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"Indicators for Ecosystem Conservation and Protected Area Designation in the Mediterranean Context"

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Protected areas constitute a key foundation for national and international strategies of effective biodiversity and ecosystems conservation. Yet, they are not islands; they are components of their surrounding social and ecological contexts. Reconciling biodiversity conservation, people, protected areas and sustainable livelihoods requires a focused strategic planning for conservation and development. The designation of new reserves must be thus based on sound indicators within ecological, socioeconomic, institutional, and financial contexts. Many of the ecological and socioeconomic indicators have been designed for this purpose by practitioners and conservation planners around the world. Although these indicators are crucial to orient conservation priorities and protected areas' designation patterns, their identification remains a big challenge, largely due to the fact that an indicator is a simplification of a system (whether natural or social) which is characterized by high structural complexity, considerable spatial heterogeneity and temporal fluctuations. This paper presents a review of ecological and socioeconomic indicators globally used to orient conservation planning on the global and national levels. It also suggests a set of suitable, relevant, and practical set of indicators, adapted to Mediterranean-type continental environments. (Text from authors' abstract)

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