

Thematic report on protected areas or areas where special measures need to be taken to conserve biological diversity

Please provide the following details on the origin of this report.

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Please provide summary information on the process by which this report has been prepared, including information on the types of stakeholders who have been actively involved in its preparation and on material which was used as a basis for the report.

This report was prepared by the CBD focal point; Ms. Lara Samaha by adopting a participatory approach whereby the stakeholders dealing with protected areas related activities were involved.

The questions included in the format were addressed to those stakeholders and all their views and information were taken into consideration.

The following stakeholders contributed to the preparation of the report:

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Protected areas or areas where special measures need to be taken to conserve biological diversity

System of protected areas

1. What is the relative priority afforded to development and implementation of a national system of protected areas in the context of other obligations arising from the Convention and COP Decisions?				
a) High	X	b) Medium		c) Low
2. Is there a systematic planning process for development and implementation of a national system of protected areas?				
a) no				
b) in early stages of development				X
c) in advanced stages of development				
d) yes, please provide copies of relevant documents describing the process				
3. Is there an assessment of the extent to which the existing network of protected areas covers all areas that are identified as being important for the conservation of biological diversity?				
a) no				
b) an assessment is being planned for				X
c) an assessment is being undertaken				
d) yes, please provide copies of the assessments made				

Regulatory framework

4. Is there a policy framework and/or enabling legislation in place for the establishment and management of protected areas?	
a) no	
b) in early stages of development	
c) in advanced stages of development	X
d) yes, please provide copies of relevant documents	
5. Have guidelines, criteria and targets been adopted to support selection, establishment and management of protected areas?	
a) no	
b) in early stages of development	
c) in advanced stages of development	X
d) yes, please provide copies of guidelines, criteria and targets	

6. Does the management of protected areas involve the use of incentive measures, for instance, of entrance fees for park visitors, or of benefit-sharing arrangements with adjacent communities and other relevant stakeholders?	
a) no	
b) yes, incentive measures implemented for some protected areas (please provide some examples)	X
c) yes, incentive measures implemented for all protected areas (please provide some examples)	

Management approach

7. Have the principal threats to protected areas and the biodiversity that they contain been assessed, so that programmes can be put in place to deal with the threats, their effects and to influence the key drivers?	
a) no	
b) an assessment is being planned for	
c) an assessment is in process	
d) yes, an assessment has been completed	
e) programmes and policies to deal with threats are in place (please provide basic information on threats and actions taken)	X

8. Are protected areas established and managed in the context of the wider region in which they are located, taking account of and contributing to other sectoral strategies?	
a) no	
b) yes, in some areas	X
c) yes, in all areas (please provide details)	

9. Do protected areas vary in their nature, meeting a range of different management objectives and/or being operated through differing management regimes?	
a) no, most areas are established for similar objectives and are under similar management regimes	
b) many areas have similar objectives/management regimes, but there are also some exceptions	X
c) yes, protected areas vary in nature (please provide details)	
10. Is there wide stakeholder involvement in the establishment and management of protected areas?	
a) no	
b) with some, but not all protected areas	
c) yes, always (please provide details of experience)	X

11. Do protected areas established and managed by non-government bodies, citizen groups, private sector and individuals exist in your country, and are they recognized in any formal manner?	
a) no, they do not exist	
b) yes, they exist, however are not formally recognized	X
c) yes, they exist and are formally recognized (please provide further information)	

Available resources

12. Are the human, institutional and financial resources available adequate for full implementation of the protected areas network, including for management of individual protected areas?	
a) no, they are severely limiting (please provide basic information on needs and shortfalls)	
b) no, they are limiting (please provide basic information on needs and shortfalls)	X
c) Available resources are adequate (please provide basic information on needs and shortfalls)	
d) yes, good resources are available	

13. Has your country requested/received financial assistance from the Global Environment Facility or other international sources for establishment/management of protected areas?	
a) no	
b) funding has been requested, but not received	
c) funding is currently being requested	
d) yes, funding has been received (please provide copies of appropriate documents)	X

Assessment

14. Have constraints to implementation and management of an adequate system of protected areas been assessed, so that actions can be initiated to deal with these constraints?	
a) no	
b) yes, constraints have been assessed (please provide further information)	X
c) yes, actions to deal with constraints are in place (please provide further information)	

