

## **TOWARDS A SYSTEM OF ENVIRONMENTAL QUALITY INDICATORS FOR SITES WITH ECOLOGICAL INTEREST**

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### **ABSTRACT**

A system of important sites evaluation based on criteria as potential environmental indicators is presented. Primarily, the meaning of environmental quality is analyzed and the possibilities for indicators use is detected based on international experience as well as the particular conditions of Greek territory. The research needs and the dilemmas of the evaluation efforts are sought while the most suitable estimation method is pursued. Criteria of environmental quality are developed concerning the significant features of the environment, some of which include sensitivity to management actions. A system of Sites of Outstanding Natural Beauty (SONB) multicriteria evaluation is rated with co-examination of environmental quality parameters such as ecological, hydrogeological, esthetical, cultural and socioeconomical. Weight attribution is undertaken for the various values which correspond to the environmental quality parameters. The system is applied to selected SONB number and compared to a second model based on empirical evaluation by the site respondents. The conclusions examine the usefulness of the evaluation model and its ability to solve different problems, giving an accurate image of site conservation priorities.