



Living in harmony with nature

Protected Areas

A Protected Area is a clearly defined geographical space, recognized, dedicated and managed through legal or other effective means, to achieve the long-term conservation of nature with associated ecosystem services and cultural values.

The establishment of comprehensive, ecologically representative, effectively managed and financially secured protected area networks is a critical strategy not only for biodiversity conservation, but for securing ecosystem goods and services, enabling climate change adaptation and mitigation, and helping countries achieve the Millennium Development Goals.

Recognizing these critical roles of protected areas, the Parties to the Convention on Biological Diversity (CBD) in February 2004 committed to a comprehensive and specific set of actions known as the Programme of Work on Protected Areas (PoWPA).

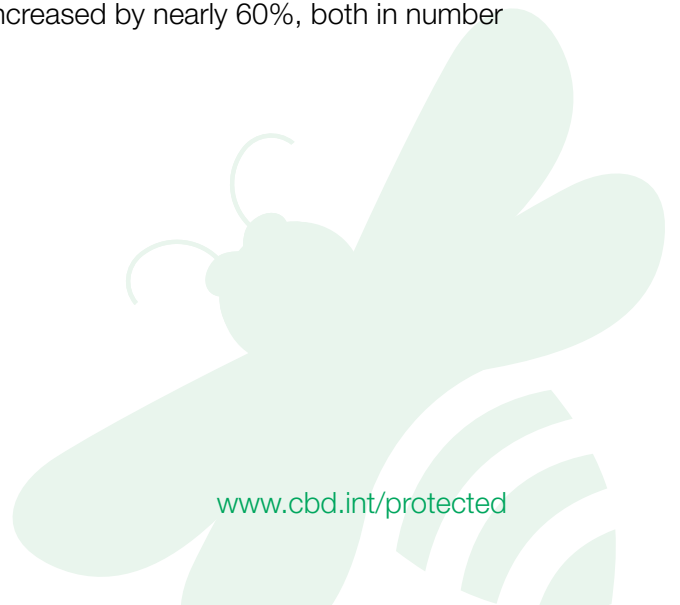
By emphasizing the equitable sharing of costs and benefits, recognizing various governance types and by giving prominence to ecological representation, management effectiveness and multiple benefits, the PoWPA is the most comprehensive global plan of action for effective implementation of protected areas and is considered as a defining framework or 'blueprint' for protected areas for the next decades.

CBD Parties have hailed PoWPA as the most implemented of CBD programmes and a successful initiative. The world's protected areas have increased by nearly 60%, both in number and in area, since the CBD came into force in 1993.



Convention on
Biological Diversity

www.cbd.int/protected





Fast Facts

- ▶ Over 120,000 designated protected areas cover about 13% of the Earth's land surface
- ▶ Marine protected areas cover 6.3% of territorial seas and 0.5% of the high seas
- ▶ Well-managed protected areas can provide vital ecosystem services, such as water purification and retention, erosion control, and can reduce flooding and unnatural wild fires
- ▶ Protected areas buffer human communities against different environmental risks and hazards and support food and health security by maintaining crop diversity and species with economic and/or subsistence value
- ▶ Protected areas play an important role in ecosystem-based approaches to climate change adaptation and contribute to mitigation by storing and sequestering carbon
- ▶ Protected areas are often an important part of local cultural heritage and identity, in addition to their recreation, education, health and tourism benefits to millions of people worldwide
- ▶ As many rural communities depend on protected forests, pastures, wetlands and marine areas for subsistence and livelihoods, protected areas contribute directly to the global agenda for sustainable development, poverty reduction and maintaining cultures
- ▶ As many existing and proposed protected areas, particularly in developing countries, overlap with areas of high rural poverty, they increasingly feature in national poverty reduction programme strategies as potential sources of economic development that can contribute to human well-being and poverty reduction (subsistence, cultural and spiritual, environmental services, political)

Learn More

World Database on Protected Areas ▶ www.wdpa.org

IUCN-World Commission on Protected Areas

▶ www.iucn.org/about/union/commissions/wcpa

UNESCO World Heritage Sites ▶ <http://whc.unesco.org/en/list>

UNESCO – The Man and the Biosphere Programme

▶ www.unesco.org/mabdb/bios1-2.htm

LifeWeb Initiative ▶ www.cbd.int/lifeweb

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