

*Thematic report on protected areas or areas where special measures need to be taken to conserve biological diversity*

*Please provide the following details on the origin of this report.*

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*Please provide summary information on the process by which this report has been prepared, including information on the types of stakeholders who have been actively involved in its preparation and on material which was used as a basis for the report.*

The report was drafted by the Finnish National Biodiversity Working Group, established by the Ministry of the Environment, on the basis of the draft report prepared by the National Heritage Services (NHS) of Metsähallitus, which is the governmental body in charge of management of almost all state-owned protected areas in Finland. The NHS has consulted the Ministry of the Environment, the Finnish Environment Institute and the Finnish Forest Research Institute during the preparation process.

The National Biodiversity Working Group acts as liaison and promotes cooperation between the sectors involved, coordinates and assesses the implementation of the National Action Plan and the monitoring of the state of biodiversity in Finland, and supervises the preparation of summaries and thematic reports. The Finnish work for biodiversity conservation is characterised by its broad participation. In the National Biodiversity Working Group the following stakeholders are represented: the Ministry of the Environment, the Ministry of Agriculture and Forestry, the Ministry of Social Affairs and Health, the Ministry of Trade and Industry, the Ministry of Labour, the Ministry of Transport and Communications, the Ministry of the Interior, the Ministry of Finance, Metsähallitus (Forest and Park Service), the Association of Finnish Local and Regional Authorities, the Confederation of Finnish Industry and Employers, the Central Union of Agricultural Producers and Forest Owners and the Finnish Association for Nature Conservation.

**Protected areas or areas where special measures need to be taken to conserve biological diversity**

**System of protected areas**

1. What is the relative priority afforded to development and implementation of a national system of protected areas in the context of other obligations arising from the Convention and COP Decisions?					
a) High	x	b) Medium		c) Low	
2. Is there a systematic planning process for development and implementation of a national system of protected areas?					
a) no					
b) in early stages of development					
c) in advanced stages of development					
d) yes, please provide copies of relevant documents describing the process					x
3. Is there an assessment of the extent to which the existing network of protected areas covers all areas that are identified as being important for the conservation of biological diversity?					
a) no					
b) an assessment is being planned for					
c) an assessment is being undertaken					
d) yes, please provide copies of the assessments made					x

**Regulatory framework**

4. Is there a policy framework and/or enabling legislation in place for the establishment and management of protected areas?					
a) no					
b) in early stages of development					
c) in advanced stages of development					
d) yes, please provide copies of relevant documents					x
5. Have guidelines, criteria and targets been adopted to support selection, establishment and management of protected areas?					
a) no					
b) in early stages of development					
c) in advanced stages of development					
d) yes, please provide copies of guidelines, criteria and targets					x

6. Does the management of protected areas involve the use of incentive measures, for instance, of entrance fees for park visitors, or of benefit-sharing arrangements with adjacent communities and other relevant stakeholders?	
a) no	x (see below)
b) yes, incentive measures implemented for some protected areas (please provide some examples)	
c) yes, incentive measures implemented for all protected areas (please provide some examples)	

**Management approach**

7. Have the principal threats to protected areas and the biodiversity that they contain been assessed, so that programmes can be put in place to deal with the threats, their effects and to influence the key drivers?	
a) no	x (see below)
b) an assessment is being planned for	
c) an assessment is in process	
d) yes, an assessment has been completed	
e) programmes and policies to deal with threats are in place (please provide basic information on threats and actions taken)	
8. Are protected areas established and managed in the context of the wider region in which they are located, taking account of and contributing to other sectoral strategies?	
a) no	
b) yes, in some areas	
c) yes, in all areas (please provide details)	x
9. Do protected areas vary in their nature, meeting a range of different management objectives and/or being operated through differing management regimes?	
a) no, most areas are established for similar objectives and are under similar management regimes	
b) many areas have similar objectives/management regimes, but there are also some exceptions	
c) yes, protected areas vary in nature (please provide details)	x
10. Is there wide stakeholder involvement in the establishment and management of protected areas?	
a) no	
b) with some, but not all protected areas	
c) yes, always (please provide details of experience)	x

11. Do protected areas established and managed by non-government bodies, citizen groups, private sector and individuals exist in your country, and are they recognized in any formal manner?	
a) no, they do not exist	
b) yes, they exist, however are not formally recognized	
c) yes, they exist and are formally recognized (please provide further information)	x

