2. Aims and Objectives

Objectives

The **overall objectives** of this work are twofold:

1) To contribute to a systematic identification of the protected areas which have the greatest value, in terms of biological resources, and of those which are the most threatened by human development.

2) To contribute to the definition of a decision support system for assessing the relative threats and pressures on protected areas in Africa through a pressure – state – response system, where threats are "pressures", biodiversity value and habitat irreplaceability are "state" and decision is "response".

The **purpose** of the work is to provide to decision makers a regularly updated tool to assess the state of Africa PAs and to prioritize them according to biodiversity values and threats so as to support decision making and fund allocation processes.

Expected results

The specific aims within this overall objective are:

1) To develop a framework that combines biodiversity, environmental and socioeconomic information from a range of sources, in order to create 'status' reports for each protected area.

2) To present the information about a protected area, with respect to other protected areas in the same country, and with respect to other protected areas in the same Ecoregion,

3) To ensure that the process is repeatable such that new information (i.e. new species data or measures of environmental or anthropological threats) can be incorporated into the system to improve or update the assessments

A brief overview of the method

This report contains extensive information on data sources and data processing. Figure 1 shows how these data sources are linked and combined to create the final assessment of protected areas and how this is placed in context with external country level data such as (i) EC projects and funding, (ii) environmental sustainability, (iii) progress towards the Millennium Development Goals and (iv) social and economic indicators.

The next section reviews existing literature on biodiversity assessment and conservation planning and prioritisation. This is followed by a description of the datasets and the methods for generating the indices for assessing a protected areas status. The results of the assessment are presented and compared to existing coarse scale conservation priorities to determine the degree of agreement between the two. We then present the relationship between our assessment and EC funding in protected areas in Africa to highlight successful targeting and also areas where targeting could be benefit from the type of information contained within this assessment.

Figure 1. Flow chart of the overall methodology.