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**SUPPORTING NATIONAL IMPLEMENTATION OF THE PROGRAMME OF WORK ON
PROTECTED AREAS: LESSONS LEARNED AND INGREDIENTS OF SUCCESS**

Note by the Executive Secretary

1. In pursuance of paragraph 2 of decision VII/28 regarding NGO pledge to support the implementation of the programme of work on protected areas, The Nature Conservancy submitted a report on “supporting national implementation of the programme of work on protected areas - lessons learned and ingredients of success”. The Executive Secretary is pleased to make available herewith for the information of participants in the second meeting of the Ad Hoc Open-ended Working Group on Protected Areas, this report.
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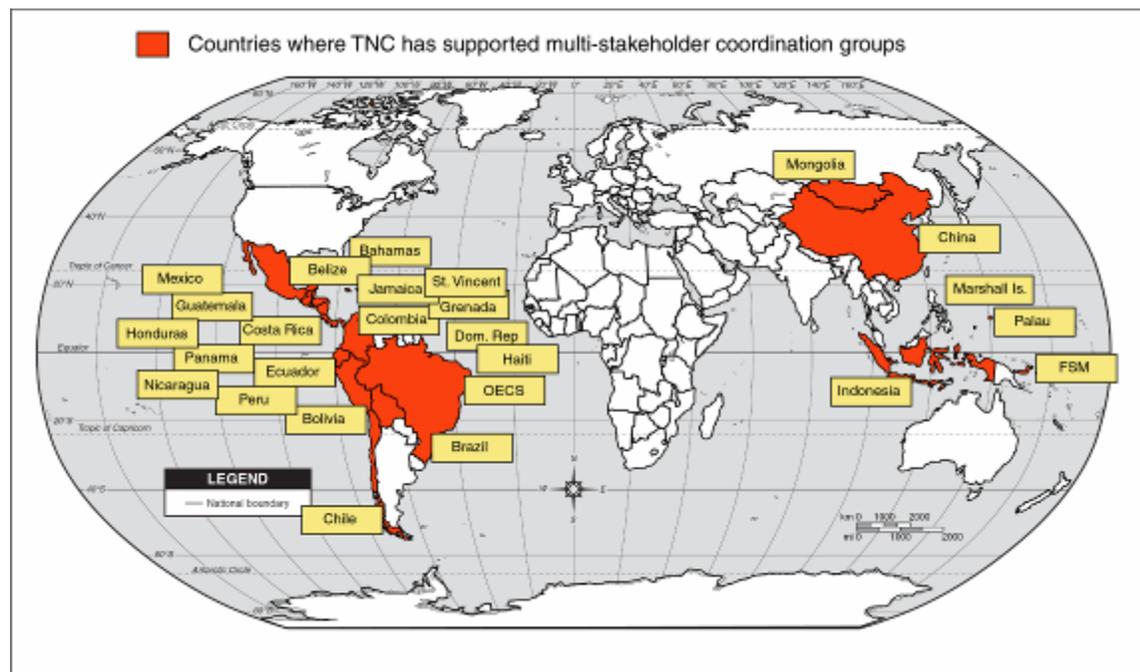
SUPPORTING NATIONAL IMPLEMENTATION OF THE PROGRAM OF WORK ON PROTECTED AREAS – Lessons Learned and Ingredients of Success

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The Nature Conservancy is a non-profit conservation organization whose mission is to preserve the plants, animals and natural communities that represent the diversity of life on earth by protecting the lands and waters they need to survive. To that end, The Nature Conservancy (TNC) has enthusiastically embraced the programme of work on protected areas as a strategic and historic conservation opportunity, and is providing technical support and funding to over 25 governments to achieve the goals to which they have committed. Since 2003, TNC has identified four key ingredients of success in implementing the Programme of Work: coordination, capacity, commitment, and capital. This information document highlights lessons learned on each of these themes, and identifies some recommendations for supporting the next phase of implementation of the Programme of Work on Protected Areas.

