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This document is a synthesis of *Les aires marines protégées d'Afrique de l'Ouest. Gouvernance et politiques publiques* (Weigel et. al, 2007) which proposes an analytical framework to study the governance of MPAs in the LDCs, drawing on four sources of inspiration: (i) the interactive fisheries governance approach; (ii) the risk governance approach; (iii) the socioanthropology of mediations and brokerage; and (iv) the governance analytical framework. The framework indicates the five issues that must be addressed in order to operationalize the concept of governance in LDC MPAs: (i) definition of the problem or the issue at stake; (ii) identification of the set of relevant governance norms; (iii) presentation of the actors involved in the governance process; (iv) highlighting the nodes around which actors' strategies converge; and (v) recalling the processes that have led to the current state of governance. This analytical framework makes it possible to characterize the governance system of each of the MPAs considered and to develop a typology of these systems. The characterization of different governance systems highlights their weaknesses and paves the way for new public policy options and, more generally, for the restructuring of governance to correct these weaknesses.

In order to develop an analytical framework and the characterization of governance systems the main MPA governance principles and constraints, as well their legal context, were clarified. This was done by testing the proposed methodology in three West African coastal and marine protected areas, which illustrated the difficulties of governance in LDCs: the Banc d'Arguin National Park in Mauritania, the Saloum Delta Biosphere Reserve in Senegal, and the Bolama Bijagos Archipelago Biosphere Reserve in Guinea-Bissau. The analysis of demographic and economic constraints in these West African MPAs showed the importance of: (i) increasing population density and mobility; (ii) the intensification of resource exploitation; and (iii) and the opening of the MPA economy. The analysis of the legal and institutional contexts showed the international inspiration of the MPA objectives and conservation arrangements, and the syncretism of the legal system.

