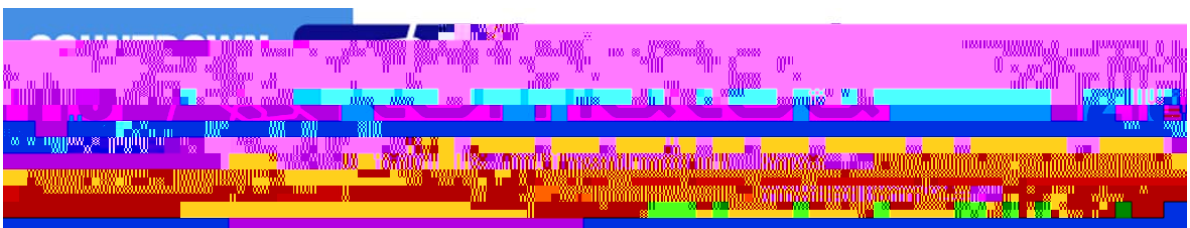




# **Improved and Coherent Implementation of Conventions Relevant to Protected Areas in Georgia**

**Guidelines for the effective and coherent implementation of MEAs through national legislation, policy and programmes**



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## Abbreviations

<b>APA</b>	Agency of Protected Areas
<b>BS</b>	Biodiversity Service
<b>BR</b>	Biosphere Reserve
<b>CBC</b>	Caucasus Biodiversity Council
<b>CBD</b>	Convention on Biological Diversity
<b>CEPA</b>	Communication, Education and Public Awareness
<b>CITES</b>	Convention on International Trade in Endangered Species of Wild Fauna and Flora
<b>CMS</b>	Convention on Migratory Species
<b>ECP</b>	Eco-regional Conservation Plan for the Caucasus
<b>EIA</b>	



**1. Use of the TEMATEA IBM on PA:** The TEMATEA IBM on PA compiles information on relevant commitments and obligations for all aspects of PA policy, management etc. Having been publicised during the national consultation process in Georgia, it will be consulted routinely by MEA FPs, as well as implementing and legislative organisations, as a database on all MEA commitments relevant to a given policy development, management decision, MEA report etc. This will enable these stakeholders to have the full picture of relevant commitments and obligations when planning and deciding management or policy steps, and to modify their approach in order to optimise implementation across the entire range of relevant commitments.

**2. Communication amongst MEA FPs and with policy makers, implementers and other stakeholders:** The national consultation process on PA-related MEA commitments in Georgia revealed the need for intensive and regular communication between Convention FPs. Beyond this, it showed that communication of commitments and obligations with policy-making and implementing institutions is crucial for effective national implementation, and should become more regular and inclusive. On the one hand, MEA FPs cannot implement “their” convention on their own, while on the other hand, national policy makers as well as implementers need constantly updated information from focal points to guide and inform their work. Regular communication meetings between MEA FPs and the main implementing government institutions will be intensified and used to ensure information flow between MEA FPs and implementers.

**3. Engaging government institutions and other stakeholders outside the PA field:** The inventory of the current implementation of MEA commitments in Georgia revealed the high dependence of effective and coherent implementation on institutions and stakeholders who are primarily responsible for subjects other than PAs but whose actions strongly influence the success of PA policy and management, and hence the implementation of MEA commitments and obligations on this issue. The national consultation process succeeded to engage many of these actors, but there is agreement among consultation participants that the challenge of involving key stakeholders outside the PA field - like the Ministries of Economy and Agriculture – remains, partly reflecting current development and policy priorities in Georgia. This challenge will need to be tackled on a case-by-case basis in the future.

**4. Use of ongoing and upcoming policy processes to promote the multi-convention approach to MEAs relevant to PAs:** The participants of the national consultation process agreed that there currently is a favourable situation for the introduction of the multi-convention approach on PAs in Georgia, because there are several ongoing and upcoming policy formulation and strategic planning processes into which the approach can be integrated. This was used to devise three of the specific follow-ups of the Georgian TEMATEA consultation, but it is also a general principle for promoting the multi-convention approach. This principle will be applied in additional policy processes as and when they become relevant in the future, through reference to the specific action items of this guideline document and the IBM on PAs itself.

## **II. Follow-up**

The discussion of options for follow-up in the course of the national consultation showed that there is strong interest in using the outcomes of the consultation beyond the lifespan of the current project, but that the application of outcomes should be integrated into existing policy processes which already have strong national ownership and momentum, rather than installing

stakeholders. By systematically integrating commitments from all major MEAs into its draft strategy, which is being drafted with support from the IUCN Programme Office for the Southern Caucasus, the APA is currently adopting the multi-convention approach as a core principle for national policy formulation and implementation in Georgia.

## **2. Integration of the multi-convention approach and of relevant commitments into the(mmit)-5 during**

**3. Management:** Better implementation of obligations and commitments on management planning and intervention: application of assessment results, conservation, sustainable use and restoration of habitats.

**4. Economic Instruments:** Better implementation of provisions on economic strategies and methods for achieving biodiversity conservation and sustainable use in PAs: incentives, market-based mechanisms, valuation, financial strategies for PAs, distribution of benefits (e.g. compensation to local communities).

**5. Provision of Resources:** The chapter on the provision of resources includes obligations and commitments relating to providing funding and technical resources for biodiversity conservation in protected areas (PAs). Technical resources include training, the transfer of technologies and the building of institutional capacity.

