

NOAA Coral Reef Conservation Program

MPA Management Assessment Checklist

Instructions: Please ask participants to bring a copy of their MPA management plan, the 2014 assessment for their MPA, and to review the CRCP project and product information provided by the CRCP Liaison before the reassessment interview. Also, please review the informational two-pager describing the intended purpose and use of the MPA Checklist provided in [Appendix A](#).

MPA management capacity assessment questionnaire:

Please note that this is not an evaluation of your performance or of the effectiveness of the MPA being assessed. This is simply a tool that seeks to clarify the areas in which additional support and investment may be needed to enhance management capacity at the MPA, thereby increasing the likelihood of effective MPA implementation. We would like to ask you some questions about how **you** assess the **current capacity** for marine protected area management at the site(s) you represent.

For each management capacity area included in the assessment, three levels or tiers of capacity are presented. Tier one represents the lowest level of capacity for each area and tier three represents the highest. Please select between the available options.

If you need clarification about any questions or answer options, please ask the assessment facilitator for more information. You can refer to the last assessment from 2014 if you wish to compare your current assessment with your previous responses.

Background Information:

Name of MPA site & jurisdiction		
Date of 2017 assessment		
Interview Type (circle one): Initial assessment or Re-evaluation		
Name of CRCP Interviewer		
Name and organization of MPA Manager		
Contact information for MPA Manager		
Please list the personnel representing the MPA site who are taking part in this 2017 MPA management capacity assessment		
Name	Organization	Contact
Are the MPA representative(s) participating in the 2017 assessment the same that participated in the 2011 or 2014 assessment?		<input type="checkbox"/> Yes, all <input type="checkbox"/> Yes, some <input type="checkbox"/> No <input type="checkbox"/> Not sure/No answer

Are there other local or national agencies or organizations with authority/influence that impact your ability to achieve the goals and objectives of the MPA?

☐ Yes If yes, please list them and explain their relationship with the MPA

Organization	Relationship

☐ No

☐ Not sure/ no answer

Are there any other organizations that currently support the site? i.e. funding, training, technical assistance

☐ Yes If yes, please list organizations that provide significant support to the MPA and explain how they support the site

Organization	Support

☐ No

☐ Not sure/ no answer

Is the site associated with a network of MPAs or is it part of an ecological MPA network?

☐ Yes

☐ No

☐ Not sure/ no answer

If yes, has it been designed to support network goals and management objectives?

☐ Yes

☐ No

☐ Not sure/ no answer

If yes, is site management coordinated with other sites across the ecological network?

☐ Yes

☐ No

☐ Not sure/ no answer

Does the site have a conflict resolution mechanism if needed?

☐ Yes If yes, please describe

☐ No

☐ Not sure/ no answer

Quick Links to Assessment Areas

1. Management Planning
2. Governance
3. On-Site Management
4. Enforcement
5. Boundaries
6. Biophysical Monitoring
7. Socioeconomic Monitoring
8. MPA Effectiveness Evaluation and Adaptive Management
9. Stakeholder Engagement
10. Financing
11. Outreach and Education
12. Resilience to Climate Change
13. Communicating Economic Value
14. Fisheries Management
15. Pollution Impacts (land-based or marine)
16. Sustainable Tourism
17. Response to Disturbance Events
18. Organizational Management
19. Partnerships and Coordination

MPA Management Assessment Area 1: Management Planning

- Tier 1** ☐ Little or no management activity being implemented, and no management plan in place
- Tier 2** ☐ Some management activity being implemented and management plan developed
- Tier 3** ☐ Approved management plan that is being implemented

Site Specific Comments and Information on Management Planning:

What is your reason(s) for selecting that tier?

What are your challenges or needs to increase management capacity and move to a higher tier? If funding is the main challenge, for what would you use the funds?

If Tier 2 or Tier 3: Do the MPA management plan objectives reflect the site designation purpose?

☐ Yes

☐ No

☐ Not sure/ no answer

Has capacity changed for this topic in past 3 years?

