

IV PROTECTED AREAS IN THE MAINSTREAM

While better known national parks and seashores are often swamped with visitors, there is a continuing need to build broad-based constituencies for protected areas and the values they represent.

“Mainstreaming” protected areas increases their effectiveness and integrates biodiversity conservation into national and international policy frameworks.

The challenge is to identify sectors directly related to protected areas, and to develop new partnerships in support of protected area values. When protected area considerations are incorporated into policies governing these sectors, the result can be a win-win for environment and development.

Nearly all GEF-supported biodiversity projects with protected area components emphasize education and awareness-raising through a variety of activities. Recent GEF initiatives encourage looking beyond the project in question to systematically target the country’s enabling environment. How well positioned are countries to address biodiversity conservation across the board and mainstream it into the wider development context?

A good example of mainstreaming concerns the Cape Floristic Region, an entire plant kingdom—one of six worldwide—situated on South Africa’s Cape Peninsula. Seventy percent of its more than

9,000 plant species are found nowhere else on earth. The region’s marine environment contains over 11,000 species.

The GEF is supporting the Cape Action Plan for the Environment, the first bioregional plan produced for the conservation of an entire floral region—marine, terrestrial, and aquatic environments. The plan lays out key conservation activities over a 20-year period. These include a system of formally protected areas of varying sizes, as well as buffer zones and biological corridors critical to sustain the region’s unique evolutionary processes. A strong multi-stakeholder partnership is supporting the mainstreaming of biodiversity conservation into economic activities, as well as through integrated development planning.

The GEF is also capitalizing the Table Mountain Fund, an endowment which provides small amounts of seed funding to support community-based conservation activities in the Cape Floristic Region.

Another GEF-supported mainstreaming initiative in Costa Rica seeks to improve the sharing of benefits from biodiversity conservation, as well as education and awareness about its importance. Implemented by the World Bank, the Biodiversity Conservation in Cacao-Agroforestry project is upgrading the management of small, cacao-based Bribri and Cabecar indigenous farms in the Talamanca-Caribbean corridor through the introduction of market-savvy organic production principles. These techniques ensure conservation and sustainable use of on-farm plant and animal diversity and provide a reliable source of family income.

The GEF Outlook

- The conservation community has made commendable progress in expanding protected area systems and forging new collaborations with actors not typically associated with biodiversity conservation.
- The GEF will continue to support innovative approaches to building the public, private, non-governmental, and local community support needed to incorporate biodiversity conservation and protected area values into the broad multi-sectoral public policy planning process.

THE GEF AND COASTAL AND MARINE PROTECTED AREAS

Brilliant and mysterious, coral reef ecosystems are the equivalent of tropical forests on land. Deep ocean thermal vents, discovered only a quarter century ago, hold unique and little-known life forms. Wetlands, estuaries, and mangrove forests are examples of important coastal ecosystems. Creating a bridge between land and sea, mangrove forests are a unique habitat for many different types of species, including mollusks, reptiles, birds and even mammals such as tigers. They are also natural barriers against floods and erosion.

Among the richest coral reefs are Southeast Asia's, with over 700 species of corals and more than 16 percent of the world's 19,000 species of freshwater and marine fish. The region's coral cays are home to more than 250 bird species, five of the world's seven species of marine turtles, and numerous marine mammal species. Nonetheless, close to 90 percent of these reefs are threatened by pollution and over-fishing.

Perhaps more so than for any other nation, the fate of Bangladesh—its people and its prospects for sustainable development—is determined by its relationship with water and wetlands. During the monsoon season, at least seven to eight million hectares, or about half the country, may be considered wetland. In addition to providing livelihoods for millions of people, these habitats support a large number of avian and aquatic species, many of which are threatened. The GEF Coastal and Wetland Biodiversity project, implemented by UNDP, is working to establish and demonstrate an innovative system for management of especially designated Ecologically Critical Areas in Bangladesh. It is hoped that these areas will have a significant and positive impact on the long-term viability of the country's important biodiversity resources.





