

Action Plan for Implementing the Convention on Biological Diversity's Programme of Work on Protected Areas



Bulgaria

2012

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Description of protected area system

National Targets and Vision for Protected Areas

DETAILED STRATEGY FOR THE ENVIRONMENT TO NATIONAL PROGRAMME FOR BULGARIA 2020

The prosperity of the Bulgarian society in the long term depends on the prevention of environmental degradation and the introduction of sustainable patterns of production and consumption that are consistent with the capacity and opportunities for ecosystem restoration.

Environmental protection is not barrier to the development of economic and social systems, that is a key prerequisite for ensuring economic growth, new business opportunities, better jobs and more jobs, a healthy lifestyle, security and social equity.

The importance of environmental policy and its integration into other policy areas are becoming increasingly important, which requires continuously working to achieve maximize its efficiency, cost effectiveness and transparency. Policy environment increasingly cuts across all areas and contributes to shaping our future. It is a driver of future structural changes in economic and social spheres in global, regional and national scale. This implies new responsibilities, risks and opportunities. To achieve its objectives, policy environment should increasingly include economic and social dimensions, and is part of all sectoral policies in the country.

In modern conditions, policy environment faces several key challenges:

- Better implementation and further strengthening of existing environmental priorities in climate change, nature and biodiversity, natural resource use and waste management, environmental health and quality of life. While they remain important priorities, managing relations between them will be paramount. Improving the monitoring and implementation of sectoral environmental policies will ensure that environmental performance will provide regulatory stability and effective governance.

- Specialized management of natural capital and ecosystem services. Improving resource efficiency and flexibility in their use are key elements towards integrating environmental priorities and the multitude of sectoral policies that depend on them.

- Consistent and coherent combination of environmental considerations into sectoral policies and can help increase the efficiency with which natural resources are used and so will contribute to greening the economy by reducing the total pressure of different sources

and economic activities on the environment. Such consistency will lead to expansion of measures of progress, not only directed towards specific goals.

- Transformation to "green" economy-oriented long-term viability of natural wealth in Europe and reduce its dependence on outside Europe.

The National Environment Strategy 2009 - 2018 plan, and its Action "Reducing or stopping the loss of biodiversity" is defined as a strategic objective. On the other hand "The protection of habitats and species of European and national importance in the National Ecological Network and beyond" is defined as a specific goal.

The main purpose related to the conservation and sustainable use of biodiversity conservation, strengthening and restoration of key ecosystems, habitats, species and landscape features in accordance with Pan-European Biological and Landscape Diversity. The main priorities for this objective are determined depending on the degree of endangerment of species and significant natural place, the importance of activities for protecting and maintaining biodiversity, the obligations arising from national laws and signed international acts. The measures provided three groups of priority measures for achieving goals related to expanding and strengthening the network of protected areas, strengthening the scientific basis for biodiversity conservation and the creation of a national ecological network. Foreseeing three groups of priority measures for achieving goals related to expanding and strengthening the network of protected areas, strengthening the scientific basis for biodiversity conservation and the creation of a national ecological network.

Bulgaria's policy in the field of biodiversity, of determining membership in the EU is in line with key strategic objectives set at European level, namely stopping the loss of biodiversity by 2010 and then Integrate ecosystem services welfare of society. In this connection, the target priorities are important in the European and national species and habitat corresponding sectoral policies consistent with biodiversity (in regional development, energy, agriculture, forestry, fisheries), reducing the negative impact of invasive alien species and international trade on biodiversity, climate change adaptation. Very important to the success of this policy is to ensure adequate financial resources, building partnerships and increasing public awareness and support for biodiversity.

By 2020 is planned to complete the inventory to determine the status of endangerment take maintenance and restoration measures and carry out long-term monitoring of species and habitats; implementation of sectoral policies, consistent with the need for conservation and development of environmentally friendly activities to ensure livelihood and welfare of the population, reducing the negative impact on biodiversity in agricultural areas through implementation of sustainable management schemes lands and forests, reduce pollution from agricultural sources, and soil degradation.

In terms of habitats and species with European significance is envisaged completion of the process of declaring the application of effective site management of the Natura 2000

network, to achieve favorable conservation status and trends of such development and implementation of management plans and ensure their long-term sustainable development.

Coverage

In the end of 2011 the number of the protected areas constituted 954 with total area of 582122.2 ha (5,2% from the territory of Bulgaria).

The distribution of the protected areas according to their categories is given below. (the categories correspond to IUCN criteria.

Categories of protection	Number	Area,ha
	30.12.2011r.	30.12.2011r.
Reserves	55	77034.8
National parks	3	150 362.3
Natural monuments	346	16875.3
Managed reserves	35	4510.6
Nature parks	11	256 455.7
Protected sites	506	77255.3
total	954	582122.2

Description and background

National policy and priorities in the management of protected areas in Bulgaria -

Bulgaria ranks among the 5 european countries in biodiversity wealth. Notwithstanding its small total area (110,910 km²), the territory of the country includes parts of 4 biogeographic areas – Alpine, Black Sea, Continental, and Steppe area. The varied relief, geology, specific microclimatic conditions and the millenary humane activity on the

territory of the country define the rich diversity of species, communities and natural habitats, the majority of which have conservation significance. The biological diversity of Bulgaria is of inestimable value which, along with other indices, preserves the national identity of the country.

Due to its diverse climatic, geological, topographical and hydrological conditions, Bulgaria is characterized by exclusively rich biodiversity.

The State policy for conservation of this biodiversity is following two main directions:

- Conservation of species

The state policy in this direction is in compliance with the European and also the national legislation. About 574 plant and 483 animal species are placed under strict protection, while other 54 animal species and 60 plant groups and species are under regulative regimes of use.

