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## Tundi's Take: How Objectives-Oriented EBM Propels Us Away from Static, Formulaic Marine Management

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Management of anything at all - a business, a household (or, even harder, teenagers within a household), fisheries, or marine environments - is focused on achieving positive outcomes. That is stating the obvious. But conventional management, and even much of EBM today, focuses not on what can be achieved with management, but what is to be avoided.

That is, far too much marine management today aims to preserve the things being managed (a coral reef, a fishery, a stretch of coastal zone) or to abate the threats to those things (pollution and overuse, over-fishing, unsustainable development). This is usually done by tackling a single use at a time, and commonly according to standard formulae.

This static approach to meeting the challenges of our ever-increasing uses of and impacts on the marine environment has, sadly, not resulted in mostly positive outcomes. And the reflexive targeting of certain users as the "bad guys" that need to be controlled or denied access does even worse: it can create strong opposition to conservation and management that results in wasted effort and sometimes even very negative outcomes.

Objectives-oriented (OO) management takes stock of what needs protecting from overuse or environmental degradation, and it focuses on threats. The difference between more conventional management and OO EBM is that the myriad tools in the management toolkit - legislation and regulations, conflict resolution, spatial planning and zoning, surveillance and monitoring, enforcement and outreach to gain compliance, etc. - are all harnessed with very specific goals in mind.

The Canadian Department of Fisheries and Oceans defines objectives-based approach to management as:

"...essentially an outcomes oriented system that promotes management and use of marine areas and resources in a manner that addresses the multiple needs and expectations of society, without jeopardizing the options for future generations to benefit from the full range of goods and services provided by the ocean."

In practice, this means identifying the needs and expectations of society, along with developing an understanding of the systems that provide those goods and services, and how we come to negatively impact them.

Distinguishing between a focus on uses versus a focus on outcomes may seem like esoteric argument. However, there is significant divergence in the way management is planned and executed under these two different approaches.

A clear example of OO EBM being put into practice comes from the Great Barrier Reef (Australia). Last decade the rezoning of the vast and complex protected area was based on clearly articulated objectives, not on existing human uses. Had the Great Barrier Reef Marine Park Authority followed a conventional management process, they might have mapped existing uses, sought to restrict the most classically damaging uses (commercial fisheries, oil/gas operations) from as many areas as possible, and created a zoning plan according to their vision. In that case, the reason for the zoning would have been to maintain the status quo by restricting the most egregious uses, wherever they could achieve that. Instead, the new zoning system takes stock of both ecosystem attributes (which areas are the most ecologically critical) as well as the realized and potential values to society. Zoning is one of many tools that the planners use to achieve the collective vision for the Great Barrier Reef's future.

The countries of the EU and those of the Barcelona Convention (Mediterranean) are also adopting OO EBM as they define Good Environmental Status and the Ecological and Operational Objectives that will steer management toward EBM with maximum benefit.

A clear difference between this approach and conventional management is that OO EBM is more forward-thinking. In addition - and this may be the most critical distinction - OO management requires that planners and managers meaningfully reach out to stakeholders and to society at large to know what they are aiming for. This does not take the form of asking people to react to a plan. Rather it places stakeholders front and center in the development of that plan, and the very clear and precise articulation of what that plan is meant to achieve.

The indicators of management effectiveness are then not solely ecological, but include assessment of and perceptions about human well-being. This puts social science on par with natural science as a foundation for management. It also puts marine management squarely at the service of human society.

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