V
NEW WAYS OF WORKING
TOGETHER

People who care about parks and protected areas do so for a reason. Some are nature lovers. Others trace their cultural heritage to natural areas or derive income from forest products or tourism—in other words, they have a direct personal stake in their continued well being.

Expanding constituencies for protected areas and the values they represent depends to a great degree on governance structures that give stakeholders a voice, a role, rights, responsibilities, a reason to care. When these structures are informed by a shared vision that goes to the heart of stakeholder concerns, the chances for sustainability are greatly increased.

Incorporating traditional management systems, implementing new policies and laws, and involving NGOs and the private sector are all means to this end. The GEF has supported activities in each of these areas, with a heavy emphasis on NGO involvement and cooperation, and emerging efforts to incorporate indigenous knowledge in management systems.

The GEF has a long-standing public involvement policy that highlights the need for public participa-

tion. Public involvement consists of three related, and often overlapping, processes: information dissemination, consultation, and stakeholder participation. Stakeholders are the individuals, groups, institutions, agencies, and governments that have an interest or stake in the outcome of a GEF-financed project. The term also applies to those potentially affected by the activity.

THE GEF PROTECTED AREAS PORTFOLIO — ENGAGING THE PUBLIC		
	GEF PROJECTS	PROTECTED AREAS
Partnerships with NGOs	137	751
Legislative Initiatives	28	106
Incorporating Traditional Management Systems	15	81
Private Sector Participation in Governance	13	62

The GEF considers the involvement of civil society and diverse actors to be crucial to successful conservation efforts and project implementation. As informed and effective advocates, NGOs have had a role in shaping the GEF and its agenda from the very beginning. Today, participation by NGOs, both local and international, is pervasive, not only at the project level but also in GEF policy dimensions.

In the GEF biodiversity portfolio, 137 projects incorporating at least 751 individual protected areas are identified as having involved NGOs. In addition, the

GEF's Small Grants Programme has provided grants of up to \$50,000 to finance more than 2,400 biodiversity projects executed by community-based organizations and NGOs.

The African NGO-Government Partnership for Sustainable Biodiversity project, implemented by UNDP, is working to build NGO capacity for sustainable biodiversity activities. Using objective internationally-agreed criteria, national teams identify sites significant for their diversity of bird species, agree on priorities for action as the foundation for a national conservation agenda, and advocate for, manage, and monitor the conservation efforts.

Local communities are brought into the conservation action process through activities designed to increase awareness, stimulate enthusiasm, develop local site support groups, and create sustainable economic opportunities. The countries involved in the project are Burkina Faso, Cameroon, Ethiopia, Ghana, Kenya, Sierra Leone, South Africa, Tanzania, Tunisia, and Uganda.

GEF projects have also strongly supported the incorporation of indigenous knowledge and traditional management systems in the conservation and sustainable use of biodiversity.

GEF experience indicates that indigenous knowledge is vital to conserving biodiversity and managing protected areas.

The following examples demonstrate ways in which the insights of indigenous people and cultures can be incorporated into projects:

■ *Indigenous Knowledge Based Co-Management*

A GEF project for Biodiversity Conservation in the Darien Region, implemented by UNDP, was jointly designed by the University of Panama, a local NGO, and representatives of the Embera-Wounaan Comarca indigenous communities. An agreement was reached with the General Indigenous Council to directly manage on-the-ground conservation activities, which included controlling encroachments into demarcated “Common Lands” and monitoring compliance with environmental guidelines for the reserve.