**Available resources**

12. Are the human, institutional and financial resources available adequate for full implementation of the protected areas network, including for management of individual protected areas?	
a) no, they are severely limiting (please provide basic information on needs and shortfalls)	
b) no, they are limiting (please provide basic information on needs and shortfalls)	x
c) Available resources are adequate (please provide basic information on needs and shortfalls)	
d) yes, good resources are available	
13. Has your country requested/received financial assistance from the Global Environment Facility or other international sources for establishment/management of protected areas?	
a) no	x (see below)
b) funding has been requested, but not received	
c) funding is currently being requested	
d) yes, funding has been received (please provide copies of appropriate documents)	

**Assessment**

14. Have constraints to implementation and management of an adequate system of protected areas been assessed, so that actions can be initiated to deal with these constraints?	
a) no	
b) yes, constraints have been assessed (please provide further information)	x
c) yes, actions to deal with constraints are in place (please provide further information)	
15. Is a programme in place or in development to regularly assess the effectiveness of protected areas management and to act on this information?	
a) no	
b) yes, a programme is under development (please provide further information)	x
c) yes, a programme is in place (please provide further information)	

16. Has any assessment been made of the value of the material and non-material benefits and services that protected areas provide?	
a) no	
b) an assessment is planned	
c) an assessment is in process	
d) yes, an assessment has been made (please provide further information)	x

***Regional and international cooperation***

17. Is your country collaborating/communicating with neighbouring countries in the establishment and/or management of transboundary protected areas?	
a) no	
b) yes (please provide details)	x
18. Are key protected areas professionals in your country members of the IUCN World Commission on Protected Areas, thereby helping to foster the sharing of information and experience?	
a) no	
b) yes	x
c) information is not available	
19. Has your country provided information on its protected areas to the UNEP World Conservation Monitoring Centre in order to allow for a scientific assessment of the status of the world's protected areas?	
a) no	
b) yes	x
20. If your country has protected areas or other sites recognised or designated under an international convention or programme (including regional conventions and programmes), please provide copies of reports submitted to those programmes or summaries of them.	
21. Do you think that there are some activities on protected areas that your country has significant experience that will be of direct value to other Contracting Parties?	
a) no	
b) yes (please provide details)	x

### *Further comments*

2. Along with the national legislation, the Natura 2000 Programme of the European Union and its implementation direct the planning and implementation of the national system of protected areas in Finland. Finland has a relatively comprehensive network of protected areas established under the Nature Conservation Act (1096/1996) (national parks, strict nature reserves and other protected areas) and the Act on Wilderness reserves (wilderness areas). The most valuable eskers have been protected by the Act of Soil Resources and the landscape values of shorelines by the Land Use and Building Act (132/1999). Several valuable forest site types are protected by the Forest Act (1093/1996). The whole network of protected areas has been developed in a systematic way by implementing and financing protection programmes for various habitat types since 1970s. New national parks have been established on the basis of more detailed investigations.

3. In Finland, there is a tradition from the 1970's of assessing the gaps in the protected area network and filling them by habitat-specific conservation programmes which have been endorsed by the Council of State and then implemented, e.g. by purchasing the lands for the state. Since 1997 the Finnish Environment Institute has assessed the extent to which the existing network of protected areas covers all important areas in a gap analysis (SAVA) covering the whole national system of protected areas and various habitat types and threatened species. The SAVA reports are written mainly in Finnish, partly scattered in various scientific journals, and available from the Finnish clearing house of the CBD at the Finnish Environment Institute (SYKE) (<http://www.ymparisto.fi/eng/orginfo/publica/publica.htm>).

In addition, relevant scientific information on underlying ecological, social and economic mechanisms in this context was provided by the Finnish Biodiversity Research Programme (FIBRE, 1997-2002), initiated by the Academy of Finland. However, the results are often not readily applicable for protected areas practitioners. The conservation programme for the old growth forest in Southern Finland (METSO, 2002) includes an evaluation of the present state, and suggestions of methods to promote conservation, of forest biodiversity. On the European Union level assessments of selected nature types and species included in Natura 2000 sites for "favourable conservation – status" is conducted in biogeographic seminars according to a special procedure of the EU Habitat directive, Appendix III.

4. See 2. The Nature Conservation Act and the Natura 2000 Programme of the European Union provide the main policy framework for establishment of management of protected areas. Metsähallitus (Forest and Park Service) has revised the principles of protected area management in Finland (<http://www.metsa.fi/julkaisut/pdf/luo/b54.pdf>).

5. See 2. The Natura 2000 Programme has detailed guidelines, criteria and targets adopted to support especially the selection of protected areas. National legislation supports the establishment of protected areas. The management of protected areas is supported both by national legislation and systematic management planning for which there are guidelines available in Finnish and occasionally in English (e.g. see 4).