☐ Yes, increased If yes, please explain how

☐ Yes, decreased If yes, please explain how

☐ No

☐ Not sure/ no answer

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MPA Management Assessment Area 2: Governance

- Tier 1** ☐ Site has been legally established or is under equivalent customary tenure or other form of community-based protection status, but there are few or no official or community based rules and regulations in place supporting the MPA and its management plan
- Tier 2** ☐ Laws or customary instruments for the establishment of the MPA are in place, and official or community based rules or regulations governing some specific activities within the MPA are also in place
- Tier 3** ☐ Clearly defined laws or customary instruments and official or community based rules and regulations governing all specific activities included in the objectives of the site management plan are in place

Site Specific Comments and Information on Governance:

What is your reason(s) for selecting that tier?

What are your challenges or needs to increase management capacity and move to a higher tier? If funding is the main challenge, for what would you use the funds?

Has capacity changed for this topic in past 3 years?

☐ Yes, increased If yes, please explain how

☐ Yes, decreased If yes, please explain how

☐ No

☐ Not sure/ no answer

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MPA Management Assessment Area 3: On-Site Management

- Tier 1** ☐ No management personnel assigned to site and/or little or no formalized community oversight
- Tier 2** ☐ Some management personnel assigned to site or some formalized community oversight
- Tier 3** ☐ Full-time site manager and programmatic personnel assigned to site or local community based management leader in place that has been formally designated and accepted and is able to dedicate sufficient time to the management of the site

Site Specific Comments and Information on On-Site Management:

What is your reason(s) for selecting that tier?

What are your challenges or needs to increase management capacity and move to a higher tier? If funding is the main challenge, for what would you use the funds?

Has capacity changed for this topic in past 3 years?

☐ Yes, increased If yes, please explain how

☐ Yes, decreased If yes, please explain how

☐ No

☐ Not sure/ no answer

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MPA Management Assessment Area 4: Enforcement

Tier 1 ☐ Little or no enforcement of existing rules and regulations

Tier 2 ☐ Inconsistent enforcement of rules and regulations

Tier 3 ☐ Active and consistent enforcement of rules and regulations

Site Specific Comments and Information on Enforcement:

What is your reason(s) for selecting that tier?

What are your challenges or needs to increase management capacity and move to a higher tier? If funding is the main challenge, for what would you use the funds?

Has capacity changed for this topic in past 3 years?

☐ Yes, increased If yes, please explain how

☐ Yes, decreased If yes, please explain how

☐ No

☐ Not sure/ no answer

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MPA Management Assessment Area 5: Boundaries

- Tier 1** ☐ Lack of clearly defined boundaries and/or zones
- Tier 2** ☐ Clearly defined boundaries and/or zones
- Tier 3** ☐ Clearly defined boundaries and zones and information on boundary locations and permitted activities in various zones (if applicable) provided to public and MPA stakeholders

Site Specific Comments and Information on Boundaries:

What is your reason(s) for selecting that tier?

What are your challenges or needs to increase management capacity and move to a higher tier? If funding is the main challenge, for what would you use the funds?

Has capacity changed for this topic in past 3 years?

☐ Yes, increased If yes, please explain how

☐ Yes, decreased If yes, please explain how

☐ No

☐ Not sure/ no answer

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MPA Management Assessment Area 6: Biophysical Monitoring

- Tier 1** ☐ Little or no existing biophysical monitoring activity
- Tier 2** ☐ Existing biophysical monitoring program but data not being used to inform management
- Tier 3** ☐ Data produced from biophysical monitoring program being evaluated and used to inform management decisions

Site Specific Comments and Information on Biophysical Monitoring:

What is your reason(s) for selecting that tier?

What are your challenges or needs to increase management capacity and move to a higher tier? If funding is the main challenge, for what would you use the funds?

If Tier 2 or Tier 3: Does your monitoring program measure progress towards meeting the MPAs management objectives?

☐ Yes

☐ No

☐ Not sure/ no answer

If Tier 2 or Tier 3: What do you monitor and what methodologies do you use?

What does the MPA monitor?

What is monitoring method?

Has capacity changed for this topic in past 3 years?

