

# Protected areas

Cornerstones of biodiversity conservation

## Goal 1.5: To prevent and mitigate the negative impacts of key threats to protected areas

**Target:** By 2008, effective mechanisms for identifying and preventing, and/or mitigating the negative impacts of key threats to protected areas are in place.

### Suggested activities of the Parties

1.5.1 Apply, as appropriate, timely environmental impact assessments to any plan or project with the potential to have effects on protected areas, and ensure timely information flow among all concerned parties to that end, taking into account decision VI/7 A of the Conference of the Parties on guidelines for incorporating biodiversity related issues into environmental impact assessment legislation and/or processes and in strategic environmental assessments.

1.5.2 Develop by 2010 national approaches to liability and redress measures, incorporating the polluter pays principle or other appropriate mechanisms in relation to damages to protected areas.

1.5.3 Establish and implement measures for the rehabilitation and restoration of the ecological integrity of protected areas.

1.5.4 Take measures to control risks associated with invasive alien species in protected areas.

1.5.5 Assess key threats to protected areas and develop and implement strategies to prevent and/or mitigate such threats.

1.5.6 Develop policies, improve governance, and ensure enforcement of urgent measures that can halt the illegal exploitation of resources from protected areas, and strengthen international and regional cooperation to eliminate illegal trade in such resources taking into account sustainable customary resource use of indigenous and local communities in accordance with article 10(c) of the Convention.

### Suggested supporting activities of the Executive Secretary

1.5.7 Address issues specific to protected areas, in the guidelines for incorporating biodiversity considerations in environmental impact assessment and strategic environmental assessment, procedures and regulations.

1.5.8 Collaborate with the International Association for Impact Assessment and other relevant organizations on further development and refinement of the impact assessment guidelines particularly to incorporate all stages of environmental impact assessment processes in protected areas taking into account the ecosystem approach.

1.5.9 Compile and disseminate through the clearing-house mechanism and other means case studies, best practices and lessons learned in mitigating the negative impacts of key threats and facilitate the exchange of experiences.

### Learn more about Goal 1.5:

#### Key activities include:

- Apply environmental impact assessments to plans or projects effecting protected areas
- Develop approaches to liability and redress measures
- Restore and rehabilitate the ecological integrity of protected areas
- Control risks associated with invasive alien species in protected areas
- Assess key threats to protected areas
- Develop policies and ensure enforcement to halt illegal resource exploitation

### **What is a protected area threat?**

A protected area threat is defined as any human activity or related process that has a negative impact on key biodiversity features, ecological processes or cultural assets within a protected areas. Some of the most common threats to protected areas include: development and encroachment; agriculture-related threats such as conversion to plantations; energy-related threats such as drilling and mining; transportation, such as roads and ship lanes; human intrusions, including unregulated recreation; modification of natural ecosystems, such as altered hydrological and fire regimes; invasive alien species; pollution; and climate change-related threats, such as coral bleaching.

### **What is an assessment of protected area threats?**

A protected area threat assessment includes an analysis on the type, extent and impact of a suite of threats on the health and integrity of biodiversity within a protected area. This assessment can occur both across the entire protected area system, as well as within individual protected areas.

### **What are liability and redress measures?**

The term "liability" is normally associated with the obligation under the applicable law to provide for compensation for damage resulting from an action for which that person is deemed to be responsible. Liability and redress in the context of this goal concern the concept that those who cause damage to protected areas are required to pay the cost of remediation and restoration.

### **What is ecological integrity?**

Ecological integrity refers to the extent to which an ecosystem has the species composition and structures characteristic of native, undisturbed ecosystems, and the ability to maintain ecological processes under stress.

### **What steps are involved in managing invasive alien species?**

Invasive alien species are non-indigenous plants, animals and microorganisms that have been deliberately or accidentally introduced to new areas beyond their native ranges, and which then spread beyond cultivation and to impact biodiversity. There are a number of steps that protected area managers can take in managing alien invasive species. These include assessing the extent of existing and future invasions, identifying pathways and preventing these, developing early detection and rapid response mechanisms, and eradicating and controlling the spread of existing invasive species.

### **What steps are involved in assessing protected area threats?**

Typical steps involved in assessing protected area threats include:

- a) Assess the biological status of key biodiversity features, including the distribution and viability of Species, natural communities and ecological systems.
- b) Map the distribution and intensity of threats and their impacts on focal biodiversity features. Threats may occur solely or partially within a protected area, or they may occur entirely outside park boundaries.
- c) Map the distribution and intensity of future threats. Planners can forecast the trend for many threats using predictive modeling, risk assessments, scenario development and vulnerability analyses.
- d) Analyze the results of the threat assessment. Planners should consider analyzing the underlying root causes of threats by developing clear conceptual models that show complex relationships and linkages. They should also analyze the cumulative impacts of multiple threats and their complex interactions.
- e) Prioritize threats based on their overall contribution to the loss of biodiversity, as well as the feasibility of developing threat abatement strategies.
- f) Develop an action plan for threat prevention and abatement, including a detailed list of strategies for abating key threats, a timeline, responsible actors, costs, and indicators for success.
- g) Monitor changes in the status and trends of protected area threats. Perhaps more than any other component of protected area management, threat abatement requires robust indicators and adaptive management planning

**What are some key documents that can help in the implementation of Goal 1.5?**

Resources for conducting an assessment of threats can be found at <http://www.cbd.int/protected/tools/>