Project Site Comparison Tool User Guide

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EDF
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TOOL DEVELOPERS

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This Project Site Comparison Tool draws from the Fish Forever Rapid Site Assessment process, initially developed by the Fish Forever Partnership of Rare Conservation, the Environmental Defense Fund, and the Sustainable Fisheries Group at the University of California – Santa Barbara.

VERSION

This tool is being released as a beta version that will be updated as we receive feedback from fishery practitioners. The beta designation is a recognition of the value of stakeholder input, which we know will make this tool even more successful in supporting sustainable fisheries management around the world. We invite you to share your feedback on the Sustainable Fisheries Toolkit website.

TOOL COMPONENTS

User Guide
Excel Tool

Any views expressed in this tool and associated materials are those of the authors and do not necessarily represent those of the contributors or their organizations. Any errors are those of the authors. This tool and any supporting materials are decision-support tools and results should be interpreted as such. Neither EDF, nor the authors, take responsibility for any outcomes that result from the use of this tool. The tool is based upon and draws significantly from the "Rapid Site Assessment Tool", initially developed by the Fish Forever partnership.

Rife, A.N., Fine, L., Battista, W. and Sarto, N. (2018). *Project Site Comparison Tool.* Environmental Defense Fund.

BACKGROUND

Fishery practitioners who are working to implement fisheries reform often start with pilot projects in a few sites to test their implementation approach. Goals for determining pilot sites may be to demonstrate proof of concept, to test a new approach, or to scale up a new strategy. Determining these project sites, fisheries or communities to begin working with is an important first step to meet those goals. Project organizers may need to narrow down potentially hundreds of possible coastal communities or fisheries to just a few as they begin a pilot project or expansion of the program. The fitness of a site may be project-dependent and the characteristics of an appropriate site often vary based on the project's goals.

The Project Site Comparison Tool outlines an approach for project organizers to select the most strategically appropriate sites or fisheries based on their project goals. This process and approach is highly modifiable and customizable to project and organizer needs. The Project Site Comparison Tool allows project organizers to predetermine criteria to analyze each site for fitness for a project and provides a structured way to select the site or fishery for engagement. This Tool includes suggested criteria based on the experiences of EDF and our partners in selecting project sites. These criteria can be modified by project organizers in order to meet their needs and goals.

The Project Site Comparison Tool can be used as part of a participatory process with partners to review potential sites or fisheries. The Tool outlines a two phase approach towards deciding where you want to work, based on criteria that are driven by project goals and strategy. First, as it is usually necessary to narrow down potential sites, the Tool outlines a process to do so using high priority "Tier 1" criteria. These criteria are potentially significant barriers to working in a site. Then, additional, more nuanced and detailed "Tier 2" criteria are used to evaluate sites for their potential fit to meet strategic goals. Typically this second level of evaluation is done via site visits, where information is collected via interviews with local stakeholders and observation during a short trip.

Suggested criteria for consideration in the tool cover the following categories: Strategic, Biological-Ecological, Economic, Social, and Governance-Political. These criteria can be customized at the discretion of the project organizers, depending on their needs and goals for the site. Sites are rated using the criteria, and this information is used to guide conversations around site selection.

This User Guide outlines a generic process that can be followed, but at every step of the way, the process can be modified and customized for the specific conditions, considerations, and strategic goals.

Intended Audience

The Project Site Comparison Tool is designed for use by fishery practitioners who are selecting areas to pilot a new project or few expansion of an existing project. The tool can be used to guide and design a process with stakeholders.

When to Use This Tool

The Project Site Comparison Tool is designed to help to select a fishery or site. It is meant to be a rapid process, resulting in enough information to determine if a site has potential or could be a fit to meet programmatic goals. As such, the Project Site Comparison Tool is normally used after the Strategic Scoping phase of the fishery reform process.

Information gained using the Tool is sufficient to make a site selection decision but it is not a thorough diagnosis of the site. Once a fishery site is selected, more information should be collected about the conditions at the site. Information collected using the Project Site Comparison Tool can feed into a tool such as the Diagnostic Scorecard and inform your fishery reform strategy for a given site in the Assessment and Engagement phase. The Project Site Comparison Tool can be used in concert with the Comprehensive Assessment of Risk to Ecosystems (CARE) model, which thoroughly evaluates potential for ecosystem recovery and degree that non-fishing threats may impede project viability.

