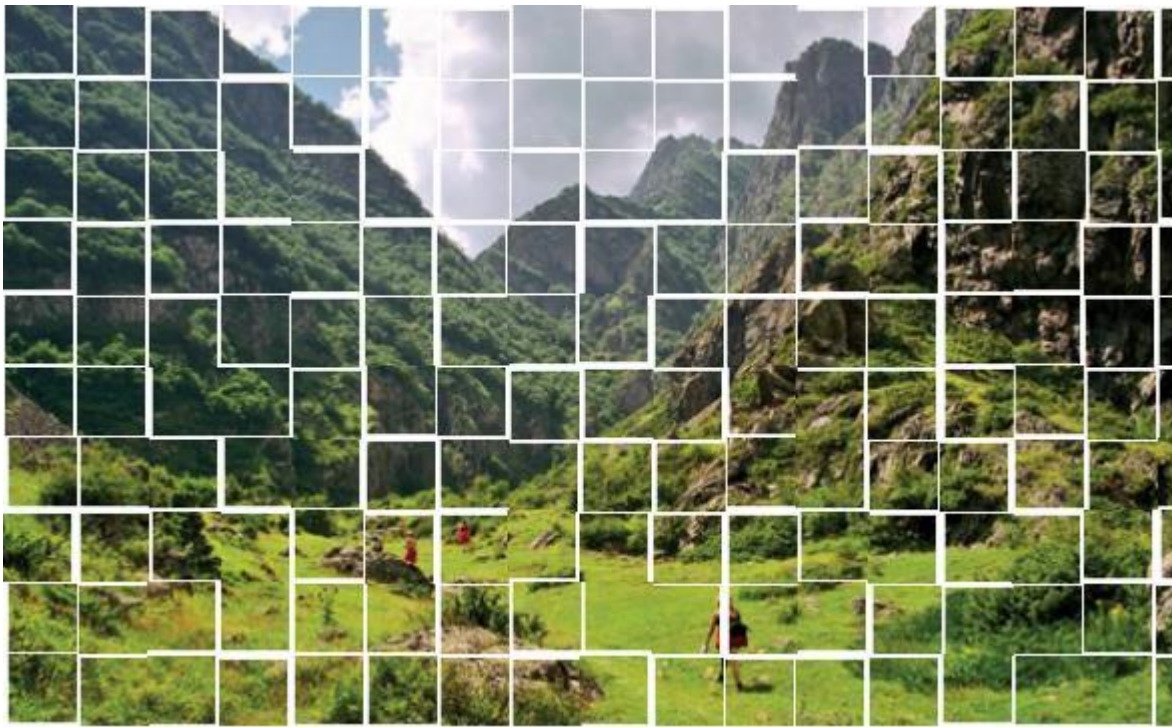


# **AJARA PROTECTED AREAS SUSTAINABLE TOURISM STRATEGY**



## **PROVISION OF SERVICES FOR ELABORATION OF ADJARA PROTECTED AREAS SYSTEM SUSTAINABLE TOURISM DEVELOPMENT STRATEGY AND PLAN OF ACTION**

**UNDP-supported and GEF-financed Project:**

**Expansion and Improved Management Effectiveness of the Adjara Region's  
Protected Areas**

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# **AJARA PROTECTED AREAS SUSTAINABLE TOURISM STRATEGY**

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The views expressed in this publication are those of the author/s and do not necessarily represent those of the United Nations or UNDP.



*Empowered lives.  
Resilient nations.*

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## LIST OF ACRONYMS AND ABBREVIATIONS

<b>APA</b>	Agency of Protected Areas
<b>APP</b>	Application
<b>CBD</b>	Convention on Biological Diversity
<b>CIS</b>	Commonwealth of Independent States
<b>CNF</b>	Caucasus Nature Fund
<b>DTR</b>	Department of Tourism and Resorts A.R.
<b>EU</b>	European Union
<b>FIT</b>	Free, Independent Travellers
<b>GDP</b>	Gross Domestic Product
<b>GEF</b>	Global Environmental Facility
<b>GNTA</b>	Georgian National Tourism Administration
<b>GoG</b>	Government of Georgia
<b>IUCN</b>	International Union for Conservation of Nature
<b>KfW</b>	Kreditanstalt für Wiederaufbau
<b>KPA</b>	Kintrishi Protected Areas
<b>LOHAS</b>	Lifestyles of Health and Sustainability
<b>MNP</b>	Machakhela National Park
<b>MTNP</b>	Mtiral National Park
<b>MoENRP</b>	Ministry of Environment and Natural Resources Protection
<b>NBSAP</b>	National Biodiversity Strategy and Action Plan
<b>NP</b>	National Park
<b>PAs</b>	Protected Areas
<b>SPPA</b>	Support Programme of Protected Areas
<b>TIC</b>	Tourism Information Centre
<b>TJS</b>	Transboundary Joint Secretariat
<b>TTOO</b>	Tour Operators
<b>UNDP</b>	United Nations Development Programme
<b>UNWTO</b>	United Nations World Tourism Organization
<b>VC</b>	Value Chain
<b>WWF</b>	World Wildlife Fund

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## EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

The *Ajara Sustainable Tourism Strategy and Action Plan* aims at providing guidelines for the development of sustainable tourism in Mtirala National Park, Kintrishi Protected Areas and Machakhela National Park. Tourism that takes into account the need of conservation of the areas, as well as the need of creating economic opportunities for the financial sustainability of the protected areas and the local communities.

The *Strategy* has a regional focus, considering the three areas (with their differences and uniquenesses) as a whole, for better coordination and tourism management purposes. There are several issues that should be addressed, in a coordinated manner, to increase their effectiveness, such as marketing and promotion, capacity building, etc.

Although the main purpose of the *Strategy* is that tourism contributes to the financial sustainability of the PA's, this *Strategy* has a strong focus on conservation objectives, making it compatible with providing quality visitor experiences and the creation of economic opportunities for the communities living in and around the PA's.

This *Strategy* analyses the present situation, based on the data gathered for the *Baseline Situation and Analysis Report*. The constraints and opportunities for nature-based tourism development in the PA's are also further detailed. These constraints and opportunities, together with the SWOT and TOWS analysis, provide the basis for the development of the *Strategy*.

The document also presents a description of the existing tourism markets and the potential segments on which Ajara PA's should focus. The identification of the main segments is important in order to define market-oriented tourism products and activities that can be appealing for these segments.

The Value Chain Analysis investigates the structure of the tourism value chain in Ajara to identify gaps in which tourism transactions are weak, and the areas for improvement. This is essential to identify potential interventions to enhance the economic impact of tourism in the local communities.

Once the existing picture has been analysed, the *Strategy* defines the **Vision** as “By 2020 Ajara Protected Areas will be recognized as a valuable nature destination that promotes the conservation and knowledge of Ajara unique ecosystems providing high quality experience for visitors and the well-being of the local communities”.

Based on this vision, **five strategic goals** are defined:

1. Encourage a coordinated management of tourism in and around Ajara Protected Areas.
2. Increase awareness among locals and visitors about the importance of the natural and cultural values of the Ajara Protected Areas.

3. Involve local communities in the tourism development so they benefit from tourism activities.
4. Generate income through tourism activities for the conservation of Ajara Protected Areas.
5. Provide a high-quality experience to visitors.

**Five Strategic Lines** with their specific objectives are identified to meet the overall goals and to contribute to the vision of the Ajara PA's:

1. **Management and Governance.** This is the priority of the *Strategy* and focuses on establishing the foundations for the effective implementation of the Strategy, through the creation of a regional body, in which relevant stakeholders are represented. Initially, it is expected that the Ajara PA's will become members of the existing Regional Advisory Council to, in a coordinated manner with DTR, define and promote tourism development initiatives that benefit all. Other issues addressed in this strategic line are related to the promotion of concession of existing facilities and the implementation of a visitor monitoring system, to monitor potential impacts of a higher level of tourism visitation.
2. **Capacity Building.** This is also one of the core issues of the Strategy. Improving skills, capacities and knowledge of PA's staff, local communities or tour guides on tourism and environmental issues is central for the sustainable development of tourism in the area. Increasing stakeholders' knowledge related to the PA's, their importance, their values, etc. will help them to understand the role of the PA's and also the need of protection.
3. **Accessibility and Safety.** This strategic line focuses on ensuring that access to Ajara PA's is easy and safe for visitors. The proposed actions include the improvement of the road, the creation of a standard road signage system, and an improved transportation system
4. **Marketing and Promotion,** both elements are needed to market and promote Ajara PA's, at national and international level, and so to increase the visitation level of the areas. Currently, the areas are not widely known, and this should be solved with a better information system and increasing online presence. The involvement and participation of DTR and TTOO in the Ajara PA's tourism development will also contribute to increasing its visibility.
5. **Product and Infrastructure development.** At last but not least, several tourism products and infrastructures for Ajara PA's are proposed. The objective is to attract and enhance the visitation to the PA's by enabling sustainable and cost-effective infrastructures that contribute to improve the quality of the visit and the satisfaction level of visitors.

These Strategic Lines are the framework in which tourism development should be developed in Ajara PA's and should be the basis and the guidance for the further development of the individual Action Plans for each Protected Area.

# 1. INTRODUCTION

## 1.1. Background

Tourism is a large global industry that can play a significant role in protected areas' conservation if it is positively managed. Tourism and visitation have been directly linked to protected areas since the modern era, as tourism is an ecosystem service that can positively contribute to the conservation strategy of protected areas.

Tourism in protected areas has unique characteristics that make it a potential positive force, by which visitors can experience and learn about cultural and natural heritage. In addition, tourism generates revenues in support of local, regional and national economy. Protected Areas, likewise, are key to global challenges such as biodiversity loss, community development, poverty alleviation, etc.

Managing the development and operation of tourism in protected areas has a series of challenges and opportunities. On the one hand, it can provide valuable social and economic benefits (creating business and employment opportunities) and contribute to biodiversity conservation of PA's. On the other hand, an uncontrolled growth may lead to the degradation of the environment and loss of local identity and traditions.

Protected Areas in Georgia represent the cornerstone of Georgia's biodiversity conservation strategy. Since 2008, Georgia has been developing a comprehensive programme on protected areas and strong partnerships with international organizations such as World Bank, EU, KfW, IUCN, GEF/UNDP, etc. The promotion of ecotourism and other forms of sustainable tourism are seen as a tool for increasing the financial sustainability of the Georgian PA's system, and became a priority for the Agency of Protected Areas (APA).

Since 2011, Georgian PA's are receiving an increasing number of visitors; investments in activities, services and product development, and also marketing activities have contributed to the higher visitation figures. Ajara PA's are part of an important priority conservation area in the Caucasus Eco-Region and have good opportunities for the development of ecotourism.

Mtiral National Park and Kintrishi Protected Areas have also experienced an increase in the number of tourists; however, the figures continue to be quite low and limited income is generated from tourism activities. Machakhela, as recently established NP, is still underdeveloped.

Increasing the number of visitors and their length of stay in and around PA's will be part of the objectives of the *Strategy*. However, in order to achieve these objectives several challenges identified should be overcome. This Strategy, therefore, aims at setting a clear direction for proper and effective tourism development in Ajara PA's, which should be adopted and supported by key stakeholders in order to succeed.



## 1.2. Purpose and Objectives of the Plan

The **overall purpose** of the *Ajara Protected Areas System Sustainable Tourism Strategy and Action Plan* is to provide a clear roadmap for sustainable tourism development in the Ajara PA's.

The *Ajara Protected Areas System Sustainable Tourism Strategy and Action Plan* is intended to be a useful tool for Protected Area managers but also for the Department of Tourism and Resorts of Ajara Region and other relevant stakeholders, who should join forces for the coordinated implementation of the Plan.

The **general objective** of the *Strategy* is:

- » To sustainably develop the Ajara Protected Areas as a quality ecotourism destination within the Region, based on the natural and cultural richness of the area, creating employment opportunities as well as business for the local community and economic revenues to support the areas conservation.

The **specific objectives** of this *Strategy* are:

- » To create marketable nature-based tourism products that can be offered to potential visitors.
- » To involve communities and other key stakeholders at regional and national level in decision-making for an effective management of tourism in and around Ajara PA's.
- » To increase economic revenues derived from tourism by creating effective revenue generating and revenue-capture mechanisms for Ajara PA's and surrounding communities.
- » To increase the number of visitors and encourage them to stay longer by offering them quality tourism products and services.
- » To ensure environment and landscape conservation by increasing the appreciation of the natural and cultural values of PA's among locals and visitors.

## 1.3. General Approach

Following the principles of **sustainability**, this *Strategy* intends to provide a response to the needs identified in Ajara PA's by:

- » Making an optimal use of the existing environmental resources while helping to conserve natural heritage and biodiversity.
- » Respecting and promoting socio-cultural aspects of local communities.

- » Ensuring income-earning opportunities for the Protected Areas and also the local communities, contributing to improving local welfare.

The formulation of the *Ajara Protected Areas System Sustainable Tourism Strategy and Action Plan* has been designed in order to achieve the above-mentioned objectives and to provide an answer to the question: *Where do we want to be?*

For the effective achievement of these objectives, a holistic approach is needed. Tourism development in protected areas involves a complex relationship between the environment and tourism activities, between rural traditions and lifestyle and visitors influence, therefore it requires an appropriate and careful planning.

The **guiding principles** of the *Strategy* are:

- » **CO-ORDINATION:** Ecotourism can provide a number of benefits to PA's but also a number of challenges, therefore a strong leadership is needed. In order to ensure it, it is key to enhance the coordination levels and build the consensus among key stakeholders such as the DTR, Municipalities and PA's administration.
- » **PARTICIPATION:** Participation and active involvement of local communities and tourism private sector is crucial for the integrated management of tourism and biodiversity. The inclusion of local communities in PA's decision-making is key for ensuring integrity and conservation of PA's, and also the integration of tourism private sector, for the definition of market-driven tourism products that can be attractive to tourists. In addition, it has to be ensured that an adequate percentage of women are represented in the participatory structures. The gender perspective, supporting women empowerment by creating business opportunities for them and contributing to build their capacities, will be also a crosscutting issue in tourism development in the area.
- » **FINANCIAL SUSTAINABILITY:** Through tourism development, it is expected to increase the financial resources of the PA's, so they would be less dependent of external funds. Cost-effective options will be recommended to ensure a sustainable economic income that can be allocated to conservation and management efforts of the PA's.
- » **CONSERVATION:** Achieving sustainable tourism requires constant monitoring to ensure that environmental impacts such as waste pollution or environment degradation are minimized. In addition, environment education and interpretation will be also a way to increase awareness and better communicate the importance and values of the PA's.
- » **VISITOR SATISFACTION:** Sustainable tourism aims at ensuring a high level of tourist satisfaction and a meaningful experience, providing quality tourism services, raising awareness about environment and conservation issues and promoting sustainable practices.



Figure 1: Guiding principles of Ajara PA's Sustainable Tourism Strategy

## 1.4. Methodology

The *Strategy* has been elaborated through a participatory process in which stakeholders have been considered, as this strategy should work not only for the benefit of PA's but also for local tourism business, local communities, and visitors.

For the elaboration of the *Strategy*, first, a baseline assessment and analysis report was produced. Once the baseline was completed, the strengths, weaknesses, constraints, opportunities of tourism in Ajara Region were identified. This deep analysis was done in conjunction with major stakeholders in a participatory workshop, in which participants had the chance to provide their vision of the main issues affecting Ajara Protected Areas.

The SWOT analysis was complimented with a TOWS analysis that helped to identify the strategy lines to focus on. The draft *Strategy* was also presented for stakeholder revision and validation on January 22<sup>nd</sup> 2016.

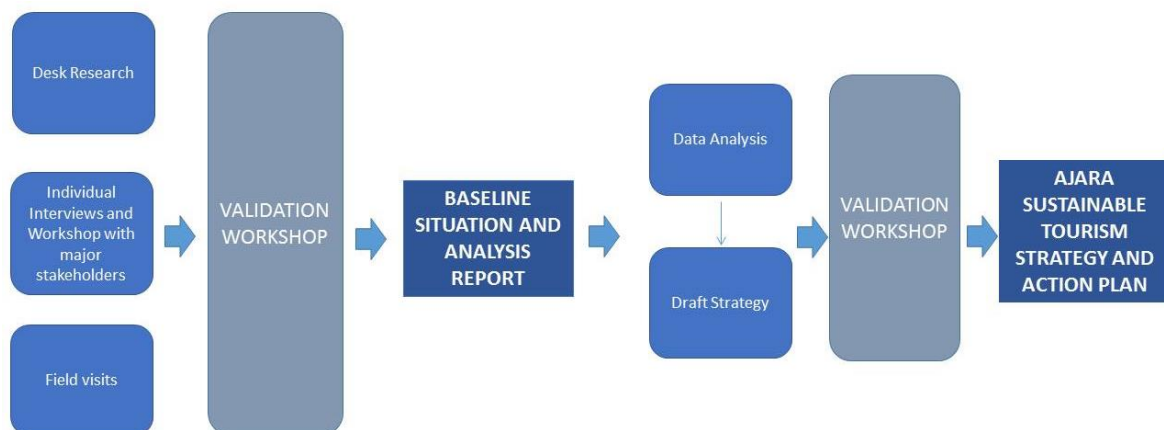


Figure 2: Methodology for the Ajara Sustainable Tourism Strategy and Action Plan

## 2. FRAMEWORK FOR TOURISM DEVELOPMENT IN AJARA PROTECTED AREAS

### 2.1. Description and Key Features of the Area

Ajara Region is one of the regions that receives a higher number of visitors in Georgia; over the last years, significant efforts and investments have been made in order to promote Batumi and the Region as one of the main tourism destinations within Georgia.

The coastline of Ajara is a favourite destination among tourists visiting Georgia, and several resorts are located in Batumi, Kobuleti and Khelvachauri municipalities. The Region received 431,678 visitors in 2014, representing an 8% increase in relation to 2013. In addition, Ajara hosts a rich landscape with high and unique ecological diversity, the Region covers 0.5% of the total area of the Caucasus Eco-region, and the three project PA's are an important priority conservation area in the Lesser Caucasus.

The three project PA's have many natural and cultural resources that are of considerable interest for ecotourism development. The assessment of tourism development in target PA's has shown a relative development in Mtirala National Park and Kintrishi, and an important potential for the recently established Machakhela NP. The three PA's host a rich biodiversity, typical from Colchic forests ecosystems, that include rare, endangered and relict species, and also species included in the Red List of Georgia: lynx, brown bear, Caucasian squirrel, Colchic box-trees, yew-trees, rhododendron ungerii, Medvedev birch, etc.



Figure 3: Vegetation in Ajara PA's. Source: APA

The area is an important bottleneck for **migratory birds** (Batumi Flyway) in spring and autumn. More than 1,000.000 raptors migrate through the corridor annually, having one of the highest volume of raptor migration in the world. Birdwatching is a potential tourism activity that should be developed and promoted in the area. Among the species that can be observed are: Imperial Eagle, Lesser Spotted Eagle, Steppe Buzzard, Black Kite, Booted Eagle, etc.



Figure 4: Honey Buzzard and Crested Honey Buzzard recorded in Batumi. Source: Batumi Raptor Count

The **ethnographic values** such as traditions, legends, and customs are also relevant in the Ajara PA's. Several communities live in and around the PA's and are willing to engage in tourism activities. The members of the community offer the opportunity to experience the authentic way of life of rural communities in Ajara and learn about the history of the area.



Figure 5: Traditional constructions, ethnographic museum and gastronomy in Ajara PA's



## 2.2. Assessment of the Area

A detailed assessment of the area was conducted in the *Baseline Situation and Analysis Report*. In this point, some of major findings and conclusions are included.

### » Mtirala NP

Based on existing tourism figures, Mtirala is the most popular destination among selected PA's. Tourists (mostly domestic) can plan their trip to this place individually, to experience nature and adventure.

The area is easily accessible from Batumi and Chaqvi, it takes around 1-hour drive from Batumi to the Visitor Centre located in Chaqvistavi.

Mtirala NP offers basic services for relaxing and enjoyment: different types of accommodation (rooms in the Visitor Centre, camping sites, shelters and guesthouses), equipment rental, and a 200 meters long zip line.

The zip line has been recently built, with the support to the World Tourism Organization (UNWTO). It is very popular, and it has clearly contributed to increase the economic revenues of the Park.

The same project also developed a canyoning path, where individuals can travel through canyons and slide down waterfalls using a variety of techniques. The area designated for canyoning activities in Mtirala NP is approximately 700 meters long. However, this service is not popular yet and needs skilful guides to accompany guests.

The park has good potential to develop an additional circular trail, bird-watching areas and expand its routes on Mtirala Mountain and surrounding area.



Figure 6. Canyoning at Mtirala NP. Source: APA

### » Kintrishi PA

It is only 25 km far from Kobuleti, a popular area for holidaymakers spending longer summer periods in the resort, often in private homes. Last year (2014) 310.000 holidaymakers spent the summer in the resort (*"Eco-tourism development strategy"*, TJS). However, only 3,896 tourists visited the Protected Area, and only a small percentage overnight in the area, being most of them day-trippers.

The development of additional activities and the improvement of access would lead to an increase in visitor numbers. It is also essential to develop joint tour programs together with Sakhalvasho

village (famous birdwatching area that belongs to Chakvi community, nearby Mtirala PA) and Mtirala PA.

» **Machakhela NP**

It has recently established as National Park<sup>1</sup>. It is the nearest PA for Batumi citizens, as well as for the holidaymakers at popular recreational places such as: Gonio, Kvartsi, Sarpi and others. Its close location to Batumi (27 km, 1/2 hours driving by car) gives opportunities for short breaks in the region.

Although tourism in Machakhela has not been developed yet, it is already included in travel packages (created by DTR) as one of the rural destinations in Ajara. Here, old traditions are well preserved, and it has good connection with neighbouring protected area in Turkey. It can also be visited by tourists driving to Samtskhe-Javakheti region via Goderdzi Pass.

Machakhela has great potential to develop several trails and other tourism infrastructures and facilities to attract different tourism segments. Currently, people visiting the area enjoy the landscape and visit the initiatives promoted by the local community such as the Ethnographic museum.

The DTR has already plans to further develop and promote this area as it is seen as a priority in the Region. Another opportunity for Machakhela NP is to establish a transboundary PA as it shares borders with the Turkish PA Jamili.

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<sup>1</sup> On 29<sup>th</sup> May 2015 was approved the Georgian Law about establishment of Machakhela National Park.

## **2.3. Analysis of the main Constraints and Opportunities**

### **2.3.1. Constraints for tourism development in Ajara Protected Area**

The assessment of tourism development in target PA's has illustrated some results already achieved, and has also revealed some challenges to be addressed during the process of building a nature-based tourism industry that will help to protect and develop an area in a positive way. These challenges are outlined and commented below:

#### **» GOVERNANCE AND MANAGEMENT:**

Aspects such as (1) the centralized government of PA's, (2) the separate responsibilities in the field of tourism and environment between different government bodies, at national and regional level; and (3) the poor cooperation between these bodies, are in some aspects affecting the development of tourism in the areas.

In addition, other relevant constraints that should be addressed:

- **Inadequate institutional capacity to operate effectively and efficiently:**
  - The PA's administrations have limited resources in terms of human and financial resources to implement not only conservational goals but also to focus on tourism development.
  - The centralized government of PA's and system of collecting revenues is inefficient. The revenue generation has to be expanded in order to fund the conservation efforts of the parks, tourism infrastructure development, capacity building, etc. In order to achieve this, a percentage of the revenues generated from tourism activity should be managed from the PA's. This would also contribute to increase the initiatives of PA's administration.
  - Core competencies of PA workers (especially rangers) are not adequately defined and do not respond to organizational needs in relation to environmental education and tourism.
  - Skills of administration in hospitality and tourism areas are limited, and should be enhanced for attending adequately existing and future demand.
- **Limited participation of stakeholders in decision making of PA's:**
  - Regional authorities promote PA's, however they do not define the activities in a coordinated way with Ajara PA's. Routes and tours are developed without proper co-ordination with PA's administrations.



- TTOO and other tourism providers in the area do not collaborate with PA's administration, especially for promotion.
- Limited involvement of adjacent communities, the participation of communities in the conservation aspects of the Park is also limited due to low level of engagement.
- **Concession system:**
  - There is no clear policy or framework for concession development. Some experiences in the areas were unsuccessful. This is a limiting factor to further develop some services that should be carried out by tourism professionals in a public-private partnership (PPP).

#### » **VISITOR EXPERIENCE:**

- **Relatively poor tourism experience:**
  - Lack of diverse tourism products, practical information of tours, services. Extension of existing routes in Kintrishi and Mtirala, investigate joint trails of Ajara PAs, design joint programs with Sakhalvasho village (with SABUKO -Society of Nature Conservation-, founded by GCCW and Batumi Raptor Count) and special programs for children would place Ajara PAs on niche market of ecotourism in Georgia.
  - Insufficient number of infrastructures for product development. There are limited options of activities to be done (trails, infrastructures for birdwatching, etc.). In Machakhela the tourism infrastructures are non-existent.
  - Quality of the services offered by private sector should be improved. Quality of accommodation services and local product processing is demanded by tourists and can increase economic revenues for both PA's administration and local population.
- **Accessibility:**
  - Roads infrastructure to PA's is uncomfortable, and public transportation system unreliable and inadequate, providing a challenge for tour operations and also for individuals that do not have a private car to visit the PA's.
- **Short-tourism season:**
  - Although Ajara PA's are open all year round, visitation to the areas occurs between May and September, being August the month with higher number of visitors. The climate in September or even October is suitable for mountain and sports activities. Events and other activities can be organized to attract new market segments and extend the season in the area.

### **2.3.2. Main opportunities for tourism development in Ajara Protected Areas**

Equally, the Region has many opportunities to be exploited for the development of tourism in and around PA's and create diverse economic options for the adjacent communities.

- **Rich landscape with ecological diversity and ethnographic values:**
  - The three project PA's host a rich biodiversity with unique flora and fauna and an attractive mountainous landscape. Local communities living in and around Ajara PA's maintain traditions that can enrich the visitor's experience.
- **Local communities' dynamism and hospitality:**
  - Local communities are willing to engage in tourism related activities. Creating a positive framework for the creation of tourism business can provide an alternative livelihood, promote entrepreneurship and facilitate new employment prospects.
  - Local communities in Ajara are warmth and hospitable.
  - The area is also rich in traditions, cultural values, as well as in gastronomy and wine, and these aspects should enhance the tourism activity in the area.
- **Transboundary cooperation agreements:**
  - Machakhela NP shares borders with the Turkish Jamelli Protected Area. Jamelli Protected Area receives, in average, over 50,000 thousand visitors per year. A potential agreement on transboundary protected area could benefit Ajara Protected Areas and specially Machakhela.
- » **Proximity to Batumi and Kobuleti:**
  - Batumi and Kobuleti, as coastal destinations, receive thousands of visitors every year. Attract a percentage of the visitors to the coastal areas can increase significantly the number of visitors of PA's, as well as it may contribute to increase the length of stay of those tourists visiting the area.
- » **Tour Operators:**
  - There is an important number of TTOOs operating in Ajara, although they are not specialized in nature tourism, they have important international contacts and experience dealing with visitors. TTOOs should be involved in PA's management in order to contribute to the definition of market-oriented products and experiences.