**6. Communication, Education and Public Awareness (CEPA):** Better implementation of obligations and commitments relating to raising awareness of biodiversity conservation and sustainable use in PAs: campaigns targeted at raising awareness, dissemination of scientific research, provision of information and reporting on information and progress to conventions and Parties.

**7. Cooperation:** Better implementation of obligations and commitments relating to coordination across sectors, internationally and nationally, and partnerships between Parties and organizations. The cooperation section is closely aligned to the CEPA section.

**8. Stakeholders and indigenous and local communities:** Better implementation of obligations relating to stakeholders, as well as indigenous and local communities.

### ***Criteria for the inclusion of actions in the guidelines***

**1. Multi-convention approach or inter-agency collaboration focus:** The aim of the TEMATEA consultation process on PA was not simply to improve implementation of individual PA-related commitments from each MEA, but also to introduce a collaborative multi-convention approach to the ways in which they are implemented, and to build the necessary capacity among all key actors to implement this approach. This is reflected in the focus of the guidelines, which concentrate on actions that are clearly based on a multi-convention approach or on improved inter-agency communication and collaboration in the implementation of individual commitments. This focus does not imply that all other commitments from each MEA are either fully implemented or not important; it simply follows from the purpose of this particular process.

**2. Relevance to PAs in Georgia:** An additional criterion that is used to focus the actions in the guidelines is the relevance to Georgian PAs. While numerous indirectly relevant commitments and their improved implementation were included where they had clear links to PAs, others with only marginal links were omitted from the final list of actions, following stakeholder requests to keep the process outcome PA-focused.

**3. Defined actors:** A third criterion is the need for defined actors for each action in the guidelines. The consultation process succeeded in engaging an unprecedented range of actors from various institutions relevant to PAs. However, as a result of current development priorities in Georgia, some of the actors that are not primarily concerned with PAs but nevertheless have a strong influence on the effectiveness of the Georgian PA system (e.g. Ministry of the Economy, regarding licenses and permits), could not be engaged fully. This challenge will be met through continued promotion of PA-related commitments during the follow-up of the project by all main stakeholders of the process.



# 1. Assessment

The assessment chapter includes ways to improve the implementation of commitments that relate to gathering and interpreting information on all PA processes and the methods used to do this. It therefore includes monitoring, research, inventories, assessing projects, developing standards and indicators and establishing mechanisms to document knowledge.

## 1.1. General evaluation and actions

**Integration of MEA commitments into the PA System Long-term Strategy and Action Plan:** Of the ongoing processes aimed at improved biodiversity governance in Georgia, one contributes particularly to the implementation of obligations related to PA assessment, monitoring and research: the *Long-term Strategy and Action Plan for PA System Development*, which is currently being developed by the Agency of Protected Areas (APA), in collaboration with IUCN POSC, will contain a section on assessment and monitoring. The TEMATEA IBM on PA will be consulted during its further development and implementation.

**Action 1.1:** *The MoE, particularly the APA (as the owner of the PA system development strategy) take into account MEA commitments and as detailed in the assessment activity of the TEMATEA IBM on PA while further developing and implementing the PA System Development Strategy and Action Plan and NBMS, respectively.*

## 1.2. Site assessment

**The National Red List as a tool for site prioritization:** Reflecting the need to base conservation site prioritization on the distribution of species of conservation value, as a major criterion, both CBD and Ramsar give high priority to broad species-based approaches in PA site assessment. In the Georgian context, the absence of some taxonomic groups, such as herbaceous plants (a major component of the endemic flora of the Caucasus Biodiversity Hotspot) from the national Red List and of freshwater habitats and biota in general from available datasets and prioritization systems was identified during the consultation process as a



*(4) PA gap analysis as required under CBD Decision VIII/24 and the CBD PoW PA, while also taking into account needs identified under other MEAs.*



(relevant to RAMSAR, WHC and UNCCD) and to identify knowledge and skills gaps, as prescribed by the IBM on PA.

## **1.7. Development of standards, criteria and indicators for assessing PAs**

**Integration of MEA commitments during the upcoming NBSAP revision:** Georgia's National Biodiversity Strategy and Action Plan (NBSAP) includes a number of targets and corresponding indicators for national PA system development, as prescribed by the CBD PoW on PA. The implementation and practicability of these targets should be assessed during the upcoming revision of the NBSAP. It should also be monitored by the NCC on the PoW PA.

**Action 1.11:** *The MoE (particularly the BS and APA), during the upcoming NBSAP revision, reviews the practicability and implementation of the original PA-related targets in the NBSAP of Georgia, referring to Activity 1.1.1. of the PoW PA and related MEA obligations and commitments. It amends the targets as necessary to better reflect Georgia's international commitments.*

**Definition of national PA targets:** No outcome-oriented national targets on the extent, representativeness and effectiveness of the national PA system of Georgia have been compiled, and Georgia has not participated in the *State of the World's PAs* assessment process.

