. It provides detailed guidelines on how to effectively structure a management plan, how to collaborate with stakeholders from the planning stages and how to monitor the implementation of the plan.

This manual will facilitate the development of protected areas by providing structured guidance on how to conserve biodiversity in a protected area.

“By far the most common situation is that general management and development plans tend to gather dust or best receive minimal implementation, despite the tremendous national (and frequently international) technical cooperation efforts that go into their preparation”

(Budowski and MacFarland, 1982)



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1.0 Background

1.1 What is a management plan for a protected area?

A management plan is a document which sets out the management approach and goals, together with a framework for decision making, to apply to a protected or managed area over a given period of time. Plans may be more or less descriptive, depending upon the purpose for which they are to be used and the legal requirements to be met. The process of planning, the management objectives for the plan and the standards to apply will usually be established in legislation or otherwise set down for protected area planners.

1.2 Why is a management plan needed?

Management plans bring many benefits to protected areas and to the organizations or individuals charged with their management – and, without them, serious problems can ensue.

“If there is no general management plan, preservation, development and use activities in a park will occur in a haphazard basis, often in response to political pressures with little consideration as to the implications for the future. The result is likely to be lost opportunities and irreversible damage to park resources and values.” (Young and Young, 1993)

1.3 Guidelines on management planning

Successful management planning will be characterized by these features:

Management planning is a process – not an event; i.e. it does not end with the production of a plan, but continues through its implementation and beyond.

It is concerned with the future; it identifies concerns and future alternative courses of action, and examines the evolving chains of causes and effects likely to result from current decisions.

It provides a mechanism for thinking about threats and opportunities and other difficult issues, solving problems and promoting discussion between involved parties.

It is systematic: most planning exercises work through a pre-determined sequence of steps that give structure to the process and encourage a logical approach. A systematic approach helps to ensure that decisions are based on knowledge and analysis of the subject and its context, and helps others to understand the rationale for proposed actions.

It also involves value judgments. Management planning can be thought of as a process which embraces the identification of what a protected area is and what it should become and how to maintain or attain that desired condition in the face of changing internal and external conditions.

It takes a ‘holistic’ view. The planning process can, if carried out openly and inclusively, take into consideration a very wide range of issues, views and opinions. When applied to a particular area, it should be able to include all processes and issues arising within it, as well as those arising outside its boundaries.

It is a continuous process; it is never static and can adjust to changing conditions and goals.

1.4 Management by objectives

In the broader field of management science, the style of management brought about by management planning is known as 'management by objectives'. Management by objectives is proactive rather than reactive. It is also 'result orientated', emphasising accomplishments and outcomes. It is an approach that encourages active management by the organisation. Four distinct steps have been identified within this type of management and decision-making:

1. Formulation of clear, concise statements or objectives
2. Development of realistic action plans for their attainment
3. Systematic monitoring and measuring of performance
4. Taking corrective actions as and when necessary

1.5 The benefits of management planning

Notable benefits of management planning include:

- It improves management of the protected area: management decisions are based upon a clear understanding of the protected area
- It provides guidance for managers
- It provides continuity for management
- It helps to identify management effectiveness
- It improves use of financial and staff resources
- It increases accountability
- It improves communication, particularly with key audiences

1.6 Time requirements

The time needed to prepare a management plan, for even a small site, is rarely less than 12 months. Where extensive consultation is required or complex issues

must be addressed, it may be considerably more. In Fiji, 18-24 months might be the expected timeframe for developing a management plan for the larger reserves.

Natewa Tunuloa IBA Community-declared Protected Area

BirdLife International Fiji Programme commenced work in the Natewa Tunuloa IBA in 2005 working with communities, advocating for the protection of the forest and sustainable use of their natural resources. The IBA covers 17,600 ha to an altitude of 832m and comprises of 30+ landowning clans that reside in the 15 villages in the 2 districts.

In 2006, a Local Conservation Group/Site Support Group was established and assisted BIFP with consultations and stakeholder collaboration. This was followed by an agreement by 5 landowning clans to protect their forests and to have a Management Plan for the protected forest. Extensive consultations continued with multi-sectoral stakeholders, eventually leading to an additional 6 clans agreeing to protect their forest and establish a community-declared protected area. The community-declared PA covers 6452 ha of the entire IBA, 36.7% of the IBA. The MOU between BirdLife International and the 11 landowning clans was finally signed in 2009 for a period of 10 years and includes a Management Plan for the community-declared PA.