☐ Yes,
increased

If yes, please explain how

☐ Yes,
decreased

If yes, please explain how

☐ No

☐ Not sure/ no answer

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MPA Management Assessment Area 7: Socioeconomic Monitoring

- Tier 1** ☐ Little or no existing socioeconomic monitoring activity
- Tier 2** ☐ Existing socioeconomic monitoring program but data not being used to inform management
- Tier 3** ☐ Data produced from socioeconomic monitoring program being evaluated and used to inform management decisions

Site Specific Comments and Information on Socioeconomic Monitoring:

What is your reason(s) for selecting that tier?

What are your challenges or needs to increase management capacity and move to a higher tier? If funding is the main challenge, for what would you use the funds?

If Tier 2 or Tier 3: Does your monitoring program measure progress towards meeting the MPAs management objectives?

☐ Yes

☐ No

☐ Not sure/ no answer

If Tier 2 or Tier 3: What do you monitor and what methodologies do you use?

What does the MPA monitor?

What is monitoring method?

Has capacity changed for this topic in past 3 years?

☐ Yes,
increased

If yes, please explain how

☐ Yes,
decreased

If yes, please explain how

☐ No

☐ Not sure/ no answer

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MPA Management Assessment Area 8: MPA Effectiveness Evaluation and Adaptive Management

- Tier 1** ☐ Little or no evaluation of MPA effectiveness
- Tier 2** ☐ MPA effectiveness evaluated but no ongoing effectiveness monitoring and evaluation program in place
- Tier 3** ☐ MPA effectiveness evaluated and effectiveness monitoring and evaluation program in place with findings being applied to adapt management strategies

Site Specific Comments and Information on MPA Effectiveness Evaluation and Adaptive Management:

What is your reason(s) for selecting that tier?

What are your challenges or needs to increase management capacity and move to a higher tier? If funding is the main challenge, for what would you use the funds?

If Tier 2 or Tier 3: Does your MPA use a standard effectiveness monitoring methodology?

☐ Yes If yes, what methodology does your MPA use?

☐ No

☐ Not sure/ no answer

Has capacity changed for this topic in past 3 years?

☐ Yes, increased If yes, please explain how

☐ Yes, decreased If yes, please explain how

☐ No

☐ Not sure/ no answer

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MPA Management Assessment Area 9: Stakeholder Engagement

- Tier 1** ☐ Little or no community or stakeholder engagement
- Tier 2** ☐ Some community and stakeholder engagement in some but not in all aspects of MPA management
- Tier 3** ☐ Community and stakeholder engagement in implementation of site management efforts

Site Specific Comments and Information on Stakeholder Engagement:

What is your reason(s) for selecting that tier?

What are your challenges or needs to increase management capacity and move to a higher tier? If funding is the main challenge, for what would you use the funds?

Has capacity changed for this topic in past 3 years?

☐ Yes, increased If yes, please explain how

☐ Yes, decreased If yes, please explain how

☐ No

☐ Not sure/ no answer

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MPA Management Assessment Area 10: Financing

- Tier 1** ☐ Little or no reliable source of funding identified to support management activities
- Tier 2** ☐ Existing funding for management activities
- Tier 3** ☐ Sustainable finance plan being implemented that provides long term sustainable funding mechanisms

Site Specific Comments and Information on Financing:

What is your reason(s) for selecting that tier?

What are your challenges or needs to increase management capacity and move to a higher tier? If funding is the main challenge, for what would you use the funds?

Has capacity changed for this topic in past 3 years?

☐ Yes, increased If yes, please explain how

☐ Yes, decreased If yes, please explain how

☐ No

☐ Not sure/ no answer

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MPA Management Assessment Area 11: Outreach and Education

- Tier 1** ☐ Little or no ongoing outreach and education activities exist
- Tier 2** ☐ Ongoing outreach and education activities in support of the MPA
- Tier 3** ☐ Existence of an outreach and education program with various activities and strategies focused on the MPA that helps achieve the MPA's goals and objectives

Site Specific Comments and Information on Outreach and Education:

What is your reason(s) for selecting that tier?

