

TECHNICAL REVIEW  
TURKEY  
INTEGRATED PROTECTED AREAS AND CONSERVATION MANAGEMENT

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John Fraser Stewart  
Dept/Div: EMTEN 298/60, Room H-8013  
The World Bank, Washington DC, 20433 USA  
Fax to: 001 1 202 477 0711

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Dear John:

Thanks for asking me to review the PID on the Turkish Integrated Protected Areas and Conservation Management Project, which clearly explains several key issues:

- a) The importance of Turkey's remaining biodiversity resources, which comprise both near-pristine refuges for many ecosystems that have elsewhere been lost, and wild relatives of many domestic plants.
- b) Links with GEF pilot phase activities and international and national conservation priorities, including the very important Biodiversity Steering Committee (but less clearly with national development priorities, see below).
- c) Threats to biodiversity including poor coordination of government activities, weak regulation of the private sector, and lack of awareness and interest among the public and decision makers. These are aggravated by population growth and a very limited protected area system (1% of land area, compared with IUCN's minimum recommended 10%) which was laid out originally according to recreation rather than conservation needs.
- d) There is a clear rationale for selecting the four key representative project areas, all of which seem to be worthy of investment and which will receive about 80% of project expenditure. The rate of spending is not stated (but at less than US\$ 1.5 million/year should not be too fast), and there is no plan to establish a sustainable financing mechanism (SFM, e.g. a trust fund).
- e) The PID is fairly explicit on what the project will do, being primarily focussed on field activities that create links between conservation and local benefit capture, and research, capacity building and awareness-raising. Local benefit capture may reduce the need for a distinct SFM but will be hard to arrange, since investments by local people tend to create inequities (e.g. who builds the hotel reaps the profit), and local taxes/service charges may conflict with government policies. Keeping a link between benefits and conservation is also difficult.

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Some other matters could be discussed more fully, or be considered as the project develops further. One of the key weaknesses listed is "insufficient coordination among the agencies with official responsibility for conservation" (page 3), i.e. the Ministries of Forestry, Environment and Culture, and especially the 2 Departments and 5 Divisions of Forestry responsible for 8 kinds of protected area, a situation that cries out to be rationalized. The project might study this issue, referring to relevant models such as the Costa Rican conservation area system (see chapters in Lutz & Caldecott on decentralization, and in my *Designing Conservation Projects*, Cambridge, 1996). I see that the section on 'Lessons Learned' draws only on Turkish experience, and could be broadened.

The coordination issue may be partly addressed through the reorganization that is mentioned under 'Capacity Building' (page 7), help with environmental regulation for the Ministry of Environment (pages 8-9), and regular meetings of the Biodiversity Steering Committee. The latter would need a well-resourced secretariat if it is to do anything other than meet, but this is not to be provided under the project (if it already exists it should be mentioned). Mainly, however, the problem of coordination will be avoided by running each of the four field components of the project through local Project Implementation Committees.

It seems that these will make sensible arrangements such as allocating core area management to local officials of the GDNPGW and community development in buffer zones to NGOs and/or local government. This should work at the site level, but leaves unaddressed the larger need to straighten out the competing bureaucracies in the 'conservation sector', and those too among other groups which will often impact upon biodiversity (i.e. the people who make roads, dams, hotels, plantations, etc. in the wrong places). Even without trying to rationalize the whole system, there may be ways to help the existing environmental impact assessment and spatial planning processes to safeguard conservation areas (this might involve building on the database from the GEF pilot phase project).

I also see that links with national development priorities are discussed solely with reference to the NEAP. The latter is said to have been developed using 'conflict resolution' workshop methods, but these are only part of the broader 'conflict avoidance' process, which also includes:

- a) the partnerships by which the interests of different stakeholders are recognized in arrangements for jointly owning and capturing benefits from particular resources, and for planning and managing their use;

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- b) the forums which allow continuing dialogue among stakeholders;
- c) the lines of communication among different forums with overlapping interests; and
- d) the procedures for appeal and arbitration that are needed for solving problems that cannot be solved by any one forum.

Perhaps the next point is covered in the NEAP, but the PID does not convince me that government sees biodiversity as a key resource upon which national development will be based in future (the section on 'Borrower Commitment' seems lukewarm). It would be good to know if government positively appreciates biodiversity and is committed to sustainable development. Depending on this, different strategies will emerge on how to deal with major issues like tourism (e.g. does Turkey actively want it to be sustainable, or is it viewed more as a temporary source of finance for other forms of development?), and water management (e.g. water is a valuable forest product, but does government policy allow it to be charged for at realistic rates and the money returned to the forests, thus helping to finance at least some conservation areas?).

A similar issue of clarifying government commitment exists on the role of NGOs, since it is often easy for a government to accept a well-established national or international NGO into its counsel (such as the SPNT), while having difficulty with the community-based groups that may more directly represent the interests of local people around conservation areas. It is the latter NGOs with which planning, benefit sharing and other partnerships will need to be established, but this can only be accomplished through a long learning process based on clear differentiation of roles, of which the PID makes no mention (except perhaps in paragraph 24).

In conclusion, based on the PID Turkey is a high priority for conservation investment and the sites chosen and methods to be developed are appropriate even though some major issues are left hanging at the moment. I think the project should move forward into its next phase of development, and I hope that the comments above will help it along. Meanwhile, if there is anything else I can do please do not hesitate to contact me.

Best regards,