1.7 Budget

Before embarking on a management plan, there needs to be clear idea of the costs and resources available. This is particularly the case where resource and user surveys need to be carried out, and/or public consultation and possibly engagement of consultants. A realistic appraisal needs to be made to ensure all costs associated with the plan can be fully met, bearing in mind that the planning may take some years to complete.

1.8 The management plan document

The management plan is a product of the planning process, documenting the management approach, the decisions made, the basis for these decisions, and the guidance for future management.

2.0 *Requirements for a Successful Preparation and Implementation of Management Plans*

2.1 The approach used in plan preparation

The process of management planning should be 'participatory', involving the people affected by the management of the protected area. Participation should take place as early as possible and continue throughout the planning process. Two audiences are involved: an external one (local people & communities surrounding the protected area, visitors and other stakeholders) and an internal one (the landowners and staff who will be charged with the plan's implementation). In both cases, the plan is much more likely to be implemented if the affected audiences are involved in its development and have 'a sense of shared ownership'.

During the management planning process, it would be ideal if two teams would be established to oversee the process involved in the planning stages: a Core Team and an Advisory Committee. Both internal and external audiences, as mentioned above, will be members of the two teams to enhance ownership.



Management planning process must be a 'participatory' process, involving the people affected by the management of the PA. (Photo by BirdLife International)

A possible outline for the two teams for a management planning process in Fiji is shown below:

Establish a Management Planning Core Team	Establish a Site-level Protected Area Advisory Committee
4-6 Representatives from mataqalis	10-15 Representatives from mataqalis
1-2 Representatives from Department of Forestry (with full-time expertise in PA management)	1-2 Representatives from Department of Forestry (with full-time expertise in PA management) Note: These individuals will lead the management planning in protected areas in the future, replacing external expertise
	1 Representative from other key Government Agencies (NLTB, Agriculture, Land Use Department)
	1-3 National experts on PA management (optional: – to strengthen management planning process and to enhance capacity building)
NGO planner (i.e. the lead NGO implementing the project)	NGO planner
1 Professional consultant in management planning (facilitator)	1 Professional consultant in management planning (facilitator)
Tasks: Visit project sites, collate data, prepare draft sections and hold formal (four day) meetings for drafting management plan	Tasks: Review draft sections and hold formal (one day) meeting for drafting management plan; provide advice to Core Team
Notes: Most members of this core planning team would dedicate substantial time commitments towards collating data and developing the management plan during the 18 month period	Notes: Most members of this protected area advisory committee have other work responsibilities and can only dedicate short time commitments towards formally reviewing sections of the management plan during the 18 month period

2.2 The management planning process

Management planning is a continuous process – a cycle with three main elements:

1. Preparation of a management plan
2. Implementation of the plan
3. Monitoring and review of the plan

Within this context, the actual process of planning can be broken down into 13 steps. These steps are outlined below:

STEP 1. Pre-planning phase

The pre-planning phase is one of the most important steps in the planning process. This stage defines what the process will achieve, how it will be carried out, timing considerations and who is to be involved. These decisions need to be made at the highest possible management level and are critical to starting the planning process on the right footing.

STEP 2. Data collection, background research and initial fieldwork

Planning and management should be informed by reliable data. There are two views about the relationship between data collection and setting management objectives:

1. management objectives are refined and agreed upon after the data is collected and analyzed;
2. management objectives are set for the area and determine what data is collected.

In practice a protected area is established on the basis of an initial data set which is used to determine the management objectives. Any further data collection can then be based on these management objectives - in other words, it is a two-way process.

STEP 3. Evaluating the information

The purpose of this step is to identify and understand why the protected area is important. It helps to describe the values associated with the protected area, explains why it was designated and identifies its benefits to society. As much emphasis is placed on the local people in Fiji and their customary rights, as well as other stakeholders, it is important that their values for a protected area are identified and described.

STEP 4. Identifying constraints, opportunities and threats [SWOT]

Before defining the specific management objectives for the protected area, the constraints on its management should be identified, as should any major threats to the area's values.

STEP 5. Developing management vision and objectives

The management plan process should develop and articulate an ideal condition, state or appearance for the protected area. In some plans, this future is defined as short-term goals or aims of the protected area; on others, as long-term objectives. In some more recent plans, it has taken the form of a vision statement.

STEP 6. Identifying and evaluating options

With management objectives in place, the next step is to work out with the local stakeholders (in Fiji: the landowning mataqalis) how the objectives will be achieved. As there are often several ways in which this can be done, the range of options for management actions should be identified, and the appropriate ones chosen. Management actions could include zoning or buffering and this will most likely have direct correspondence with the desires of the local stakeholders. In the case of Fiji, this will involve the various landowning units, mataqalis, regarding land use in their respective native lands. Buffer zones can include sustainable logging zones, ecotourism zones and conservation zones, among others. Another option for management action may be the development of alternative livelihood projects such as bee-keeping, vegetable farming, model farms and others.

