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PROTECTED AREAS OF GEORGIA

SITUATIONAL ANALYSIS



Tbilisi, 2012

PROTECTED AREAS OF GEORGIA

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Tbilisi, 2012

Foreword

This document presents information compiled for the Georgian Ministry of Environment Protection to support updating of the National Biodiversity Strategy and Action Plan (NBSAP). Development of NBSAPs is envisaged by CBD COP 10 decision X/2 that requires the countries to review and update 'national and regional targets, using the Strategic Plan and its Aichi Targets, as a flexible framework, in accordance with national priorities and capacities' and to legally adopt the NBSAP as a national policy instrument in the field of biodiversity conservation.

This document provides a situational analysis of the Georgian protected area system. This analysis is conducted within the frames of the GIZ's "Sustainable Management of Biodiversity, South Caucasus" Program, the 'Updating of the Georgian Biodiversity Strategy and Action Plan' component, with financial support of GIZ and technical support of WWF Caucasus Programme Office.

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Coverpage photo: Bezoar goat in Tusheti National Park / © NACRES, WWF, Agency of Protected Areas

Abbreviation

BMZ – Federal Ministry for Economic Cooperation and Development

BP/BTC – British Petroleum/Baku-Tbilisi-Ceyhan Pipeline

CBD – Convention on Biodiversity

CENN – Caucasus Environmental NGO Network

CEPF – Critical Ecosystem Partnership Fund

CNF – Caucasus Nature Fund

EC – European Commission

EU – European Union

FFI – Fauna & Flora

GEF – Global Environment Facility

GIZ – German Society for International Cooperation

GPAP – Georgian Protected Area Programme

GPS – Global Positioning System

IUCN – International Union for Conservation of Nature

IUCN CCC – IUCN Caucasus Cooperation Centre

KfW - German Development Bank

NBSAP– National Biodiversity Strategy and Action Plan

OSCE– Organization for Security and Cooperation in Europe

REC Caucasus – Regional Environmental Centre for the Caucasus

TJS– Transboundary Joint Secretariat

UNDP – United Nations Development Programme

UNEP – United Nations Environment Programme

UNESCO – United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization

USDoI/ITAP – International Technical Assistance Programme of the US Department of the Interior

WWF – World Wildlife Fund

WB – World Bank

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Introduction

Georgia is a party to different international conventions and regional agreements, and has various respective commitments thereto. The Convention on Biological Diversity (CBD) is the most important among the international instruments.

The tenth meeting of the Conference of the Parties (COP 10) that was held in Nagoya, Aichi Prefecture, Japan, from 18 to 29 October 2010, adopted a revised and updated Strategic Plan for Biodiversity 2011-2020 and aims of biodiversity were defined for 2020. Aichi Biodiversity Targets. The Strategic Plan calls for 'continuing direct action to safeguard and, where necessary, restore biodiversity and ecosystem services'. 'While longer-term actions to reduce the underlying causes of biodiversity are taking effect, immediate action can help conserve biodiversity, including in critical ecosystems, by means of protected areas, habitat restoration, species recovery programs and other targeted conservation interventions'.

Strengthening of protected areas is one of the targets set out in the CBD Implementation Strategy for 2011-2020. Target 11 reads: 'By 2020, at least 17 per cent of terrestrial and inland water areas and 10 per cent of coastal and marine areas, especially areas of particular importance for biodiversity and ecosystem services, are conserved through effectively and equitably managed, ecologically representative and well-connected systems of protected areas and other effective area-based conservation measures, and integrated into the wider landscape and seascape'(see Aichi Biodiversity Targets, Target 11, <http://www.cbd.int/sp/targets/>).

Georgia as a party to the CBD has committed to contribute to implementation of the CBD 2020 targets by harmonization of national targets with global ones.

1. Georgia's NBSAP 2005: Implementation Overview

Georgia's Biodiversity Strategy and Action Plan were developed and adopted by the Georgian government in 2005. NBSAP 2005 identified main problems related to protected areas as well as relevant actions to address the problems (see Annex 1). Part of the actions was implemented to a different extent in 2005-2011, which had a positive impact on the PA system development.

In 2005–2011, activities implemented under the NBSAP helped to achieve the following results:

- New protected areas were established and existing protected areas expanded, increasing the overall area under PAs of IUCN categories I-VI. Newly established protected areas included the Javakheti Protected Areas comprising a National Park and 5 Managed Reserves, the Mtirala National Park, the Tbilisi National Park (the area of the Saguramo State Reserve), and the Imereti Caves Protected Areas including the Sataplia State Reserve and Managed Reserve and 18 newly established Natural Monuments. A draft law On Natural Monuments was prepared and submitted to the Parliament;
- Reorganization of some PAs increased their efficiency: the Saguramo State Reserve became part of the Tbilisi National Park; the Kazbegi State Reserves got the status of a National Park; a Protected Landscape was established within a part of the Kintrishi State Reserve that had been under traditional agricultural use; the Ajameti State Reserve became a Managed Reserve and was expanded. The status of the Ktsia-Tabatskuri, Nedzvi and Tetrobi Managed Reserves was redefined, and the status and areas of five Soviet-time hunting farms was revisited and changed for Managed Reserves;
- Priority wetland areas (Khanchali, Madtapha, Bughdasheni and Paravani lakes and Kartsakhi and Sulda swamps) were identified and respective documents prepared for their inscription on the list of wetlands of international importance (Ramsar Sites), and recognized by the Ramsar Secretariat as meeting 3-4 criteria for inscription on the Ramsar site list;
- A study was conducted in the Kazbegi National Park to evaluate feasibility of establishing Biosphere Reserve there, and recommendation was given to expand the existing National Park area and to develop the NP infrastructure and capacities;
- A consulting and planning workshop on World Heritage Sites was carried out in Georgia;

- Some biodiversity monitoring was conducted in protected areas, though the existing monitoring network is incomprehensive;
- The Agency of Protected Area created a database, though there is still no information system and no unified electronic database;
- Protected areas partly built the capacity of their staff and were partially provided with necessary equipment and tools;
- Important positive infrastructural changes occurred in a number of protected areas (Sataplia, Lagodekhi, Tusheti, Mtirala, Borjom-Kharagauli, Ktsia-Tabatskuri, etc);
- Respective legal basis was established, and PA's revenues from tourism, recreation and other activities increased significantly.

The following problems and obstacles were identified in relation with the planned activities:

- Planning of protected area network (Eco-Network) has not yet started because of the lack of respective capacity (both human and financial resources);
- There are no protected areas established on the Greater Caucasus Range. However first steps were taken in this direction - establishment of two protected areas - in Racha and Svaneti regions were identified and planned under the WB Protected Areas Development Project in 2008. At present creation of the Zemo Svaneti Glacier PA (National Park) is being planned. The initially proposed protected areas included a large part of the Greater Caucasus Range, but today legal establishment of protected areas there (as well as infrastructure development, adequate funding and effective management) would be associated with significant problems. At present protected area creation and management greatly depend on economic and infrastructural development plans of the country and its regions;
- There is no formal transboundary cooperation established between cross-border protected areas so far, though important first steps have been already made: there are protected areas established on both sides of the border between the three countries of the region (Azerbaijan, Turkey, Armenia; current political situation precludes transboundary cooperation with Russia), and negotiations about cooperation are underway;
- There is no action plan for conservation of big mammals and bird migration routes, and the areas have no respective status. Because of the existing political situation (problems with Abkhazia and so-called South Ossetia), no actions can be taken in this regard in the nearest future. Yet, it is noted that creation and development of the Kolkheti National Park, creation of the Mtirala National Park and Javakheti Protected

Areas as well as initiated establishment of the Machakhela National Park should be considered a significant step forward towards protection of bird migration routes, whereas conservation of big mammals is directly related to adequate econetwork planning;

- A pilot project on reasonable use of natural resources was initiated in PA support zones. However, this is apparently still insufficient, which is primarily related to the lack of funds.
- There is no compensation mechanism for population living within/around protected areas, due to serious problems with relevant legislation and funding;
- There is no legal basis for using PA budget revenues received from damage compensations for reinvestment. Today the issue should be considered in a broader context of the existing state biodiversity policy and in the context of new regulations, which requires a serious study;
- There is no inventory list of paleontology sites, no plans developed for their conservation and maintenance, and no protection regimes legalized. Yet it is noted that these activities go beyond the competence of protected areas.

2. Importance of Georgian Protected Areas

Georgia, as a part of the Caucasus, is identified by WWF among 200 global priority ecoregions (<http://www.worldwildlife.org/science/ecoregions/global200.html>). Considering biodiversity values and related threats, 34 “hot spots” (rich in biodiversity and, at the same time, most threatened terrestrial ecoregions) are identified globally. Among these 34 “hot spots” Georgia is listed in two of them: Caucasus hotspot (Most territory of Georgia)¹ and Iran-Anatolia hotspot (Southern Georgia, Javakheti) (<http://www.biodiversityhotspots.org>). . Thus, there is a global recognition of the biodiversity of the Caucasus in general and Georgia in particular as a country geographically located in the heart of the Caucasus, and creation of protected areas is the key effective measure for territorial protection of biodiversity in Georgia today.

¹ Caucasus Hot Spot includes north slopes of Caucasus Range, southern part of Russian Federation (including the Dagestan, Chechnya, Ingushetia, Northern Ossetia, Kabardino-Balkaria, Karachai-Cherkesia, and Adigea Autonomous Republics), Georgia, Azerbaijan, Armenia, the northeastern part of Turkey, and a part of northwestern Iran

In addition, protected areas play important role in the country's economic development and social well-being due to effective protection of vital ecosystem processes and respectively provision of comprehensive ecosystem services to meet community needs. These needs include provision of essential resources, regulation of ecological processes as well as supporting and cultural- recreational services. These services provide the population with fresh water and stabilize water resources in the ecosystem, thus protecting the communities from landslides, avalanches, and floods, and providing a stable resource of fresh and mineral water as well as water as a sustainable energy resource that may be used and is used beyond the protected areas. Protected areas of respective categories also sustainably provide the population with wood and offer significant food resources (chestnut, bladder nut (*Staphylea pinnata*), wild fruit, berries (*Arctostaphylos uva*), mushrooms, culinary herbs etc.), medical herbs etc.

Regulatory services, except for water regulation, serve the important purposes of carbon accumulation, i.e. stabilization of climate (including microclimate). Protected areas also ensure air quality, natural utilization and detoxication of waste, forest disease control, productivity of pastures (that are part of the respective protected area), etc.

