



The Justice Deliberation and Assessment Tool

Adaptation to marine nature conservation

Riku Varjopuro and Aino Rekola
Finnish Environment Institute

HORIZON-MISS-2021-OCEAN-02-01- Blueprint demonstration for co-created effective, efficient and resilient networks of MPAsclimate resilience



Table of Contents

Executive Summary.....	3
1. Dimensions of justice and equity.....	4
2. Objectives of Justice Deliberation and Assessment Tool	5
3. Guidance on using the tool	6
3.1. Steps to deliberating and assessing justice.....	8
3.1.1. Design and implementation of the process of deliberation and assessment	8
3.1.2. Using the results of the deliberation and assessment for conservation planning	9
4. Questions to guide deliberation and assessment.....	10
4.1. Recognitional justice	11
4.2. Procedural justice	16
4.3. Distributive justice	21
5. Sources and useful reading	27

Executive Summary

In recent years, increasing attention has been paid to the issue of conservation justice. These emphases can be seen, for example, in the Global Biodiversity Framework (Kunming-Montreal) as well as in the work of IPBES. The EU Biodiversity Strategy 2030 outlines in its conclusion that "*The implementation of these commitments will take into account the different challenges faced by different sectors, regions and Member States, recognising the need to ensure social equity, fairness and inclusiveness in line with the European Pillar of Social Rights.*" Justice and equity are required also in national legislation in many countries. For instance, Finland's Non-Discrimination Act gives an obligation to the authorities to evaluate the realisation of equity in their activities and take necessary measures to promote its realisation.

Scientific discussion on justice in marine nature conservation has been active in recent years. It highlights that despite ubiquitous injustices in marine realm, justice issues have so far got only little attention in ocean governance and management, including marine nature conservation. Most recently, research has provided a framework for assessing social equity in ocean governance. In recent years, justice assessment tools have been developed for climate and food policies in Finland. In the context of nature conservation, there are, however, specific spatial and temporal aspects which require attention while deliberating and assessing justice.

A demand for a tool assisting governance of marine nature conservation was recognised during the need assessment phase of the Blue4All project. In Finland, the consulted experts highlighted that there is a need for approaches which could assist nature conservation practitioners in understanding social and cultural dimensions. This tool for assessing and deliberating on equity and justice in marine nature conservation was prepared to respond to that demand.

The tool document introduces first the concepts of justice and equity. Then the purposes and principles of the tool are explained, which is followed by outlining possible steps in the assessment and deliberation process. Finally, the assessment questions are presented. At the end some useful sources are given.

One of the key messages regarding the assessment process is that the deliberation and assessment of justice would ideally be conducted as the part of conservation planning and management. Then its results can have the best impact, and the assessment wouldn't be an extra burden for administration. The other key message is that the assessment of how the dimensions of justice are realised in conservation planning and management should be followed by steps of drawing conclusions and taking correcting or enhancing actions. The topics addressed in assessment questions per dimension of justice are listed in Table 1.



Table 1. Topics addressed in the questions that guide deliberation and assessment of conservation justice

Recognitional justice	Procedural justice	Distributive justice
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Equality • Impacts on socio-economic vulnerability • Coastal communities' resilience and way of life • Taking into account a range of values, knowledge and backgrounds • Non-discrimination 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Equal opportunities for participation • Informed decision making and justification of a conservation decision • Ex-post monitoring of impacts and appeals • Inclusiveness of participatory arrangements • Participation opportunities for young people and consideration of future generations 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Distribution of impacts on livelihoods and basic needs • Distribution of impacts related to work and economic activity • Distribution of health benefits and harms • Distribution of environmental benefits and harms • Other justice impacts and their distribution • Justice implications for other countries

1. Dimensions of justice and equity

In recent years, increasing attention has been paid to the issue of conservation justice. These emphases can be seen, for example, in the CBD Kunming-Montreal Convention as well as in the work of IPBES. The EU Biodiversity Strategy 2030 outlines in its conclusion that *"The implementation of these commitments will take into account the different challenges faced by different sectors, regions and Member States, recognising the need to ensure social equity, fairness and inclusiveness in line with the European Pillar of Social Rights."* Justice and equity are required also in national legislation in many countries. For instance, Finland's Non-Discrimination Act gives an obligation to the authorities to evaluate the realisation of equity in their activities and take necessary measures to promote its realisation.

Scientific discussion on justice in marine nature conservation has been increasing in recent years (Bennett et al. 2025; Bennett et al. 2021). It highlights that despite ubiquitous injustices in marine realm, justice issues have so far got only little attention in ocean governance and management, including marine nature conservation. For ocean sustainability, a fair governance that ensures equity, decreases vulnerabilities and equal distribution of harms and benefits of protection and use of marine nature is essential. Most recently, research has provided a framework for assessing social equity in ocean governance (Bennett et al. 2025).

In recent years, justice assessment tools have been developed for climate policy and food system in Finland (Kivimaa et al. 2023; Tribaldos and Kortetmäki 2022). In the context of nature conservation, there are, however, specific spatial and temporal aspects which require attention while deliberating and assessing justice.

The focus on equity and justice has both an ethical basis and a practical side. Unjust policy implementation of protection policies causes unnecessary harm to people and reduces public support for protection.