For the conservation of species and natural habitats are designated protected areas, are elaborated action plans and are implemented activities, aimed at improving their conservation status, including such related to reintroduction and restoration of populations.

- Establishment of National ecological network

In order to ensure territorial protection of natural habitats and habitats of species, which are of national or European importance, the State party develops a National ecological network, which includes protected areas, designated according to the national legislation and Natura 2000 sites, including Special Protection Areas (SPA), designated according to Directive 79/409/EEC on the conservation of wild birds and Special Areas of Conservation (SAC), designated according to the Directive 92/43/EEC on the conservation of natural habitats and of wild fauna and flora of the European Union.

Bulgaria has long traditions in protected areas designation and management.

The first Nature reserve was declared in 1931 – Silkosija in Strandja mountain and Vitosha Nature Park, designated in 1934 was the first on the Balkan peninsula.

The specialized legislation dealing with protected areas – Protected areas Act, introduces a modern protected areas classification, in compliance with the international requirements. There are six categories of protected areas which differ according to their conservational value.

The categories for protection are as follows: National parks, strict reserves, managed reserves, natural parks, protected sites and natural monuments. According to the category and the conservation value of each protected area, there are particular regimes for use and utilization determined.

The more is intact the nature, the higher is the legal protection of the corresponding territory. For example the strict reserves are the territories with the highest legal protection. Almost all kind of human activities are prohibited in those areas. Only the guardians of those territories is allowed, as well as scientific visits and researches and passing of visitors, through trails, determined by an order of the minister of environment and water. The managed reserves are also with very strict regimes of use and utilization. In contrast to the strict reserves some management and restoration activities within their boundaries are also allowed.

The total number of protected areas up to the end of 2011 is 954, distributed in the categories, mentioned above. The protected areas network covers about 582122.2 ha which constitutes about 5.2% of the country's territory.

In 2008, Bulgaria finalized the process for identifying and establishing the Natura 2000 network. Currently, it consists of 118 Special Protection Areas and 231 Sites of Community Importance - SCI (to be designated as SAC after the approval of the European Commission).

At the present the coverage of Natura 2000 network is 34.34 % of the country's territory.

For more information regarding Natura 2000 sites in Bulgaria, please refer to the following web page: <http://www.natura2000bg.org/>

In order to ensure the protection and effective management of the territories within the National Ecological Network as well as species, Bulgaria is applying a policy related to:

- elaboration and implementation of management plans for protected areas;
- elaboration and implementation of management plans for SPA and SAC;
- elaboration and implementation of action plans for plant and animal species;
- ensuring of funding for activities related to conservation and protection of species

and natural habitats. For the purpose will be used mainly funds from the Operational Program Environment and also other financial instruments of the EU.

Governance types

The Ministry of environment and water ensures the management and control of protected areas and Natura 2000 sites at national level.

According to the specialized legislation - Protected areas Act and Biodiversity conservation Act , the management and control over the protected areas and Natura 2000 on national level is provided by the National Nature Protection Service Directorate under the Ministry of environment and water, through its "Protected areas" and "Natura 2000" Departments.

There are 16 regional inspectorates of environment and water (RIEW) in the whole country which provide the on-site management of the protected areas, within their territorial scale.

The national parks, are managed by separate administrations – National Park Directorates, which are specialized structures of the MOEW.

The nature parks are managed by Nature Park directorates under the Executive forestry Agency – Ministry of agriculture and food supply.

There are 3 NPD and 16 Regional Inspectorates of Environment and Water in Bulgaria and 11 Nature Park directorates, spread over the territory of Bulgaria.

For more information regarding the national and nature parks, please refer to the following web page <http://www3.moew.government.bg/?show=top&cid=184>.

The territorial scope of activity, the functions and the structure of the Regional Inspectorates of Environment and Water –RIEW and the National Park Directorates –NPD that ensure the conduct of the state policy in the field of protected areas at regional level, are determined with Rules issued by the Minister of Environment and Water.

The Regional Inspectorates of Environment and Water under the Ministry of Environment and water provide control over the compatibility of the activities, provided in protected areas with the conservation subject of protected areas and the corresponding regimes, determined by their orders of designation and management plans.

Key threats

The main threats to biodiversity and also to manage their challenges, facing our country are associated with degradation, fragmentation and habitat loss caused by activities in various sectors, including infrastructure projects, urbanization of natural areas illegal logging in forests, forest fires, destruction of animals and plants, genetic erosion and the introduction of alien species occurring naturally or as a result of human activities that threaten the genetic purity of native populations or harm the quality of natural habitats; air pollution and the effects of global climate change, which puts our country in the area of drought adversely affect higrofill plants, water-loving animals, and generally on habitats along rivers, lakes, peat lands, wetlands areas and other wetlands.

In the last decade the application of sustainable management schemes is the goal of many of the policies related to the use of biological resources. As a result, has gained considerable experience in approaches, methods and management tools. In this respect protected areas offer a unique opportunity to stimulate the development of areas in which they are located. They constitute a guarantee for the preservation of nature and quality of the environment, which in combination with a variety of quality products, services and procedures are a prerequisite for sustainable and environmentally sound development.

Barriers for effective implementation

Insufficient integration of biodiversity conservation into sectoral policies;
Insufficient territorial protection to certain rare and endangered species and inadequate economic incentives for biodiversity conservation

The scientific institutions, the business, NGOs and local communities should have more active role in the sustainable management of biodiversity and implementation of best practices.

