

Ocean Country Partnership Programme

Sri Lanka Marine Protection Network Mapping and Analysis

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Ocean Country Partnership Programme:

The Ocean Country Partnership Programme (OCP) is a bilateral technical assistance and capacity building programme that provides tailored support to countries to manage the marine environment more sustainably, including strengthening marine science expertise, developing science-based policy and management tools and creating educational resources for coastal communities. The OCP delivers work under three thematic areas: biodiversity, marine pollution, and sustainable seafood.

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Executive Summary

Sri Lanka's coastal and marine ecosystems are rich in biodiversity, and the country has established various protective measures to conserve these ecosystems through marine protection. These include the Marine Protected Areas (MPAs), Fisheries Management Areas (FMAs), and Special Management Areas (SMAs). However, the boundaries of these protected areas often overlap, creating both challenges and opportunities in their management. This report addresses the issues arising from such overlapping areas, particularly focusing on key zones like the Adam's Bridge National Park, Bar Reef Marine Sanctuary, Kokilai Lagoon, Negombo Lagoon, and others in regions such as the West Coast, East Coast, and South Coast.

These overlaps are often the result of the jurisdictional and functional mandates of multiple agencies, including the Department of Wildlife Conservation (DWC), the Coast Conservation and Coastal Resources Management Department (CC&CRMD), the Department of Fisheries and Aquatic Resources (DFAR), and other regulatory bodies. While overlapping areas present opportunities for enhanced protection and ecological sustainability, they also lead to conflicts in resource use and conservation priorities.

The management of overlapping MPAs, FMAs, and SMAs in Sri Lanka faces several key issues:

1. **Jurisdictional and Institutional Conflicts:** Multiple agencies are responsible for managing these areas, leading to conflicts over roles and responsibilities. This results in creating confusion and inefficiencies in decision-making.
2. **Lack of Coordination:** There is insufficient coordination between the agencies responsible for managing these areas. The absence of collaborative efforts often results in fragmented management approaches that undermine the effectiveness of conservation and resource use strategies.
3. **Conflicting Goals:** Balancing conservation goals with the need for sustainable resource use is a significant challenge. Overlapping areas frequently result in competing interests, such as the protection of biodiversity versus fishing activities or tourism development.
4. **Inconsistent Implementation of Laws and Policies:** While several laws, such as the Fauna and Flora Protection Ordinance (FFPO), the Fisheries and Aquatic Resources Act, and the Coast Conservation and Coastal Resources Management Act, are in place to regulate activities in these areas, enforcement and implementation are often inconsistent, leading to violations and ineffective conservation efforts.
5. **Legal Gaps and Overlaps:** Existing laws governing marine and coastal protection, while comprehensive, sometimes fail to address the complexity of managing multiple protected zones in the same area. This creates confusion among authorities and limits the ability to respond to emerging challenges.

Despite these challenges, there are significant opportunities for effective management.

1. **Enhanced Protection of Ecosystems:** Overlapping protected areas can create broader and more robust ecological networks, providing enhanced protection to critical habitats, migratory corridors, and biodiversity hotspots.
2. **Collaborative Management:** The overlap presents a unique opportunity for agencies to collaborate and combine their expertise and resources. Joint management strategies,

such as shared monitoring and enforcement, could improve the overall management of these areas.

3. **Integrated Coastal Zone Management:** The integration of multiple management frameworks—such as those for MPAs, FMAs, and SMAs—could lead to more cohesive and effective coastal zone management, balancing conservation with sustainable resource use.

To resolve the conflicts and capitalise on the opportunities in managing overlapping areas, the following recommendations are made:

1. **Strengthen Inter-Agency Coordination:** Establish an integrated institutional framework promoting cohesive governance.
2. **Enhance Monitoring and enforcement mechanisms:** Improve monitoring and enforcement mechanisms through inter-agency collaboration, while leveraging the support of local communities.
3. **Implement Comprehensive Zoning Plans:** Adopt integrated zoning strategies to clearly demarcate areas for conservation, sustainable use, and community activities, balancing ecological and socio-economic priorities.
4. **Undertake Legal Reforms:** Introduce clear legal provisions to manage overlapping areas and revise the existing laws to address emerging environmental threats.

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1. Introduction

1.1. Purpose and Scope of the Report

The purpose of this report is to examine the overlapping boundaries and management regimes of MPAs, FMAs, and SMAs in Sri Lanka. It aims to identify the conflicts, synergies, and gaps in the management of these zones and provide actionable recommendations to address these issues. Specifically, the report explores the overlaps among key institutions such as the DWC, CC&CRMD, and DFAR.

The scope of the report encompasses a detailed analysis of legal and institutional frameworks, challenges arising from overlapping areas, and potential benefits of collaboration between agencies and other stakeholders. It further examines how other related laws, such as the Marine Pollution Prevention Act, Antiquities Ordinance, and National Environmental Act, influence the management of these areas.

1.2. Importance of Coastal and Marine Resource Management in Sri Lanka

Sri Lanka, an island nation located in the Indian Ocean, is endowed with rich coastal and marine biodiversity. The country's coastline stretches over 1,700 kilometers, encompassing diverse ecosystems such as coral reefs, mangroves, estuaries, lagoons, and seagrass beds. These ecosystems not only serve as critical habitats for numerous species but also provide invaluable services to human communities, including fisheries, tourism, coastal protection, and carbon sequestration.

