

Protected Areas Management Effectiveness Information Module

Methodology Description

TNC Parks in Peril - Site Consolidation Index

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1.1 Organisation

The Nature Conservancy (TNC) and the US Agency for International Development (USAID)

1.2 Primary methodology reference

The Nature Conservancy. 2004. *Measuring Success: The Parks in Peril Site Consolidation Scorecard Manual*. Arlington, VA: The Nature Conservancy. 56 pp.
<<http://www.parksinperil.org/howwework/methods/scorecard.html>>

1.3 Brief description of methodology

TNC established this monitoring tool for its program Parks in Peril (PiP) to understand the processes and capacities needed for the conservation of individual protected areas and to allow protected area managers to measure progress.

Parks in Peril focuses on strengthening conservation NGOs and agencies in countries where protected areas may have been designated on paper, but the realistic means for protecting them are lacking. Parks in Peril fosters the local support necessary for conserving protected areas using a process called 'site consolidation'. Site consolidation is the process of bringing together the resources necessary to support long-term conservation in specific protected areas. These resources include financial resources, technical resources, human resources, adequate infrastructure, a supportive local constituency, strong capacity for strategic planning, political support, and ecological information.

A consolidated site is one in which the institutions charged with its management have the tools to deal with current threats and management challenges, as well as the capacity to respond to threats that arise in the future. To manage this process, TNC developed the Parks in Peril Site Consolidation Scorecard. This tool helps site managers to set priorities for building conservation capacity, measure progress, and apply adaptive management to improve program efficiency and impact.

1.4 Purposes

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

1.5 Objectives and application

The Site Consolidation Scorecard was designed to measure the effectiveness of the investment in protected areas in the Parks in Peril program. It serves to:

- Set multi-year, life-of-project objectives for Parks in Peril sites using standard criteria across a portfolio of protected areas;
- Allow project managers to track progress towards site consolidation at specific protected areas over time;

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- Allow Parks in Peril program managers to track advances across the entire program/ portfolio of protected areas;
- Enable TNC and USAID to recognize when the objectives of the Parks in Peril Program have been met at particular protected areas;
- Promote adaptive management by providing a planning and monitoring framework; Encourage accountability for performance;
- Raise awareness for systematic assessment of conservation capacity over time; and
- Attract future funding and technical resources by demonstrating documented excellence in conservation management.

The Parks in Peril program has operated in 40 countries in Latin America and the Caribbean region since 1990. The Scorecard has been used 271 times across 45 protected areas since 1997. It was revised in 2004, with

- Greater integration – elements are cross-referenced
- Vision-based consolidation (strategic planning first)
- Documentation section
- Site constituency section enhanced

The Scorecard is not designed to measure direct conservation impact or a protected area's success in reducing threats and conserving biodiversity. Instead, it measures processes that lead to site consolidation and the capacity for conservation of a given protected area. When properly developed and implemented, a site-specific monitoring plan, included as one of the 17 indicators, will provide an ongoing measure of conservation impact through changes in threat and biodiversity health indicators.

PiP employed the Site Consolidation Scorecard so that over the life of its investment in a site, managers could set goals that, if met, would create a sustainable conservation presence to conserve and protect the site into the foreseeable future. PiP's intensive investment in this site would be limited to this period; after this period, smaller investments by TNC, USAID or others might be necessary to generate specific products to aid management, but supplementing the development of basic management capacity would not be necessary (Martin and Rieger 2003).

The Scorecard approach has since been applied in protected areas outside the Parks in Peril program and has also been adapted by a number of other programs. It was recently adapted and used in a study to evaluate two protected areas in Austria and Germany (Pfleger 2007).

1.6 Origins

The Scorecard was developed based on experiences in the field between 1990 and 1997 (Martin and Rieger 2003). A tested and revised version was published in 1999, and further revision made for the version published in 2004. Another version is forthcoming in 2007 based on the latest work of the conservation community regarding protected area management effectiveness, lessons learned in the field, and mandates of the Convention on Biological Diversity's Program of Work on Protected Areas.

1.7 How the methodology is implemented

The methodology is implemented using a participatory process involving protected area managers and key stakeholders to facilitate communication and negotiation of management decisions. The steps are:

- Form a team of managers and key stakeholders
- Compile information, define and document baseline scores at beginning of project:

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Where are we now?

- Set targets, and define changes necessary to reach the targets: Where do we want to be?
- Develop strategies: How will we get there?
- Revisit, adjust scores and targets annually: feedback loop for adaptive management (Martin 2005)

The Site Consolidation Scorecard was designed to be used by a program with specific funding sources in order to sustain its use at protected areas over the short to medium term. It is used in conjunction with complementary tools (i.e., TNC's Conservation Action Planning to define outcomes and TNC's Institutional Self-Assessment (ISA) to marshal resources for project implementation) (Martin 2005).

As one of the first steps in the process, Scorecard users should define what changes in the protected area constitute each benchmark of the Scorecard. For example, Scorecard users should define at the *outset* the changes in infrastructure that will qualify for each of the five benchmark levels. What buildings and equipment are needed and where in order to qualify for a level of '4' within the indicator for infrastructure? This reduces subjectivity and assists development of site activities by making goals more explicit.

The Site Consolidation Scorecard should be accompanied with guidance and technical assistance for its application in order to maximize its effectiveness and improves quality control and consistency across protected areas.

While the Scorecard is designed to measure a protected area's progress towards consolidation, it is not designed to measure direct conservation impact or a protected area's success in reducing threats and conserving biodiversity. Instead, it measures *processes* that lead to the consolidation of a protected area and the *capacity* of a given site. When properly developed and implemented, a site-specific *monitoring plan*, included as one of the 17 indicators, will provide an ongoing measure of conservation impact through changes in threat and biodiversity health indicators.

1.8 Elements and indicators

The Scorecard separates the elements of a functioning protected area into four major categories:

- strategic planning;
- basic on-site protection;
- long-term financing; and
- a supportive local constituency for the protected area.

Within these categories, the Scorecard provides 17 indicators with which to measure consolidation.

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Indicator for the Site Consolidation Scorecard Methodology (2004 version)

1.9 Scoring and analysis

Each of the 17 Scorecard indicators is rated according to five benchmarks.

Each of the five benchmarks reflects a similar level of progress across all the indicators.

The levels can be summarized roughly as follows:

5 =Excellent (proper management of the protected area ensured)

4 =Adequate (protected area is adequately managed for the most critical threats and highest priority conservation targets)

3 =Progress made (protected area becoming adequately managed, but still has progress to make)

2 =Work begun (little actual progress towards adequate management of the protected area)

1 =No work has been done (protected area not being managed)

As a general rule, a protected area that has achieved a score of '4' in all 17 indicators is considered consolidated. The specific circumstances of individual protected areas will vary, and it is the role of the portfolio's manager and in-country partners to determine the level of achievement for each indicator that best represents the consolidation of a given protected area. On a case-by-case basis, the portfolio's manager and the partners may decide that certain indicators do not apply to a given protected area; they may also decide that it will not be possible to boost every indicator to a level of '4' or greater. Ideally, this should be established at the beginning of the project, when baseline conditions are being determined (The Nature Conservancy Parks in Peril Program 2004).

1.10 Further reading and reports

Reports for protected areas in Latin America and the Caribbean and the Parks in Peril Site Consolidation methodology can be downloaded by [clicking here](#)