

Towards a “Security Index” for ICCAs -- a very early draft for comments

We may have a relatively narrow window of opportunity between the long delayed recognition of the values of ICCAs, recognition of their significance in international programmes and instruments and the disappearance of many of these unique and important sites. Urgent action is needed now if the social, biological and cultural values contained in many ICCAs are not to be lost. This will include addressing threats at many levels, which can probably best be achieved by coordinated efforts between the relevant communities and national or international sympathisers, but also strengthening the capacities of the communities themselves.

In order to have a broad sense of the stability and strength of ICCAs and to identify on time possible needs for attention and support, a relatively simple “Security Index” has been developed (see Table 1). This is very preliminary and undoubtedly needs the criticisms and contributions of colleagues, which is why it is proposed here. As of now, the Index results from a combination of internal factors related to the community own strength/ vulnerability and external factors related to **forms of recognition and support** to the ICCA, or the presence of serious **threats in the surrounding environment**. These factors are called “components” of the Security Index.

For the internal components, we identified factors that relate to the three main defining characteristic of ICCAs :

- **Connection between the community and the ICCA** – the key here is the strength and solidity of the relationship, the richness of motivations, the fact that the relationship is embedded into culture and a sense of community identity.
- **Governance** -- the key here is the capacity of the community to express respected institutions and leaders, to be a cohesive social body, capable of taking decisions as well as implementing them and respecting them (taking responsibilities) and being accountable to itself and to others.
- **Sustainability and resilience** – the key is appropriateness and effectiveness of management decisions implemented by the community for both conservation and livelihoods objectives; this is reflected in the sustainability of the practices by which the community uses natural resources, and the capacity of the community to respond to crises and re-establish a balance with its environment.

For each component in the Table below one can assign a rough score (some suggestions about what to consider are given in parentheses). It is also advisable to take into account tendencies (is the factor improving? Getting worse?) before assigning a score. After all the components have been scored, the Index can be assembled by summing up the scores assigned for each component (minimum result 22; maximum result 110).

As the significance of each of the factors/ components can only be assessed in a local context, the Index has no pretence whatsoever of comparability, sensitivity or precision. It can, however, help people to think about phenomena that may affect ICCAs and changes that can make a difference. The Index could also be assessed for one particular ICCA at different points in time and would thus offer an estimate of the “security tendency” for a particular site. It is only in this limited sense that it is offered here.

Please send your remarks, comments and proposals for change to Grazia Borrini-Feyerabend (gbf@cenesta.org) and Juan Carlos Riascos de la Pena (jcriascos@ecozaica.org). Many thanks in advance! Let us also know if you like to be involved in future development and testing of this Index.

Table 1. Components of an “ICCA Security Index”		Estimate				
		Strong	Fairly strong	Medium	Fairly weak	Weak
Internal factors						
Connection between the community and the ICCA						
1.	ICCA’s intangible values appreciated by the community (ICCA as element of community worldview and identity, sacred site, culturally important) (medium if by 50% of the people)	5	4	3	2	1
2.	ICCA’s conservation values appreciated by the community (biodiversity & functions known & valued) (medium if by 50% of people)	5	4	3	2	1
3.	ICCA’s subsistence & economic values appreciated by the community (food, water, security) (medium if by 50% of people)	5	4	3	2	1
4.	Age of relationship (ICCA less than 10 years old = weak; 100 years old= medium; well over 100 year old = strong)	5	4	3	2	1
5.	Intensity and continuity of attachment (medium if there is a strong involvement of community elders or the youth; strong is both elders and youth are engaged in caring for the ICCA)	5	4	3	2	1
Governance						
6.	ICCA decision-making institution valued & respected by the community (take here into account also the presence of champions and leaders for the specific ICCA) (medium if much respected by 60% of people; strong if by more than 90%:)	5	4	3	2	1
7.	Community engagement, cohesion and solidarity (medium if the ICCA related decisions are debated and taken by majority votes ; strong if a general assembly decides of all major ICCA issues by consensus)	5	4	3	2	1
8.	Effective enforcement of rules (rules exist, are available, are monitored and respected) (medium if infraction are rare; strong if infractions by members of the community are virtually absent)	5	4	3	2	1
9.	Transparency and accountability (information I available; technical and financial management is sound; archives and accounting procedures are in place; evaluations are performed, etc.) (strength proportional to clarity and respect of procedures)	5	4	3	2	1
Sustainability and resilience						
10.	Tendencies of environmental indicators for the ICCAs and surroundings (Fairly strong if stable, strong if improving)	5	4	3	2	1
11.	Capacity to overcome crises and restore the ICCA in good conditions (strong only if recently clearly demonstrated)	5	4	3	2	1
External factors						
Tenure and recognition						
12.	Collective land and natural resource rights (ownership and/or use) recognised by the state (medium if <i>de facto</i> ; strong if full <i>de jure</i> recognition)	5	4	3	2	1
13.	ICCA status recognised and respected by outside communities (medium if only by direct neighbours)	5	4	3	2	1
14.	ICCA status recognised in policy and law (strong if the government formally recognises customary institutions and helps enforcing customary laws)	5	4	3	2	1
Support						
15.	Political support from outsiders - if needed and desired (NGO advocacy, international recognition as ICCA, linkage into networks) (value depending on a balance between desired and obtained support – i.e. if no support is desired and no support is received the score is 5, the same score applies if much support is needed and received, the score is in between if only part of what is needed is received)	5	4	3	2	1
16.	Economic support from outsiders (financial resources and/or in kind)	5	4	3	2	1

	support) (value depending on a balance between desired and obtained support, as noted above)					
17.	Technical support from outsiders (e.g. for biodiversity inventories) (value depending on a balance between desired and obtained support)	5	4	3	2	1
18.	Cultural recognition and respect (e.g. understanding of the cultural and identity values motivating IPs and LCs) (medium if language & other cultural expressions are respected; strong if those are openly valued & included in local school curricula)	5	4	3	2	1
Threats						
19.	Economic forces coveting the area (medium if such forces are not operating together with the government; strong if in alliance with the government)	1	2	3	4	5
20.	Colons, migrants and refugees, coveting the area (medium if operating alone; strong if with government support)	1	2	3	4	5
21.	Major environmental threats (e.g. pollution, expected severe effects of climate change)	1	2	3	4	5
22.	Threats related to war, violent conflicts and crime (including guerrilla and counterinsurgency operations)	1	2	3	4	5

■ **Estimate of the ICCA Security Index.** The sum total of all the scores marked above for the identified components adding or detracting from ICCA's security (minimum total 22, maximum total 110) offers a first approximation of a level of "overall security" of the concerned ICCA. Roughly, one could say that if the calculated Index scores **more than 100**, the ICCA should be in a relatively stable and sustainable situation. If the Security Index scores **less than 60**, the ICCA situation may not be particularly good. If the Security Index scores **less than 40**, the ICCA may need some serious attention and help. Besides offering an overall sense of the situation, the individual components of the Index may suggest ideas about what could be done to strengthen a particular ICCA.