

Sustainable Development of Protected Areas

Empowered lives.
Resilient nations

Boosting Conservation Efforts to Safeguard Ethiopia's Biodiversity, Ecosystems, and Ecological Processes

Period:

January 2008-
December 2016

Location:

Nationwide

Budget:

USD 9 million
GEF: USD 9 m

Implementing partner:

Ethiopian Wildlife Conservation Authority, in partnership with the German Gesellschaft für Internationale Zusammenarbeit (GIZ)

Opportunities:

Protected areas can serve as natural buffers against adverse climate change impacts and other disasters by providing space for floodwaters to disperse, stabilizing soil against landslides and blocking storm surges. They can keep natural resources healthy and productive so they can withstand future impacts of climate change and continue to provide food, clean water, shelter and income to communities.

As Ethiopia charts a course toward creating a low-emission and climate resilient future, it is looking for ways to find the most efficient and innovative solutions to meet the country's social development needs and biodiversity conservation goals. Expanding protected area coverage and involving local communities in these efforts could be one of the most effective ways to reinforce nature's and people's resilience to climate change, increase tourism revenues, bolster business development and create job opportunities in Ethiopia.

The government is working tirelessly to unlock the potential of protected areas so that they are sustainably managed and effectively financed. It has set up the Ethiopian Wildlife Conservation Authority (EWCA) to ensure efficient management and sustainable utilization of natural resources in protected areas, and has steadily increased the institution's early budget. The government is also showing strong commitment to restoring the Simian Mountains National Park and preserving its status as one of UNESCO world heritage sites.

Beneficiaries:

The project directly benefits local communities living around the protected areas. The sustainable development of protected areas will also provide a source of income to regional and federal governments, thus indirectly benefiting the populations in these regions.

Strategies:

The project on Sustainable Development of Protected Area System in Ethiopia (SDPASE) aims to support the government in effectively safeguarding Ethiopia's biodiversity, ecosystems and ecological processes from human induced pressures. The project – financially supported by the Global Environment Facility (GEF) and implemented in partnership with the German Gesellschaft für Internationale Zusammenarbeit (GIZ) – has a two-pronged strategy.

For one, the project focuses on developing capacity and integrating the protected area system into Ethiopia's development plans at the federal level. Conducting a gap analysis of the existing wildlife policy and legislation and providing recommendations for revisions is part of UNDP's engagement in helping the government to build appropriate policy, regulatory and governance frameworks. UNDP is also assisting the government in strengthening the management and financing of selected protected areas and promoting co-management with local communities to maximize effectiveness and economic benefits.

Further, the project seeks to replicate the successful protected area management systems. This includes the creation of financial sustainability plans, capacity building and institutional support for the planning and management of protected areas, as well as the development of new management concepts and partnerships for protected areas.



UNITED NATIONS DEVELOPMENT PROGRAMME

Actions:

- Ensuring the appropriate policy, regulatory and governance frameworks are put in place.
- Making sure the protected areas and wildlife conservation are mainstreamed into Ethiopia's development framework and ensure greater political support and funding.
- Supporting the policy, regulatory and governance frameworks in a way that leads into redefining and implementing protected area strategies to reduce land use conflict.
- Developing institutional capacity for protected areas' planning and management resulting in a functional system plan and improved protected areas' management.
- Piloting new protected area management options, including the upgrading of the Aledge wildlife reserve to National Park status by using lessons from other parks best practices, which can be replicated across the protected area system.
- Developing mechanisms for financial sustainability, possibly through the development of a trust fund, for Ethiopia's protected area system.



Progress to Date

- Existing wildlife policy and strategy reviewed
- Wildlife marketing strategy created
- Management Effectiveness Tracking Tool (METT) scores of 10 protected areas improved
- Eight protected areas legally gazetted and the gazette management of the rest in progress
- Six different knowledge products created (Economic and Business Study, Gap Analysis, Carbon Study, Study on Abijata-Shalla Lakes National Park, Assessment of Factors Driving Environmental Change for Management Decision-Making, and Analysis of Hunting Industry)
- Mapping the protected areas in progress (Overview map of Ethiopia; Maps of Gambella, Awash and NechSar)

Impact:

Sustainable development of protected areas will contribute towards socio-economic development and environmental protection of Ethiopia. The interventions will further strengthen the management and sustainable financing of protected areas and promote co-management with local communities to maximize effectiveness and economic benefits.

The project interventions' impact on protecting Ethiopia's natural heritage will contribute to safeguarding global and regional biodiversity, ecosystems and ecological processes, given that Ethiopia houses large portions of two important biodiversity hotspots and contributes to the protection of endemic species and genera that would be otherwise threatened. The protection of the watershed in the Ethiopian highlands will also have an impact on ecosystems sustainability in the Horn of Africa.

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