## 2.4. Analysis of Tourism Demand

### 2.4.1. Current market demand

Ajara PA's have seen an increase in visitor numbers over the last years. The trend is aligned with the higher interest of tourists in visiting pristine environments and national parks over the last decades worldwide. APA efforts in promoting the recreational use of protected areas have also highly contributed to increase the demand.

Georgian **domestic tourism** is currently the most relevant for the tourism in Ajara PA's. The domestic demand represents 72.9% of Mtirala visitors and 83% of the total visitors in Kintrishi. Most visitors were day-trippers and only 15% of Mtirala visitors stayed for overnight (around 3,445 visitors).

In relation to the **international markets**, the main markets are from neighbouring countries (Ukraine Russia, Armenia, etc.) and also from main European markets (Germany or Poland), however, the number of visitors from the EU countries are relatively low and more effort should be made to attract these markets.

Although the three PA's are open all year round, the analysis of visitor figures also shows high **seasonality**; the period between May and September receives the higher number of visitors (especially in August). This can be related to two main causes:

1. Holiday period of visitors.
2. Batumi and Kobuleti are the most frequently visited summer destinations in Ajara.

The main motivation for visiting the Parks is hiking in wild nature: Mtirala 31% and Kintrishi 53%. Mtirala NP is recognized as a unique destination place for birdwatchers and is promoted as "*Mtirala National Park – full day subtropical forest birdwatching and trekking*" by Batumi Raptor Count – an international nature conservation NGO that works to monitor and conserve the birds.

There are no statistics available for Machakhela yet. So, the main activities carried out in the PA's are hiking and recreation with picnic.

The level of satisfaction among visitors is good, however, there are visitors that consider infrastructures and services provided should be improved.

## 2.4.2. Market potential for Ajara Protected Areas

In average, almost 1.1 billion tourists take an international trip every year, this fact means that tourism continues to be a key driver of the global economy.

According to UNWTO, the global and **general tourism trends** until 2020 can be summarized as:

- Tourists are more physically and intellectually active now than previously.
- Tourists are becoming sophisticated in their travel habits and they expect good value for money.
- More tourists are seeking new destinations and products.
- More tourists are taking more frequent but shorter vacations, opening up opportunities for “neighbouring country” tourism.
- Growth in older demographic groups. Ageing population. The average age of population is increasing, especially in most developed countries, which are also significant generator markets of foreign visitation of parks. This segment demands adequate infrastructures (wheelchair ramps, trails with a lesser gradient or comfortable accommodation) and learning activities (for example nature and culture interpretive programs).
- Growth in internet use and social media networks. Social networking has changed how travellers research trips, make decisions and share experiences. Sites like Facebook, with more than 800 million active users, and TripAdvisor, with 50 million unique monthly visitors, enable travellers to seek trip information and advice from the sources they trust the most: other travellers and people they know.
- There are particular tourism growth areas, such as Nature/Culture/Adventure Tourism, “Roots” Tourism, etc.

According to UNWTO, in 2004 ecotourism was growing three times faster than the global tourism industry as a whole. This trend has continued over the last years confirming a relevant consumer attraction, and this market share will grow over next years. Most of the tourism target groups have a greater environmental awareness, especially the Lifestyle of Health and Sustainability (LOHAS) segment, who is a conscious traveller that seeks unpolluted environment and authentic experiences.

Based on GNTA Strategy, the tour product/offer that has the most significant development potential in Georgia lies within **four major international leisure travel market segments**:

- **Nature and Adventure**, which includes a wide range of activity-oriented pursuits, from bird watching to heli-skiing.
- **Cultural Heritage**, including history, archaeology, and living culture, as expressed through religion, art, architecture, music, food, dance, etc.

- **Wine and Cuisine.** A market with significant potential for growth in Georgia, and closely linked to its cultural heritage offering, given the country's 8,000-year history of wine making.
- **Sun, Sand and Sea.** A well-developed market in Georgia that has additional room to grow, but the country is not as competitively well positioned outside of the CIS region (much more easily accessible for major outbound markets).

According to the most recent GNTA International Visitor Survey (2014), all four of these segments are well represented in Georgia today, and most visitors have multiple travel motivations.

Nature and Adventure tourism is one of Georgia's most important markets with the greatest growth potential. The country offers a wide range of both hard and soft adventure pursuits, including hiking, mountain biking, paragliding, rafting, speleology, climbing, mountaineering, alpine and downhill skiing, and a number of other activities. Given its rich and, in many areas, relatively untouched natural beauty, biodiversity, microclimates, and compact size, Georgia is well positioned to grow its share of the nature-oriented travel market.

In terms of more nature-oriented pursuits, according to a recent 2014 GNTA survey, out of all tourism stays, 52% were nature-based trips (although this also likely includes a significant percentage of people whose primary travel motivation is a holiday at the beach).

In the process of developing nature-based tourism products, special focus must be put on the needs of target groups that shall be attracted to the protected areas, as it is important to match the services and products available in the PA's to tourist travels motives.

Identify visitors' needs, expectations, interests and motivation is important to better meet these demands. The motivations of the visitors are directly related to their way of life, and some facts should be taken into account:

The **profile of an average international nature tourism/leisure tourist** is:

- Educated, interested in the guidance and knowledge from professional guides and looking for high-quality services.
- Earns an average of \$50,000 yearly income (outside of Georgia).
- Average age bracket is 25-63 years.
- Gender: 60% traveling as couples; 56% male and 44% female; (Source: GITO)
- Interested in low impact tourism effecting the community and environment, looking for authentic experiences in which nature is combined with culture and other activities.
- Willing to spend more vacation funds if associated with an ethical business.
- Interested in mild to moderate adventures with meaningful nature and cultural experiences
- Travels twice or more times a year.
- Seek to experience also local and healthy cuisine.

- Families with children older than 8 years old are looking for experiences they can enjoy with their children.

Ecotourists are divided according to the following market segmentation typologies from a **behavioural perspective**:

1. **Hard ecotourists or dedicated ecotourists**, which are travellers with strong environmental attitudes who prefer to travel in small groups. They are physically active and enjoy challenging activities. They make their own travel arrangements in order to make it a real life experience.
2. **Soft ecotourists** are those travellers who like ecotourism and traditional holidays. They prefer to travel in larger groups and require some level of comfort.

Other authors also identify a third group:

3. **Casual nature tourists**, those that come into close contact with nature only incidentally while in a holiday trip.

These two last groups might be the group into a higher percentage of Ajara PA's visitors fall.

According to their **origin**:

1. **DOMESTIC MARKET**, as we have already presented the domestic market is and will be the predominant market in the future. Very little is known about the local Georgian national market for domestic travel, except that they tend not to be so active, not to travel in large groups beyond friends and relatives and to spend less on local accommodations and other services.

We differentiate two main segments within the domestic market:

- a. **Weekenders- day-trippers**, are mostly families that visit the PA with recreational purposes, they go for picnic and soft activities. They usually travel with children, so activities should be designed also for them. The majority will stay with local families and friends.
  - b. **Long weekend and multi-day visitors** (from Tbilisi and other Georgian cities). This group demands higher standard visitor facilities. Interested in natural and historical attractions.
2. **INTERNATIONAL MARKET**, most important markets are the **neighbouring countries**: Ukraine, Azerbaijan, Armenia. A relative high number of Armenians spend summer holidays with a family in Ajara (around 80,000 – 100,000), this market is especially interested in nature and would appreciate to visit the project PA's. Require good access, safety and high standards of visitor facilities and services.

Apart from these traditional markets, the international market has potential to be further targeted:

- The **European market** is also an important market for ecotourists, especially Germany, the Netherlands and the UK, which are the strongest nature and eco-tourism markets. These markets are motivated by high-quality experience to lesser-known destinations.

Important segments within the international markets are:

- a) **Free, Independent Travellers (FIT):** People that travel independently rather than with tour operators. Thanks to the opportunities given by technologies, they design their journeys: book their flights, accommodation and other activities through the Internet. For this group it is important that all information is easy accessible through the internet. This market is an opportunity for local providers.
- b) **Special interest travel:** this covers a wide range of sub-niche markets: bird-watching, wildlife enthusiasts, kayakers, etc.
  - a. *Bird-watchers:* Bird-based tourism is also growing rapidly. According to published studies around 3 million international trips (worldwide) are taken each year for the main purpose of bird watching<sup>2</sup>. In the United States between 2005 and 2009 nearly 20 million people took birding trips away from home. Europeans are also increasingly becoming involved in bird watching; the UK is home to the largest bird organization in Europe the Royal Society for the Protection of Birds (RSPB) with more than 1 million members, in the UK annual expenditure in bird watching is estimated at \$500 million. Around 50 UK TTOO's offer specialised birdwatching tours.
  - b. *Rafting, canoeing or kayaking* are also main motivations for visiting PA's around the world. Younger visitors that seek for adventure activities are willing to get engaged in some of these activities.

In the following table, main tourism markets for Ajara PA's are summarized:

	TYPOLOGY	DEFINITION	MAJOR INFLUENCING FACTORS
DOMESTIC MARKET	Weekenders/Day-trippers	Families/group of friends traveling with recreational purposes.	Activities are designed for children, picnic. Short walks.
	Long weekend and multi-day visitors	People travelling from longer distances (mainly Tbilisi and other regions.)	Interested in natural and historical attractions. Gastronomy. Events.

<sup>2</sup> "Developing a Niche Tourism Market Data Base for the Caribbean" Caribbean Tourism Organization (2008)

<b>INTERNATIONAL MARKET</b>	<b>FIT</b>	Book independently and directly from providers. Individual itinerary.	Information is available in the Internet.
	Soft ecotourists	Interested ecotourism and traditional holidays. They prefer to travel in larger groups.	Hiking. Pristine nature. They are also interested in local culture. Require some level of comfort
	High volume	People spending their holidays in Ajara that spend time in the Protected Areas. Interest also in nature and culture. Can be identified with casual nature tourists.	Good access, safety and high standards of visitor facilities and services.
	Special Interest: Kayaking, birdwatching	People dedicated to hobby (they may travel as group or FIT).	Require special facilities and services. Knowledgeable guides. Birding infrastructure and accessibility.
	Families	Couples travelling with children older than 8 years-old	Health and safety. They look for activities that combine fun and excitement with learning.

Table 1. Main markets for Ajara PA's. Source: Own elaboration from adaptation of Cochrane Segmentation (2003) and other authors.

This segmentation can help managers and responsible of visitors to understand what tourists seek when visiting Ajara PA's and establish and appropriate management response to satisfy visitors.

According to this analysis, the market potential of Ajara PA's is high to medium, especially due to the current levels of visitation of the Region. Some percentage of visitors can be directed to PA's increasing the number of visitors.

It is expected that tourism trend in the near future will continue to grow and also the nature tourism segment.

### 3. STAKEHOLDER ANALYSIS

The tourism development in Ajara PA's involves many stakeholders. Each group has its own particular values, interests and objectives; and also are affected in different ways by protected areas and tourism management policies.

In the following table, the main stakeholders' groups are identified and described related to tourism in the Ajara PA's as well as their position and interests. Another important classification in the table is according to their importance to project and their influence on the project in terms of their role in achieving the project's purpose and outcomes.



MAIN STAKEHOLDERS IN 3 TARGET PAS IN AJARA							
STAKEHOLDERS		ROLE	INTEREST	POSITION		IMPORTANCE	INFLUENCE
				Current	Desirable		
PA ADMINISTRATION	APA	Management and protection of protected areas in Georgia.	Improve management and capacity building; Enhance involvement of local population in nature conservation and eco-tourism activities	In favour	In favour	HIGH	HIGH
	Mtirala National Park Administration	Management of protected areas.	Develop new products and activities in the PAs.	In favour	In favour	HIGH	HIGH
	Kintrishi Protected Area Administration						
	Machakhela National Park Administration						
	Associations Friends of PA in Kintrishi	Support development and management of PAs. Including: conservation and protection of biodiversity, ecotourism development, and involvement of stakeholders in the management, protection and development, socio-economic development of adjacent communities, promotion of PAs.	Develop new product, rent facilities for tourism business development; Implementation projects mainly in eco-education and community development. Organize different seminars, trainings, excursions etc. for local school children, Eco-camps for students and school children. Share tourism benefits among local communities.	In favour	In favour	MEDIUM	MEDIUM
REGIONAL AND MUNICIPAL ADMINISTRATION	Kobuleti, Batumi and Khelvachauri municipalities	Spatial Planning of the areas. Regional and infrastructural development projects such as road rehabilitation towards and around PAs. Kobuleti municipality is actively involved in the Association of PA Friends of PA	Development of local capacity building and de-concentration in APA. Facilities for eco-educational camps for universities and schools.	Neutral	In favour	HIGH	MEDIUM

MAIN STAKEHOLDERS IN 3 TARGET PAS IN AJARA							
STAKEHOLDERS		ROLE	INTEREST	POSITION		IMPORTANCE	INFLUENCE
				Current	Desirable		
	GNTA	Georgian National Tourism Development Strategy	Increase visitor numbers in Georgia and the Protected Areas	Neutral	In favour	HIGH	MEDIUM
	Ajara Tourism and Resorts	Ajara Tourism development strategy.		In favour	In favour	HIGH	HIGH
	Ajara Department for Environmental Protection and Natural Resources	Environment protection.	Protect quality of environment.	Neutral	In favour	HIGH	MEDIUM
	Ajara Travel Agency	Product Development in rural area; increase awareness of the region and quality service standards.	Increase visitor numbers in Georgia and the Protected Areas	In favour	In favour	HIGH	HIGH
<b>TOURISM &amp; HOSPITALITY ENTERPRISES</b>	Ajara accommodation and catering providers	Tourism service supply in the Region.	Popularization of the region as a travel destination; tour programs/excursions for their guests	Neutral	In favour	LOW	LOW
<b>TRANSPORTATION</b>	Batumi International airport	Main transportation providers in the area.	Increase visitor numbers in the Region	Neutral	In favour	LOW	LOW
	Batumi public transport company		Increase visitor numbers in the Region				
	Kobuleti, Chakvi and Batumi taxi drivers		Transportations service and collaboration with PAs				
<b>TOURISM ORGANISATIONS</b>	TIC in Batumi	Provide information to visitors about the Region: major sightseeing and activities that can be done.	Diversity of tour packages/offers and Increase sales.	In favour	In favour	LOW	LOW

MAIN STAKEHOLDERS IN 3 TARGET PAS IN AJARA							
STAKEHOLDERS		ROLE	INTEREST	POSITION		IMPORTANCE	INFLUENCE
				Current	Desirable		
TOUR OPERATORS AND TRAVEL AGENCIES	Tour operators & Travel agencies in Batumi, Tbilisi and Ukraine	Developing and organizing tour programs for groups. Attract visitors to the Region and to the country.	Availability of good infrastructures, safety, and quality services.	Neutral	In favour	MEDIUM	MEDIUM
	Sports and recreation services providers (Aragvi Adventure, Georgian Adventure)	Eco-adventure tour programs for groups.	Provide services in Ajara PA's.	Neutral	In favour	LOW	LOW
	GITOA	Facilitate cooperation between Georgian Incoming Tour operators.	Quality tourism products in PA's.	Neutral	In favour	MEDIUM	MEDIUM
NGOS, CENTERS, CLUBS	Mta da Bari / Ajara Development Fund	Improvement of social-economic condition of local communities in PAS and in surroundings.	Local community involvement. Support producers and product supply to Honey Shop.	In favour	In favour	MEDIUM	MEDIUM
	ELKANA - Biological Farmers Association	Improvement of social-economic condition of rural population through fostering sustainable agriculture and awareness raising.	Develop organic agriculture and establish product producing and rural accommodation standards in the Region.	In favour	In favour	MEDIUM	MEDIUM
	Bird watchers' club	Increase awareness on conservation of nature and protection of birds. Monitoring activities.	Protect area, organize annual festivals and increase tour product sales and diversity.	In favour	In favour	MEDIUM	MEDIUM
	SaBuKo			In favour	In favour	MEDIUM	MEDIUM
	NACRES	Safeguard the biodiversity of Georgia and the South Caucasus, through conservation activities at national and local levels.	Nature conservation. Work with APA/administrations in PA management plans development.	Neutral	In favour	MEDIUM	MEDIUM
	Green Alternative	Environmental governance, sustainable energy, social-economic rights.	Implementation of projects.	In favour	In favour	LOW	LOW
	Black Sea Eco Academy	Support social-economic condition of local population on Ajara.	Working with local municipalities in rural development projects.	In favour	In favour	MEDIUM	MEDIUM

MAIN STAKEHOLDERS IN 3 TARGET PAS IN AJARA							
STAKEHOLDERS		ROLE	INTEREST	POSITION		IMPORTANCE	INFLUENCE
				Current	Desirable		
	CENN	Foster modern and sustainable development values and practices through bridging society and environment.	Working on projects in good governance, risk reduction.	Neutral	In favour	LOW	LOW
ASSOCIATIONS	GTA	Cooperation between Georgian tourism companies.	Develop projects and enhance their activities through PA administrations	Neutral	In favour	LOW	LOW
	Eco Tourism Association	Sustainable tourism development.	Development of eco-educational programs; new members among PAs communities	In favour	In favour	MEDIUM	LOW
	Mountain guides associations	Develop mountain guide school and certification system in five categories (mountain, trekking, skiing, rock climbing and alpine tour guiding.	New trails (especially joint trails among PAs) and local capacity development in PA's.	In favour	In favour	MEDIUM	MEDIUM
	Cafe, Bars and restaurants' Association	Trainings in food safety, European legislation and hospitality industry.	Conduct trainings for new members in PA's and around.	Neutral	In favour	LOW	LOW
EDUCATIONAL ORGANISATIONS	Batumi Shota Rustaveli University	Provide educational services to Georgian population.	Development of eco-educational programmes for school pupil and students.	Neutral	In favour	LOW	LOW
	Ilia State University						
	Schools in Georgia and from the region						
LOCAL COMMUNITIES	Guesthouse owners in and around Kintrishi, Mtirala and Machakhela PAs	Provide basic accommodation to visitors to Ajara PA's.	Increase number of customers and revenues received from their activity. Extend the periods of visitors' flow.	In favour	In favour	HIGH	MEDIUM

MAIN STAKEHOLDERS IN 3 TARGET PAS IN AJARA							
STAKEHOLDERS		ROLE	INTEREST	POSITION		IMPORTANCE	INFLUENCE
				Current	Desirable		
	Horse riding service providers in PAs	Provide complementary services to visitors in Ajara PA's.		In favour	In favour	LOW	LOW
	Artisans and craft producers	Preservation of traditional production techniques	Access into the tourism market.	Neutral	In favour	LOW	LOW
	Farmers and farmers' cooperatives	Production of agricultural products.	Interest in introducing their production into the tourism market.	Neutral	In favour	LOW	MEDIUM
	Tour guides in PA local communities	Provide basic guiding services to tourists.	Increase number of customers and revenues received from their activity. Extend the periods of visitors' flow.	In favour	In favour	MEDIUM	MEDIUM
	Honey shop (Mtirala)	Promote local products. Local social enterprise.	Increase number of customers and revenues received from their activity. Extend the periods of visitors' flow.	In favour	In favour	LOW	LOW
DONORS & OTHER INTERNATIONAL ORGANISATIONS	UNDP	Provide economic and technical support to PA's development.	Assist administration to achieve national and international conservation objectives.	In favour	In favour	HIGH	HIGH
	SPPA/KfW					MEDIUM	MEDIUM
	WWF/KfW						
	CNF						
	Mercy Corps/SDC	Provide support to local communities for economic development (also in tourism related aspects).	Improve local livelihood.	In favour	In favour	MEDIUM	MEDIUM

## 4. SWOT AND TOWS ANALYSIS

### 4.1. SWOT and TOWS Analysis

The SWOT analysis (Strengths, Weaknesses, Opportunities and Threats) determines the external and internal situation of tourism development in Ajara PA's. The TOWS is a complimentary tool that helps generating strategic options, taking advantage of the opportunities, minimizing the impact of weaknesses and reducing the threats.

	STRENGTHS	PLAY STRENGTHS
MANAGEMENT AND GOVERNANCE	Interest of PA's administration in tourism development.	Establish mechanisms for a proper development of sustainable tourism in Ajara PA's.
	Good cooperation between PA's administrations.	Coordination and information sharing among government agencies, increase the effectiveness of tourism planning and management both in the protected areas and in the "support zones". Cooperation between the different levels of administration (regional and national level).
	Good cooperation between Kintrishi and Kobuleti Municipality	Establish improved mechanisms for coordinated decision-making with other regional authorities.
MOBILITY AND ACCESIBILITY	Short distance from Batumi and Kobuleti (important tourism destinations).	Design new nature-based tourism products that can attract some segments. Establish regular minibuses services during the season and promote them in TIC, hotels and cafes.
	Open all year round.	Design activities/products that can be offered in low season.
	Close to the main road / highway.	Improve signage system from Batumi/Kobuleti.

	Close to train station and Batumi international airport.	Locate PA's promotional material at train station/airport
	Close to Turkish border.	Establish cooperation with Turkish authorities.
TOURISM INFRASTRUCTURES	Visitor centres with guest rooms in Kintrishi and Mtirala.	Better management or concession of buildings and promotion to use of these facilities throughout the year.
	Honey house and simple market place in Mtirala NP.	Increase variety of local product in shop, enhance network of product/service suppliers. Promote Blueberry tea and other locally produced items at visitor centres and PA administrations (during trainings, workshops). Arrange local product tastings for hotel/guesthouse managers.
	27 guesthouses around PA's.	Improve sanitarian conditions and facilities based on standards. Establish network of guesthouses under the "umbrella" of PAs. Improve quality standards.
LOCAL COMMUNITIES	Hospitable communities	Train interested community members in tourism related issues (hospitality, quality standards, service, etc.)
	Motivated local population	Enhance involvement of local population in local festivals and events; Arrange exchange practices, study visits to other PAs in Georgia. Provide economic support to local entrepreneurs (small grant programmes).
	Settled territory (especially in Machakhela).	Promote knowledge of traditions and ethnographic values.
TOURISM DEMAND	Mtirala NP is well known	Design quality services and activities to increase economic revenues.
	Visa Regime.	Promote existing facilities to visit Georgia and the Region.

	Attractive place to escape during hot summer.	Define products that allow visitor to escape and relax in nature.
CULTURAL AND NATURAL RESOURCES	Important migratory bird bottleneck.	Develop birdwatching infrastructures and events for bird watchers. Identify specialized bird-watching tour operators/associations and establish cooperation agreements (special offers for groups/guided activities, etc.). Design joint programs with <i>Sakhalvasho village</i> working closely with SABUKO (Society of Nature Conservation, found by GCCW and Batumi Raptor Count). Promotion of the area as a destination for bird watchers.
	Diversity of cultural and natural sites.	Enhance those cultural and natural sites; cooperation with the agency of cultural heritage for restoration and promotion of cultural sites
	Untouched nature.	Promote the natural values of the Protected Areas among locals and visitors. Determination of endemic and unique species to Emphasizing uniqueness of the area
	Kintrishi and Machakhela Rivers.	Develop kayaking or canyoning activities.
	Biodiversity (Brown bear...).	Promote knowledge about PA's biodiversity (educational activities, interpretation).
TOURISM PRODUCTS AND SERVICES	Shelters, tents, sleeping bags are available in Mtirala NP and Kintrishi PA.	Promote tourist services/offers through printing materials, webpages, photo exhibitions, video clips.
	Camping places and places for rest partly organized.	Finalize and improve places for recreation & rest.



	WEAKNESSES	REDUCE WEAKNESSES
MANAGEMENT AND GOVERNANCE	Insufficient coordination among institutions, especially with tourism organizations.	Establish Coordinate and jointly perform promotion and marketing of PAs with GNTA and ATA.
	Limited staff of protected areas for proper tourism development.	Increase staff and develop the tourism related skills of existing staff.
	Lack of professional HR, trainings and study visits.	Formation of hospitality team in PAs administration (common tourism hospitality team for Ajara PAs, Tourism-hospitality manager, promotional/marketing specialist).
	No Management Plans in Machakhela and Mtirala NP.	Need for trained tourism staff (product development, eco-education, communication).
	Low salaries of PAs staff, lack of incentives and low motivation.	Develop incentive system for rangers / staff.
	Obstructive legislation and Centralized system of PAs development of management.	De-concentration in PA management.
	Lack of statistics evidence /inaccurate statistics.	Establish a regular collection of visitor data and publish it annually.
	Low income from tourism, no mechanisms to raise revenues.	Elaboration of income-generation activities and mechanism - discussion of entrance fees in case of Mtirala and Kintrishi), concession & lease fees for visitor centres, cross marketing (in Machakhela case), sponsorship, donation, project revenues, volunteering.
	Language problem of communication with visitors (English language).	Establish permanent courses of English language for PA-s staff.
	No revenue sharing system in the different protected areas.	Establishment of “Friends of Protected Areas Association” in order to support the administration of the “support zone” and fill some financial gaps (case of Kintrishi) and generate revenues.

MOBILITY AND ACCESIBILITY	Bad access road to Mtirala and Kintrishi.	Reconstruction of access road to Mtirala and Kintrishi with cooperation with local municipalities and Ajara Tourism Department (Sakhalvasho's example).
	Lack of road signs.	Enhance cooperation with ATA and other institutions especially in Machakhela gorge where ATA has planned to mark trails.
	Inadequate regular public transport to PA's.	Provide information to visitors about public transportation system to PA through internet. Assess quality of private transportation providers to PA's.
	Poor phone/internet accessibility in Mtirala and Kintrishi.	Improve connectivity system in the PA's, especially around administration buildings. Provide free Wi-Fi.
TOURISM INFRASTRUCTURES	Lack of merchandising and market for the local products (souvenir shops etc.).	Promote local handicrafts.
	Closed hotel in Mtirala and poor results of concession practice.	Elaboration of concession policy (based on tender) or management plan for Mtirala hotel.
	No infrastructure in Machakhela.	Prepare plan of all necessary infrastructure development for Machakhela (administration, visitor centre, picnic & camping places, trail signs and interpretation desks).
	Use of ICT and energy renewable technology.	Provide Wi-Fi free services in Administration Building. Parks information is available in mobile app.
	Medical service is not operational in Mtirala.	Provide medical service, at least in "high season".
	Lack of inclusive tourism infrastructure.	Design and implement inclusive infrastructures.
LOCAL COMMUNITIES	Lack of hospitality skills, knowledge of foreign languages	Define a capacity-building programme for local communities.