Justice is achieved when people are treated fairly, taking into account their needs, their circumstances and their ability to influence their own situation. Justice in nature conservation is a special case, where it is necessary to consider how nature conservation decision-making takes account of and involves different groups of people, and how the benefits and disadvantages of nature conservation are distributed. Assessing justice requires considering impacts at different spatial and temporal scales. In practice, this means taking into account, inter alia, global and trans-generational justice considerations. In the research literature, justice is typically considered along three dimensions: recognitional justice, procedural justice and distributive justice.

Recognitional justice takes into account the socio-cultural differences of people and groups of people, their different positions in society and the specific needs and vulnerabilities that result from their differences. Procedural justice is about justice in different decision-making processes. It looks at the equity of participation, transparency, impartiality and accountability of decision-makers to citizens. Distributive justice focuses on the distribution of benefits and disadvantages in society. Distributive justice also includes the means to reinforce the benefits of protection and compensate for the disadvantages.



Figure 1: The three dimensions of justice together form the whole of justice. The dimensions are interlinked and none of the dimensions alone ensures justice.

2. Objectives of Justice Deliberation and Assessment Tool

Justice Deliberation and Assessment Tool is developed to **improve informed decision-making and creates opportunities for resolving conflicts**. It helps to engage in a dialogue about equity and justice and their potential shortcomings in concrete, structured and multidimensional way through the key issues affecting conservation justice. In addition, it is important that the dimensions of

justice are also considered in relation to each other, as conflicts between justice impacts can also be identified.

The Justice Deliberation and Assessment Tool brings some new perspectives to current conservation planning and implementation practices, but, ideally, it should not be a new, additional assessment task. The best use of the justice assessment is ensured when its components and questions are internalised into the existing conservation planning and management practices. In many respects, the components of this tool **supports existing deliberation and assessment practices** and help in summarising and synthesising various socio-cultural and participatory aspects that are already being assessed. These aspects include:

- Recognitional justice assessments help, for example, in identifying stakeholders and taking into account the perspectives and interests they represent
- For example, the assessment of procedural justice support the design and implementation of participatory methods and broaden the knowledge base for conservation planning.
- The assessment of distributive justice increases understanding of the distribution of benefits and drawbacks of conservation decisions, which supports the assessment of social and economic impacts. It also helps to identify ways to reduce the negative impacts.

Many of the elements of tool are already part of conservation planning and implementation, but the **added value** of the Justice Deliberation and Assessment is that it compiles the considerations related to the groups of people, communities and livelihoods.

We use the terms 'deliberation' and 'assessment' in parallel in the name of the tool to emphasise its nature as a **development** tool. The tool can be used from the very beginning of conservation planning, as a kind of guide to enable navigation in a multidimensionality of conservation justice. The tool is **not intended to be used as an ex-post evaluation tool**, nor can it be used as a certificate of a fair conservation process. The name of the tool includes both 'deliberation' and 'assessment' also because our proposal is that the assessment of justice will be followed by **deliberative steps to draw conclusions and design actions** that enhance justice of nature conservation.

3. Guidance on using the tool

It is important for the deliberation and assessment to consider justice through all **three dimensions of justice** - recognitional, procedural and distributive justice. The Justice Deliberation and Assessment Tool identifies **key issues** to consider during the protection process from a justice perspective. The main questions are intended to be considered and reflected upon, and there is no ready-made, right answer to them; answers must always be deliberated on a case-by-case basis. To answer the core questions, you can use the accompanying **supporting questions**.



In addition to the questions, the tool contains **options** for each main question, which can be used to help outline the need for further involvement or research, for example. However, the options are not intended to be used as such, e.g. for reporting purposes. If a self-assessment or monitoring exercise using the options is to be reported, it is important that a careful justification is given as to why the situation is as described and on what the assessment is based.

The Justice Deliberation and Assessment Tool is first and foremost a **methodological tool** that can also be applied to participatory work. In addition, the tool and its questions can be used to report on the impacts of conservation decisions.

The most important thing is that the justice deliberation and assessment is part of the process of designing conservation decisions and the design of conservation decisions should take into account the different dimensions of justice. By conducting the deliberation and assessment process alongside the preparation of conservation decisions, rather than at the end of the process, responses and their justification can be sought together with actors and stakeholders. This will allow the justice questions to be integrated into the participatory process and, where appropriate, to consider options for implementing conservation decisions or how to implement them in a way that is equitable. It is also useful to discuss with representatives of the various actors and stakeholders the more precise scope of the justice deliberation and assessment, the questions that underpin it, the sources of information and the practical implementation of the assessment.

When discussing justice and using the tool with actors and stakeholders, attention should be paid to the **vocabulary and concepts** used, including language in multi-language and multi-cultural settings. The questions below are formulated in plain language as much as possible, but attention should be paid to their presentation in different contexts and for different target groups in understandable ways. The questions for deliberation and assessment are intended as a tool to help those responsible for the conservation process to collect the necessary information and data to answer the questions.

