Project Update: January 2020

It is important to start this report by giving a brief explanation of the socio-political detonation that has suffered the country in the last months and how this external situation has altered some internal scheduled agendas. First, Chilean society strongly criticised the whole neo-liberalism model that has been implemented since Pinochet's´ dictatorship, and in consequence of more than 30 years of unfairness and inequality. Secondly, the authorities rejected the reactions of society to those abuses and many of the disturbances have ended up with systematic human rights violations. Therefore, the complex situation that the country has faced has produced some consequences and producing some delays on our deliverables. Nonetheless, as an organisation we haven't been affected and our contributions have been valued and considered key for social justice system.

Since we received the grant, we have conducted several meetings in diverse territories providing project scopes. These encounters have reunited Marine and Coastal Areas of Indigenous Peoples (MCAIPs) administrates, representatives and community leaders from 13 areas, and representing over than 130,000 ha. Unfortunately, a scheduled large encounter for October 2019 was delayed because of the causes described above. Nonetheless, reduced encounters have been led based on the development of conservation strategies for MCAIPs administration and conservation outputs that can provided by the implementation of this areas. Additionally, we initiate an adaptative strategy for climate change and how can impact communities that depend on MCAIPs resource management. These strategies are related to biodiversity outputs, diversification of productivity, damage site restoration, nitrates and pH assessment or monitoring sea level raise.

On the other hand, we have launched a related project that is based on raised biodiversity data in MCAIPs in order to provide the first national MCAIP biodiversity catalog. This approach has helped to identify the biodiversity status of MCAIPs and to explore how this baseline can change through the years by direct or indirect impacts. Furthermore, we delivered to local authorities an administrative and management plan that focuses on developing a climate adaptation governance system in complement to provide fishery and biodiversity outcomes. This catalogue seeks to be a permanent toolkit for biodiversity information for each MCAIP. Considering that the amount of MCAIP is growing, and today more than 90 are facing diverse stages of its processing, the potential biodiversity outputs provided by these areas would represent the most relevant coastal marine instrument to validate marine conservation efforts. Ultimately, the catalogue is seeking for adding information for six more areas by the end of 2020, representing over than 24,000 ha of coastal marine biodiversity data for open access users.

A marine planning workshop was conducted in order to assess the spatial attributes of the largest MCAIP in the country. With more than 90,000 ha the MCAIP Mañihueico-Huinay in northern Patagonia fjords represents a unique ecosystem where extremely vulnerable habitats are damaged by anthropogenic actions. The pressure caused by salmon aquaculture and unregulated practices associated to that industry, has made several environmental deteriorations, and in consequence altering vulnerable

ecosystems and its fragile species, such a cold-water coral. In consequence, marine planning for the identification of these critical habitats and to explore a governance model that meets all the criteria to ensure its conservation has been crucial. Furthermore, we were able to raise key data regarding biocultural sites where local and indigenous communities have interact for centenars. The importance of this first steps falls on a novel approach for marine conservation in the country. Here we are exploring the strong local relationship with specific sites that represents both cultural and biological attributes to them and for its sustainability. In order to understand the baseline status of those sites, a participatory cartography was conducted. Preliminary results showed that some ancestral fishing areas have been altered by the implementation of aquaculture infrastructure, and other that remain in the original site, have some damage vestiges. Nonetheless, the importance of its identification and description represents a new precedent for coastal marine planning. Moreover, the data collected have been processed and were deliverable a zoning planning proposal for the Hualaihue county, and included the participation of the local community that include non-indigenous fisherman, local authorities, small business, small-scale mussel farming representatives, and local NGOs and other small organisations.

During the time of this project, we have also work on the design of management plan of a new MCAIP that become part of the MCAIP network. This participatory process assessed the natural marine banks in a zone of a 2,600 ha. Data collected were processed and used for the creation of a fishery plan that includes 15 benthic species and considers economic and subsistence species. Management plans are under review and is based on the recovery of marine species through the implementation of strict control rules, such as no-take areas, gear restriction, and fishing rotation zones. Additionally, this plan represents the first on providing novel solution for multi-specific fishery base on local knowledge and geographic criteria.

MCAIP network meeting.


Left: Management plan workshop session. Right: Participatory cartography.

Coordination of data collection.