15. Is a programme in place or in development to regularly assess the effectiveness of protected areas management and to act on this information?	
a) no	X
b) yes, a programme is under development (please provide further information)	
c) yes, a programme is in place (please provide further information)	

16. Has any assessment been made of the value of the material and non-material benefits and services that protected areas provide?	
a) no	
b) an assessment is planned	
c) an assessment is in process	
d) yes, an assessment has been made (please provide further information)	

Regional and international cooperation

17. Is your country collaborating/communicating with neighbouring countries in the establishment and/or management of transboundary protected areas?	
a) no	X
b) yes (please provide details)	
18. Are key protected areas professionals in your country members of the IUCN World Commission on Protected Areas, thereby helping to foster the sharing of information and experience?	
a) no	X
b) yes	
c) information is not available	

19. Has your country provided information on its protected areas to the UNEP World Conservation Monitoring Centre in order to allow for a scientific assessment of the status of the world's protected areas?	
a) no	
b) yes	X
20. If your country has protected areas or other sites recognised or designated under an international convention or programme (including regional conventions and programmes), please provide copies of reports submitted to those programmes or summaries of them.	

21. Do you think that there are some activities on protected areas that your country has significant experience that will be of direct value to other Contracting Parties?	
a) no	
b) yes (please provide details)	X

Further comments

Q2: At the present, there is a need to develop a national system of protected areas and to strengthen the protected areas department at the Ministry of Environment which is the national authority responsible for the supervision of the protected areas.

Q4: The Ministry of Environment has prepared a draft framework law for the establishment and management of nature reserves in Lebanon, the draft law is currently in the process of endorsement.

According to this law, the nature reserves may be established on public as well as private lands and will be established by Decree which will also defines the boundaries of the “strict conservation area” as well as the “sustainable development region” and should define management guidelines for both areas. The management of “sustainable development regions” should reconcile conservation and economic activities while the management of “strict conservation areas” should follow a policy of strict conservation.

Q6: Incentives measures implemented for some protected areas include:

- Visitors’ contributions at the protected areas’ entrance. (At the present, entrance fees for the visitors of the protected areas are not mandatory. The Ministry of Environment is working to impose obligatory entrance fees within the laws and regulations of the protected areas)
- Involving all relevant stakeholders (Municipalities, NGOs, academic institutions, experts, line ministries) in the management and supervision of the protected areas through committees appointed by the Ministry of Environment.
- Sales of rural goods produced by the local communities at the entrances of some protected areas.
- Creation of job opportunities for the local communities (Management team staff, personnel responsible for running the hostel and awareness’ facilities...)
- Memorandums of Understanding were signed by some protected areas with major tour operators that have national and international programmes in order to include within their tours to the protected areas visits to other sites in the region and to use the services provided in the surrounding areas.

Q7: The assessment of the principal threats to the protected areas was conducted during the process of the preparation of the management plan of three protected area, however the main threats facing the remaining protected areas in Lebanon were not assessed:

The main threats included:

- | | |
|---|-----------------|
| - Grazing | - Cutting |
| - Hunting | - Camping |
| - Forest fires | - Littering |
| - Water shortage | - Pollution |
| - Introduced/invasive species | -Illegal taking |
| - Poverty leading locals to abuse the natural resources | |
| - Lack of awareness of the local communities about the importance of biodiversity | |
| - Lack of support from some locals to the creation of the protected area | |

Many actions were taken to deal with these threats, mainly:

- Prohibition by the law establishing each protected area of all actions having negative impacts on the protected area and its biodiversity.
- Awareness and sensitization campaigns were conducted to target groups (hunters, fishermen, local populations, sheep herders, youth, women...) about the importance of the protected area and the need for its conservation.
- In some protected areas, some alternatives sources of revenues were given to some locals to replace the revenues generating from the uses of the protected areas’ resources through rural development programmes, creating job opportunities in the protected area for the shepherds and wood cutters ect...

- Support from the Lebanese army and the civil defense to control and prevent illegal uses in the protected area.
- Coordination with the relevant municipalities to involve them in the control of the illegal uses and practices occurring in the protected areas; furthermore these municipalities are represented in the committees for the protected areas.
- Allocation of alternatives sites for camping and grazing. A project for sustainable management of grazing in the surrounding areas and for the prevention of forest fires in one of the protected areas was recently initiated with the collaboration of a local NGO.