Strengths

What advantages will the PA management plan bring?

Weaknesses

What could be improved on?

What could hinder the effective implementation of the MP?

Opportunities

What opportunities may arise as a result of your PA management?

Threats

What are the constraints to effectively managing the PA?

What obstacles could you face?

STEP 7. Integration into a draft plan

The integration of all the above planning elements into a single document will result in a draft management plan.

STEP 8. Public consultation

The opportunity for the general public and stakeholders to review the draft management plan is a vital step in the management planning process.

STEP 9. Revision of draft and production of final plan

This step in the process involves revision of the draft, taking into account the comments received from stakeholders and the public. Good practice requires that all written comments received, and those noted at public hearings, should be recorded and considered.

STEP 10. Approval of the plan

This is a procedural step involving submission of the final plan for approval by the competent authority.

STEP 11. Implementation of the plan

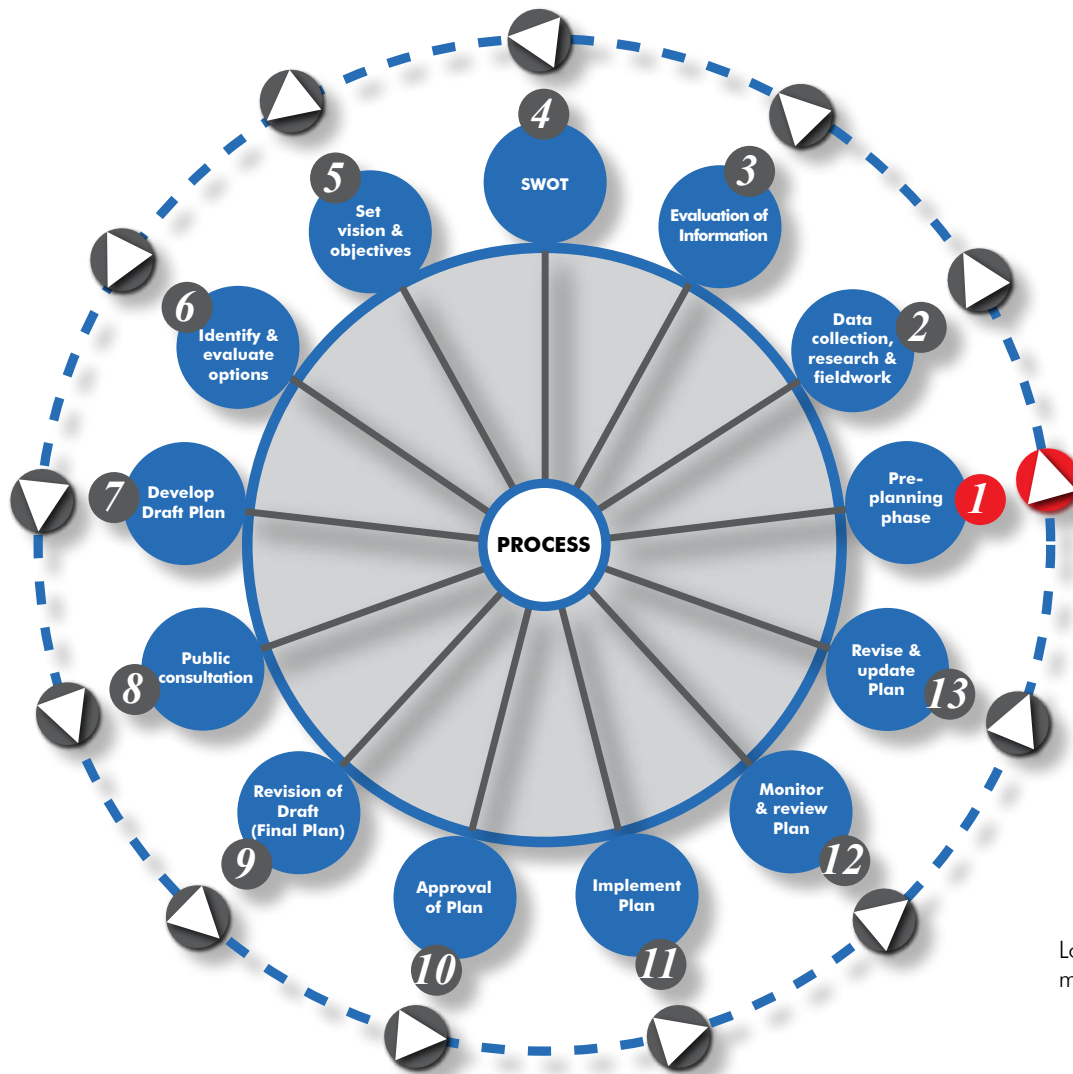
The management plan sets out the actions to be implemented. These should be realistic and necessary for management of the protected area.

