



Protecting Blue Horizons

The public official

One possible scenario: Along the western coast of an island in a temperate Sea, a species rich ecosystem needs urgent protection. As a result, also the octopus population, a commercially important species for the local fishers can recover. Overfishing, particularly from destructive bottom trawling, pollution and invasive species, strain the ecosystems. In order to protect fish and octopus nursery areas and allow the juvenile individuals to grow, a Marine Protected Area (MPA) is being planned.

NB Another scenario can be chosen for all to fit your context better, applicable to all. See fictional map or use a map of a coastal area close by to help visualise the conflict areas between different interests.

MPAs are geographically distinct zones which aim at safeguarding the biodiversity through habitat protection, maintaining marine ecosystem healthy or restore them to a healthy state for the supply of ecosystem products and services. They are fundamental because they help to release the pressure on the habitats and on the species. Indeed, many human activities and all the phenomena linked to the climate change put a huge pressure on ecosystems.

Imagine being the mayor or a high-ranking regional official with a say in where the planned MPA is to be located and what types of permits and licenses will be issued in and around the area for economic and recreational activities.

You want to position your town or region as a pioneer in marine protection to attract funding from the European Mission 'Restore our Ocean and Rivers' (if outside of Europe, replace with what applies locally). You welcome the opportunity to attract a marine wind farm to your area for the investment and secure access to electricity. At the same time, you do not want to make negative headlines in national and international newspapers for allowing all former activities in the area which should become protected. You also can not afford to break ties with some well connected investors in your area who wish to have as little conditioning as possible and would prefer more coastal infrastructure from which they expect hefty profits.

For you it's a balancing act to steer your town's/region's policy between these often opposing interests without losing the opportunities expected from a pioneering role of a green/blue economy that should generate more fiscal returns to meet the needs for public services and mitigate any temporary hardship for the weaker parts of your constituency.