In many respects, the deliberation and assessment of justice requires more detailed consideration, often disaggregated by different groups of people, of issues such as the distribution of the benefits and harms of conservation or the cultural significance of the area for people than is currently collected. In conservation planning, a wealth of **information** is collected not only on the habitats and species of the site, but also on its use and value to people, which can be put to good use also for the purposes of this tool. The information collected in conservation planning and presented, for example, in the management plans of conservation areas, on the use of the site and the social and economic effects of conservation decisions is also useful information for assessing conservation justice.

Justice deliberation and assessment encourages the identification of how conservation decisions may affect people from different backgrounds or working in different professions. This review will increase understanding of **who and which groups are affected** and for what reasons, which will

also help in the design and implementation of participatory conservation planning. Indeed, well-designed and implemented participation is also key to achieving justice, but it is important to note that participation is related to the theme of procedural justice and therefore cannot alone ensure justice in conservation planning.

In reporting on the justice deliberation and assessment, the justice issues raised and taken into account during the process of preparing the conservation decisions can be summarised by formulating answers to the main questions on the basis of the discussions and analyses carried out and the resulting changes to the conservation decisions.

3.1. Steps to deliberating and assessing justice

The justice deliberation and assessment can be organised in different ways. As mentioned earlier the components would be ideally included into existing conservation and planning practices. The steps of the assessment presented below should be then applied and designed to fit into the existing practices. Another important perspective raised above is that the actual assessment should be followed by deliberative steps to draw conclusions and take actions to foster justice.

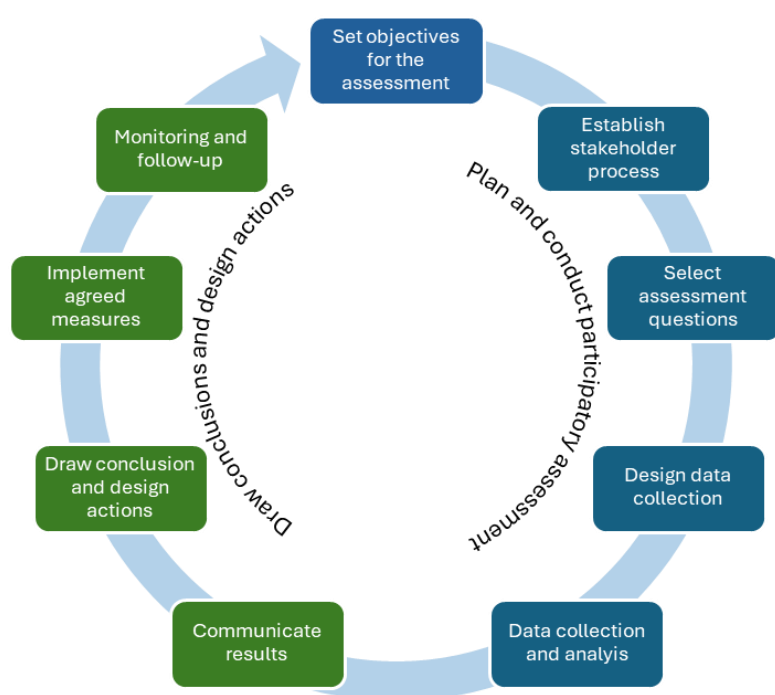


Figure 2. Steps of the assessment to be modified to fit the regular conservation and planning practice. The steps in blue boxes depict a process to plan and conduct justice assessment and the steps in green boxes a process of drawing conclusions, taking actions and monitoring. The steps are explained in the list below. Modified from Bennett et al. (2025)

3.1.1. Design and implementation of the process of deliberation and assessment

1) Setting a broader objective for the deliberation and assessment

- It is useful to engage in dialogue with stakeholders to ensure that the issues they consider important are also taken into account. However, the conclusions of this dialogue must be fair and respectful of all stakeholders.

- This must take account of the broader guidelines on and requirements for social and economic aspects of conservation planning.
 - The setting of the objectives should decide which phases of conservation cycle (e.g. planning, designation, management, monitoring or update) the deliberation and assessment focuses on. Ideally, as proposed in this document, all phases of the conservation cycle should be covered.
- 2) Establishment of a stakeholder process to support the assessment and selection of stakeholder representatives
- This should be done as part of a wider stakeholder engagement process in conservation planning
 - **Stakeholders should be consulted and their expertise used at all stages of the assessment 1-9**
- 3) Selecting assessment questions
- Defining the priority of the assessment questions below and their relevant phrasing should reflect the views of stakeholders, the conservation objectives of the protected area or network and their relevance to the context, including the phases of planning cycle that the assessment targets (see step 1).
 - It is recommended that all three dimensions of justice are included in the assessment
- 4) Design data and evidence collection
- This should make use of existing data and other socio-economic information collected in conservation planning.
 - Evidence to be collected and possible indicators should be relevant to the questions set for the assessment and also relevant to stakeholders
- 5) Data collection and analysis
- Quantitative and qualitative methods should be used according to their strengths
 - You can use the answer options provided for each question as a tool for self-assessment. When reporting your answers, it is important to justify your answer and also to reflect on how you arrived at it. In some cases it may be necessary to consider whether further clarification is needed
 - Research ethical aspects, such as GDPR, should be taken into account when collecting and analysing socio-economic data

3.1.2. Using the results of the deliberation and assessment for conservation planning

- 6) Communication of results
- The results of the process should be widely and comprehensively communicated, as they are meaningful to coastal communities and occupations
 - Communication of the results should clearly inform that the process continues to draw conclusion and design solutions to utilise the assessment results

7) Drawing conclusions and designing actions

- The deliberation and assessment may highlight issues that require specific measures to be addressed. These may be included, for example, in management plans or action plans under conservation legislation.
- Stakeholders play a key role in drawing conclusions
- In some cases, stakeholders can also take responsibility for measures

8) Implementation of agreed measures

- Implementation of the action plan
- Some measures may require additional resources, which need to be provided for.