STEP 12. Monitoring and review

When the management plan has been prepared and approved, and the operational plans are in place to guide its implementation, field staff are then able to put the plan into practice. With implementation under way, monitoring and review will provide the feedback loop. The purposes of this step are to identify whether the plan is being implemented effectively and the objectives are being met, and to adapt the management plan accordingly.

STEP 13. Decision to review and update the management plan

The final step in the planning process is to decide on either review or update of the management plan. In many cases, the plan will be time-limited by legislation, typically for five, seven or ten years. An integral part of this final step is to ensure that feedback from the monitoring is available to guide drafting of the new document.



Local stakeholders' consultation for the formulation of a community-based protected area management plan. (Photo by BirdLife International)

3.0 Outline for a Protected Area Management Plan (Fiji)

Part I: BACKGROUND

CHAPTER 1: Designation and status of the protected area

CHAPTER 2: Justification for the selection of the protected area as a priority for action

CHAPTER 3: The plan and the objectives for protected area site management

- 3.1 Purpose of the plan
- 3.2 Structure of the plan
- 3.3 Preparation of the plan
 - 3.3.1 The protected area management planning area
 - 3.3.2 The planning process
- 3.4 The goal and objectives for protected area management

CHAPTER 4: The setting and history of the protected area

- 4.1 Location of the protected area
- 4.2 Summary description of the protected area
- 4.3 General features of the protected area
- 4.4 Recent history of the area
 - 4.4.1 Settlement and land use prior to establishment of the protected area

- 4.4.2 Protected area management since establishment

Part II: THE SETTING OF THE PROTECTED AREA

CHAPTER 5: The bio-physical environment

- 5.1 Physical features of the area
 - 5.1.1 Climate
 - 5.1.2 Hydrology
 - 5.1.3 Geology and soils
- 5.2 Biological features
 - 5.2.1 Vegetation
 - 5.2.2 Fauna
- 5.3 Main biological significance

CHAPTER 6: The socio-economic environment

- 6.1 Demographic overview
 - 6.1.1 Population
 - 6.1.2 Ethnicity and religion
- 6.2 Settlements
 - 6.2.1 Mataqalis
- 6.3 Existing infrastructure and community services
 - 6.3.1 Transport (road access)
 - 6.3.2 Education
 - 6.3.3 Health care
 - 6.3.4 Employment
 - 6.3.5 Tourism

- 6.4 Tenure and access to land
 - 6.4.1 Land tenure
- 6.5 Other proposed land-use developments

CHAPTER 7: Villager livelihoods and current use of natural resources within the protected area

- 7.1 Villager livelihoods
- 7.2 Agricultural practices
 - 7.2.1 Cassava
 - 7.2.2 Taro
 - 7.2.3 Other field and tree crops (coconuts, fruit trees, mahogany)
 - 7.2.4 Livestock (cattle, pigs, chickens)
 - 7.2.5 Fish aquaculture
- 7.3 Adequacy of agricultural lands
- 7.4 Utilization of forest habitats
 - 7.4.1 Leased logging
 - 7.4.2 Selective logging
 - 7.4.3 Fishing
 - 7.4.4 Utilization of Non-Timber Forest Products
 - 7.4.5 Fishing
 - 7.4.6 Hunting (pigs, pigeons)
- 7.5 Tourism Benefits

CHAPTER 8: Threats and constraints to the conservation of natural habitats within the protected area

- 8.1 Introduction
- 8.2 Direct threats to the natural habitats within the protected area
 - 8.2.1 Conflict analysis
 - 8.2.2 Habitat degradations

- 8.3 Causal factors
 - 8.3.1 Unsustainable resource-use patterns
 - 8.3.2 Limited economic opportunities for local community
 - 8.3.3 Weak control of settlements and immigration
 - 8.3.4 Poor public perception of the protected area
- 8.4 General constraints to effective conservation management of the protected area
 - 8.4.1 Lack of a policy and legal framework
 - 8.4.2 Poor definition of authority within the protected area
 - 8.4.3 Limited institutional capacities
 - 8.4.4 Demographic and social factors
 - 8.4.5 Interdependence of resource-use patterns

Part III: MANAGEMENT PRESCRIPTIONS

CHAPTER 9: Conservation strategy and protected area zoning: a framework for protected area management