Also, protected areas ensure conservation of the perceptual value of landscapes, which is a precondition for tourism and recreation. Protected areas are 'laboratories of nature' that attract researchers from different countries.

Existence of 'healthy' ecosystem services is a necessary factor for sustainable socio-economic development. Accordingly, protected areas are the priority areas where these services should be sustainably conserved.

In 2011, evaluation of the 'Valuation of the Contribution of Protected Areas Ecosystem Services to Economic Growth and Equity' was conducted in the Borjomi-Kharagauli and Mtirala National Parks in the frame of the WWF Protected Areas for a Living Planet – Caucasus Ecoregion Program. In the same year, under the framework of the United Nations Environment Programme and Global Environment Facility (UNDP/GEF) Project 'Promotion of Financial Sustainability of Georgia's Protected Areas' was conducted a study on 'Valuation of the Contribution of Ecosystems to Economic Growth and Human Well-Being: Tusheti Protected Areas and Georgian Protected Area Network'. These documents provide an overview of existing ecosystem services in the given protected areas and present their economic evaluation.

Protected Areas also fulfill an important function in the context of global climate change, both in terms of adaptation to and mitigation of climate change consequences. Ecosystem degradation is a significant source of greenhouse gas emissions. Following from their

functions, Protected Areas protect ecosystems and thus promote accumulation of carbons on PA territory. In addition, in well-managed protected areas where undisturbed ecosystems are still preserved, no additional activities are usually necessary for ecosystem adaptation to potential climate change, as natural ecosystems and biocenoses self-regulate and gradually, by succession, adapt to the new conditions.

3. History of Protected Areas development in Georgia

Georgia has a long history of nature protection. Till the 21st century, natural sites were protected mainly for religious purposes (so-called icon (i.e. sacred) forest, etc), and for using them as feudal hunting lands. The history of protected areas in today's understanding of this concept started in Georgia in the 21st century. The first official protected area, the Lagodekhi Reserve, was established in 1912. In 1920-1930, 28 new Reserves were created². Yet in 1951, under the Natural Resources Mobilization Plan, most of the natural reserves were cancelled, leaving only the Lagodekhi Reserve to survive that campaign. Later, in 1975, some old reserves were re-established, and by the moment the Soviet Union collapsed Georgia had 15 reserves with a total area of 168,8 thousand hectares covering about 2.4% of country's territory.

The Reserves were areas under strict protection where any kind of human intervention was prohibited by law, (i.e. the status at that time corresponded to the same status today). Yet the law was frequently violated in most of the Reserves. It should be noted that objectives for establishing Reserves were not sufficiently justified, and no integrated approach was applied. Rather, the focus was made on protection of forests and/or one species, and no attention was paid to other species, to the ecosystem in general, to ecological processes or social and human aspects. There was no protected area legislation in place. As a result, most of the Reserves had low ecological effectiveness.

In addition to Reserves, about 0.8% of the country's territory was allotted for forestry/hunting farms. Another protected target were 30 living (especially huge and old trees) and 77 non-living Natural Monuments (rocks, caves, buried plants, canyons and gorges, volcanic forms, etc) included in the USSR Red Book. A part of those were located on the territory of the Reserves. There was no management of the Natural Monuments, yet legal liability was envisaged for their damage and intervention.

²UNEP, 2000

In the soviet period, issues related to protected areas were regulated by the 1958 Law on Nature Protection yet in the same time were subject to forestry legislation, which led to contradictions between the objectives and practices of nature conservation and forest use at different levels (including administrative, legislative, management, planning, etc).

Since early 1990s, mainly after the collapse of the USSR, with the support of international donors, Georgia started planning and creation of the today's protected area system, increasing the total area conserved and diversifying protection categories. In 1990–1991, WWF initiated and supported development of the first spatial structural development plan for Georgia's protected areas, which was later used as a basis for planning. In 1995, the Georgian Cabinet of Ministers formally established the Borjomi-Kharagauli National Park and planned regions for the protected areas of Eastern Greater Caucasus range, Ivri, Kolkheti, Achara-Imereti, Central Greater Caucasus Range and Erusheti, Shavsheti and Abkhazia. Different international organizations supported creation of new protected areas (the Kolkheti PAs were established by law in 1998, the Borjomi-Kharagauli NP was established in 1999-2003 with financial support from BMZ and KfW and technical assistance from WWF, followed by establishment of a whole number of other protected areas).

In 1996, the Georgian Law *On the Protected Area System* (hereinafter 'the PA Law') identified protected area management categories and establishment procedures. The law is largely in compliance with IUCN recommendations, so Georgia was the first country in the region to adapt international legal standards related to protected areas. Table 1 below shows PA classification under the 1996 law and corresponding IUCN categories.

Table 1. Classification of Georgian Protected Area Categories

Protected Area Category	Key Management Targets	IUCN Category
Strict Nature Reserve/State Reserve	Strict protection of biodiversity, non-manipulated scientific research	I
National Park	Protection of ecosystems and recreation on a comparatively large area	II
Natural Monument	Conservation of small-sized prominent natural site and features	III
Managed Reserve/Sanctuary	Conservation of biodiversity through active management and focusing on particular	IV

	species	
Protected Landscape	Conservation of traditional natural and cultural landscapes	V
Multiple-Use Territories	Sustainable development of natural ecosystems	VI

The law also stipulates issues for establishment of Biosphere Reserves, World Heritage Sites and Wetlands of International Importance.

In 1998-2008, the World Bank and the Global Environmental Fund (GEF) supported implementation of the 'Georgia's Protected Areas Development Project aimed at biodiversity conservation in Georgia through creation of environmentally and socially sustainable protected areas and implementation of biodiversity conservation policy in agricultural landscapes between the protected areas. The project was also supported by the US Department of the Interior (USDol). In the frames of that important project, 8 new protected areas were created and 3 existing protected areas were expanded by means of the one legislative act – the Tusheti and Vashlovani National Parks were established; the Lagodekhi and Ilto Managed Reserves, Tusheti Protected Landscape and 3 Managed Reserves were created; protected area planning on the Greater Caucasus Range was conducted; documentation for establishment of the planned protected areas – Central Caucasus, Alazani Floodplains and Davit Gareji (Management Plans, Draft Laws) were prepared by the "Georgian Protected Areas Programme (GPAP); awareness-raising activities on development of protected areas and biodiversity conservation were implemented in three regions of the Eastern Greater Caucasus. Within the framework of the project was conducted reorganization and institutional strengthening of the Agency of Protected Areas. With the partnership of the US Department of the Interior have been implemented and is ongoing currently institutional strengthening of the Agency of Protected Areas with the aim of improvement of biodiversity conservation and management.

The same donors also funded another project – the 'Integrated Management of the Coastal Zone' – that supported establishment of the Kolkheti National Park in 1998 and its further development, and nowadays the Kolkheti NP is a protected area of utmost importance for birds of passage (especially waterfowl) on the eastern Black-Sea Coastal zone.

4. Regulatory Framework

Protected areas are primarily regulated by the Georgian Law On the Protected Area System (136–IIS; 7 March, 1996). As mentioned above, the Law that was drafted in 1994–1996 complies with international standards, namely the list of protected area categories and permitted and prohibited interventions within different PA categories in the law is based on respective IUCN guidelines. Thus, the law became a pioneering legislation of this kind in the region and presumably remains the most internationally compliant among similar national laws in the countries of the region. However, this law needs to be further improved to harmonize it with the current IUCN guidelines on PA categories and PA management that have been recently updated in view of the knowledge and experience accumulated over years (see, for example, <http://data.iucn.org/dbtw-wpd/edocs/PAPS-016.pdf>). Thus we would recommend reflecting the international knowledge and experience also in the Georgian legislation, as discussed in more details in respective chapters of this report.

The following laws were adopted for establishment of separate protected areas in Georgia:

- Law of Georgia On Establishment and Management of the Kolkheti Protected Areas (9 December 1998);
- Law of Georgia On Establishment and Management of the Tusheti, Batsara-Babanauri, Lagodekhi and Vashlovani Protected Areas (22 April 2003);
- Law of Georgia On Establishment and Management of the Borjomi-Kharagauli Protected Areas (11 July 2007);
- Law of Georgia On the Tbilisi National Park (20 November 2007) that stipulated reorganization and transformation of the Saguramo State Reserve into the Tbilisi National Park;
- Law of Georgia On Establishment and Management of the Imereti Caves Protected Area (22 November 2007) that also established the Sataplia Managed Reserve and 18 more natural monuments;
- Law of Georgia on the Status of Protected Areas (N 5486 – IIS; 22 November 2007).
- Law of Georgia On the Mtirala National Park (18 December 2007);
- Law of Georgia On Establishment and Management of the Javakheti Protected Areas (№4459–IS, 22 March 2011), that established the Javakheti National Park, the Managed Reserves of Kartsakhi, Sulda Swamps, Khanchali Lake, Bugdasheni Lake, Madatapa Lake as well as the Javakheti Multiple Use Area (Support Zone).

The Law of Georgia on the Status of Protected Areas regulates legal issues related to the status, area and boundaries, management and operation of protected areas established by the governments of the Georgian Soviet Socialist Republic and the Republic of Georgia. Namely, the Law changed the status of some Reserves – those of Algeti, Ajameti, Kazbegi and Kintrishi – either partly or totally, resulting in the establishment of the Algeti and Kazbegi National Parks and the Ajameti Managed Reserve, and a protected landscape on a part of the Kintrishi State Reserve; updating of the status of Korugi, Chachuna, Iori, Katsoburi and Gardabani from hunting forests into Managed Reserves.

Other laws related to protected areas include the Georgian Law On Fauna (540–RS, 26 December 1996), the Georgian Forest Code (2124–IIS; 22 June 1999), the Georgian Law On Environmental Protection (519–IS; 10 December 1996), and others.

A number of bylaws regulate different issues related to protected areas and their management. The mandate of the Agency of Protected Areas is established by APA Regulation approved by decree #27 of the Georgian Minister of Environment of 1 July 2011. The same decree also approved 'Typical Regulations of APA's Territorial Administrations' that specified mandates of protected area administrations.

Protected area management planning procedures are specified in the Act 'On Stages and Procedures for Elaborating the Structure, Content and Thematic Components of Protected Area Management Plans' (Decree #39 of the Georgian Minister of Environment of 22 August 2011).

