STATE OF PROTECTED AREAS IN CENTRAL AFRICA 2020

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INFORMATION AND DATA TO SUPPORT MANAGEMENT DECISIONS IN CENTRAL AFRICAN PROTECTED AREAS

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Annex 2. Contributions of decision-support tools in protected area strategy development, planning, monitoring & evaluation, and management

How can we make the right decisions for the effective management of Central African protected areas in a changing and complex context?

What types of tools and methodologies can be relied on to address the management and governance challenges facing the managers of protected areas in Central Africa? Which tools could help us identify concrete courses of action and feasible solutions? How do these decision-support tools help the managers of our protected areas?
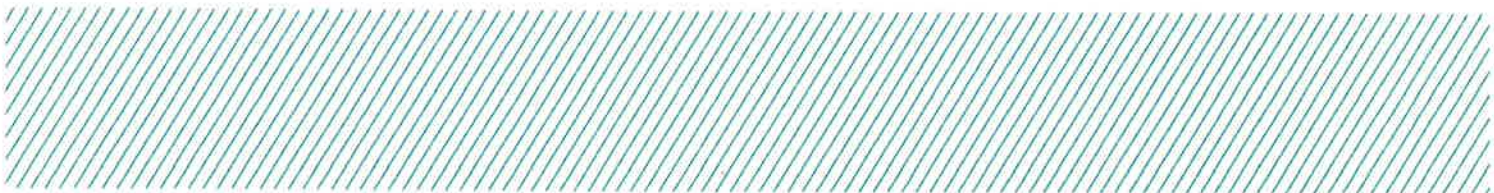
In general, decision-support tools, especially tools for assessing the management effectiveness of protected areas, enable protected area managers and their partners to: (i) measure the performance of a protected area (or of a protected area network) in relation to its conservation objectives; (ii) make decisions to improve this performance and facilitate the evolution of the protected area context; (iii) in so doing, improve the achievement of objectives; and lastly (iv) be able to be accountable to all partners involved in the management of protected areas.[1] The choice of a specific tool depends on the scale at which the protected area manager wishes to work and the level of precision s/he expects from results and analyses. Considering the array of tools used in Central Africa, this document lists the most widely used tools in terms of their usefulness, user type and application framework.

1. https://papaco.org/fr/evaluations/

Table 9 – Overview of the main tools used in Central Africa for decision support

	SMART	IBA	IMET	METT	RAPPAM	EoH	SAPA	SAGE	GAPA	Green list
General information										
Context of application	PA	PA	PA	PA	PA	Assets to conserve	Social impact of conservation measures	PA + periphery Governance and equity of conservation measures	Governance and equity of conservation measures	PA + reference context
Approximate period when the tool began to be used in Central Africa	2005	2001	2015	2002	2008	2010	2019	2019	Not yet used	Not yet used
Level of dissemination of the tool in Central Africa	High	Low	Medium	High	Low	Low	Low	Low	None	None
Ease of use of the tool	Medium	Forte	Medium	High	Medium	Medium	Low	Low	Low	Low
Time required for implementation	Long	Short	Medium	Short	Medium	Medium	Long	Long	Long	Long
Flexibility of the tool in collecting information to better reflect the specific features of the PA considered	Medium	Medium	High	Low	Medium	Medium	Medium	Medium	Medium	Medium
Fundamentally quantitative evaluation	YES	NO	YES	NO	NO	NO	NO	NO	NO	YES
Fundamentally qualitative evaluation	NO	YES	NO	YES	YES	YES	YES	YES	YES	YES
Adaptability of the tool for multiple uses in PA management (themes and applications)	Medium	Low	High	Low	High	High	High	High	High	High
Possibility of inserting information on the intervention context	Low	Medium	High	Low	Medium	Medium	Medium	Medium	Medium	Low