Effective coastal and marine resource management is crucial for balancing the needs of conservation with sustainable resource use. With a significant proportion of the population relying on fisheries for their livelihoods and food security, marine resources play an essential role in the country's economy. Furthermore, Sri Lanka's vulnerability to climate change, including sea-level rise and extreme weather events, underscores the need for robust management strategies to protect coastal communities and ecosystems.

However, management regimes among key agencies have often led to challenges in effectively managing coastal and marine resources. This report highlights the importance of addressing these challenges to achieve the sustainable use and long-term conservation of Sri Lanka's coastal and marine ecosystems.

1.3. Definition and Classification of MPAs, FMAs, and SMAs

Marine Protected Areas (MPA): MPAs are areas that are intended to protect all or part of a marine ecosystem. At the most protective end of the spectrum are no-take "marine reserves" – areas where extractive activities are prohibited. The rest are "partially protected Marine Protected Areas" that allow extractive activities to different degrees. According to the International Union for Conservation of Nature (IUCN), an MPA is defined as being *"any area of inter-tidal or subtidal terrain, together with its overlying water and associated flora, fauna, historical and cultural features, which have been reserved by law or other effective means to protect part or all of the enclosed environment"*

The Fauna and Flora Protection Ordinance No.02 of 1937 (as amended), Fisheries and Aquatic Resources Act, No. 02 of 1996 (as amended), Coast Conservation and Coastal Resource Management Act No.57 of 1981 (as amended) and Forest Conservation Ordinance No.16 of 1907 (as amended) have special areas declared as MPAs to protect and conserve marine ecosystems, resources, and biodiversity in Sri Lanka Waters. The protection granted to MPAs differs according to the respective legislation under which such area is declared.

Marine Protected Areas (MPAs): The primary legislation governing the declaration of Marine Protected Areas in Sri Lanka is the Fauna and Flora Protection Ordinance (FFPO). Under its provisions, the Minister is empowered to declare specific areas of State land as Marine National Parks, Marine Reserves, or Sanctuaries and they are managed by the DWC. Examples include the Bar Reef Marine Sanctuary and the Great Basses and Little Basses Sanctuary.

Fisheries Management Areas (FMAs): FMAs are zones established under the Fisheries and Aquatic Resources Act to regulate and manage fishing activities to ensure the sustainable use of fish stocks and other aquatic resources. FMAs are managed by the DFAR and are often associated with specific lagoons, estuaries, or coastal areas, such as the Batticaloa Lagoon FMA and Negombo Lagoon FMA.

Special Management Areas (SMAs): SMAs are areas designated under the Coast Conservation and Coastal Resources Management Act for the integrated management of coastal resources. These areas are managed by the CC&CRMD and often focus on addressing site-specific challenges such as erosion, pollution, and resource degradation. Examples include the Trincomalee Bay SMA and Batticaloa Lagoon SMA.

Further details on relevant Sri Lankan legislation can be found in the Annexes.

2. Overlapping Protected Areas in Sri Lanka

2.1. Overview of Identified Overlapping Areas

Sri Lanka's coastal and marine ecosystems host a range of overlapping protected areas, including MPAs, FMAs, and SMAs. These overlapping zones arise due to the classification of areas under different legal frameworks and the involvement of multiple management authorities. While the overlaps have the potential to foster collaborative management, they also give rise to conflicts, inefficiencies, and challenges in enforcement. Overlapping zones often share similar conservation objectives, such as biodiversity protection, sustainable fisheries management, and addressing coastal erosion.

2.2. List and Description of Key Overlapping Zones

1. Adam's Bridge National Park and West Coast (Mannar and Puttalam District) FMA

- Adam's Bridge National Park is a protected area managed by the DWC, known for its rich biodiversity, including migratory birds and marine species. It overlaps with the Mannar and Puttalam District Fisheries Management Area, a key site for sustainable fisheries.

2. Bar Reef Marine Sanctuary and West Coast (Mannar and Puttalam District) FMA

- Bar Reef is Sri Lanka's largest coral reef system, protected as a Marine Sanctuary under the FFPO. The same area overlaps with the West Coast FMA.

3. Chundikulam National Park and Lankapatuna Lagoon FMA

- Chundikulam National Park supports a diverse range of bird species and mangroves, overlapping with the Lankapatuna Lagoon FMA, which supports local fisheries.

4. Chundikulam National Park and Chalai Lagoon FMA

- Similar to Lankapatuna Lagoon, Chalai Lagoon is critical for local fisheries, overlapping with Chundikulam National Park.

5. Nandikadal Nature Reserve and Nandikadal Lagoon FMA

- Nandikadal Nature Reserve protects mangroves and aquatic habitats, while the FMA focuses on sustainable fisheries management.

6. Nayaru Nature Reserve and Nayaru Lagoon FMA

- Nayaru Nature Reserve, known for its mangrove ecosystems, overlaps with the Nayaru Lagoon FMA.

7. Great Sobar and Little Sobar Island Sanctuary and Trincomalee Bay SMA

- This sanctuary, managed for biodiversity, overlaps with the Trincomalee Bay SMA.