Georgia's Biodiversity Strategy and Action Plan was developed and approved by the Georgian government in 2005.

Georgia's National Protected Areas System Development Strategy and Action Plan for Georgia were developed in 2009 and included a ten-year strategy and a five-year action plan. This document was never approved and is planned to be updated.

5. Existing Protected Areas

Since 1995, Georgia has been expanding and diversifying its protected area network. New PA categories have been established and some existing protected areas have been widened and transformed.

Today protected areas occupy a total of 519 053,75 hectares, which is about 7,42% of the country's overall territory (see Annex 2). There are 14 State Reserves, 10 National Parks, 18

Managed Reserves, 24 Natural Monuments, 2 Protected Landscapes, and a Multiple-use Territory³. Thus, the area under conservation has tripled since the soviet times, with the number of Reserves remaining almost the same, and with nine new National Parks, 18 new Managed Reserves, and many other PA categories established, which can be considered a great success.

Table 2. Georgian Protected Areas⁴

#	Protected Areas	Area (ha)	Year Established
	State Nature Reserves		
1	Babaneuri	862.10	1960
2	Batsara	2 985.96	1935
3	Bichvinta-Miusera ⁵	3 645	1966
	<i>Bichvinta</i>	165	1926
	<i>Lidzava</i>	1 296	1960
	<i>Miusera</i>	2 184	1946
4	Borjomi	14 820.60	1929
5	Vashlovani	10 143	1935
6	Tusheti	12 627,2	1980
7	Kintrishi	10 703	1959
8	Lagodekhi	22 295	1912
9	Liakhvi ⁶	6 388	1977
10	Mariamjvari	1 040	1935
11	Ritsa ⁷	16 289	1946
12	Sataplia	330	1935
13	Pskhu-Gumista ⁸	40 819	1978
	<i>Pskhu</i>	27 334	1978

³ At present the Parliament reviews the issues of abolishment of Kolkehi Multiple-Use Territories.

¹ The table shows legal areas of PAs, based on data of June 2012.

^{2,3,4,5} The area is located on the de-jure Georgian territory that is not under de-facto control of the state.

#	Protected Areas	Area (ha)	Year Established
	<i>Gumista</i>	13 400	1978
	<i>Skurcha</i>	85	1946
14	Kobuleti	331.25	1998
	<i>National Parks</i>		
1	Algeti	6 822	1965
2	Borjomi-Kharagauli	61 234.84	1995
3	Vashlovani	24 610.06	2003
4	Tbilisi	23 218,28	1946
5	Tusheti	69 515	2003
6	Kolkheti ⁹	44 599.8	1998
7	Machakhela	8733	2012
8	Mtirala	15 806	2006
9	Kazbegi	686,6367	1976
10	Javakheti	14 206.83	2011
	<i>Natural Monuments</i>		
1	Abano Mineral Lake	0.04	2012
2	Alazani Floodplain	204.4	2003
3	Artivi (Eagle) Gorge	100.4	2003
4	Bgera Cave		2011
5	Gabzaruli (Cracked) Lake		2011
6	Didgele Cave		2011
7	Tetri (White) Cave		2007
8	Trusos Travertins	4.2	2012
9	Iazonis Cave		2007
10	Melouri Cave		2011

⁶including 29 323.8 ha of land and 15 276ha of the sea.

#	Protected Areas	Area (ha)	Year Established
11	Nagarevi Cave		2007
12	Navenakhevi Cave		2007
13	Okatse Canyon	70.5	2007
14	Okatse waterfalls		2007
15	Premetes (Prometheus') Cave (Kumistavi Case)	46.6	2011
16	Sakazhia Cave		2007
17	Satsurbliia Cave		2011
18	Sakhiznari Cliff	335,7	
19	Solkata Cave		2011
20	Takhti-Tepa	9.70	2003
21	Gliana Cave		2011
22	Tsutskhvati Cave		2007
23	Tskaltsitela Gorge	21.7	2007
24	Khomuli Cave	1.8	2007
	Managed Reserves		
1	Ajameta	5 117	1946
2	Bugdasheni Lake	126	2011
3	Gardabani	3 484	1957
4	Tetrobi ⁷	3 100 ¹⁰	1995
5	Ilto	6 971	2003
6	Iori	1 336	1965
7	Kartsakhi Swamps	158	2011
8	Katsobura	295	1964
9	Lagodekhi	2 155.2	2003

#	Protected Areas	Area (ha)	Year Established
10	Madatapa Lake	1 484	2011
11	Nedzvi	8 992	1995
12	Sataplia	34	2011
13	Sulda Swamps	320	2011
14	Kobuleti	438.75	1998
15	Ktsia-Tabatskuri ⁸	22 000 ¹¹	1995
16	Koruga	2 068	1965
17	Chachuna	5 200	1965
18	Chanchala Lake	839	2011
	<i>Protected Landscapes</i>		
1	Tusheti ¹²	31 518	2007
2	Kintsrishi	3 190	2003
	<i>Multiple Use Territories</i>		
1	Kolkheti	842.4	1999

Boundaries of the Ktsia-Tabatskuri¹³ and Tetrobi Managed Reserves have not yet been finally delineated and marked, and the respective lands have not yet been officially transferred to APA. Boundaries of the Kolkheti Multiple-Use Territories were delineated only in 2011, though the area itself was established by law in 1999 (At present the Parliament reviews the issues of abolishment of Kolkehi Multiple-Use Territories).

There is a vague situation with multiple-use territories that were established by law at different times, namely, those of Akhmeta, Lagodekhi, Vashlovani, Javakheti, and Imereti Caves. In case of Lagodekhi and Vashlovani, the law specifies that the multiple-use territories should be managed by local authorities, yet usually local self-governments have no capacity to manage them. The Law on the Creation of Management of the Javakheti PAs mentions the support zone as a multiple-use territories, yet similar to some other laws, fails to specify its boundaries or the management mechanism. Therefore: (1) it is necessary to clearly differentiate between the terms 'support zone' and 'multiple-use area' as theoretically

^{7, 8} The Managed Reserve has no administration, and the territory is not managed by APA.

⁹ The Tusheti Protected Landscape is managed by local self-government.

¹³ Disputes about illegally leased lands of the Manged Reserves are underway.

a multiple-use area may be established independently and not as a support/buffer zone of a protected area, whereas there could be a support zone established, for instance, within a protected landscape; at least IUCN category I and II PAs need a buffer zone, and for this purpose the zone should be assigned the status of category V and VI. It should be also added that further detalization of legislative aspects of the protected landscape category and creation of additional instruments are needed.

Georgia has two Ramsar sites: the Ispani II and Central Kolkheti wetlands that are part of the existing Kolkheti PA and Kobuleti PA (see.http://www.ramsar.org/cda/en/ramsar-pubs-notes-anno-georgia/main/ramsar/1-30-168%5E16383_4000_0__).

6. Spatial Structure of the Existing PA Network in the context of Aichi Biodiversity Target 11

What is Aichi Biodiversity Target 11 and what can be realistically achieved?

(1) According to Target 11, by 2020, at least 17 per cent of terrestrial and inland water areas and 10 per cent of coastal and marine areas, should be conserved. The Georgian PA network has obvious spatial challenges (for instance there are problems in the Racha-Lechkhumi-Svaneti-Samegrelo PAs, between the Bojomi-Kharagauli National Park and the Kintrishi Managed Reserve, in Pshavi-Khevsureti, etc).

It should be noted that Target 11 indicators are intended for reference only and may vary from country to country, if maintaining a sustainable positive dynamics of the protected area growth. How realistic are the indicators for Georgia? Today about 7% of the total terrestrial and inland water area in Georgia is conserved. In a view of the situation in and around Georgia, the target of 17 per cent of terrestrial areas does not seem realistic to achieve in 8-9 years, but 11-12 per cent seem quite feasible. This means that in this period about 280-300 thousand hectares of conserved land should be added to the existing area under protection.

Creation of the Svaneti Glacier NP, the Pshavi-Khevsureti NP and the Machakhela NP is realistic even in the nearest future: APA is working actively on that with support of other national and international agencies. These Parks would increase the total area conserved up to 80-100 thousand hectares. APA is also planning to create Samegrelo Protected Areas. The Algeti and Kazbegi National Parks will be expanded. APA has developed a list of nominated natural monuments and submitted a respective draft law to the Parliament. There

is a general plan for establishing protected areas in the central part of the Greater Caucasus Range and in other places.

As concerns to coastal and marine areas, it is planned to establish the Marine Protected Area in the Black Sea near to the Turkish border.

(2) Another focus of CBD Target 11 is that on conservation of sites of particular importance, which is directly related to the national PA network planning. Georgia does not have such a national plan so far.

According to the PA Law, protected area planning is a part of the Georgia's Development Strategy and is closely linked to different stages of spatial planning as well as to planning of different branches of economy.

Despite the fact that today political environment in Georgia is less favoring spatial development of protected areas (since Georgia has different development priorities now, namely focusing on energy and infrastructure development), detailed PA network planning is necessary and should be based on internationally tested methodology, such as GAP analysis, KBA – Key Biodiversity Areas, and others. The planning should be also supported by studies and data accumulated locally in Georgia (see below). It would be recommended to also base the planning on key CBD indicators listed in the *Introduction* above.

The fact, that about 20% of countries areas in occupied, hinders development of Georgia's protected areas. Expansion of State Reserves of Abkhazia and Liakhvi nature Reserve would contribute in hitting 17% target easily.

Identification and further conservation of key or priority biodiversity areas would meet the CBD Target 11.

(3) Management is another important issue that is discussed in detail below.

(4) It is critical to transform the isolated protected areas into an interconnected protected area network. It is clear that the political situation, lack of respective legislation and other reasons would prevent establishment of a comprehensive protected area network in Georgia by 2020. Yet even creation of some important Ecological Corridors and Wildlife Corridors would be a serious achievement, especially in some critical regions, such as the Likhi Ridge, the Alazani Valley and some others. Again, we would not have to start from a scratch, as there are already some studies and documents existing in Georgia (see below).

(5) Finally, Target 11 recommends integrating PA networks into broader landscapes, namely Large Conservation Landscapes, such as, for instance, the Greater Caucasus Range in Georgia (that can be broken down into the Eastern and Western Greater Caucasus Range), the Smaller Caucasus Range, the Ivri Plateau, the Javakheti Highlands, etc. At the first

glance, this objective could seem problematic, yet in reality, if well-planned, ecological network(s) would themselves easily integrated into Large Conservation Landscapes.