9) Monitoring and long-term evaluation of justice.

- Monitoring the implementation of measures
- Monitoring changes in the operating environment
- New cycle of assessment, e.g. in line with other assessment cycles for protected areas

4. Questions to guide deliberation and assessment

This section presents questions that guide deliberation and assessment of justice in conservation planning. The questions are phrased to fit the characteristics of marine conservation. Even though it is developed for the context of Finland, most of the questions are phrased in ways that are applicable to other countries and even other governance contexts.

Table 2. Topics addressed in the questions that guide deliberation and assessment of conservation justice

Recognitional justice	Procedural justice	Distributive justice
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Equality • Impacts on socio-economic vulnerability • Coastal communities' resilience and way of life • Taking into account a range of values, knowledge and backgrounds • Non-discrimination 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Equal opportunities for participation • Informed decision making and justification of a conservation decision • Ex-post monitoring of impacts and appeals • Inclusiveness of participatory arrangements • Participation opportunities for young people and consideration of future generations 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Distribution of impacts on livelihoods and basic needs • Distribution of impacts related to work and economic activity • Distribution of health benefits and harms • Distribution of environmental benefits and harms • Other justice impacts and their distribution • Justice implications for other countries

4.1. Recognitional justice

Recognitional justice takes into account the socio-cultural differences of people and groups of people, their different positions in society and the specific needs and vulnerabilities that result from their differences.

RJ1: Equality

Main question	Supporting questions to allow a comprehensive assessment of the discriminatory effects of conservation decisions:
Are people, because of or regardless of their background, culture, wealth, age, place of residence, education or profession, in an equal position with regard to the conservation process and the impacts of conservation decisions? How?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • How do age, gender and health affect the positions of people in relation to conservation process and decisions? (e.g. in terms of benefits or harms) • How do differences in people's wealth, skills, education, place of residence, lifestyle or socio-cultural background affect the benefits or disadvantages? • How can the knowledge, skills and capacity for change of different groups of people in relation to conservation decisions be increased in the context of conservation? • How has the socio-cultural background of policy makers or evaluators influenced the formulation and evaluation of conservation decisions or related practices?

The following options can be used to help monitor and self-assess equality, for example to outline the need for further participation or research:

- People are on an equal position with regard to the impacts of conservation decisions, and no risk of discriminatory impacts of conservation decisions has been identified. [On what grounds?]
- People are on an equal position with regard to the impacts of conservation decisions, but the risk of discriminatory impacts of conservation decisions has been identified. [Which risks?]
- People are not on an equal position with regard to the effects of conservation decisions, as the conservation decision is considered to have discriminatory effects. [What kind of effects?]
- Not known, as it has not been possible to comprehensively assess the discriminatory effects of conservation decisions [Why not?]
- The question is not relevant or was not addressed because...

Note! The options are given as illustrative examples that may need to be adjusted and rephrased to fit the context. If self-assessment or monitoring using options is to be reported, it is important to provide a careful justification of why the situation is as described and on what the evaluation is based. Hints for reporting are given after questions in square brackets [...].

RJ2: Impacts on vulnerability

Main question	Supporting questions to allow a comprehensive assessment of the impact of conservation decisions on vulnerability:
How do conservation decisions affect the vulnerability of individuals or groups of people? (Also related to questions PJ4 and DJ1)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • How are the existing vulnerabilities of individuals or groups of people identified? • Do conservation decisions create new vulnerabilities? • Are there clusters of vulnerabilities for certain groups? • How existing or foreseen vulnerabilities can be reduced by adapting conservation decisions or other measures

Identifying and addressing vulnerabilities is important for justice, but the concept of vulnerability should be used with discretion. Labelling a group of people as vulnerable can only be made if the people representing the group have identified themselves as such. Even then, judgement should be exercised as to whether designation as vulnerable is necessary, as it may also cause harm.

In monitoring and self-assessing vulnerability impacts, the following options can be used to outline examples of the need for further participation or research:

- Conservation decisions reduce the vulnerability of different groups of people and support the adaptive capacity of all on an equal basis. [On what grounds?]
- Conservation decisions reduce the vulnerability of some individuals/groups of people, but do not necessarily support the adaptive capacity of all equally by limiting opportunities to practice some occupations locally. [In which ways it may be limited?]
- Conservation decisions may increase the vulnerability of some individuals/groups of people, but conservation decisions have been adapted/other specific measures have been designed to prevent vulnerability. [In which ways?]
- Conservation decisions are likely to increase the vulnerability of individuals/groups of people. [In which ways?]
- It has not been possible to assess the impact of conservation decisions on the vulnerability of groups of people. [Why not?]
- The question is not relevant or was not addressed because...

