Venezuela Vision

1.1 Organisation

FUDENA (Fundación para la Defensa de la Naturaleza) and INPARQUES (Instituto Nacional de Parques – Venezuela)

1.2 Primary reference

FUDENA/INPARQUES (2001)Visión 2001: Situación Actual del Sistema de Parques Nacionales de Venezuela. Caracas.

1.3 Brief description of methodology

The methodology was developed to analyse the risk situation of the protected areas in Venezuela, based on the 'sensitivity' of the area as well as the incidence of pressures over the protected area. It aims to establish protected area management priorities and to show which areas are most in need of management interventions (FUDENA/INPARQUES 2001).

It includes scoring of context (sensitivity, threats), design and inputs (personnel, funding, equipment and information) and does not address other aspects of management (processes, outputs or outcomes).

The methodology can:
- Define and consider a group of criteria which allow to estimate the sensitivity to use of every management unit (protected area);
- Carry out an evaluation, based on these criteria, to establish the relative sensitivity of each protected area by group consensus; and
- Evaluate every protected area considering its level of sensitiveness as a specific weight and submitting it to the pressure of permitted and non permitted uses and to other forms of influence to detect those in critical situation or danger.

(Cracco *et al.* 2006)

Once the sensitivity has been determined using a matrix, the resulting value is the protected area specific weight. A comparison is made using a comparative matrix with the various uses and factors of disturbance of the protected area.

Criteria of sensitivity include the size (very large protected areas are less vulnerable than small ones) and isolation (from human activity). Examples of permitted uses in the matrix are public recreation, agriculture and existence of traditional populations.

The result of this evaluation is a numerical ordering of the protected area, from the most affected or in danger to the least affected with fewer problems.

1.4 Purposes

✓ **to assist in prioritisation or resource allocation**

1.5 Objectives and application

By rating the intrinsic *sensitivity* of each National Park or Natural Monument as well as the incidence of the *pressures* or factors of legal and illegal use on these protected natural areas, the evaluation can be used to establish management priorities and power to focus activities towards parks with the greatest needs. The information generated by this methodology allows problems to be solved according to the importance order and makes the management more

efficient. As the methodology demands and allows the interaction of many people and is based on consensus of opinion, the results are better understood and accepted by the group.

It has been used for two system-wide evaluations in Venezuela: for 35 national parks in 1991 and for 43 national parks and 21 natural monuments in 2001. This has enabled comparative ratings both throughout the park system and over time in some protected areas.

1.6   Origins

The original work applying this methodology is one of the first references to evaluation of protected area management in the literature. It was developed and first applied in Venezuela in 1991 in 35 national parks. The system called 'Numeric Methodology to Evaluate Protected Area Systems' was published in 'Parks' in 1992 (Rivero Blanco and Gabaldon 1992). FUDENA and INPARQUES considered it important re-evaluate the condition of fragility of the 43 National Parks and 21 Natural Monuments, 10 years later, to direct research, conservation and restoration projects.

1.7   How the method is implemented

The 2001 project, leaded by the researchers Carlos Rivero Blanco and Edgard Yerena, involved the participation of 35 experts, representatives of INPARQUES, National Parliament, FUDENA, Audubon, UNELLEZ and Fiscalia.

1.8   Elements and indicators

Indicators are of sensitivity (park size, design etc), some inputs, and pressures/ uses

Table 1: Indicators for the Venezuela Vision methodology 2001

	Criteria
A. Sensitivity	1. PA size (area) 2. Distance from human influence 3. Genetic isolation 4. Landscape diversity 5. Degree of intervention 6. Regeneration capability 7. Control of catchments 8. Land tenure 9. Plan and regulations 10. Staff 11. Technical staff 12. Equipment 13. Facilities 14. Control and vigilance 15. Access 16. Political interest (for development projects and use) 17. Strategic importance 18. Knowledge of the area 19. Natural risk
B. Pressure (use and other factors)	20. Recreation intensity 21. Scientific use 22. Therapeutic or cultural use 23. Use of the image of the area 24. Use as water reserve 25. Deforestation 26. Fire 27. Agriculture 28. Hunting 29. Grazing 30. Commercial or sport fishing 31. Traditional populations

	32. Neighbouring populations 33. Roads and electrical cables 34. Gas and water systems 35. Port and other uses 36. Mining 37. Communication antennas 38. Navigation routes

1.9   Scoring and analysis

The weighting of these criteria and the evaluation of the management units are based upon the consensus of a group of experts, who assign them numeric values ranging from 1 (highest) to 5 (lowest).