The above analysis could be summarized as follows: There are still a lot of critical and sensitive biodiversity sites in Georgia that are located outside the existing protected areas (e.g. the Central Greater Caucasus Range). Currently Georgia has no corridors connecting the existing protected areas, so there is no protected area network, and no PA spatial development plan that would provide for development of the existing protected areas and their transformation into a network. Yet, different agencies in Georgia have generated documents and other kinds of information that could support such planning. Most important and recent documents are discussed below.

In 2002-2005, experts from all the six countries of the Caucasus supported by WWF Caucasus Program Office identified, mapped and briefly described the region's Priority Conservation Areas and Priority Corridors (see <http://www.cbd.int/search.shtml?cx=002693159031035132009%3Aetadhtewsy4&cof=FORI D%3A11&q=An%20Ecoregional%20Conservation%20Plan%20for%20the%20Caucasus&sa=Search&hl=e>). This is a small-scale map that can be used as a reference. Approximately in the same years, under the Critical Ecosystem Partnership Fund's Caucasus program, WWF Caucasus Program Office provided technical assistance for more detailed mapping of critical conservation areas (<http://www.cepf.net/Documents/final.caucasus.ep.pdf>) In addition, in 2007, WWF Caucasus Program Office supported generation of GIS data and a narrative report about proposed forest conservation areas that was then delivered to respective authorities. All the three documents and the GIS information are available to the public, though not formally approved.

One of the components of the *Georgian Protected Areas Development Project* funded by WB/GEF and implemented by the Georgian Protected Areas Programme (GPAP) in 2002-2008 was integration of biodiversity conservation issues into the management of used landscapes between protected areas. Ecological corridors were identified, including the Alazani floodplain forests and the Davit-Gareji Protected Landscape, and respective management plans were developed. Though the documents have no legal status either.

In the context of the PA network, initiation of the Emerald Network became a significant step forward. In 2004, the Ministry of Environment and Natural Resources of Georgia initiated planning of the local Emerald Network, identified and nominated eight conservation areas, and sent the list to the Secretariat of the Bern Convention for inscription. The Emerald Network initiative was revisited in 2009–2011 under the 'Emerald Network Creation in the South Caucasus and Central and Eastern Europe Project funded by the European Union and the Council of Europe. The project implemented by Scientific-research Centre on

Species Conservation NACRES created a scientific database and maps and selected 21 potential sites. The second stage of the project is expected in 2013.

Today Georgia does not sufficiently use other spatial mechanisms of biodiversity conservation. As mentioned earlier, there are two Ramsar sites in the country. Georgia also identified other priority sites for nomination as wetlands of international importance that meet three or four Ramsar criteria, and prepared respective documentation packages. Yet the government did not approve the sites though their recognition would not result in any environmental restrictions. Potentially, the reason was some misunderstanding with regard to Lake Paravani that was misinterpreted for the Paravani River that is an energy resource. One of the sites, Lake Kartsakhi located on the territory of the Javakheti National Park, is shared between Georgia and Turkey and should be considered as a perspective area for future bilateral transboundary cooperation (together with South Kolkheti).

First steps have been already made towards transboundary and regional cooperation between Georgia and Turkey as well as Georgia and Armenia, and negotiations are underway between Georgia and Azerbaijan. There are protected areas adjacent to the border in all the three countries. Negotiations have been initiated about transboundary cooperation between Lagodekhi PAs in Georgia and Zakatala-Belakani PAs in Azerbaijan.

In 2009–2011, a project entitled '*South Caucasus – Creation of the Javakheti National Park in Georgia*' was funded by the Federal Ministry for Economic Cooperation and Development (BMZ) and the German Development Bank (KfW) and supported by WWF Germany/WWF-Caucasus to establish the Javakheti National Park and five Managed Reserves (Lake Khanchala, Lake Madatapa and Lake Bugdasheni Park and the Kartsakhi and Sulda swamps). The project [Conservation of Arid and Semi-Arid Ecosystems in the South Caucasus \(1999-2002\)](#) carried out by NACRES and FFI, with financial support from GEF/UNDP and Conservation Plan of Javakheti Plato served as bases for the conduction of above mentioned project and establishment of Javakheti protected areas. This area is one of the most perspective ones for transboundary cooperation as the Arpi lake National Park has been established across the border with the same funding and technical assistance. Perspectives of cross-border cooperation between the two countries are further strengthened by existence of the Transboundary Joint Secretariat (TJS), second face of which is carried out AHT Group and the Regional Environmental Centre for the Caucasus (REC-Caucasus) consortium, promoting development of transboundary and regional mechanisms for nature conservation and rehabilitation in the South Caucasus.

In 2010, BMZ/KfW funded a feasibility study for the establishment of the Kazbegi Biosphere Reserve. The study recommended expanding the existing territory of the National Park.

The process of identification and nomination of potential areas for inscriptions on the UNESCO World Heritage List was re-initiated in 2011 when WWF and IUCN, with support from MAVA Foundation conducted a consultancy and planning workshop on World Natural and Mixed Heritage Sites as an Environmental Protection Tool in Georgia. The workshop gave an impetus to future establishment of World Heritage Sites in Georgia.

Establishment of global categories of protected areas, such as the UNESCO World Heritage Sites, Ramsar sites, UNESCO's Biosphere Reserves, would raise international awareness about Georgia, attract additional funds to the protected area sector, and promote tourism development in the country.

7. Planning, Establishment and Management of Protected Areas

In the Soviet period, Reserves and forest-hunting reserve were administered by the Main Agency of Reserves and Hunting Forests that was part of the Ministry of Forestry. In 1992-1997, the Agency was restructured into the Principal Bureau of Reserves and Hunting Farms of Georgia and over the years was either subordinated to different ministries or functioned as independent entity. After October 9, 1997, protected areas in Georgia were managed by the Georgian State Department of Protected Areas, Reserves and Hunting Farms. By the end of 2004, the Department was reorganized into the Department of Protected Areas subordinated to the Ministry of Environment Protection and Natural Resources. In February 1, 2008, Department got the status of a legal entity under the public law and was established as the Agency for Protected Areas (APA) under the Ministry of Environment Protection and Natural Resources.

Presently, protected areas planning in Georgia is the responsibility of the APA/Ministry of Environment and the Ministry of Economy and Sustainable Development. Decisions to establish or cancel protected areas, design the territory, or change their protection category are made by the Georgian Parliament. Public policy in the field of PA creation, operation and management as well as policy coordination and compliance control are the responsibility of the Ministry of Environment (MoE). Protected areas are managed by APA through its territorial administrations.

APA has a chairman and two deputy chairmen, adheres to a typical Charter in its operations and consists of seven services: Development, Planning, Internal control, Administrative, Marketing and Public Relations, Economy and Legal Services.

Protected areas established at different times by various legal acts accordingly (acts of the Council of Ministries of the Georgian SSR, resolutions of the government of independent Georgia, Presidential Decrees or special laws) had different legal status. In 2004, all Protected Areas were included in the composition of the Ministry of Environment Protection and Natural Resources as a legal entity of public law. In 2005, part of PAs remained as legal entity of public law, and the other part represented the territorial body of the department of Protected Areas. Since 2008, all Protected Areas are administrative territorial units of the Agency of Protected Areas. Presently, according to the typical charter of the PA administrations, there are 22 territorial Protected Area administrations¹⁴, acting in compliance with the typical charter of the APA's territorial administrations.

Every PA administration has a director, and two services – for conservation and administration.

To date, management of Protected Areas is centralized. It should be mentioned, that management of the PA system of Georgia has significantly improved since 2005: new, motivated personnel have been hired, poaching has reduced, illegal logging has been almost eradicated (except those PA sections that are located adjacent to populated areas; this is linked to the absence of buffer zones, which is a legacy of management practices in the past and should be gradually resolved by current PA management). All these were supported by the centralization of the management, which was by all means a justifiable solution as previously, when the system was fully disintegrated, central administration was not effective. However, centralization of management caused shifting of decision making on a high level – far from the resources, which resulted in reduction of effectiveness. Parallel to improvement of particular PA management, the system will be gradually decentralized, which would on the one hand alleviate the management burden on APA and on the other hand would enable protected areas to introduce adaptive management in terms of proper infrastructure and management. Yet it is recommended to properly prepare for this process (both legally and in terms of management which would take certain time) and, as mentioned above, also, it is also recommended to proceed without haste.

According to the PA law, APA directly manages protected areas of categories I-IV, Biosphere Reserves, World Heritage Sites and Ramsar Sites.

Protected landscapes as well as, in exceptional cases, Managed Reserves, Biosphere Reserves, World Heritage Sites and Ramsar Sites may be managed together with other organizations. Yet the law does not specify other organizations, procedures or regulations of

¹⁴out of those, four administrative units are de jure under Georgian jurisdiction, however de facto, no state control is exercised there as they are located on the occupied territory of Abkhazia and so called South Ossetia.

such joint management. According to the PA law, APA has the function of control over multiple use territories, yet this is not clearly formulated either.

Presently, as mentioned above, all Georgian protected areas are managed by APA, except for the Tusheti protected landscape and Kolkheti multiple use territory that are managed by local self-government.

The Tusheti protected landscape has been managed by local self-government since 2006. In 2006-2011, the protected landscape was managed by only one employee of the Akhmeta municipality. Since March 2011, the Tusheti landscape has been managed by the Tusheti Protected Landscape Administration created at the Akhmeta municipality council. The administration adheres to the charter that inter alia determines the structure of the administration, management issues, competence and functions.

Boundaries of the Kolkheti multiple use territory were finally identified in 2011 and the area were transferred to the local self-government for management.

Establishment of the protected landscapes and multiple-use territories faces certain difficulties, as there is no spatial planning and comprehensive land cadastre. Their management approaches are comparatively new and need to be improved, as it requires involvement of various stakeholders and cooperation with respective structures. Also, it is important to strengthen awareness and skills of the staff members. Legislation needs to be improved to segregate powers and competences of relevant governing bodies and other structures as well as to clearly formulate management principles of Protected Areas of this category. Issues of Biosphere Reserve creation and management issues (legal and management) have to be developed, which is closely linked to the previous issue, as it is possible to apply relevant IUCN categories V and VI when establishing Biosphere Reserve zones (other than the core zone). Management of the Managed Reserves and natural monuments also requires certain adjustments, especially in view of recently adopted laws, also pertaining to Protected Areas. This requires particular attention, as literal application of these legal acts could jeopardize integration of the Protected Areas and complicate their management.

