

Catalonia Management Effectiveness Evaluation

Material in this summary is extracted from Mallarach (2006)

Organisation/ Affiliation

Institució Catalana d'Història Natural – ICHN (Catalan Institution of Natural History)

Primary reference

Mallarach, J.M. and Varga, J.V. (Eds.) 2004 EI PEIN deu anys després: balanç i perspectives. Diversitas: 50, Universitat de Girona, Girona, pp 29-40.:
[http:// www.iec-ichn/ichn](http://www.iec-ichn/ichn)

Mallarach, J.M (ed) (2005); Protegits de dret o de fet? Avaluació de l'efectivitat del sistema d'espais naturals protegits de Catalunya. Institució Catalana d'Història Natural, Barcelona

Purposes

- ✓ to improve management (adaptive management)
- ✓ for accountability/ audit
- ✓ for prioritisation and resource allocation
- ✓ to raise awareness and support

Brief description of methodology

The assessment studied the entire system of natural protected areas of Catalonia, Spain, which includes 148 protected areas (21% of Catalonia's land area), from a medium size National Park in the Pyrenees mountains, to small island nature reserves in the Mediterranean Sea. Catalan and Spanish legislation establish 20 different types of protected natural areas, which correspond to I-V IUCN categories. In Catalonia, there is a large majority of category V protected areas.

The evaluation of the protected areas system of Catalonia, Spain (2002-03) was the first to assess the effectiveness of an entire system of protected areas within Spain, and one of the first in the European Union to be conducted by an external, independent scientific organization, based on the IUCN-WCPA Framework.

The evaluation of protected areas was conducted by the Catalan Institution for Natural History (*Institució Catalana d'Història Natural*, ICHN), the oldest and most influential scientific organization in Catalonia. The evaluation was external, participatory and independent, though it received the support and collaboration of the Ministry for the Environment and Housing, as well as economic support from Foundation *Territori i Paisatge de Caixa Catalunya* (a savings bank) and the *Diputació de Girona* (a local authority). In addition, several research centres from three Catalan universities collaborated in the evaluation, helping in the application of a limited number of indicators for the entire system (Mallarach 2006).

Objectives and application

The project aimed to:

- Assess the condition of the entire system of 148 protected areas of Catalonia; and
- Based on the results of assessment, propose actions for improvement when needed.

The project also aimed to test, refine and be a reference for evaluation methodology, at least in Spain, and may be in other Mediterranean countries, based on the IUCN-WCPA Framework (Mallarach 2006).

The goals of the project were:

- to introduce the practice of protected area evaluation to Spain following a sound, internationally accepted methodology
- to disseminate the findings of the evaluation to the public
- to help improve the condition of the protected areas system in Catalonia

(Mallarach 2006)

System origins

In 1999, the Institució Catalana d'Història Natural proposed a project to evaluate the effectiveness of the entire system of natural protected areas of Catalonia, and was able to persuade the responsible public agencies and private organizations to cooperate, providing the necessary information and some funding.

The methodology was developed with indicators based on the IUCN-WCPA Framework.

Strengths

- The positive impact that a committed NGO can make on assessing the management of protected areas, even in countries which lack tradition in this matter. The active participation and support of the Ministry of the Environment and Housing proved to be very useful.
- The value of an iterative, participatory process to adapt the IUCN-WCPA Framework to a particular situation. The pilot plan allowed substantial refinements, even at the end of the process when further simplifications were introduced.
- The critical importance of the support of the key agencies, local governments, and other private NGOs, without which the evaluation could not have been performed.
- The positive reaction of most stakeholders: policy-makers, managers, planners and evaluators – who all acknowledged that they have learned a great deal from this evaluation.
- Outcome indicators are more complete than most methodologies and include impacts on communities as well as on natural systems.

Primary constraints and weaknesses

- The complexity of coordinating over one hundred different evaluators with different backgrounds, experience levels and knowledge of protected areas.
- The necessity to provide the appropriate training and ensure an effective coordination to the evaluators during the entire process.
- The frequent difficulty of getting significant data from public local and regional authorities that are not used to being evaluated and have a variable level of distrust towards this process.
- For some types of protected areas (mainly Strict Nature Reserves, Wildlife Reserves and some Nature Parks) the problems identified are so serious that it is advisable to undertake evaluations at the individual protected area level, as soon as possible.

How the methodology is implemented

Since it was the first protected area evaluation to be conducted in Spain, it took a long time to set up, develop and complete the process of assessment. The main steps in this process are summarised below:

- In November 2000 the ICHN organized a workshop to adapt the IUCN-WCPA Framework to the particular situation of Catalonia. Next, six reporters worked on the first draft of 87 indicators. During 2001 the definition of the indicators was completed,

and funding was secured to conduct a pilot plan. In February 2002, a seminar was held about the scope of the evaluation and the methodology to be used.