Status, priority and timeline for key actions of the Programme of Work on Protected Areas

Status of key actions of the Programme of Work on Protected Areas

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<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Progress on assessing gaps in the protected area network (1.1) 	<p>Status: 3</p> <p>There is no special assessment on the gaps in the protected areas network in Bulgaria. Despite the above, it could be said that protected areas are designated in a way to cover the most of the ecosystem types, natural habitats and habitats of species which are of conservation value, according to the national and international classification.</p> <p>With regard to the Natura 2000 now Bulgaria has secured sufficient coverage of protected areas to protect the most natural habitats and habitats of species protected by European directives. Assessment shall be given the biogeographic workshops, according to the methodology and criteria of the EU, whose decisions and recommendations are implemented by the Ministry through the opening where necessary additional territory.</p> <p>With regard to protected areas Natura 2000 designated to protect marine habitats, at the time in Bulgaria are 13 designated conservation areas which cover marine areas, with an area of 975.59 km².</p> <p>Within Bio workshop for "sea" Natura 2000 sites, held on 15 June 2010 in Brindisi, Italy, reported insufficient coverage, inadequate research and lack of information on protected areas to protect marine habitats in Bulgaria.</p> <p>In connection with the above, the MoEW has started a project to study and designate additional marine</p>

	<p>areas as protected zones of NATURA 2000 in Bulgaria. The project involves several steps that will be implemented by July 2012 and include:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Summary of available data and establish pilot distribution maps of habitats and species; - Field studies and / or collect additional data; - Preparation of final report, GIS-based data cards; - Preparation of proposals and documentation of art. 8, para. 1 from Biodiversity Conservation Act to expand, revise the boundaries and / or designation of new areas.
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Progress in assessing protected area integration (1.2) 	<p>Status: 3</p> <p>The Environmental Protection Act (EPA) is the framework act in Bulgaria which determines the State policy in the field of environment. It specifies the place and the role of the state authorities at central and local levels, in relation to the management and control of different environmental components.</p> <p>EPA determines the procedures for accomplishing of:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> -Environmental Impact Assessment (EIA) for investment proposals for construction; - Ecological Assessment (EA) for plans and programmers in the implementation of which considerable impact on the environment is possible. <p>This is a kind of a Sectoral Environmental Impact Assessment. It is provided for plans and programmes in the field of forestry, agriculture, fishery, transport, energetics, tourism, territory development, management of waters, management of wastes, etc. The EIA and the EA procedures aimed at integration of the national environmental protection policy into sectoral policies: transport, energy, construction, agriculture, industry, etc.</p> <p>The other main goal of the EIA and EA is to ensure adequate participation of the public in decision making in relation to protection and management of nature resources.</p> <p>Besides the above, according to the requirements of the EU Directives, all the investment proposals, plans and programmes, are subject of an Appropriate</p>

	<p>assessment about their compatibility with the conservation objections of the Natura 2000 sites. In particular the Bulgarian legislation there is no provision which requires the establishment of ecological corridors linking separate protected areas. A special Bulgarian legislation sets the objectives of the National Ecological Network creation of conditions for genetic exchange between separate populations and species, which in practice is the role of ecological corridors and those areas are taken into account in establishing the network;</p> <p>According to European directives, Member States should ensure that improving the ecological coherence of the "Natura 2000", where necessary, encourage the management of landscape features which are of major importance for wild fauna and flora. Although that the provision does not derive direct engagement for the Member States to create green corridors in the development of Natura 2000 networks, while developing Natura 2000 network in Bulgaria, 62 Natura 2000 sites, which have functions of ecological corridors and stepping stones, were proposed. Most of them were adopted and created a matrix of ecological corridors and Stepping stones, which provide communication and exchange between populations of different species of European and national level.</p> <p>Ecological corridors and Stepping stones provide communication and exchange of genes between biological centers and / or speciation centers in Stara Planina, Rila - Rhodopes, Strandja, some of which are covered by the existing National and Nature Parks.</p>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Progress in establishing transboundary protected areas and regional networks (1.3) 	<p>Status: 2</p> <p>So far, there are no transboundary protected areas designated in Bulgaria. Despite the above, the authorities of many protected areas located in the border regions are cooperating with the corresponding institutions managing protected areas in the neighboring countries.</p> <p>Besides, within the Green belt initiative (aimed at conservation of the territories, allocated in the past along the Iron curtain), officially recognized by</p>

	<p>MOEW, the ministry and the site managers participate in many activities related to exchange of best practices, experience and know how, aimed at nature conservation, amongst the interest stateholders in the countries located along the Iron curtain in Europe.</p> <p>The MOEW and the concrete site managers are also participating to different projects in the field of protected areas management, involving other countries from the region.</p>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Progress in developing site-level management plans (1.4) 	<p>Status: 2</p> <p>Management plans</p> <p>The PAA requires the elaboration of management plans for protected areas. Besides the Act there is also a special regulation which determines a comprehensive procedure related to the elaboration of management plans (MP) for protected areas. Management plans are obligatory for the categories of National parks, nature parks, managed and strict reserves. For the other two categories – protected sites and natural monuments management plans could be also developed if there is an interested institution, for example NGO or Municipality, but only after the written approval by the MOEW. Management plans are developed on the basis of scientific data for the nature, landscape, biodiversity ecosystems, comprehensive socio-economic information, data about the infrastructure within and around the protected areas. Management plans provide zoning of the territories and define specific regimes for use and utilization of the separate zones according to their conservation value.</p> <p>The management plans for the national and nature parks (which territories normally cover bigger areas and directly affect the interests of the local population) are a kind of agreements between the interested parties, namely the protected area’s managers and local population. They are tools for development of opportunities for sustainable development and use of natural resources.</p> <p>The Management plans consist of several parts, including: description and assessment , based on the</p>