Presently there are only Protected Areas of national importance in Georgia, and the legislation does not envisage establishment of any regional, municipal or local Protected Areas.

Thereby, according to the existing legislation, there is only one form of governance of Protected Areas – governance by the government (either through the national ministry/agency; or through regional or municipal government). The international practice acknowledges and uses three more forms of governance – co-management, private

governance and governance by the indigenous and or local communities. In future, along with socio-economic development of the country, after the population is less depending on usage of the natural resources, it would be recommended to reflect all three above indicated forms of governance in Georgian legislation, as such diversification may facilitate establishment of new protected areas, expansion of current ones and transformation of isolated PA system into a PA network. Yet in view of the current environmental and resource use policy, at this stage such an initiative could be risky and could have an adverse impact, leading to disintegration of the existing system.

Forms of PA ownership vary depending on the PA category. Core zones of the first four PA categories (State Reserves, National Parks, Natural Monuments and Managed Reserves), also of Biosphere Reserves, and associated resources are owned by the state. In protected areas of category V (protected landscapes) and VI (multiple use territories) other forms of ownership are permitted alongside the state ownership. Ownership of Ramsar Sites, World Heritage Sites and associated resources depends on the category of protected areas where these are established.

Overall against the existing background, PA management in Georgia should be considered successful even despite the existing objective challenges that are discussed in detail below. The success is illustrated by the fact that in 2007 Borjomi-Kharagauli NP was certified and joined PAN-Park, the European Protected Area network, following a comprehensive evaluation of the PA management compliance with international standards conducted by EU experts.

7.1 Human Resources Issues

Lack of staff in general and qualified staff in particular is a significant problem of PA management.

Over the years the different projects conducted activities to improve knowledge and skills of the APA staff as well as separate territorial administrations. Within the framework of the WB/GEF's "Georgian Protected Areas Development Project", corresponding training of the PA staff was conducted (in Tusheti, Lagodekhi, Batsara-Babanauri, Vashlovani PAs, including also personnel from the Kolkheti and Borjomi Kharagauli protected areas). BMZ/KfW supported a similar training for the staff of the Borjomi-Kharagauli NP administration. Capacity of the Kolkheti NP and Kobuleti PAs was built under the WB/GEF Project for "Georgian Integrated Coastline Management". Norwegian Government and WWF supported trainings in Chachuna Managed Reserve and Mtirala National Park. Since 2006, with support of GIZ, within the framework of the International Technical Assistance

Programme of the US Department of the Interior (USDol/ITAP), which is the instrument for capacity building for effective management of protected areas, various trainings, workshops, site visits etc. has been conducted for the APA staff, PA administrations and different governmental agencies. With the assistance of BP/BTC, IUCN Caucasus Cooperation Centre (CCC) held trainings in PA management planning. USDol/ITAP and TJS supported a study tour to Protected Areas of Europe and America. In the framework of TJS Twinning project permanent collaboration among South Caucasus and Eifel National Park (Germany) is ensured, given possibility to the stakeholder to share information and experience. In the frame of EU/FFI/NACRES, awareness raising programs were carried out for local communities in Tusheti and Vashlovani PAs, etc.

Despite these efforts, lack of qualified staff remains a pressing problem because of low salaries and lack of social benefits. Therefore, in most cases PA administration staff is insufficient. In some of protected areas, there are vacant positions of natural resources experts and rangers.

Introduction of regular, permanent training system consisting of various modules is obviously necessary for protected area staff. There are dedicated training programs developed USDol/ITAP support, yet lack of funding remains the major obstacle.

7.2. Management Planning

Management plans are the main instrument for protected areas management. Non-existence of management plans hinders planning and implementation of relevant measures in PAs, reducing chances for involving local communities in PA planning and management. Based on the guidelines prepared by TJS, the Minister approved rules for management plan development in 2011. The guidelines prepared by TJS were based on the IUCN Guidelines. To date, most of the protected areas in Georgia are managed without any management plans in place. Management plans that were developed and approved for some Protected Areas have already expired. Currently, only three Protected Areas, namely, the Batsara-Babaneuri, Kolkheti and Kobuleti PAs have management plans that expire in 2012. Most of protected areas are managed under temporary procedure for regulation developed by APA (MoE order no. 53, *On Approval of Temporary procedure for regulation of some Protected Areas*, December 6, 2011). There is no business plans for protected areas either.

Over the years, management plans for some protected areas have been prepared with the support of different donor organizations. For example, Kolkheti, Kobuleti, Vashlovani, Tusheti, Lagodekhi and Batsara-Babanauri protected area management plans were prepared by the “Georgian Protected Area Programme” (GPAP). However, the majority of

management plans have already expired. Yet all management plans need to be updated and brought in compliance with APA's recently developed standards and approved by an order of the Minister of Environment. In 2006-2008, with funding from BP/BTC Co, the IUCN South Caucasus program office developed a draft management plan for the Ktsia-Tabatskuri Managed Reserve. In the same period, a management plan was developed for the Mtirala NP with funding from the Norwegian Government and technical assistance from WWF. In 2009-2011, funding from the German Government and WWF's technical assistance provided for of the "South Caucasus: Creation of Javakheti National Park in Georgia" project supported preparation of a draft management plan for the Javakheti PAs (presently the document is being updated to new standards). In 2009, UNDP/GEF supported the Facilitation of Financial Sustainability of Georgian Protected Areas' Project in the framework of which, the Tusheti NP management plan is being revised by NACRES. The Vashlovani NP management plan is now being revised by the GIZ-funded Project for 'Sustainable management of biodiversity: South Caucasus/Georgia' that started in 2010. In 2011, Caucasus Nature Fund (CNF) and WWF provided funding for revision of the Borjomi-Kharagauli NP management plan.

Management plans will be developed or revised for the Ajameti Managed Reserve, Imereti Caves PAs, Lagodekhi PAs and Mtirala NP in the frames of the EU-funded twinning project for 'Strengthening the Georgian Protected Areas Management'. Also, management planning for the Tusheti Protected Landscape is scheduled together with Czech partners.

The above information shows that most of the management planning efforts has been so far funded by donors under various projects. The Agency of Protected Areas and relevant PA administrations lack the management planning capacity, primarily due to lack of funding, experience, and personnel.

7.3. Equipment and Infrastructure

Over the years, different projects supported technical capacity building efforts for the Protected Areas in Georgia, which helped to improve infrastructure and provide basic equipment in many protected areas. In this regard, the situation is much better in protected areas established and/or rehabilitated with donor assistance, or with substantial investments by the business sector, such as: the Borjomi-Kharagauli NP (German Government, CNF and some others), the Tusheti, Lagodekhi and Vashlovani PAs (GEF/WB, CNF and some others), the Kolkheti NP (GEF/WB), the Mtirala NP (government of Norway) and the Sataplia PAs (BP/BTC). The government of Norway has also invested in improvements in the Chachuna Managed Reserve, and BP/BTC in the Ktsia-Tabatskuri in the recent years.

Under respective programs of the German government, development of the Javakheti PAs infrastructure and provision of equipment are planned for the nearest future. The same donor is hoped to support significant improvements in the Algeti NP and Kintrishi State Reserve. Potentially, the same donor would support improvement of infrastructure in the planned Khazbegi NP and Pshavi-Khevsureti NP. In addition to the above mentioned protected areas, the progressively developing CNF offers and/or is soon going to offer substantial support to the Mtirala NP, Kintrishi State Reserve and some other protected areas. There is an interest to develop the Machakhela National Park with the support of GEF, once it is established. In addition to providing technical assistance to APA for establishing the Javakheti PAs and Machakhela and Pshavi-Khevsureti NPs, WWF also makes efforts for raising funds from other sources for a number of Protected Areas, for example, a BMZ-funded project will start in July and will comprise a component aimed at improving infrastructure and equipment for reintroduction of gazelles in the Vashlovani National Park, etc.

The Agency of Protected Areas tries to use its own scarce funds to improve the existing infrastructure, but the issue is still pressing, and equipment/infrastructure of Georgian protected areas need significant further development, especially in those areas that have not received donor assistance yet.

In many Protected Areas, infrastructure does not comply with the PA functions; maintenance of the existing infrastructure requires significant costs; lack of equipment is obvious in many protected areas (for example, the Tbilisi NP has only one GPS); etc. These problems are apparently due to lack of funding for the protected area system.

7.4. Study & Monitoring System

The existing monitoring system in Georgian protected areas is imperfect or outdated. Rangers regularly gather information that is accumulated in the annual Chronicle of Nature of each protected area. Yet the methods for the data collection do not comply with modern scientific approaches. There is an apparent need for developing and introducing modern unified methodology.

One of the sound monitoring mechanisms recently introduced in some protected areas is using photo-traps. Yet the number of photo traps is insufficient to create a comprehensive picture, and in some PAs there are no photo-traps equipment in place; in others, there is a lack of human resources for using the equipment (i.e. there is a need for training).

Data are gathered in different projects and during scientific research conducted in protected areas.

In 2003 male leopard was discovered in Vashlovani Protected Areas during the baseline research in the framework of the GEF/WB Protected Areas Development Project. Since then, species conservation center NACRES has been studying big mammals, including leopards.. In 2009, WWF Caucasus office and NACRES jointly started a study of leopard in the Tusheti PAs; a similar study is intended in 2012 in the proposed Pshavi-Khevsureti protected areas.

In the scope of the UNDP/GEF project on 'Facilitation of Financial Sustainability of the Georgian Protected Areas System' (2009-2011) NACRES developed a program for the wild boars - Caucasian tur and bezoar goat - monitoring in the Tusheti PAs, which should facilitate effective conservation of these species.

Various projects are implemented in the Borjomi-Kharagauli NP: the Park administration is implementing a black-grouse monitoring project, targeted at identification of black-grouse population areas, their number and current ecological status. The Institute of Zoology is conducting a study of "Biodiversity of dragonflies, semi-coleopterous, thin winged and coleopterous species". NGO 'Biosphere' collaborates with the National Park staff in a project for "promotion of chamois conservation".

Information on the number of deer population is systematically gathered by administrations of the Lagodekhi and Borjomi Protected Areas.