Lesson 1: Coordination

Over 30 countries have created multi-stakeholder working groups to help coordinate implementation of the Program of Work. These groups, typically comprised of representatives from government and non-governmental sectors, ensure that Programme of Work actions are well coordinated and staffed. The Nature Conservancy has directly supported 25 of these multi-stakeholder coordination working groups through government agreements called “National Implementation Support Partnerships (NISPs).”



These NISP agreements typically involve a range of governmental agencies and non-governmental groups, have a written memorandum of understanding, identify specific activities of the Programme of Work in which members will cooperate, and have clearly outlined communication, budget and decision-making roles and responsibilities. One example of a multi-stakeholder coordination group is Mexico.

Mexico

Several international non-governmental organizations, including the World Wide Fund for Nature, Conservation International, and The Nature Conservancy, signed a memorandum of understanding with Mexico at the 7th Convention of the Parties in 2004. The memorandum calls for a committee called a National Implementation Support Partnership (NISP). Each organization brings a different set of skills. The Mexican Secretary of Environment appointed the National Commission on Protected Areas (CONANP) as leader of the NISP committee. The committee's function has stayed similar since inception, and membership has increased due to growing interest. For example, after the original agreement was signed, ProNatura asked to join by signing an official agreement, followed by Ducks Unlimited of Mexico.

The Nature Conservancy has concentrated on a few focused activities, including supporting ecological gap assessment, one of the critical components for completion of a system-wide master plan for a national protected area system. With financing by a grant from The Nature Conservancy along with technical assistance, the Mexican government was able to complete the ecological gap analysis. Preliminary results from the assessment helped the government prioritize the most important sites in Mexico, and identify where gaps in protection exist. For example, the most significant conservation gaps are distributed at the north of the Baja California Peninsula, as well as in the states of Oaxaca, Sonora, Coahuila and Durango. Nearly one-quarter of the 96 terrestrial ecoregions are not represented in any of the existing protected areas. Also, the deep sea marine realm and terrestrial areas at higher altitudes are lacking in protection.

The gap assessment also resulted in the declaration of five new protected areas and the reinstatement of one former protected area, bringing the total of new protected areas in 2005 to nearly 3.5 million acres. Additionally, in 2005, Mexico increased its annual protected area budget by a third, to \$54 million.

Another result of the ecological gap assessment was a workshop in Mexico to prioritize marine and coastal sites. An unprecedented 45 experts from across the country were involved in this rare opportunity to pull together scarce information. One unexpected result of this effort was the opportunity to identify what information is available and what is missing. An important part of this success is due to the existence of a National System on Biodiversity Information (SNIB) which compiled over 4 million geo-referenced occurrences for flora and fauna, generated by hundreds of projects and 20 years of building a database by the National Commission on Biodiversity (CONABIO).

In addition to the ecological gap assessment, The Nature Conservancy is also contributing expertise alongside partners in Mexico to assist in assessments of protected area management effectiveness, capacity needs, and sustainable finance components related to the Programme of Work. When funding is available, a future priority is the development of an overall master plan for the protected area system. Perhaps the most important success of the NISP partnership in Mexico is the adoption of a conservation agenda that lines up actions of the government and key NGOs. As a result, a common baseline has been established for conservation gaps, with acknowledgement that non-governmental organizations can help cover gaps that the government cannot.



NISP agreements help strengthen partnerships between government agencies and non-governmental organizations. Photo: Mark Godfrey, © TNC.

Lessons learned

The Nature Conservancy, in reviewing its experience in supporting more than 25 multi-stakeholder coordination working groups, has identified several lessons. First, participation of multiple sectors – from forestry, land-use planning, energy, tourism, fisheries – is critical to the success and long-term societal acceptance of actions. Such participation ensures that the results not only reflect realities on the ground of creating and improving a robust protected area network, but also are more likely to see long term societal support from different sectors. In fact, the establishment of such working groups has catalyzed new partnerships between protected areas and the business sector, partnerships which otherwise may not have happened.

Second, a single, charismatic leader is one of the hallmarks of an effective coordination working group. Time and again, a dynamic, energetic, and well-placed individual who leads the working group will make the difference between sporadic and uncertain success versus strong and unequivocal progress.