	<p>studies of the biotic and abiotic factors; long-term and operational goals; provide zoning of the territories and corresponding regimes for their utilization; point the operational tasks and provide recommendations for conservation and utilization. Management plans are developed for a period of 10 years. For the National parks on every 4 years from the MP entry into force a special public hearing is held which aims to assess the management plan implementation.</p> <p>MPs are being developed with priority for those sites which are internationally recognized such as Ramsar sites, Biosphere reserves, World Heritage Sites, etc. Up to the moment (April, 2012) are approved and being implemented management plans for 46 protected areas, within different categories. It is foreseen that till 2014 will be developed management plans for 62 other protected areas with funding ensured by the Operational Program Environment - EU funding.</p>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Progress in assessing threats and opportunities for restoration (1.5) 	<p>Status: 2</p> <p>The main threats for the protected areas and the biological diversity protected in them, as a whole, are recognized in different strategic documents. By providing regular control activities at the field the Regional departments of the MOEW – RIEW and NPD can establish the main threats facing the particular protected areas in their scope and take appropriate measures. Detailed studies on the threats are provided also during the management plan preparation process when special measures could be prescribed.</p> <p>The NGOs dealing with protected areas are also contributing to the recognition of particular threats and undertaking of appropriate measures.</p> <p>In 2012 within the Operational program Environment (2007 -2013) was opened a call for projects aimed at restoration of habitats and species. Direct beneficiaries under this call that applied for funding are the respective structures in the MOEW and the Executive Forestry Agency in charge of protected areas, i.e. Regional</p>

	<p>inspectories of environment and water, National park directorates and Nature park directorates.</p>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Progress in assessing equitable sharing of benefits (2.1) • Progress in assessing protected area governance (2.1) 	<p>Status: 2</p> <p><u>Progress in assessing equitable sharing of benefits</u></p> <p>The National Nature Protection Service Directorate, under the MOEW which is also the national focal point for UNESCO’s activities in the field of nature protection and particularly the World Heritage Convention and Man and Biosphere Program, is currently working as a partner of the Bulgarian Biodiversity Foundation – Bulgarian NGO in the implementation of a project Project “Collaboration for Biodiversity Conservation and Sustainable local development in Strandja mountain in Bulgaria”, funded by the EEA and the Norwegian financing mechanism.</p> <p>The main objective of the project is to secure long-term support for biodiversity conservation and sustainable use of nature resources in Strandja Mountain (which is currently the biggest protected area in Bulgaria, covering an area of 1161 sq.km., declared in 1995 as Nature park) by applying the contemporary concept of the biosphere reserve. Within the project will be elaborated a nomination form for designation of the first post Seville Biosphere reserve in Bulgaria.</p> <p>Within the project is developed Strandja regional trade mark (Strandja Brand) and certification system. Labelling is considered as important tool for the good image of the region (something in common, share responsibility, identity) that will contribute to its sustainable development.</p> <p>The main idea is to demonstrate how the usage of the nature in a sustainable way can bring profits and incomes for local people through development of pro-biodiversity businesses – guest houses, food offering, guided tours, tourist attractions, production of honey, cheese, milk, fish products, herbs and mushrooms collection, crafts, etc.</p> <p>The establishment of a Biosphere park is a new opportunity for Strandja.</p>

It is crucial to give the locals the knowledge and understanding what a biosphere park is and what could be the benefits of it.

- The creation of scientific data base for the monitoring of biodiversity and socio-economical processes in the biosphere reserve and update the existing scientific information.
- Increasing the public awareness and education for the functioning of the natural ecosystems and the role of men.
- Achieving agreement for common management of the nature resources and greater involvement of the stakeholders.
- Ensuring support the pro-biodiversity businesses for sustainable use of the nature resources.
- Increasing the capacity of the local stakeholders for applying measures for protection and management
- Increasing the capacity of the local stakeholders for applying measures for protection and management.

As good examples for the benefits of the local communities, living in neighborhood to protected areas, can be given also the two Pan parks in Bulgaria – Rila and Central Balkan National parks. Please refer to item 4.1.

Status 3

Progress in assessing protected area governance

In the management of protected areas and Natura 2000 sites using a range of modern technologies. For example, to ensure effective management, boundaries and modes of protected areas and protected areas are reflected in the map of restored ownership and cadastral maps for the respective areas.

Besides the above, for PA and Natura 2000 sites maintain databases in Ministry and the Executive Environmental Agency and the regional structures of the Ministry. As mentioned above, for all national and nature parks have created websites.

Currently, MOEW is implementing a Project for Development and implementation of information

	<p>system for protected areas of Natura 2000 The project aims at building a unified information system for management of protected sites from Natura 2000, which will ensure data from different sources and provides easy access to the Internet by the institutions involved in the management of protected sites from Natura 2000. As part of the information system is also foreseen the construction of public register with data about the procedures for assessing the compatibility of plans, programs, projects and investment proposals with the conservation purpose and objectives of conservation of protected areas. This will facilitate the access of stakeholders to information and ensure transparency in the conduct of administrative proceedings.</p> <p>From the item below is evident that there are many mechanisms, aimed at ensuring the public participation in the process for designation and management of protected areas.</p>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Progress in assessing the participation of indigenous and local communities in key protected area decisions (2.2) 	<p>Status: 3</p> <p>There are no indigenous people in Bulgaria. There are many mechanisms ensuring the participation of the local communities and other interested parties in decision taking process about protected areas management. Some examples are given below: - Public participation in the process of designation of protected areas</p> <p>The Protected areas Act ensures broad participation of the interested general public in the process of declaring and management of protected areas. Proposals for designation of national and natural parks may be initiated by ministries and central-government departments, by municipalities and regional governors, research and academic institutes and public organizations. Proposals for designation of all other categories reserves, managed reserves, protected sites and natural monuments can be done by all natural and juristic persons concerned.</p> <p>Acc. to Protected areas Act, the Ministry of</p>

Environment and Water shall organize a public discussion of any proposals for designation of national and natural parks, of strict and managed nature reserves. Representatives of the municipalities, the regional governors, local NGOs, other representatives of ministries, central-government departments, research and academic institutes are invited to attend.