RJ3: Coastal communities' resilience and way of life

Main question	Supporting questions to allow a comprehensive assessment of the impacts of conservation decisions on the functional capacity and continuity of lifestyle of coastal communities:
How do conservation decisions affect the ability of coastal communities to function and the continuity of their way of life? (Also related to question PJ4)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • How are the current state of coastal communities and the factors affecting them taken into account? • What impacts there are on the ability of coastal communities to maintain their culture and way of life in the future? • How do coastal communities benefit from marine areas and their resources? • How can the disadvantages of conservation decisions be minimised or compensated and the benefits enhanced?

In monitoring and self-assessing the impacts on the functional capacity and sustainability of coastal communities, the following options can be used as a tool to outline examples of the need for further participation or research:

- Conservation decisions improve the functional capacity and continuity of coastal communities' way of life, inter alia by increasing the benefits to coastal communities. [In which ways?]
- Conservation decisions will improve the functional capacity and continuity of coastal communities' way of life, provided that the disadvantages of conservation decisions for them are managed properly. [What management options?]
- Conservation decisions undermine the functional capacity and continuity of coastal communities and there are no measures to manage the impacts of conservation decisions. [In which ways is this evidenced?]
- It has not been possible to assess the impact of conservation decisions on the functional capacity and continuity of lifestyle of coastal communities. [Why is it so?]
- The question is not relevant or was not addressed because...

RJ4: Taking into account a range of values, knowledge and backgrounds

Main question	Supporting questions to allow a comprehensive assessment of the range of values, knowledge and starting points to be taken into account:
How do the design, implementation and communication of conservation decisions take into account different socio-economic and cultural backgrounds and the diversity of values associated with marine nature?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • How do conservation planning and implementation recognise and respect people's different backgrounds and values? • Is communication diverse, recognising and respecting different socio-cultural values • How are different people's native languages taken into account in communication? • Is advice available for people from different backgrounds? • How does conservation planning take into account and make use of different types of information, such as the traditional knowledge of local communities?

The following options can be used to help monitor and self-assess the consideration of a range of values, knowledge and starting points, as examples of the need for further participation or research:

- a. The diversity of socio-economic and cultural backgrounds and/or values associated with marine nature is respected in conservation, e.g. through the use of traditional knowledge, the involvement of local communities in the management of protected areas and/or the provision of clear or multilingual communication, and no risk of conflict of values has been identified. [In which ways are these evidenced?]
- b. Some account has been taken of different socio-economic and cultural backgrounds and/or values related to marine nature, but the risk of conflicting values has been identified. [Which risks?]
- c. Different socio-economic and cultural backgrounds and/or values related to marine nature are not taken into account and conflicts of values cannot be foreseen. [Why is it so?]
- d. The question is not relevant or was not addressed because...

RJ5: Non-discrimination

Main question	Supporting questions to allow a comprehensive assessment of non-discrimination:
How is it ensured that the measures do not discriminate against anyone on the basis of, for example, cultural background, age, gender, disability or illness?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> How have the negative and positive impacts of conservation planning and implementation on different groups of people been assessed, taking into account age, cultural background, gender, disability and underlying diseases? What has been done to mitigate these impacts?

The following options can be used as a tool for monitoring and self-assessment of non-discrimination, for example to outline the need for further participation or analysis:

- a. The impact of protection on different groups of people has been assessed extensively and in consultation with them. Conservation can improve the situation or reduce the vulnerability of minorities, people with lower socio-economic status or local communities dependent on nature, for example. [Which are the main improvements?]
- b. The impacts of conservation on different groups of people have been assessed extensively and in consultation with them, and where conservation has been judged to have negative impacts, particularly on minorities, the socio-economically disadvantaged or local communities dependent on nature, for example, solutions have been put in place to mitigate these impacts. [What solutions?]
- c. The impact of conservation on different groups of people has been assessed, but solutions to mitigate the negative impacts, especially on minorities or those in a weaker socio-economic position have not been successfully implemented and therefore their position may be weakened. [In which ways is this evidenced?]
- d. The impact of conservation on different groups of people has not been assessed and solutions to mitigate the negative effects of conservation have not been implemented. For example, the conservation decision has been adopted on purely scientific grounds.
- e. The question is not relevant or was not addressed because...

4.2. Procedural justice

Procedural justice is about the fairness of different decision-making processes.

PJ1: Equal opportunities for participation

Main question	Supporting questions to allow a comprehensive assessment of equal opportunities for participation:
Do different groups of people have equal access to planning, decision-making and implementation of conservation?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Is information on participation opportunities and conservation options provided in a transparent, accessible and understandable way? Are citizens given sufficient time to react to conservation proposals and to requests for comments and consultations on them? • Is the choice of conservation options transparent? Do citizens have the opportunity to bring options to the debate? • Have those who are likely to be directly and indirectly affected been consulted in the assessment of conservation decisions? • Are there any restrictions on participation? How do available resources, such as education, language, age, and place of residence, affect access to participation? Have efforts been made to remove barriers and promote equal opportunities for all to participate?

