

Finance Tools for Coral Reef Conservation: A Training Guide

Special Use Permits

Developed by the Conservation Finance Alliance and Wildlife Conservation Society for the International Coral Reef Initiative

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Special Use Permits - Overview

- Definition: “Permits or fees for activities that provide a benefit to an individual, group, or organization seeking access to and use of MPA resources, in contrast to activities that benefit visitors or the public at large” (MPAFAC, 2017)
- Value: Ability to charge for special values of sites in MPA. Examples of uses
 - Scientific Research
 - Filming
 - Education
 - Other activities requiring specific access to targeted areas
- Economic Model: User pays for access to resources. Always strong conditionality, e.g. one time use or restrictions to specific zones within an MPA

Special Use Permits – How does it work?

- Collecting Fees

- Potential users (e.g. universities, film production studios etc.) may approach the MPA, or the MPA may also market its potential for such uses and approach potential users directly

- Pros

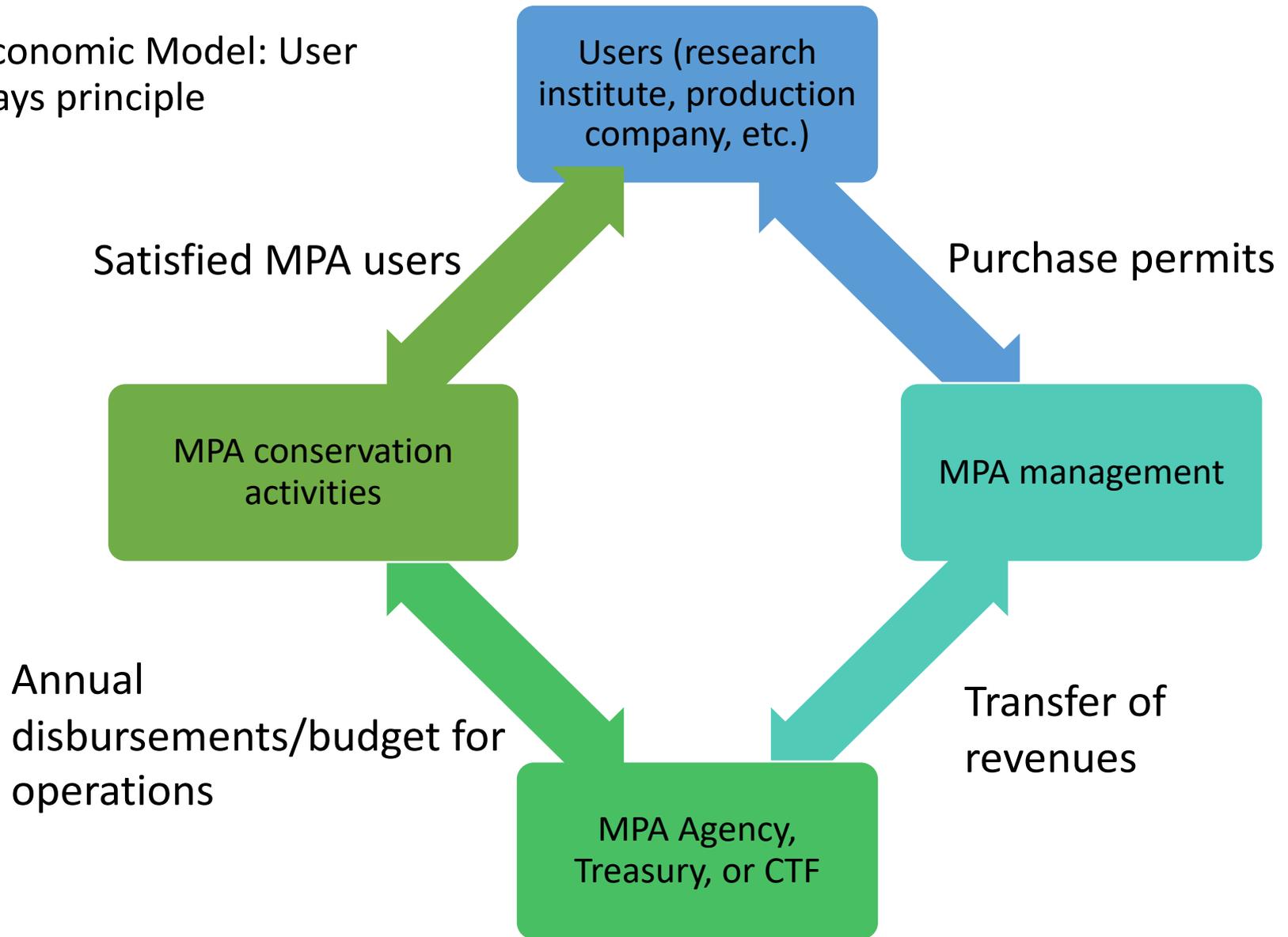
- Like entrance/activity fees, use permits are a direct form of payment collected by the PA
- Can provide significant amounts of funding depending on site characteristics

- Cons

- Also like entrance/activity fees, income from permits may be collected by the government and routed to different uses
- Not a consistent source of finance – one time sales

Special Use Permits

Economic Model: User pays principle



Special Use Permits – Conservation Activity Relevance

- Special use permits provide income to support the creation, development, and management of MPAs
- Can support sustainable fisheries and tourism as well
- Special uses are generally very low impact, and allow PAs to gain supplementary revenue to complement other sources like entry fees,
- May be a source of revenue for highly sensitive or protected areas where even eco-tourism is restricted.

Special Use Permits - Stakeholders

- Government
- MPA Authority
- Users: Research institutions, film production companies, or other “special users”
- MPA employees
- Local communities supporting special uses

Special Use Permits – Feasibility Assessment

- Does the site have certain marketable characteristics relevant to potential users? (e.g. high biodiversity for researchers, charismatic megafauna for film & photography, etc.)
- Is there proper oversight to ensure that the site is not being damaged from permitted uses?
- Is the MPA allowed to retain at least part of the income from permits?
- Is there private sector engagement through established industries?

Special Use Permits – Revenue potential

- The revenue can vary depending on the types of private entities being granted access, the type of use, and how regularly permits can be distributed.
 - E.g. Industries like film production or pharmaceutical research may pay higher fees than research universities.
- Examples of revenues of Special Use Permits:
 - Tanzania Marine Parks and Reserves. Commercial filming permits cost \$1,180 and grants access for up to 7 days.
 - Malpelo Sanctuary, Colombia, earned ~\$1,500 in fees for filming in 2018, but less than \$100 the year before
 - Seychelles Islands Foundation charges a 5000 Euro photography/filming fee for professional photographers/journalists visiting Aldabra Island, on top of entry fee of 225 Euros