Special commission, appointed by the Minister of Environment and Water or other authorized persons takes the final decision about the designation of a new protected area and its regimes.

The above mentioned commission includes representatives of the Ministry of Environment And Water, the Ministry of Agriculture and Forestry, the Ministry of Regional Development and Public Works, Ministry of culture (in cases when there are cultural sites within protected areas), of the municipalities, of the private owners of forests, lands and aquatic areas, and the competent regional governors.

Public participation in the process of elaboration of Management plans

The Protected Areas Act determines the procedure for preparation of management plans for protected areas.

Acc. to the Protected Areas Act, in the process of elaboration of management plans of national parks, nature parks and managed reserves, public discussions are held with the participation of representatives of the central and local government authorities concerned, as well as owners of the lands, research, academic and non-governmental organizations.

The management plan shall take into account the observations, recommendations and remarks of the public hearings.

Public Participation in the process of establishing Natura 2000 network

According to Biodiversity Conservation Act in the process of establishing of Natura 2000 network, the Ministry of Environment and water and the Ministry of agriculture and food supply carry out national and regional public campaigns in order to raise the public awareness about the goals of Natura 2000 sites.

	<p>The Biodiversity Conservation Act foresees broad participation of the wide public when determining the specific regimes for each of the Natura 2000 sites.</p> <p>The Biodiversity Conservation Act requires public consultation to be carried out within the procedure for Appropriate assessment of plans, programmes or investment proposals within Natura 2000 sites.</p> <p>To some of the national and nature parks directorates are established specialized consultative councils, including representatives of local communities, which provide consultancy and guidance to the responsible national institutions in the process of the management of the properties.</p>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Progress in assessing the policy environment for establishing and managing protected areas (3.1) • Progress in assessing the values of protected areas (3.1) 	<p>Status: 3</p> <p><u>3.1.1. Progress in assessing the policy environment for establishing and managing protected areas</u></p> <p>Over the last decade the application of sustainable management schemes is the goal of many of the policies related to the use of biological resources. As a result, has gained considerable experience in approaches, methods and management tools. In this respect, protected areas provide a unique opportunity to stimulate economic development in many regions through development of alternative tourism - ecological, rural, cultural, etc. The cave, which has specific financial incentives for local people. Protected areas are increasingly out in the development and supply of tourism services in areas where they are located. They constitute a guarantee for the preservation of nature and quality of the environment, which in combination with a variety of quality products, services and procedures are a prerequisite for sustainable and environmentally sound development.</p> <p>Within the operational program Environment implement projects related to inventory biodiversity in many protected areas that will provide real data on the status of species and habitat conservation subject.</p> <p>Besides the above, within the project of mapping the</p>

	<p>habitat of species and habitats in Natura 2000, which is implemented with funds of an operational program “Environment” also makes inventory and assessment of the status of species and habitats under Natura 2000, by determines their favorable conservation status.</p> <p><u>Progress in assessing the values of protected areas</u></p> <p>Protected areas and protected sites cover a large part of the country and protect the species with high conservation value. In the end of 2011 the number of the protected areas constituted 954 with total area of 582122.2 ha (5,2% from the territory of Bulgaria). At the present the coverage of Natura 2000 network is 34.34 % of the country’s territory.</p>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Progress in assessing protected area capacity needs (3.2) 	<p>Status: 2</p> <p>In order to improve and raise the qualification and ensure more effective work of the working staff responsible for the protection and conservation of the protected areas and Natura 2000 sites, the MOEW organizes for its central and regional structures specialized trainings and workshops. According to the needs, trainings and workshops in different fields, pointed below, are annually planned:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - specialized training in flora, fauna, public relations; - monitoring of species and habitats; - preparation of project proposals and managing of projects with EU or other funding; - foreign languages learning; - gaining of specialized computer skills, related to the establishment and maintenance of GIS for protected areas and the Natura 2000; - improving the level of knowledge and application of the specialized national and international legislation in the field of nature protection and biodiversity conservation; - exchange of know – how and experience with similar institutions from other countries.

<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Progress in assessing the appropriate technology needs (3.3) 	<p>Status: 2</p> <p>Please refer to 2.1.2.</p>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Progress in assessing protected area sustainable finance needs (3.4) 	<p>Status: 2</p> <p><u>Funding sources</u></p> <p>The main funding source for protected areas management is the State budget, as well as the State Enterprise for management of environmental activities (SEMEPA) under the Ministry of Environment and Water.</p> <p>The Enterprise for management of environmental activities was established with the Environmental protection Act as a structure of the MOEW. The Enterprise is a juristic person and it is not a commercial corporation and does not form and distribute any profit.</p> <p>The core activity of the Enterprise is to implement environmental projects and activities in compliance with the environmental strategies and programmes at national and municipal level.</p> <p>As far as the protected areas and Natura 2000, are concerned, the Enterprise for management of environmental activities provides funds in the following directions:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Preparation of management plans for protected areas; - Preparation of action plans for plant and animal species; -Construction(establishment) of Visitor centers; - Monitoring of endangered species; - Educational programs elaboration, information materials preparation; -Scientific researches and monitoring; <p>These funds are being planned annually by the Regional departments of the Ministry of Environment and Water (Regional Inspectorates of environment and water and National park directorates) in compliance with the activities prescribed in the Management plans if such exist.</p> <p>The funds from the state budget are used for salaries, social security, clothing of the staff of the</p>