To complete the site selection process in its entirety takes over one week, especially if applied in workshop settings with partners and site visits are conducted. Scoring may be informed by a participatory process, consultation with experts on the site, and/or through interviews in the field. Sample interview questions are listed for each criterion to help guide scoring or conversations with local experts; they can be modified based on who is being interviewed. You can create a customized questionnaire to prepare for field visits using these questions.

Limitations

The site selection process is a rapid narrowing down and analytical process. It is not a deep diagnosis and is meant to give a snapshot of the situation at a site and illuminate strategic considerations and if the site could serve as a good pilot to meet programmatic goals. Information gained during site selection is necessarily limited and will need to be improved upon during the Assessment & Engagement phase.

INSTRUCTIONS

Getting started

This user guide is designed to walk you through the Project Site Comparison Tool. The Tool is divided into multiple tables: (1) Overview, (2) Instructions, (3) Sites and Scores, (4) Tier 1 Criteria, and (5) Tier 2 Criteria.

To begin, **open the Project Site Comparison Tool Excel file**, which will open on the Introduction tab.

Before you begin

Before you begin it is important to understand how the Tool divides site selection criteria into two tiers. Tier 1 criteria are critical considerations that may indicate major barriers for a site.

Tier 2 criteria are important secondary factors for site selection. Within each tier, criteria are divided into five categories (Strategic, Biological and Ecological Criteria, Governance and Political Criteria, Economic Criteria, and Social Criteria).

For both Tier 1 and Tier 2, there is an option to add project-specific criteria that project organizers want to consider during the site selection process. If criteria are added, indicators should be clearly described and the criteria should be used consistently for all evaluated sites in that region.

In addition, before going through the site selection process, it is important to first set the goals for site selection and what you want to accomplish by working there. Potential goals include:
- Identify pilot sites for a new project
- Expand existing work
- As part of a scaling strategy

Step 1: Customize and finalize tier 1 (high priority) criteria

Navigate to the "Tier 1" worksheet. The Tier 1, high priority criteria are meant to be criteria which, if not met, are reasons to not work at a given site/community or in a certain fishery. As such, these criteria should be high level and of high importance and consideration. The criteria listed in the spreadsheet are a starting point for determining which criteria to use for your own process. Criteria cover the following categories:
- Strategic
- Biological and Ecological
- Governance and Political
- Economic
- Social
- Project-Specific

Begin by reviewing and customizing these criteria to meet your project goals and strategic needs. Edits can be made to the descriptions themselves and to the scoring guidelines, depending on strategic goals. Criteria can also be deleted. At the bottom of the worksheet, in rows 32-36, there is space to enter in additional criteria which you may want to consider.

As Tier 1 criteria are highly important to project success and potential major barriers to implementation, they are automatically weighted by 4 in the final scoring system. The weight can be changed if desired. See Section "Weighting and Overall Score Calculation" below for more information.

Step 2: Nominate sites for analysis

The second step is to nominate sites for analysis. Nomination of sites can be done in a number of ways: by consultation with experts, a participatory process with partners in the area of interest, recommendations by trusted partners, or others, or by conducting background research around the communities and fisheries within a given geography.

In the "Sites and Scores" worksheet, enter the region/country you're working in in cell C3. List the names of the sites/fisheries you are analyzing in Cells D5 through M5. These names will automatically populate in the rest of the workbook. Up to 10 sites can be compared in this workbook; if more than 10 sites are being considered, use additional copies of the workbook.

Step 3a: Score sites using Tier 1 criteria

Move back to the "Tier 1" worksheet. For each criteria, score each site as "OK," "Concern," or "Major Barrier" based on the indicator descriptions. The Interview Questions column lists potential questions to ask stakeholders or partners in order to score that particular criteria. It also indicates if desk research may be sufficient to determine the score.

The number of criteria labelled as Major Barriers and Concerns are summed at the bottom of the sheet. Total scores are automatically calculated and summarized by category in the "Sites and Scores" tab. A more negative score indicates a less desirable site.