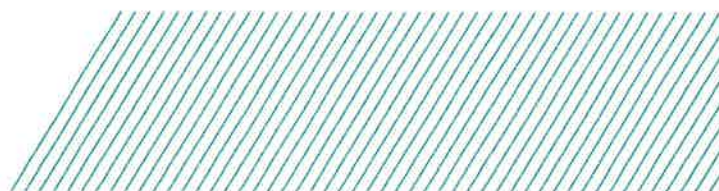|	SMART	IBA	IMET	METT	RAPPAM	EoH	SAPA	SAGE	GAPA	Green list
General information										
Level of objectivity in the attribution of values, estimated on the basis of: 1) openness to stakeholder participation, 2) number of elements considered and 3) range of the assessment scale	Medium	Medium	High	Medium	Medium	High	High	High	High	High
Information on the content										
The tool considers elements related to the following themes:										
1. Climate change	NO	NO	YES	Medium	Medium	NO	NO	NO	NO	YES
2. Ecosystem services	NO	NO	YES	NO	NO	NO	NO	NO	NO	YES
3. Anti-poaching	YES	YES	YES	YES	YES	YES	NO	NO	NO	YES
4. Ecological monitoring	YES	Medium	YES	Medium	Medium	YES	NO	NO	NO	YES
5. Marine Protected Areas	NO	YES	YES	NO	NO	YES	NO	NO	NO	YES
6. Governance	NO	NO	Medium	NO	YES	YES	YES	YES	YES	YES
7. Social dimension	NO	NO	Medium	Medium	YES	YES	YES	YES	YES	YES
8. Participatory management and local communities	NO	NO	Medium	Medium	YES	YES	YES	YES	YES	YES
Respect for the succession of elements of the management cycle	Low	Low	High	Medium	Medium	Medium	Low	Low	Low	Medium
Services and products provided										
Tool supporting the results-oriented approach	YES	Medium	YES	Medium	Medium	YES	YES	YES	YES	YES
Tool that integrates a database	YES	NO	YES	NO	NO	NO	NO	NO	NO	YES
Possibility of integrating information into a database supporting the results-oriented approach	YES	Medium	YES	Medium	Medium	Low	Low	Low	Low	YES
Possibility of carrying out analyses of the entire PA (multi-theme)	Medium	Medium	YES	Medium	NO	YES	NO	NO	NO	YES
Possibility of changing the scale of analysis	YES	Medium	YES	Low	YES	Low	Low	Low	Low	YES
Operational support in monitoring key conservation elements	YES	Medium	YES	Medium	Medium	Medium	NO	NO	NO	YES
Support for planning	YES	Medium	YES	Medium	YES	YES	YES	YES	YES	YES
Contributes to capacity building	YES	Medium	YES	Medium	NO	YES	YES	YES	YES	YES

Note: this table is compiled based on the authors' personal experience and knowledge and reflects their opinion only.