	<p>regional departments of the MOEW, as well as repair costs, fuel, telephone, mail property insurances, stationery and other materials; improving the skills and qualification of the experts (workshops, courses).</p> <p>As for the funding, ensured for management and restoration activities in the protected areas such as: preservation of rare and endangered plant and animal species and their habitats; development of educational programs and informational materials; carrying out of scientific researches and monitoring, etc., the main source is the SEMEPA.</p> <p>There are also other sources of funding, such as different EU programs, among which Life +, Operational program “Environment”, Operational Program “Regional Development, Financial Mechanism of the European Economic Area (which donors are Norway, Liechtenstein and Iceland), SEE Eastern European program, programs for bilateral cooperation, etc. The regional departments of the MOEW are potential beneficiaries for such programs and can apply with projects, aimed at biodiversity conservation and sustainable development.</p> <p>In 2012 , within Operational program Environment (2007 – 2013), was opened call for biodiversity projects where as direct beneficiaries were recognized all the regional structures in charge of protected areas, including Regional Inspectorates of environment and water, National Park Directorates and Nature Park Directorates. The above mentioned applied with projects and there is currently ongoing procedure for their assessment. The projects aimed at:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - elaboration of management plans for their protected areas; - establishment of tourist infrastructure, including information centers, educational trails, where appropriate; - elaboration of information materials and organizing of public information campaigns; - restoration of habitats and species in order to reach favorable conservation status.
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Progress in conducting public 	<p>Status: 3</p>

awareness campaigns (3.5)

Various means for distribution of information, aimed at raising the public awareness for protected areas and Natura 2000 sites are used by the MOEW and its regional departments. These might be related to

- preparation of information materials, such as posters, leaflets, stickers and maps, etc.

- organization of public campaigns for different environmental days – the Biodiversity day, the international Day of the Earth, the international Day of the water, the International day of the Wetlands, etc.

- distribution of Information about the protected areas and Natura 2000 by electronic and printed media Central and especially local newspapers, magazines, radio and TV stations are being often used to spread such information for the general public, usually in relation to special events.

- elaboration of Internet sites with detailed information about the protected areas and Natura 2000, held both in the MOEW and its regional structures.

- ensuring of nature protection education, combining classroom with various outside activities, green schools, field trips or lessons in open air, executed by the public relation officers, working in the regional structures of the MOEW in cooperation with teachers from the local schools, as well as nongovernmental organizations;

- provision of other interpretative environmental programs, with information about protected areas and Natura 2000 sites, aimed at people from different ages, and different target groups;

Besides the above, most of the national parks, nature parks, wetlands, recognized as Ramsar sites, as well as many other protected areas have their visitor and information centers which provide the visitors with general and specific information about the protected areas and Natura 2000 sites such as infrastructure available, opportunities for development of tourism, etc.

Interpretative trails and Information boards are also installed in many protected areas and Natura 2000 sites.

	<p>As mentioned above there is a call for projects under Operational program Environment (2007-2013), where all the national parks directorates, nature park directorates and also regional inspectorates of environment and water apply with projects, envisaging establishment of tourist infrastructure, including visitor centers and trails in Protected areas and Natura 2000 sites, where appropriate.</p> <p>At the present, the National Nature Protection Service Directorate is implementing another project under Operational program Environment, envisaging development of "National Information and communication strategy for the Natura 2000 network", with total value of 173 070 BGN from which 147 109.50 BGN is funding ensured by the European Regional Development Fund and 25 960.50 BGN is the national co-funding. The project's duration is 13 months. The main objective of the project is raising the awareness of the public and all the interested parties about the value and significance of Natura 2000 network and further development of consensual approach for the management of protected areas. This will ensure broad public support and commitment, and will promote the objectives of the network.</p>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Progress in developing best practices and minimum standards (4.1) 	<p>Status: 2</p> <p>Bulgaria has two national parks that are certified PAN parks - Rila and Central Balkan. The PAN /Protected Areas Network/ Parks Foundation works to protect Europe's wilderness, the continent's most undisturbed areas of nature.</p> <p>PAN Parks, focusing on the protection of wilderness areas, applies an integrated approach combining wilderness protection and sustainable tourism development.</p> <p>PAN Parks creates a network of European protected areas that offer a wilderness area with undisturbed nature where natural systems of animals and plants are safe to thrive and people appreciate the pleasures offered by wilderness with the respect it deserves. In other sections of these parks there are high quality tourism facilities, well balanced with</p>

	<p>wilderness protection and sustainable local development.</p> <p>PAN Parks Foundation works in close partnership not only with protected areas but also with local businesses in and around certified PAN Parks. These businesses are certified according to environmental criteria and their commitment to wilderness protection. They are recognised by the PAN Parks logo; this guarantees that your visit contributes to the protection of nature. Local PAN Parks partners offer exciting activities to enable you to have a unique experience also of European wilderness!</p> <p>UNESCO</p> <p>Bulgaria has 2 natural properties included in the World Heritage List in 1983. These are Pirin National Park and Srebarna Nature Reserve</p> <p>For more information, please refer to the following web page: http://www.unesconaturebg.info/en</p>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Progress in assessing management effectiveness (4.2) 	<p>Status: 2</p> <p>At the moment, is not made an independent assessment of management effectiveness. Such assessment shall be conducted in planning and reporting activities of the Ministry level and regional structures, and in connection with periodic assessments that are made in reporting on the implementation of the requirements and criteria of international initiatives concerning Protected Areas - Unesco, PAN Parks, European degree, Ramsar. This management effectiveness will be further developed within a Programme for „Responsible management and economic benefits for biodiversity conservation” which will be funded by the Swiss government and where beneficiaries will be several Bulgarian NGOs. The MOEW will supervise and guide the project implementation.</p>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Progress in establishing an effective PA monitoring system (4.3) 	<p>Status: 2</p> <p>The Environmental Executive Agency of the MoEW is the institution responsible for the overall monitoring of the environmental components and for the</p>

