

## MONITORING TERRESTRIAL VEGETATION DYNAMICS IN THE ARGENTINE ISLANDS REGION

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Maritime Antarctica experiences one of the steepest regional climate warming trends, which makes it necessary to establish monitoring of the influence of climatic changes on terrestrial habitats. One of the most appropriate sites to launch such monitoring is the Ukrainian Vernadski station located in the epicenter of the warming processes. Supported by NASC of Ukraine, we have launched a long-term program to monitor the status of Antarctic herb tundra formation on the Argentine Islands. The fundamental basis in this program should be a complete inventory of the existing distribution locations of the formation in which *Colobanthus quitensis* as yet remains rare in the region. All inhabited areas are described in detail using a special blank form which includes detailed orographic, geobotanic, and population characteristics of the habitat. The form also contains information on natural (birds, pinnipeds) and anthropogenic impacts. Besides, forms for the biometry of both vascular plants have been prepared. The detailed geobotanic composition of a cenosis is studied by sampling its different constituents with indication of their role in the total vegetation cover according to the Braun-Blanquet method. Concurrently, a system of study areas have been defined on Galindez Island for which the above mentioned parameters will be monitored annually. In perspective, it is planned to monitor, based on a set of defined indicator traits, some species representing cryptogam formations. Genetic monitoring constitutes a separate monitoring unit within the program. We invite all who is interested for collaboration and its concurrent implementation in other regions of the Antarctic.