- 9.1 Conservation management strategy
 - 9.1.1 Conceptual basis of management
 - 9.1.2 Approach and strategies
- 9.2 Regulatory framework
- 9.3 National policies for protected areas
- 9.4 Management policies for protected areas
 - 9.4.1 Sustainable (community-managed) logging practices
 - 9.4.2 Selective logging (non-commercial)
 - 9.4.3 Fishing
 - 9.4.4 Hunting
 - 9.4.5 Forest fires
 - 9.4.6 Collection of forest products
- 9.5 The protected area boundary and management of the buffer zones
 - 9.5.1 The protected area boundary
 - 9.5.2 Buffer areas
 - 9.5.3 Role for environmental assessment
- 9.6 The role for local communities

- 9.7 The protected area zoning scheme
 - 9.7.1 Principle components of the scheme
 - 9.7.2 Major characteristics of zones
- 9.8 Protected area community customary rules
 - 9.8.1 Development of community customary rules
 - 9.8.2 Amendment of the protected area community customary rules

CHAPTER 10: Zoning within the protected area

- 10.1 Introduction
- 10.2 Application and management of zones
 - 10.2.1 Sustainable (community-managed) logging zone
 - 10.2.2 Tourism development zone
 - 10.2.3 Watershed protection zone
 - 10.2.4 Conservation zone (for general biodiversity values)
 - 10.2.5 Special protection zone (for special biodiversity values)
 - 10.2.6 Buffer zone (outside protected area)

PART IV: MANAGEMENT ARRANGEMENTS AND PROGRAMME

CHAPTER 11: Protected area management arrangements

- 11.1 Management authority and responsibilities
 - 11.1.1 Local communities (mataqalis)
 - 11.1.2 Department of Forestry
- 11.2 Protected Area Advisory Committee
- 11.3 External support and relations
 - 11.3.1 Human Resource Development
 - 11.3.2 Departmental support

- 11.4 Financial mechanisms and support
 - 11.4.1 General considerations

CHAPTER 12: Overall programme of activities

- 12.1 Protected area development and development sub-programme
 - 12.1.1 Policy and law component
 - 12.1.2 Institutional strengthening component
 - 12.1.3 Management framework component
 - 12.1.4 Infrastructure component
 - 12.1.5 Office and field equipment component
 - 12.1.6 Impact assessment component
 - 12.1.7 Financial management component
 - 12.1.8 Biological research component
 - 12.1.9 Natural resource management component
- 12.2 Recreation and education sub-programme
 - 12.2.1 Infrastructure component
 - 12.2.2 Communication and education component
- 12.3 Community development sub-programme
 - 12.3.1 Demographic planning and social services component
 - 12.3.2 Participatory resource planning component
 - 12.3.3 Community communication component
 - 12.3.4 Agricultural enhancement component
 - 12.3.5 Economic diversification component
 - 12.3.6 Financial support component
 - 12.3.7 Local employment component
 - 12.3.8 Infrastructure component
- 12.4 Training activities
 - 12.4.1 Local communities
 - 12.4.2 Government staff
- 12.5 Work schedule
- 12.6 Partnerships
- 12.7 Monitoring and evaluation



BirdLife International is a global Partnership of more than 100 conservation organisations that strives to conserve birds, their habitats and global biodiversity, working with people towards sustainability in the use of natural resources.

By focusing on birds, and the sites and habitats on which they depend, the BirdLife Partnership is working to improve the quality of life for birds, for other wildlife (biodiversity) and for people.

The BirdLife International Pacific Partnership was initiated in 1999 and is the newest of BirdLife International's regions comprising a network of seven national NGOs in Australia, the Cook Islands, French Polynesia, New Caledonia, New Zealand, Palau and Samoa, with a country programme in Fiji.

BirdLife International identifies Important Bird Areas as internationally recognized sites vital for the conservation of birds using a standard set of globally applied scientific criteria. IBA designa-

tion has no legal basis but it provides strong scientific justification for the conservation of these areas and can lead to conservation action which supports local peoples need to maintain the site as it is, but undertake positive actions for the protection of the environment.

BirdLife International Fiji Programme has developed few community-declared protected areas within these IBAs in the hope to establish them as designate protected areas. Management planning for existing protected areas and such community conserved areas in Fiji is lacking and this manual hopes to improve the skills and knowledge of conservationists in adopting strategic actions towards the development of effective management plans.

Management Planning Guideline for Protected Areas in Fiji is a small yet helpful tool aimed at achieving effective management of protected areas in the hope of conserving Fiji's biodiversity for present and future generations.