Third, as most of the working groups intend to work together for several years, a written charter can help buffer against political changes as administrations come and go. Several countries have found that a written charter, spanning at least several years, helps when new government officials come into power.

Fourth, integrating the costs of associated activities, such as creating new protected areas or improving management effectiveness, into the national budgeting process is critical. If this step does not occur, it is likely that the careful and time-consuming efforts in developing plans and conducting assessments will not be funded, and therefore will not yield the intended results.

Lesson 2: Capacity

In order to conduct the many assessments called for in the Programme of Work, governments must have sufficient technical capacity. In partnership with the Secretariat of the Convention on Biological Diversity, a consortium of non-governmental organizations, (including The Nature Conservancy, World Wide Fund for Nature, World Conservation Society and Birdlife, among others), has held nine regional workshops over the past 18 months. The workshops, which focused on ecological gap assessments, management effectiveness and capacity assessments, sustainable finance assessments and protected area system master planning, reached 118 countries and over 750 protected area specialists. The consortium has committed to continuing this series through 2010.



Regional workshops like this one bring dozens of governments together to share experiences in implementing the programme of work. Photo: Jamison Ervin © TNC.

However, such workshops are only a beginning in improving governments' technical capacity to implement the programme of work. One step is to improve access to new and existing tools and case studies through web sites and electronic media. The programme of work includes a collection of 92 actions aimed at securing ecologically representative and well-managed protected area networks. However, the list of actions can be overwhelming, overlapping and even confusing. In order to help foster a more coherent approach to understanding the programme of work through capacity-building tools and support, The Nature Conservancy, along with a consortium of other non-governmental partners, has identified the following set of key themes. Please visit www.protectedareatools.org to access specific tools related to each of these themes.

Proposed set of themes for the development of protected area guidance materials

OVERALL THEME	Actions of the Programme of Work on Protected Areas
Assessing and improving the protected area network	
▪ Ecological gaps	(1.1.1), (1.1.2), (1.1.3), (1.1.5),
▪ Landscape and seascape integration	(1.2.1), (1.2.3), (1.2.4),(1.3.1)
▪ Transboundary protected areas	(1.3.2), (1.3.3), (1.3.4), (3.1.11)
▪ Restoration	(1.2.5), (1.5.3), (1.5.4), (1.5.5), (1.5.6)
Assessing and improving protected area management	
▪ Management of threats	(1.4.3), (1.4.5), (1.5.1), (1.5.2)
▪ Management planning	(1.4.2), (1.4.4)
▪ Monitoring and adaptive management	(4.1.3), (4.3.1), (4.3.2), (4.3.3), (4.3.5)
▪ Management effectiveness	(1.4.6), (4.2.1), (4.1.1), (4.2.2), (4.2.3), (4.2.4)
▪ Capacity	(3.2.1), (3.2.2), (3.2.3),
▪ Participatory planning	(1.4.1), (2.1.5), (2.2.1), (2.2.2), (2.2.3), (2.2.5)
▪ Communication and education	(3.5.1), (3.5.2), (3.5.3), (3.5.4), (3.5.5), (3.5.6)
Assessing and improving the protected area enabling environment	
▪ Protected area system master planning	
▪ Policy environment	(1.2.2), (2.2.4), (3.1.1), (3.1.3), (3.1.5), (3.1.6), (3.1.7), (3.1.8), (3.2.4)
▪ Sustainable finance	(3.1.9), (3.1.10), (3.2.5), (3.4.1), (3.4.2), (3.4.3), (3.4.4), (3.4.6)
▪ Protected area governance	(1.1.4), (1.1.7), (2.1.2), (2.1.3), (3.1.4)
▪ Protected area benefits	(2.1.1), (2.1.4), (2.1.6), (3.1.2)

In addition, the collection of 92 actions of the Programme of Work can lead to the impression that each activity is not necessarily part of a cohesive whole. One overall theme that binds all of the elements together is the theme of protected area system “master planning.” This concept, which may be called a variety of different names in different countries (e.g., “National Protected Area Action Planning”; “Protected Area System Strategic Planning”), is a sub-theme that, while not expressly in the Programme of Work, does bind all of the elements together into a cohesive whole. Therefore, it is included as a separate theme in this table, and for capacity building.