	<p>establishment and maintenance of the National Biodiversity Monitoring System http://monitoring.biodiversity.bg/.</p> <p>In the period 2004 -2006 was elaborated and approved a national framework for observation and information of the biological diversity in compliance with the European directives, related to conservation of species and habitats.</p> <p>In 2007 with an Order of the minister of environment and water a National Biodiversity Monitoring System in Bulgaria (NBMS) and a practical manual for collection and storage of data were approved. A special regulation was also adopted.</p> <p>In the National Biodiversity Monitoring System are also determined the subjects of the monitoring and the monitoring schemes.</p> <p>Most of the habitats and species to be monitored are located within protected areas.</p> <p>The species monitored within particular protected areas are identified as a result of preliminary studies.</p> <p>Besides, in the three national parks, a program for Complex Environmental Monitoring (CEM) is provided, which envisages also monitoring over the abiotic components, such as waters (lakes and rivers) and soils. Within the CEM, some additional elements are also monitored. These are: the state of the forests; some resource species of plants, such as <i>Vaccinium myrtillus</i>, the influence of the grazing, the tourist flow and its impact on the environment.</p> <p>Following the prescriptions of the Monitoring Framework each year the EEA requires the NPD, RIEWs to fill a specific form with the monitored indicators.</p>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Progress in developing a research program for protected areas (4.4) 	<p>Status: 3</p> <p>Comprehensive studies and inventories of the species and habitats will be provided at many protected areas while preparing their management plans.</p> <p>Management plans of protected areas provide a number of studies in different areas, depending on the specific needs of the territory. The above are</p>

	<p>met by the regional structures of the Ministry and in cooperation with scientific institutions and NGOs. The National Nature Protection Service Directorate (NNPSD) under the MOEW is beneficiary and currently implementing a project, aimed at "Developing of Natura 2000 network in Bulgaria", under Priority Axis 3 "Preservation and restoration of biodiversity" of Operational Program "Environment 2007-2013", where the funding is provided by the European Fund for Regional Development.</p> <p>The project is called "Mapping and identification of conservation status of natural habitats and types - Phase 1. The duration of the project is 36 months. The project provides activities for mapping and determining the conservation status of natural habitats and species which will be carried out within the protected sites of Natura 2000 and also activities related to determining the most risky places for wild birds, as a result of the construction of wind turbines, which will be implemented on the territories of protected sites from Natura 2000 for conservation of wild birds and beyond them according to the existence of migration routes. The project will contribute to the preservation and sustainable management of natural resources of the country, as it will enable management to be based on specific, reliable and scientifically sound information on species and habitats.</p> <p>The project envisages comprehensive researches to be held at the field in order to identify the species and natural habitats and also determine their conservation status. Many scientists from most of the competent institutes under the Bulgarian Academy of Sciences and also experts from nongovernmental organizations are involved. There is special team from the NNPS that provides monitoring of the work at the field.</p>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Progress in assessing opportunities for marine protection 	<p>Status: 2</p> <p>Here is only two nationally designated protected area in Bulgaria that comprise marine area: Nature reserve "Kaliakra", with area of 713.67 ha, designated to conserve coastal ecosystems,</p>

	<p>characteristic step vegetation and fauna, as well as habitats of rare and endangered species of birds. Protected site “Koke trais”, with total area of 760 ha, designated in 2001 with conservation subject aimed at the preservation of: sand bank and of benthos fauna in Black sea.</p> <p>As for more information related to marine protection, please refer back to item N (1.1) Progress on assessing gaps in the protected area network</p>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Progress in incorporating climate change aspects into protected areas 	<p>Status: 2</p> <p>One of the priorities of Ministry of Environment and Water is to participate in the development of EU common policies for adaptation. Good management of ecosystems such as wetlands and forests remains an effective mitigation options given the high sequestration potential of natural systems. It is envisaged to determine the most vulnerable zones: alpine forests, wetland and lower mountain zone up to 800 altitudes and preference is given to the evaluation of the most sensitive biological groups such as migratory birds, amphibians and reptiles, invertebrates, plants. Protected areas are a priority for inclusion in adaptation measures as an important tool for preserving genetic, species and ecosystem diversity. In process of preparation are Third National Action Plan on Climate Change, Strategy on adaptation to climate change, including specific measures for biodiversity protection and National Climate change Act.</p>

Status: 0 = no work, 1 = just started, 2 = partially complete, 3 = nearly complete, 4 = complete
 (Insert notes as appropriate)

Priority actions for fully implementing the Programme of Work on Protected Areas:

Timeline for completion of key actions

Action Plans for completing priority actions of the Programme of Work on Protected Areas

Action 1: Development of the National ecological network of protected areas and protected zones

Key steps	Timeline	Responsible parties	Indicative budget
1.1. Designation of new protected areas and area or expanding existing			
1.1.1. There is a Life + (EU) funded project, aimed at designation of protected areas, dedicated to the preservation of nationally important plant species. The project is implemented by the Botanic institute under the Bulgarian academy of sciences in cooperation with the MOEW	2013	Botanic institute under the Bulgarian academy of sciences in cooperation with the MOEW	
1.2. Mapping of habitats and species under Directive 79/409/EEC and 92/43/EEC and the establishment of the conservation status			
1.2.1. The project for "Mapping and identification of conservation status of natural habitats and types	2009 - 2013	MoEW	13 062 443.20 Euro
1.3. Study and designate of marine protected zones			
1.3.1. The project for study and designation of additional marine areas as protected zones of NATURA 2000 in Bulgaria	June 2012	MoEW	78 515 Euro