8. **Seruwila-Allai National Park and Lankapatuna Lagoon FMA (Down-Eastern)**
 - Overlapping areas include mangroves and lagoon ecosystems that support biodiversity and fisheries.
9. **Kayankerni Marine Sanctuary and East Coast (Batticaloa District) FMA**
 - Kayankerni is a protected coral reef area that overlaps with a key fisheries zone.
10. **Batticaloa Lagoon FMA and Batticaloa Lagoon SMA**
 - Batticaloa Lagoon serves as both an FMA and SMA.
11. **Great Basses and Little Basses Sanctuary and South Coast (Hambantota District) FMA**
 - Known for coral reefs and marine biodiversity, this sanctuary overlaps with a key fisheries area.
12. **Godawaya MPA (right to Ussangoda FMA) and South Coast (Hambantota District) FMA**
 - This area protects marine biodiversity and supports sustainable fisheries along the South Coast.
13. **Kalamatiya Lagoon Sanctuary and Kalamatiya Lagoon SMA**
 - Kalamatiya Lagoon is protected as a sanctuary and managed as an SMA, focusing on coastal conservation.
14. **Rakawa Sanctuary and South Coast (Hambantota District) FMA**
 - Rakawa Sanctuary is known for its turtle nesting sites, overlapping with a fisheries management area.
15. **Koggala Lagoon FMA and Koggala Lagoon SMA**
 - Koggala Lagoon is designated as both an FMA and SMA, supporting local fisheries and addressing coastal issues.
16. **Rumassala Sanctuary and South Coast (Galle and Matara) FMA**
 - Rumassala is a critical habitat for marine species and overlaps with a fisheries area.
17. **Negombo Lagoon FMA and Negombo Estuary SMA**
 - Negombo Lagoon is managed as both an FMA and SMA, addressing sustainable fisheries and coastal resource management.

[illegible]

Figure 1. MPAs, FMAs, and SMAs of Sri Lanka.

3. Challenges in Managing Overlapping Areas

3.1. Jurisdictional and Institutional Conflicts

One of the most significant challenges in managing overlapping areas is the conflict arising due to different institutional mandates of the key institutions being applied within the same geographic locations. For instance, the CC&CRMD regulates development within the coastal zone under the Coast Conservation Act, while the DFAR oversees FMAs under the Fisheries and Aquatic Resources Act. These overlapping jurisdictions often lead to confusion and inefficiencies in enforcement and management.

3.2. Lack of Coordination Among Management Authorities

A lack of inter-agency coordination exacerbates jurisdictional conflicts. For example, the MEPA, which is tasked with controlling marine pollution, rarely collaborates with CC&CRMD, which regulates development in coastal areas. Similarly, DWC and DFAR often operate independently without aligning their management plans for overlapping areas like Bar Reef or Adam's Bridge. The absence of an integrated management framework or a formal mechanism for collaboration between agencies leads to fragmented decision-making and resource misallocation, weakening overall conservation efforts.

3.3. Conflicts Between Conservation and Resource Utilisation

Conflicts often arise between conservation priorities and the needs of resource utilisation. For example, communities dependent on fishing in FMAs frequently clash with conservation regulations imposed by DWC within MPAs. While MPAs aim to protect biodiversity, they often restrict fishing activities, leading to disputes and non-compliance. The lack of alternative livelihoods or sustainable resource utilisation plans exacerbates this tension, particularly in areas like the Batticaloa Lagoon, where conservation regulations intersect with intensive resource use.

3.4. Inconsistent Implementation of Laws and Policies

Inconsistent application of laws and policies further complicates the management of overlapping areas. Different agencies enforce their respective mandates without considering the broader ecological or socio-economic impacts. Additionally, laws like the Fisheries and Aquatic Resources Act and the FFPO often lack explicitly laid down guidelines on how to resolve overlapping mandates, leading to varied interpretations and inconsistent enforcement across regions.

3.5. Overlapping Boundaries and Confusion in Management

The lack of clear demarcation of boundaries between MPAs, FMAs, and SMAs causes significant challenges in implementing conservation strategies. Overlapping boundaries also confuse stakeholders, including local communities, who are often unaware of the exact regulations applicable in these areas. This confusion leads to unintentional violations of laws and complicates enforcement efforts.

3.6. Insufficient Enforcement

Weak enforcement of existing laws is a major concern. For example, illegal fishing practices, including the use of destructive gear, often go unchecked in overlapping zones due to resource limitations and fragmented enforcement responsibilities.

3.7. Inadequate Stakeholder Involvement

Local communities, who are key stakeholders in coastal and marine conservation, are often excluded from decision-making processes. This lack of engagement leads to conflicts and reduces the effectiveness of conservation initiatives.

3.8. Outdated Regulations

Several legal provisions, such as the FFPO and Fisheries and Aquatic Resources Act, require updates to address contemporary challenges, including climate change impacts and invasive species management.

3.9. Lack of Comprehensive Zoning Plans

There is no integrated zoning plan that considers the ecological, social, and economic aspects of coastal and marine resource use. This gap results in ad hoc decision-making and conflicting activities.

4. Recommendations for Resolving Conflicts

4.1. Strengthening Coordination Between Agencies

The complexity of managing overlapping Protected Areas (PAs) in Sri Lanka necessitates improved communication and collaboration between the key agencies involved, such as the DWC, DFAR, CC&CRMD, and the MEPA. Enhancing institutional collaboration will reduce jurisdictional conflicts and ensure that conservation efforts are aligned across multiple management frameworks.

One key approach is the establishment of a steering committee (Integrated Institutional Framework) that brings together DWC, CC&CRMD, MEPA, DFAR, and other relevant bodies, including the relevant Ministries. This body would ensure that pollution control, fisheries management, and habitat conservation are harmonised, thereby reducing administrative overlaps and enhancing resource allocation.