	Lack of tourist product and service providers.	Introduction of quality standards' criteria, internal certification of services.
	Lack of product packaging by locals, private tourism sector is not aware properly of tourism potential /accessibility of infrastructure in Mtirala PA's.	Partnerships or agreements with TTOO.
	Little involvement of communities and other stakeholders in the decision-making process in issues affecting protected areas.	Establish similar initiatives as the Regional Advisory Committee in Kintrishi PA (supported by SPPA).
	Difficult access to bank credits & co-investments, social-economic condition of local population.	Develop small grant projects for SMEs development among local population (Kintrishi example) and enhance business opportunities, cooperation with banks for credits with low commission
TOURISM DEMAND	Lack of awareness of Ajara visitors on existing PA's.	Increase cooperation with tourism providers in Batumi and Kobuleti. Develop additional activities to attract visitors. More promotion.
	Lack of integration of Ajara PAs in tour planning of companies and individual tourists.	Short nature impact assessment by nature protection organizations.
CULTURAL AND NATURAL RESOURCES	Cultural and natural values are not adequately promoted.	Design educational activities or events that promote biodiversity, local traditions, etc.
	Lack of cultural & nature events.	
TOURISM PRODUCTS AND SERVICES	Lack of tourism products/diversity for different segments: adventure, families, etc.	Design and implement new quality tourism products.
	Lack of tourist information/promotion of about trails, infrastructure.	Update PAs web sites and tourism maps. Prepare tourism information leaflets & guidebooks, travel magazines. Products –souvenirs (postcards, wall calendar, T-shirt...)
	Lack of uniform marketing system in target PA's.	Establish common branding/ marketing & promotion.

	PA's do not sale products and services.	Look for concessionaires or other type of management of these products.
	Few TTOO's are taking groups in PA's.	Involve TTOO's in tourism development in PA's.
	Lack of English speaking guides.	Implement English courses for guides.
	The existing attractions are not adequately promoted.	Natural and cultural values should be enhanced and well promoted.
	OPPORTUNITIES	ENHANCE OPPORTUNITIES
MANAGEMENT AND GOVERNANCE	International and national cooperation with other protected areas.	Establish cooperation agreement with Jamelli National Park.
	Decentralization of PAs management.	Improving decision-making process on regional level would lead to a more effective management and would increase initiatives and entrepreneurship from management and staff.  Enhance availability to implement initiatives and activities that PAs administration wants to implement on local level. Sell local product/services, rent facilities, hire local guides etc.
	Enhancement of capacities on PA administration	Better involvement of local administration is strategy and action plan development, project implementation etc. and fundraising campaigns will support PAs conservation and mission.
	Establish entrance fees (Increase income).	Establish entrance fee in Mtirala for foreign and local tourists, groups, students & adults, school pupil (like in Batumi Botanic Garden).

<b>MOBILITY AND ACCESIBILITY</b>	Connecting roads.	Develop connecting roads between Mtirala, Machakhela & valleys nearby.
<b>TOURISM INFRASTRUCTURES</b>	New hotel developments in Batumi and Kobuleti offer new collaboration potential.	Conduct FAM trips with hotels administration to promote PA's activities.
<b>LOCAL COMMUNITIES</b>	Rural tourism development.	Increase elementary business knowledge among local community.
<b>TOURISM DEMAND</b>	Disabled/Senior market.	Elaborate at least one offer for disabled persons and older people
	European ecotourists market.	Promote Ajara PA's in specialized fairs.
	Specific marketing of various "Niche"-products (Ecotourism / Bird watching, soft adventure tourism) integration in Tourist Routes for TOs groups (short break/escape from rainy seaside); Tourism destination from Batumi, Kobuleti	Info material distribution in hotels other institutions. Merchandising and development of local products / NP products.
	Cross border and joint Caucasus development of PA's.	Promote transboundary activities between Turkey and Machakhela.
<b>CULTURAL AND NATURAL RESOURCES</b>	Traditions, cultural values, gastronomy.	Define tourism products that enhance local traditions and culture, and promote their knowledge among locals and visitors.
<b>TOURISM PRODUCTS AND SERVICES</b>	Potential for new attractive visitor trails - common trail of three PA's.	Better cooperation between PAs, development of hiking, birdwatching, ethnography/rural tours. Recruit hospitality tourism staff in PAs
	Development of Joint product between Transboundary PA's.	Cross border – Caucasus transboundary PAs (Machakhela - Jamili) tourism development and cooperation.
	Joint ventures with other tourism attractions: Botanical garden, museums, Patronizing PAs by schools or universities etc.	Establish cooperation agreements with other tourism attractions & educational centres.

	THREATS	NULLIFY THREATS
MANAGEMENT AND GOVERNANCE	Lack of carrying capacities estimations and nearly no monitoring.	Monitor visitor impacts and elaborate a carrying capacity study of the protected areas.
	Lack of integration of tourism development and protection activities.	Organize a system to alert PAs administration about accidents. Organize rescue team (train existed rescue team to work in PA's, and service with First Aid tourist routes with interpretation and information, code of conduct, inform visitors about how behave and how to ask for help.
	Reduction of financial resource from International organizations security and safety.	Generate economic revenues through user fees, recreation fees, concession fees, etc.
MOBILITY AND ACCESIBILITY	Congestion of private cars in PA's.	Stimulate the use of public transportation. Establish delimited parking places and charge fees for the use of parking places.
TOURISM INFRASTRUCTURES	Lack of finances for infrastructure maintenance.	Use economic resources from tourism activities in visitor infrastructure maintenance.
LOCAL COMMUNITIES	Tradition and cultural erosion.	Promote local traditions and local values.
	Intensive migration of population from the villages & areas of PA's.	Protect interests of the local communities.
TOURISM DEMAND	International social and political instability.	Promote safe environment in Georgia.
	Economic crisis.	Create and Design products for diverse market segments.

CULTURAL AND NATURAL RESOURCES	Waste pollution.	Elaborate a Waste Management Plan.
	Disruption of eco-system due to large Hydroelectric power station.	Demand of realistic Environmental Impact Assessment.
	Species extinction.	Elaborate regular wildlife monitoring.
	Eco-system destruction.	Conduct visitor impact studies.
	Exaggerated use of natural resources (wood).	Regulate traditional uses within PA's.
	Climate Change.	Maintain PA's ecosystem integrity. Design adaptation plan.
TOURISM PRODUCTS AND SERVICES	Poor quality private sector product can devalue reputation of PA's.	Establish regular quality assessments.

## 5. VALUE CHAIN ANALYSIS

**Value Chain Analysis** is aimed at assessing tourism value chain in Ajara PA's and surrounding areas, identifying interventions that the *Strategy* should take into consideration in order to support value chain strengthening and more involvement of local communities.

Value Chain Analysis traces financial flows - where the financial revenues from tourism currently go and who currently benefit from this. It focuses on local business entrepreneurs and community members who work in PA's and surrounding areas.

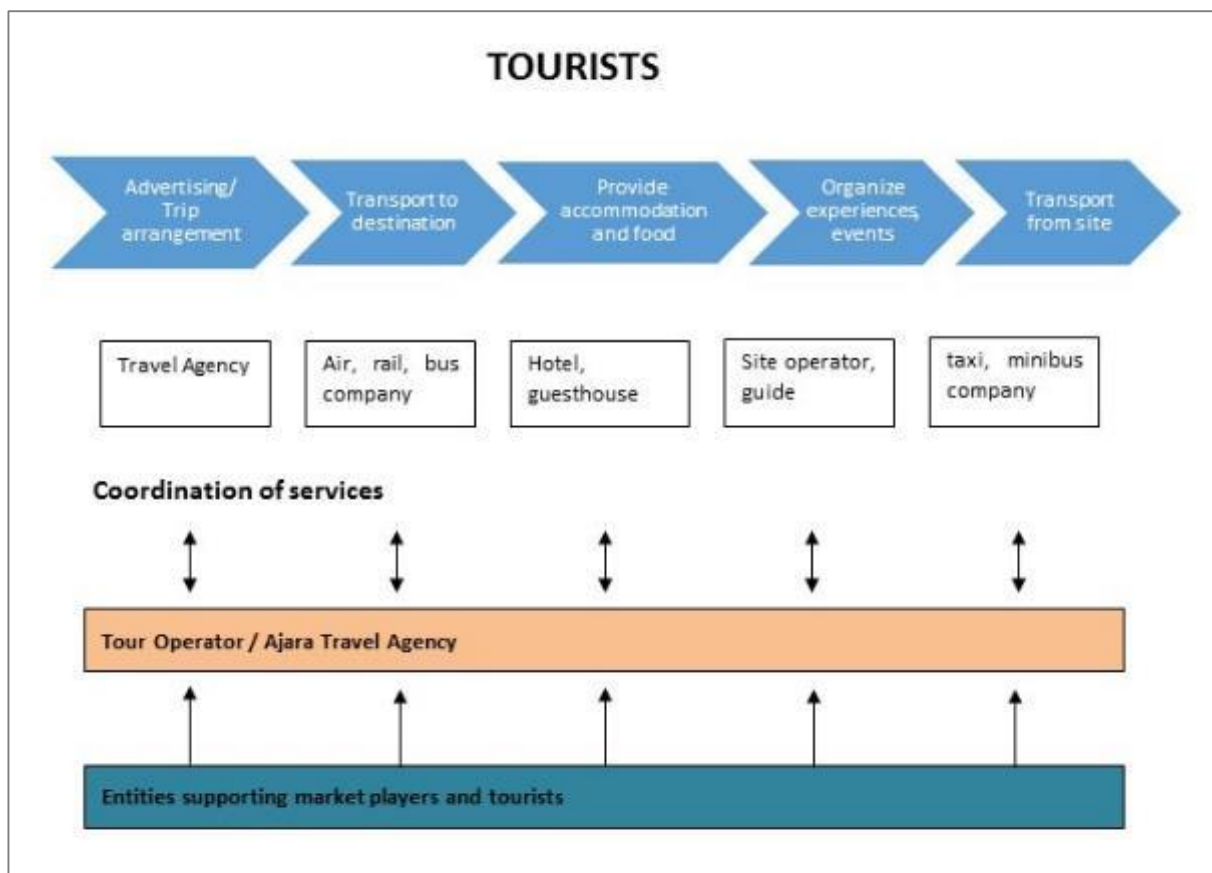


Figure 7: Tourism Value Chain.

The above figure is a graphic illustration of the way different actors participate in the tourism network in Ajara, Georgia and target PA's. The tourism network is represented by **three main parts**:

1. The "tourists or end market" is on top of Value Chain (VC) map.
2. The second part represents the main tourism market players, entities that are directly involved in the VC (including accommodations, services, town operators, activities and transportation); and



3. The bottom part represents the entities that directly support the second part and indirectly support the end market. These supporting entities include state agencies, industry associations, tourism training centres and etc.

In the following pages, it will be detailed how these three levels operate in Ajara PA's:

#### » Tourists (End Market)

According to APA statistics, the number of visitors (locals and foreigners) in target PA's has increased considerably over the last years, as it is reflected in the following figure.

#	PA's	NUMBER OF TOURISTS (2013)	NUMBER OF TOURISTS (2014)	% OF FOREIGN TOURISTS (2014)	VISITORS' COUNTRIES OF ORIGIN	HIGH SEASON
1	Mtiralala	16,453	22,968	30%	Ukraine, Russia, Germany, Poland	VII- IX
2	Kintrishi	3,364	3,896	20%	Ukraine, Russia, Poland, Azerbaijan	VII- IX
3	Machakhela	No records available	3,600*	N/A	N/A	VII- IX
	<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>19,817</b>	<b>30.464</b>			

Table 2: Demand situation in the three project PA's

In addition, **local guesthouse owners** counted around 1,000 people in 2014 using accommodation and catering services for 1-2 nights (in average).

Georgians make up the majority of the visitors, almost 70-80% in Mtiralala and Kintrishi PA's.

#### » Direct Service Providers

##### a) Travel Agencies and TICs

Based on Ajara Tourism Agency data, there are **55 incoming tour agencies registered in the region**. However, 10% of them are active and share 80% of the tourism market in the region. The most popular are: Wonderlands, Calypso travel, Gemini, etc. They mostly offer classic tours throughout Georgia. The most visited places in Ajara are Gonio Fortress, Batumi Botanic Garden and museum, or Mtiralala NP. In **annex 2** is included the list of TTOO offering tourism or natures-based tourism products.

GNTA estimates that the majority of international visitors are individuals organizing their trip by themselves. The share of organized visitors that arrived in organization of TTOOs/TAs does not exceed 30% of total visitors.

The visits to PA's are based mainly on **individual travel arrangements**. APA estimates that PA visitors from tours organized by TTOOs/TAs do not exceed the 15% of the total number of visitors to PA's.

Georgian TTOOs access international tourism market through their foreign partner companies/agencies. They operate like ground operators in Georgia for foreign TTOOs/TAs. Diverse tour products as well as tailor made tours are offered at international travel exhibitions and are also available on companies' websites.

The direct contacts and linkages to foreign travellers are limited. Foreign tourists come to Georgia mostly in groups of 15 to 20 people and stay from 5-7 days. 50% of them choose combined tours with Armenia or Azerbaijan. Tailor made packages are offered for group of three to five persons. Visits and tours to Protected Areas represent in these Georgian TTOOs/TAs about 10-15% of their overall business. The average price per day is from 100-150 \$ including overnight half board and transport. Any of the TTOO see the possibility of specializing exclusively in offering Protected Areas tours.

Based on eco-tourism development strategy, elaborated by TJS/KFW project (2015) the evaluation of TTOOs of tourism characteristics in Protected Areas is very critical (see the table below). All features except natural environment and landscapes and to some extent guest houses received very low notes.

FEATURE	Note (1 to 10)	FEATURE	Note (1 to 10)
Guesthouses/B&B and Services	<b>8</b>	Tourism Information Service	<b>5</b>
Catering facilities*	<b>4</b>	Transport Services	<b>5</b>
Human Resources	<b>4</b>	Environment and Landscape	<b>10</b>
Shopping Offer	<b>0</b>	Internal Signs and Interpretation	<b>4</b>
Navigation and Sign**	-	Cleanliness, Hygienic Services and Toilets	<b>5</b>

Source: Evaluation based on interviews with selected TOs

\* Mostly not available in PAs

\*\* Not tested enough yet

Table 3: Evaluation of Tourism features in PA's by Georgian Incoming TTOO (Status Mid 2014)

38% of Ajara PA's visitors organized the trip with the information obtained from the internet, so internet is one of the major sources of information for travellers visiting Ajara. Therefore, the information on the internet should be improved. Therefore, on-site internet connection and apps for improving the quality of the services can enhance the visitor experience in the PA's.

Once at the destination, visitors count on 8 *Tourism Information Centres*. Batumi has a very good location, nearby Radisson hotel on Black Sea Boulevard. Here guests can find souvenirs, printed information about excursions throughout Ajara region, rent bikes ("BatumiVelo" cards are available at 20 Gel) or cars. Information about PA's and excursions are also available in TIC. Recently, another

TIC was opened in at Batumi airport. Another information centres in Ajara are located in Kobuleti, Sarpi and Khulo.

#### b) Transportation

Getting to Ajara is available by train, public transport and plane. There is an **international airport** in Batumi with a capacity of 500 passengers/hour. Batumi airport is located 2km from the City and it serves both, international and domestic flights. It has direct connections to Turkey, and in 2014 handled 213,841 passengers and 1,599 flights.

Georgia and Turkey have signed an agreement whereby Batumi airport is considered part of Turkey's domestic network, creating a favourable environment for both countries. Georgia has a liberal visa regime; it has a visa waiver for citizens of 94 countries for short-term visit (up to 90 days).

Main **road** to the region is in very good condition. Transportation system in general to Kobuleti and Batumi from Tbilisi is well developed. There are **day and night trains**, public buses from Tbilisi to Batumi. Public minibuses and taxis are also available from regional centres of Georgia.

Getting to Ajara is also available through Samtskhe-Javakheti region: Tbilisi - Gori - Borjomi - Adigeni - Goderdzi Pass - Batumi. The conditions of the Goderdzi Pass road are to be checked when travelling by car in wintertime. It requires an all-terrain/4-wheel drive vehicle.

Public transport to PA's and Upper Ajara is fairly poor. The schedule for regular minibuses is detailed in the following table:

ROUTE		
Batumi-Mtirala-Batumi	2 Departures from Batumi at am (summer season) 1 Departure from Batumi at am (winter season) August > 3 Departures round trip	2 Departures from Mtirala at am (summer season) 1 Departure from Mtirala at am (winter season)
Batumi-Machakhela-Batumi	4-5 Departures from Batumi at am (summer season) 3-4 Departure from Batumi at am (winter season)	4-5 Departures from Machakhela at am (summer season) 3-4 Departure from Machakhela at am (winter season)

Table 4: Schedule for regular minibuses to Ajara PA.

Independent travellers use train/public transport to get to Batumi, Kobuleti and Chakvi. Here local taxi drivers offer transportation service by minibuses and 4x4 cars. It costs 50 Gel for one way and 80 Gel for round trip. Drivers work independently. However, taxis are not regular, drivers are lack of service skills, do not speak English, no information about their service is available in hotels or TICs.

ATA is promoting Mtirala NP in TIC, offering transportation service for small groups and individual tourists. Regular daily minibus service was operational from Batumi to Mtirala last year in July and August by ATA. Now, this service is provided by TIC, or Taxi Private Companies offering calling service: Taxi 2; Taxi 555; Taxi 929 and Taxi +. Their contacts are available at hotels and restaurants. Transportation service charge for Mtirala is 50 Gel or 80 Gel for round trip. As for Kintrishi and Machakhela it is subject to check distances and varies between 50 -100 Gel.

### c) Accommodation

Batumi boasts several international hotel brands: Sheraton and Radisson Blu, Divan Brand. Hilton Garden Inn, Babillon Tower and Crown palace are under construction. There are a total of 10,793 beds at hotels/guesthouses in Ajara region<sup>3</sup>.

However, eco-adventure travellers (target group for PA's) require simple guesthouses, rural accommodations with 3-6 rooms that located in six municipalities of Ajara region. Around 57 guesthouses/hotels in Ajara, from which 27 are located in PAs and surrounding areas with a capacity of 217 beds<sup>4</sup>. In **annex 1** we present the list of guesthouses/rural accommodation around PA's and Upper Ajara. The total number of guesthouses are sufficient for existing tourism demand, but service quality needs improvement.

According to the management plan of MNP, **15% of visitors stay for overnight in the park**, using local guesthouse services, camps and administration building. The figures would reveal that:  $22,968 * 0.15 = 3,445$  would approximately overnight at Mtirala NP. Most of them used guesthouse services for 1-2 nights.

The average price in rural guesthouses is 15-20 Gel without a meal, 25-35 Gel with breakfast, 40-50 half board service and 50-70 Gel with three daily meals. Some of the guesthouse owners offer horse rental, transportation and guide service.

Some of guesthouse owners have experience of receiving domestic and international visitors. They **offer simple, very basic accommodation services at rural houses**, no hot water /indoor bathroom facilities.

**Service standards are not appropriate to international tourism demands.** Almost all can be characterized by poor infrastructure (toilets, showers, kitchen equipment, hitting and old furniture) and insufficient service. **Prices** are not high but **do not meet service level**.

Some guesthouses in Upper Ajara (Nigazaurli, Gobroneti) attended trainings in hospitality tourism & service quality standards conducted by association of ELKANA (within the scope of rural tourism development project 2006-2012). They were checked by experts/inspectors. Those who got Elkana's certificates are placed on RTN webpage ([www.ruraltourism.ge](http://www.ruraltourism.ge)) and catalogue.

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<sup>3</sup> GNTA Data, 2015

<sup>4</sup> ATA, ELKANA and Mercy Corps Data, 2015

Apart from Elkana's trainings guesthouses attended rural tourism hospitality course organized by Ajara Guides association (supported by the Department of Ajara Tourism and Resorts) and Mercy Corps (rural development project in Upper Ajara. SDC).

LOCATION	NUMBER OF ACCOMMODATING FACILITIES	TYPE	NUMBER OF ROOMS/BEDS	PRICES (GEL)	COMMENTS
Mtirala NP	6	Local guesthouses, cottages, shelter	13 rooms / 49 beds	15-50	
Kintrishi NP and around	4	Local guesthouses, recreational complex, cottage	6 rooms/ 18 beds	20-50	The information about new built recreational complex nearby an entrance of Kintrishi is N/A and will be counted form next season
Machakhela NP and around	17	Local guesthouses and hotel	60 rooms / 150 beds	30-70	Including new built hotel in Machakhela
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>27</b>		<b>79 rooms / 217 beds</b>		

Table 5: Number of accommodating facilities in Ajara PA's

The main obstacle among rural service providers is a **language problem and prior reservation, price calculation, accountancy, catering service** (how to make catering service profitable, how to serve or provide visitors with picnic lunch boxes) and **additional services/offers**.

Most of them are not registered as an entrepreneur/tax payer and cannot issue a receipt (this is strongly required by tour operators) upon clients' request. They do not have subscription to the electronic waybill and/or do not have cash register. However, hosts are motivated to improve quality service and attend training courses.

Some of guesthouses have Facebook page. They also are placed on web pages of:

1. Ajara Tourism Agency;
2. Welcome.ge;
3. ELKANA,
4. Ecotourism association
5. GTA.

Ajara Tourism Agency is providing support to guest houses to be present in the internet. Few of them (ZEBO and MTIRALA) are placed on [www.booking.com](http://www.booking.com); [www.tripadvisor.com](http://www.tripadvisor.com); [www.bedandbreakfast.eu](http://www.bedandbreakfast.eu); [www.agoda.com](http://www.agoda.com); [www.airbnb.com](http://www.airbnb.com)

There is no coordination, network of rural entrepreneurs. The capacity of establishment of rural tourism network does not exist. Local population is not capable or motivated to develop common projects. The exception is Kintrishi PA where the development of social and economic projects,

within the framework of SPPA/KfW project, has already established a network of collaborators. This enhances the motivation among locals to work together and collaborate with stakeholders.

d) Catering facilities

Based on field trip findings and interviews with PA administration, it can be stated that one of the purposes of holidaymakers that visit PA's are restaurants and simple catering facilities along the road to PA's. There are around 15 restaurants in Ajara PA's and surrounding areas (five of them opened recently). Most of them are only open during high season. In **annex 3**, the list of catering facilities around PA's is provided.

Owners are local community members providing traditional food, typical to Ajara region. Some of them attended training in food & safety provided by Bar and Restaurants Association (supported by Mercy Corps/SDC project).

Catering facilities are located on the main road to PA's, nearby the river and close to the nature attraction (waterfall, nice landscape). Service and quality of restaurants/café meet basic standards (except Ajara Wine house), menus are available in few restaurants, and existing ones are not presented in foreign languages.

e) Souvenir/Merchandising

Guests are able to find local, traditional souvenirs (made by bamboo and seashell) along the main road (from Kobuleti to Batumi). Locals sell flowers with pots, home-made product such as honey, jam.

Ajara is lacking souvenir shops where tourists are able to purchase local handicrafts and home-made products, and especially locally-produced products (cheeses ...).

There is only one shop, the "Honey House," nearby Mtirala NP with local products (blueberry tea, honey, bamboo cups).

Handicraft is still preserved in Khelvachauri/Machakhela, however, new generation do not follow and are losing these traditions.

f) Other services

Emergency services in the remote villages are limited. There are no ATMs for withdraw money and accommodation facilities and other service providers do not accept credit cards. Main communication source is GSM mobile communication system.

g) Activities

i. Local festivals

Ajara has number of festivals around the year. Target PA's are visited by many Georgians during religious and public festivals and they mainly are held in August and September. These festivals are organized by local government. They are not promoted by APA.

Traditional festivals and events:

- Chakvistavoba in September
- Fest of Chakvi Water Gorge
- Festival of Kintrishi Gorge in August.
- Machackhloba in September

ii. Information Guiding services

There is one professional training organization the Georgian Mountain Guides Association (GMGA) based in Tbilisi with the capabilities to train adventure guides in Georgia; The Georgian Mountain Guides Association is working on a guides' certification system and is planning to establish guides training school in Georgia.

The Georgian Guides Association (GGA) offers variety of training courses for cultural and historical guide trainings, however, courses by GGA are not sufficient and done professionally.

There are no relevant Guides Associations in Ajara and the exiting guides are non-professional.

h) Support industries

Tourism network heavily depends on supporting industries, these include financial services, transportation services, business development services, hospitality services, marketing and advertisement and etc.

Kobuleti Vocational Education Training Centre is a recently developed institution supported by Professional Standards Development centre at Ministry of Education in Georgia. Professional trainings in hospitality, guiding, catering service, home cleaning etc. are conducted on regular basis.

### » Entities supporting and promoting tourism

GNTA is the central national agency for Georgian tourism promotion on international and domestic markets. Its budget for 2014 was 10,400,000 Gel and covers the production of promotion materials, out-door campaigns, TV and internet advertising, participation on travel fairs and FAM trips of TOs/TAs and journalists.

GNTA attended around 19 international travel fairs in 2014, among them 12 in Europe, 2 in neighbouring countries and 5 in Far and Middle East countries. PR campaigns are focused on following countries: Ukraine, Poland, Azerbaijan, Germany, Netherland, Austria, Belarus, and Hungary. Usually, GNTA organizes a presentations stand “*Discover Georgia*” that is shared with DTR, APA, Georgian tour operators, and wine companies that actively promote wine tourism in Georgia.

The website of GNTA ([www.Georgia.travel.com](http://www.Georgia.travel.com)) is informative, well presenting Georgian tourism market. However, there is insufficient information about Protected Areas of Georgia on the web, while "White Resorts of Georgia", "Spa and Entertainment" and others are well submitted.

Ajara as Autonomous Region has the Department of Tourism and Resort, which is involved in the state management of tourism, and resorts in the region. The recently created Ajara Travel Agency is responsible for preparing travel promotional material, developing new products, especially in rural and agrotourism.

The website of the DTR [www.gobatumi.com](http://www.gobatumi.com) has available information on the protected areas, existing guesthouses. However, the level of information provided can be improved.

APA, as the authority for Protected Areas, also plays a role in promoting the area. APA has a very limited budget for promotion, around 150,000 Gel, which represents only 2.4% of the total APA budget. However, the budget for promotion is higher than the revenues obtained from tourism in Protected Areas.

APA produces a good collection of basic information for all and separately for each PA together with their map in uniform corporate design. PA's of Ajara are also well promoted by ATA (Batumi, Ajara guide). The best promotional material presented at travel fairs by APA are "Legends of Nature" (published by TJS/KFW). However, all materials mentioned above are lack of practical travel information. They do not contain useful info about service providers, tour packages/product that can be organized both by locals and by travel agencies.

