

Protected areas

Cornerstones of biodiversity conservation

Goal 4.1 - To develop and adopt minimum standards and best practices for national and regional protected area systems

Target: By 2008, standards, criteria, and best practices for planning, selecting, establishing, managing and governance of national and regional systems of protected areas are developed and adopted.

Suggested activities of the Parties

- 4.1.1 Collaborate with other Parties and relevant organizations, particularly IUCN, on the development, testing, review and promotion of voluntary protected areas standards and best practices on planning and management, governance and participation.
- 4.1.2 Develop and implement an efficient, long-term monitoring system of the outcomes being achieved through protected area systems in relation to the goals and targets of this work programme.
- 4.1.3 Draw upon monitoring results to adapt and improve protected area management based on the ecosystem approach.

Suggested supporting activities of the Executive Secretary

- 4.1.4 In collaboration with the key partners and based upon the best practices promote available guidance for parties minimum standards for planning, selecting, establishing, managing and governance of protected area sites and systems.
- 4.1.5 Compile information on best practices and case-studies on effective management of protected areas and disseminate it through clearing-house mechanism and facilitate exchange of information.

Learn more about Goal 4.1:

Key activities include:

- Collaborate with relevant stakeholders on the development, testing and review of voluntary standards and best practices
- Monitor the PoWPA outcomes achieved
- Use monitoring results to adapt and improved protected area management

What are voluntary minimum standards and best practices?

Protected are minimum standard and best practices include the suite of practices associated with protected area design, planning, management and evaluation that are considered to be exemplary of accepted guidelines and principles. These guidelines and principles can help guide protected area staff.

What topics do minimum standards typically cover?

Minimum standards can cover a range of topics and issues, including, for example, the extent of coverage, the type of protected area objectives, the existence and quality of a management plan, staff qualifications, the use of science in planning, and processes for engaging with communities. Minimum standards help protected area agencies by creating consistent expectations for protected area planning, establishment, management and monitoring across an entire system.

What does it mean to monitor the outcomes of the Programme of Work on Protected Areas?

The Programme of Work on Protected Areas is very ambitious – 92 specific actions, many with specific deadlines. However, not all of these actions require specific monitoring. Protected area agencies should focus on a smaller subset of indicators that help them know how they are progressing. These should include indicators that measure whether or not key assessments have been conducted (e.g., an ecological gap assessment, a sustainable finance assessment, a management effectiveness assessment), and that measure what key actions have taken place (e.g., new protected areas created, innovative finance mechanisms developed, management practices improved). The Secretariat of the Convention on Biological Diversity has developed a streamlined reporting format to assist countries in monitoring and reporting on progress in implementing the Programme of Work on Protected Areas.

What are some key documents that can help in the implementation of Goal 4.1?

Resources on protected area minimum standards and best practices can be found at:
<http://www.cbd.int/protected/tools/>