Another step is to foster in-depth technical clinics and exchanges between protected area specialists, to share approaches and provide one-on-one assistance. The country of Madagascar, with support from The Nature Conservancy, World Wide Fund for Nature, Conservation International, and Wildlife Conservation Society, among others, has offered to host such a clinic for neighboring countries, focusing on integrating freshwater and marine biodiversity into ecological gap assessments, among other technical issues.

Another step to raise national capacity is to develop virtual curricula. One example of this is a new curriculum that The Nature Conservancy has developed on business planning for protected areas – please visit the following website -- <http://capps.wsu.edu/SustainableFinance/> for more details.

Lesson 3: Commitment

Fully implementing the Program of Work requires visionary leadership and bold commitment. One example of such leadership is President Bongo's decision to create 13 new protected areas across Gabon, covering ten thousand square miles, and over ten percent of its national territory. The government's vision is for Gabon's national parks to become a "global model of conservation." Many other countries have taken similar steps to increase the coverage and representativeness of their protected area networks, including Australia, Brazil, Bahamas, Germany and Madagascar, to name just a handful. These countries have committed to ambitious protection goals, and have begun to take bold actions to turn those commitments into action.

A few countries, however, have taken their commitments to an even higher level by catalyzing regional protected area 'challenges' with neighboring countries. Examples of such challenges include the Micronesian Challenge, the Caribbean Challenge, the Amazon, the Coral Triangle and the Mediterranean. Such initiatives are becoming increasingly important as mechanisms for raising regional and global commitments to fulfill the Program of Work on Protected Areas.

Micronesian Challenge

Islands around the world play a unique role in global biodiversity yet are facing conservation threats amplified by their unique geography, from rising sea levels to invasive species. For small island countries, these threats have entire societies hanging in the balance. Recognizing the urgent needs of his country, its people and its lands and waters, the president of Palau has issued a challenge to Micronesian nations that may have implications for islands conservation around the globe. On November 5, President Tommy E. Remengesau, Jr. called on his peers to join him in the Micronesia Challenge to effectively conserve 30 percent of near shore marine resources and 20 percent of forest resources by 2020.



The Micronesian Challenge raises the bar on protection – participating countries aim to conserve 30 percent of near shore marine resources by 2020. Photo: Jez O'Hare © TNC.

The Challenge countries – Palau, Federated States of Micronesia and Marshall Islands, and the U.S. territories of Guam and Northern Mariana Islands – represent nearly five percent of the marine area of the Pacific Ocean and seven percent of its coastlines. Yet the president's challenge could have an even larger impact on conservation around the globe. Cites Bill Raynor, director of The Nature Conservancy's Micronesian program, "Our ability to conserve lands and water in the Oceania biogeographic realm just multiplied exponentially. The opportunity for conservation in this region is incredible. A combination of visionary leadership and capable local partners makes Micronesia a very special place to work."

Caribbean Challenge

The Caribbean Basin has almost 8,000 square miles of coral reefs that sustain a wealth of biodiversity. The Caribbean Sea is teeming with more than 1,400 species of fish and its waters support six of the world's seven species of endangered sea turtles during key stages of their lifecycles. The region is also home to some 300 bird and mammal species found nowhere else on the planet.

Currently, just seven percent of the coastal Caribbean Basin is under any form of protection. However, the Caribbean is well poised for long-term conservation efforts as it is a region with few conflicts, a thriving tourism economy and a high rate of literacy. Creating effective protected areas is one of the most

efficient methods of ensuring long term conservation of lasting healthy habitats that support human and natural life.

Under the Programme of Work on Protected Areas, the Caribbean nations of Antigua and Barbuda, Bahamas, Barbados, Belize, Cuba, Dominica, Dominican Republic, Grenada, Haiti, Jamaica, St. Kitts and Nevis, St. Lucia, St. Vincent and the Grenadines, and Trinidad and Tobago have committed to protecting ten percent of representative terrestrial and marine ecosystems by 2010 and 2012 respectively.