Step 3b: Narrow down and prioritize sites for further analysis

In some cases, you will not be visiting all nominated sites for further analysis and need to narrow down or prioritize sites. After completing the "Tier 1" scoring, review the results of the Tier 1 criteria and make strategic decisions on which sites are to be removed from consideration. The information gained in Tier 1 helps to inform these conversations and decisions. The summarized scores in the "Sites and Scores" tab can be a useful reference. If there are one or more Major Barriers at a site, close consideration should be given to whether they could be overcome to allow for successful work at that site. Many Major Barriers most likely mean a site should not be selected.

Step 4: Customize and finalize Tier 2 criteria

Navigate to the "Tier 2" worksheet. This sheet lists a variety of criteria that might be important to determine whether or not a given site or fishery is a good potential fit for your site. Review and customize these criteria as needed based on your project goals. The Tier 1 criteria scores will be automatically carried over into the "Sites and Scores" tabs, so it is not necessary to re-enter any criteria for consideration.

As with Tier 1, the criteria listed in the spreadsheet are criteria which EDF has applied in the past, and are meant to be used as a starting point or suggestions for considerations. Also as above, the criteria cover the following categories:
- Strategic
- Biological and Ecological
- Governance and Political
- Economic
- Social
- Project-Specific

Review and customize these criteria to meet your project goals and strategic needs. Edits can be made to the descriptions themselves and to the Indicators for scoring guidelines. Criteria can

also be deleted. At the bottom of the worksheet, in rows 31-35, there is space to enter in additional criteria that project organizers may want to consider.

All Tier 2 criteria are automatically weighted by "1". If some criteria are higher priority than others or you wish to give them more consideration in the final score, then you can change the weight as necessary in Column D. These will be automatically considered in the final scoring. See Section "Weighting and Overall Score Calculation" below for more information.

Step 5a: Score sites based on Tier 2
Score the site between 1 and 5 for each criteria based on the indicator descriptions, with 1 indicating a poor score and 5 indicating a good score. The scores of "2" and "4" are left undefined in order to reflect the occasional uncertainty with scoring.

Step 5b: Conduct site visits / additional data collection
Often, it is necessary to conduct site visits and collect additional information following a rapid site assessment process in order to score sites on the Tier 2 criteria.

The Interview Questions column lists potential questions to ask stakeholders or partners in order to score that particular criteria. You can use these questions as a starting point to creating questionnaires to use during your site visits. Generally, we recommend approximately one to one and a half days in a site, with visits to local markets and ports and interviews with fishers and government leaders and other stakeholders as appropriate and possible in order to gather information to inform scoring decisions. We recommend scoring each site immediately following the site visit.

Step 6: Prioritize and select sites
After all site visits are complete and each site has been scored, you can review the cumulative scores for each site across Tier 1 and Tier 2 criteria in the "Scores and Sites" tab. This gives you a summary of the quantitative performance of your site. See Section "Weighting and Overall Score Calculation" below for guidance on interpreting scores and weighting criteria, if you choose to do so.

The quantitative score for your site can give you an indication of the potential fit of each site for your fishery project. If a site scored poorly in Tier 1, you may end up with a negative overall score. Graphs are automatically generated to give visual representation of scores across categories.

In the end, the determination of sites should be done by project organizers through conversation and discussion about the pros and cons of each site. Information gathered, and numerical scores, are meant to provide insight and an unbiased analysis of each site.

Weighting and overall score calculation
- All criteria can be weighted to better represent priorities for site selection in a country. As a default, all Tier 1 criteria are weighted as a 4 and all Tier 2 criteria are weighted as a

1. These weights can be adjusted, though Tier 1 criteria should generally be weighted more highly than Tier 2. A weight of 0 indicates that a criterion is not at all important for site selection in that country.

- All weights should be held constant across all evaluated sites in a given country so that results are directly comparable.
- The overall Tier 1 score is calculated as the sum of each Tier 1 criterion score multiplied by the weight for that criterion (Major Concern=-5, Concern=-3, OK=0). A more negative score in Tier 1 indicates a less desirable site.
- The overall Tier 2 score is calculated as the sum of each Tier 2 criterion score multiplied by the weight for that criterion. A higher score indicates a more desirable site.
- To calculate a total score, the negative Tier 1 score is added to the Tier 2 score.
- Scores are recorded in the "Sites and Scores" worksheet. Higher total scores indicate preferred sites.