PA : aire protégée. Niveau de réponse : ☐ Low ☐ Medium ☐ High

Tableau 10 – Outils d'aide à la décision utilisés en Afrique centrale pour évaluer et améliorer l'efficacité de gestion et la gouvernance des aires protégées
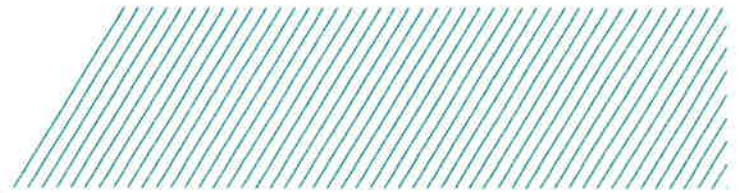
Tool	Objective targeted by the tool	Advantages	Disadvantages
SMART **(Spatial Monitoring and Reporting Tool)** smartconservationtools.org	The spatial monitoring and reporting tool is designed to: (i) improve anti-poaching efforts in a protected area, (ii) ensure effective monitoring of law enforcement in protected areas and conservation zones, (iii) conduct ecological monitoring, and (iv) understand the level of pressures and threats to the protected area. SMART facilitates the collection, storage, and analysis of data on patrol efforts, and the extraction, transfer, and sharing of data with key actors. The tool helps to create and maintain a flow of information between eco-guard teams, protected area managers and their partners, as well as data managers and users. The SMART approach helps to significantly improve the protection of wildlife and their habitats. SMART is a combination of patrol efforts, ecological monitoring, monitoring the application of the law, and monitoring management measures to improve the protection of protected areas, control threats and pressures, and inform decision-making.	The SMART approach is applicable in all protected areas and is implemented by patrol teams to protect wildlife and natural ecosystems. It contributes effectively to the protection of protected areas as well as biodiversity as a whole. SMART is the protected area manager's ideal software. The tool makes it possible to: i) work towards better law enforcement to reduce threats to wildlife and natural resources; ii) motivate field teams through a system of bonuses adapted to the performance of eco-guards, and iii) have a database through the systematic collection of data during patrols, and data storage and analysis upon return from patrols.	The use of SMART and the establishment of a patrol database alone will not improve the protection of a protected area. The use of SMART must be combined with effective law enforcement and the provision of sufficient multifaceted resources to the protected area. Adaptive patrol management requires: (i) additional resources; (ii) qualified staff in the fields of IT, team management, data processing and analysis. The evaluation of feedback mechanisms between managers and eco-guards is an important element that must not be neglected in the process.
IBA **(Important Bird Areas)** https://rris.biopama.org/node/18654	BirdLife International has developed this global framework to identify and monitor the conservation status, threats and protection actions in IBAs. IBAs are places of international importance for birds and, therefore, for biodiversity conservation. The tool aims to identify, monitor and protect essential sites for birds and biodiversity. It has a threat calculator, a record sheet to specify the status of bird populations and a record sheet of actions in progress. The designation of a site as an IBA is made on the basis of one of the following criteria: i) it regularly hosts a species that is endangered at the country level; ii) it hosts a species that is endemic or has a restricted range; iii) it hosts an avian community representative of a biome; iv) it constitutes a gathering area hosting a number of birds representing at least 1% of the national, continental or global population, whether for nesting, migrating or wintering.	BirdLife provides a standard "Pressure-State-Response" (PSR) framework as a management approach. PSR is simple, flexible and practical enough to be implemented effectively on a wide range of sites. The framework enables the compilation of data at national, regional and global levels for better monitoring of BirdLife partnerships. It enables the identification of conservation actions to be undertaken and key partners for achieving the objectives set. Through this conservation plan, it is easier to mobilize human resources and to help obtain the financial and material resources needed to implement the selected activities.	The designation of an IBA has no legal implications because it works above all to encourage decision-makers and tourism promoters to respect the heritage value of the site. However, the prestige of an IBA label often brings legal protection and facilitates ecotourism. The ZICO monitoring tool can be used to feed databases but these are not always accessible to protected area managers.

