Mexico SIMEC – System of Information, Monitoring and Evaluation for Conservation

1.1 Organisation

National Commission of Protected Areas of Mexico (CONANP)

1.2 Primary methodology reference

Comisión Nacional de Áreas Naturales Protegidas (CONANP). Resumen Ejecutivo del Sistema de Información, Monitoreo y Evaluación para la conservación – SIMEC. México, 2007.

1.3 Brief description of methodology

The methodology is a rapid assessment based on a scorecard questionnaire. The scorecard includes all six elements of management identified in the IUCN-WCPA Framework (context, planning, inputs, process, outputs and outcomes), but has an emphasis on context, planning, inputs and processes. It is basic and simple to use, and provides a mechanism for monitoring progress towards more effective management over time. It is used to enable park managers and donors to identify needs, constraints and priority actions to improve the effectiveness of protected area management.

The system has been built with strategic indicators to measure the performance in the application of public policy designed for the conservation of the Priority Conservation Regions in the country, which encompass Mexico's protected areas.

1.4 Purposes

- ✓ to improve management (adaptive management)
- ✓ for accountability/ audit

1.5 Objectives and application

The general objective of the SIMEC is to establish a system to integrate biological, geographic, social and economical indicators to allow the analysis of management effectiveness and impact of public policy in the priority conservation regions of Mexico.

The system is based in three main streams: information, monitoring and evaluation, organised as sub-systems with differentiated activities, interacting with each other. The interaction between information and evaluation enables an understanding of institutional goals, according to the strategic indicators in the Working Programs (2001-2006 and 2007-2012). Evaluation and monitoring are combined to show the impact of the institutional programs in conservation, through the actions established in the biological, environmental, ecosystems and social monitoring projects. Finally, the crossing of information and monitoring is used to analyse species population tendencies and ecological and social processes, through the use and analysis of databases.

1.6 Origins

The design of the system started with the revision and analysis of several methodologies (IUCN, The Nature Conservancy, WWF, and de Faria) used to measure management effectiveness in other countries of Latin America, and the establishment of an internal

consultation network in the planning phase, with representatives of the PA central offices. Indicators and their relationships were established and so were the annual goals for each indicator. Existing information was compiled and the information and evaluation tool was socialized internally in the National PA Commission (CONANP).

1.7 How the methodology is implemented

At the start of 2004, CONANP's Evaluation and Monitoring Directorate organized an internal workshop to revise its Strategic and Operation Plans of each Process and Project included in the 2001-2006 Program of Work. The workshop was based in the assessments made in 2002 and 2003 of each process and project and, as a result, the 53 indicators used were classified in four different categories:

- impact, referring to the efforts to mitigate environmental degradation;
- results, related to changes in the environment (biotic, abiotic, and human) resulting from actions of projects or programs;
- management, used to measure the accomplishment of the institutional objectives and to relate the results with the demands of the society; and
- administrative and/or support, to determine the performance and technical capabilities of the human resources in the achievement of goals and activities assigned to a certain administrative unit.

As a result of the workshop, the indicators have been reduced to a total of 28: 16 are related to processes and the other 12 refer to projects, both defined in the CONANP's program of work (see list in the next section).

The SIMEC is used to assess every one of the Regional Units of the CONANP every trimester and at the end of the year the results are summarized in an annual evaluation.

As part of the development of the SIMEC, the country has also been working on a gap analysis of priority regions for conservation and in the analysis of CONANP's capabilities, in order to contribute to improve protected area administration and management, and the conservation of ecosystems and biodiversity.

As part of the diagnosis of capabilities, the RAPPAM methodology was adapted and applied in seven workshops, encompassing all Mexican states, resulting in the collection of information for 103 federal and 40 state protected areas. Based in the identification of pressures, threats and weaknesses, an analysis of the necessary capabilities to be developed in the regional and national levels was carried out. Additionally, 400 questionnaires were applied to the CONANP staff and civil organizations in the country and a work group developed recommendations and strategies to strengthen the institutional capabilities and the professional development of the protected area managers.

The results of the RAPPAM analysis (not available yet) have been combined with the results of the SIMEC (System of Information, Monitoring and Evaluation for Conservation) to obtain quantitative and qualitative information.

1.8 Elements and indicators

There are 28 indicators related to the evaluation of management of the Federal System of PA in Mexico, listed bellow. The first 16 indicators are related to processes and the other 12 indicators refer to projects defined in the CONANP program of work.

Source: Leverington *et al.,* 2008. 'Management Effectiveness evaluation in protected areas – a global study. Supplementary Report No1: Overview of approaches and methodologies.' The University of Queensland, Gatton, TNC, WWF, IUCN-WCPA, AUSTRALIA.

1. Investment in the PA from alternate sources (millions of Pesos per year)
2. Number of PA with at least one economic tool or mechanism to encourage conservation
3. Number of PA with national and international cooperation projects
4. Percentage of the PA surface in the process of active or passive restoration
5. Number of permissions issued (for commerce, tourism, recreation, film)
6. Number of programs of conservation and management finished
7. Number of projects of conservation of priority species in curse
8. Area of the Conservation Priority Region with sustainable management
9. Number of work days contracted per year (related to conservation building or soil restoration)
10. Percentage of the Conservation Priority Region with sustainable management (what is the difference between this and 4.1?)
11. Total number of appliers for support (related to producer's training)
12. Number of government bodies which participate in conservation initiatives
13. Number of bodies participating in projects of conservation and/or management of ecosystems (related to social participation)
14. Medium or high level staff accomplishing with their individual training program
15. Total area of PA created per year
16. Total area of the PA with conservation certificates (accredited?)
17. PA with strategic communication materials to create a conservation culture
18. Number of events which contribute to create a conservation culture
19. Number of PA with ecotourism initiatives
20. Number of PA with personal, material and financial resources for its basic operation
21. PA with a program of control and vigilance in coordination with the "PROFEPA"
22. PA with effective co-administration of initiatives and resources with the local government and/or the civil society
23. Percentage of the Conservation Priority Region with initiatives to strengthen social and institutional participation
24. Number of communities in the Conservation Priority Region participating in conservation initiatives
25. Fundraise (millions of Pesos per year) – not clear if it is related to the access fees or general)
26. Number of PA which monitors at least one flag species population
27. PA with research initiative taken by other bodies
28. PA where the rhythm of conversion of natural ecosystems is maintained or reduced

1.9 Scoring and analysis

The indicators in the PA system evaluation receive a score related to the general goals set by theme or activity as well as to the yearly goal in the program of work.

1.10 Further reading and reports

http://www.conanp.gob.mx/dcei/simec/

Source: Leverington *et al.,* 2008. 'Management Effectiveness evaluation in protected areas – a global study. Supplementary Report No1: Overview of approaches and methodologies.' The University of Queensland, Gatton, TNC, WWF, IUCN-WCPA, AUSTRALIA.