4.2. Strengthening Monitoring Systems

Effective monitoring is critical to the success of any marine conservation effort. While some larger fishing vessels are equipped with Vessel Monitoring Systems (VMS), these systems often exclude the smaller, locally operated boats that make up a significant portion of nearshore fishing activity. As a result, many of these artisanal or small-scale vessels remain untracked, creating substantial gaps in enforcement and data collection. To address this challenge, monitoring systems must be enhanced and diversified. This can include a combination of on-site park offices strategically located within or near MPAs, the deployment of well-trained and adequately resourced wardens, and the integration of advanced surveillance technologies. These technologies may include expanded VMS coverage where feasible, as well as low-cost alternatives such as Automatic Identification Systems, mobile app-based reporting tools, and drone surveillance for real-time monitoring of fishing activity. By combining traditional enforcement methods with scalable technology solutions, conservation authorities can achieve a more comprehensive and equitable monitoring framework, one that not only deters illegal, unreported, and unregulated (IUU) fishing, but also promotes accountability and sustainable practices across all segments of the fishing fleet.

4.3. Improving Enforcement Mechanisms

Develop clear, joint enforcement protocols and invest in targeted capacity building for local enforcement agencies. This includes tailored training programs on legal frameworks, surveillance techniques, evidence collection, and conflict resolution. Regular joint patrols involving DWC, CC&CRMD, and community members should be instituted, supported by the integration of surveillance technologies such as drones and GPS tracking to monitor activities effectively. Strengthening these capacities will help deter illegal activities and improve compliance with conservation regulations.

4.4. Enhancing Stakeholder Involvement

Effective management of coastal and marine areas cannot be achieved without the active participation of local communities, fishers, and other stakeholders. To reduce conflicts between conservation goals and resource utilisation, it is crucial to involve local stakeholders in the

decision-making process. Community engagement for all protected area activities ensures that management plans reflect local needs, incorporates traditional knowledge, and fosters a sense of ownership and responsibility for the resources.

Stakeholder inclusion can be achieved through the establishment of community advisory boards, consultation processes, and participatory decision-making forums. Furthermore, integrating local knowledge into scientific research and management practices can provide valuable insights and improve the effectiveness of conservation strategies.

To institutionalize stakeholder engagement, provisions for co-management and community participation within the Fisheries and Aquatic Resources Act should be strengthened by making the establishment and regular operation of Fisheries Management Committees compulsory. These committees should include local fishers and community representatives to ensure their interests are integrated into planning and enforcement decisions.

4.5. Developing Comprehensive Zoning Plans

To ensure the long-term sustainability of marine and coastal ecosystems, it is essential to develop comprehensive and integrated zoning plans that cover not only MPAs but also the broader seascape including coastal waters, nearshore habitats, and, where relevant, zones extending out to the Exclusive Economic Zone. These zoning plans should delineate distinct areas for biodiversity conservation, sustainable fisheries, tourism, industrial use, cultural heritage, and local community activities. Within MPAs, zoning helps define varying levels of protection from strict no-take zones to multiple-use areas enabling more targeted management and enforcement. Beyond MPAs, a broader zoning approach along the entire coastline and into offshore can ensure that activities such as artisanal and industrial fishing, shipping, and coastal development occur in appropriate locations and with appropriate safeguards. Strategically layered zoning allows for better spatial planning, reduces user conflicts, and improves governance coordination across sectors and jurisdictions. Moreover, involving local communities, traditional resource users, and industry stakeholders in the zoning process is key to ensuring legitimacy, equity, and long-term compliance.

4.6. Legal Reforms to Address Jurisdictional Overlaps

When examining the hierarchy of legal acts, it is apparent that the different Acts serve distinct purposes such as conservation, development, and management, with conservation taking priority over development and management concerns. In cases where conflict arises between general and specific laws, established legal principles dictate that the specific law prevails over general provisions. Furthermore, when multiple interpretations of a legal text are possible, the interpretation that best aligns with and addresses the purpose and intention of the legislation should be given priority.

However, the current legal framework lacks clear guidance on managing overlapping areas, leading to confusion, institutional conflict, and operational inefficiencies. Therefore, the inclusion of explicit provisions addressing the governance of overlapping areas is essential to eliminate ambiguity and enhance coordination among responsible authorities.

4.7. Modernising Outdated Regulations

Initiate a comprehensive review and update of existing marine conservation laws. Modern legislation should incorporate adaptive management strategies, address emerging threats, and align with international conventions and standards, ensuring that the regulatory framework remains responsive to current environmental challenges.

5. Case Studies and Lessons Learned

5.1. International Examples of Managing Overlapping Marine Zones

Managing overlapping marine zones has been a challenge in various countries, but successful models offer valuable lessons. A few international examples of managing overlapping areas can offer insight into resolving conflicts and enhancing collaboration.

Australia's Great Barrier Reef: The Great Barrier Reef (GBR) in Australia is one of the world's largest and most complex marine ecosystems. It is managed by multiple agencies, including the Great Barrier Reef Marine Park Authority (GBRMPA), the Queensland Parks and Wildlife Service (QPWS), and the Australian Fisheries Management Authority (AFMA). These agencies are responsible for different management zones that overlap within the Great Barrier Reef, including protected areas, no-take zones, and fishery zones. The GBR is a prime example of integrating conservation goals with sustainable fisheries management, guided by the **Great Barrier Reef Marine Park Act 1975**. The success of the GBR can be attributed to a well-coordinated management framework that integrates research, stakeholder engagement, and adaptive management strategies. Regular communication between government agencies, local communities, and stakeholders has been key to resolving conflicts and ensuring long-term sustainability (For further reading: https://www2.gbrmpa.gov.au/about-us/legislation-and-polices/Legislation?utm_source=chatgpt.com)

United States – Papahānaumokuākea Marine National Monument: This UNESCO World Heritage Site in the United States is an example of a successful model for managing overlapping marine areas. The Papahānaumokuākea Marine National Monument spans a vast area of the Northwestern Hawaiian Islands, involving multiple agencies, including the National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration (NOAA) and the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service (USFWS). This area overlaps with designated fishery management zones, conservation areas, and cultural sites. The management approach emphasises **co-management** between federal agencies and Native Hawaiian communities, providing an excellent model for stakeholder engagement in marine conservation. The monument's management plan incorporates input from local stakeholders and uses traditional knowledge alongside scientific data to resolve conflicts.

