

# Protected areas

Cornerstones of biodiversity conservation

## Goal 1.2: To integrate protected areas into broader land- and seascapes and sectors so as to maintain ecological structure and function

**Target:** 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.

### Suggested activities of the Parties

1.2.1. Evaluate by 2006 national and sub-national experiences and lessons learned on specific efforts to integrate protected areas into broader land- and seascapes and sectoral plans and strategies such as poverty reduction strategies. 1.2.2. Identify and implement, by 2008, practical steps for improving the integration of protected areas into broader land- and seascapes, including policy, legal, planning and other measures.

1.2.3. Integrate regional, national and sub-national systems of protected areas into broader land- and seascape, *inter alia* by establishing and managing ecological networks, ecological corridors and/or buffer zones, where appropriate, to maintain ecological processes and also taking into account the needs of migratory species.

1.2.4. Develop tools of ecological connectivity, such as ecological corridors, linking together protected areas where necessary or beneficial as determined by national priorities for the conservation of biodiversity.

1.2.5. Rehabilitate and restore habitats and degraded ecosystems, as appropriate, as a contribution to building ecological networks, ecological corridors and/or buffer zones.

### Suggested supporting activities of the Executive Secretary

1.2.6. Encourage the organization of regional and sub-regional workshops for the exchange of experiences on integration of biodiversity and protected areas into relevant sectoral and spatial plans.

1.2.7. Compile and disseminate, using the CHM and other media, case-studies of best practices and other reports regarding the application of the ecosystem approach in relation to protected areas at the international, regional, national and sub-national levels.

### Learn more about Goal 1.2:

#### Key activities include:

- Evaluate lessons learned in integrating protected areas
- Identify and implement steps for improving protected area integration
- Establish and manage ecological networks, ecological corridors, and buffer zones
- Develop ecological corridors to link protected areas
- Restore habitats and degraded ecosystems to strengthen networks, corridors and buffer zones

#### What is protected area integration?

Protected area integration is the process of ensuring that the design and management of protected areas, corridors and the surrounding matrix fosters a connected, functional ecological network; and the process

of ensuring that the policies and practices of natural resource sectors foster a connected, functional ecological network.

### **What are broader landscapes and seascapes, and what are related sectors?**

Wider landscapes and seascapes include the array of land and water uses, management practices, policies and contexts that have an impact within and beyond protected areas, and that limit or enhance protected area connectivity and the maintenance of biodiversity. Related sectors include any field that contributes to the economy of a community or country, and that has an actual or potential bearing on the creation, integrity, and/or management of protected areas. Examples include forestry, fisheries, agriculture, energy, transportation and development.

### **What are ecological corridors?**

Ecological corridors are areas of intact ecosystems that help connect one protected area with another, and thereby help to maintain ecological processes such as migration. They are also increasingly important in helping species and ecosystems adapt to climate change. A related term is a transboundary migratory corridor, which is an area of land and/or sea in two or more countries, which are not necessarily contiguous, but are required to sustain a biological migratory pathway, and where co-operative management has been secured through legal or other effective means.

### **What is an assessment of protected area connectivity and integration?**

**An assessment of protected area connectivity and integration involves two aspects:** 1) an assessment of the extent to which the design and management of protected areas, corridors and the surrounding matrix fosters a connected, functional ecological network; and 2) an assessment of the extent to which policies and practices of natural resource sectors foster a connected, functional ecological network.

### **What steps are involved in assessing protected area connectivity and integration?**

Typical steps involved in conducting an ecological gap assessment include:

- a) **Getting started:** This step entails creating a core group, setting goals, establishing parameters, and creating effective partnerships.
- b) **Assessing the broader context:** This step entails
  - a. assessing the ecological context (by identifying key biodiversity, setting goals, and assessing connectivity gaps);
  - b. assessing the protection context (by assessing the type, distribution and effectiveness of protected areas and other conserved areas);
  - c. assessing the socio-economic and cultural context (by identifying social, economic and cultural constraints and opportunities to integrate protected areas);
  - d. assessing the policy and sectoral context (by identifying policies and sectors, and their constraints and opportunities); and finally,
  - e. putting it all together by aligning gaps and opportunities, and creating scenarios for an integrated landscape.
- c) **Developing strategies and actions:** This step entails identifying, screening and prioritizing actions, and identifying best practices for engaging stakeholders
- d) **Implementation:** This step entails developing and mainstreaming an implementation plan for protected area integration strategies. These strategies could include, for example, changing protection levels, management practices, laws and policies, sectoral practices, market incentives, the enabling environment and the physical environment through restoration.
- e) **Monitoring and adapting:** The step entails monitoring the effectiveness of strategies aimed at integrating protected areas, monitoring objective indicators such as connectivity, and modifying strategies based on the monitoring results.

**What are some key documents that can help in the implementation of Goal 1.2?**

Resources for assessment of protected area connectivity and integration can be found at <http://www.cbd.int/protected/tools/>