Over the past four years, the governments of the Bahamas, Dominican Republic, Grenada, Jamaica, and St. Vincent and the Grenadines, supported by The Nature Conservancy, have begun to fulfill these commitments via the completion of master plans for each country's national system of protected areas. These plans identify the financial, staffing, and biological gaps that hinder the effective management of these national systems of protected areas.

Several Caribbean island nations have come together with The Nature Conservancy, local NGOs and other stakeholders on an unprecedented project to legally protect at least five million hectares of marine habitat and to ensure the effective management of at least two million hectares of new and existing protected areas over the next six years. The Caribbean Challenge Marine Initiative, which will solidify these and other commitments, will be officially launched at a high level event at the ninth Conference of the Parties under the Convention on Biological Diversity (COP-9) in Bonn, May 2008.



*Governmental, business and non-governmental representatives from Grenada, a member of the Caribbean Challenge, work together to assess ecological gaps in their national protected area network.
Photo: Jamison Ervin © TNC.*

Lesson 4: Capital

Implementing the 92 actions of the Program of Work on Protected Areas requires sufficient financial capital to undertake the many assessments included in the Program of Work, including assessments of ecological gaps, management effectiveness, capacity needs, sustainable finance needs, equity and benefits sharing, and policy environment, among others. NGOs and donors have played a key role in financing these assessments. The Nature Conservancy, for example, has invested \$4 million in implementation grants to 25 countries to undertake key early actions of the Program of Work. Based on this model, the GEF has recently developed a \$9 million fund for conducting key assessments of the Program of Work (see the website www.protectedareas.org for details on this fund).

However, assessments are only the first step. The real work lies in implementing the assessment results – in improving the protected area network, in improving protected area management, and in improving the broader enabling environment. This means creating a robust and sustainable financial base for funding national protected area systems. The Programme of Work on Protected Areas recognizes the need for such funding, stating that governments should “establish and begin to implement, by 2008, country-level sustainable financing plans that support national systems of protected areas.” Although substantial advances have been made, many countries are still a long way from completing this goal.

Traditionally, financial planning of protected areas has focused on the priorities of international donors, lacked business approaches and provided poor incentives for behavioral change. Traditional financial

plans have not been supported by accurate assessments of financial needs and gaps, cost reduction strategies, assessment and diversification of income sources, business plans and a framework to prioritize revenue allocation. Additionally, financial strategies lack enabling regulatory frameworks, and business planning tools have not been available. Consequently, to date, few countries have completed financial plans that incorporate the above indicated elements at system level. Some exceptions include Ecuador, Costa Rica, Peru, Brazil, Colombia and Grenada.

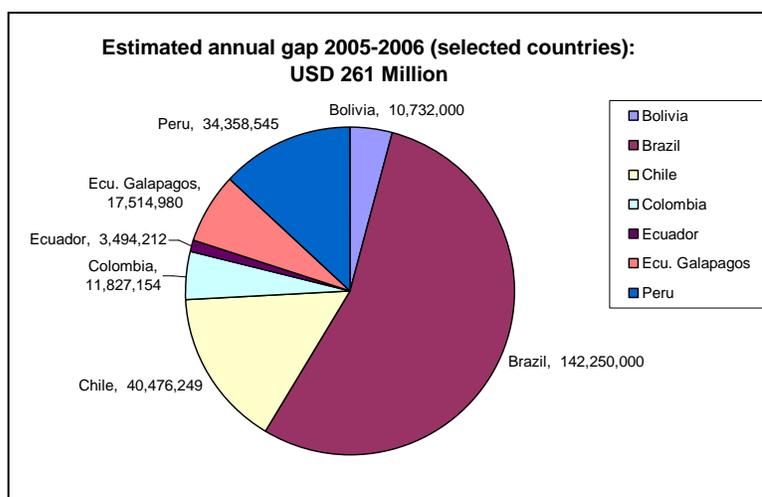
At a national level, limited growth of government budgets, lack of transparency and poor accountability has led to a slow growth in domestic funding. Government funding for conservation relative to the national budget is normally under one percent. Besides, disbursements to protected area system agencies are often less than budgeted and are often transferred late, making it difficult for protected area systems to plan their activities. The situation is aggravated by poor budgeting practices that often result in financial shortfalls. Biodiversity continues to lack priority vis-à-vis other national development agendas (poverty, governance, health, education, and infrastructure); and there is limited or no interaction between environmental agencies with agencies outside the environmental sector, including public and private finance sectors.