Institute of Ecology of Ilia [Chavchavadze] State University (ISU) implemented a project for the Study and Conservation of the Caucasian Salamander in the Borjomi-Kharagauli NP, Nedzvi Managed Reserve and Kintrishi PA. The study identified habitats of the Caucasian Salamander and assessed the population status. Researchers of the ISU Institute of Zoology implement a project for the Establishment and Development of Inter-State Monitoring Network for the Caucasus *Chiroptera*. As part of this project, a scientific research was carried out in Kumistavi and Gliani caves; another conducted study is the *Chiroptera* and Dragonflies in the Gardabani Managed Reserve.

In 2009, NACRES and Fauna and Flora International (FFI) implemented an EU-funded project for the Conservation of big Georgian predators in the Vashlovani and Tusheti Protected Areas and adjacent territories.

Also in 2009, NACRES implemented a project for brown bear conservation in Georgia, financially supported by Dutch fund Alertis. The purpose of the project was to study brown bear ecology in the Vashlovani State Reserve and National Park as well as to conduct monitoring of big predators (including bear, leopard, lynx, and wolf).

Studies in protected areas are mainly conducted by research universities and NGOs in frames of different projects. Researchers mainly focus on protected areas in eastern part of

Georgia where infrastructure is well-developed, such as Borjomi-Kharagauli, Vashlovani, Lagodekhi, and Tusheti protected areas.

The Agency of Protected Areas has identified gaps in different aspects of Protected Area management, developed a list of research needs and submitted it to respective scientific and educational institutions.

Despite the ongoing monitoring efforts discussed above, the monitoring system is insufficient, which is due to different factors: a) lack of funding to establish a modern monitoring system and to implement relevant measures (namely, trainings and monitoring capacity building); b) there is a lack of staff in general and qualified specialists in particular: there are vacant positions of Resources Experts and rangers in some protected areas because of the lack of funding, resulting in inadequate salary for large scope of work.

In the scope of GEF/WB project, NACRES developed a biodiversity monitoring manual and implemented relevant trainings for APA and PA administrations in East Georgia. Yet there is still a permanent need for human capacity building for monitoring; also, lack of a local modern monitoring system in PAs (including relevant equipment) makes it very hard to implement serious changes in terms of monitoring.

Data collected in Protected Areas are accumulated in APA. Partially there exists the database, however yet currently there is no unified electronic database with the corresponding programme in place. Real biodiversity status and trends in protected areas is hard to evaluate because there are no up-to-date and effective mechanisms for data collection, data storage and analysis, so it is difficult to judge whether a particular area performs its functions. All these are impediments for efficient management of Protected Areas, for biodiversity conservation and resource management.

Creation of a unified well-equipped monitoring system using modern methodologies is one of the complex however challenging tasks to be addressed by APA. This implies not only biodiversity monitoring, but monitoring of resource use by local community in protected areas (timber, use of pasturelands, etc), tourism development (APA has made very important steps in this regard), cases of poaching, staff statistics, etc.

There is also a need for regular monitoring of management efficiency of a particular protected area using an internationally practiced evaluation approach.

7.5. Resource Management in Protected Areas

Illegal and uncontrolled use of natural resources poses a risk for protected areas as well as adjacent territories, especially for Protected Areas located close to communities that largely depend on natural resources. In some cases this results in conflicts.

Different measures undertaken over the years, including policing, high penalties, increased responsibility of the personnel and awareness-raising campaigns for the local population, have significantly reduced illegal logging, grazing, poaching, etc. Yet problems still remain: There are still some cases of poaching for sporting and economic purposes. Difficult socio-economic conditions, lack or high cost of the alternative resources (gas, coal) for heating, remoteness of timber cutting areas from the communities (increasing the product cost), lack of benefits (e.g., subsidized costs of gas, or compensations (e.g., for lost opportunities), provoke illegal logging and trigger conflicts. In addition to all these, long and early winters in the recent years are another obstacle in obtaining designated firewood, also increasing its consumption period. There is also a high demand not only for firewood but also for timber, yet the existing legislation prohibits timber production from the protected areas, which causes discontent of the population.

Grazing is another potential hazard for protected areas that have summer or winter pastures: high mountains, semi-arid ecosystems of southeast. Legal and illegal grazing, large-scale and uncontrolled grazing trigger land erosion, negatively affect composition and productivity of vegetation and create favorable conditions of invasive plants.

Today, there are no established grazing norms and no pasture management plans in place (there is a plan only for the Borjomi-Kharagauli NP that includes an unrealistic action plan); currently, a similar but simpler plan is being developed for the Javakheti NP where there are no forest areas and grazing is the main resource use pattern.

Hayfields are another problem in some areas. Poaching has significantly reduced yet still remaining in some PAs.

Reasons include poor socio-economic status of the population, low environmental awareness, poor availability of information and low degree of public participation in PA planning.

Recently liberalization of legislation regulating resource use (timber, hunting) together with misinterpretation of information by local communities bring significant new challenges for biodiversity both inside and outside protected areas.

Different projects conducted in protected areas include a socio-economic development component for communities living around the PAs. The WB/GEF-funded project “*Georgian*

Protected Areas development program” was the first initiative to include such a component, involving the following alternative income generating and nature protection activities in communities around the protected areas of Tusheti, Lagodekhi and Vashlovani, Batsara-Babaneuri State Reserves and Ilto Managed Reserve: construction of plant nurseries, restoration of agrobiodiversity, development of sustainable management planning of grazing lands, development of guesthouses, restoration of traditional, hystoric-cultural infrastructure and promotion of traditional crafts.

The Japan Social Development Fund implemented a project for ‘Improving Livelihood Security in Kolkheti Lowland’. Project activities included upgrading of the village infrastructure, alternative income generation, construction of drinking water supply systems, rehabilitation of school and kindergarten buildings, roads and bridges, and capacity building.

With the financial assistance of the German Government, a similar approach was implemented to develop communal utilities in villages around the Borjomi-Kharagauli NP. With CEPF’s fund and WWF’s facilitation, a number of pilot development projects was implemented in a small village of Chakvistavi surrounded by the Mtirala NP and some adjacent areas. Objectives of the pilot projects included development of family tourism, beekeeping, as well as construction of traditional plant nurseries, etc. Implementation of socio-economic sustainability projects is also intended in Javakheti. TJS also supports some socio-economic development activities in the regional and transboundary context.

Implementation of socioeconomic development projects is highly important for improving the conditions of local communities and developing a positive attitude towards protected areas, yet their implementation is associated with significant costs.

Another hazard is extraction of natural resources in the immediate vicinity of protected areas. The main reason is the lack of legislation regulating buffer zones. In particular, the existing laws have no requirement for creation of buffer zones in Protected Areas, thus occasionally endangered the PAs. Article 20 of the PA Law specifies the issue of regulation of activities both within and outside protected areas. Yet there are no clear regulations and control mechanisms for managing natural resource use as well as other economic activities outside PA boundaries.

Since there are no buffer zones as territories with legal status, the Agency of Protected Areas fails to control activities outside the boundaries of protected areas.

Allocation of large PA lands to economic projects also has an adverse impacted on Protected Areas. This is what happened in the Kolkheti National Park where a part of a Ramsar site was allotted for construction of the Kulevi terminal, recently hydropower project was planned to develop in Kazbegi and the plot of the NP was allocated for this. The

planned project will cause river degradation and ecosystem and landscape change. The similar problem is regarding Kintrishi protected areas. Such activities have a critical impact on Protected Areas and their biodiversity and general integration. If necessary, exclusion of lands from protected areas should be at least compensated with allocation of some other areas, and the procedure should be legalized. Otherwise the land exclusions would not jeopardize individual protected areas but would also undermine proper functioning of the entire PA system.

Inaccurate delineation of boundaries of some protected areas causes disputes with local communities and local self-government. Lands within some protected areas are either municipal lands, privately owned lands, or leased lands. In the framework of the WB/CEF Georgian Protected Areas Development Project has started legal and physical demarcation of the protected areas. This process was especially successful in Vashlovani, Tusheti, Batsara-Babanauri, Ilto and Lagodekhi protected areas. The PA demarcation process, which is now ongoing, would potentially solve the land ownership issues in the Protected Areas.

7.6 Restoration Measures

A number of re-introduction and conservation measures have been implemented in protected areas as part of different projects.

Significant steps have been made towards re-introduction of fauna species. Since 2006, WWF has been supporting the 'Bezoar goat Reintroduction Project' in the Borjomi-Kharagauli NP. Yet the project is not a success, and in the nearest future TJS, CNF and WWF are going to support an analysis of the project failure causes and re-start the project if the analysis provides a sufficient basis for that.

A lot of partner organizations, such as the Ministry of Environment and Forestry of Turkey, the US Department of the Interior Technical Assistance Program (USDol/TAP), GIZ, EU, NACRES, FFI, Tbilisi Zoo, Ilia State University, and WWF, support implementation of the gazelle reintroduction project in the Vashlovani PA. In 2009, gazelles were brought from Turkey and placed in fenced areas. Presently, the species restoration capacity is being assessed countrywide, and a reintroduction plan is being developed (NACRES, FFI). Ilia State University conducted a genetic study of gazelles brought from Turkey as well as those to be brought from Azerbaijan. The Agency of Protected Areas is currently negotiating transfer of additional gazelles with their counterparts from Azerbaijan. The fenced areas should be expanded, stable veterinary services should be ensured and other measures implemented.

In 2011, the Association of Vashlovani PA Friends established a Kolkhetian pheasant (*Phaseanus colkhicus*) breeding center to facilitate restoration of the Kolkhetian pheasant in their natural habitats. The project was supported by the “Eurasian Partnership Fund” and funded by grant from BP/BTC.

In some protected areas, relevant measures are carried out to control forest diseases. The situation with the Imeretian oak-tree is a serious issue in the Ajameti Managed Reserve where the forest is affected by pests and there is no significant potential for natural regeneration. There is a nursery for the Imeretian oak established in the vicinity of the Managed Reserve, and restoration measures are being conducted.

Also, the Kolkhetian box-tree is affected by diseases, and establishment of a nursery is needed to restore for implementation of restoration measures. The status of chestnut trees is also a problem not only in protected areas but countrywide. Lack of funding is again a barrier to more or less comprehensive restoration measures in protected areas.

8. Stakeholders

Different stakeholders play a critical role in promotion of protected area management.

