

**Plenary presentation text – Marc Hockings Plenary 2 Workshop streams
Evaluating Management Effectiveness**

As we enter the 21st Century over 11% of the earth's land surface is in some form of protected area. As Queen Noor and Nelson Mandela commented, this is a remarkable achievement for conservation, and shows the importance that we give to protecting biodiversity and cultural values.

So, we are well on the way to building a diverse and robust system of protected areas that span the globe from tropical forests to icy tundras.

Or are we?

I would like each of you to think about a protected area that you know well. Imagine that someone asked you these questions?

What is the state of the park?

How healthy are its ecosystems?

Are they in a better or worse condition than 5 years ago?

Are its cultural values intact?

What impact is park management having on indigenous and local communities?

What are the current and emerging threats? Are these being effectively addressed by current management practices?

Are there sufficient funds for management?

Do staff have access to the training that they require?

If you can answer these questions with any degree of confidence, you are in a minority. If you can answer these questions for all the protected areas in your region, you are probably unique.

How we can go about addressing these questions is what the workshop on the Evaluating Management Effectiveness is all about.

If we were doctors doing a health check on protected areas worldwide I suspect that we would find that some sites should be on the critical list with their injuries and diseases obvious to even the casual observer. Others might be in declining health – still breathing but rapidly losing their values. Some might seem outwardly healthy but disease lurks within and the preconditions for a heart attack are accumulating. Some, thankfully, are in the peak of fitness. However, the reality is that we have few doctors and mostly we don't know how healthy our protected areas are.

Taking the pulse of park management is not easy. Declining health in natural systems can be a long slow process and the outward signs might not be obvious. Commonly, we lack the basic knowledge of what a healthy park looks like. In most cases we don't know simply because we don't undertake even basic checks.

In terms of our medical analogy – we don't EVEN take the patient's temperature and pulse.

So what do we gain from a program that evaluates management effectiveness?

Evaluation can help us manage better as we assess what is happening in the protected areas and thereby learn about what works and what doesn't work. This is the key to an ADAPTIVE approach to management. Too often, we are so busy managing the parks that we fail to step back and see whether we are operating in the best way and whether we are making real progress towards our goals.

It can also help us to identify local and global THREATS and allow us to understand if we are responding effectively to these threats (i.e. have we prescribed the right medicine?). Evaluation can provide the information that we need to identify priorities and to better assess real resource needs. The health of our parks is of interest to more than just the managers.

Local communities, politicians, donors, and I am sure all of you here today are vitally interested in knowing whether the protected area system is being effectively managed.

Being accountable to these groups and involving them in the process of assessment can help to build credibility and good relationships.

Monitoring and evaluation can use sophisticated diagnostic tools but, as with the experience with medicine, simple health checks are often all that is needed. It's a case of matching the methods to the needs and circumstances of the sites.

The need for this sort of information has been recognised for many years. It was mentioned 20 years ago at the 3rd WPC in Bali. The Caracas Congress in 1992 called for IUCN to further develop a system for monitoring management effectiveness of protected areas. And much HAS happened since the last World Parks Congress; IUCN has prepared a framework and guidelines for developing management effectiveness evaluation systems. This has received wide acceptance around the world. Governments, NGOs, donors and managers have shown their interest in the issue by developing, supporting and implementing monitoring and evaluation systems in the field. We are now in a position to reflect on the experience gained over the past decade.

This Congress provides us with an opportunity to review where we are.

The workshop on Evaluating Management Effectiveness will draw together people who have been developing evaluation systems and working with park staff and stakeholders to assess protected areas from all corners of the world. We also hope that many of you will come, not only to learn, but also to contribute your experience and ideas, and maybe challenge some of the accepted wisdom.

Workshop sessions are detailed in the participant's handbook and a Management Effectiveness workshop outline that is available around the Congress Venue. A full program guide will be available at the workshop.

There are four main themes within the workshop.

We START by sharing lessons and distilling experiences from the work over the past decade. Guidelines for conducting and using good evaluations will be put forward for discussion.

Secondly, we will examine key indicators for assessing management effectiveness.

For example, sessions within the workshop will consider indicators and evaluation systems relevant to marine environments, examine indicators and monitoring approaches for assessing ecological integrity, and discuss how local and indigenous communities can both gain from and contribute to the evaluation process. We hope we can make some progress in working out the best indicators for healthy parks in these areas.

The third theme being addressed within workshop sessions are THREATS to protected areas, focussing on climate change, invasive species and unsustainable resource harvesting.

Finally, we will also cover other issues such as standards and certification of protected areas and recommendations for the future

Thank you. I hope that we will see you at the opening workshop plenary tomorrow morning -