Despite the above, there has been substantial development in the establishment of new financial mechanisms for protected areas. To mention a few, in México, an increase of the gasoline tax was just approved (5.5 percent) in October 2007. Part of the increase (12.5 percent) will go to support investments in the environment sector, potentially including protected areas. In addition, the budget of the National Protected Area Commission (CONANP) was increased over 40 percent in 2006.

A new debt-for-nature swap in Guatemala will benefit the protected area system with USD 1.5 million per year in the next 15 years. Additional swaps have taken place in Costa Rica and Panama. New protected area trust funds are being established in Colombia and Costa Rica; and water-based payment for ecosystem services and related endowment funds are being established in Colombia and Brazil, following the success of the Water Fund established in Ecuador in 2006. In Peru, as a result of the new Free Trade Agreement, the

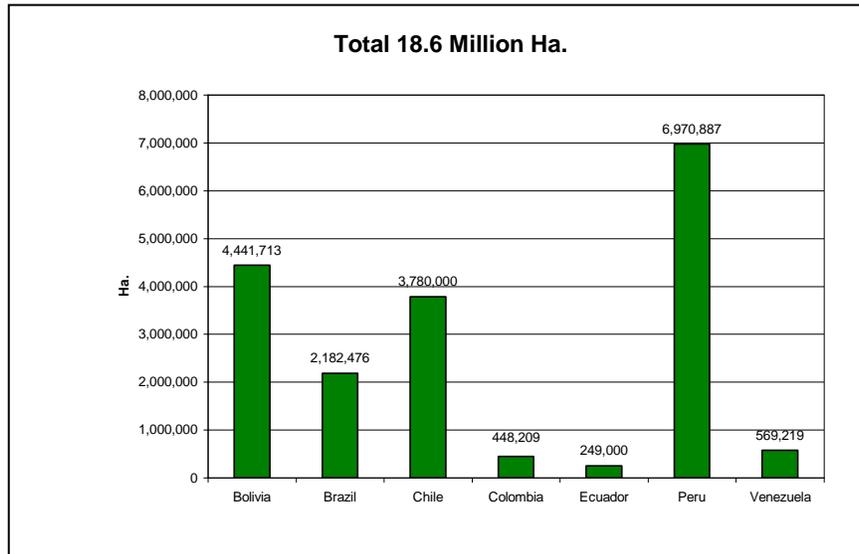
government will increase their support to the forest sector (USD 15 million) to support illegal logging control in and outside protected areas; and the environmental compensation scheme in Brazil has the potential of delivering millions of dollars to support the protected area system once it is fully operational. At a regional level, The Nature Conservancy and partner organizations have successfully leveraged funding for conservation through the Micronesia Challenge (USD 12 million), the Caribbean Challenge and the Atlantic Forest Challenge in Brazil.

However, the current funding to protected areas has not been able to contain the ever increasing financial gaps associated with the cost of managing protected areas. On-going financial analyses indicate dramatic increase in the financial gaps (needs vs. income) in most protected area systems across regions. For instance, according to data provided by national governments (2006), the estimated gap in six countries in South America: Brazil, Bolivia, Colombia, Chile, Ecuador (including Galapagos) and Peru totals USD 261 million. In other regions the situation is similar. For instance, the estimated annual financial gap of the protected area system in Indonesia is over USD 100 million.



Using a rigorous science-based assessment method, The Nature Conservancy and partner organizations, have determined that in order to establish fully representative ecosystems, millions of hectares will need to be set aside as new protected areas. In South America alone, ecological gap analyses indicate that approximately 18.6 million hectares of different habitat types is needed; and new protected areas will significantly expand the existing financial gaps. Thus, an aggressive approach to mobilize funding and carry out fiscal policy reform is critical to ensure that new protected areas are sustainably funded.