These international examples highlight the importance of clear legal frameworks, effective inter-agency collaboration, and the incorporation of local knowledge and stakeholder engagement in managing overlapping marine zones.

5.2. Successful Local Examples of Collaboration in Sri Lanka

Sri Lanka has several successful examples of local collaboration in marine and coastal zone management that can serve as models for resolving conflicts in overlapping zones.

The Negombo Lagoon Management: The management of Negombo Lagoon, which is both an important fishery area and a sensitive ecosystem, has seen collaborative efforts between the CC&CRMD, DFAR, and local fishing communities. The lagoon faces pressures from pollution, overfishing, and habitat degradation, with overlapping responsibilities between agencies. In response, the government introduced an ICZM framework, which incorporates both conservation and livelihood needs. The framework involves regular consultations with local communities and provides a platform for collective decision making, addressing the needs of

both resource users and conservationists. This cooperative approach has led to a reduction in illegal fishing practices and improved water quality in the lagoon.

The Bar Reef Marine Sanctuary: The Bar Reef Marine Sanctuary, located off the coast of Puttalam District, was once considered a strong example of successful local collaboration. Managed by the DWC and the CC&CRMD, with support from local fishing communities and environmental NGOs, the sanctuary initially benefited from a comprehensive management plan introduced in response to overfishing and coral reef degradation. This plan, which ran from 2019 to 2023, included FMAs and helped reduce illegal fishing while boosting marine biodiversity. However, during the METT-4 assessment conducted in 2023/2024, it was noted that the management plan had expired, with most of its actions no longer being implemented or enforced. Community engagement and collaboration once a cornerstone of its success had significantly diminished. Future efforts should focus on updating the management plan, re-establishing local partnerships, and addressing the factors that led to the breakdown in collaboration to ensure more resilient and sustainable management moving forward.

The Kala Oya Estuary and Kokilai Lagoon: The Kala Oya Estuary, located in the northwestern part of Sri Lanka, has long been a hotspot for agricultural activities and fishing. As a result, the CC&CRMD and DFAR have overlapped jurisdictional responsibilities in this area. However, effective collaboration among these agencies, with input from local farmers and fishermen, has resulted in the creation of a Coastal Zone Management Plan that balances conservation efforts with resource use. By designating sustainable fisheries management zones and creating conservation areas, these stakeholders have managed to maintain biodiversity while ensuring that local communities can continue their livelihoods.

These local examples demonstrate the potential for successful collaboration between government agencies and local communities in managing overlapping marine zones in Sri Lanka. These experiences underscore the importance of developing cooperative frameworks that prioritise sustainable resource use and conservation, while ensuring that the needs of local stakeholders are met.

6. Conclusion and Way Forward

This report has explored the management of overlapping marine and coastal protected areas in Sri Lanka, focusing on the complex interactions between MPAs, FMAs, SMAs. Through the identification of overlapping zones, it became clear that while these overlapping areas have the potential to enhance protection and conservation of critical ecosystems, they also present several challenges, particularly with regard to jurisdictional and institutional conflicts.

The legal framework governing the management of these areas involves multiple agencies operating under various laws, including the Fauna and Flora Protection Ordinance, the Fisheries and Aquatic Resources Act, the Coast Conservation and Coastal Resources Management Act, among others.

The challenges outlined include jurisdictional conflicts, inconsistent implementation of laws, and the difficulty of balancing conservation efforts with resource utilisation. Additionally, there is insufficient coordination among management authorities, which often leads to conflicting goals and priorities. These issues, however, also present opportunities for enhanced collaboration, integrated management, and sharing of resources and expertise among agencies.

On the positive side, the benefits of overlapping areas, such as enhanced biodiversity protection, opportunities for joint management, and the potential for integrated coastal zone management, have been highlighted. Successful local examples, like the Negombo Lagoon Management and Bar Reef Marine Sanctuary, demonstrate that coordinated efforts between government agencies and local communities can lead to sustainable management practices.

To enhance the management of Sri Lanka's coastal and marine ecosystems and reduce jurisdictional conflicts, key steps include strengthening coordination among agencies, improving enforcement and monitoring systems, and ensuring meaningful stakeholder participation. Legal reforms are also needed to clarify overlapping areas and modernise outdated regulations, ensuring a more cohesive and responsive governance framework.

In conclusion, while the management of overlapping marine and coastal areas in Sri Lanka presents significant challenges, it also offers an opportunity to adopt innovative, collaborative, and integrated approaches. By addressing institutional conflicts, strengthening legal frameworks, and promoting stakeholder involvement, Sri Lanka can achieve a balanced and sustainable approach to managing its rich and diverse coastal and marine resources for future generations.

