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EBM Toolbox: A new, short, and free primer on modern ocean management

Has having to figure out if you want to do management (EBM), integrated coastal zone management (ICZM), area based management (ABM), whole domain management (WDM), or marine spatial planning (MSP) got you down?

You are in luck. A [new paper published on OpenChannels.org](#) for policy makers, managers, and students provides a short history of ocean management, its conceptual foundations, modern frameworks for it, and numerous real world examples of how these concepts and frameworks are being applied.

Lead author Steven Katona, a former professor of biology and president at the College of the Atlantic and now managing director for the Ocean Health Index with Conservation International, initiated the project because he was confused by all the terms used in ocean management. He wanted to understand how they fit together. "I've always found that when I have a question, others do too, so I hoped that any insights I gained would be useful to others," says Katona.

The paper discusses concepts like sustainability, natural capital, and ecosystem services as well as initiatives such as Blue Economy, Large Marine Ecosystems, and Seascales. It covers similarities, differences, relationships, and synergies among these activities as well as the types of analytical tools useful for ocean governance and their availability (or lack thereof).

Vocabulary of ocean governance evolving

When asked why there has been such a proliferation of similar terms for ocean governance, Katona says the various terms reflect contributions from a variety of practitioners worldwide over the course of two decades or more. "Some are refinements of previous terms (e.g., DPSIR to DAPSI(W)R)," he says. "People from different places may use different terms for the same thing – e.g., 'measures' in EU countries are 'responses' or 'actions' elsewhere. Other new terms highlight particular circumstances, approaches or nuances. The situation is a microcosm of what we see in English, where new words steadily emerge, others go out of style, and the language constantly develops to suit new needs and environments. In similar fashion, the vocabulary of ocean governance is likely to keep evolving even as the EBM foundation remains relatively constant."

And if EBM really is the foundation for progressive ocean management these days, why are we hearing relatively little about it in the news and literature, particularly compared to a decade ago? Katona believes that EBM has indeed become established as the central organizing principle for managing socioecological systems and the discussion has now shifted to *how* to implement it – hence the discussion of topics such as marine spatial planning, adaptive management, dynamic management, and other tools for curating ecosystem services. "It's a little like baseball," he says. "The general concepts and fundamentals of the game are well established and not discussed often. But there is constant attention to new strategies and techniques for playing it better in different situations."

"Navigating the seascape of ocean management: waypoints on the voyage toward sustainable use" is available [here for free download or online reading](#).

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