**Action 1.12:** *The APA includes, during the further development of a National Long-term PA System Strategy and Action Plan, outcome-oriented targets on the extent, representativeness and effectiveness of the national PA system of Georgia.*

## **1.8. Development of tools for assessing PAs**

**Contribution to the World Database on PAs:** According to CBD and other MEAs, Georgia has a responsibility to provide data and information about PAs, to be built into toolkits that are used for conservation monitoring and planning at the international level. Among these tools, the **World Database on Protected Areas** (WDPA) occupies a central position. However, information about Georgian PAs within the WDPA is currently outdated and incomplete. A regional (South Caucasus) database on PAs is being prepared by WWF Caucasus and would have maximal impact if shared with the MoEs of Georgia and its neighbours, and fed into the WDPA.

**Action 1.13:** *The APA liaises with UNEP-WCMC to arrange input of the data and information gathered about Georgian PAs into the World Database on Protected Areas. As a preparatory step, APA and WWF jointly assess the feasibility of using data from the WWF regional PA database as a contribution to Georgia's input into the WDPA.*

**Inclusion of the CBD Programme of Work on Forest Biodiversity into the multi-convention approach:** In addition to these directly relevant obligations, five CBD-decisions from the **Extended PoW on Forest Biodiversity** are relevant to the development of assessment tool development in forest areas, including potential future forest PAs. They focus on forest monitoring capacity, information systems for forest genetic diversity, as well as the adoption of internationally established forest classification, inventory and survey systems. These obligations are relevant to PAs because reliable information on forest status and biodiversity inside and outside PAs is a prerequisite for the future development of the PA system and possible ecological networks linking PAs.

**Action 1.14:** *The Forestry Department of the MoE, with the support of relevant legislative and executive institutions continues to implement Georgia's obligations under the CBD Extended*

*PoW on Forest Biodiversity, including those on assessment and monitoring, and liaises with the APA to exchange relevant information.*

## **2. Legislative Measures and National Policies**

### ***2.1. Review and development of policy and legislation for PAs***

#### **2.1.1. Development of national policies**

The TEMATEA IBM on PAs reveals a wide range of obligations for the development of national policies on PAs, some of which are already being implemented in Georgia. An important policy document is the NBSAP of Georgia, which will be revised in 2009. Relevant policy recommendations of the national TEMATEA process will be integrated into the revised NBSAP. Obligations and commitments from MEAs other than CBD, for many of which there are no funding mechanisms, will qualify for the CBD related funding mechanisms if they are included in the NBSAP. This approach will be taken where appropriate, and will allow a much wider implementation of MEA obligations in Georgia.

**Meeting MEA commitments relevant to illegal resource use in PAs:** The PoW PA, but also several other MEAs such as CITES (Convention on International Trade in Endangered Species of Wild Fauna and Flora), encourage the development of policies to halt the illegal exploitation of resources from PAs. In Georgia, examples of natural resources in PAs prone to illegal exploitation are timber, wild animals (through illegal hunting), and the rejuvenation of forests

policy will also ensure that new BRs fulfil their conservation objective, and hence contribute to a better implementation of other PA-related MEAs.

**Action 2.3:** *The MoE, particularly the APA, and the TJS the support the inclusion of the necessary legal basis for BR establishment in Georgian PA legislation, taking into account the Seville Strategy and other relevant MEA obligations and commitments. They engage the EPNRC at the Parliament of Georgia to support creating the necessary legal framework for PAs.*

**Joining PAs of various types into a national PA network:** The development of BRs and possibly World Heritage Sites and additional Ramsar sites will widen the range and complexity of PA types in Georgia. This development will increase the need for the integration of the various PAs within a national PA network, and the development of a unified policy and legislative framework to guide its development. This need is explicitly acknowledged in Ramsar Resolution IX. 22, 10, which calls for the integration of efforts towards a broader PA system, but it is also implicit in many other obligations.

**Action 2.4:** *The MoE, with support from the US DoI Technical Assistance Programme and other relevant organisations, creates a clear and consistent policy and legislative framework for the development of the Georgian PA system, comprising PAs of all IUCN categories, BRs, World Heritage Sites and Ramsar Sites, and in accordance with obligations from all relevant MEAs.*

**Mainstreaming of PAs in national policy and planning:** PAs are influenced not only by activities of the APA and similar agencies that are officially responsible for them, but also by those of a wide range of other sectors. This creates the need to integrate policies that are explicitly focused on PAs and biodiversity within a wider, cross-sectoral and inter-agency policy framework, and to mainstream the development and effective management of PAs within

## ***2.2. Review and development of legislation for PAs***

### **2.2.1. Development of national legislation**

**Consideration of MEA commitments during the harmonization of national legislation:** A central obligation of the CBD PoW PA, which is further supported by additional provisions of other MEAs, is the development and adoption of a legal framework for national and sub-national PA systems, including the establishment of new PAs. Additional provisions range from the promotion of a broad set of PA governance types by legal and/or policy, financial and community mechanisms (PoW PA Act 2.1.1), to the identification of legal gaps (Act. 3.1.1), to the harmonization of sectoral policies and laws (Act. 3.1.3), as well as the legal framework for wetland PAs (Ramsar Rec. 4.4) and World Heritage sites (WHC Art. 5, d). The law of Georgia on the System of Protected Territories (1996) is the central law regarding the national PA system. An assessment of national legislation relevant to PAs is currently underway, in the framework of the US DoI International Technical Assistance Programme. This assessment will form the basis of recommendations and draft amendments to the MoE for a more effective and coherent PA legislation, according to implementers.