7. Annexes

Title	Year	Details
Fauna and Flora Protection Ordinance No. 2 of 1937 (as amended)	1937	The Fauna and Flora Protection Ordinance No.02 of 1937 as amended is the primary piece of legislation that provides for: a) the protection and conservation of the fauna and flora of Sri Lanka and their habitats; b) for the prevention of commercial and other misuse of such fauna and flora and their habitats; (and) c) for the conservation of biodiversity of Sri Lanka. (Fauna and Flora Protection Ordinance, No. 2 of 1937 (as amended), Long title) Under the FFPO, the Minister has the authority to declare a specific area of State land or any part of land in Sri Lanka as Marine National Parks, Marine Reserves and Sanctuaries. (FFPO 1937 as amended, s 2(1), (2) & (3)). The management, regulation, and conservation of MPAs declared under FFPO are vested with the Department of Wildlife Conservation. Entry to Marine National Parks is limited for the purpose of observing the flora and fauna therein (FFPO 1937 as amended, S 3(1)). Moreover, there are various acts prohibited to be carried out in a National Reserve (Marine National Park, Marine Reserve - FFPO 1937 as amended, s 6) such as kill any wild animal, destroy any egg of any bird or do any other act which disturbs or is likely to disturb any wild animal or in any way damage or destroy any plant or introduce any poison, waste material, garbage or any other material which is likely to pollute the water. Moreover, it also illegal to remove any object of archaeological or other scientific interest or any other object of mineral value, within a National Reserve (Marine National Park, Marine Reserve) or a Sanctuary without obtaining prior permission from the DWC (FFPO 1937 as amended, s 6A (2) (a)). Similarly, the Fauna and Flora Protection Ordinance also outlines the activities that are prohibited within a sanctuary.
The Sea Mammals (Observation, Regulation and Control) Regulations, No. 1 of 2012 (Under the FFPO No. 2 of 1937)	2012	These regulations are intended to ensure the peaceful and natural existence of all sea mammals whose natural habitat is within the territorial waters of Sri Lanka and assist to regulate and control vessels used by visitors for the purpose of observing such sea mammals.

Title	Year	Details
Fisheries and Aquatic Resources Act No. 02 of 1996 (as amended)	1996	The Fisheries and Aquatic Resources Act No.02 of 1996 as amended ('FARA') provides for the management, regulation, conservation, and development of fisheries and aquatic resources in Sri Lanka. The Act defines Sri Lanka waters to comprise of the Territorial Sea, Contiguous Zone, Exclusive Economic Zone, historic waters and all other public inland or internal waters (FARA 1996 as amended, s66). 'Fisheries Management Areas' and 'Fisheries Reserves' can be declared under FARA and the management, regulation, and conservation of the declared MPAs are vested with the Department of Fisheries and Aquatic Resources('DFAR'). If there are threats to the sustainability of fish and other aquatic resources in any area, the Minister has the authority to designate the area upon recommendation from the Director General as a Fisheries Management Area (FARA 1996 as amended, s 31). Moreover, with respect to conservation, FARA vests the Minister with the power to declare any area of Sri Lankan waters or any land adjacent to such waters Fisheries Reserves (FARA 1996 as amended, s 36). In a Fisheries Reserve, no person is allowed to engage in fishing operations, mining or collecting corals, sand dredging, waste discharge, or other activities that disturb fish or aquatic resources or their habitats, nor construct structures within a reserve, except with a permit obtained from the Director (FARA 1996 as amended, s 37).

Title	Year	Details
Fisheries (Regulation of Foreign Fishing Boats) Act No. 59 of 1979	1979	This Act regulates, control and manage fishing and related activities by foreign boats in Sri Lankan waters (Long title, Fisheries (Regulation of Foreign Fishing Boats) Act No. 59 of 1979). It prohibits fishing activities conducted by foreign fishing boats unless permits for such activity have been obtained under Section 6 of the Act (Section 4, Fisheries (Regulation of Foreign Fishing Boats) Act No. 59 of 1979). The Minister is empowered to reserve certain areas of Sri Lankan waters for local fishing activities (Section 7, Fisheries (Regulation of Foreign Fishing Boats) Act No. 59 of 1979). The Secretary may for proper management of fisheries in Sri Lanka, include special conditions in the permits issued under Section 6 of the Act and cancel such permits in circumstances where the permits have been issued in contravention of provisions of the Act, or Regulations made under the Act, or any condition specified in the permit (Section 9, Fisheries (Regulation of Foreign Fishing Boats) Act No. 59 of 1979).

Title	Year	Details
Coast Conservation and Coastal Resource Management Act No. 57 of 1981 (as amended) - Hereinafter referred to as 'CC&CRM')	1981	Coast Conservation and Coastal Resource Management Act No.57 of 1981 as amended (CC&CRM') regulates and controls activities within the Coastal Zone. The Act empowers the subject Minister to declare "Affected Areas", "Beach Parks", "Conservation Areas", and "Special Management Areas" to protect and conserve coastal and aquatic ecosystems. "Affected Areas" are declared for any area within the coastal zone, or adjacent to the coastal zone, within any water, within any lagoon, or any peripheral area of the lagoon (CC&CRM 1981 as amended, s 22B(1). It is illegal to carry out development activity within such an "Affected Area" (CC&CRM 1981 as amended, s 22B(2)). The Minister has the authority to make regulations setting out the manner in which these areas are to be administered, and the activities prohibited within such area (CC&CRM 1981 as amended, s 22B(6)). Any area in which special measures need to be taken for the protection of the coastal and aquatic ecosystem can be declared as a "Conservation Area" (CC&CRM 1981 as amended, s 22D (1)). It is prohibited to carry out any development activity or collecting and gathering of aquatic resources within such areas (CC&CRM 1981 as amended, s 22D (2)). The Minister has the authority to make regulations prescribing the manner and mode of administration of such areas, the activities permitted within such areas and the people who may engage in such activities within such areas (CC&CRM 1981 as amended, s 22D (3)). Special Management Area can be declared in respect of any area of land within the Coastal Zone or adjacent to the Coastal Zone or comprising both areas from the Coastal Zone and the adjacent area of land, if it appears that it is necessary to do so due to the need to adopt a collaborative approach to planning resource management within the defined geographic area (CC&CRM 1981 as amended, s 22E). Moreover, the CC & CRM allows the declaration of Beach Parks where it is necessary for the preservation of the scenic beauty and the biodiversity of any area within the Coastal Zone (CC&CRM 1981 as amended, s 22C).