New protected areas needed to complete ecological gaps across South America



The traditional limited funding to protected areas has been dominated mostly by project-based international funding, central government transfers, park entry fees and trust funds. However, it is now being recognized that in order to generate sufficient funding to protected areas, it is critical to look at both sides of the financial equation, supply and demand. On the supply side move from the “site-level approach” (focusing on individual

protected areas) to the “system-level approach” focusing on the entire system of protected areas, assessing financial viability and diversifying financial mechanisms, and articulating viable financial mechanisms with the gaps and priorities identified by the financial plans. On the demand side, define financial needs and gaps, address problems related to financial management capacity and developing the enabling finance-related governance framework to stimulate generation and retention of revenue for protected areas.

Numerous studies from bilateral agencies and international non-governmental organizations indicate that there is a great variety of financial mechanisms for protected areas available, both market and non-marked based. However, many are not yet implemented and others are being implemented at a modest scale and need to scale-up. For instance, nationwide water-based payments for environmental services, incorporate business approaches to manage park entry fees, small and medium endowment funds can form collective trusts by joining together for efficiency and with a “sponsor” larger trust; and develop clear operational guidelines for environmental-compensation schemes to better articulate support to protected areas. There is no silver bullet in protected area financing. However, by combining sound financial planning, improved financial management capacity, transparency, accountability and a diversified financial portfolio (traditional and new financial mechanisms) sustainable financing options can be dramatically improved.



In Grenada, cruise ships pay substantial fees for freshwater, fees that come from protected areas, and flow to protected area agencies. Photo: Jamison Ervin © TNC.

National systems of protected areas around the world are confronted by a set of inter-connected barriers to achieve financial sustainability, and particularly to diversify their portfolio of financial mechanisms. The common denominator is over-dependence on government subventions that are below the estimated financial needs.

Legislative, political, and institutional constraints inhibit efforts to develop innovative financing strategies or streamline operations to help close the gap. Financial planning and cost-effective management are not typically part of the operational culture of protected area agencies. All too often, agency managers are ill-equipped and poorly-motivated to engage in long-term financial planning, seek out new funding sources, or to adopt cost-effective practices. While protected area managers have heard of emerging markets for environmental services, they lack sufficient technical knowledge, and these markets are still relatively undeveloped. Where such mechanisms have been implemented, often the focus has been on the individual protected area to the exclusion of the whole system. These barriers are common to protected area systems around the world over. Thus, it is critical that governments identify barriers and develop strategies to eliminate them.

Barriers to system-level financial sustainability were assessed in a recent analysis in six countries, as part of the preparatory process for a Global GEF supported project: Financial Sustainability of National Systems of Protected Areas. The countries included Panama, Ecuador, Bulgaria, Vietnam, Thailand and Gabon. The key findings can be summarized in four major barriers:

1. Government budget allocations that are below estimates of need. Governments and ministries of finance tend to favor investment in economic development and export-led growth. The environmental sector is generally in a weak bargaining position relative to other sectors. In addition, the countries must overcome low levels of political support for the protection of nature.
2. Legislative, political, or institutional constraints to innovation and cost-effective operations. Protected areas are poorly integrated into national development policies, and are prevented or discouraged from generating or retaining revenues from alternative sources. At the same time, institutional systems and structures are overly bureaucratic and not conducive to cost-effective operations, such as co-management arrangements. The division of responsibilities between different institutions is often poorly defined; procedures may be administratively burdensome; and processes of participation, governance and accountability may be ineffective.
3. Managers are ill-equipped and poorly-motivated to diversify funding sources or adopt cost-effective operations. In most cases, individual protected areas and protected area systems have not developed strategic financial plans to support their management plans, and it is not uncommon that basic protected area management plans are not even in place. In addition, countries have not put in place a set of long-term financing mechanisms to adequately meet the needs of their protected area systems. Over-reliance on few funding mechanisms leaves them vulnerable should sources dry up. Furthermore, PA managers lack financial planning frameworks that will enable the systematic assessment of financing needs, the viability of new revenue sources, and the development of system-wide financing strategies to meet those needs; and the absence of financial information and business plans makes it more difficult to engage donors, the private sector, and ministries of finance, which are key actors to address resource allocation issues across protected area systems.
4. Limited technical knowledge on screening, assessment, formulation and implementation of new mechanisms and market opportunities to improve protected area financing. Information, knowledge, and expertise on payment for ecosystem services (PES) and other mechanisms for generating financial returns are not available among protected area system personnel.