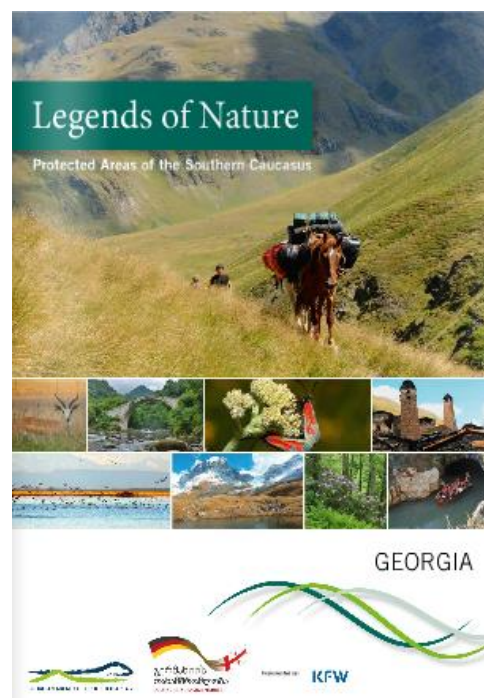


Figure 8. Cover of the brochure “Legends of Nature”



APA annually participates at Caucasus Travel fair (CTF in Tbilisi), Batumi Expo Fair, International Travel fairs in Berlin(ITB), in Spain (FITUR) and London(WTM) together with GNTA and separately in exposition halls dedicated to nature and adventure.

APA organizes each year “awareness raising” campaigns within the domestic market: eco-educational courses- seminars, meetings with students, events such as Green Calendar Events - planting of trees open lessons, eco-tours, eco-camps, cleaning the waste, etc. This experience has been implemented in Ajara PAs.

## 6. POTENTIAL TOURISM SERVICES AND FACILITIES – BUSINESS OPPORTUNITIES

### 6.1. Financial Assessment

The financial assessment of Ajara PA's shows that the PA's receive their funds from three main sources:

1. State government budget funds.
2. Extra-budgetary funds from international organizations: KfW, CNF, etc.
3. PA- generated revenues from tourism activities.

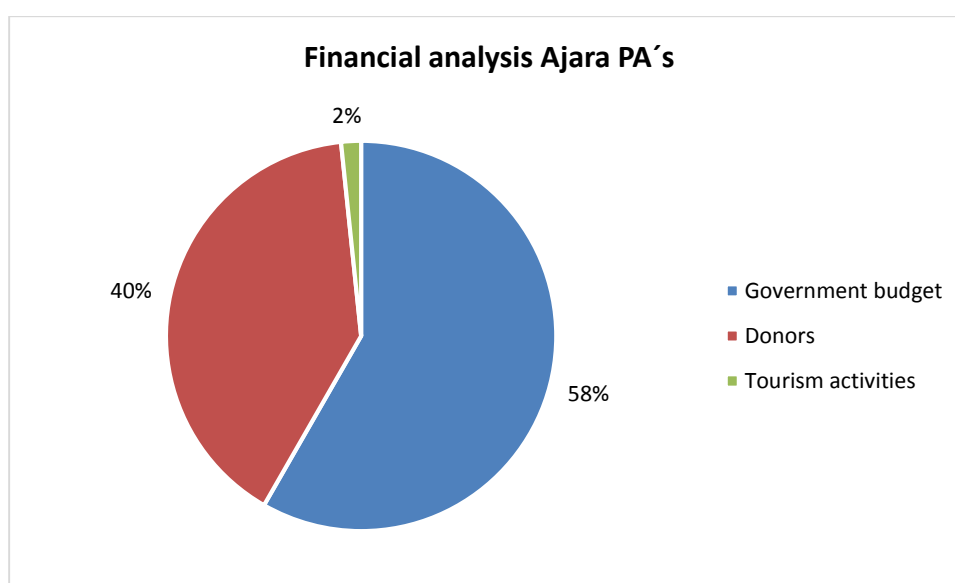


Figure 9: Financial analysis of Ajara PA's. Source: APA and PA's administration

State budget represent the higher percentage in the financial assessment of Ajara PA's with an expenditure per ha. of less than 18 Gel per ha. (for Mtirala NP) as it is shown in the next table:

	Total Expenditure* (Gel)	Surface (ha)	Expenditure/ha. (Gel)
Mtirala NP	280,390	15,608	17.96
Kintrishi PA	197,092	13,893	14.19
Machakhela NP	76,700	8,733	8.78

\* Donors and state budget

Table 6: Expenditure per ha. in Ajara PA in 2014. Source: APA

Currently, the site-based generated PA revenues in Ajara PA's amount to 9.287<sup>5</sup> Gel representing 2% of the total available funds for Ajara PA's, which is almost insignificant.

<sup>5</sup> Data from 2014

Mtiralala NP generates 86% of the revenue from tourism activities while Kintrishi generates 14%, Machakhela does not offer any tourism activity yet, and generates not income from tourism.

The generation of revenues from tourism activities does not mean that the amount collected can be reinvested in conservation or tourism infrastructures in the PA's. The amount received is sent to APA who is in charge of redistributing the revenues among the Georgia PA's. In 2014 Machakhela received 12,500 Gel from APA's revenue, which is accounted as Government budget in the above figure.

Services offered	COST (Gel)*		AMOUNT RECEIVED (2014)	
	Mtiralala	Kintrishi	Mtiralala	Kintrishi
Guest room in Visitor Centre	40 per day	-	1,480	0
Conference hall	100 per day	-	-	-
Overnight in tourist shelter	12 per person/day	11 per person/day	725	770
Zip line	15 per person	-	2,115	0
Camp site	4 per person/day	3.25 per person/day	908	90
Picnic site	7.5 for 5 people/ 12.5 for 10	8 per person	2,410	360
Tent	8 per day	6.5 per day	166	5
Sleeping bag	3 per day	3 per day	212.84	25
Backpack	3 per day	3 per day	-	15
Horse service	-	27.5 per day	-	-
Maps				6
<b>TOTAL</b>			<b>8,016</b>	<b>1,271</b>

» Average cost as they are different prices according to number of people, etc.

Table 7: Services offered by Ajara Pas and revenues received in Gel in 2014. Source: APA

Most of the revenues from Mtiralala derived from picnic sites, zip line, campsites and accommodation in the Visitor Centre. In Kintrishi revenues come mostly from overnight in the tourism shelter and picnic sites.

The revenues generated from picnic sites reveal the importance of day-trippers and are related with predominance of domestic market in these areas. Revenues from the services offered are low, directly related with the low number of visitors received.

Without appropriate funds, PA's cannot develop tourism infrastructures, hire or train staff, manage or patrol the areas, research cannot be conducted, etc. Therefore, additional economic revenues should be raised to contribute to the financial sustainability of the Ajara PA's. Supplementary sources that can be used to generate economic income include: entrance fees, recreational fees (campsites, tours), income from concessions to tourism operators, (accommodation, catering services, etc.), sales of souvenirs, donations, etc.

Apart from increasing tourism related revenues in protected areas, it should be ensured that these revenues are allocated for PA's management and conservation. If revenues from tourism flow back

to PA's or are retained in the PA's instead to central government, it can be ensured that these resources are used to minimize the negative impacts from increased visitation. A more rational system should be implemented to increase effectiveness in the management of tourism in the Ajara PA's.

## 6.2. Investment Requirements and Income Opportunities

Investments in Ajara PA's are required in a wide range of areas: to hire staff, to improve accessibility, for capacity building, research and monitoring, marketing and promotion, and to develop needed infrastructures for tourism development.

Important levels of investment in PA's infrastructure must be achieved to improve the attractiveness of the areas. As it has been stated, tourism income can be augmented by increasing visitor numbers and especially offering better services.

### » DEVELOPMENT OF INFRASTRUCTURES AND SERVICES

When developing new infrastructures and services in Ajara PA's, there are several issues that should be taken into account:

- i. Infrastructures should interfere as little as possible with the natural ecosystem.
- ii. Structures should not dominate the natural surrounding and should, where possible, reflect local traditions and local materials.
- iii. Environmentally-friendly design should be applied to building design, construction and functioning. Considering waste minimization, energy and water saving, renewable energies, etc.

### » *Proposed infrastructures, facilities and services for Ajara PA's:*

#### 1. TRAILS

Currently, Mtirala and Kintrishi offer two trails (four in total) for hiking (and also for horse riding) in the PA's. Both Parks have short and long trails, for the long trails two days of hiking are needed. These trails present a series of weaknesses:

- Lack of directional signs. Some of them are in bad condition.
- There are no interpretation materials along the route.
- Places of interest are not marked.

The existing trails should be improved taking into account these considerations.

Additional recreational trails should be designed and implemented in the three project PA's. These trails should accommodate a range of walking abilities, as many visitors are families with children and the trails should be easy and short for this market, and interests.

Also one-way flow off traffic (circular or loop trails) should be considered in the new-designed trails.

- Main attractions of points of interest should be identified for the trail design.
- Trails for day-trippers should be short that should include resting areas.
- Habilitate refuges or mountain shelters for long distances.
- If possible, the potable water sources should be identified.

It is recommended that a trail joining the three PA's is promoted. Currently, there is a route that joins Kintrishi PA and Mtirala NP, it is also possible to hike to Machakhela NP. These route can be a good attraction to more adventurous hikers. The route should be done in different days, combined with accommodation in local guesthouses.

The potential of developing trails for mountain biking should be assessed. There are professional associations for mountain biking that can provide support and recommendations.

## **2. DIRECTION INDICATORS/INFORMATIVE AND INTERPRETIVE FACILITIES**

Directly related to trails are **direction indicators** (directional signs) which should be located at crossing points and in confusing sections. There should be a standard manual for the style of those indicators and signage for the Georgia/Ajara PA's. These indicators should be written at in Georgian and English (if necessary).

Informative and interpretive facilities can also be used to influence visitor behaviour and should be used for conservational and educational purposes. Interpretation is very important for the development of nature-based tourism and attention should be paid to develop thematic trails with interpretation boards about flora, fauna, landscape features, etc.

## **3. MAPS AND PROMOTIONAL MATERIAL**

The **maps** should include relevant information about distance, difficulty, highlight main stops, safety information, recommendations (what to wear, water needs, etc.).

## **4. VIEW POINTS**

The PA's have an impressive landscape, surrounded of mountains and scenic views. These views should be promoted by locating adequate view points from which visitors can enjoy the landscape. The viewpoints should also include information/interpretation panels describing the area.



Figure 10: Example of a view point that would fit in Machakhela area.

Some of these viewpoints can become an attraction for the visitors in the area. Machakhela for the special characteristics of the area can be a good place to located one attractive viewpoint.

## 5. PARKING FACILITIES

Ajara PA's are accessible with public transportation, however, the service is not regular and reliable. Many visitors (especially to Mtirala NP) arrive by car. In order to prevent congestions and pollution, park facilities should be provided, designating areas for cars where impacts from car parking can be minimized. The provision of parking facilities can also be a source of income for the Park (introduction of parking fees).

## 6. ACCOMMODATION

Although most of the visitors to Ajara PA's are one-day visitors, local people living in PA's can provide small-scale accommodation options to travellers. This accommodation can be combined with the possibility of experiencing the authentic rural way of life (offering local products, tasting local dishes, etc.).

- a. Local entrepreneurs should be financially and technically supported for the provision of accommodation services: *local guesthouses*. This support should be directly related to the existing demand and to a sustainable number of beds to be offered within the premises of the PA's. An inadequate number of accommodation facilities (the offer is higher than the demand) may lead in disappointment from the local providers as they do not meet the expectations.
- b. *Camping facilities*: The provision of comfortable accommodation in campsites allows visitors to enjoy direct contact with nature and to enjoy the natural heritage. In addition, sustainable and ecologic public toilets should be considered.

- c. *Shelters*. These shelters should be constructed in case of new long trails. One of these shelters could be located close to Lake Tbiliki in Kintrishi. In addition, cabins for families would be needed in Mtirala area.
- d. *Public toilets* should be considered near the camping/shelter facilities. Composting toilets in remote areas economise on water and also prevent sewage seeping through the ground.

» **DEVELOPMENT OF NEW TOURISM ACTIVITIES**

- i. *Bird-watching* has an enormous potential in the area. More than 1,000,000 raptors are counted every year in the area, however this activity is not adequately promoted. Bird-watching is a tourism market niche with important economic potential in the area. In order to promote this activity, special facilities should be provided such as bird-observatories, hideouts, interpretive panels, etc.
- ii. *Water sports*. Kintrishi and Machakhela rivers offer opportunities to develop water sports such as kayaking or rafting.
- iii. *Guiding services*. Tour guiding provides a great opportunity to experience any protected area, and it is an added value to the visit. Currently, there are no official guides in the area and this service is provided by locals without particular competences.
- iv. *Geocaching activities/events*. Geocaching is an outdoor game that uses GPS enabled devices to find hidden containers, known as geocaches, in certain locations. According to authors,<sup>6</sup> this activity is practiced by 6 million of geocachers worldwide. Most of the geocachers prefer to practice this activity in natural areas. This practice can be regulated according to an operational policy to minimise impact, for instances, placing the cache in non-sensitive areas that may interfere with wildlife, vegetation, etc. This activity can be enjoyed the families, organized groups, young, etc. These geocaches should have an educational function providing information regarding PA's flora, landscape, etc. This activity should be promoted from PA's.
- v. *Events*. These events can be related to local products such as honey, related to worldwide celebrations (Earth Day, World Environmental Day) or event to season changes. The events should have an educational component and count on the direct participation of local communities.

In addition to these new activities, the recently developed canyoning trail in Mtirala NP should be operational and promoted.

Also new recreational services for hard-adventurers should be developed in target PA's. Such kind of activities would also help to increase the number of visitors, providing uniqueness to the area.

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<sup>6</sup> Geocaching activity within protected vs. recreation urban areas. Santos, et al. (2014)

There are several sources of income available from protected areas as it can be shown in the next figure.

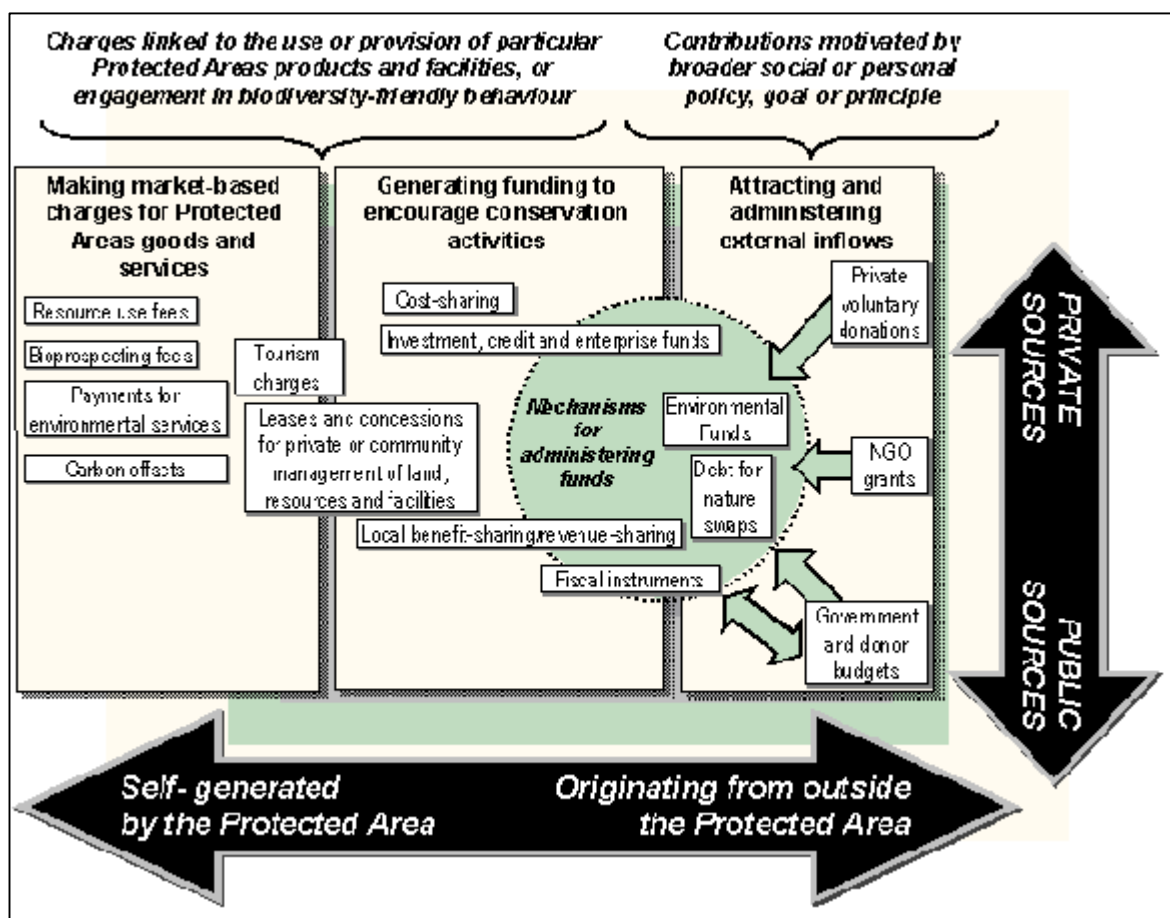


Figure 11: Typology of protected areas funding mechanisms. Source: Emerson (2006)

In this Strategy **Income Opportunities** for Ajara Protected Areas should come from two main sources: (1) from tourists visiting the PA's that should make an economic contribution paying for some services, and entrance fees in Mtirala NP; and (2) from businesses, that is, concessions on activities that can take place in the PA's.

These are further explained as follows:

#### » VISITORS:

- a. Entrance fees: Although there is an opposition from certain sectors on establishing entrance fees, especially from private operators, entrance fees can be a good system of obtaining economic revenues. Other sectors also claim that nature should be accessible to everybody as it is a public good. However, entrance fees are considered an important tool to increase the economic income from tourism activities. Most of the world's protected areas either do not charge any entrance fees, due to customary rights and "freedom of access" legislation, or charge low entry and user fees.



However, current trends also indicate a continued reduction in the proportion of state/public budgets allocated to protected areas while revenues from tourism are increasing.

Imereti (Sataplia and Prometheus caves) are charging entrance fees since 2011 and 2012 respectively. Imereti caves in 2013 raised 918,984 Gel from tourism, which is about 90% of all tourism revenues in PA's. The number of visitors has not decreased as a consequence of establishing the entrance fees.

In 2012, NACRES conducted a study on entrance fees for Tusheti Protected Areas, which reported the negative attitude of Tushetians to introduce entrance fees for Georgians. In relation to visitors, locals were majority against fees while more than 60% of foreign visitors were in favour.

It is recommended that a pilot entrance fees system is established in Mtirala NP, this PA already receives an important number of visitors that it is impacting in the quality of life of local communities. Prior to the establishment of the entrance fee, an awareness raising campaign should be developed in order to explain to locals and visitors the reasons behind the establishment of the fees and main objectives.

However, entrance fees should not be implemented until better services are offered, also a "*Willingness to Pay*" survey could be relevant to determine the level of fee to be implemented.

- b. Recreational services: There are several activities that can be offered to visitors against a small price such as:
- i. *Park entry fees*, currently there are not parking services being offered by the Ajara PA's, however, tourists visiting Mtirala NP are using the area in front of the visitor centre as a parking place causing some congestion in the area, and disturbance among local communities. Identify an area for parking would be needed in the three PA's. In addition, a fee should be charged for using this service, in addition to generate some income this fee would also encourage visitors to use public transportation to visit the PA's.
  - ii. *Picnic sites and shelters/family cabins*. These activities are already contributing to generate income in the PA's. Prices should be reviewed if services are improved.
  - iii. *Equipment rental (sleeping bags, binoculars, backpacks, sticks for hiking)*. The level of revenues created with this item might not be relevant, however it should be regarded as an added value provided by the PA's to the visitors travelling long distances that cannot carry all items with them. Additional items can be rented as proposed.

- iv. *Fees from renting of facilities (conference rooms).* Currently, Mtirala National Park count on an Administration Building with appropriate meeting room that is being underutilized. The Meetings and Incentives market in the area can be a source of business opportunities for this space. The rental of the facilities can also be accompanied by the visit to the area.
- c. Donations. It is an additional way to raise funds for Ajara PA's, voluntary contributions can also help to improve conservation and maintenance of infrastructures in PA's.

#### » BUSINESS:

**Concession** is defined in this point as a “*lease, license or permit for an operation undertaken by any party other than the APA*”. Concession is a good system of generating economic revenues, equally, it allows the PA's staff to concentrate in their core business while tourism private sector can manage services such as lodging, souvenir shops, guided tours, etc. Fees collected from “concessionaires” would generate the income.

Concession activities that can be awarded in Ajara PA's are: accommodation facilities, kayaking, canoeing, biking, 4x4 tours, horse riding,

Based on existing legislation (*Georgian Government Regulation # 125, based on the Law on Protected Areas of Georgia*), APA could determine an initial tender price for PA facilities and give it on concession. These facilities should be ready to use before renting them.

In case of Mtirala, APA plans to delegate the local administration the management of their facilities in Mtirala NP instead of give it on concession; however, for its sustainability, product sale and marketing, the collaboration with private businesses, especially local, is highly recommended.

The use of concessions offers many **benefits** for PA's:

- i. Facilitates the provision of additional visitor services that the protected area agency could not otherwise afford to provide.
- ii. Concessionaires are professionals in the tourism industry and have the knowledge to bring visitors to their business.
- iii. Can generate employment for the local population.
- iv. Well-regulated concessions can ensure the efficient management of tourism facilities.
- v. Increases the investment of private sector, and provides income for the protected area to reinvest in conservation or visitor service programs.

The components of a successful concession system are summarized in the following figure:



Figure 12: Components of a concession system. Source: UNDP

Transparency, fair decision making are important principles for concessions, it has to be ensured that potential concessionaires are informed correctly about the process correctly, all needed information is available (criteria for decision making, contract terms, selection process, etc.).

Although there are not many studies about concessions in PA's, existing data from other countries reveal that concessions can be a good source of revenues.

Despite of the opportunities offered by the establishment of concessions there are not many successful examples in Georgian PA's. However, there are some examples that can be used as models:

1. **Tusheti PA:** APA announced the tender for Tusheti visitor centre and the cafe and souvenir shop in 2013 for a period of concession of 10 years.

The tender requirements included:

- Investment (one-time): 15 000 Gel in infrastructure/maintenance during the first year. Business plan of maintenance has to be arranged with APA.
- Minimum fee: 350 Gel per month; 30 % of income during travel season (July - October). Concessioner: preferable local business representative.

The concessionaire is a local woman (entrepreneur) who started her own hospitality business in Omalo (where the administration centre, hotel, cafe and souvenirs' corner is

located). Her contribution to APA's budget in 2014 was 4,432 Gel plus 15,000 Gel investment.

According to the head of Tusheti PA administration, on-going obligations in this 10-year agreement have been performed well, just one theme/subject to discuss (or consider in Ajara case) is that APA or Tusheti PA administration has no mechanism to control/check annual revenue if 30% of income is fully paid by concessionaire.

**2. Uplistsikhe Historical – Architectural Museum- Reserve.** Concession of the cafeteria and gift shop. This model was developed after almost four years of work. Key elements in this model were:

- a. Mobilization of local staff
- b. Understanding of successful examples and adaptation to existing reality
- c. Research of tourist market
- d. Identification of product
- e. Elaboration of a business plan
- f. Preparation of tender documentation relevant to the Georgian legislation

Before the tender was published, clear rules and standards were elaborated for working procedures, payments, monitoring process, and products to be offered

Currently, business concessions in Ajara PA's are not used as a source of revenue. Mtirala awarded for exploitation the accommodation facilities in the Visitor Centre but the results were not satisfactory and over the last year accommodation facilities were not operational.

Due to the limited references in Georgia for concessions, the appropriate model for Ajara PA's should be defined with contributions and inputs from PA's, tourism providers, lawyers and other specialists. However, some recommendations are included

- A careful evaluation of the business opportunity should be done before preparing the tender. The concession fee to be established should not be high in the beginning, at it should increase as revenues also increase. This would help the concessionaire in his/her initial stages.
- Concession should be awarded through a competitive bid process in which technical/environmental aspects are evaluated.
- Medium-term concessions would be preferred (up to 5-8 years with possibilities of extension). If concessions include infrastructure construction the concession should be given for longer periods (up to 15 to 20 years).
- Opportunity should be given to locals to obtain these concessions. In any case, it is recommended that the concessionaire include corporate social responsibility aspects such as the commitment to train and employ locals, etc.
- The concession agreement should include environmental requirements (for any commercial activity an environmental impact assessment or carrying capacity study should be elaborated).

- Establish in the tender clear and detailed standards and requirements to be accomplished.
- Payment and monitoring mechanisms should be clearly stated.
- The maintenance of the infrastructure should be a liability of the concessionaire.
- Clear criteria for tender award have to be defined. The criteria should include following concepts:
  - a. Managerial and technical competence.
  - b. Experience related to the tourism industry.
  - c. Corporate Social Responsibility (CSR) including commitment to employ local people, provide training, gender equality, provide adequate salaries.

For example, for Mtirala NP, if the hotel is given on concession and the potential concessionaire rents the existing 4 rooms almost every weekend of the year (probably for 10 months per year, 50 nights x 4 rooms + 100 Gel per room) her/his turnover would be 20,000 Gel. Staff and transportation costs would amount to approximately 6,000 Gel/year). With a concession fee (which should be no less than 10% of annual turnover) profit would be between 9,000-10,000 Gel/year, including a considerable risk to fill the hotel on 50 nights per year). High season and high tourist demands in July - September will increase turnover and income and business is quite optimistic.