The following options can be used to help monitor and self-assess equal opportunities for participation, for example to outline the need for further participation or research:

- a. There are equal opportunities for participation. This was actively promoted, and changes to conservation decisions were made on the basis of citizens' views. [What are the main changes?]
- b. There is some equality in opportunities, but not all barriers to participation were successfully removed and/or the views of citizens were not taken into account in conservation decisions. [Which challenges are faced?]
- c. No, because the opportunities for participation were limited, favouring e.g. already capable stakeholders, and the views of the public were not taken into account in conservation decisions. [Why is this so?]
- d. No, because there was no participation. [Why is this so?]
- e. The question is not relevant or was not addressed because...

PJ2: Informed decision making and justification of a conservation decision

Main question	Supporting questions to allow a comprehensive assessment of the evidence base and rationale for decision-making:
Are conservation decisions prepared in an informed and comprehensible way?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • How and what information has been used? How has scientific knowledge been used? Who produced the data? • Is the evidence base openly available and has the compilation of the evidence base been transparent and in line with good scientific practice? • Are the impact assessments comprehensive and transparent? Has the impact assessment had an impact on the measures proposed? • Were the value choices behind the decision and the rationale behind the formulation of options explained?

The following options can be used to monitor and self-assess the knowledge base and rationale for decision-making, for example to help outline the need for further participation or research:

- a. The preparation of conservation decisions and impact assessments have made use of up-to-date scientific information from a wide range of disciplines and the justification for the decision is transparent and understandable. [How is the scientific basis justified?]
- b. Yes, but only to a certain extent, as few sources of information or studies in a specific area have been used in the preparation of conservation decisions and impact assessments and/or a certain level of familiarity is required to understand the rationale behind the solution. [What are the limitations in the knowledge-base?]
- c. No, because conservation decisions and impact assessments are not based on scientific knowledge. [Why is it so?]
- d. No, because the impact assessment of conservation decisions has not been carried out, is not available or transparent, and citizens have no opportunity to familiarise themselves with the justification for the conservation decision. [Why is it so?]
- e. The question is not relevant or was not addressed because...

PJ3: Ex-post monitoring of impacts and appeals

Main question	Supporting questions to allow a comprehensive assessment of the ex-post monitoring of impacts and the possibilities for appeal:
How can different groups of people influence conservation decisions afterwards? Does everyone have a say?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • How is information on the progress and impact of conservation measures made available to all in a transparent and accessible way? • Is information available on the cross or cumulative effects of different policies? What about policy inconsistencies? • Is information about the possibilities for redress sufficiently and accessible? Is access to redress guaranteed?

In the monitoring and self-assessment of ex-post monitoring of impacts and access to justice, the following options can be used to help outline, for example, the need for further participation or research:

- a. The impacts of conservation decisions are systematically monitored ex-post, including cross-cutting and cumulative impacts, and citizens have access to information on impacts and the opportunity to propose changes to conservation where necessary. [In which ways is this evidenced?]
- b. There is some post-implementation monitoring of the impacts of conservation decisions, but there is a lack of monitoring or transparency and/or access to justice is limited to certain actors, such as landowners. [What are the limitations?]
- c. There is no ex-post assessment of the impact of conservation decisions, but certain actors, such as landowners, can apply for a change in the conservation decision.
- d. There is no ex-post monitoring of the effects of protection decisions and no appeal mechanism. [Why is it so?]
- e. The question is not relevant or was not addressed because...

PJ4: Inclusiveness of participatory arrangements

Main question	Supporting questions to allow a comprehensive assessment of the inclusiveness of the participatory arrangements:
How have the participation arrangements taken into account socio-economic and cultural differences between people and groups of people, their different positions in society and the specific needs and vulnerabilities arising from their diversity? (Related to questions RJ2 & RJ3)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • How are vulnerable people or people with different native languages taken into account in the procedures? How and at what stage have different groups of people been consulted and involved? Who has represented them? • Do people from different coastal communities, municipalities and provinces have equal opportunities to be represented and heard? Including inland municipalities and counties? • How will the impact on different groups of people be taken into account in further preparation and decision-making? How will concerns raised during consultation and participation be addressed?

The following options can be used to help monitor and self-assess the participation arrangements, for example to identify the need for further participation or research:

- The preparatory process has supported the participation of minorities, people with lower socio-economic status, those with the lowest capacities or local communities dependent on nature, for example, and the conservation decision can help to improve their situation. [In which ways is this evidenced?]
- The preparation process has sought to support participation of people who do not normally participate, but who have either not been reached or whose concerns have not been addressed. [What are the challenges in this respect?]
- The preparatory process has mainly supported the participation of people who are already "capable". [In which ways is this evidenced?]
- No way, because there was no participation. [Why is it so?]
- The question is not relevant or was not addressed because.

PJ5: Participation opportunities for young people and consideration of future generations

Main question	Supporting questions to allow a comprehensive assessment of the participation potential of young people and future generations:
How has the perspective of young people and future generations (young people, children, the unborn) been taken into account in the preparation?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • How and at what stage have young people and children been involved? How are or how could the perspectives of future generations taken into account? • What weight has been given to children, young people and future generations?