**Action 2.7:** *The MoE and the expert commission for the revision of the national Red List Law ensure that the revised Law on the Red List of Threatened Species serves as an appropriate tool for the protection of threatened species and populations, in accordance with CBD Article 8, k, CITES, and CMS, and that it makes use of the full range of species protection measures for threatened species, including habitat protection through PAs where appropriate.*

### **2.3. Establishment and designation of new PAs**

CBD, as the framework convention on biodiversity, obliges Parties to establish PA systems (CBD Art. 8, a), and gives additional guidance with regard to the types of PAs that should be included (e.g. marine and inland waters – PoW PA 1.1.3), methods for site selection (e.g. gap analyses – PoW PA 1.1.6, incorporation of Important Plant Areas (IPAs) – CBD Dec. VI.9, 2), management and ownership (e.g. promotion of private and community PAs – CBD Dec. VI/22, 28), and other issues. This general framework is filled in by more specific obligations from other MEAs, namely Ramsar (with various obligations related to the creation of Ramsar sites and wetland PAs), CMS (with obligations regarding PAs protecting the critical site network of migratory species), and WHC (related to the nomination and tentative listing of new World Heritage Sites). Other MEAs and programmes, such as the joint work programme of CBD and UNCCD, contain indirectly relevant obligations. All of them need to be integrated when planning the further development of the Georgian PA system.

Georgia's 38 PAs currently cover 6.7% of the country's territory. They are comprised of the main IUCN PA categories and include Ramsar sites (Kolkheti National Park and Kobuleti Nature Reserve), but no BRs and no mixed or natural World Heritage Sites. There are currently plans to extend a number and area of existing PAs. In addition, as mentioned above, the APA is currently developing a long-term strategy and action plan for PA system development in Georgia, which will be aimed at forging the various PAs in the country into a coherent national PA system. The ongoing planning phase is an opportunity to optimize the effectiveness of the national PA system to support the implementation of the entire range of biodiversity-related MEAs.

**Creation of new PAs based on ECP recommendations:** CBD Decision VI/9, 2 sets global targets for a significant reduction of the loss of biodiversity by 2010. Among those targets is the conservation of at least 10% of each of the world's ecological regions. This target is not binding at the national level. However, a long-term target of at least 10% PA coverage would be appropriate contribution for a country like Georgia, which is part of the Caucasus global biodiversity hotspot. An even higher PA coverage target of 20% was adopted in 1997 but has not officially been endorsed by the current administration. Equally important as the percentage of Georgia's territory that is covered by PAs is the representation of various ecosystem and habitat types, and the overall connectivity and functionality of the national PA system. The Eco-regional Conservation Plan for the Caucasus (2006, ECP) contains specific plans for the conservation of various ecosystem types and general recommendations for linking individual PAs and priority conservation areas into a coherent ecological network, which spans Georgia as well as its neighbouring countries.

**Action 2.8:** *The APA continues to identify and prioritize additional sites for the establishment of PAs (including all IUCN categories, PAs in BRs, Wetland PAs at Ramsar sites, natural/mixed World Heritage Sites and PAs covering corridors), considering the recommendations of the ECP and MEA obligations, aiming at a significant increase in PA coverage.*

**Action 2.9:** *The NCC on PoW PA ensures, while developing recommendations for the creation of new PAs and the consolidation of the Georgian PA network in accordance with the CBD PoW PA, that relevant obligations from other MEAs (particularly Ramsar, CMS and WHC) are equally taken into account.*

Complementing these general actions, additional actions on site assessment, policy development and management improvements will support and inform the extension of Georgia's

PA system: The development of a National Wetland Policy (see 2.1.1) will provide guidance on the identification and designation of new Ramsar sites and wetland PAs, the application of the Critical Site Network Tool of the project *Wings over Wetlands* (see 1.2) will assist in including critical MWB sites in the national PA network, as requested by CMS Res. 5.4, and progress with the designation of Georgian mixed and natural World Heritage Sites (see 3.3) will support their

In addition, the TEMATEA IBM on PA lists several commitments on the implementation of policies and plans for PAs. Although these are referring to specific obligations, they improve the overall consistency of MEA implementation and are therefore within the scope of these guidelines:

CMS Resolution 8.2. calls for site protection for migratory species habitats. Another Resolution (Res. 8. 12.) repeats this provision, with a particular focus on migratory raptors and owls. Several existing or planned PAs (including Kolkheti National Park, the planned Javakheti NP and a planned PA on the mouth of the River Chorokhi) comprise important migratory bird (including owl and raptor) habitats, but the necessary extensive data for a the systematic implementation of this provision are currently not available.

**Ecological network development, including for migratory bird and plant conservation:**

CBD Decision VI/9, 2 prescribes the conservation of the world's plant biodiversity *in situ*. Most of the biodiversity that distinguishes the Caucasus as a global biodiversity hotspot is comprised of plants. A regional Red List of Threatened Plants is currently being compiled (coordinated by the IUCN Species Programme), and another IUCN project on Caucasus Important Plant Areas is nearing its completion. These projects will provide the necessary data for a gap analysis, to decide if the Georgian PA network adequately conserves plants. They will also yield recommendations for possible new PAs to improve plant conservation in Georgia, and thereby contribute to meeting this obligation.