## 7. STRATEGIC PLAN

### 7.1. Vision, Mission and Goals

#### » VISION

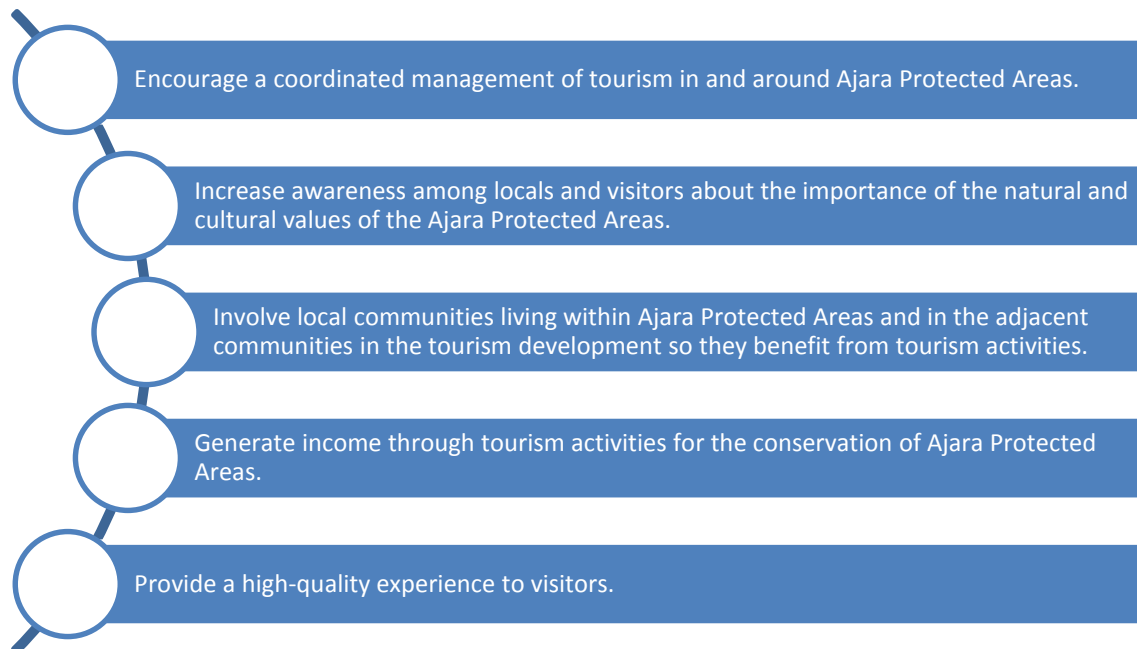
The **VISION** of the Ajara PA's is: "By 2020 Ajara Protected Areas will be recognized as a valuable nature destination that promotes the conservation and knowledge of Ajara unique ecosystems providing high quality experience for visitors and the well-being of the local communities"

#### » MISSION

The **MISSION** of Ajara PA's is to enhance the financial sustainability and the environmental conservation of Ajara PA's through the promotion of sustainable tourism activities that positively impact in the area's economy and wellbeing.

#### » GOALS

Based on the established vision, the goals of the *Ajara Sustainable Tourism Strategy and Action Plan* are:



## 7.2. Strategy

Five Strategic Lines with their objectives have been identified to meet the overall goals and to contribute to the vision of the Ajara PA's. Setting clear, measurable, specific, relevant and achievable objectives is important for a successful Strategy.

The *Strategy* is aimed for the period 2016-2020, it has been considered as a medium-term strategy, as the PA's are being configured as an emerging destination and therefore long-term planning would not suit their needs. The Strategy should be monitored regularly in order to be adjusted to emerging needs or to the changing reality.

### Strategic Line 1: Management and Governance

- **OBJ. 1.1.** A participatory structure in which PA's and tourism related stakeholders can work together is developed.
- **OBJ. 1.2.** Improve the financial management of Ajara PA's
- **OBJ. 1.3.** Income generation from tourism activities increases by 70% by the end of 2020.
- **OBJ. 1.4.** Ensure conservation approach in project PA's.

### Strategic Line 2: Capacity Building

- **OBJ. 2.1.** Increase knowledge of PA's staff in sustainable tourism and environmental issues.
- **OBJ. 2.2.** Increase local communities' knowledge about Ajara PA's.
- **OBJ. 2.3.** By 2020 there will be at least 15 certified Tour Guides.

### Strategic Line 3: Accessibility and Safety

- **OBJ. 3.1.** Improve accessibility to Ajara PA's.
- **OBJ. 3.2.** Transportation to PA's from Batumi and Kobuleti is regular and reliable.
- **OBJ. 3.3.** Ajara PA's are considered to be a safe place.

### Strategic Line 4: Marketing and Promotion

- **OBJ. 4.1.** Increase awareness about Ajara PA's at national and international level.
- **OBJ. 4.2.** Information related to Ajara PA's is easy accessible through new technologies.
- **OBJ. 4.3.** Visitors are able to buy locally produced "souvenirs".

### Strategic Line 5: Product and infrastructure development

- **OBJ. 5.1.** New infrastructures and facilities are built in Ajara PA's.
- **OBJ. 5.2.** New products and services are available for main tourism segments.
- **OBJ. 5.3.** Increase environmental awareness among locals and visitors.
- **OBJ. 5.4.** Tourism services providers associated to PA's comply with defined quality standards.

## 8. ACTION PLAN

### STRATEGIC LINE 1: MANAGEMENT AND GOVERNANCE

The concepts of management and governance are closely linked, however, there are some important differences. While management refers to what and how has to be done to achieve given objectives, governance is defined by IUCN as *“the interactions among structures, processes and traditions that determine how power and responsibilities are exercised, how decisions are taken and how citizens or other stakeholders have their say”*.

Effective management will be the engine of tourism development in the project PA's, it is therefore crucial to establish an adequate structure for the successful implementation of the *Strategy* and the achievement of the set goals. This structure should be participative, involving a broad range of relevant stakeholders such as regional government, municipalities, local communities, etc.

This structure would be key in addressing some relevant challenges for the effective development of tourism in Ajara PA's such as establishing an agreement with APA for tourism revenue sharing, designing a model for concessions, etc.

**OBJECTIVE 1.1: A participatory structure in which PA's and tourism related stakeholders can work together, is developed.**

Action	Create a participatory multistakeholder platform in Ajara, especially with DTR	1.1.1
<b>Justification</b> In order to implement the <i>Ajara Sustainable Tourism Strategy and Action Plan</i> , strong cooperation with stakeholders - regional government, private sector, local communities and the protected areas is needed. Mutual cooperation and regular discussion with knowledge and understanding will support and promote tourism in the Region and the Protected Areas.		
<b>Description</b> There is a Regional Advisory Council (recently established) at the Department of Tourism and Resorts of Ajara that can play a key role in cooperation between PA administrations and DTR. The RAC unites representatives of private sector and municipalities and facilitates public and private dialogue on the tourism issues. New members can apply for membership in spring 2016 and APA should be one of them. This organization is a participatory structure, through which key stakeholders can discuss specific actions from the Strategy and implement common activities in a coordinated way. This is a partnership of different organizations and interests working together towards a common goal.  Some common activities such as signage system, PR and marketing that are discussed at meetings should be included in PA's management plans. Coordination role on regional level should be taken by local administrations of APA by regular permanent collaboration with DTR. The projects should focus on enhancement of the capacities of visitor specialists who will attend RAC meetings, train them in PR and collaboration and communication skills.		



<p>It is recommended that this Council meets at least four times a year. Although the Council meets at DTR premises, it would be desirable that at least once per year the meetings are held at PA's premises (Mtirala Administration, etc.)</p> <p><b>Roles and responsibilities:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>– Inform other stakeholders about decisions-made</li> <li>– Exchange information, define common goals and include in management plans</li> <li>– Identify the required financial resources to implement the Tourism Strategy</li> <li>– Increase eco-awareness of the society</li> <li>– Marketing and Promotion</li> <li>– Provide unbiased insights and ideas from a third point-of-view (not involved in the operation of the business &amp; management)</li> <li>– Encourage and support the strategy plan</li> <li>– Provide social networking platform for PA &amp; DTR</li> <li>– Encourage the development of a governance framework that enable sustainable growth</li> </ul>			
<p><b>Activities involved</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Meetings with RAC (request to become a RAC member should be officially done).</li> <li>• Administrative work (collaboration in the agenda, minutes of meeting, etc.).</li> <li>• Define common actions that should be considered in the Ajara PA's management plans.</li> <li>• Reporting.</li> </ul>			
<b>EXPECTED RESULTS</b>	An agreed Annual Operating Plan for tourism development in Ajara PA's, which is successfully implemented.		
<b>AGENTS INVOLVED</b>	Department Tourism and Resorts of Ajara AR Ajara Environmental Department Municipalities of Ajara Ajara PA's administrations/APA Tourism Private Sector (TTOO/TA, hotels, restaurants, etc.) Local Communities NGOs		
<b>COORDINATOR</b>	Department Tourism and Resorts of Ajara AR		
<b>ASSESSMENT INDICATORS</b>	Number of meetings held.		
<b>EXECUTION TIME</b>	2016-2020	<b>PRIORITY</b>	HIGH <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> MEDIUM <input type="checkbox"/> LOW <input type="checkbox"/>
<b>BUDGET</b>	900 Gel/year		

## OBJECTIVE 1.2: Improve the financial management of Ajara PA's

Action	Elaborate simple business plans with APA for expected tourism revenues and expenditures		1.2.1
<b>Justification</b> <p>Revenues from tourism activities in Ajara PA’s are collected and sent to APA that will later redistribute the income. This centralized system has positive and negative effects. On the one hand allows redistribution to other PA’s, in the other hand, this centralized system leads to a lack of initiatives and entrepreneurship of PA’s management and staff, and it is not possible with the current regulatory framework to reinvest raised income.</p> <p>Although there is an existing debate about the need of de-concentration, it is claimed that PA’s administrations lack the necessary skills to manage their own budget. In order to solve this, apart from build the capacities, it would be important that PA’s staff take the first steps in business planning.</p>			
<b>Description</b> <p>With the creation of new services and products the Ajara PA’s will be able to raise the economic income derived from tourism. Currently, there are limited options to do this as the existing legislation does not allow the revenue retention on site., another obstacle are also the capacities of local administration to manage tourism revenues and make further planning. However, this is a long-term recommendation for increasing the sustainability of the Protected Areas.</p> <p>In order to make tourism in Ajara PA’s more de-concentrated and effective, it is proposed to start with a simple business planning with budget, and estimations about how much revenues are expected from tourism and how much should be re-invested for further development. Business plans have to be prepared by local administration staff and discussed with APA. Improve the capacity of protected area administration staff in business and financial planning is essential for the de-concentration and revenue sharing process in the future. For the preparation of the business planning, it is important to start collecting statistical data in a more systematic way. Data regarding income derived from tourism activities, number of tourists received, etc.</p>			
<b>Activities involved</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Meetings with APA.</li><li>• Collection of data: economic income from existing tourism activities, number of tourists (for typology, country of origin, etc.),...</li><li>• Elaboration of the business plans.</li></ul>			
EXPECTED RESULTS	More effective economic planning for tourism development in Ajara PA’s		
AGENTS INVOLVED	APA Ajara PA’s administration		
COORDINATOR	APA		
ASSESSMENT INDICATORS	Annual business plans		
EXECUTION TIME	2018-2020	PRIORITY	HIGH <input type="checkbox"/> MEDIUM X LOW <input type="checkbox"/>
BUDGET	10,500 Gel /year		

**OBJECTIVE 1.3: Income generation from tourism activities increase by 70% by end of 2020**

Action	Design and implement a mechanism for generating revenues from tourism (Tourism User Fees)	1.3.1
<p><b>Justification</b></p> <p>In order to enhance the management effectiveness and the financial sustainability of Ajara PA's it is recommended to develop self-financing schemes, in addition to receiving state funding from the central budget and funds from international institutions/donors.</p> <p>A well-designed system of fees can contribute to generate enough income to be reinvested in conservation, maintenance of infrastructures, or environmental programs. Moreover, there are other activities that can help to generate economic income for the Ajara PA's.</p>		
<p><b>Description</b></p> <p>The increase of revenues will be originated from (1) the increase of number of visitors, (2) the expanded and/or newly developed tourism products and services, (3) the introduction of entrance fees and (4) with efficient management of tourism - hospitality facilities.</p> <p>Except direct increase of revenues, there is a wide range of indirect economic effects of tourism visits in PA's. The visitors in PA's use minivans, 4x4 cars from local drivers and taxi company, make a stop in the restaurants and shop, use local guesthouses for accommodation and buy product from locals. Farmers can benefit from selling their products to restaurants or directly to visitors.</p> <p>Tourism direct and indirect effects can contribute to improve livelihood of population living around PA's, and this should be enhanced by improving cooperation between various stakeholders from private-business and from public-administration sector.</p> <p>Defining the sources and mechanisms to generate revenues is also part of the financial planning process, and each PA should define, based on their advantages and disadvantages, which options are most appropriate to generate revenues.</p> <p><b>Potential sources of tourism revenue in Ajara PA's:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Entrance fees for visitors (in Mtirala)</li> <li>• Concessions and lease for service development (visitor centre with hotel, camping with small infrastructure, etc. -)</li> <li>• Travel packages/ offers for visitors (transportation, trails, event, picnic sites, etc.)</li> <li>• Equipment rental (tents, binoculars)</li> <li>• Merchandise sales (Mtirala NP products, souvenirs, such as cups, T-shirts, caps...)</li> <li>• Parking fees</li> <li>• Cross product selling (accommodation in Kobuleti and Batumi hotels &amp; visit PAs; etc.)</li> <li>• Sponsorship &amp; Donations</li> </ul> <p>Some of these sources are further analysed in Chapter 6.</p>		
<p><b>Activities involved</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Identify suitable sources of tourism revenues for each PA.</li> <li>• Elaborate a Plan to introduce the defined mechanisms.</li> </ul>		

<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Present the Plan to relevant stakeholders.</li> <li>• Implement the activities included in the Plan.</li> </ul>			
<b>EXPECTED RESULTS</b>	Several sources of revenues are identified to be cost-effective for the Ajara PA's.		
<b>AGENTS INVOLVED</b>	DTR Ajara PA's administrations Local communities		
<b>COORDINATOR</b>	APA		
<b>ASSESSMENT INDICATORS</b>	Visitor registration forms Annual revenues		
<b>EXECUTION TIME</b>	2016-2018 (Planning and Implementation)	<b>PRIORITY</b>	HIGH <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> MEDIUM <input type="checkbox"/> LOW <input type="checkbox"/>
<b>BUDGET</b>	1,800 Gel (planning)		

<b>Action</b>	<b>Elaboration a property/service rental framework for Ajara PA's based on concessionaries' professional experience in tourism business</b>	<b>1.3.2</b>
<p><b>Justification</b></p> <p>Concession or renting a property for some period of time could be a good system of generating economic revenues for Ajara PA's. It allows the PA's staff to concentrate in their core business while tourism private sector can manage services such as lodging, souvenir shops, guided tours, etc. The income would be generated by fees collected from "concessionaires".</p> <p>It should be ensured that concessionaires are either professionals with relevant experience in the business or local communities, for providing them an opportunity to generate income.</p> <p>Best practices for tourism concessions include to define <b>the qualifications</b> (tourism experience, languages, education level, etc.), <b>legal and financial</b> (fines, concession user fee, income requirements, maintenance responsibility, etc.), <b>environmental</b> (waste management or efficient use of energy), and <b>social responsibilities</b> (capacity building, local employment, local business involvement, etc.).</p> <p><b>Description</b></p> <p>Based on existing legislation (<i>Georgian Government Regulation # 125, based on the Law on Protected Areas of Georgia</i>), APA has the right to rent facilities/services for some period of time. The initial price (minimum 10% of annual turnover), renting period and tender procedures are initiated and managed by APA. Information about tender is announced at <a href="http://www.eauction.ge">www.eauction.ge</a> and <a href="http://www.apa.gov.ge">www.apa.gov.ge</a> 10-20 days in advance. Selection criteria are considered by APA and decision is based on price.</p> <p>Currently, there are several facilities in Ajara PA's that could be given on concession. Ajara PA's could determine an initial tender price for Mtirala NP and Kintrishi PA facilities and give on concession Mtirala hotel with cottage, and Kintrishi cottage. Investment for maintenance of building will be needed. The hotel has low number of rooms, however if concessioner take more facilities (hotel plus cottage) it would be more reasonable. It is essential to be ensured that concessionaires are professionals with relevant experience in the business.</p>		

<p>APA plans to delegate the local administration the management of their facilities in Mtirala instead of give it on concession, however for sustainability, product sale and marketing, the collaboration with private businesses, especially local, is recommended.</p> <p>To facilitate Ajara PA's or APA should give publicity and the existing opportunities. One option could be to organize an annual event or meeting, to which private entities can be invited, and the businesses to be leased or concessioned are presented.</p>			
<b>Activities involved</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Identification of potential services that can be rented.</li> <li>• Definition of a clear framework and criteria for potential renters (paying attention to the quality of experience).</li> <li>• Meetings with potential private operators to inform them about the existing opportunities.</li> <li>• Publish the existing opportunities.</li> </ul>			
<b>EXPECTED RESULTS</b>	Concessions opportunities are published and opportunities are given for local business people.		
<b>AGENTS INVOLVED</b>	DTR APA Local communities		
<b>COORDINATOR</b>	Ajara PA's administrations		
<b>ASSESSMENT INDICATORS</b>	Number of concessions established		
<b>EXECUTION TIME</b>	2017-2018	<b>PRIORITY</b>	HIGH <input type="checkbox"/> MEDIUM X LOW <input type="checkbox"/>
<b>BUDGET</b>	4,600 Gel		

<b>Action</b>	<b>Implement a pilot entrance fee in Mtirala</b>	<b>1.3.3</b>
<b>Justification</b> <p>The introduction of entrance fees is one of the options that can help to generate revenues in Ajara PA's. Entrance fees were introduced in Imereti Caves PA's with positive results. On the other hand, one of the most visited places in Ajara is the Batumi Botanical Garden that also is implementing an entrance fee system.</p> <p>The decision on introducing entrance fee (ticket) system (NACRES research, 2012) is an exclusive right of the Georgian government (first of all, the prerogative of the APA). In case such decision is made, based on studies conducted to date (Tusheti PAs, GEF/UNDP program), a price differentiation is recommended in order not to discriminate local people with a low income. On the other hand, charging foreigners much higher entrance fees than National visitors creates a bad impression. Voluntary contributions by Georgian may be also tested, however it does not work in most areas where charity boxes were placed.</p>		

In Ajara case the entrance fee is recommended both for local and foreign visitors. Differential fee system should exist for families, group and individual visitors (for TTOOs), retired persons, multi-entry tickets considering high season and off season.

In Batumi Botanical Garden with possible differentiation regarding age, season, type of visitors. Entrance fee is also the main source of tourism income for Imereti PAs and APA itself. However, it is rigid without any differentiation regarding age, season etc. The established fees in Imereti are 6 Gel for adults and 3.5 for children. In 2015 the fees were increased to 7 Gel adults.

In the case of Galapagos National Park (Ecuador) or the Protected Areas in Costa Rica, entrance fees are also main sources of economic revenue:

Costa Rica PA's charge different rates according to quality and quantity of services and infrastructure for each PA, in average locals pay around \$2 and foreigners around \$5 (although some of the parks charge \$25 and \$50). Galapagos National Park charges -\$100 to foreigners and \$6 to locals. The revenues generated by entrance fees are shared among different institutions. In 2011 the total revenues generated from entrance fees reached almost \$ 11 million

In Škocjan UNESCO cave in Slovenia as another example, entrance fees represent 60% of all revenues, the rest 40% are revenues from state budget and international - EU projects. The share of revenues from tourism reaches on average up to 25% of total budget of protected areas in developed countries (source: *Ecotourism development strategy for PAs of Georgia. TJS 2015*).

#### Description

It is proposed that a pilot initiative for the introduction of entrance fees is initiated in Mtirala NP. This is the NP that receives a higher number of visitors, it is quite known, and it already offers a wide range of recreational opportunities.

The introduction of entrance fees in Mtirala can generate important income level to further develop and improve the services offered by the Park. The introduction of entrance fees can be also an added value strategy. People increase appreciation of an area when they have to pay something for it.

The proposed Entrance Fee Structure would be as it is presented in the following table:

Entrance Fee Structure		Destination		
Visitor		Mtirala MP	Kintrishi	Machakhela
General	Foreigner	8 GEL /pp	Free (or consider at later stage)	Free (or consider at later stage)
	Georgians	3 Gel		
Groups (above 10p)		2 Gel L/pp	Free	Free
Local residents		Free	Free	Free
School Children /Students		Free	Free	Free

The proposed fees are coherent according to the services offered. It is expected that such a low entrance fee would not discourage tourists to visit the area.

The fees can be collected at the visitor centre against a ticket. Additional personnel should be hired to collect the fee. An accounting system to track and analyse fees being collected should also be established.

It is important that prior to the establishment of the entrance fee system an awareness campaign is defined and implemented to clearly explain reasons and objectives of the fee system. Promoting public awareness and acceptance of user-pays is a key factor for encouraging public support. Especially important is that visitors perceive that they are paying for a service and not for an entry.

The introduction of fees should be publicised through a wide range of media (brochures, advertisements in local newspapers, etc.), travel agencies commercializing the area should be informed through a mailing campaign.

The project should be monitored and if successful should be further implemented in Kintrishi PA and Machakhela NP (once services and infrastructures are improved).

If in the near future 50% of visitors pay entrance fees the income could sum up to 40,000 Gel, which would be 2 times more than present revenue of Mtirala NP).

#### Activities involved

- Meetings with major stakeholders (RAC) to discuss and agreed on the introduction of fees in Mtirala NP.
- Definition of fees to be charged.
- Design and implement an awareness campaign oriented to local communities, visitors and tourism private sector to inform about the introduction of fees.
- Elaborate an Operational Plan for the introduction of fees in Mtirala.
- Monitoring and reporting.

<b>EXPECTED RESULTS</b>	Effective entrance fees system is established in Mtirala NP		
<b>AGENTS INVOLVED</b>	APA Tourism and Resorts Department of Ajara AR Private Sector Local Communities		
<b>COORDINATOR</b>	Ajara PA 's administration		
<b>ASSESSMENT INDICATORS</b>	Visitor registration forms, annual revenue		
<b>EXECUTION TIME</b>	2017-2019	<b>PRIORITY</b>	HIGH <input type="checkbox"/> MEDIUM X LOW <input type="checkbox"/>
<b>BUDGET</b>	35,000 Gel (including awareness campaign and implementation of actions needed to collect fees)		

#### OBJECTIVE 1.4: Ensure conservation approach in project PA's

Action	Elaborate and conduct a Visitor Impact Monitoring System	1.4.1
<p><b>Justification</b></p> <p>The consequences of visitor use for natural resources is a concern in parks and protected areas. The knowledge of visitor impacts (at social, economic and environmental level) is basic for sustainability of tourism in the Ajara PA's. Monitoring visitor's use is essential to keep management informed to take measures if they are needed.</p>		
<p><b>Description</b></p> <p>In order to monitor tourism development and its impacts, it is necessary to identify a set of indicators that will allow the analysis of the tourism situation. The indicators will facilitate decision-making by the PA's staff. The indicators should include data related to:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>– Visitor satisfaction (with tourism activities, environmental issues,</li> <li>– Local community satisfaction</li> <li>– Evolution of visitor's numbers</li> <li>– Evolution of economic revenues (monthly and annual) from tourism activities and fees</li> <li>– Income received by concessions</li> <li>– Number of incidents</li> <li>– Volume of waste produced</li> <li>– % tourists using public/private transportation</li> <li>– % of habitats being affected by tourism infrastructure and facilities</li> <li>– Number of people from local communities actively involved in tourism</li> </ul> <p>The benefits of establishing a good set of indicators include:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>– Lowering risks and costs</li> <li>– Identification of emerging issues – allowing preventive actions</li> <li>– Identification of impacts – allowing corrective actions when needed.</li> <li>– Performance measurement of the implementation of the Strategy and its objectives</li> <li>– Greater accountability, providing credible information for wise decision-making.</li> </ul> <p>Several stakeholders/organizations should be involved in the collection of data. This data should be recorded annually and presented to all stakeholders. The results should be carefully analysed in order to determine appropriate management options (corrective measures, etc.).</p> <p>PA's administration staff should work on the definition of the indicators and the elaboration of the baseline analysis. Rangers should play an active role in the measurement of indicators. Local communities should also be involved, especially those inside the PA's.</p> <p>This action should start in 2017 with the definition of the indicators, and the elaboration of the baseline analysis.</p> <p>From the baseline analysis, the monitoring should be systematic and periodic. It is recommended that at least the monitoring is conducted every two years. This period should be reduced if the number of visitors increases substantially.</p>		
<p><b>Activities involved</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Identify a set of indicators to be measured.</li> <li>• Elaborate a baseline report.</li> <li>• Conduct the Visitor Impact Monitoring.</li> </ul>		



<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Elaborate a report analysing the results achieved and present it to relevant stakeholders.</li> <li>Define (if needed) corrective measures to be introduced.</li> </ul>			
<b>EXPECTED RESULTS</b>	A system for monitoring the visitor impact is defined and conducted regularly.		
<b>AGENTS INVOLVED</b>	PA's administration Local communities Private business around PA's		
<b>COORDINATOR</b>	PA's administrations		
<b>ASSESSMENT INDICATORS</b>	Monitoring indicators are defined Baseline indicators is elaborated		
<b>EXECUTION TIME</b>	2017 and 2019	<b>PRIORITY</b>	HIGH <input type="checkbox"/> MEDIUM X LOW <input type="checkbox"/>
<b>BUDGET</b>	17,000 Gel		

## STRATEGIC LINE 2: CAPACITY BUILDING

Strengthening the capacity of the Protected Areas' staff and local communities on themes related to the protected areas can have a positive impact in behaviour changing. It is important to provide community members a solid environmental knowledge on the natural values of the PAs, so it can be ensured that they get committed to their conservation.

The main objective is to establish public awareness strategies and programmes on the importance of the protected areas, in terms of their role in biodiversity conservation and the sustainable socioeconomic development for the community.

In addition, capacity should be built in tourism relates issues (hospitality, languages, etc.). Tourism is a service industry, and the quality of the visitor experience is largely determined by the quality of service and personal interaction experienced at destination, therefore the development of quality interactions with PA's staff and local services providers is an important element of the tourism destination.

A relevant issue to take into account in relation to capacity building, is the relevance of partnerships. Forming partnerships with local NGO's, academic institutions and private sector means that the PA's can make use of their experience, knowledge and skills to promote training and educational programmes (for instance: ELKANA, Shota Rustaveli University in Batumi, Hotels and Restaurants Association, etc.).