Tool	Objective targeted by the tool	Advantages	Disadvantages
IMET **(Integrated Management Effectiveness Tool)** https://rris.biopama. org/node/18643	The main objective of IMET is to support the planning, monitoring and evaluation of protected areas to improve management and ensure the achievement of conservation objectives. It is designed to build the capacity of protected area managers to adopt a results-oriented approach. Although IMET assessments include the assessment of protected area management effectiveness, the scope of the tool is much broader than some of the methods in the Global Database on Protected Area Management Effectiveness (GD-PAME). IMET is a participatory and program-based approach that relies on the results of the analysis of adaptive management of protected areas. It provides a comprehensive set of decision-support tools for protected area managers, organizations and biodiversity conservation agencies. The tool covers all elements of the protected area management cycle. The results of the assessment are visualized in real time, which facilitates exchanges between the different stakeholders for participatory decision-making.	IMET exercises are carried out with the support of facilitators, "IMET Coaches". The assessment is based on a database that allows functional links to be established between different management levels: from the site to the landscape and ecosystem, or from the site to the national and regional network of protected areas. The tool is adapted for the manager and his/her partners who wish to obtain a complete inventory of the intervention context and management of a protected area or a network of protected areas. IMET makes it possible to adapt to the specificities of the protected area. The visualization of analyses and scores through the graphs automatically generated by the tool can support decision-making. In the absence of a development and management plan, the tool facilitates the planning of activities and helps provide guidance for the revision of work and management plans.	The tool is intended for centralized data collection and helps improve management efforts and reporting on protected areas. IMET should not be used to compare protected areas but rather to assess the specific features of each. While including elements that allow an initial assessment of governance and social impacts, the tool – in its current state – is not meant to be used specifically to assess these aspects. If required, it would be useful to conduct more in-depth studies using tools such as SAPA and SAGE (see below for a brief presentation of these tools). It should be noted that an IMET module for assessing the governance of ecosystem services has been developed and is currently being tested in Central Africa.
METT **(Management Effectiveness Tracking Tool)** https://rris.biopama. org/node/18647	A tool for measuring the performance of a protected area in relation to community development actions, METT allows for a rapid assessment of the effectiveness of a protected area's management. The different versions of METT allow managers and their partners to identify needs, constraints, trends, strengths, weaknesses and priority actions to improve the management effectiveness of a protected area. The tool is used by donors to obtain an inventory of the state of the protected area and to monitor and evaluate conservation objectives. When carried out on a regular basis, METT makes it possible to monitor improvements and setbacks with a view to defining management priorities. Advanced METT+ covers other important aspects that are not in the traditional METT version, notably climate change. RAPAC (Réseau des Aires Protégées d'Afrique Centrale) has used METT under the name PAMETT (Protected Area Management Effectiveness Tracking Tool), which has been used widely in Central Africa. To measure progress and correct management actions on an ongoing basis, the assessment should be repeated annually.	Easy to use by managers themselves, METT provides sufficient information to identify the main management issues that need to be communicated to decision-makers. It is useful for protected area managers who would like to carry out a rapid assessment of individual sites without the need for additional studies or research. The tool consists of a series of forms to be filled in by the user (whether an expert or not) that have a relatively simple interface and are easy to understand. Indicators on assets, habitats and species are filled in during discussions and do not necessarily need to be well documented.	The assessments are relatively superficial and should not be the only basis for improving the management effectiveness of protected areas. The quality of the assessment is directly related to how it is carried out. If the method is not properly applied, the assessment can easily be biased, leading to results that are not comparable from year to year. The scoring method for each criterion (scores from 0 to 3) makes it difficult to assess the evolution of different situations over time and does not allow a comparison of the management effectiveness between different protected areas. The absence of a database does not ensure complete standardization of the tool for comparable analyses over time.

Tool	Objective targeted by the tool	Advantages	Disadvantages
RAPPAM **(Rapid Assessment and Prioritization of Protected Area Management)** https://rris.biopama.org/node/18645	Designed for large-scale comparisons across many protected areas, the tool provides policy makers and managers with a relatively quick and easy method to identify key trends and issues that need to be addressed to improve management effectiveness in a given protected area system or group of protected areas. RAPPAM is a decision support tool for setting priorities and allocating resources throughout the system to improve management. It represents a first step in the identification of management priorities for a network of protected areas, whether at the national or regional level. It highlights gaps or obstacles in legislation and policies for urgent action, particularly for IUCN category I-IV protected areas.	RAPPAM is implemented by protected area managers but is more useful to policy makers and stakeholders as a decision support tool for an entire protected area network. Participatory evaluation is carried out in the framework of discussions with stakeholders, which makes it possible for decision-makers to define strategic interventions to improve the management of the entire protected area system. When a protected area network needs to be rapidly assessed, it is recommended in the case of an initial assessment to prioritize the key management issues which require attention.	The tool is more useful for a network of protected areas. An isolated assessment at the level of a single protected area reduces the relevance of the analyses, which are meant to be comparative. The protected areas evaluated should have similar objectives. If the objectives vary, the evaluation should be divided into different "sub-evaluations", otherwise the results may be inaccurate. The method relies on questionnaires that include definitions of terms and details on key concepts, hence the need for reliable data to produce credible reports.
EoH **(Enhancing our Heritage)** https://rris.biopama.org/node/18648	Although developed for World Heritage sites, the tool can be used in all protected areas. The tool makes it possible to: i) identify gaps in the management of the protected area; ii) explore appropriate solutions based on the values and objectives for the establishment and management of the protected area; iii) identify threats to the assets of the protected area; iv) develop and implement a system for the monitoring and evaluation of the management effectiveness of the protected area.	User-friendly and flexible, the tool helps managers identify the main values that contribute to the conservation of heritage assets, the respect of the protected area's management objectives and the evaluation of management effectiveness in achieving these objectives. The tool is very useful for managers of protected areas who wish to carry out a complete assessment or to analyze in more detail certain aspects of the management of their site according to a particular objective.	The compilation of the tool is lengthy and essentially qualitative and not quantitative in nature, which makes it difficult to compare two successive exercises. The tool does not allow the multitude of information collected during the assessment to be inserted into a database that would allow it to be processed. This is unfortunate because the information collected is very complete and could be very useful in filling in gaps in governance and management. It would be desirable to have a database for monitoring and comparative analyses that would allow for changes in scale and the monitoring of developments over time.