Q8: Protected areas in some region are contributing to promote tourism in the whole region in which they are located:

Visitors to protected areas are oriented to visit other natural and archaeological sites in the region by the team of the protected area or in a form of package provided by some tour operators specially that Memorandums of Understanding were signed by some protected areas with tour operators for this purpose.

The relevant municipalities and the protected areas in some areas are collaborating together to promote ecotourism at the level of the protected area and in the wider region in which the protected area is located, thus achieving mutual benefits for both areas:

Some protected areas have signed Memorandum of Understandings with the relevant municipalities in order to get their support and to involve them in all the activities of the protected area. Some municipalities are investing money to promote ecotourism activities (providing financial support to improve the infrastructure in the protected area and its surroundings).

The concerned municipality in the region of Ehden created a Master Plan which promote ecotourism in the broader area and in which the Horsh Ehden Nature Reserve is considered a part of a whole, accordingly the protected area will help to attract visitors to the whole region and at the same time the tourists visiting the area will be oriented to go to the protected area.

Al- Shouf Cedars Nature Reserve initiated the development of a strategy to promote tourism in the whole region of the Shouf, the strategy was prepared in cooperation with all stakeholders mainly the municipalities and the private sectors. The study was conducted by the management team of the protected area and experts from Stanford University with the financial support of the USAID.

Q10: Committees for protected areas are appointed by the Ministry of Environment to provide supervision and guidance to these areas. These committees are composed of volunteers representing municipalities, local NGOs, academic institutions and concerned ministries.

Q11: Protected areas are established by laws and decisions under the supervision of the Ministry of Environment which appoints committees and management teams to manage these areas. On the other hand, there are some protected areas established by private initiatives, however they are not formally recognized.

Q12: Needs and Shortfalls:

- Lack of institutional set-up for all the protected areas.
- Delay in the adoption of the framework law for the protected areas by the Lebanese parliament (the law was prepared by the Ministry of Environment and is in the process of endorsement)
- Lack of specialization related to nature conservation especially in Taxonomy at the national level, accordingly few people have appropriate qualifications and background and experience in managing protected areas.
- Shortage of human resources in the national authority supervising the protected areas.
- The government is allocating annual contribution to the committee managing each protected area, however additional financial resources need to be allocated by the government to the national authority responsible for the protected areas and to the individual sites.
- Lack of resources mobilization from some individual sites, as entrance fees are not yet mandatory.

- Shortage in investment in income generating activities in the protected areas. A fund raising strategy was prepared by the Ministry of Environment for three protected areas and will be implemented in the first stage by a private company to build the capacities of the protected areas' management teams for the long-term implementation of this strategy.

Q13: Three protected areas (Al Shouf Cedars, Horsh Ehden and Palm Islands) are managed via GEF funding through the protected areas project which is being implemented in Lebanon since 1996 by the Ministry of Environment and the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP) (Please find the project data sheet in the appendix 1).

Two Ramsar sites (Ammiq marshes and Tyre Coast Nature Reserve) are being managed via funds from the FFEM (Fonds Francais pour l'Environnement Mondial) through the Medwet Coast project executed by the Ministry of Environment and the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP) (March 2002-March 2006). (Please find the project data sheet in appendix 2).

Q14: Constraints were only assessed for the three protected areas managed by the GEF protected areas project mentioned in the previous question: constraints to implementation and management of the protected areas were assessed during the preparation of the management plan for these protected areas and the actions to deal with these constraints were identified and prioritized within the management plans some actions were implemented while others will be executed when the necessary resources will be available.

On the other hand, a workshop to develop an understanding of the problems impeding effective protected areas management was held in June 2002 at the Ministry of Environment with the managing bodies of the protected areas. During this workshop, all the issues and concerns related to the management of the protected areas were discussed and identified as well as opportunities and directions. The results of this workshop were presented and discussed with the key stakeholders including relevant municipalities, line ministries, research institutions and other relevant projects dealing with biodiversity issues. Based on the recommendations of the workshop, the Ministry of Environment prepared a proposal about Lebanon Protected Areas Conservation Programme, which will include among its activities implementation of necessary actions to remove the constraints facing the implementation and management of protected areas.