Title	Year	Details
Forest Conservation Ordinance No.16 of 1907 (as amended - Hereinafter referred to as 'FCO')	1907	The Forest Conservation Ordinance No.16 of 1907 as amended (FCO') provides for the conservation, protection, and sustainable management of forest resources (FCO 1907 as amended, Long Title). The Department of Forest Conservation manages forests declared under the FCO. Under the Ordinance, forest areas are declared as Reserved Forests, Conservation Forests, and Village Forests. All other forests (that are not declared under the Ordinance) are protected under Section 20 of the Ordinance. Certain forest areas with marine components such as Mangrove Forests are declared as protected forests under the Ordinance. It is illegal for any person to enter a Mangrove Conservation Forest (with prior approval from the Conservator-General of Forests) except for scientific research, observation of fauna and flora, and for the implementation of the activities prescribed in the Management Plan (FCO 1907 as amended, s 6(1). Section 6(2) and Section 7 state respectively the activities that are prohibited within Mangrove Conservation Forests and Mangrove Forest Reserves. Inter alia it is prohibited to fell, any plant, tree, or timber, remove the bark or leaves of a tree within such forests. Also, it is prohibited to block waterways and pollute or poison water within such forests. The killing of animals, setting traps or snares, use of guns to capture animals, and removing of corals or Mollusca shells within such forest areas are also prohibited. While Sections 6 and 7 ban certain activities in Mangrove Conservation Forests and Mangrove Forest Reserves, Section 8 allows them if approved by an authorized officer of the Forest Department or permitted by regulation from the Minister.

Title	Year	Details
National Environmental Act No.47 of 1980 (as amended - Hereinafter referred to as 'NEA')	1980	The National Environmental Act No.47 of 1980, as amended (NEA') provides for the protection, management, and enhancement of the environment and the regulation, maintenance, and control of the quality of the environment (NEA 1980 as amended, Long Title). The subject Minister is empowered to declare any area to be an 'Environmental Protection Area' (NEA 1980 as amended, s 24C). An important feature of this Act is that there can be regulations to prohibit, restrict, regulate and approve certain types of activities within such areas and these are given effect through regulations (Ministry of Mahaweli Development and Environment, National Biodiversity Strategic Action Plan (2016-2022)).
North-Western Province Environmental Statute No. 12 of 1990 (as amended - Hereinafter referred to as 'NWPES')	1990	The North-Western Province Environmental Statute No. 12 of 1990 (as amended) ('NWPES') applies only to the Northwestern Province of Sri Lanka. The Statute established the North-Western Provincial Environmental Authority. It provides for the protection, management and enhancement of the environment and the regulation, maintenance and control of the quality of the environment (NWPES 1990, Long Title) The subject Minister is empowered to declare areas as EPAs (NWPES 1990, s52).

Title	Year	Details
National Heritage Wilderness Areas Act No. 03 of 1988 (as amended - Hereinafter referred to as 'NHWAA')	1988	The National Heritage Wilderness Areas Act No. 03 of 1988 provides for the declaration of 'National Heritage Wilderness Areas' for the protection and preservation of such areas (NHWAA 1988, Long Title). The subject Minister is empowered by Order published in the Gazette to declare any area of State land for the purpose of preserving in their natural state, unique eco-systems, genetic resources or any outstanding natural features (which constitute the habitat of threatened species of animals and plants of outstanding universal value from the point of view of science or conservation) to be a National Heritage Wilderness Area (NHWAA 1988, s 2(1)). It is prohibited for any person to enter and remain within any National Heritage Wilderness Area unless under the authority of the Conservator of Forests to observe the fauna or flora therein or to conduct such scientific studies (NHWAA 1988, s 3). Also, it is prohibited inter alia to cut, collect, remove, uproot, destroy, damage or sell any plant, pollute water, shoot, trap, use a snare to capture birds and animals, fire any gun or do any other act which disturbs or is likely to disturb any wild animal within any National Heritage Wilderness Area (NHWAA 1988, s 4).

Title	Year	Details
Antiquities Ordinance No. 9 of 1940 (as amended)	1940	The Antiquities Ordinance No. 09 of 1940 (as amended) provides for the better preservation of the Antiquities of Sri Lanka, and of sites and buildings of the historical or archaeological importance in Sri Lanka. In terms of the Ordinance, all undiscovered antiquities (other than ancient monuments), whether lying on or hidden beneath the surface of the ground or in any river or lake or within the territorial sea of Sri Lanka, are deemed to be the absolute property of the State (Section 2 (3)). It is illegal to excavate for the purpose of discovering antiquities without under a license issued by the Director- General of the Department of Archaeology (Section 6). The Minister is empowered under the Act to declare, that any specified monument which has existed or is believed to have existed for a period of not less than a hundred years as an ancient monument (Section 16): - that any tree, whether growing in State land or any other land, is of such historical or archaeological importance as an ancient monument in order to secure the preservation or protection of such tree (Section 17). - that any ancient monument situated on any land other than State land is in danger of destruction or removal, or damage from neglect or injudicious treatment as a protected monument (Section 18). It is a punishable offense to destroy, injure, deface or tamper any protected monument or any ancient monument (Section 31). The Director- General of the Department of Archaeology is empowered to declare any specified area of that land to be an Archaeological Reserve (Section 33). It is illegal to clear/break up for cultivation, cultivate, erect any building, fell or destroy trees within an archeological reserve (Section 33).
Mines and Minerals Act No. 33 of 1992	1992	Mines and Minerals Act No.33 of 1992 (as amended) provides for the establishment of the Geological Survey and Mines Bureau (GSMB) and to regulate the exploration for, mining, transportation, processing, trading in or export of minerals. According to the Act, ownership of minerals is vested in the Republic.

