Goal 4.3: To assess and monitor protected area status and trends

Target: By 2010, national and regional systems are established to enable effective monitoring of protected-area coverage, status and trends at national, regional and global scales, and to assist in evaluating progress in meeting global biodiversity targets.

Suggested activities of the Parties

4.3.1 Implement national and regional programmes to monitor and assess the status and trends of biodiversity within protected area systems and sites.
4.3.2 Measure progress towards achieving protected area targets based on periodic monitoring and report on progress towards these targets in future national reports under the Convention on Biological Diversity as well as in a thematic report at COP-9.
4.3.3 Improve and update national and regional databases on protected areas and consolidate the World Database on Protected Areas as key support mechanisms in the assessment and monitoring of protected area status and trends.
4.3.4 Participate in the World Database on Protected Areas maintained by UNEP-WCMC, and the United Nations List of Protected Areas and the State of the World Protected Areas assessment process.
4.3.5 Encourage the establishment and establishment use of new technologies including geographic information system and remote sensing tools for monitoring protected areas.

Suggested supporting activities of the Executive Secretary

4.3.6 Develop and consolidate working partnerships with appropriate organizations and institutions that have developed and maintained monitoring systems and databases on protected areas, in particular with the UNEP-WCMC and the IUCN World Commission on Protected Areas.
4.3.7 Explore establishment of a harmonized system and time schedule for reporting on sites designated under the Convention on Wetlands, the World Heritage Convention, and UNESCO MAB programme, and other regional systems, as appropriate, taking into account the ongoing work of UNEP-WCMC on harmonization of reporting and the IUCN protected area management category system for reporting purpose.
4.3.8 Prepare an updated format for the thematic report on protected areas covering, *inter alia,* integration of protected areas and national systems of protected areas into relevant sectors and spatial planning taking into account decision VII/25 on national reporting.

Learn more about Goal 4.3:

Key activities include:

- Implement programmes to monitor and assess the status and trends of biodiversity within protected area systems and sites
- Measure and report progress toward protected area targets
- Improve national and regional databases on protected areas
- Participate in the World Database on Protected Areas
- Encourage the use of geographic information systems and remote sensing

What is an assessment of protected area status and trends?

An assessment of protected area status typically includes an assessment of a) the health and viability of key species and ecosystems; b) the extent and severity of threats facing key species and ecosystems; and c) the management effectiveness within protected areas. Combined, these three aspects can provide protected area managers with an overall snapshot of effective conservation of species and ecosystems within protected areas. An assessment of trends includes an analysis of how the status snapshot has changed over time, and is likely to continue to change in the future.

What does it mean to measure progress toward protected area targets?

Protected area targets are specific goals related to individual species and ecosystems within protected areas (e.g., goals regarding the population, health and viability for species and ecosystems within each protected area); and related to the protected area as a whole (e.g., goals regarding the extent and distribution of protection that is needed for key species and ecosystems across the country). Measuring progress towards these protected area targets usually means establishing a national database of key species and ecosystems, and periodically monitoring how well protected area sites, and the system as a whole, are achieving those goals.

What is a geographic information system (GIS) and what is remote sensing?

A geographic information system (GIS) is any system that captures, stores, analyzes, manages, and presents data that are linked to a specific location. GIS has become one of the most important technologies in protected area management planning, ecological gap assessments and monitoring. Remote sensing is the process of collecting data using devices that are physically separated from the protected area. Examples include aircraft, spacecraft, satellite, buoy, or ship. Remote sensing allows protected area managers to monitor sites within a protected area that inaccessible. One of the simplest tools for remote sensing is the free program Google Earth (http://earth.google.com/intl/en/). By incorporating multiple levels of data, including remote sensing data, into a single geographic information system, protected area managers can monitor forest cover, develop coarse-level resource inventories, identify landscape linkages and potential conservation corridors, develop appropriate zones, and conduct many other fundamental management activities.

What is the World Database on protected areas?

The World Database on Protected Areas is a global project of the World Conservation Monitoring Centre (WCMC) that tracks key information on the world's protected areas. To visit the site, click on www.wdpa.org, or to correspond with the World Conservation Monitoring Centre on issues related to protected areas, please click on http://www.unep-wcmc.org/protected_areas/protected_areas.htm.

What are some key documents that can help in the implementation of Goal 4.3?

Resources on monitoring of protected-area coverage, status and trends can be found at: http://www.cbd.int/protected/tools/