**Action 3.4:** *The APA considers CMS commitments like those on migratory bird habitat conservation and commitments under CBD regarding in-situ plant conservation during ecological network development (particularly regarding the Pan-European Ecological Network), and successively integrates them into the relevant parts of the National Long-term PA System Strategy and Action Plan during further development. It uses available data from the Regional IUCN Plant Red List project and of the IUCN Caucasus IPA project to evaluate the effectiveness of Georgia's PA network for plant conservation to meet obligations from CBD Decision VI/9.*

**Integration of PAs into spatial planning:** Individual PAs are also part of their surrounding landscape, and need to be managed as part of that landscape to be effective. PA management needs to be integrated into general spatial planning and management, and general development plans at the local, regional and national level need to pay special attention to PAs. This need is expressed both generally (CBD Decision VII/28), and specifically in provisions about integrated watershed/river basin management (e.g. Ramsar Recommendation 2.3., 6.2.5.), ICZM and IMCAM (CBD), and integrated land use planning (e.g. CBD Decision III/11, 17). It is also spelled out by CBD Article 8, 2, which calls for environmentally sound and sustainable development around PAs to increase their protection. With regard to wetlands, Ramsar Res. IX.3, 17 specifies that wetland conservation should be integrated in development projects, poverty-reduction strategies and similar plans. Since many new regional development plans will be developed in Georgia over the next few years, it appears timely to promote the systematic inclusion of PA issues in regional development, following the guidance of these MEAs.

**Action 3.5:** *The APA engages local and regional government institutions responsible for cadastral issues and spatial planning to disseminate information about PAs and the use of their*



**Management of PAs in dry and sub-humid lands:** The joint work programme of the CBD and the UNCCD on the biodiversity of dry and sub-humid lands, as well as the CBD PoW on dry and sub-humid land, and UNFCCC contain a number of provisions relevant to the management of PAs in dry and sub-humid areas.

**Action 3.10:** *The APA uses the IBM on PAs to identify necessary action regarding MEA provisions on dry and sub-humid land biodiversity in Georgia, and includes management implications in the Management Plans of Georgian PAs in dry and sub-humid areas (e.g. Chachuna SNR, Vashlovani PAs).*

## **3.2. Mitigate or removal of external threats to PAs**

### **3.2.1. Threats from IAS**

CBD obliges its Parties to control risks associated with IAS in PAs (Dec. VII.28, 19). The Ramsar Convention does the same with regard to Ramsar Sites, while CMS, CITES and WHC also contain commitments relevant to IAS. In addition, both CBD and Ramsar contain commitments on the control of IAS throughout the landscape and various ecosystems (such as forests, dry and sub-humid lands, wetlands, and isolated mountain areas, the later being of particular relevance in Georgia), be it inside or outside PAs. This integrative approach is particularly sensible in relation to IAS, as their distribution will not stop at PA borders once they have been introduced to their vicinity.

**Identification and control of IAS:** While some IAS have been identified in Kolkheti NP and a project proposal for their control has been submitted, there are no national-level emergency plans in place to control threats from IAS in Georgian PAs. The first element of such plans is the development of the necessary expertise and capacity to detect IAS threats. This development can be based on existing projects, such as the ongoing development of an IAS checklist (plants) for Georgia, and additional complementary projects. However, PA managers and particular the research and monitoring units at PA administrations also need to be sensitized for the fact that IAS threats, by their very nature, can be unpredictable and involve species that are not covered by existing checklists.

**Action 3.11:** *The APA distributes the “Checklist of alien and invasive plants of Georgia”, which is currently under development at the Institute of Botany, to all PAs in Georgia, supports projects aiming at developing a similar list for animals, and includes IAS detection and control in PA staff training and capacity building. The APA maintains sufficient monitoring capacity to detect and control emerging threats from IAS and follows emerging IAS threats in neighbouring countries, aimed at establishing an early warning system on IAS threats.*

**Action 3.12:** *Academic institutions, such as the Biodiversity Centre at Chavchavadze State University, continue to study IAS (particularly aquatic species and animals) including threats, links to other threats like pollution and climate change, detection methods and mitigation measures, and make the results of this research available to the APA.*

### **3.2.2. Threats from climate change**

**Consideration of PAs during the planning and implementation of climate change mitigation projects:** Only three obligations from MEAs (CBD and Ramsar) with indirect relevance to PAs are included in TEMATEA. They deal with the need to ensure that future activities for climate change mitigation in the context of UNFCCC implementation are consistent with biodiversity conservation.

**Action 3.13:** *The UNFCCC Focal Point within the MoE and agencies responsible for UNFCCC-related projects within the MoE consult the BS and APA during the planning and implementation of future UNFCCC projects, regarding possible biodiversity effects of planned activities. They*

*consider the introduction of biodiversity-inclusive EIAs for climate change mitigation or adaptation measures, whenever appropriate.*

### **3.3. Maintenance of healthy habitats and resources**

**Management of emerging effects of climate change on PAs:** A particularly important emerging challenge to the maintenance of healthy habitats and ecosystems is climate change. This is a relatively new issue and there is still a lack of data about future needs for adaptive ecosystem management to address it. However, preparations for climate change adaptation need to be initiated now to allow timely action in the future. CBD (Dec. VII.15. 12) calls for management to maximise ecosystem resilience and hence adaptation capacity. While there are some measures that will contribute to this in any case (such as ecological networks with high connectivity, and effectively managed PAs), there is no systematic assessment of the likely future adaptation needs for Georgian ecosystems. Such an assessment, for which methodologies are now available, will inform Georgia's management planning on ecosystem adaptation to climate change, in accordance with the Country's MEA commitments, and will also serve as a public awareness raising tool.