For more on innovative sustainable finance mechanisms, please visit www.conservationfinance.org.

Conclusions

The results of these coordination working groups have been impressive. One of the main benefits has been the additional funding that small funding grants has catalyzed. Many countries have been able to generate additional revenue, leveraging the small amounts of TNC funding to increase funding from a variety of other sources, including other donors and governmental matches. This means that investments from non-governmental organizations, even if modest, can catalyze significant results – typically at a rate of two to four times.

Another major accomplishment has been the establishment of new protected areas. The table below shows a sampling of some of the new protected areas that these countries have created, in part based on the results of their ecological gap assessments, increased sustainable financing, and sustained political will.

New protected areas created since 2005

Country	New protected area(s)
Brazil	5.9m ha of new protected areas declared in 2005, 6m ha in February of 2006
Colombia	3 protected areas created, Yuriques National Park created (150,000 acres), Dona Juana (187,000 acres), Churumbelos National Park (190,000 acres).
Ecuador	3 new protected areas, El Quimi (9000 ha) El Zarza (3642 ha), El Morro. (3000 ha)
Indonesia	13 new Pas covering 3m ha, plus 1 district level PA, plus 7 new Marine Protected areas.
Mexico	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Bahía de los Angeles, canales de Ballenas y Salsipuedes Biosphere Reserve • Zona Marína del Archipiélago de Espíritu Santo National Park • Sierra Gorda de Guanajuato Biosphere Reserve • Laguna Madre y Delta del Río Bravo Flora and Fauna Protected Area • Islas Marietas Flora and Fauna Protected Area • Archipiélago de San Lorenzo National Park • Bala'an K'aax Flora and Fauna Protected Area • Isla Guadalupe Biosphere Reserve
Peru	Sierra del Divisor National Park (300,000 acres)

Another primary indicator of accomplishment and progress is the extent to which countries have implemented key assessments. While progress in conducting key assessment has been variable across the globe, with many gaps evident, countries that have partnered with The Nature Conservancy and other non-governmental have made considerable and demonstrable progress. Each of the countries with NISP agreements in place and early action grants from The Nature Conservancy are making progress towards completing the key assessments that form a national protected area system master plan (see table below).

Progress in countries where The Nature Conservancy has provided technical and financial support

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	Ecological gap assessment	Management effectiveness assessment	Sustainable finance assessment	Master Plans	Protected Area system goals established	New protected areas created
South America Region						
Bolivia	√	√	√			
Brazil	√	√	√	√	√	√
Chile	P	√				
Colombia	P	P	P	P		√
Ecuador	√	√	√	√		√
Peru	√ (except marine)	√	√	P		√
MesoAmerica & Caribbean Region						
Bahamas	√	√	P	P	√	
Belize	√	√	√	√		
Costa Rica	P	√	√	P		
DR	√	P	P	P		
Gren, St V & Gren	√	√	√	P	√	
Guatemala	√	√	√			
Jamaica	P	√	P	P		
Mexico	√ (except freshwater)	√	P	P		√
Nicaragua	P	P	P	P		
Panama	P	P	P	P		
Asia-Pacific Region						
China	√	P	√		√	
Federated States of Micronesia	P	P	P		√	
Indonesia	P	√	P		√	√
Mongolia	P	√				
Palau	√	P	√		√	
Papua New Guinea		√				
Solomon Islands		√				

The progress of countries that The Nature Conservancy has worked with clearly demonstrates that appropriate technical capacity, adequate financial capital, and sufficient financial capital and demonstrated political will and commitment are the cornerstones for implementation of the Programme of Work on Protected Areas.