What are your challenges or needs to increase management capacity and move to a higher tier? If funding is the main challenge, for what would you use the funds?

If Tier 2 or Tier 3: Does your outreach/education program focus on a specific audience?

☐ Yes If yes, which audience(s)?

☐ No

☐ Not sure/ no answer

Does your Education and Outreach program include social marketing approaches?

☐ Yes If yes, please describe

☐ No

☐ If No, is this an approach you'd like to learn more about?

Has capacity changed for this topic in past 3 years?

☐ Yes, increased If yes, please explain how

☐ Yes, decreased If yes, please explain how

☐ No

☐ Not sure/ no answer

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MPA Management Assessment Area 12: Resilience to Climate Change

- Tier 1** ☐ Little or no consideration of climate change resilience in the management of the MPA.
- Tier 2** ☐ Climate change considerations incorporated into management planning of the MPA
- Tier 3** ☐ Climate change adaptation plans, response plans or climate elements of management plans implemented

Site Specific Comments and Information on Resilience to Climate Change:

What is your reason(s) for selecting that tier?

What are your challenges or needs to increase management capacity and move to a higher tier? If funding is the main challenge, for what would you use the funds?

Has capacity changed for this topic in past 3 years?

☐ Yes, increased If yes, please explain how

☐ Yes, decreased If yes, please explain how

☐ No

☐ Not sure/ no answer

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MPA Management Assessment Area 13: Communicating Economic Value

- Tier 1** ☐ Economic value of the MPA's natural resources not been assessed
- Tier 2** ☐ Economic value of the MPA's natural resources has been assessed but not used in targeted communications with decision makers
- Tier 3** ☐ Economic value of the MPA's natural resources has been assessed and is used in targeted communications with decision makers to build support for the MPA

Site Specific Comments and Information on Communicating Economic Value:

What is your reason(s) for selecting that tier?

What are your challenges or needs to increase management capacity and move to a higher tier? If funding is the main challenge, for what would you use the funds?

Has capacity changed for this topic in past 3 years?

- | | |
|--|----------------------------|
| <input type="checkbox"/> Yes, increased | If yes, please explain how |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Yes, decreased | If yes, please explain how |
| <input type="checkbox"/> No | |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Not sure/ no answer | |

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MPA Management Assessment Area 14: Fisheries Management

- Tier 1** ☐ No site-specific fisheries assessment has been conducted
- Tier 2** ☐ Site-specific fisheries assessment has been conducted but no fisheries management actions are being implemented in the MPA
- Tier 3** ☐ Site-specific fisheries regulations have been implemented as a result of fisheries assessments

Site Specific Comments and Information on Fisheries Management:

What is your reason(s) for selecting that tier?	
What are your challenges or needs to increase management capacity and move to a higher tier? If funding is the main challenge, for what would you use the funds?	
If Tier 2 or Tier 3: What fisheries do you assess and what methodologies do you use?	
What fisheries have been assessed?	What is assessment method?
Has capacity changed for this topic in past 3 years?	
<input type="checkbox"/> Yes, increased	If yes, please explain how
<input type="checkbox"/> Yes, decreased	If yes, please explain how
<input type="checkbox"/> No	
<input type="checkbox"/> Not sure/ no answer	

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MPA Management Assessment Area 15: Pollution Impacts (land-based or marine)

Tier 1 ☐ Assessments of pollution affecting the MPA have not been conducted

Tier 2 ☐ Major sources of pollution and proposed management actions to control them have been identified but are not being addressed

Tier 3 ☐ Targeted actions for pollution control are being implemented

Site Specific Comments and Information on Pollution Impacts:

What is your reason(s) for selecting that tier?

What are your challenges or needs to increase management capacity and move to a higher tier? If funding is the main challenge, for what would you use the funds?

Has capacity changed for this topic in past 3 years?