**Action 3.14:** *The MoE promotes and supports studies of the imminent climate change effects on ecosystems, biodiversity and PAs in Georgia. It integrates their outcomes with those of ongoing case studies on revealed climate change effects and with lessons learned from ongoing adaptation projects, and uses them for planning and public awareness raising.*

**Collaboration for the establishment of mixed and natural WH sites:** A Georgian example of the need for inter-ministerial communication as a prerequisite for effective PA system development is World Heritage sites: The responsibility for them lies with the Ministry of Culture, Monument Protection and Sport in Georgia. Georgia currently has no natural or combined heritage sites listed on the World Heritage List under the WHC. WHC Article 4 calls for the

VII/28), restoration of degraded secondary forests (CBD Dec. VI.22, 28), and other measures. CMS Res. 8.2 calls for the restoration of habitats of Appendix I species, 16 of which occur in Georgia.

**Action 3.16:** *The APA takes into account commitments of relevant MEAs, particularly CBD, CMS and Ramsar when prioritizing, planning and implementing ecosystem or habitat restoration projects in and around Georgian PAs.*

### **3.5. Management of resource use in PAs**

Natural resource use is a main cause of conflict surrounding PAs, and one of the main challenges to successful PA management. CBD Art. 8, c obliges Parties to “manage biological resource use important for biodiversity conservation within or outside PAs, to ensure their conservation and sustainable use”. Additional provisions deal with the control of illegal trade in natural resources from PAs (CBD Dec. VII/28, 21), the sustainable use of marine resources in coastal and marine PAs (CBD Dec. VIII.22, 3), and arrangements for the sustainable use of natural resources by local communities in or around PAs (CBD Dec. VIII.23, 3).

**Collaborative management of natural resource use in and around PAs:** While PA management in Georgia is regulated by the *Law of Georgia on the Protected Areas System* and specific laws for individual PAs, natural resource use in general is regulated by the *Law of Georgia on Licenses and Permits*. The legal situation for natural resource use within PA (other than IUCN Category 1) is unclear, and is further discussed in the section of this document that deals with policy and legislation. Regardless of possible improvements of the legal basis for natural resource use in PAs, close communication between the Service of Licences and Permits and the APA will remain crucial for effective natural resource management in Georgian PAs.

**Action 3.17:** *The APA engages the Forestry Department and the Service for Licenses and Permits to discuss all decisions regarding natural resource use, and comply with the abovementioned MEA provisions when issuing licenses for natural resource use in and around PAs.*

**Natural resource use by local communities:** With regard to arrangements for the sustainable use of natural resources by local communities in or around PAs other than IUCN Category 1 (CBD Dec. VIII.23, 3), it appears problematic that licences for natural resource use (with the exception of fuel wood collection) are auctioned, according to the Law on Licences and permits, because successful participation in auctions is difficult for small-scale local users of natural resources. Access of local communities to the sustainable exploitation of traditionally used natural resources (e.g. fish, berries, other Non-timber Forest Products (NTFPs)) should be made easier, possibly by following the example of exemptions from the licensing procedure such as for fuel wood collection.

**Action 3.18:** *The APA consults with the Service of Licenses and Permits to ensure the legitimate rights of local communities for the sustainable use of natural resources are respected and safeguarded through the granting procedure for natural resource use licences in and around PAs.*

While the sustainable resource use by local communities should not be illegalized through licensing procedures that exclude the rural poor, there are cases of illegal resource use that need to be reduced, based on existing laws. The PoW PA calls for improved governance and enforcement to halt the illegal exploitation of natural resources from PAs. CBD Dec. VIII.22, 3 repeats this obligation with special emphasis on coastal and marine resources, while similar provisions exist for forest resources.

### ***3.6. Enforcement and support of PA management***



**Action 4.2:**

**Action 4.5:** *The APA, NCC on PoW PA and UNDP (during the further development of a current sustainable financing project for the Georgian PA system) take into account obligations from CBD, WHC, Ramsar and UNCCD, and consider a wide range of financing instruments involving the private sector, voluntary payments and natural resource use, when developing sustainable financing and resource provision strategies for the Georgian PA system.*

strategy for the funding of Biosphere Reserves, which will become relevant to Georgia in the future once BRs are established (see 2.1.1).

The funding for the establishment and the creation of infrastructure in most Georgian PAs has predominantly been sourced from international donors, with some contributions from the Georgian State Budget. Their running costs are sourced from the State Budget, which constrains the overall funding available. In order to ease this constraint, the Caucasus Protected Areas Fund was established by international donors in 2006, aiming at a target capital of EUR 45 Mio to contribute 50% to the running costs of high priority PAs in Armenia, Azerbaijan and Georgia.

