

PRESS RELEASE

Secretariat launches a practical guide on how to integrate protected areas into wider landscapes, seascapes and sectors

Montreal, 1 February 2010 – The Secretariat of the Convention on Biological Diversity released a practical guide developed with the generous support of the Government of the Netherlands titled, “Making Protected Areas Relevant: A Guide to Integrating Protected Areas into Wider Landscapes, Seascapes and Sectoral Plans and Strategies”.

Goal 1.2 of the Programme of work on Protected Areas (PoWPA) of the Convention on Biological Diversity specifically calls for integrating protected areas into broader land and seascapes and sectors to maintain the structural and functional viability of ecosystems. The target for goal 1.2 is, “By 2015, all protected areas and protected area systems are integrated into the wider land- and seascape, and relevant sectors, by applying the ecosystem approach and taking into account ecological connectivity and the concept, where appropriate, of ecological networks”.

The unprecedented increase in the human use of natural resources over the last century has adversely affected ecosystems, leading to their fragmentation and loss of biological diversity. Protected areas remaining as isolated units, surrounded by radically altered habitat, almost always face serious viability problems over the long term. In addition to fragmentation of physical landscape, policies and programmes of economic sectors particularly those directly related to natural resource use and management such as agriculture, forestry, fisheries, wildlife utilization, mining and tourism will also impinge upon protected areas and biodiversity conservation, resulting in loss of ecosystem services.

Creating or restoring functional linkages between protected areas and their surrounding regions is essential if we are to strengthen ecological coherence and resilience for both biodiversity conservation and sustainable development. The need to integrate protected areas into the wider landscape and sectors is all the more imperative, in order to address the adverse impacts of climate change. Fragmentation impairs the ability of a species to adapt to rapidly shifting habitat patterns and ecological processes that result from climate change, further weakening their resilience, and increasing the likelihood of local and widespread extinctions. Because the severity and distribution of the impacts of climate change are so uncertain, the maintenance of landscape connectivity across biophysical gradients is essential to safeguard biodiversity.

The guide has met with critical acclaim, including from the Scientific and Technical Advisory Panel of the Global Environmental Facility which stated, “This is a very well prepared and useful contribution to the CBD programme in developing the capacity of biodiversity conservation practitioners and their partners throughout the world”.

The Government of Australia has also welcomed the draft guide, noting that “overall the document provides a good framework to guide the effective integration of protected areas into the broader landscape.”

“As the detrimental impact of climate change is threatening our planet and our existence, protected areas provide a convenient solution to an inconvenient truth and this guide offers practical ways and means to integrate protected areas into wider land- and sea-scapes and sectors to address climate change” said Ahmed Djoghlaif, Executive Secretary, while presenting the guide to the 500 participants attending the European Conference “Post-2010 Biodiversity Vision and Target – the role of Protected Areas and Ecological Networks”, on 26 January in Madrid, Spain.

The CBD Technical Series No.44 is available at <https://www.cbd.int/doc/publications/cbd-ts-44-en.pdf>.

For More Information on the Guide:

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The Convention on Biological Diversity (CBD)

Launched at the Earth Summit in Rio de Janeiro in 1992, the Convention on Biological Diversity is an international treaty for the conservation and sustainable use of biodiversity and the equitable sharing of the benefits from the utilization of genetic resources. With 192 members, the CBD has near-universal participation among countries committed to preserving life on Earth. The CBD seeks to address all threats to biodiversity and ecosystem services, including threats from climate change, through scientific assessments, the development of tools, incentives and processes, the transfer of technologies and good practices and the full and active involvement of relevant stakeholders including indigenous and local communities, youth, non-governmental organizations, women and the business community. The headquarters of the Secretariat of the Convention is located in Montreal.

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