■ *Community-Based Natural Resource Management*

Two GEF projects under implementation by the World Bank in Mali and Zambia feature local communities employing innovative means to improve management of their natural resources. In Mali, as part of the Arid Rangeland Biodiversity Conservation Project, a “negotiating zone” scheme is being adopted by park authorities and tribal groups in the Gourma area bordering Burkina Faso and

Niger. The goal is to establish a pastoral perimeter and demonstrate alternatives to current grazing practices. In Zambia, the Miombo woodlands, which constitute 40 percent of the country’s forests, straddle its borders with Tanzania and the Republic of Congo. To reduce conflicts over access to forests, indigenous communities formed “blocks” of about five camps each in the Mkushi and Serenje districts. Knowledge gained from each block supported “chitemene,” a type of conservation farming.

■ *Using Indigenous Knowledge to Designate Park and Reserve Boundaries*

A GEF project in Bolivia, implemented by the World Bank, consulted local Indian populations in drawing the boundaries of Beni Biological Station and Biosphere Reserve. One-fourth of the area was designated for sustainable use by the Chimane Indians. The project also identified buffer zones occupied by Reyesano, Ignaciano, and Movima peoples for targeted support. This consultation process helped avoid costly conflicts between local people and protected area authorities.

■ *Indigenous Knowledge and Science in Protected Area Management*

GEF projects have also made

use of indigenous-based scientific knowledge to document and catalog biological resources. An African regional project implemented by UNEP worked to record traditional practices and uses of grasses for an integrated database, including information collected by indigenous communities on germplasms of grasses. A World Bank-implemented project in Guatemala developed with GEF support created a master plan for Laguna del Tigre Biosphere Reserve by gathering information from indigenous Mayan communities. With the help of NGOs and local church organizations, the project used indigenous input to develop alternative livelihoods.

The GEF Outlook

- Public involvement in GEF projects has been and will continue to be a high priority.
- GEF projects broadly represent and incorporate the interests of stakeholders, and extensive stakeholder involvement has been recognized as an important contributor to project success.
- The GEF will continue to strive to improve and expand public involvement in protected area projects, especially with respect to local and indigenous groups.

PEOPLE AND EQUITY

Throughout the history of protected areas, important issues have been raised regarding the involvement of local peoples and the equitable distribution of benefits. The GEF is helping to address these issues and ensure that protected areas provide the broadest benefits possible. GEF projects have been pro-active in involving local communities in the planning and management of protected areas and the full spectrum of stakeholders.

In Peru, a GEF project implemented by the World Bank is working to increase the participation of indigenous peoples in the conservation of biodiversity in the Peruvian Amazon through communal management of protected areas. Project goals include establishment of areas for communal reserves using participatory methods, and the development of management plans and agreements with indigenous communities.

A recently approved GEF project implemented by UNDP seeks to conserve biodiversity in the arid and semi-arid regions of southwest Pakistan. Objectives include raising the awareness of local communities and stakeholders about biodiversity conservation and the sustainable use of natural resources, and creating an enabling environment for community-based biodiversity conservation and natural resource management.

A GEF small grant to the Caribena Producers Cooperative Society (a local fishing cooperative) in Belize is supporting data gathering on commercial species in Bacalar Chico Marine Reserve. The work is being carried out by the fishers themselves, a first in Belize, with technical support from a local NGO, the Green Reef Environmental Institute. The data will be used to analyze the effectiveness of zoning within the reserve. Joint interviews with the stakeholder groups confirmed that while the fishers have acquired data-gathering skills, their increased awareness and positive attitude towards the Marine Protected Areas is a more significant development. Fishers are even going so far as to encourage protected area managers, who support and supervise the project, to become more effective in enforcing fishing regulations.

THE GEF'S PROTECTED AREAS PORTFOLIO — PROMOTING PEOPLE AND EQUITY

	GEF PROJECTS	PROTECTED AREAS
Emphasizes participatory planning or management	56	313
Involves community conservation areas or community-based conservation	33	145
Targets women and raises gender awareness	35	171
Uses traditional knowledge, rights, or practices	27	128
Involves community-based organizations or associations	26	158
Addresses conflicts between people and protected areas	6	68