**Sources of PA funding:** In order to meet the various MEA commitments of Georgia, three complementary approaches need to be taken: (1) Budget funding for the establishment and running costs of Georgian PAs should be increased, as far as possible in the current financial situation. (2) The donor coordination by the Georgian Government should ensure that sufficient funding for the implementation of existing plans and targets on PA system development, in accordance to MEA commitments, is sourced from international donors. (3) New innovative ways to achieve financial sustainability of PAs (e.g. through natural resource use, involvement of the private sector, or payments for environmental services) should be developed and piloted.

**Action 5.1:** *The NCC for PoW on PA promotes meeting PoW and related commitments on provision of PA funds in Georgia through increased funding for PAs from the state budget.*

**Action 5.2:** *The MoE, through its existing mechanisms of donor coordination, takes into account Georgia's MEA commitments as listed in the IBM on PA when prioritising international donor funding for nature conservation projects in Georgia.*

## **5.2. Capacity building for PAs**

In agreement with obligations from various MEAs, the Georgian Government has identified the improvement of the capacity of Government Institutions, including those tasked with PA management, as a major priority.

### **5.2.1. Education and training**

The CBD PoW PA (Act. 3.2.1), as the framework programme on biodiversity, calls for the creation of curricula, resources and programs for the sustained delivery of PA management training. Ramsar Article 4, 5 and Res. IX.6, 12 contains a similar provision which is specific to wetlands. Additional commitments under both MEAs specify the need of training and education on a range of specific subjects. The MAB Seville Strategy does the same for BR Managers.

#### **Implementation of MEA commitments through the establishment of a joint training centre:**

In practice, Georgian Ramsar sites and BRs will most likely be managed as PAs of one or several of the IUCN Categories, and the main PA management principles and skills will be relevant to possible future mixed and natural WH sites as well. In addition, there will often be an exchange of managers between the various PA types, and there is a wide range of training frameworks, modules, resources, etc. that have been developed in the context of different MEAs and may be more or less applicable to any given PA in Georgia. Therefore, an effective concerted approach to the education and training needs and obligation under the various MEAs would be the establishment of a joint training centre for the Georgian PA system. The establishment of a training centre for PA management is one of the objectives of the ongoing US DI funded International Technical Assistance Program. Once established, the ToR of this centre could be defined in such a way that it serves the training and education needs of all PA types in the country, and hence makes a contribution to meeting the corresponding MEA obligations. The centre could build on wide inter-agency participation, including the national knowledge community (e.g. Ranger Course at Ilia Chavchavadze State University) and

international organisations with expertise on PAs, to ensure an integrative approach and the application of international best practice in PA training.

**Action 5.3:** *The MoE, particularly the APA, implements MEA commitments on provision of education and training to PAs, by promoting the extension of the planned US DoI training centre for PA management, to act as an integrated training and education centre for the Georgian PA system, with wide stakeholder participation in curriculum development, based on national experience and internationally established training guidelines and tools from biodiversity-related MEAs.*

### 5.2.2. Technology development and transfer

**Use of a joint training centre as a hub for technology transfer:** A joint training centre of the PA system can also create the enabling conditions to transfer technology for improved PA management, as required under the CBD PoW PA, and UNFCCC. Furthermore, it can become a focal point for the communication between the MoE and APA on the one hand and the academic and research sector on the other hand. Technology needs can be formulated, based on the requirements of PA management, and communicated to academic institutions that are able to develop solutions to meet these needs. In this way, the centre could become a catalyst for the guided development of technology for PA management and biodiversity management in general, which is also required under the CBD PoW on Mountain Biodiversity and UNCCD.

**Action 5.4:** *The APA considers including the promotion of technology development and transfer in the mission of the suggested joint training centre for the PA system of Georgia and establishes regular communication between PA managers and academic/research institutions, taking into account education and training commitments under CBD and UNFCCC.*

### 5.2.3. Institutional capacity building

Similar to the training and education of individual PA staff, which tend to be applicable in various types of PAs and institutional contexts, the institutional capacity building needs in various parts of the institutional setup that manages the Georgian PA system are likely to have considerable overlap. Greater capacity to function effectively as a Government organisation will benefit any institution within the Georgian PA system.

**Consideration of MEA commitments on institutional capacity development:** Based on this understanding, the institutional capacity building needs that are identified by various biodiversity-related MEAs can be seen and addressed in concert. The capacity for improved governance by PA management authorities, including financial planning (CBD Dec. VIII/24, 18g), the capacity to collaborate across sectors (CBD PoW PA 3.2.4), the capacity to protect and conserve cultural and natural heritage (WHC article 5, b) or wetlands (Ramsar Strategic Plan 2003-2008), and the capacity to reach various other targets, can all be addressed through similar measures of institutional capacity building. For this purpose, a concerted approach to institutional capacity building that takes into account Georgia's obligations under all MEAs listed under the TEMATEA IBM on PA, should be taken. One framework within which such an approach can be implemented is international donor projects on institutional capacity building for the Georgian MoE, such as a project that is being initiated by the German Technical Cooperation.

**Action 5.5:** *The MoE takes into account the multiple commitments from MEAs when designing and implementing technical cooperation projects on institutional capacity building.*

**Advisory board on climate change adaptation and mitigation:** However, there also are more technical issues that need a more specific capacity developing approach. Capacity for the integration of climate change adaptation concerns into development strategies (UNFCCC Dec. 1/CP.8), including those related to the PA system, and into wetland management (Ramsar Res.