### OBJECTIVE 2.1: Increase knowledge and skills of PA's staff in sustainable tourism and environmental issues

Action	Design and implement a training programme for PA's staff	2.1.1
<p><b>Justification</b></p> <p>To contribute to the effective sustainable tourism management in the project PA's, it is important to strengthen PA's staff in tourism related issues. Capable, competent and skilled staff is key to the successful delivery of results. Tourism activities and businesses are new in project PAs and it requires more involvement and commitment of their staff.</p> <p>The core staff of PA's are rangers. Protected Areas require well-trained, equipped and motivated rangers to provide security to visitors, confront existing threats such as inappropriate use behaviour, illegal hunting, etc. These challenges demand trained rangers in skills on topics related to resource management, safety and rescue procedures, law enforcement, building and maintaining protected area infrastructures, tourism and hospitality, etc.</p> <p>Although, some training events in hospitality &amp; tourism have taken place for Mtirala and Kintrishi visitor specialists (by Elkana in 2012), recent capacity assessments have identified a need for improved capacity among PA staff. There is no structural capacity building program within the PA system.</p>		

According to the report “Assessment of capacity development needs of Protected Area Staff in Georgia” there is an overall need for improved capacity among protected area staff at all levels in Georgia. This conclusion has been made after the analysis of the survey carried out among PA’s staff. The respondents were asked to assess the competence of five levels of staff against 11 skills categories such as: **financial and resources management, human resources management, conservation assessment, sustainable development and communities, law enforcement, recreation and tourism and awareness, education and public relations.**

In the attached table is summarized the results of the questionnaires conducted

Country capacity development needs ranked by category and level 1 = Highest need 10 = Lowest need Top 4 preferences highlighted				
		LEVEL 4/5	LEVEL 3	LEVEL 2
FRM	FINANCIAL & RESOURCES MANAGEMENT	1	8	9
HUM	HUMAN RESOURCES MANAGEMENT & DEVELOPMENT	8	9	4
CTI	COMMUNICATION TECHNOLOGY AND INFORMATION	9	3	2
FCR	FIELD CRAFT AND PRACTICAL SKILLS	6	7	5
CMP	CONSERVATION ASSESSMENT PLANNING & MANAGEMENT	7	2	3
SDC	SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT & COMMUNITIES	5	1	1
PAM	PROTECTED AREA POLICY, PLANNING AND PROJECTS	3	4	7
LAW	LAW ENFORCEMENT	9	4	8
RTO	RECREATION AND TOURISM	4	6	6
AWA	AWARENESS, EDUCATION AND PUBLIC RELATIONS	2	8	9

According to this table, in blue are marked the skills highly needed such as financial and resources management, sustainable development and communities, recreation and tourism, awareness, education and public relations.

It is also important to undertake potential partners in the area - identify and support the development of an internal network of trainers - that can facilitate effective capacity building and establish partnership agreements with them (NGOs, professional associations, academic institutions, local community members etc.).

#### Description

To establish structured capacity building program within the protected area system, and professional evaluation tools for APA staff, the administration is developing **training modules** with close cooperation with SPPA project experts. Modules are based on assessment of training needs (2013) and Capacity Building Plan for PoWPA implementation in Eastern Europe<sup>7</sup> by ProPark Foundation<sup>8</sup>. **One of the main**

<sup>7</sup> Eastern Europe, defined as the scope of this project is comprises the following 24 countries: Croatia, Estonia, Latvia, Georgia, Romania, Serbia, Slovakia, Slovenia, Ukraine (priority countries), Albania, Armenia, Azerbaijan, Belarus, Bosnia and Herzegovina, Bulgaria, Czech Republic, Hungary, Kosovo, Lithuania, FYR Macedonia, Moldova, Montenegro, Poland and Turkey (secondary countries).

<sup>8</sup> ProPark Foundation facilitated the preparation of through national working group in Georgia. The project “Capacity Building Plans for Efficient Protected Area Management in Eastern Europe” has been implemented with the support of the German Federal Agency for Nature Conservation (BfN) in 2013-2016.

**objectives of the plan was establishment of systematic program of capacity development and professional development for all protected area personnel, linked to national occupational standards.**

APA with SPPA decided to build trainings modules on rangers' needs, starting on common baseline for all ranger staff, as they are core staff of PAs of Georgia. Tourism and recreation are not in their prime responsibilities, however some activities such as guiding tourists and giving instructions to visitors are within their duties and this is considered in training topics. Some modules will consider introductory courses for new recruits on main specialist topics relevant to their position. These courses will build a basic foundation of skills and knowledge among specialist staff and are likely to include: Biodiversity conservation; tourism and recreation and Community development.

Elaborated modules will be implemented (used) individually for each PA, based on concrete needs of each PA's personnel. It is also planned to encourage and advise universities of Georgia to develop high-level modules and courses on PA topics, which can be open to PA staff.

PA occupations can be standardizing by the working group that will be established under the MoEdu (the institution that officially registers occupations) according to existing procedures and by the involvement of The National Centre for Educational Quality Enhancement.

Training modules are being elaborated within SPPA project and will be launched in 2017.

Apart of mentioned above, assessment of training needs in tourism & hospitality made by project staff revealed the most needed topics.

	PA Director	PA administration staff
Ecotourism principles and nature-based tourism	X	X
Hospitality and customer care/service		X
Environmental Interpretation		X
Interpretation and communication / guiding	X	X
PR and Marketing	X	X
Communication technology and information	X	X
Languages (English)		X
Project writing	X	
Business planning	X	

It is highly recommended that visitor specialists at PA administrations get training in tourism and marketing, especially for online marketing, tour product development and packaging.

Rangers working in Adjara PA's do not need specific skills for their position, a learning programme should be designed and implemented for rangers to better define their role and their responsibilities. Some of the topics that should be covered by the training programme aimed for rangers are:

- Working with local communities. Local communities living in PA's have direct influence in the conservation of PA's. Relation between local communities and rangers should be friendly.

<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>– Infrastructure and trails</li> <li>– Interpretation and environmental education</li> <li>– General Hospitality and tourism</li> <li>– Protection and enforcement</li> <li>– Emergency response (safety procedures)</li> <li>– English and other foreign languages</li> <li>– Monitoring</li> </ul> <p>All mentioned above are considered in structured capacity building program within the protected area system, (APA/SPPA project).</p>			
<b>Activities involved</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Define training curricula for the PA's members.</li> <li>• Identify potential trainers/experts in the Region.</li> <li>• Establish an annual training calendar.</li> <li>• Implement training modules.</li> </ul>			
<b>EXPECTED RESULTS</b>	PA's administration staff is fully trained in relevant issues.		
<b>AGENTS INVOLVED</b>	Ajara PA's administration		
<b>COORDINATOR</b>	APA		
<b>ASSESSMENT INDICATORS</b>	Number of trainings held Number of PA's participants Number of training hours		
<b>EXECUTION TIME</b>	2017-2020	<b>PRIORITY</b>	HIGH <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> MEDIUM <input type="checkbox"/> LOW <input type="checkbox"/>
<b>BUDGET</b>	35,000 Gel/year		

**OBJECTIVE 2.2: Increase local communities' knowledge about PA's environmental values and tourism related issues.**

<b>Action</b>	<b>Design and implement a training programme for local communities</b>	<b>2.2.1</b>
<b>Justification</b> Local communities living in and around Ajara PA's play a key role in the tourism development in the PA's. Local tourism enterprises in the "support zone" should be supported to achieve their objectives in terms improving their well-being through the opportunity of creating new business and employment. The formulation of business plans should be a key issue in the provision of this support.		
<b>Description</b> Local communities living in and around Ajara PA's are willing to engage in tourism related activities, however these initiatives should be assessed in order to support them in the creation of services that are linked to real market demand, and to ensure that the business are profitable. To develop viable local business, it is important to understand the type of tourist visiting Ajara PA's and their needs.		

Several trainings should be implemented to enhance the capacities of local communities in issues related to tourism, environment and business. Prior to the development and implementation of the trainings, priorities should be defined in conjunction with those interested. The identification of training needs can be assessed by PA's staff.

Training content should be adequate to the needs of the local communities.

Among the training needs identified, are:

- Tourism and hospitality
- Environmental values of Adjara PAs
- Ecotourism concepts
- Marketing and promotion
- Quality criteria in products and services
- Business planning
- Accounts

In addition, these micro-enterprises should be trained in basic accounting, to register income and expenses and help them to understand how to perform monthly accounts.

Finally, for all those engaged, especially in accommodation business should be able to gather and submit visitor statistics from their guests to increase the knowledge of competent authorities on the profile of visitor and keep track of changes. Visitors' surveys should be placed at Guest Houses to monitor also the level of satisfaction from visitors.

#### Activities involved

- Organize a meeting with local communities to identify training needs.
- Identify potential trainers/experts (NGO's) in the Region.
- Establish an annual training calendar.
- Implement training modules.

<b>EXPECTED RESULTS</b>	Local community members increase their skills and capacities topics related to tourism, environment, business planning, etc.		
<b>AGENTS INVOLVED</b>	Local Communities Municipalities DTR NGO's		
<b>COORDINATOR</b>	Adjara PA's administrations		
<b>ASSESSMENT INDICATORS</b>	Number of trainings held Number of participants		
<b>EXECUTION TIME</b>	2016- 2018	<b>PRIORITY</b>	HIGH X MEDIUM <input type="checkbox"/> LOW <input type="checkbox"/>
<b>BUDGET</b>	17,000 Gel		

**OBJECTIVE 2.3: By 2020, there will be at least 15 certified Tour Guides**

Action	Create a certification for local tour guides	2.3.1
<b>Justification</b> Tour guides are key to enhance visitor’s experience in PA’s. Currently, there are not professional tour guides, which is something demanded by TTOO. Specific training is needed for local guides that work with visitors. A certification for local guides should be created in order to have guides that count on a minimum knowledge and skills for carrying out this activity. The trained guides should obtain a certification that recognized their value in the promotion and conservation of PA’s.		
<b>Description</b> The certification should be defined in collaboration with TTOO, academic institutions, other tour guiding associations. A certification should be designed in order to recognise the importance of guides in the tourism experience. The certification would define minimum requirements to acquire the certification. These requirements should include language knowledge, knowledge about the environmental values of Ajara PA’s, local knowledge (traditions, history), first aid training, etc. Examinations should be required to obtain the certification.  Only certified tour guides would be allowed to guide groups inside and around Ajara PA’s. Certified tour guides should be clearly identified. This certification should be recognition of competency, professionalism and practical skills.  Apart from providing recognition to the Tour Guides, the certification provides many benefit to the tourism industry and other stakeholders, as improves customer service, increases understanding of Ajara PA’s, its wildlife, culture and heritage, etc.		
<b>Activities involved;</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>Organize meetings with stakeholders to define the requirements to the Ajara Tour Guide certification.</li><li>Define and agree on the requirements to the Ajara Tour Guide association.</li><li>Define the image for the certified Ajara Tour Guides.</li></ul>		
EXPECTED RESULTS	Requirements for certificating Ajara Tour Guides are defined	
AGENTS INVOLVED	Ajara PA’s administrations DTR TTOO Municipalities Local communities Tour Guides Associations	
COORDINATOR	DTR	
ASSESSMENT INDICATORS	Number of meetings held Agreement on requirements.	
EXECUTION TIME	2016-2017	<div><div>PRIORITY</div><div>HIGH X MEDIUM <input type="checkbox"/> LOW <input type="checkbox"/></div></div>

BUDGET	6,000 Gel											
Action	Design and implement a training programme for Tour Guides in Ajara PA´s	2.3.2										
<b>Justification</b> Once requirements for tour guide certification have been defined, a training programme for guides should be designed to have qualified guides that can provide a quality experience for visitors. The training should include theoretical and practical skills.												
<b>Description</b> Currently, local guides working in Ajara PA´s do not have specific skills to conduct a group, knowledge on the environmental values of the areas or even appropriate language skills. Guiding is an activity that can help members of local community to have a profession from which earn a salary. Once the certification system has been defined, it is important to design a programme for local guides in order to obtain the certification that qualifies them to be recognized guides.  The training programme for the certification should include following topics: <table><tr><th colspan="2">TRAINING TOPICS</th></tr><tr><td>– Introduction to sustainable tourism, ecotourism and resources conservation.</td><td>– Environmental Interpretation</td></tr><tr><td>– Natural and cultural values of Ajara Protected Areas</td><td>– Customer service</td></tr><tr><td>– How to conduct a group</td><td>– Safety</td></tr><tr><td>– Language skills</td><td></td></tr></table> The training programme should include also practical aspects. Minimum skills should be requested to obtain the certification. Professional tour guides are being required by tour operators/travel agencies and have an essential role in the knowledge of protected areas and the history of the area, the culture and the traditions.  Once the training programme for certified tour guides is defined and agreed among stakeholders. Regular training sessions should be implemented. In addition, the accreditation process should be defined: eligibility, examination process, etc. Tuition fees for trainings should be offered at affordable prices to encourage enrolment. Certified tour guides should be required to attend regular trainings to maintain certification.			TRAINING TOPICS		– Introduction to sustainable tourism, ecotourism and resources conservation.	– Environmental Interpretation	– Natural and cultural values of Ajara Protected Areas	– Customer service	– How to conduct a group	– Safety	– Language skills	
TRAINING TOPICS												
– Introduction to sustainable tourism, ecotourism and resources conservation.	– Environmental Interpretation											
– Natural and cultural values of Ajara Protected Areas	– Customer service											
– How to conduct a group	– Safety											
– Language skills												
<b>Activities involved</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Define training curricula for the Ajara Tour Guides.</li><li>• Implement an annual training program for Ajara Tour Guides.</li><li>• Organize an annual examination for getting the Ajara Tour Guides Association.</li></ul>												
EXPECTED RESULTS	A clear training content for the accreditation process is defined											
AGENTS INVOLVED	Ajara PA´s administrations TTOO Municipalities Local communities Academic institutions											





<b>COORDINATOR</b>	DTR		
<b>ASSESSMENT INDICATORS</b>	Number of certified guides Number of trainings held		
<b>EXECUTION TIME</b>	2018-2020	<b>PRIORITY</b>	HIGH <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> MEDIUM <input type="checkbox"/> LOW <input type="checkbox"/>
<b>BUDGET</b>	24,000 Gel		

### STRATEGIC LINE 3: ACCESSIBILITY AND SAFETY

Ajara PA's should provide an easy access for all those tourist willing to visit the area and also provide a safe environment for them during the visit. Safe transportation to the PA's should be ensured. In addition, developing a plan for rescue and first aid should be considered by PA's administration to ensure a safety environment for all visitors.

#### OBJECTIVE 3.1: Improve accessibility to Ajara PA's

Action	Improve road access to Ajara PA's, especially Kintrishi and Mtirala	3.1.1
<b>Justification</b> Repair and maintain roads to Ajara PA's is especially important to improve level of safety and satisfaction of visitors and local communities. This is also a requirement from TTOO in order to bring their customers to the PA's.		
<b>Description</b> The poor condition of the roads leading to mostly Mtirala NP and Kintrishi PA makes travel to these destinations tiring and uncomfortable. The construction of the hydropower station on the way to Kintrishi PA is also contributing to damage the road, make it impassable. The pictures below show the situation of the road to Kintrishi PA (on the left) and Mtirala NP (on the right).		
 		
<b>Activities involved</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Meetings with the Department of Road and Rehabilitation of the Government of Ajara.</li> <li>• Elaborate project for road rehabilitation.</li> <li>• Repair and rehabilitate the road.</li> </ul>		
<b>EXPECTED RESULTS</b>	Time and discomfort to reach the areas is reduced.	
<b>AGENTS INVOLVED</b>	Department of Environment Municipalities Department of Road and Rehabilitation of the Government of Ajara	
<b>COORDINATOR</b>	Municipalities	
<b>ASSESSMENT INDICATORS</b>	Project for roads rehabilitation	

<b>EXECUTION TIME</b>	2016-2017	<b>PRIORITY</b>	HIGH <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> MEDIUM <input type="checkbox"/> LOW <input type="checkbox"/>
<b>BUDGET</b>	60,000 Gel		

<b>Action</b>	<b>Design and produce standard road directional signs for PA's</b>	<b>3.1.2</b>
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#### Justification

The signage system provides essential information about how to get to the destination, distance to the destination, etc. These signs should maintain coherent graphics and be the same at least for the three PA's. All directional signage should be agreed among authorities and guidelines should be defined.

A common system will ensure that visitors recognize at a glance the presence of the Protected areas and strengthen the PA's image and identity. A good sign system is important to transmit information and ensure also visitor's safety.

#### Description

The road signage system leading toward the Ajara PA's is very deficient and insufficient. In the following pictures examples of the existing signs are provided:



Signs in

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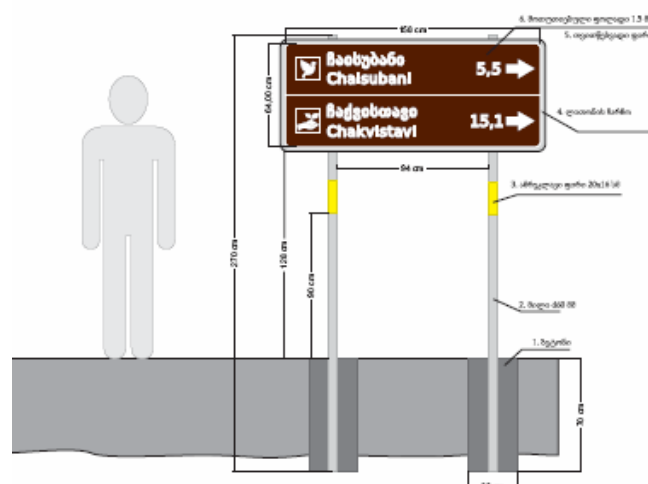
easily r





Once a manual of style has been designed for road signs, new signs should be placed along the different roads. These signs should be located at strategic points outside Batumi, Kobuleti, and Khelvachauri; and also in different points along the roads. So visitors have a clear idea on how to get to the PA's and the distance.

Recently, DTR has defined a manual for signs design and has designed and installed new signs in the way to Machakhela NP (see picture below):



This manual should be adopted also by APA and Ajara PA's in order to maintain a common style in the area and to be easy recognizable.

<b>Activities involved</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Assessment of existing signals and identify existing needs and improvements.</li> <li>• Elaborate a Plan that includes the number and type of signs that need to be installed or repaired.</li> <li>• Define signs guidelines for Ajara PA's or follow existing DTR guidelines (where appropriate).</li> <li>• Produce and install new signs.</li> <li>• Monitoring.</li> </ul>			
<b>EXPECTED RESULTS</b>	Access to Ajara PA's and their main attractions are duly signposted.		
<b>AGENTS INVOLVED</b>	Road and Rehabilitation Department APA DTR Municipalities		
<b>COORDINATOR</b>	Ajara PA's administrations		
<b>ASSESSMENT INDICATORS</b>	Number of new signs installed Number of signs repaired		
<b>EXECUTION TIME</b>	2016 -2017	<b>PRIORITY</b>	HIGH <input type="checkbox"/> MEDIUM X LOW <input type="checkbox"/>
<b>BUDGET</b>	4,500 Gel		

**OBJECTIVE 3.2: Transportation to PA's from Batumi and Kobuleti as regular and reliable.**

<b>Action</b>	<b>Develop a clear and quality system of public and private transportation to access to Ajara PA's</b>	<b>3.2.1</b>
<b>Justification</b> <p>A reliable transportation system is crucial to provide tourists with information explaining how to use it. Tourists need information about the transport network, timetable and the fare structure. Currently, the system for reaching the PA's without private car includes transportation provided by private drivers and the public transportation system.</p> <p>Transportation with private drivers are subjected to arrangements made by TICs in Batumi or Kobuleti. These TICs have the contacts and arrange the trips.</p> <p>On the other side, public transportation system is available but also may be confusing for foreigners, and has limited timetables</p>		
<b>Description</b> <p>Public transportation offering services to and from Ajara PA's are not regular and sufficient these services should be improved, especially in summer season. Moreover, the information related to public transportation should be easily accessible for visitors (through DTR website, TICs, hotel service providers, bus providers' services website, etc.)</p>		

<p>Private drivers and taxi drivers play an important role in the transportation system to Ajara PA's. These providers should be easy recognizable and their information should be available also in Batumi and Kobuleti hotels.</p> <p>Tourists represent an important share of taxis demand in destinations, so it is very important that taxi services and other public transportation providers are encouraged to fulfil visitor needs.</p> <p>Taxis and public transportation providers have an important role in welcoming visitors to the destination. It is essential that the drivers, especially private providers, can communicate with the visitor and provide a good service. It is recommended that private transportation service providers attend a training programme to improve their customer services skills, languages, and especially the knowledge about Ajara PA's-. Those attending the training should be promoted in official websites as official service providers. In addition, these taxi providers could announce the visits to Ajara PA's in their doors; this would also help to increase PA's visibility.</p>			
<b>Activities involved</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Meetings with Batumi and Kobuleti municipalities, private taxi companies' representatives, and other stakeholders.</li> <li>Define a short-term plan for improving transportation service (including training activities).</li> </ul>			
<b>EXPECTED RESULTS</b>	Improved timetable for public transportation to Ajara PA's Private car drivers are knowledgeable		
<b>AGENTS INVOLVED</b>	Taxi Drivers DTR Ajara PA's administrations		
<b>COORDINATOR</b>	Batumi and Kobuleti Municipalities		
<b>ASSESSMENT INDICATORS</b>	Number of trips Number of private transportation providers offering official services		
<b>EXECUTION TIME</b>	2017	<b>PRIORITY</b>	HIGH <input type="checkbox"/> MEDIUM X LOW <input type="checkbox"/>
<b>BUDGET</b>	2,500 Gel		

**OBJECTIVE 3.3: PA's are considered a safe place.**

<b>Action</b>	<b>Design and test a manual of safety procedures in Ajara PA's</b>	<b>3.3.1</b>
<b>Justification</b> <p>The Ajara PA's are responsible for providing a framework for safety procedures that ensure an appropriate protocol in case of a medical or other emergency situation. These procedures should facilitate or enable any visitor to be brought safely and quickly back to a medical centre.</p> <p>Protected Areas are quite distant from health services, so it would be necessary for the field PA staff to know how to provide a response in emergency situations.</p>		



<b>Description</b> <p>The manual of safety procedures should define the necessary protocols to help an ill or injured person before medical personnel can intervene. This manual should include relevant topics such as: on –site treatment, evacuation, emergency action principles, primary survey, etc.</p> <p>In addition to the manual, the Park should identify the equipment needs, source these items and also provide adequate training to field staff.</p> <p>Mtirala count on a small medical centre, close to the Visitor Centre, which is not operational yet. In addition, there is limited material and medicines available at the moment. Kintrishi and Machakhela do not count on a “medical centre” within its premises however; field staff should be able to provide first aid according to international protocols.</p>			
<b>Activities involved</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Meetings with emergency services</li> <li>• Elaboration of the manual</li> <li>• Training activities</li> <li>• Monitoring and reporting</li> </ul>			
<b>EXPECTED RESULTS</b>	A clear emergencies protocol is defined for the Ajara PA’s		
<b>AGENTS INVOLVED</b>	Health institutions Emergency services		
<b>COORDINATOR</b>	Ajara PA’s administrations		
<b>ASSESSMENT INDICATORS</b>	Number of tourists attended/year		
<b>EXECUTION TIME</b>	2018- 2019	<b>PRIORITY</b>	HIGH <input type="checkbox"/> MEDIUM X LOW <input type="checkbox"/>
<b>BUDGET</b>	12,500 Gel		

## STRATEGIC LINE 4: MARKETING AND PROMOTION

The DTR has done important efforts to promote the Region by updating their website: [www.gobatumi.com](http://www.gobatumi.com), and with the publication of high quality brochures and leaflets. Some of these brochures include information of Ajara PA's. APA, with support of WWF and the Norwegian government has also published materials about Ajara PA's. However, apart from Mtirala NP, Kintrishi and the recently established Machakhela are not adequately known.

Annual marketing plans should be developed to promote the areas. These plans should be defined in collaboration with APA, DTR, and the private sector. These operational plans should include online marketing activities.

New technologies are changing the way people travel and organize the trips. According the PA's visitors survey internet is one of the main sources of information. Therefore, it should be considered that good websites, available in different languages, with updated information, as well as social network profiles are important to promote the areas. In addition, other technologies such as applications should be considered.

Finally, the creation of events and educational and recreational activities in the PA's can work as a tool for attracting visitor's, especially in low season. These events should help to promote traditions, and the environmental values of Ajara PA's.

### OBJ. 4. 1. Increase awareness about Ajara PA's at national and international level

Action	Define a marketing strategy and operational plan	4.1.1
<b>Justification</b> Marketing and promotion are essential to increase awareness about PA's and therefore increase the number of visitors. A joint marketing strategy and operational plan should be developed for Ajara PA's. The cooperation must also be established with DTR and other tourism stakeholders (tourism service providers, travel agencies, etc.).		
<b>Description</b> One of the roles of the Regional Advisory Council (RAC), in which Ajara PA's would be integrated, should be the definition of marketing and promotion strategies and activities.  Among the activities that can be included in the operational plan are: production of promotional materials with the new and developed services and activities (maps, posters, leaflets, booklets for birdwatchers, etc.), design joint activities with the tourism private sector, organization of fam trips (for journalists, international tour operators), publication of advertisements, participation in travel/tourism fairs, etc. There should be a combination between traditional and online marketing strategies.  The marketing and promotion operational plan should concentrate on the different target groups identified (day-trippers, weekenders, etc.), adjusting the offer to their needs.		



The activities should be defined a year in advance so Ajara PA's can include these activities in their operational plan.			
<b>Activities involved</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Meetings with stakeholders.</li> <li>• Elaborate a marketing strategy and operational plan.</li> <li>• Report and monitoring.</li> </ul>			
<b>EXPECTED RESULTS</b>	Annual marketing and promotion Plan is elaborated		
<b>AGENTS INVOLVED</b>	Ajara PA's administrations GNTA APA Ajara Travel Agency Tourism private sector		
<b>COORDINATOR</b>	DTR		
<b>ASSESSMENT INDICATORS</b>	Calendar of promotional and marketing activities and actions		
<b>EXECUTION TIME</b>	2017-2020	<b>PRIORITY</b>	HIGH <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> MEDIUM <input type="checkbox"/> LOW <input type="checkbox"/>
<b>BUDGET</b>	16,500 Gel		

<b>Action</b>	<b>Create a membership card for Ajara Protected Areas</b>	<b>4.1.2</b>
<b>Justification</b> The creation of a "Friends of Ajara Protected Areas Card" can be an efficient tool for promotion and awareness raising, especially for the domestic market. This card can also be used to raise revenues.		
<b>Description</b> The creation of the Friends of Ajara Protected Areas card is proposed as a tool for increasing PA's awareness among for both, Georgian citizens and foreign visitors. It is considered a positive way to encourage not only to visit the PA's but also to keep cardholders informed about PA's development projects, news, celebration of events, etc.  So the main <b>target groups</b> for this card would be:  <b>1. INDIVIDUALS (local and visitors)</b>  The objective is to encourage Georgian and visitors to purchase the card and become "friends" of Ajara/National Protected Areas".  In the beginning, the card should have a promotional price (for instance, 10 Gel for individuals – 30 Gel for families up to 4 members). To promote the purchase of the membership card, a number of them (for instance 100) should be given as a gift by organising a contest or similar in APA/ Ajara PA's social networks.		

It is also recommended that different cards are defined (with different designs) according to different level of payments and benefits. For instance, a 10 Gel card provides a 10% discount in Protected Areas services, and other partner services, while a 20 Gel card provides 15% discount in PA's services and 5% discount in PA's souvenirs, a 50 Gel card could also offer a free entrance to some of the Georgian PA's, etc. However, it is recommended to start with a basic type and increase the types as the system improves and the card is well known.

