



# CBD Briefing

## Implementing the Programme of Work on Protected Areas

### WWF Supporting Delivery on the Convention on Biological Diversity (CBD) Commitments

Protected areas are a cornerstone of WWF's work in more than 100 countries around the world. WWF is active in protected area establishment, management and financing as well as ensuring the participation of local communities and respect for the rights of indigenous peoples.

WWF works at the site level in more than 1000 protected areas as well as at the national and regional system level. Integrating protected areas into surrounding landscapes through the ecosystem approach is a key priority.

WWF is also active in supporting governments to meet their specific commitments under the CBD Programme of Work on Protected Areas (PoWPA). For example, key projects and activities include:

- **Protected Areas for a Living Planet** – with the support of *MAVA Fondation pour la Protection de la Nature*, WWF has brought together partners and stakeholders (governments, donor agencies, scientists and civil society) to support and monitor implementation of the PoWPA in five ecoregions stretching across 27 countries: Altai-Sayan, Carpathian, Caucasus, Dinaric Arc and West Africa Marine. For more information: [www.panda.org/pa4lp](http://www.panda.org/pa4lp)
- **Pan-Amazon Protected Areas Initiative** – in partnership with RedParques, Colombia National Parks, IUCN (Sur) and the CBD Secretariat, WWF is supporting the development of an ecological vision for the Amazon biome based on transboundary implementation of the PoWPA.
- **"Friends of PoWPA"** – the "Friends of PoWPA" is an informal group of NGOs, governments and individuals who have supported the work of the CBD Secretariat to build capacity and raise awareness of the PoWPA. WWF has contributed to these activities by supporting regional capacity building workshops and the development of training materials.

## **Priorities for the Future**

Despite the progress in implementing the PoWPA, protected area networks continue to be under-funded and require additional resources and capacity for their effective establishment and management. WWF has identified the following priorities for future work:

### **1. Climate Change**

Protected areas need to be an integral part of national and regional adaptation and mitigation strategies and plans. This requires UNFCCC to: a) recognise that protected areas are an essential part of the global response to climate change through the important role they play in mitigation and adaptation; b) ensure that national mitigation and adaptation actions that involve enhancement of protected area networks can receive financial and technical assistance through climate-related financial mechanisms; and c) recognize ecosystem-based adaptation approach as an effective mechanism/tool to build the resilience of vulnerable communities and ecosystems.

Guidelines for the integration of protected areas into national and regional adaptation and mitigation strategies should be developed as a matter of urgency so that governments can understand how to integrate protected areas into these strategies.

### **2. Funding**

Governments and donors need to increase efforts to ensure adequate support to protected area systems from traditional and innovative funding sources. The development of sustainable financing plans as required under the PoWPA should be prioritized. These plans should include new means and methods of generating and allocating finance, e.g. by redirecting perverse incentives, the introduction of equitable Payment for Ecosystem Services (PES) mechanisms, or the redistribution of tax revenues on the basis of stronger validation of ecosystem services, taking into account the findings of [The Economics of Ecosystems and Biodiversity](#) (TEEB, <http://www.teebweb.org/>) study.

### **3. Communicating the Benefits of Protected Areas**

If protected area networks are to receive adequate financial and political support then key decision makers need to understand the social and economic benefits of PA networks. Several studies are now available that detail the value of biodiversity and ecosystem services, and the central role that protected areas play in maintaining them, such as the TEEB report and WWF's [Arguments for Protection](#)<sup>1</sup> series. CBD Parties should adapt these studies to the national and regional context and communicate them widely to ensure that key national decision-makers understand the value of protected areas. Studies that evaluate the economic and other benefits of protected areas should be prioritized as they are vital for promoting understanding of the values of protected areas.

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<sup>1</sup> Available at [www.panda.org/protection/arguments](http://www.panda.org/protection/arguments)

**4. Strengthening Implementation of Element 2**

Participation of indigenous peoples and local communities in protected area governance and equitable sharing of costs and benefits from protected areas are critical to ensure that protected areas are effective and sustainable. Governments should increase recognition and support to the broader range of protected area governance types, and expand efforts to ensure full and effective stakeholder participation in the establishment and management of protected areas.

**5. Multi-sectoral Integration**

With effective communications relevant sectors of government (forestry, fisheries, health, aid agencies, climate change) should understand the value of biodiversity and protected areas in order to be able to fulfil their work programmes. In addition, effective mechanisms to ensure cooperation between government sectors need to be established, so that planning for development and conservation is effective.

**6. Regional Agreements and Networks**

There are many multilateral agreements, conventions and networks that deal with biodiversity conservation or specifically with protected area networks. At regional level, these agreements and networks are doing very effective work on conservation, capacity building and exchange of expertise. However, they are not always effectively linked to the CBD. To promote implementation of the PoWPA in the post-2010 period, these regional agreements and networks should be more effectively integrated into global efforts on capacity building, reporting and the development of expertise.

**7. Strong and enduring Partnerships**

Governments, NGOs, international organizations, and donors must make every effort to establish or enhance existing national and transboundary partnerships to combine their efforts in establishing and managing effective PA networks. These partnerships have been effective to date at national and regional level, and merit being replicated in other countries and regions based on lessons learned.

**8. Ensuring Representative Systems of Protected Areas**

While protected area systems have been expanding rapidly in many countries, there are still major gaps in many biomes such as grasslands, freshwater and marine. Governments should urgently address these gaps as well as ensure that all habitat types and species are represented in national and regional systems of protected areas.

Many countries have carried out protected area gap analyses. It is important to protect the areas identified by these studies, but obviously it takes time to put the necessary legal and financial requirements in place for new protected areas.

WWF urges governments to ensure that unsustainable development does not take place in those areas identified in gap analyses as important for biodiversity.

## 9. Permanence of Protection for Protected Areas

Conservation policy assumes that national parks and protected areas are permanent fixtures on the landscape, but there is evidence that points to widespread – yet largely overlooked – protected area downgrading, downsizing, and degazettement (PADDD) (see below for formal definitions<sup>2</sup>). Though protected areas are the cornerstone of global conservation efforts, PADDD has never been systematically studied and its patterns, trends, and causes remain unknown.

WWF has identified more than 600 instances of PADDD in 59 developing countries. In several countries, up to 60% of the national protected area system has been affected. PADDD seems to be driven by a mix of local land pressures and global demand for scarce natural resources – dynamics that are likely to intensify in the coming years and increase pressure on governments to downgrade, downsize, and degazette protected areas. For instance, the growing proliferation of oil and gas exploration is increasingly threatening the integrity and effective management of protected areas (both terrestrial and marine) in certain regions, notably in Africa, and should be urgently addressed by the CBD Parties.

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<sup>2</sup> *Downgrading* is the functional decrease in “protection status” resulting from an increase in the number, magnitude, or extent of legally authorized activities within a protected area. *Downsizing* is the functional decrease in size of a protected area, resulting from excision of land from the protected area through a legal boundary change. *Degazettement* is the functional loss of legal protection for an entire protected area.