In order to monitor and self-assess the participation of young people and future generations, the following options can be used to help identify the need for, for example, further participation or research:

- Children and young people have been involved in the preparation process and cross-generational impacts have been fully considered. Conservation decisions will improve the position of children, young people and future generations and reduce their vulnerability. [In which ways is this evidenced?]
- In the preparation process, some consideration has been given to the views of children, young people and future generations and the impact of conservation decisions on them has been assessed. In drawing up of conservation decisions, efforts have been made to mitigate negative impacts on them. [Which were the solutions found?]
- Children and young people or representatives of future generations have not been explicitly involved in the preparation process, but it is estimated that the protection decisions will not have a negative impact on them. [Why is this so?]
- Children, young people and representatives of future generations have not been involved in the preparation process or the impact on them has not been assessed and there is a risk that the conservation decisions will be harmful to them. [Why is it so?]
- The question is not relevant or was not addressed because...

4.3. Distributive justice

Distributive justice relates to the distribution of benefits and disadvantages in society and possible compensatory measures to make this distribution more equitable.

DJ1: Distribution of impacts on livelihoods and basic needs

Main question	Supporting questions to allow a comprehensive assessment of the distribution of impacts on livelihoods and basic needs:
How are the impacts of conservation decisions on people's livelihoods or access to basic needs distributed now and in the future? (related to question TO2)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Do conservation decisions increase or decrease some people's access to basic needs or livelihoods now or in the medium term? • Do conservation decisions increase or decrease the chances of future generations to meet basic needs or to earn a living? • Are there significant regional differences in income effects in Finland? And are there differences between sparsely populated areas and cities? • Are there ways to avoid or mitigate adverse impacts on livelihoods or basic needs? • Are the effects of conservation concentrated in such a way as to reduce or increase existing vulnerabilities among different groups of people? • How are the positive or negative impacts of conservation decisions on livelihoods assessed and taken into account?

In monitoring and self-assessing the distribution of impacts on livelihoods and for meeting basic needs, the following options can be used to help outline the need for, for example, further participation or research:

- Conservation decisions generally improve access to livelihoods and basic needs in the local area or beyond. [Through which mechanisms?]
- The conservation decisions will not change people's livelihoods or their ability to meet basic needs in the immediate area or beyond. [In which ways is this evidenced?]
- Conservation decisions improve the livelihoods and basic needs of some in the local area or wider area, but reduce or do not affect the livelihoods and basic needs of others. [In which ways is this evidenced?]
- Conservation decisions generally undermine access to livelihoods and basic needs in the local area or beyond. [Why is it so?]
- The question was not relevant or was not addressed because....

DJ2: Distribution of impacts related to work and economic activity

Main question	Supporting questions to allow a comprehensive assessment of the distribution of impacts on livelihoods and basic needs:
How are the impacts of conservation decisions on people's ability to work and earn a living distributed now and in the future?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Are there more or fewer opportunities for some sectors of the economy? Now or in the medium term? • Is there an industry in danger of disappearing altogether? How are the impacts distributed between and within industries? • Are there particular job gains or losses in a region? And are there differences between sparsely populated areas and cities? • What alternative sources of work or livelihood are available? • Are retraining opportunities available or can they be improved? • How are the positive or negative impacts of conservation decisions on livelihoods assessed and taken into account?

The following options can be used to monitor and self-assess the distribution of impacts on employment and economic activity, for example to help outline the need for further participation or research:

- Existing job and business opportunities will be preserved by the conservation decisions, and new ones will be created. [Through which mechanisms?]
- Conservation decisions have no impact on people's work and livelihoods. [In which ways is this evidenced?]
- Conservation decisions require changes that may be challenging for some existing workers or operators to adapt to. [What are the main challenges?]
- Conservation decisions reduce employment and livelihood opportunities, worsen working conditions or require changes that not everyone can adapt to. [Why is it so?]
- The question is not relevant or was not addressed because...

DJ3: Distribution of health benefits and harms

Main question	Supporting questions to allow a comprehensive assessment of the distribution of health benefits and harms:
How are the impacts of conservation decisions on human health benefits or harms distributed now and in the future?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • What are the potential health harms or benefits of conservation decisions? • Do conservation measures increase or decrease the chances of future generations to lead healthy lives? • Is it possible to avoid or mitigate health risks? • How are the health impacts of conservation decisions assessed and taken into account?

In monitoring and self-assessing the distribution of health benefits and harms, the following options can be used to help outline, for example, the need for further participation or research:

- a. Conservation decisions deliver health benefits that people can enjoy regardless of their socio-economic status or cultural background. [What are the main benefits?]
- b. Conservation decisions deliver health benefits for only some people. [Why is it so?]
- c. Conservation decisions are causing health problems for some people and no solution has been found to mitigate these. [Why is it so?]
- d. Conservation decisions cause or increase the risk of widespread adverse health effects. [Why is it so?]
- e. The question is not relevant or was not addressed because...

Note! The options are given as illustrative examples that may need to be adjusted and rephrased to fit the context. If self-assessment or monitoring using options is to be reported, it is important to provide a careful justification of why the situation is as described and on what the evaluation is based. Hints for reporting are given after questions in square brackets [...].