Various Georgian agencies are involved in the protected area management process, including different services of the Ministry of Environment, the Agency of Protected Areas (APA) of the Ministry of Energy and Natural Resources, Ministry of Culture and Monument Protection, Ministry of Education and Science, Border Police of the Ministry of the Interior, National Tourism Agency of the Ministry of Economy and Sustainable Development, Georgian Orthodox Church, and other stakeholders.

The Georgian Parliament is the authority responsible for decisions on PA establishment, annulment, changes in the PA territory or conservation status.

The Ministry of Environment with its different services and departments (Biodiversity Protection Service, Department for Environmental Policy and International Relations, Department for Integrated Environmental Management, Legal Department, Environmental Expertise and Inspection Department, etc) is the major stakeholder.

An important structure responsible for further development of protected areas is the Ministry of Energy and Natural Resources, namely, the Agency for Protected Areas (APA). APA's mandate includes management of the Georgian forest stock, issuance of licenses for natural resource use as well as supervision and oversight.

The Ministry of Culture and Monument Protection of Georgia is responsible for conservation of historical and cultural heritage. In the same time, conservation and restoration of historical and cultural landscapes as well as archeological complexes is also one of the APA's objectives. According to the Law *On the System of Protected Areas and Cultural Heritage*, it is important to somewhat involve the Ministry of Culture and Monument Protection of Georgia in protected area planning.

The Ministry of Education and Science of Georgia is involved in environmental education and public awareness-raising.

The Border Police of the Georgian Ministry of the Interior ensures protection of the border and adjacent areas on the territory of transboundary protected areas.

The National Tourism Agency of the Georgian Ministry of Economy and Sustainable Development is responsible for the development of the tourism sector in the country.

An important stakeholder in the PA management is local authorities that may be responsible for protected areas within the territory they manage (respective units of IUCN category V and VI).

The Georgian Autocephalous Orthodox Church is another stakeholder, as certain number of churches and monasteries are located on the territory of different protected areas.

Stakeholders also include governmental agencies of different countries (including donors and/or technical assistance providers) as well as international and local non-governmental organizations involved in different aspects of protected area planning and management.

Another important stakeholder is local communities that live in the vicinity of protected areas and depend on the protected areas and associated natural resources.

According to the PA law, The Agency of Protected Areas cooperates with other governmental agencies and local authorities by means of Scientific-Advisory Councils that are established for each particular protected area.

Pursuant to the laws amended in 2007, the reasons for establishing the Councils were differently defined in respective laws. On the one hand, according to amendments to the Law *On Creation and Management of Tusheti, Batsara-Babaneuri, Vashlovani and Lagodekhi Protected Areas* approved on April 27 2007, the councils are entitled to ensure public involvement in the PA management. On the other hand, the April 27 2007 amendments to the Law *on the System of Protected Areas* state that the Ministry establishes the Scientific and Advisory Councils for cooperation with other governmental agencies and local authorities. Thus the amendments are apparently contradictory.

Councils created in 2007 included representatives of the Ministry of Environment and Natural Resources, APA, local authorities, NGOs and academia. The council-creating mechanisms were quite transparent. Council meetings were intended to be monthly. Yet only one meeting was held within two years after the council was created, which was justified by the fact that high-ranking members of the council were busy within their principal occupations.

In 2008, the Ministry of Environment and Natural Resources of Georgia created new PA Scientific-Advisory Councils for inter-agency cooperation as well as cooperation of local authorities in protected area management. The objective of the councils was to involve local population and NGOs in integrated protected area management, to adequately formulate the associated issues and give recommendations for the Ministry of Environment. Today the Council includes PA administrations, APA, local authorities, respective governmental agencies, NGOs, universities, research institutions and other stakeholders. It should be noted that local stakeholders, including local non-governmental organizations and community representatives, are not represented in the Councils. The councils do not hold regular meetings (twice a year) because of poor enthusiasm of their members resulting from lack of funds and motivation.

With regard to cooperation with local population and NGOs, the PA Law gives the right yet not an obligation to APA to cooperate with stakeholders and local population in making decisions on PA establishment, development, changes in the PA territory and status, management planning, consideration and amendment of administrative acts and other documents. Yet the PA Law does not define respective cooperation mechanisms.

First steps towards involving stakeholders in the protected areas management have been made in 2003 during establishment of a number of protected areas. Social surveys and meetings were held. In recent years even more important steps have been made in this direction. Public disclosure and public consultations were held prior to establishment of new protected areas, namely, during management planning of the Javakheti PAs, proposed Khevsureti and Machakhela PAs, etc. Local participation was really high in creation of the Javakheti Protected Areas: there were four working groups actively involved in the PA planning.

APA also uses certain mechanisms to ensure public participation, e.g., sociological studies, festivals, educational events for children and teenagers, and contests. In 2009, IUCN CCC with assistance of Eurasian Partnership Foundation and eco-grants received from BP/BTC established Friends' Associations of Protected Areas in three protected areas (those of Tusheti, Lagodekhi, and Vashlovani) for strengthening public participation and involvement (especially local stakeholders) in the PA management. Similar associations should be also

established in other protected areas. Financial stability is a critical prerequisite for existence of the associations.

Despite a number of implemented actions, stakeholder involvement is still insufficient, which is mainly due to lack or inadequacy of relevant regulations, lack of specific mechanisms of participation, lack of awareness and experience, low environmental awareness in the society and insufficient funding.

9. Environmental Awareness

Over the years, APA and PA administrations as well as different international and national NGOs have conducted environmental education under different programs and projects, intended for different target groups (schoolchildren, students, local population, and local governmental and nongovernmental organization, broad public).

APA has been especially active in this regard. They have prepared many publications, TV programs and social marketing clips as well as photo exhibitions, banners, etc. PA Administrations cooperate with NGOs and schools for the purposes of environmental education and awareness-raising, trainings are arranged for schoolchildren and teachers, etc. Joint efforts are undertaken with the Ministry of Education and Science, Aarhus Center, supported by the Organization for Security and Cooperation in Europe (OSCE), Georgian Society of Nature Friends (Telavi); Public Awareness Raising and Information Plans are updated yearly, public surveys are carried out, etc.

The conducted activities have succeeded in significantly raising the awareness and recognition of protected areas in the society. Yet there is still a need to expand the existing educational programs and to develop new ones, so that the broader public would understand multi-functionality of protected areas and the critical importance of Georgian nature conservation, ultimately a major determinant of the Georgian population's well-being. It is a rather long-term objective that requires capacity building of PA administrations and significant funds.

In 2012 the Georgian Ministries of Environment and of Education and Science developed an instrument called *'Environmental Education for Sustainable Development: Georgia's National Strategy and Action Plan 2012–2014'*. Implementation of the plan should facilitate overall environmental awareness-raising in the Georgian society.

10. Funding

Most of the challenges in the PA system are due to the lack of funding.

Over years, different donors, international and national NGOs and private sector have been supporting development of the protected area system in Georgia. Donor contribution in the existing funding is about 50 per cent. Today PA support programs in Georgia are mainly funded by the German Government/ KfW, European Commission (EC) and Global Environmental Fund (GEF). Donor contribution to creation of new protected areas has been already discussed above, so we will now make a brief overview of mechanisms and projects intended to ensure financial sustainability of Georgia's protected areas.

Georgian budget spending for protected areas has increased in recent years. Establishment of the Agency of Protected Areas as a legal entity under the public law in 2008 facilitated additional fund raising, namely from entry fees from National Parks as well as from concessions. Today APA's revenues make up about 12-13 per cent of its annual budget, which is already a success since there are also positive dynamics: the agency is planning to attract more visitors to protected areas, to further develop tourist marketing and PR in order to push up the revenues from the PA entry fees. In 2010 Kolkheti National Park Development Foundation was established.

Despite the increased funding and additional revenues, the existing national budget funding is still insufficient and covers only a part of the PA system needs. As mentioned in the audit of APA's ecotourism development activities by the Georgian Control Chamber in February 2012, the national budget funding of protected areas is inadequate. We would add that there are inadequate salaries of the protected area staff as well as a lack of operational costs.

Current legislation does not significantly restrict protected areas in terms of diversification of funding sources and implementation of effective revenue mechanisms. Yet the laws should be improved to enhance financial sustainability of the protected areas by giving a clear definition of the PA funding diversification and mechanisms and opportunities of additional revenues for APA.

Caucasus Nature Fund (CNF) was established for improving protected area management in countries of the Caucasus by the German Government (BMZ/KfW), WWF and Conservation International in 2006-2007, with a starting capital of up to 7 million Euros. This is a trust fund created for support in operation of protected areas in the three countries of the Caucasus (today it fully functions in Georgia and Armenia). CNF has been successfully developing, its capitalization has significantly increased (again with support from the German government as a component of the Ecoregional Programme and GEF/UNDP as well as some private donors), yet it needs additional fund-raising to function comprehensively, which is quite

feasible in view of CNF's current dynamics. Based on this, today CNF (see <http://www.caucasus-naturefund.org/>) is the only one and quite effective mechanism of sustainable financial support for protected areas in the Caucasus in general and in Georgia in particular. Today CNF supports 3 or 4 protected areas in Georgia per year, with total funding of 300-400,000 Euros.

Besides CNF, the other two components in the BMU/KfW Ecoregional Programme are "Support to Individual Protected Area projects" (Individual PA projects) and TJS programme, which support to the Ministries of Environment of Armenia, Azerbaijan and Georgia to increase regional sector harmonization and sector development in nature conservation and related socio-economic development. All three components are intrinsically linked and designed to work closely together to provide maximum synergy.

In 2009, UNDP and GEF provided support for the "Facilitation of Financial Sustainability of Protected Areas in Georgia" Project. The Project developed a ten-year investment plan for 2012–2022 that should assist APA in identification and attraction of necessary investments in protected areas.

Here are some key activities that the Project identified as needing financial support:

- human and institutional capacity building of the APA and particular PA administrations;
- updating/development of PA infrastructure;
- maintenance of the PA infrastructure;
- expansion of existing public education programs (formal and informal);
- provision of equipment for field staff, better increased fire and overall safety management;
- management planning;
- monitoring and evaluation programs;
- funding and support of advisory council and PA friends associations for increased stakeholder participation;
- local community-centered socioeconomic projects;
- expansion of existing tourist marketing and PR programs.
- Facilitation of Public-Private and Public-Public Partnerships to increase revenues (requiring investments into APA capacity building to initiate and develop Public-Private and Public-Public Partnerships). It is also recommended to create a Business Development Unit within APA that would be responsible for commercial and business

issues related to protected areas as well as for relations with donors and charity foundations.