Tool	Objective targeted by the tool	Advantages	Disadvantages
SAPA **(Social Assessment for Protected and conserved Areas)** https://www.iied.org/assessing-social-impacts-protected-conserved-areas-sapa	Within the framework of poverty reduction for communities living in and around protected areas, SAPA enables the assessment of the positive and negative social impacts of protected areas on the well-being of these communities. The process includes a self-assessment using a combination of community workshops, a household survey, and stakeholder workshops, all conducted by a SAPA facilitation team. It is intended to help managers increase and share more equitably the social benefits (positive impacts) of conservation and reduce the negative social impacts. The community stakeholder workshop also helps to develop an action plan in a participatory manner to bring about positive change regarding stumbling blocks identified during the assessment.	The SAPA process is carried out with the help of community SAPA facilitators in collaboration with protected area managers, neighboring communities and key stakeholders. The diagnosis of the positive and negative impacts of the protected area on local and indigenous communities is done in a participatory manner, which promotes the joint search for appropriate solutions to reduce negative social impacts and improve social dialogue between different actors.	SAPA is useful for protected areas with human communities living in and around them. The method is more applicable for individual protected areas, but it can be adapted for the needs of protected area networks. It should be noted that where local communities exist, their support is the key to success in co-managing protected area resources. SAPA sheds light on the population-protected area relationship. The approach focuses on social aspects.
SAGE **(Site-level Assessment of Governance and Equity)** https://www.iied.org/site-level-assessment-governance-equity-sage	SAGE is a method used to assess the governance and equity of measures to conserve biodiversity, ecosystem services and other actions to support conservation, such as cost-benefit sharing programs. SAGE has two objectives. The first is to enable actors at the site level to improve governance and equity in their daily work to conserve biodiversity and preserve the environment. The second is to generate information for actors at higher levels to monitor the effective management of protected areas, improve governance and produce national reports. Initially developed for protected areas, its use has been extended to other sites and conservation areas for sustainable natural resource management. The assessment is based on a framework of 10 principles of effective and equitable governance in line with IUCN protected area governance principles. It is generally not recommended to use the full set of 10 principles because experience has shown that summarizing the findings will take more than a full day's work and participants may lose interest in the proceedings.	Supervised by SAGE facilitators, site-level actors and rights holders conduct the assessment themselves in close collaboration with protected area conservation services. This allows the key actors to appropriate the process as they participate in identifying and prioritizing problems, and preparing actions to be taken to improve governance of the protected area. The SAGE exercise would not be considered credible if the following «basic principles» are absent from the assessment of equity and governance: equity, respect for actors, participation of all stakeholders in the decision-making process, transparency, responsibility or accountability, and sharing of costs and benefits.	Before starting the SAGE process, it is important to verify the feasibility of its use on the proposed conservation site. Five key conditions must be met for a SAGE assessment to produce reliable results and improve the equity and governance of the site: (i) the area's management and governance systems have been operating for at least 2 years (i.e., the assessment is based on concrete experience); ii) there is a low risk that the assessment will lead to conflicts between or within different groups of actors; iii) all key actors are willing to commit themselves to the assessment; iv) the lead facilitator must be independent and considered to be neutral by all actors; v) key actors commit to supporting short and medium-term actions in response to the assessment's results.