The card should be renewed annually.

The **benefits** of purchasing the card would be:

- a) Contribute to Protected Areas conservation
- b) Get discounts in services and goods provided by PA's
- c) Get discounts in services offered by partner companies
- d) It is recommended that the card has some **loyalty benefits**. That is, for any purchase or expenditure in APA services, the visitor gets reward points that can be accumulated and used to get some additional benefits. However, due to the technical difficulty of implementing the system, this can be a long-term benefit.
- e) Receive a newsletter, with updated news about PA's
- f) Other special promotions (free guiding route, attendance to events, etc.)

The card would be personal and non-transferrable. Family cards allow to benefit 4 members (two adults and two children up to 16 years old)

## 2. TOURISM SERVICE PROVIDERS

To increase the interest in purchasing this card, agreements should be signed with other local partners. These partners can get a certification "supporter of Adjara Protected Area" by offering discounts to the card owners.

Specially encouraged to participate in this campaign are the accommodation and catering service providers adjacent to Protected Areas. These providers are subject to have a quality certification to join the program. The participation of local communities in APA's card program should be encouraged, by promoting them on APA's website.

Additional partners related to activities related to nature or culture should also be part of the program, as for instance Batumi Botanical Garden, museums, or any hotel that is committed to sustainability.

An agreement with DTR would also be encouraged, so discounts for using the BatumiVelo or other services

The benefits of partners would be:

- a) Recognition as Protected Area supporters, improving their image towards sustainability and quality services.
- b) Increase their exposure without high investments

<p>The steps to become a member of the Friends of PA's card would be: (1) Fill in an application format, (2) proceed to payment. The process should be easy enough to not discourage interested in becoming members.</p> <p>The application form for requesting this card should be available online (APA's website, DTR website, etc.) with a simple online payment method through PayPal or similar.</p> <p>It is advised that informative brochures should be prepared and distributed among PA's, DTR and other partner to promote the card. The brochure should clearly explain the objectives and benefits of the card.</p> <p>Efforts should be done in presenting attractive card designs, with images of representative attractions of Protected Areas.</p>			
<p><b>Activities involved</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Meetings with stakeholders and potential partners.</li> <li>• Develop a software for database elaboration, card, APA website and card production.</li> <li>• Promotion (brochure, presentation event, contest, etc.).</li> <li>• Monitoring and reporting.</li> </ul>			
<b>EXPECTED RESULTS</b>	Increase PA's visibility in the domestic tourism market		
<b>AGENTS INVOLVED</b>	Ajara PA's GNTA APA Ajara Travel Agency Tourism private sector		
<b>COORDINATOR</b>	APA		
<b>ASSESSMENT INDICATORS</b>	Number membership cards issued Number of private operators that are part of the membership card		
<b>EXECUTION TIME</b>	2016-2017	<b>PRIORITY</b>	HIGH <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> MEDIUM <input type="checkbox"/> LOW <input type="checkbox"/>
<b>BUDGET</b>	30,000 Gel		

<b>Action</b>	<b>Identify themes/topics for events creation and define a calendar of events.</b>	<b>4.1.3</b>
<p><b>Justification</b></p> <p>Events are good occasions to attract visitors to PA's, especially in low season. Events can be related to cultural, environmental or recreational issues to attract a different range of visitors. These events should provide an opportunity for discovery the Areas.</p>		
<p><b>Description</b></p> <p>Ajara PA' should develop an events calendar, some of these events can be jointly celebrated, as the World Environment Day (5<sup>th</sup> June) or each PA should design and celebrate their particular events.</p>		

<p>The PA's administration should design the calendar of events at least a year in advance to have enough time to organize it. The celebration should count on the collaboration of administrations, communities (should be coordinated in the Regional Advisory Council.)</p> <p>Some of the topics that could serve the basis for the celebration of events could be:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Spring/autumn festival (using blossoming and the fall colours)</li> <li>- Earth Day</li> <li>- Photographic events</li> <li>- Honey related events...</li> </ul> <p>The events should be used to promote environmental education among visitors.</p> <p>These events should be promoted in the website and social network profiles.</p>			
<p><b>Activities involved</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Elaboration on an annual program of events to be developed in and around PA's (should be done a year in advance for budgeting purposes).</li> <li>• Establish cooperation agreements with potential partners (NGOS, local communities, etc.).</li> <li>• Define an operational Plan for organizing and implementing the event.</li> <li>• Definition and implementation of promotional activities.</li> <li>• Monitoring and reporting.</li> </ul>			
<b>EXPECTED RESULTS</b>	The celebration of events is consolidated in Ajara PA's		
<b>AGENTS INVOLVED</b>	Local Communities Municipalities NGO's Tourism private sector		
<b>COORDINATOR</b>	Ajara PA's administrations		
<b>ASSESSMENT INDICATORS</b>	Calendar of events		
<b>EXECUTION TIME</b>	2017- 2018	<b>PRIORITY</b>	HIGH <input type="checkbox"/> MEDIUM X LOW <input type="checkbox"/>
<b>BUDGET</b>	4,500 Gel		

#### OBJECTIVE 4.2: Information related to PA's is easy accessible through new technologies

<b>Action</b>	<b>Create a visitor friendly tourism website for each PA optimized for search engines</b>	<b>4.2.1</b>
<p><b>Justification</b></p> <p>Websites are essential to promote PA's. Travel consumers have become increasingly demanding of tourism websites and social media platforms in terms of content that is highly relevant to their needs. Almost 40% of visitors to Ajara PA's have organized their visit with information available in the internet. Therefore, adding more resources to the internet will facilitate potential visitors to find all relevant information to better organize the trip.</p>		

Currently, most of the information related to Ajara PA's is hosted in APA website. This website is not user-friendly, especially for promotional purposes. The website publishes relevant information about the areas but this information is not related to the "support zone", areas: no information on how to get there, means of transportation available, etc.

#### Description

Each PA should have a website from which not only the environmental values of the PA can be promoted but also to offer detailed information about the activities in the Park, especial events, provide information about accommodation provided (including local guest houses), etc.

Some key elements of the website:

- Timely written and updated content (available in the language of target audiences)
- Include quality and positive images of the destination (visual designed)
- User-friendly
- Appealing to target markets
- Readable on multiple devices (desktop and mobile)

This website should be integrated to social network profiles to encourage an active participation with users. PA's staff should be trained to update regularly new content to the website.

Google analytics should be used to measure website traffic. It would be useful to create an email list or newsletter to informed list members about Ajara PA's news. Another tool for positioning is the use of keywords; this is an important element in online marketing success. It would be important to develop a list of around 120 words that will be used throughout the site (including words of interest to the different target markets).

In addition, the DTR website: [www.gobatumi.ge](http://www.gobatumi.ge) is a good example of destination website. The site has already important information available about the region and Ajara PA's. This information should be updated regularly and enriched with potential new trails and products developed in the PA's.

Currently, the website has available brochures and maps to download, and this opportunity should be used for the promotion of brochures with information of Ajara PA's.

Strengthen the collaboration between DTR and Ajara PA's around this marketing strategy can enhance the image of the destination, and, in the other hand can help to reduce costs for content creation and advertising.

#### Activities involved

- Definition of requirements of websites.
- Develop the websites (website developer)
- Update regularly the websites.
- Monitoring and reporting about website use.

#### EXPECTED RESULTS

Appealing and updated Ajara PA's are published.

#### AGENTS INVOLVED

APA  
GNTA  
DTR

#### COORDINATOR

Ajara PA's administrations

<b>ASSESSMENT INDICATORS</b>	Website traffic		
<b>EXECUTION TIME</b>	2017-2018	<b>PRIORITY</b>	HIGH <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> MEDIUM <input type="checkbox"/> LOW <input type="checkbox"/>
<b>BUDGET</b>	20,000 Gel		

<b>Action</b>	<b>Create downloadable multimedia trails and include detailed information on Ajara Protected Areas in the Gobatumi app</b>	<b>4.2.2</b>
<p><b>Justification</b></p> <p>Hiking is one of the popular activities in Ajara PA's, it is a great opportunity for enjoying the beauty of the PA's.</p> <p>Detailed information on trails are very useful for those hiking willing to engage in this activity. The provision of interactive maps is an added value for those taking self-guided hikes.</p>		
<p><b>Description</b></p> <p>Maps are a valuable tool for hikers, however giving the possibility of downloading the map and use it in the smartphone helps to reduce the use of paper and printing costs; and it is an added value for hikers. The maps should be ready for download in the websites of the PA's, and visitors should be informed about this possibility.</p> <p>An additional option is to develop a mobile app or to use the gobatumi app to download relevant information about Ajara PA's, so visitors can use this app for visiting the area (main sightseeing, useful information, what to do in Ajara PA's, etc.</p> <p>National Geographic has developed an app for the America's most visited national parks that include photo gallery, visitor information, and maps to enhance visitors' experience. The app also includes information on accommodation options, etc.</p> <p>The app should be free to download, and available for Android, IOS and Windows Phone</p>		
<p><b>Activities involved</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Track needed trail information.</li> <li>• Develop an official mobile application for different mobile operating systems that will allow visitors to explore existing trails</li> <li>• Promotional activities.</li> <li>• Monitor and reporting.</li> </ul>		
<b>EXPECTED RESULTS</b>	Information of trails can be downloaded GoBatumi app offers detailed information on Ajara PA's	
<b>AGENTS INVOLVED</b>	Ajara PA's administration APA DTR	
<b>COORDINATOR</b>	DTR	

<b>ASSESSMENT INDICATORS</b>	Number of downloads		
<b>EXECUTION TIME</b>	2018	<b>PRIORITY</b>	HIGH <input type="checkbox"/> MEDIUM <input type="checkbox"/> LOW X
<b>BUDGET</b>	8,000 Gel		

<b>Action</b>	<b>Increase social media presence</b>	<b>4.2.3</b>
<b>Justification</b> Social media are a new source of information for travellers. Tourists made their decisions on comments from other fellow travellers. Creating a social media strategy can help to better position Ajara PA's in the domestic and international market. The opinions of other travellers are highly valued and the active participation of visitors in the Ajara PA's social media profiles should be encouraged.		
<b>Description</b> Mtirala NP and Kintrishi count already with Facebook profiles. Additional profiles should be created in other social media channels such as Flickr, Instagram or YouTube. Visitors should be encouraged to upload pictures and videos to these profiles creating a community of followers. The presence in the social media can contribute to better position the areas in the Google search.  The social media profiles should also be used to keep followers informed about events and other important issues related to the PA's, therefore they have to manage them regularly.		
<b>Activities involved</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Definition of the annual/six-monthly social media strategy.</li> <li>• Create and update regularly the social media profiles.</li> <li>• Monitoring and reporting.</li> </ul>		
<b>EXPECTED RESULTS</b>	Ajara PA's have fully active social media profiles in main channels.	
<b>AGENTS INVOLVED</b>	APA DTR	
<b>COORDINATOR</b>	Ajara PA's administration	
<b>ASSESSMENT INDICATORS</b>	Number of followers Number of posts published	
<b>EXECUTION TIME</b>	2016-2020	<b>PRIORITY</b> HIGH <input type="checkbox"/> MEDIUM X LOW <input type="checkbox"/>
<b>BUDGET</b>	6,000 Gel/year (dedication of the 3 visitor specialists per year)	

Action	Facilitate free internet access (Wi-Fi) in Ajara PA’s (Visitor Centres)		4.2.4
<b>Justification</b> Internet became an essential part of our lives. Smartphones are also one of the most used devices to access to internet. A great percentage of social media users’ access social media on mobile. Providing a free internet connection can be a good opportunity for visitor to share their experience while they are on-site.			
<b>Description</b> Providing free internet access to visitors in the Visitor Centres/administration buildings of PA’s is an added value in PA’s. Having access to internet visitors are able to share the experience of visiting the PA’s.			
<b>Activities involved</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>Meetings with stakeholders and telecommunication providers.</li></ul>			
EXPECTED RESULTS	Free internet access is available to visitors		
AGENTS INVOLVED	Telecommunications companies PA’s administration DTR Municipalities		
COORDINATOR	PA’s administration		
ASSESSMENT INDICATORS	Wi-Fi access		
EXECUTION TIME	2019	PRIORITY	HIGH <input type="checkbox"/> MEDIUM <input type="checkbox"/> LOW X
BUDGET	1,200 Gel		

**OBJECTIVE 4.3: Visitors are able to buy locally produced "souvenirs".**

Action	Identify and train artisans and local producers in the area	4.3.1
<b>Justification</b> <p>Local products are an added value to the destination. Visitors travelling to different areas are willing to try and buy products that are not available at their home places.</p> <p>No souvenirs locally produced are sold to visitors. The only example of local product marketed to visitors is the honey shop located at the entrance of the administration building in Mtirala. This honey shop was sells locally produced honey, which is one of the main products in Ajara PA’s, and also tea.</p> <p>It is important that the items to be sold have some practical function that makes them desirable for purchase.</p>		



<b>Description</b> <p>Some artisans may be available in Machakhela NP. Artisans should be identified and engaged to create handicrafts that can be marketed to visitors. Training and marketing activities should be provided to artisans and local producers to help them to market adequately their products (packaging, labelling, etc.). It would be also desirable to organize small grants to support these initiatives.</p> <p>The development of additional market places, similar to the Honey shop in Mtirala should also be considered.</p> <p>In addition, farmers can also use part of their production to be sold to visitors, especially organic products such as honey, tea, nuts... In this way organic production will be encouraged. Training would be also needed for them on organic production, labelling, packaging, business, etc.</p> <p>Mtirala NP has already available a space in which a small souvenir shop can be placed. Also Machakhela can have a space if ground floor of administration building could be used.</p>			
<b>Activities involved</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Research and interview artisans/farmers in the area.</li> <li>• Identify and provide training in required topics to improve labelling, packaging, etc.</li> <li>• Provide economic support to artisans to develop their activities.</li> </ul>			
<b>EXPECTED RESULTS</b>	Database of artisans and organic agricultures Network of local artisans and producers is created		
<b>AGENTS INVOLVED</b>	PA's Administration Municipalities Local communities		
<b>COORDINATOR</b>	DTR		
<b>ASSESSMENT INDICATORS</b>	Number of agreements with artisans Number of trainings held		
<b>EXECUTION TIME</b>	2017-2018	<b>PRIORITY</b>	HIGH <input type="checkbox"/> MEDIUM X LOW <input type="checkbox"/>
<b>BUDGET</b>	10,200 Gel		

<b>Action</b>	<b>Create a sustainable line of “merchandising” for PA’s</b>	<b>4.3.2</b>
<b>Justification</b> <p>“Souvenir” or “merchandising” shops can be an additional attraction for PA’s and contribute to generate additional economic income for the PA’s, and also economic opportunities for locals. By selling items related to the area, or even well packaged local products. In addition, these items can help to promote and raise awareness on PA’s.</p> <p>These souvenirs or gift should be useful, eco-friendly (recycled, organic, etc.) and should bring financial benefit to communities living in or around the PA’s.</p> <p>One of such souvenir shops or market place should be established in Machakhela.</p>		

<b>Description</b> Among the products that can be marketed as “souvenirs” in Ajara PA’s: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Books, maps, guides, mugs, postcards, pens, quality pictures, etc.</li> <li>- Textiles: T-shirts, textile bags, huts</li> <li>- Organic products: honey, tea, nuts, (locally produced.)</li> <li>- Locally made crafts (this should be marked in the label).</li> <li>- Cuddly toys representing emblematic animals of the area, etc.</li> </ul>			
<b>Activities involved</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Definition of products to be sold (product that comply with sustainability principles), and select provider, and establish a fair agreement.</li> <li>• Design a brand to the products to be sold as Ajara PA’s souvenirs</li> <li>• Establishment of agreement with providers</li> <li>• Monitoring and reporting</li> </ul>			
<b>EXPECTED RESULTS</b>	Line of locally produced handicrafts is ready to be sold.		
<b>AGENTS INVOLVED</b>	Ajara PA’s administrations Artisans APA		
<b>COORDINATOR</b>	DTR		
<b>ASSESSMENT INDICATORS</b>	Typology of products ready to be sold		
<b>EXECUTION TIME</b>	2018-2019	<b>PRIORITY</b>	HIGH <input type="checkbox"/> MEDIUM <input type="checkbox"/> LOW X
<b>BUDGET</b>	18,000 Gel		

## STRATEGIC LINE 5: PRODUCT AND INFRASTRUCTURE DEVELOPMENT

Product design and infrastructure development are key elements of a destination in order to create experiences to be offered to visitors. The design of feasible and cost effective activities in the Ajara PA's is essential to attract visitors and increase their level of enjoyment. Infrastructures and facilities should be built to support the development of tourism products. The construction of infrastructures should follow sustainability patterns to avoid any negative impact on the environment.

Together with product and infrastructure development it is important to define an environmental awareness programme, both for locals and visitors, to increase appreciation for the values of the Ajara PA's.

### OBJECTIVE 5.1: New infrastructures and facilities are built in Ajara PA's

Action	Design and build new tourism facilities and infrastructures in Ajara PA's	5.1.1
<p><b>Justification</b></p> <p>A number of facilities and infrastructures have been proposed in Chapter 6 in order to enhance visitor's experience. The facilities and infrastructures proposed are considered the necessary ones to develop nature-based tourism activities in Ajara PA's in a way that enriches visitors' experience with a low impact on nature.</p>		
<p><b>Description</b></p> <p>The facilities and infrastructures proposed have to be built with local materials and in a sustainable way. Priority should be given to local companies and local human resources to implement the construction works.</p> <p>The facilities/infrastructures proposed include:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>✓ Nature Trails in the three PA's.</li> <li>✓ Signage of nature and recreational trails</li> <li>✓ View Points</li> <li>✓ Bird-observatories</li> <li>✓ Picnic Areas</li> <li>✓ Camping facilities, shelters and family cabins</li> <li>✓ Road/directional Signs and Interpretive Boards</li> <li>✓ Parking facilities</li> </ul> <p>The potential for developing mountain biking routes should be assessed by the Georgian Mountain Bike Users.</p> <p>In Machakhela a Visitor Centre would be also needed in case that the current building cannot be used for the PA's administration. The location of the current building is very convenient and if possible PA's administration and APA should make the effort of extending the existing agreement for using the whole building. The ground floor could be used for locating a souvenir shop and displaying relevant information about Machakhela NP.</p>		

An important issue related to the construction of tourism facilities and infrastructures is to seek financial funds as government/APA resources are limited.			
<b>Activities involved</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Elaborate feasibility studies to develop new facilities and infrastructures.</li> <li>• Elaboration of projects.</li> <li>• Carry out construction activities.</li> <li>• Reporting and monitoring.</li> </ul>			
<b>EXPECTED RESULTS</b>	The new, sustainable and attractive infrastructures and facilities built in Ajara Protected Areas improve visitor's experience.		
<b>AGENTS INVOLVED</b>	APA DTR NGO's International Organizations Tourism private sector		
<b>COORDINATOR</b>	Ajara PA's administrations		
<b>ASSESSMENT INDICATORS</b>	Number of facilities built Visitor's satisfaction		
<b>EXECUTION TIME</b>	2016-2018	<b>PRIORITY</b>	HIGH <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> MEDIUM <input type="checkbox"/> LOW <input type="checkbox"/>
<b>BUDGET</b>	45,000 Gel (for the elaboration of the feasibility studies)		

**OBJECTIVE 5.2. New products and services are available for main tourism segments.**

<b>Action</b>	<b>Develop cost-effective and attractive tourism products</b>	<b>5.2.1</b>
<b>Justification</b> In order to attract visitors to the Protected Area, nature-based activities should be developed. These activities must be nature and culture based, with low environmental impact.		
<b>Description</b> One of the first steps for developing nature-based products or activities is to develop nature trails through the PA's, these nature trails take into account the different ecosystems/features observed (not in sensitive areas.  The strategy considers thematic hiking routes associated to environmental interpretation, to provide information on the values of natural and cultural heritage, to prevent negative effects; and contribute to the preservation in the area. Environmental interpretation adds value to the proposed routes. One of such routes will combine the three PA's.-  A seasonal program of thematic guided walks can be offered to tourists, both in low and high season. In high season these walks can help to diversify the tourists in different routes, while in low season can help to attract visitors.		

<p>Some proposed thematic routes can be: “A day with a Ranger”, Family trek”, “Birds of Ajara PA’s”, etc. Other activities to be included are: birdwatching, rafting, canyoning, kayaking, geocaching, and 4x4 tours (especially in Mtirala). These activities should be combined to create marketable tourism products that can be offered to tourists.</p> <p>The collaboration of Tour operations can help to create marketable experiences for differentiated tourism segments.</p> <p>In order to extend the season winter activities should also be promoted such as:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>– Winter wildlife tracking</li> <li>– Winter survival weekend,</li> <li>– Etc.</li> </ul>			
<p><b>Activities involved</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Definition of products with higher potential in each PA . Conduct cost-benefit analysis</li> <li>- Meetings with stakeholders.</li> <li>- Define a plan to develop at least 5 selected products in each protected area.</li> <li>- Monitoring and reporting.</li> </ul>			
<b>EXPECTED RESULTS</b>	New products and services defined in each Protected Area are attractive to visitors.		
<b>AGENTS INVOLVED</b>	DTR TTOO NGO’s (Sabuko, etc.) Associations (Guiding associations, mountain bike association, etc.) Tourism private sector		
<b>COORDINATOR</b>	Ajara PA’s administrations		
<b>ASSESSMENT INDICATORS</b>	Number of products developed in each PA		
<b>EXECUTION TIME</b>	2016-2019	<b>PRIORITY</b>	HIGH <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> MEDIUM <input type="checkbox"/> LOW <input type="checkbox"/>
<b>BUDGET</b>	50,000 Gel		

**OBJECTIVE 5.3: Increase environmental awareness among locals and visitors.**

<b>Action</b>	<b>Design and implement an environmental education and interpretation program for locals and visitors.</b>	<b>5.3.1</b>
<p><b>Justification</b></p> <p>Environmental education and interpretation are two subjects that should be linked with the tourism activity. They are the necessary tools in order to create a wider knowledge of the natural area and its relations, functions, etc. Both aspects are relevant to encourage environmental appreciation change behaviour.</p>		

Interpretative program planning should consider at least three elements: the content or interpretative themes, the interpretive media, and interpretive facilities or infrastructures.			
<p><b>Description</b></p> <p>Developing an Environmental education and Interpretation program to define environmental awareness activities targeted at all key groups such as children, youth and adults.</p> <p>The objective of this programme is to raise awareness and educate on the importance of environmental conservation, highlighting the protection of biodiversity, fighting climate change, or the ecological footprint. The programme should also promote a better understanding and appreciation of the PA's culture and heritage.</p> <p>Therefore, goal of the education and interpretation program is to communicate local and visitors, the important of key resources of the PA.</p> <p>Among the activities to be included are the development of "self-guided interpretive trails", through the location of a system of signs, in designed trails, which permit the visitor to go round alone and at the same time to get relevant information on the themes, which form part of it.</p> <p>Guided interpretive trails could also be developed once an initial group of tour guides is certified and have knowledge on interpretation and other communication skills.</p> <p>Other tools can include the elaboration of environmental education materials, brochures, posters, school programs, events, etc.</p> <p>It would be recommended to count on the collaboration of existing NGOs in the design of the program and materials.</p>			
<p><b>Activities involved</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Definition and implementation of environmental education and interpretation program.</li> <li>• Define and implement promotional campaign/activities.</li> <li>• Reporting on the activities carried out, expenditures, attendance, etc.</li> </ul>			
<b>EXPECTED RESULTS</b>	A comprehensive environmental programme for different audiences is developed.		
<b>AGENTS INVOLVED</b>	NGO's Academic Institutions		
<b>COORDINATOR</b>	Ajara PA's administrations		
<b>ASSESSMENT INDICATORS</b>	Number of students/groups who have participated in the Environmental Education programme Visitor and local satisfaction		
<b>EXECUTION TIME</b>	2017-2020	<b>PRIORITY</b>	HIGH <input type="checkbox"/> MEDIUM X LOW <input type="checkbox"/>
<b>BUDGET</b>	11,000 Gel/year		

**OBJECTIVE 5.4: Tourism services providers associated to PA's comply with existing standards**

Action	Assess existing quality standards for accommodation and catering facilities in PA's	5.4.1
<p><b>Justification</b></p> <p>The quality of services offered in and around Ajara PA's (restaurants and accommodation services) need to be improved. Services are not professional enough and some standards should be implemented.</p> <p>The Biological Farming Association ELKANA, a Georgian non-governmental organization, has developed quality standards for rural tourism enterprises that can be used for those services providers in the area.</p>		
<p><b>Description</b></p> <p>One of the first steps to improve the level of the quality of services is the elaboration of standards and their introduction to local service providers. For this visitors' specialists of PA's should be trained in this quality standards. This can be included in the training module "Hospitality and Tourism". Once the services specialists have been trained, these visitors' specialists should be responsible of assessing the existing services in the PA's. Recommendations should be done for the providers to improve their services. Continuous support and monitoring should be done in order to ensure that quality effectively improves.</p> <p>Ajara PA's has such experience with Elkana RT accommodation standards. Visitor specialists were trained as a "local instructors"; small reports for each guesthouse were prepared and delivered to APA. Based on which, selected guesthouses are placed on APA web page and recommended to visitors.</p> <p>APA with support of SPPA project started working on elaboration of quality standards and eco labelling in PA's of Georgia. The award of a certification can encourage the service providers to improve and market their services. The Certification body will be either APA or a separate legal entity, authorised by APA.</p> <p>The service providers should have a proper visitor's satisfaction questionnaire in order to measure satisfaction and dissatisfaction, weak points for further improvement and better recognition of the area.</p>		
<p><b>Activities involved</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Definition the quality standards for tourism service providers.</li> <li>• Training for visitor specialists' in the quality standards.</li> <li>• Training for tourism service providers in the quality standards.</li> <li>• Assessment to tourism service providers and elaborate recommendations of improvement.</li> <li>• Provision of Certifications tourism service providers.</li> <li>• Reporting.</li> </ul>		
<b>EXPECTED RESULTS</b>	Tourism service providers understand the importance of providing quality services and have the tools to improve their services.	
<b>AGENTS INVOLVED</b>	DTR GNTA Ajara PA's administrations SPPA/ELKANA TTOO	
<b>COORDINATOR</b>	APA	

<b>ASSESSMENT INDICATORS</b>	Visitors satisfaction Number of accommodation and restauration providers certified Number of trainings organized Number of participants		
<b>EXECUTION TIME</b>	2017-2019	<b>PRIORITY</b>	HIGH <input type="checkbox"/> MEDIUM X LOW <input type="checkbox"/>
<b>BUDGET</b>	8,500 Gel		