Q15: There is no programme in place to regularly assess the effectiveness of protected areas management, however the management of some protected areas is assessed through the monitoring of different indicators (biological indicators, number of visitors, behavior of visitors, number of donors, number of people using awareness' materials...) and from the tripartite review of the protected areas project mentioned above. As the protected areas project includes only three sites, there is no tool used to assess the effectiveness of the management in the remaining protected areas in Lebanon.

Q16: The material and non-material benefits and services were not assessed systematically and regularly but were partially assessed in some protected areas by individual researchers through some occasional researches conducted in agreement with the management bodies of the protected areas and through personal initiatives from the management teams of some protected areas. Furthermore, Memorandums of Understanding were signed recently by some protected areas with universities to conduct research studies in the protected areas on several issues.

Q18: NGOs managing the protected areas are IUCN members but they are not members in the IUCN World Commission on Protected Areas.

Q20: Lebanon has four sites recognized as Ramsar sites (Tyre Coast Nature Reserve, Palm Islands Nature Reserve, Ammiq Marshes, Ras El-Chaqaa), four sites recognized as IBAs sites by Birdlife International (Important Birds Areas: Palm Islands Nature Reserve, Horsh Ehden Nature Reserve, Arz Al-Shouh Nature Reserve, Ammiq Marshes), five sites inscribed on the World Heritage List (Anjar, Baalbeck,

Byblos, Tyre, Qadisha Valley) (Please find the information sheets submitted to Ramsar Secretariat on Ramsar wetlands in Lebanon in appendix 3, information submitted to Birdlife on IBAs in Lebanon in appendix 4, reports submitted to UNESCO about the Lebanese sites inscribed on the World Heritage List in appendix 5)

Q21: Involving local NGOs and all other stakeholders in the management of the protected areas have proven to be a successful model for the management of the protected areas. The involvement of the private sector dealing with ecotourism to develop and promote ecotourism activities in the protected areas leading to mutual benefits for both sides is another experience that other parties may benefit from.

Additional Information:

There are eight Nature Reserves declared in Lebanon:

1. Horsh Ehden Nature Reserve (Law.121 date 9/3/1992)
2. Palm Island Nature Reserve (Law 121 date 9/3/1992)
3. Shouf Cedares Nature Reserve (Law 532 date 24/7/1996)
4. Tyre Coast Nature Reserve (Law 708 date 5/11/1998)
5. Bentaël Nature Reserve (Law 11 date 20/2/1999)
6. Yammouni Nature Reserve (Law 10 date 20/2/1999)
7. Tannourine Cedars Nature Reserve (Law.9 date 20/2/1999)
8. Karm Chbat (Decision 14/1 date 6/10/1995)

Due to the lack of resources, most of the work was only executed in the three sites managed by the GEF protected areas project, this includes: field studies, business plans, management plans, fund raising strategies, monitoring programmes, appointment of management teams.... There is a need to conduct similar studies and activities for the remaining protected areas in Lebanon. Another concern is that there will be no funds remaining at the end of the GEF project to ensure effective management of the relevant sites, thus there is a need to mobilize resources to develop and implement income generating activities within the sites in order to ensure their sustainability.

Aside the nature reserves, the Forest Code (Law 85 date 12/9/1991), amended by the Parliament in 1996 (Law 558 date 24/7/96) stipulates that all cedar, fir, juniper forests and “other forests” in Lebanon are protected in fact. Moreover, fifteen forests were declared protected explicitly by ministerial decisions issued from the Ministry of Agriculture under the amended Forest Code.

On the other hand, the Ministry of Environment has declared many sites, rivers, valleys, mountain tops as protected sites by ministerial decisions. According to these decisions, the Ministry of Environment will develop in coordination with the General Directorate of Urban Planning permitting standards for the construction and operation of any facility around these sites and within 500-meter buffer zone. The Ministry of Agriculture has declared as well other natural sites protected by ministerial decisions.

List of Appendixes (available in hard copy only)

- Appendix 1: Protected Areas Project (Project Fact Sheet)
- Appendix 2: MedWet Coast Project (Project Fact Sheet)
- Appendix 3: Information Sheets on Ramsar Wetlands in Lebanon
- Appendix 4: Information on IBAs in Lebanon
- Appendix 5: Periodic Reports about the Lebanese sites inscribed on the World Heritage List