11. Summary: Key Problems and Obstacles

The situational analysis identifies the following key problems existing in the protected area system today:

- Deficient legislation, in particular related to establishment and management of protected areas of IUCN categories V and VI, and Biosphere Reserves. This problem is closely related to establishment and management of buffer/support zones, so high categories of protected areas in Georgia actually have no buffer zones. Also, improvements need to be made to legislation related to natural monuments and Managed Reserves (e.g. permission for hunting on the territory of natural monuments seems to be an obvious misunderstanding).
- There is deficient legislation in terms of provision of some PA lands for different uses, and the laws fail to define adequate compensation mechanisms.
- Strategic development goals for protected areas under Aichi Biodiversity Target 11 are not defined; in the same time:
 - the territorial distribution and general area conserved are not sufficient for Georgian biodiversity conservation;
 - transformation of existing PAs into a PA network has not been initiated;
 - there is no drafted and adopted plan for the development of Georgian protected areas.
- Territorial protection and international recognition instruments, like Ramsar Sites and UNESCO World Heritage Sites are not sufficiently applied;
- Transboundary cooperation mechanisms are underdeveloped;
- There is a lack of staff, including qualified personnel; no regular professional advancement/training; Most of the protected areas have no management plans;
- Most of the protected areas have no adequate infrastructure and equipment;
- There are no adequate mechanisms for local self-government and public involvement in PA planning and operation;

- Research and monitoring systems are incomprehensive; there is no unified database, no regular evaluation of protected area management effectiveness is conducted;
- There are few re-introduction activities, and they are limited in scope (especially fauna re-introduction);
- There are no sufficient educational and awareness-raising programs and activities dedicated to protected area relevance and functioning, especially community-oriented;
- There are no sufficient projects for socio-economic development of local communities that depend on protected areas or their resources; there are no benefit-sharing mechanisms to enable the population to generate more income from the existence and functioning of protected areas;
- Almost all components of the PA management structure and functioning are under-financed, including salaries and operational costs as well as costs for additional research, monitoring and educational activities, this being one of the major causes of the above-listed problems and obstacles.

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Meetings with People

#	Name, Family Name	Position	Date and Location
1	Lasha Moistsrapishvili	Deputy Chairman, Agency of Protected Areas, Ministry of Environment	24.02.2012, Tbilisi
2	Khatuna Tsiklauri	Chief specialist, Development Service, Agency of Protected Areas, Ministry of Environment	27.02.2012, Tbilisi
3	Avto Mikaberidze	Chief specialist, Development Service, Agency of Protected Areas, Ministry of Environment	27.02.2012, Tbilisi
4	Nata Sultanishvili	Chief specialist, Development Service, Agency of Protected Areas, Ministry of Environment	27.02.2012, Tbilisi
5	Levan Tabunidze	Director of Borjomi-Kharagauli PA Administration, Agency of Protected Areas, Ministry of Environment	06.03.2012, Borjomi
6	Vano Kupradze	Head of Security Service of Borjomi-Kharagauli PA Administration, Agency of Protected Areas, Ministry of Environment	06.03.2012, Borjomi
7	Community of village Kvabiskhevi		06.03.2012, village Kvabiskhevi
8	Giorgi Sulamanidze	Director of Lagodekhi PA Administration, Agency of Protected Areas, Ministry of Environment	07.03.2012, Lagodekhi
9	Gela Bakhturidze	Director of Tusheti Protected Landscape Administration	07.03.2012, Amkheta
10	Irakli Shavgulidze	Director, 'NACRES' Species Conservation Research Center	12.03.2012, Tbilisi
11	Bezhan Lortkipanidze	Project Coordinator, 'NACRES' Species Conservation Research Center	12.03.2012, Tbilisi

Annexes

Annex 1. 'Georgian Biodiversity Conservation Strategy and Action Plan, Protected Areas', 2005: Performance Evaluation

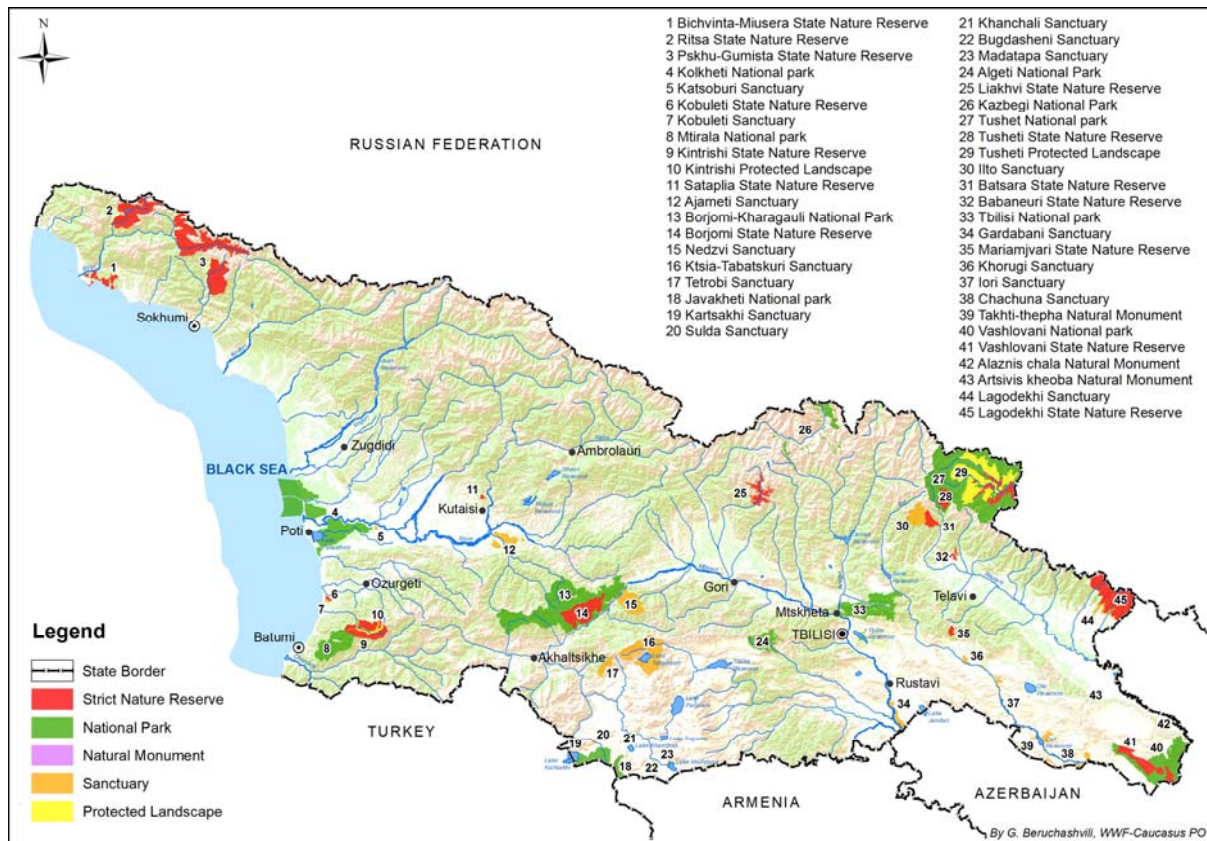
Scoring: 5 –completed fully; 4 –completed satisfactorily, 3 –in progress, 2 – starting; 1 – initiated, 0 –not initiated

	Action	Indicators /Expected Results	Status
1	Prepare a project to develop Georgia's protected area system	Systems plan approved by the Government	0
2	Establish protected areas in the central Caucasus	Protected areas set up in the central Caucasus; Management plans for the protected areas developed and officially approved.	0
3	Establish protected areas on the Javakheti Plateau	Protected areas set up on the Javakheti plateau; Management plans for the protected areas developed and officially approved.	5
4	Designate new Ramsar sites in Javakheti Plateau (lakes Khanchali, Madatapa, Bugdasheni)	Javakheti wetlands included in the List of Wetlands of International Importance	3
5	Reorganise existing reserves (including expansion and up-grading into national parks, as appropriate) to improve their effectiveness	At least 3 reserves reorganised	5
6	Improve the effectiveness and management of existing protected areas	Results of evaluation by governmental and public organisations	3
7	Identify potential Ramsar sites, and prepare necessary designation proposals	At least one Ramsar site proposal submitted for designation	3
8	Develop a list of potential Natural Monument Sites. Draft and adopt laws	List of potential sites developed. Relevant laws adopted, and management plans	4

	Action	Indicators /Expected Results	Status
	in support of these sites. Develop management plans for these sites.	approved.	
9	Designate biosphere reserves	Official designation of biosphere reserves in Georgia	2
10	Compile a list of potential world heritage sites and prepare documentation for their submission to UNESCO	Relevant documents submitted to UNESCO	1
11	Identify potential transboundary protected areas and initiate their establishment	Official agreement with neighbouring countries on the establishment of transboundary protected area	1
12	Set up biodiversity monitoring schemes in protected areas	Biodiversity monitoring schemes established in protected areas, and integrated into the national biodiversity monitoring system.	2
13	Set up protected areas information centre and a database at the Department of Protected Areas	Widely available data base of protected areas; Various publications on protected areas produced	2
14	Prepare an action plan for the protection of large mammal migration corridors and birds flyways	Identified migration corridors designated as protected areas of appropriate category	0
15	Implement pilot projects in buffer (support) zones of protected areas	At least one pilot project implemented at each national park	1
16	Develop compensation schemes for local people living in or at protected areas	Relevant legal instrument developed to provide compensation	0
17	Improve funding of protected areas by ensuring any funds generated from fines and damage reimbursement are allocated to the protected area budget	Improved (i) financial situation and (ii) infrastructure of protected areas	0
18	Ensure that the income from visitors is allocated to the protected area budget	Improved (i) financial situation and (ii) infrastructure of protected areas	3

	Action	Indicators /Expected Results	Status
19	Carry out an inventory of known paleontological sites (Dmanisi, Taribana, Dzegvtahevi, Udabno, Ialguja, etc).	Published database of Georgia's paleontological sites	0
20	Develop management plans for paleontological sites that are expected to remain outside protected areas	Officially approved management plan(s)	0

Annex 2. Protected Areas of Georgia¹⁵



¹⁵ Some small Protected Areas, particularly most of Natural Monuments, are not depicted on the map because of the scale.