DJ4: Distribution of environmental benefits and harms

Main question	Supporting questions to allow a comprehensive assessment of the distribution of environmental benefits and harms:
How are the effects of conservation decisions on the environmental impacts on sites or people distributed now and in the future?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • How do conservation decisions improve or degrade the habitats and benefits of nature for different groups of people? • In what ways will the opportunities for future generations to enjoy a healthy and safe habitat be increased or reduced by conservation decisions? • Are there ways to avoid or mitigate adverse environmental impacts on people? • How are the environmental impacts of conservation decisions on people assessed and taken into account?

The following options can be used to help monitor and self-assess the distribution of environmental benefits and disadvantages, for example to outline the need for further participation or research:

- a. Conservation decisions improve people's living environments in ways that people can enjoy regardless of their socio-economic status or cultural background. [In which ways?]
- b. Conservation decisions improve the living environments of some people, such as certain landowners, but the environmental benefits are not enjoyed by all who want them. [What are the main limitations?]
- c. Conservation decisions cause environmental damage to some people or degrade certain living environments, and no solution was found to mitigate the damage. [Why is it so?]
- d. Conservation decisions cause extensive environmental damage or degrade the living environments of people. [In which ways?]
- e. The question is not relevant or was not addressed because...

DJ5: Other justice impacts and their distribution

Main question	Supporting questions to allow a comprehensive assessment of other impacts and their distribution:
How are the other justice-related impacts of conservation decisions on people, groups of people or regions distributed now and in the future?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Does it reduce or improve mobility for some people? • Does it weaken or improve the security of some people? • Is it possible to avoid or mitigate the harm caused? • How are human impacts of conservation decisions on the environment assessed and taken into account?

The monitoring and self-assessment of other equity impacts can use the following options to help outline the need for, for example, further participation or research:

- a. Conservation decisions improve e.g. human mobility and safety or other impacts. [What are the main improvements?]
- b. Conservation decisions improve the mobility and safety of some people or have other impacts. [Why is it so?]
- c. Conservation decisions reduce the mobility and safety of some people or other impacts, and no solution was found to mitigate these. [Why is it so?]
- d. Conservation decisions generally reduce e.g. the movement and safety of people or other impacts. [Why is it so?]
- e. The question is not relevant or was not addressed because...

DJ6: Justice implications for other countries

Main question	Supporting questions to allow a comprehensive assessment of justice impacts on other countries:
Do conservation decisions have positive or negative impacts on other countries?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • How are the benefits and drawbacks distributed outside Finland? • Are there ways to avoid or mitigate the harm caused? • What national legislative or other instruments are in place to control and mitigate cross-border equity effects?

The monitoring and self-assessment of equity impacts on other countries can be used to help identify the need for, for example, further participation or research:

- a. Conservation decisions also support biodiversity protection in other countries. [In which ways?]
- b. Conservation decisions support biodiversity conservation in other countries, but can undermine, for example, livelihood opportunities. [Why is it so?]
- c. Conservation decisions make it more difficult to safeguard biodiversity in other countries, but can support, for example, livelihood opportunities. [Why is it so?]
- d. Conservation decisions cause widespread damage to other land. [Which damage in particular?]
- e. The question is not relevant or was not addressed because...

5. Sources and useful reading

Bennett, N. J., L. Katz, W. Yadao-Evans, G. N. Ahmadi, S. Atkinson, N. C. Ban, N. M. Dawson, A. de Vos, J. Fitzpatrick, D. Gill, M. Imirizaldu, N. Lewis, S. Mangubhai, L. Meth, E.-K. Muhl, D. Obura, A. K. Spalding, A. Villagomez, D. Wagner, A. White, and A. Wilhelm (2021). Advancing Social Equity in and Through Marine Conservation. *Frontiers in Marine Science* 8. <https://doi.org/10.3389/fmars.2021.711538>

Bennett NJ, Relano V, Roumbidakis K, Blythe J, Andrachuk M, Claudet J, Dawson N, Gill D, Lazzari N, Mahajan SL, Muhl E-K, Riechers M, Strand M and Villasante S (2025) Ocean equity: from assessment to action to improve social equity in ocean governance. *Front. Mar. Sci.* 12:1473382. <https://doi.org/10.3389/fmars.2025.1473382>

IIED 2019). Site-level assessment of governance and equity (SAGE). [Site-level assessment of governance and equity \(SAGE\) | International Institute for Environment and Development](#)

Kivimaa, P., Heikkinen, M., Huttunen, S., Jaakkola, J. J. K., Juhola, S., Juntunen, S., Kaljonen, M., Käyhkö, J., Leino, M., Loivaranta T., Lundberg, P., Lähteenmäki-Uutela, A., Näkkäläjärvi, K., Sivonen, M. H., Vainio, A. (2023). Evaluation of justice in climate policy. Finland climate panel report 1/2023. <https://ilmastopaneeli.fi/en/hae-julkaisuja/evaluation-of-justice-in-climate-policy/>

Tribaldos, Theresa, and Teea Kortetmäki. 2022. "Just transition principles and criteria for food systems and beyond." *Environmental Innovation and Societal Transitions* 43: 244-256. <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.eist.2022.04.005>.