



May 26, 2016

Focal Area: Science and Monitoring  
Participants: PICRC- Dr. Yimnang Golbuu, Dr. Alan Friedlander, Dan Mayer and Steven Lindfield  
PCS facilitating team- Umai Basilius and Fabio Siksei  
Date/time/venue: 5/25/2016; 9:00am to 10:00am; PCS conference room

### **General Project Overview:**

PCS is working with the PNMS Office to facilitate the drafting of a Strategic Plan to guide implementation of Palau's National Marine Sanctuary. These efforts include identification of vision, goals, strategies, objectives and actions for the PNMS based on the following identified focal areas:

- Sustainable Finance
- Surveillance and Enforcement
- Fisheries and Food Security
- Science and Monitoring
- Tourism and Marketing
- Awareness and Outreach

A previous planning exercise held in January of 2016 consisted of technical experts from the focal areas who worked to develop a vision, goals, outcomes and some key activities for the PNMS strategic plan. The meeting was facilitated by Trina Leberer of the Nature Conservancy. Planning participants included: Steven Victor, Ben Fennel, Trina Leberer, Sahar Hanser, Ileberang Olkeriil, Larry Goddard, Yimnang Golbuu, Asterio Takeshi, Marine Guezo, Steven Lindfield, Lotus Vermeer, Rachel Dimitruk, Lolita Gibbons-Decherong, Clarinda Ziegler, Nanae Singeo, Noah Idechong, Victor Remengesau, Yvonne Ueda, Darren Fritz, Min. Umiich Sengebau, Keobel Sakuma, Ann Singeo, Surech Hideyos, Jen Koskelin-Gibbons.

At that first meeting the participants identified five key areas with which the PNMS strategic plan would focus. They are the focal areas reflected above with the tourism and marketing and awareness and outreach components collapsed into one focal area. Currently the PNMS strategic plan will be focused around six focal areas.

**Current plan status:** Draft goals, objectives/outcomes and associated key actions have been developed for five focal areas. The Awareness and Outreach focal area needs to have goals, objectives and actions developed.

### **Science- Monitoring**

Purpose of meeting was to discuss and further develop the Science and Monitoring goals, objectives, outcomes and key actions. The following are discussion items and associated decisions resulting from the meeting.



**Discussion item #1:** Discussion centered on a research agenda that is utilized by the Big Ocean Network. It is straight forward and is a good model for the Palau National Marine Sanctuary.

**Decision:** The PNMS Science and Monitoring component will adopt the research agenda framework utilized by the Big Ocean network which is focused on filling in scientific knowledge gaps that exist in large marine protected areas/large marine ecosystems. To this end the Science and Monitoring component will focus on the development of a science plan that will enable the:

- Biological and ecological characterization of the PNMS and
- Describe Connectivity of biological and ecological systems in the PNMS,
- Describe Climate change impacts and,
- Describe other anthropogenic impacts (invasive species, fisheries effects, marine debris).

The Science and Monitoring component of the PNMS strategic plan will adopt the Big Ocean Framework as a base and add on to it to reflect the unique circumstances of the Palau National Marine Sanctuary.

**Discussion Item #2:** Focused on the draft objectives and key actions. For the most part the ones that had been developed were sufficient. However, they needed to be strengthened and the presumption is that strengthening would come over the course of the planning engagement. However, it was agreed that there were key outcomes that were missing, most notably outcomes on data management arising from the science and monitoring work in the PNMS as well as outcomes around human benefits.

**Decision:** Four focal area objectives to be developed with associated outcomes and actions were identified. They are as follows:

1. Development of science plan
2. Identification of mechanism to implement science plan
3. Integrate a human dimensions component into the science and monitoring focal area
4. Establish a PNMS database, explore data management link with the CB2 project being implemented at PALARIS

**Discussion Item #3:** Identification of key actions and mechanisms necessary to ensure successful implementation of the PNMS. These do not necessarily pertain to the Science and Monitoring focal area they also relate to the entire strategic plan and its implementation.

**Recommendations:**



- Ensure alignment of mandates of the line agencies in the MNRET, MOJ and MOF and others who have a stake in the implementation of the PNMS. These agencies should undergo a mandate update/revision to reflect PNMS objectives and their attainment.
- Sign MOU between oceanic fisheries and other agencies/organizations and PNMS for data sharing. Data collection, analysis and reporting is weak across all sectors and every effort must be made to ensure that PNMS management has a robust data management system in place.
- Need to identify the government agencies, civil society organizations and private sector organizations that have a direct stake or role in the PNMS and its implementation. We need to document their role in the PNMS and how that role is teased out or delineated from their specific agency mandate or organizational mission so that we can identify their entry point into the PNMS management.
- To ensure efficient PNMS implementation a mechanisms for coordination and collaboration is needed. The PNMS office should be the focal point in charge of coordinating the various implementation efforts. PNMS management should be a collaborative effort. Co-management, should be flexible, and have productive meetings, Use time wisely. It may be necessary to have triggers, which will help us engage specific partners for inclusion into management actions.
- PNMS should have a chief scientist who will be dedicated to PNMS science and monitoring work. Some of the actions undertaken by the scientist will include identification and filling of knowledge gaps, setting science agenda, and coordinating research efforts.
- Ideally we should have a PNMS Science advisory board to provide guidance and feedback. However, it is noted that this is a very expensive undertaking and funding needs to be secured. Maybe we can look at regional initiatives to fund this. Palau will be participating in a regional (ROP, FSM and RMI) shark sanctuary initiative. Maybe this initiative can support a science advisory board and that board can review PNMS research and monitoring activities.

### **Strategic Planning Next Steps:**

We anticipate that PCS's contract with PICRC will be signed soon and so that we can begin fully committing effort and associated resources to this planning process. We will undertake the following activities as we wait for the paperwork to be finalized:

1. Conduct a desktop review of all PNMS related documents
2. Conduct a desktop review of large marine ecosystem protected areas. (Dr. Friedlander recommended looking at the Kiribati and Cook Island plans as a starting point) to build our understanding of the various management options, challenges and benefits of these protected areas.
3. We would like to attend the June 10<sup>th</sup> PNMS Executive Committee meeting so that we can document the awareness and outreach discussions to inform plan development.

And finally, after the signing of the PNMS planning contract, we would like to engage in smaller group discussions with key people from the focal area sectors to further develop the strategies (goals and objectives etc.) to roll out the work plan for the PNMS strategic plan development project.