☐ Yes, increased If yes, please explain how

☐ Yes, decreased If yes, please explain how

☐ No

☐ Not sure/ no answer

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MPA Management Assessment Area 16: Sustainable Tourism

- Tier 1** ☐ Tourism activities are not managed in the MPA
- Tier 2** ☐ A sustainable tourism assessment and/or plan has been developed but is not being implemented
- Tier 3** ☐ Tourism activities in the MPA are managed and conducted according to a sustainable tourism plan or the MPA management plan

Site Specific Comments and Information on Sustainable Tourism:

What is your reason(s) for selecting that tier?

What are your challenges or needs to increase management capacity and move to a higher tier? If funding is the main challenge, for what would you use the funds?

Has capacity changed for this topic in past 3 years?

☐ Yes, increased If yes, please explain how

☐ Yes, decreased If yes, please explain how

☐ No

☐ Not sure/ no answer

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MPA Management Assessment Area 17: Response to Disturbance Events

- Tier 1** ☐ Little or no consideration of response to disturbance events in the management of the MPA
- Tier 2** ☐ Response plan(s) developed for the MPA
- Tier 3** ☐ Response plan(s) being implemented with resources, technical capacity and infrastructure available to respond

Site Specific Comments and Information on Response to Disturbance Events:

What is your reason(s) for selecting that tier?

What are your challenges or needs to increase management capacity and move to a higher tier? If funding is the main challenge, for what would you use the funds?

Has capacity changed for this topic in past 3 years?

☐ Yes, increased If yes, please explain how

☐ Yes, decreased If yes, please explain how

☐ No

☐ Not sure/ no answer

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MPA Management Assessment Area 18: Organizational Management

- Tier 1** ☐ The MPA staff complement is very limited and/or staff has inadequate skills and knowledge to effectively carry out management
- Tier 2** ☐ The MPA staff complement is inconsistent in numbers, skills and/or knowledge to effectively carry out management
- Tier 3** ☐ The MPA staff complement is adequate and has proper skills and knowledge to effectively carry out management

Site Specific Comments and Information on Organizational Management:

What is your reason(s) for selecting that tier?

What are your challenges or needs to increase management capacity and move to a higher tier? If funding is the main challenge, for what would you use the funds?

Are there training and/or professional development opportunities for the MPA staff?

☐ Yes If yes, please specify

☐ No

☐ Not sure/ no answer

Has capacity changed for this topic in past 3 years?

☐ Yes, increased If yes, please explain how

☐ Yes, decreased If yes, please explain how

☐ No

☐ Not sure/ no answer

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MPA Management Assessment Area 19: Partnerships and Coordination

- Tier 1** ☐ One agency managing the site with little or no coordination with other pertinent agencies or organizations
- Tier 2** ☐ Informal partnerships/coordination with agencies or organizations who support MPA management activities (e.g. outreach, monitoring)
- Tier 3** ☐ Formal partnerships/coordination with the relevant agencies and organizations

Site Specific Comments and Information on Partnerships and Coordination:

What is your reason(s) for selecting that tier?

What are your challenges or needs to increase management capacity and move to a higher tier? If funding is the main challenge, for what would you use the funds?

Has capacity changed for this topic in past 3 years?

☐ Yes, increased If yes, please explain how

☐ Yes, decreased If yes, please explain how

☐ No

☐ Not sure/ no answer

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For all sites: Based on the management capacity assessment areas, what are the **top three capacity building priorities for the MPA for the next 3 years?** Please mark #1, #2 and #3

Only one answer is possible in each column

	Management Planning
	Governance
	On-site Management
	Enforcement
	Boundaries
	Biophysical Monitoring
	Socioeconomic Monitoring
	MPA Effectiveness Evaluation and Adaptive Management
	Stakeholder Engagement
	Financing
	Outreach and Education
	Resilience to Climate Change
	Communicating Economic Value
	Fisheries Management
	Pollution Impacts
	Sustainable Tourism
	Response to Disturbance Events
	Organizational Management
	Partnerships and Coordination

Which **capacity building approaches** best address your top three capacity building priorities for the MPA **for the next 3 years?** Please rank them where #1 is the most important.