VIII.3, 19), relies on technical expertise, in addition to the ability for cross-sectoral communication, and will be addressed through regular expert involvement.

**Action 5.6:** *The MoE establishes an interdisciplinary expert advisory board on climate change*

**Listing of natural and combined World Heritage sites:** An important PA-related shortcoming of WHC implementation in Georgia with implications for other MEAs relates to the balance between the numbers of cultural and natural properties included in the World Heritage List and the national tentative list (Dec. 27 COM 14). Among the 15 properties listed on Georgia's tentative WH list are only three of the mixed category and none of the natural heritage category. This imbalance could be redressed by including additional natural or mixed sites, taking into account recommendations from PA gap analyses and complementing the existing PA system of Georgia. This would create synergies with the implementation of other MEAs, including the CBD PoW PA and the Aarhus Convention.

**Action 6.2:** *The Ministry of Culture, Monuments Protection and Sport considers the inclusion of additional natural or mixed heritage sites in the tentative World Heritage list of Georgia, based on consultation with the MoE (particularly APA) and nature conservation NGOs. It includes these institutions in the management planning for any additional sites.*

### **6.3.2. Awareness-raising in organizations and specific groups**

The only directly relevant obligation in this sub-section is from the CBD PoW PA (Activity 3.5.2) and calls for CEPA programmes for local communities and policy makers. This obligation is discussed in the participation section (Chapter 8) of this document.

### **6.3.3. Evaluation and ng) oaioAwa8ni**





Recommendations (Goal 2) recommend multi-stakeholder partnerships to achieve wide support for trans-boundary Biosphere Reserves.

**Action 7.5:** *The MoE (particularly the APA) take into account commitments regarding international cross-sector collaboration at the local to regional level in the establishment and management of new PA, particularly Biosphere Reserves.*

## **8. Stakeholders and indigenous and local communities**

Participation of stakeholders and indigenous and local communities in PAs is a cross-cutting challenge that is relevant to all aspects of PA management, policy, decision making etc. It is most explicitly and comprehensively spelled out in the obligations of CBD, while other MEAs contain supplementary obligations. Strong stakeholder participation is particularly important in Georgia, where the rural population is relatively poor and depends on natural resource use to support their livelihoods, and where at the same time PA enforcement capacity is relatively limited. This means that PAs rely on the support of the local population for their effectiveness, and that, at the same time, agreements and compromises regarding resource use and benefit sharing in PAs have to be made between the APA on the one hand and stakeholders and local communities on the other hand.

### **8.1. Participatory PA establishment and management**

According to CBD (V.16, 3; PoW PA), Ramsar (Res. VII/8, 15), and other MEAs, local communities need to be closely involved in the establishment and management of PAs, including their planning, zoning, and governance. The CBD PoW PA also prescribes that indigenous and local communities should be supported regarding their ability to participate in PA planning and management, for instance through legislation, capacity building and provision of resources. They should also be involved in collaborative research on PAs. Ramsar repeats P

## **8.2. Creation of benefits of PAs to stakeholders and local communities and reduction of negative impacts**

Local communities around PAs in Georgia economically depend on resources in and around PAs, and sometimes have traditional use rights to them. A fair and equitable management of resource access where it can be maintained in a sustainable way, or adequate compensation for these stakeholders where this is not possible, are therefore key elements of local stakeholder participation in PAs.

**Facilitating benefits for local stakeholders of PAs:** According to CBD, the establishment of reserves with the inclusion of sustainable development objectives, including income generation and employment for local communities, should be promoted. One possible framework to achieve this might be Biosphere Reserves, as detailed in the Seville Strategy (1996). The establishment of PAs that benefit local communities, including by respecting, preserving and maintaining their traditional knowledge, is also prescribed by the CBD POW PA. A related commitment, also from the CBD PoW on PA, focuses on the avoidance and mitigation of costs (both economic and socio-cultural) of PAs to local communities. This obligation also foresees compensation in cases where costs cannot be avoided.

**Action 8.3:** *The MoE and particularly the APA include in the PA System Long-term Strategy and Action Plan policy provisions for the use of PA benefits and resources by local stakeholders, and of their participation in the economic use of PA services (e.g. tourism), provided they are in agreement with conservation objectives. They establish procedures to minimise or compensate for costs of new and existing PAs to local communities.*

## **8.3. Preservation of the customs, knowledge and resources of stakeholders and local communities**

**Monitoring and application of lessons learned in traditional use zones of Georgian PAs:** This section contains commitments under CBD and Ramsar, the most important of which are on the preservation of resources of stakeholders and local communities. Georgia has established traditional use zones for activities like fisheries, forestry, grazing and mowing in several of its PAs, thereby fulfilling these obligations at least partly. The experiences from such zones should be applied in other PAs, where appropriate, and local stakeholders should be engaged by PA administrations and the APA to develop practices of resource use that meet both the legitimate needs of local communities and PA conservation objectives.

**Action 8.4:** *The APA monitors the economic and ecological effects of traditional use zones in Georgian PAs and applies the lessons learned when establishing new PAs, taking into account relevant Ramsar and CBD obligations as listed by TEMATEA. The APA maintains a dialogue with traditional resource users to optimize the combined outcome of natural resource use for livelihood support and biodiversity conservation.*



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