- From March to May 2002 a pilot evaluation was conducted in seven protected areas, representing a sample of the system: from large mountain natural parks, to small steppe natural areas or marine strict nature reserves. The purpose was to test the methodology and refine and adjust the indicators. In July 2002 the coordinators organized seven seminars in different parts of Catalonia to explain the methodology to the 130 evaluators, making sure that everybody had a sufficient understanding of it. Then began the actual data compilation for evaluation, which lasted six months.
- Once the protected area evaluations were completed, the evaluators sent all the forms in electronic format to the managers, asking them to comment on the findings. Once this step was completed, both the evaluation and the managers' comments were sent to the secretariat of the ICHN, where all the forms were reviewed and checked for completion and coherence. When a problem was found, the responsible evaluator was required to solve it.
- In January 2003, data analysis began. The next two months were spent elaborating the proposed analysis with the input of all the evaluators. Later, several workshops were conducted to discuss the analysis, until a consensus was reached to validate the interpretation.
- From September 2003 to the present the methodology and results of the evaluation project have been presented at four levels: Catalonia, Spain, Europe and the international community.

Elements and indicators

Six sets of indicators were developed based on the IUCN-WCPA Framework: context (21); planning and legislation (13); means or inputs (15); processes (1); activities/services or outputs (13), and results or outcomes (22). The reason for developing so many indicators was an attempt to be as rigorous and comprehensive as possible. For the entire list of indicators, see below. For a complete description of each indicator and its associated form, see www.ies/ichn.es (currently only in Catalan).

Context indicators	Conservation value of geology
	Conservation value of flora and vegetation
	Conservation value of vertebrate fauna
	Conservation value of invertebrate fauna
	Conservation value of domestic traditional breeds
	Presence of habitats of European significance
	Spiritual, cultural or historical relevance
	Dimensions
	Shape
	Ecological reconstitution stage
	Fragmentation
	Ecological connectivity
	Fire risk
	Geological risk
	Urban pressures
	Infrastructure pressures
	Threats significance
	Population
	Sectoral work force

	Area with economic production
	Visitors
Planning and Legislation indicators	IUCN equivalent category
	Adequacy of existing legal protection
	International designations
	Adequacy of design
	Coherence of the protected natural areas system
	Land ownership
	Natural resources management planning level
	Existence and adequacy of the protected area management plan
	Time span between the declaration of the protected area and the approval of the management plan
	Conservation categories included on the management plan
	Public participation during the elaboration of the management plan
	Dissemination of the management plan
	Management of the protected area annual report
Means (inputs)	Staff by type of contract
	Staff by functional responsibility
	Participation of volunteers
	Public participation on the board
	NGOs and corporations making contributions
	Facilities inside the protected natural area
	Facilities outside (around) the protected area
	Fire prevention plan and management
	Use of new technologies
	Environmentally friendly facilities
	Access with motor vehicles
	Budget
	Level of economic autonomy
	Adequacy of the available resources
	Funding sources
Processes	One single indicator to measure how the different processes taking place for the management of the protected areas follow a formal pattern
Activities and services (outputs)	Number of visitors making use of the protected area facilities
	Physical identification of boundaries and accesses
	Informative panels
	Sign posted paths and trails
	Staff devoted to the attendance of visitors
	Litigation and prosecution
	Mandatory consultation reports
	Technical and economic support to local population
	Scientific publications
	Popular publications
	Research related to management
	Educational activities
	Execution of activities included in programs
Results (outcomes)	Changes in key geologic features or elements
	Changes in key species
	Changes in key habitats
	Local extinction of species
	Land use/land cover changes
	Negative impacts due to legal activities
	Changes of rivers ecological conditions
	Eutrophication of marine waters
Changes on the quality of groundwater	

	Impact of wildfires
	Shape and dimension changes
	Changes on the condition of historical and cultural heritage
	Changes on the number of visitors
	Changes on education and sensitivity
	Changes on the perception of quality of the natural environment and the landscape
	Monitoring and research
	Economic activity that has been induced (by the protection of the natural area)
	Number of jobs that have been created
	Changes on the (local population) average family earnings
	Changes on the local population types of jobs
	Changes in the number of farms
	Demographic changes in the local population

References

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Mallarach, J. M. 2006. Case Study III: Evaluation of the Protected Areas System of Catalonia, Spain in M. Hockings, S. Stolton, N. Dudley, F. Leverington, and J. Courrau, editors. *Evaluating effectiveness: a framework for assessing the management of protected areas* second edition. IUCN Best Practice Protected Area Guidelines Series, Gland, Switzerland and Cambridge, UK.