Action 2: Improving the effective management of National Ecological Network in Bulgaria

Key steps	Timeline	Responsible parties	Indicative budget
2.1. Continue activities to develop management plans for protected areas and protected zones	2012 - 2014	RIEW, National and nature directorate, MoEW	7 500 000 Euro (Ensured by OP "Environment" EU)
2.2. Developing a common vision for integrated	2012 - 2016	Bulgarian NGOs	These activities

management of the national ecological network, consultations with stakeholders and ensure their support - a study of foreign experience, make recommendations, meetings (including foreign experts and representatives of the European Commission). Ensuring interdepartmental participation.		coalition. The MOEW will supervise and guide the project implementation	will be provided within a program, funded by the Swiss government), with total amount of the funding 3 492 857 euro (for the whole Program)
2.3. Analysis and development of methodology for assessment of effective management of Bulgarian protected areas based on national circumstances and recommendations of the IUCN / WCPA;			
2.4. Building capacity for adaptive management of protected areas and the effectiveness of self-management. Support for annual planning processes, monitoring and assessment			

Action 3: Creating sustainable financing mechanisms for biodiversity conservation and the national ecological network through payments for ecosystem services and other income from protected areas

Key steps	Timeline	Responsible parties	Indicative budget
3.1. Ensuring models for valuation of ecosystem services and creating models for payment for use of ecosystem services	2012 - 2016	Bulgarian NGOs coalition. The MOEW will supervise and guide the project implementation	These activities will be provided within a program, funded by the Swiss government), with total amount of the funding 3 492 857 euro (for the whole Program)
3.2. Selection and valuation of ecosystem services. Defining the market for them.			
3.3. Review of the existing national and international legislation on valuation of selected ecosystem services			
3.4. Information campaign for developed payment schemes for ecosystem services			
3.5. Working with the central and local governments, businesses and consumers of ecosystem services for testing and implementation of the developed payments for ecosystem services schemes			
3.6. Development of methodology for assessment of the ecosystem services for the territory of the whole country	2012-2015	MOEW	80 000 Euro (this Action Will Be Developed Within The Next Phase Of The Financial Mechanism Of

			<i>The European Economic Area (Which Donors Are Norway, Liechtenstein And Iceland)</i>
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Action 4: Implementation of best practices for sustainable management of protected areas and network of protected sites "Natura 2000" to better protection of habitats and species of European and national importance in the protected areas network of protected areas "Natura 2000"

Key steps	Timeline	Responsible parties	Indicative budget
4.1. Development of regional brands for local products to stimulate local economic development in backward areas and also to be friendly for nature			
4.1.1. Project within Strandja Nature Park	2014	Strandja nature park Directorate and MOEW	20 000 euro (Ensured by OP "Environment")
4.1.2. Project "Collaboration for Biodiversity Conservation and Sustainable local development in Strandja mountain in Bulgaria	2012	Bulgarian biodiversity foundation – Bulgarian NGO, MOEW, Bulgarian MAB national committee of UNESCO.	33 300 euro (funded by the EEA and the Norwegian financing mechanism)

Key assessment results

Ecological gap assessment

The total number of protected areas up to the end of 2011 is 954, distributed in the categories, mentioned above. The protected areas network covers about 582122.2 ha which constitutes about 5.2% of the country's territory.

In 2008, Bulgaria finalized the process for identifying and establishing the Natura 2000 network. Currently, it consists of 118 Special Protection Areas and 231 Sites of Community Importance - SCI (to be designated as SAC after the approval of the European Commission). At the present the coverage of Natura 2000 network is 34.34 % of the country's territory. As **ecological** gaps can be considered insufficient coverage of the National Ecological Network on marine areas. In connection with these gaps forthcoming designated of marine protected areas.

Management effectiveness assessment

Such assessment shall be conducted in planning and reporting activities of the Ministry level and regional structures, and in connection with periodic assessments that are made in reporting on the implementation of the requirements and criteria of international initiatives concerning Protected Areas - Unesco, PAN Parks, European degree, Ramsar.

Sustainable finance assessment

Greater funding from the state budget would have a positive effect on needs of capacity in the regional structures.

The funding of activities in protected areas and protected sites (which are operated and managed by Ministry of Agriculture and foods and MoEW) from European sources mentioned above in 3.4. are ensured to 2014.

Capacity needs assessment

There is still a need for ensuring of additional staff in the regional structures of the MoEW and his further training, funding for which to this moment is insufficient.

Policy environment assessment

In Bulgaria is provided the necessary legal framework, which sets policies on environment protection. Bringing these policies at local level through management plans is underway. Please refer to item 3.1.1.

Protected area integration and assessment

Observance of the specific measures to protect species and their habitats in PA and protected sites is achieved by environmental legislation, which is integrated into other sectoral policies. Please refer to item 1.2.

Protected area valuation assessment

Bulgaria ranks among the 5 European countries in biodiversity wealth. The varied relief, geology, specific microclimatic conditions and the millenary humane activity on the territory of the country define the rich diversity of species, communities and natural habitats, the majority of which have conservation significance. The biological diversity of Bulgaria is of inestimable value which, along with other indices, preserves the national identity of the country.

Climate change resilience and adaptation assessment

In process of preparation are Third National Action Plan on Climate Change, Strategy on adaptation to climate change, including specific measures for biodiversity protection and National Climate change Act.