Title	Year	Details
National Aquaculture Development Authority of Sri Lanka Act No. 53 of 1998 (as amended)	1998	This Act ('NAQDA Act') provides for the establishment of the National Aquaculture Development Authority of Sri Lanka ('NAQDA'), to develop aquatic resources and the aquaculture industry; and to make provision for matters connected therewith or incidental thereto (Section 41 of the NAQDA Act No. 53 of 1998 (as amended): Aquaculture, aquaculture enterprises, aquatic resources, fish, fishing boat, shall have the respective meanings assigned to them by the FARA No. 2 of 1996 (as amended). • Aquaculture: husbanding of aquatic plants and organisms ranging from the propagation of aquatic organisms under human control to the manipulation of at least one stage of an aquatic organism's life for the purpose of increasing production. • Aquaculture enterprises: any area, enclosure, pond, impoundment, premises or structure set up or used for the cultivation of aquatic plants or organisms for commercial purposes and includes any cultivated pearl oyster or other shellfish bed, or raft or other structure used for cultivation of pearl oyster or other shellfish • Aquatic resources: living aquatic organisms and includes any seaweed, phytoplankton or other aquatic flora and non-living substances found in an aquatic medium • Fish: any aquatic organism, whether piscine or not, and includes any shellfish, crustacean, pearl oyster, mollusk, holothurian, or aquatic mammal and its young, fry, eggs or spawn and includes zooplankton • Fishing boat: any vessel which in for the time being employed for the purpose of taking of fish and includes its propulsion unit and fishing gear and other equipment.). The licensing for the purpose of aquaculture operations is to be issued by the Director General of Fisheries and Aquatic Resources for that purpose (Section 39 of the FARA No.2 of 1996 (as amended)) or by the Licensing officer appointed by the Director General under Section 40 of FARA. The Minister has the power to make Regulations, inter alia, in respect of the management of aquaculture resources (Section 37 of NAQDA Act No 53 of 1998 (as amended)).

Title	Year	Details
National Aquatic Resources Research and Development Agency (NARA) Act No. 54 of 1981 (as amended)	1981	This Act establishes the National Aquatic Resources Research and Development Agency (NARA - Long title, NARA Act No. 54 of 1981). NARA is assigned with the duty to utilize scientific and technological expertise for the implementation of the national development program on the subject of aquatic resources and to conduct research activities towards the conservation and development of aquatic resources (Section 4, NARA Act No. 54 of 1981 (as amended)).
Maritime Zones Law No. 22 of 1976	1976	The maritime boundaries of Sri Lanka are declared in terms of the Maritime Zones Law No. 22 of 1976. Sri Lankan maritime boundaries comprise of Territorial Sea, a Contiguous Zone, and an Exclusive Economic Zone (EEZ).
Sri Lanka Ports Authority Act No. 51 of 1979 (as amended)	1979	The Sri Lanka Ports Authority Act No. 51 of 1979 (as amended) provides for the establishment of Sri Lanka Ports Authority and to develop, maintain, operate and provide port and other services in the ports of Sri Lanka. It is the duty (Section 6) of the Ports Authority to provide in any specified port efficient and regular services. It is illegal for any person to throw or empty into the harbour or any specified port any ballast, rubbish, dust, ashes, stones or other refuse or things (Section 60). The subject Minister is empowered to make regulations inter alia for the prevention of damage to or pollution of premises of the Ports Authority and the pollution of the water in the harbours (Section 67).
Sri Lanka Sustainable Development Act No. 19 of 2017	2017	The Sustainable Development Act provides for the development and implementation of a national policy and strategy on sustainable development in Sri Lanka and for the establishment of a sustainable development council (Long title, Sri Lanka Sustainable Development Act No. 19 of 2017).
Marine Pollution Prevention Act No. 35 of 2008 (as amended - Hereinafter referred to as 'MEPA')	2008	Marine Pollution Prevention Act No. 35 of 2008 (as amended) provides for the prevention, control, and reduction of pollution in the Sri Lanka waters. The Marine Environment Protection Authority is responsible for the administration of the Act. The Act also regulates the exploration of natural resources including petroleum to prevent pollution from such activities. It is mandatory to obtain a Marine Environment Protection license from the Authority to explore natural resources including petroleum within the waters of Sri Lanka.

Title	Year	Details
Tourism Act No. 35 of 2005 (as amended)	2005	The Tourism Act No. 35 of 2005 (as amended) provides for the establishment of the Sri Lanka Tourism Development Authority (SLTDA) and regulation and monitoring of the tourism industry. All prescribed Tourist Enterprises, Travel or Tourist Services and every person who wishes to be employed in any travel or tourist service must register with SLTDA.