Tool	Objective targeted by the tool	Advantages	Disadvantages
GAPA **(Governance Assessment for Protected and conserved Areas)** https://pubs.iied.org/17632IIED/	GAPA is an assessment tool designed for the managers of protected areas and their key players. It helps to identify the strengths and challenges of the governance of a protected area, and aims to promote robust and equitable governance. The evaluation framework is based on IUCN governance principles. GAPA is suitable for all types of protected areas, and allows biodiversity conservation and local development to be covered. To conduct an in-depth analysis of specific points, the actors and managers of the protected area select five or six principles to focus on from 11 governance principles. The collection of data on the status of the protected area in terms of good governance is achieved by combining several actions, namely: the consultation of key stakeholders, the organization of target groups, and conducting surveys/interviews and workshops. The results of the assessment enable the preparation of the action plan and are validated by the stakeholders.	The tool has three main elements: the principles of good governance, the assessment process, and a set of methods and tools. GAPA is comparable to a health check-up that shows the strengths and challenges of the governance of a protected area, enabling the identification of the problems to be solved. It renders possible a diagnosis of the protected area to understand the underlying causes of gaps in governance. This in turn renders it possible to identify the actions likely to improve the situation and to establish a baseline to monitor changes in governance over time.	The multi-stakeholder GAPA approach involves the active participation of key stakeholders in: i) designing the assessment process, ii) analyzing and validating the results, and iii) preparing the action plan. This is essential for the transparency, ownership and credibility of the results. The assessment has six stages: preparation, framing, information, data collection, governance assessment and action plan. The four key people facilitating the process should be experienced: the GAPA Facilitator, the Animator, the Host, and the Rapporteur. The Facilitator must be competent, neutral and impartial. The tool has not yet been used in Central Africa; it has been used in Southern/Eastern Africa (Kenya, Uganda, Zambia, etc.).
Green List (IUCN) https://www.iucn.org/theme/protected-areas/our-work/iucn-green-list-protected-and-conserved-areas/global-standard	The Green List is a process that includes several tools for assessing the management effectiveness of a protected area and an external evaluation of its performance. It aims to provide international recognition of the quality of protected area management. This certification process defines quality criteria that encourage managers to make efforts to better manage protected areas and achieve conservation objectives. The Green List serves to label protected areas that are effectively managed and equitably governed. The method is based on a unique and comprehensive verification process that gives independence and credibility to the evaluation process and its results.	The certification application process is conducted by the protected area manager with stakeholders, independent experts, mentors (similar to IMET coaches) and independent assessors. Ideal for individual protected areas, the certification process also can be adapted to protected area networks that wish to be eligible for the «Green List» label. Green List certification is based on internationally recognized quality standards. The tool relies on the COMPASS data base, whose access is restricted to the global community of the Green List.	The standards for defining best practices are ambitious. Developed to help achieve, among other objectives, target 11 of the Convention on Biological Diversity (CBD), the Green List includes an independent mechanism for verifying the protected area's performance (as opposed to a self-assessment). The certification process is long and can be expensive. It takes place in successive stages and the cost is borne entirely by the protected area.

Figure 9 – Main tools used in Central Africa to support decision-making

GAPA — Green list

IMET

IBA

EoH

SMART

RAPPAM

SAPA

METT

SAGE

Legend
- ☐ Not yet implemented
- ■ Implemented

BDI : Burundi
CMR : Cameroon
CAF : Central African Republic
COD : Democratic Republic
        of the Congo
COG : Republic of Congo
GAB : Gabon
GNQ : Equatorial Guinea
RWA : Rwanda
STP : Sao Tome and Principe
TCD : Chad