Only one answer is possible in each column

	Training
	Technical support
	Learning exchanges
	Higher education courses
	More staff
	Professional networking
	Other, please specify

MPA Management Assessment Score Card

(check tier that applies to each assessment area; green boxes indicate target tiers)

MPA Site Name & Jurisdiction:

Interview Date:

CRCP Staff Interviewer:

Interview Participants:

Assessment Area	Tier 1	Tier 2	Tier 3
1. Management Planning			
2. Governance			
3. On-site Management			
4. Enforcement			
5. Boundaries			
6. Biophysical Monitoring			
7. Socioeconomic Monitoring			
8. MPA Effectiveness Evaluation			
9. Stakeholder Engagement			
10. Financing			
11. Outreach and Education			
12. Resilience to Climate Change			
13. Communicating Economic Value			
14. Fisheries Management			
15. Pollution Impacts			
16. Sustainable Tourism			
17. Response to Disturbance Events			
18. Organizational Management			
19. Partnerships and Coordination			

Score:

NOAA Coral Reef Conservation Program MPA Management Assessment Checklist

Evaluating the current status of marine protected area (MPA) implementation and management can lead to improved MPA effectiveness and performance. Strengthening MPA management to conserve coral reef resources remains a pillar of NOAA's Coral Reef Conservation Program (CRCP) efforts both domestically and internationally (http://coralreef.noaa.gov/conservation/resources/3threats_go.pdf). With its focus on conservation of coral reefs and the human communities that depend upon them, a priority goal of the CRCP is to support effective implementation and management of marine protected areas (MPAs) and ecological networks of MPAs that protect key coral reef ecosystem components and functions. This MPA Management Assessment Checklist was developed as a simple tool to assess the management of MPAs in priority coral reef sites in U.S. jurisdictions and internationally, areas important to the CRCP and jurisdictional partners. This checklist will allow the CRCP to better understand the needs of its partners in the MPA management community and help managers build and/or maintain the management capacity necessary for successful implementation of their MPA management goals and objectives.

The information gathered for the MPAs, collected through interviews with site managers, will provide insight into management strengths and needs. With this information, the CRCP can make more informed decisions about where to strategically invest limited resources to address priority MPA management capacity gaps. Additionally this will provide a transparent process to the resource managers responsible for MPA management. Managers will then have the information needed to request funding, technical support, and other forms of assistance through targeted proposals to the CRCP and other funders, thereby increasing the capacity of partners in the management community to effectively conserve their coral reef resources.

This tool will also be used to track the performance of the CRCP at addressing the management needs identified using the checklist. Through initial assessments and periodic re-evaluations, the CRCP will track incremental progress made at MPA sites and identify new or emerging issues that may impede management success. The CRCP will compile and report on this progress through a NOAA performance measure - therefore, the performance of the CRCP will be tied to the overall management effectiveness of the MPAs that it strives to support.

The checklist includes nineteen assessment areas that are key components of a successful MPA management program: management planning, governance, on-site management, enforcement, boundaries, biophysical monitoring, socioeconomic monitoring, MPA effectiveness evaluation and adaptive management, stakeholder engagement, financing, outreach and education, planning for resilience to climate change, communicating economic

value, fisheries management, pollution impacts, sustainable tourism, response to disturbance events, organizational management, and partnerships and coordination.

Assessment Criteria

In order to be eligible for assessment an MPA site needs to:

- Be located in one of the priority geographic areas as identified by the CRCP (Domestic priorities include: American Samoa, the Commonwealth of the Northern Mariana Islands, Guam, Hawaii, Flower Garden Banks, Florida (Martin County to the Dry Tortugas), Puerto Rico, and the U.S. Virgin Islands. International priorities include jurisdictions located in the following four regions: the Wider Caribbean, Micronesia, Samoa and the Southwest Pacific, and the Coral Triangle.)
- Be a legally established MPA recognized by appropriate government authority or under equivalent customary tenure or other form of community-based protection status
- Have some ongoing management activity

Three tiers of management activity are defined and presented under each assessment area. The NOAA CRCP seeks to apply this assessment tool to eligible MPA sites in priority geographic areas and to improve management capacity by providing funding and technical assistance to help MPA managers progress from tier one activity towards tier two and tier three management activity in each of these nineteen assessment areas.