STRATEGIC LINE 1: MANAGEMENT AND GOVERNANCE									
Objective 1.1. The Ajara PA's administrations became members of Regional Advisory Council for the coordinated management for the tourism									
Actions	Coordinator	Agents involved	Estimated Budget	Priority	2016	2017	2018	2019	2020
1.1.1 Create a participatory platform for cooperation with DTR in Ajara.	DTR	DTR, Municipalities, PA's, APA, Tourism private sector, NGOs	900 Gel (estimating 4 meetings per year) Includes transportation, allowance and administrative work: recording of minutes, invitations...)	HIGH					
Objective 1.2. Improve the financial management of Ajara PA's									
Actions	Coordinator	Agents involved	Estimated Budget	Priority	2016	2017	2018	2019	2020
1.2.1 Elaborate simple business plans with APA for expected tourism revenues and expenditures.	APA	PA's, Ministry of Environment and Natural resources	4,500 Gel (230 hr. dedication of administrative staff in each PA) + 4,500 Gel (120 hr. external support) + 1,500 Gel (administrative work) <b>TOTAL: 10,500 Gel</b>	MEDIUM					
Objective 1.3. Income generation form tourism activities increases by 70% by the end of 2020									
Actions	Coordinator	Agents involved	Estimated Budget	Priority	2016	2017	2018	2019	2020
1.3.1 Design and implement a mechanism for generating revenues from tourism (Tourism User Fees).	APA	DTR, Ajara PA's administrations, Local communities	1,800 Gel for planning (meetings and administrative work)	HIGH					
1.3.2 Elaboration a property/service rental framework for Ajara PA's based on concessionaries' professional experience in tourism business.	Ajara PA's administrations	DTR, PA's Administration, APA, Local communities, Tourism private sector	2,100 Gel (90 hr dedication of administrative staff and administrative costs) + 1,200 Gel (Organization of meetings/event with interested concessionaires) + 1,300 Gel (dissemination of information) <b>TOTAL: 4,600 Gel</b>	MEDIUM					
1.3.3 Implement a pilot entrance fee in Mtirala.	Ajara PA's administrations	Ajara PA's administrations, APA, DTR, Tourism private sector, Local Communities	10,000 Gel (Design and implement an awareness campaign- 6 months duration) + 25,000 Gel (administrative organization to collect fees). <b>TOTAL: 35,000 Gel</b>	MEDIUM					
Objective 1.4. Ensure conservation approach in project PA's									
Actions	Coordinator	Agents involved	Estimated Budget	Priority	2016	2017	2018	2019	2020
1.4.1 Elaborate and conduct a Visitor Impact Monitoring System.	Ajara PA's administrations	PA's administration Local communities Private business around PA's	13,000 Gel (estimated dedication of Administrative staff in the elaboration of the monitoring system) + 2,200 (elaboration of templates for data registration) + 1,800 (organization annual meeting for results presentation) <b>TOTAL: 17,000 Gel</b>	MEDIUM					
STRATEGIC LINE 2: CAPACITY BUILDING									
Objective 2.1. Increase knowledge of PA's staff in sustainable tourism and environmental issues									
Actions	Coordinator	Agents involved	Estimated Budget	Priority	2016	2017	2018	2019	2020
2.1.1 Design and implement a training programme for PA's staff (administration).	APA	Ajara PA's administration	35,000 Gel (curricula definition and training implementation)	HIGH					

Objective 2.2. Increase local communities' knowledge about Ajara PA's environmental values and tourism related issues									
Actions	Coordinator	Agents involved	Estimated Budget	Priority	2016	2017	2018	2019	2020
2.2.1 Design and implement a training programme for local communities.	Ajara PA's administrations	PA's administration, Municipalities, DTR, NGO's	3,000 Gel (estimated dedication of PA's administration staff) + 14,000 Gel for implementation. <b>TOTAL: 17,000 Gel</b>	HIGH					
Objective 2.3. By 2020 there will be at least 15 certified Tour Guides									
Actions	Coordinator	Agents involved	Estimated Budget		2016	2017	2018	2019	2020
2.3.1 Create a certification for local tour guides.	DTR	Ajara PA's administrations, DTR, TTOO, Municipalities, Local communities Tour Guides Associations	4,000 Gel (for meetings and consultations with academic institutions) + 2,000 Gel (design the common image for Ajara Tour Guides). <b>TOTAL: 6,000 Gel</b>	HIGH					
2.3.2 Design and implement a training programme for Tour Guides in Ajara PA's.	DTR	Ajara PA's administrations, TTOO, Municipalities, Local communities, Academic institutions	11,000 Gel (definition of training contents) + 10,000 Gel training implementation/year + 3,000 Gel registration and examination process. <b>TOTAL: 24,000 Gel</b>	HIGH					
STRATEGIC LINE 3: ACCESSIBILIY AND SAFETY									
Objective 3.1. Improve accesibility to Ajara PA's									
Actions	Coordinator	Agents involved	Estimated Budget	Priority	2016	2017	2018	2019	2020
3.1.1 Improve road access to Ajara PA's, especially Kintrishi and Mtirala.	Municipalities	Municipalities, Department of Road and Rehabilitation of the Government of Ajara	60,000 Gel (project design for roads rehabilitation)	HIGH					
3.1.2 Design and produce standard road directional signs for PA's.	Ajara PA's administrations	Road and Rehabilitation Department, APA, DTR, Municipalities	4,500 Gel (dedication of PA's staff)	MEDIUM					
Objective 3.2. Transportation to PA's from Batumi and Kobuleti is regular and reliable									
Actions	Coordinator	Agents involved	Estimated Budget	Priority	2016	2017	2018	2019	2020
3.2.1 Develop a clear and quality system of public and private transportation to access to Ajara PA's.	Municipalities	Taxi Drivers, DTR, Ajara PA's administrations	2,500 Gel (for meetings with transportation providers and administrative work)	MEDIUM					
Objective 3.3. Ajara PA's are considered to be a safe place									
Actions	Coordinator	Agents involved	Estimated Budget	Priority	2016	2017	2018	2019	2020
3.3.1 Design and test a manual of safety procedures in Ajara PA's.	Ajara PA's administrations	Health institutions, emergency services	8,200 Gel (elaboration of the Manual ) + 800 Gel (meetings) + 3,500 (Training to rangers/2 trainings per year around 35 hr/training). <b>TOTAL: 12,500 Gel</b>	MEDIUM					

STRATEGIC LINE 4: MARKETING AND PROMOTION									
Objective 4.1. Increase awareness about Ajara PA's at national and international level.									
Actions	Coordinator	Agents involved	Estimated Budget	Priority	2016	2017	2018	2019	2020
4.1.1 Define a marketing strategy and operational plan.	DTR	Ajara PA's administrations, GNTA, APA, Ajara Travel Agency Tourism private sector	1,500 (meetings with different stakeholders and administrative work) + 15,000 (external technical assistance). <b>TOTAL: 16,500 Gel</b>	HIGH					
4.1.2 Create a membership card for Ajara Protected Areas.	APA	Ajara PA's administrations, APA, DTR, Tourism private sector	3,000 Gel (meetings and administrative work) + 22,000 Gel (software development and card design) + 5,000 Gel (promotional activities). <b>TOTAL: 25,000 Gel</b>	HIGH					
4.1.3 Identify themes/topics for events creation and define a calendar of events.	Ajara PA's administrations	Local Communities, Municipalities, NGO's, tourism private sector	<b>4,500 Gel</b> (meetings, administrative work and planning)	MEDIUM					
Objetivo 4.2. Information related to Ajara PA's is easy accessible through new technologies									
Actions	Coordinator	Agents involved	Estimated Budget	Priority	2016	2017	2018	2019	2020
4.2.1 Create a visitor friendly tourism website for each PA optimized for search engines.	DTR	Ajara PA's administration, APA	15,000 Gel to hire services of a Web Designer Company + 5,000 Gel per year for 3hr dedication/month of each visitor specialist for updating the website. <b>TOTAL: 30,000 Gel</b>	HIGH					
4.2.2 Create downloadable multimedia trails and include detailed information on Ajara Protected Areas in the Gobatumi app.	DTR	Ajara PA's administrations, APA	<b>8,000 Gel</b> (hire a software engineer to develop the app)	LOW					
4.2.3 Increase social media presence.	Ajara PA's administrations	APA, DTR	<b>6,000 Gel</b> per year estimated dedication of Visitor Specialist (12 hr/week to update social media profiles)	MEDIUM					
4.2.4 Facilitate free internet access (Wi-Fi) in Ajara PA's (Visitor Centres).	Ajara PA's administrations	Telecommunications companies, DTR, Municipalities, APA	<b>1,200 Gel</b> (meetings)	LOW					
Objective 4.3. Visitors are able to buy locally produced "souvenirs"									
Actions	Coordinator	Agents involved	Estimated Budget	Priority	2016	2017	2018	2019	2020
4.3.1 Identify and train artisans and local products in the area.	DTR	Ajara PA's administrations, Municipalities, Local communities	2,200 Gel (dedication of staff to identify artisans and administrative work) + 8,000 Gel to provide 3 trainings of 160 hr in total. <b>TOTAL: 10,200 Gel</b>	MEDIUM					
4.3.2 Create a sustainable line of "merchandising" for PA's.	DTR	Ajara PA's Administrations, Artisans, APA	<b>18,000 Gel</b>	LOW					
STRATEGIC LINE 5: PRODUCT AND INFRASTRUCTURE DEVELOPMENT									
Objective 5.1. New Infrastructure and facilities are built in Ajara PA's									
Actions	Coordinator	Agents involved	Estimated Budget	Priority	2016	2017	2018	2019	2020
5.1.1 Design and build new tourism facilities and infrastructures in Ajara PA's.	Ajara PA's administration	APA, DTR, NGO's, International Organizations, tourism private sector	<b>45,000 Gel</b> (elaboration of feasibility studies)	HIGH					

Objective 5.2. New products and services are available for main tourism segments.									
Actions	Coordinator	Agents involved	Estimated Budget	Priority	2016	2017	2018	2019	2020
5.2.1 Develop cost-effective and attractive tourism products	Ajara PA's administration	APA, DTR, NGO's, International Organizations, tourism private sector, associations	50,000 Gel (to develop at least 5 tourism products in each PA)	HIGH					
Objective 5.3. Increase environmental awareness among local and visitors.									
Actions	Coordinator	Agents involved	Estimated Budget	Priority	2016	2017	2018	2019	2020
5.3.1 Design and implement an environmental programme	Ajara PA's administration	NGO's, Academic Institutions	11,000 Gel/year (elaboration of the annual programme and administrative work)	MEDIUM					
Objective 5.4. Tourism services providers associated to PA's comply with defined quality standards									
Actions	Coordinator	Agents involved	Estimated Budget	Priority	2016	2017	2018	2019	2020
5.4.1 Assess existing quality standards for accommodation and catering facilities in PA's	DTR	GNTA, APA, PA's administration, ELKANA, TTOO	8,500 Gel	MEDIUM					

## 9. CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

Ajara PA's has a great potential for tourism development, however there are several issues that should be addressed in order to tap this potential.

Firstly, it is necessary to work on the governance and management structure by facilitating the participation of different administration levels, local communities, private sector, etc. in the PA's decision-making. Secondly, provide a more flexible system of revenue sharing between APA and the PA's, however, this is a long-term measure, as the existing legislation does not allow the establishment of a revenue sharing system.

1. To motivate PA staff to be more active involved in tourism development in the area.
2. To effectively use the revenues generated to improve services offered by the Park and to minimize environmental impacts derived from increased tourism activities.

The need of strengthen the de-concentration, co-management and increase public-private partnerships has been recognized in different IUCN resolutions and recommendations: *“Encourage and support the co-management agreements by and between local, regional, and national governments, non-governmental entities, the private sector, local and indigenous communities and other stakeholders... Remove policy and institutional barrier to sustainable financing solutions, including barriers to the effective allocation of resources across protected area networks and systems, so that funding from both new and existing sources, and revenue generated by protected areas can be fully and efficiently directed to protected area management”*. (Ammam Congress 2000).

The participation of Ajara PA's in a regional structure in which representatives of different administration levels, and also private sector, NGO's and other stakeholders are involved is one of the first actions to be developed. This participatory body will allow the definition and coordination of joint actions that can benefit

In addition, it would be important that this regional council has responsibilities over the following activities:

1. Implementation of the Ajara Protected Areas Sustainable Tourism Strategy and Action Plan.
2. Definition of the mechanisms to raise economic revenues in the Protected Areas.
3. Implementation of entrance fees in Mtirala NP
4. Design and effective promotion and marketing strategy to increase the visibility about the Protected Areas.

The participation of a broader range of stakeholders will favour the support of PA's and their understanding. Particularly important are the links and partnerships with the private tourism sector that can help to manage and raise revenues from tourism. It is necessary to start working on

developing needed infrastructures and services that can support market-driven tourism products that attract a higher number of visitors.

The higher visitation number should not impact on the environmental values of the PA's, therefore efforts should be made in controlling and monitoring visitor impacts, in order to ensure that PA's continue to play their role in preserving valuable ecosystems.

Other aspect that should be taken into account is that tourism, as a global industry can bring many benefits, in terms of economic diversification, livelihood enhancement or employment opportunities; however, expectations have to be managed in order to be realistic, especially from local communities. An overreliance on tourism can be very risky, as any change in consumer patterns, natural disasters or economic downturns can have very negative impacts.

Finally, it has to be highlighted that the Strategy provides guidelines according to the present situation and based on the vision of the Adjara PA's. Any change in the current situation or market evolution should lead to an adaptation on the Strategy priorities. Therefore, the *Strategy* should be continuously monitored and evaluated according to the assessment indicators of the actions and the baseline data and corrective measures should be implemented if needed.

## 10. ANNEXES

### 10.1. Annex 1. List of existing Guest Houses in Ajara PA's

#	Name	Address	Type	Contact person /Tel	Number of rooms	Number of beds	Price	Comments
1	hotel "Mtirala /APA	Batumi / Mtirala NP/village Chakvistavi	cottage	Guram Koncenlidze 558 46 68 28 Viitor service specialist : Lali Makhadze 577 10 18 89	4	8	50 GEL with meal 25 without meal	
2	local house	Mtiral NP/village Chakvistavi	guesthouse	Zia Koncenlidze 790596662	3	6	50 GEL with meal 25 without meal	
3	local house	Mtiral NP/village Chakvistavi	guesthouse	Guram Koncenlidze 558 46 68 28	3	7	50 GEL with meal 25 without meal	
4	local house	Mtiral NP/village Chakvistavi	guesthouse	Eter Koncenlidze 558 71 90 06	2	8	50 GEL with meal 25 without meal	
5	APA	Mtiral NP	shelter	558 46 68 28	1	1	50 GEL with meal 25 without meal	
6	"SHOKA & LEO"	Mtiral NP/village Chakvistavi	guesthouse /cottage	593 35 84 35 577 559429	5	12	50 GEL with meal 25 without meal	
7	guesthouse at vizitor centre /APA	Kobuleti / Kintrishi	cottage	Viitor service specialist : Nana Nogaideli 577 59 21 12 Head of administration Amiran Khinikadze 577 10 18 03	2	4	15 Gelwithout meal	
8	local house	Kobuleti / Kintrishi valley	guesthouse	593 43 40 90 Jumberi	2	4	20 Gel p/p with breakfast	guesthouse with comfortable garden is located nearby river Kintrishistskali. There is possible to arrange dishing tours and 4x4 drive excursions
9	ISPANI /APA	Kobuleti PA	guesthouse	Adam Beridze 557 101897 Administration 577 10 18 12	2	8	45 GEL with meal in summer; 25-30 in winer	
10	local house	Khelvachauri/Upper Chkhutuneti	Guesthouse	Malvina, Beka 555 45 36 79 / 555 67 13 67				
11	local house	Khelvachauri/Upper Chkhutuneti	Guesthouse	Eldar Nagervadze 539 66 97 77				
12	local house	Khelvachauri/Upper Chkhutuneti	Guesthouse	Vazha Kakhidze - 555 17 66 90				
13	local house	Khelvachauri/Upper Chkhutuneti	Guesthouse	Khasan Nagveraidze 555 340700				
14	local house	Khelvachauri/Upper Chkhutuneti	Guesthouse	Mindia Merkuladze 558247384				
15	local house	Khelvachauri/Upper Chkhutuneti	Guesthouse	Nagveradze Nana 593 35 46 02 / 593 28 09 09				
16	local house	Khelvachauri /Kostaneti	Guesthouse	Pati Khinkiladze 555 60 09 08/558 900 945	6	12		
17	local house	Khelvachauri /Kostaneti	Guesthouse	Neli Karidze, 593 45 90 79 / 555 46 79 24	2	5		wine tourism
18	local house	Khelvachauri /Akhasheni	Guesthouse	Ruslan Zanakidze 593 75 8088				wine tourism
19	local house	Khelvachauri /Chikuneti	Guesthouse	Niaz Khinkiladze 577 156790				wine tourism
20	local house	Khelvachauri /Maradidi	Guesthouse	Nadim Didmanidze 577 594747				wine tourism
21	local house	Khelvachauri /Kirnati	Guesthouse	Gicha Kakhaberidze 577 203838				
22	local house	Khelvachauri /Tskhemlara	Guesthouse	Malkhaz, Nato Salvaridze, vilage Tskhemlara 591 95 54 36; 599 85 15 70				
23	local house	Khelvachauri /Tskhemlara	Guesthouse	Levan Salvaridze 574 302727				
24	local house		Guesthouse	Kobuladze Manana 595 99 36 72 / 558 13 81 13				
25	local house	Khelvachauri / Acharisagmarti	Guesthouse	Iasha Tarieladze 593 2279 52				

#	Name	Address	Type	Contact person /Tel	Number of rooms	Number of beds	Price	Comments
26	"Machakhela"		hotel	514 71 60 60 577 46 59 59	20	60		
27	local house	Keda/Merisi	Guesthouse	Amiran Devadze 577 30 27 53/577 40 27 10				
28	TSKAROSTVALI	Keda / Gobroneti	Guesthouse	Amiran Bolkvadze 599 94 46 42	3	6	30 Gel with breakfast	member of ELKANA
29	ZEBO	Keda / Gobroneti	Guesthouse	Zebur Bolkvadze 593 93 34 03	3	6	30 Gel with breakfast	member of ELKANA
30	local house	Keda/ Gundaure	Guesthouse	Merab Turmanidze 593 22 39 07				
31	local house	Keda/ Gundaure	Guesthouse	Nodar Diasamidze 593 58 83 73				
32	local house	Keda/Garetke	Guesthouse	Amiran Turmanidze 558 27 64 03				
33	local house	Keda/ Gundaure	Guesthouse	Akaki Khalvashi 577 14 34 23				
34	local house	Keda/ Gundaure	Guesthouse	Zurab Turmanidze 599 85 13 34				
35	local house	Keda / Pirveli Maisi	Guesthouse	Nodar Shervashidze 593070088				wine tourism
36	local house	Keda /Vaio	Guesthouse	Lado Shawshvili 599783659				wine tourism
37	local house	Keda Gegalidzebi	Guesthouse	Nuri Sirabidze 591 988 255				wine tourism
38	local house	Keda/Merisi	Guesthouse	Mindia Chkhikvadze 593 102009				wine tourism
39	local house	Keda /Vaio	Guesthouse	Malkhaz Gorgiladze 591 980658				wine tourism
40	Mtsvane saxli "green house"	Shuakhevi /Nigazeuli	Guesthouse	Beglar Kekelidze 558 793 307, 555 28 62 75	3	6	25 Gel with breakfast	member of ELKANA
41	"Imedi"	Shuakhevi /Nigazeuli	Guesthouse	Amiran Khimshiashvili 555 12 81 95, 595 36 80 32	3	6	50 Gel with meal	member of ELKANA
42	"AVTO"	Shuakhevi /Nigazeuli	Guesthouse	Malkhaz Khimshiashvili 593 62 83 78	3	6	25 Gel with breakfast	member of ELKANA
43	"Kvemoerebi"	Shuakhevi /Nigazeuli	Guesthouse	Bichiki Khimshiashvili 593 76 84 00	2	5	50 Gel with meal	member of ELKANA
44	local house	Shuakhevi /Chvanta	Guesthouse	Roman Kiladze 577 17 64 27				
45	local house	Shuakhevi / Takidzebi	Guesthouse	Valiko Tsintsadze 99 85 20 13				
46	local house	Shuakhevi /Gomarduli	Guesthouse	Guram Beridze 591 58 98 53				Ski /adventure tourism
47	local house	Shuakhevi /Gomarduli	Guesthouse	Badri Katamadze 555773700				Ski /adventure tourism
48	local house	Shuakhevi /Gomarduli	Guesthouse	Tamaz Kartsivadze 591712379				Ski /adventure tourism
49	local house	Shuakhevi /Gomarduli	Guesthouse	Nodar Beridze 555175334				Ski /adventure tourism
50	local house	Shuakhevi /Gomarduli	Guesthouse	Guram Kartsivadze 593 112362				Ski /adventure tourism
51	local house	Khulo /Kinchiauri	Guesthouse	Akaki Shanidze 577 17 6049				
52	local house	Khulo/Danispira	Guesthouse	Guram Shamanadze 599202037				
53	local house	Khulo/Kedelebi	Guesthouse	Murman Tapladze 551098367				
54	local house	Khulo/Kedelebi	Guesthouse	Chogadze Nodar 59932 07 31				
55	local house	Khulo/Kedelebi	Guesthouse	Chogadze Otari 598 09 55 58				
56	local house	Khulo/Kedelebi	Guesthouse	Chofadze tamaz 591 98 10 96				



## 10.2. Annex 2. List of TTOO offering nature-based products

Tour Operators / Travel agencies	Proposed Tours by Tour Operators (Offering Custom & Tailor made Tours to PA's)				
	Adventure Tours	Nature based Tours	(Tailor-made & Custom Tours)	Group Tours	Weekend Tours or 1 Day trips to PAs (1-3 Days)
Tbilisi based incoming tour operators // Ajara (Batumi) based tour operators					
<b>Explore Georgia</b> <a href="http://www.exploregeorgia.com">www.exploregeorgia.com</a> Tbilisi based company	X	X	X	Adventure, Culture, Events, Expeditions	X
<b>Caucasus Travel</b> <a href="http://www.caucasustravel.com">www.caucasustravel.com</a> Tbilisi based company	X	X	X	Adventure, Culture, Events, Expeditions, MICE business, Cruise service	X
<b>Concord Travel</b> <a href="http://www.concordtravel.ge">www.concordtravel.ge</a> Tbilisi based company	X	X	X	Adventure, Culture, Events, Expeditions, MICE business	X
<b>Omnes Tour</b> <a href="http://www.omnestour.ge">www.omnestour.ge</a> Tbilisi based company	X	X	X	Adventure, Culture, Events, Expeditions, MICE business, Transport service (by own bus company)	X
<b>GeorgiCa Travel</b> <a href="http://www.georgicatavel.ge">www.georgicatavel.ge</a> Tbilisi based company	X	X	X	Adventure, Culture, Expeditions, MICE business, Cruise service	X
<b>Georgian Discovery Tours</b> <a href="http://www.gdt.ge">www.gdt.ge</a> Tbilisi based company	X	X	X	Adventure, Culture	X
<b>Lifetime Travel Event</b> <a href="http://www.lifetime.ge">www.lifetime.ge</a> Batumi based company		X	X	Culture, Cruise service	X

<b>Visit Georgia</b> <a href="http://www.visitgeorgia.ge">www.visitgeorgia.ge</a> Tbilisi based company	X	X	X	Adventure, Culture, Events, Expeditions, MICE business, Cruise service	X
<b>Freshtour</b> <a href="http://www.freshtour.ge">www.freshtour.ge</a> Batumi based company	X	X	X	Adventure, PA Tours, winter tours (Ajara), events, culture, Adventure	X
<b>Exotour</b> <a href="http://www.exotour.travel">www.exotour.travel</a> Tbilisi based company	X	X	X	Adventure, Culture, Expeditions, MICE business	X
<b>Living Roots</b> <a href="http://www.travellingroots.com">www.travellingroots.com</a> Tbilisi & Signaghi based company	X	X	X	Wine & Rural Tourism, Wine Events, Eco Tours, Adventure, Horseback Tours	X
<b>Inter Travel</b> <a href="http://www.inter-travel.ge">www.inter-travel.ge</a> Batumi based company	X	X	X	Culture, Adventure, SPA, Sea resorts, Cruise service	X
<b>Calipso Travel</b> <a href="http://www.calipso.ge">www.calipso.ge</a> Batumi based company		X	X	Culture, Nature, Culinary Tours, Sea resorts, Hotel reservations, Cruise service	X
<b>Wonderland</b> <a href="http://www.wonderland.ge">www.wonderland.ge</a> Batumi based company	X	X	X	Culture, Nature, Sea resorts, Hotel reservations, Events, MICE business, Cruise service	X
<b>Visit Adjara</b> <a href="http://www.visitadjara.com">www.visitadjara.com</a> Batumi based company			X	Culture, Sea resorts, Hotel reservations, Events, Cruise service	X
<b>Adjara Tour</b> <a href="http://www.adjaratour.com">www.adjaratour.com</a> Batumi based company	X	X	X	Culture, Nature, Sea resorts, Hotel reservations, Events, MICE business, Cruise service	X

### **10.3. Annex 3. List of Restaurant Facilities in Ajara PA's**

#### **Mtirala**

1. Restaurant "Cakvistavi". Owner: Jeiran Kontsenlidze. Tel: 593 009332; 557 74 53 80
2. Local restaurant in Chavistavi
3. Local restaurant in Khalashi

#### **Kintrishi**

1. Restaurant "Tamaris Khidi" on the way of Chakhati -Kobalauri villages.  
Owner Eldar Takidze Tel: 558412020, 577242963
2. Trout Farm in Kokh. Owner Sopho Japaridze 577 43 06 08
3. Recreational complex in entrance of PA

#### **Machakhela**

1. Restaurant "Machakhela" in village Tskhemlara Tel: 599 52 12 25 / 574 30 27 27
2. Restaurant Gele-Gurdani in village Jocho (Khelvachauri Municipality)
3. Tel: 599 55 72 33 | (0422) 27 46 71
4. Restaurant "Kaklebi" in Txilnati (Khelvachauri Municipality)  
Tel: +995 577 572 582 | 597 071 000
5. Restaurant "Harale" in Txilnati (Khelvachauri Municipality)  
Tel: +995 558 390 554 | +995 558 390 544 .
6. Restaurant "Wine House" near Ajaristskali (Khelvachauri)  
Tel: 0790 11 55 00, 577 21 40 02

**10.4. Annex 4: Minutes of Meeting – Ajara Protected Areas Sustainable Tourism Strategy and Action Plan validation meeting.**







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