6. The parks are allowed to use for their conservation and other management expenses the income generated by themselves e.g. by selling fishing licences (when it is permitted), renting cabins (which are mostly free), and selling books and t-shirts etc. at the visitor centres. In 2002, the amount of such income was 1.7 million euros at the NHS of Metsähallitus. There are visitor fees only at Siida (i.e. the visitor center of the Upper Lappland) which is jointly managed by the NHS and Sámi Museum specialising in the cultural heritage of the indigenous Sámi people, and at the visitor centre of the Koli National Park managed by the Finnish Forest Research Institute. At Koli National Park, there is also a local association called the Friends of Ukko-Koli supporting the activities of the national park. The association acts as a partner of the Forest Research Institute providing services (guiding, education etc.) for visitors. It gains resources amounting 100 000 euros through the contribution of visitors (passport for program services and provisions when selling local products/handicrafts). The incomes are used in the labour costs of guiding services. The Forest Research Institute uses the brutto model in budgeting the park management, which means that about 120 000 euros collected as rents and licences for the business management of enterprises in park is transferred to the incomes of government, not directly to the use of national park.

7. Even though there has not been a comprehensive assessment of threats in Finland, the threats to individual protected areas have been assessed case by case as part of the management planning process. The threats to Finnish animal and plant species, including the threatened species living in the protected areas, have been thoroughly assessed in the three subsequent, comprehensive red data books. Nation-wide analyses of the threats to different habitat types have been conducted as part of the habitat conservation programmes.

8. In Finland, almost all state-owned protected areas are managed by the NHS of Metsähallitus (Forest and Park Service), and its regional units (see <http://www.metsa.fi/natural/protectedareas/>). Koli National Park is managed by the Finnish Forest Research Institute (Metla). To guarantee that protected areas are managed in a wider regional context, each NHS unit has a regional responsibility of the whole network of protected areas in the region and on the cooperation with other stakeholders in surrounding areas in other use. Most of the protected areas lie on state-owned areas; but the establishment and management planning of protected areas always include the broad participation of all relevant stakeholders. With a broad participation of various stakeholders and using the GIS, the natural resource planning of Metsähallitus assesses, province by province, the land use of all state-owned areas, the main emphasis being in forest resources. It also assesses the needs to establish new protected areas and recreational areas on state-owned lands and the needs and opportunities to increase spatio-temporal connectivity in the network of protected areas. The Land Use and Building Act and physical planning are the similar key mechanisms on private lands. Also the Forest Act and forest planning on private forests contribute to the wider regional framework where the management of protected areas takes place.

9. The protected areas in Finland vary in their nature and management objectives and are operated through different management regimes (see <http://www.metsa.fi/natural/protectedareas/>)

The Nature Conservation Act sets the basic management objectives for different categories of protected areas and the acts and statutes of individual protected areas set the management objectives for individual protected areas. Furthermore, the management plans describe in detail the management objectives and regimes. The visitor facilities and services of protected areas have been planned in a systematic way on the basis of a comprehensive analysis and plan with different visitor management regimes (see also 2 and 3).

10. See 8. The methods used in natural resource management have been published by Metsähallitus: Loikkanen, T. Simojoki, T. & Wallenius, P. 1999: Participatory approach to natural resource management. A guide book. 96 p. ISBN: 952-446-021-1.

11. In addition to the large state-owned protected areas, there are plenty of small privately-owned protected areas in Finland. Private landowners can ask the governmental bodies to establish privately-owned protected areas on the basis of the Nature Conservation Act. To an increasing degree, and on the basis of voluntary agreements, private landowners can also be in charge of the site management of those protected areas. In a few cases, also non-governmental organisations have privately-owned protected areas. In the Repovesi national park, a paper company (UPM Kymmene corporation) donated 560 hectares of forest land to the state in November 2001 to enable the establishment of the national park. The corporation has furthermore promised to conserve 1,400 hectares of its own forests in the area surrounding the new national park.

12. Even though the available resources have considerably increased during the recent years, there are clear needs and shortfalls in full implementation of the protected areas network. The needs include the need of a more scientific basis and more comprehensive ecological information on the habitats and species of marine areas as well as of the forests in southern Finland. In both cases there are, however, inventories and research projects going on. The resources of protected area management lay clearly behind the very rapid increase in the numbers and area of protected areas. Although the financing of site management has increased, there are still great gaps in the visitor services of the parks, especially in southern Finland. In general, the technical work associated with the establishment, real estate practices, marking of borders and management planning cannot be properly carried out with the present resources in any due time. On the other hand, the threats involved in the time lag are not considered to



be very serious. At the moment, active management of habitats, especially restoration of boreal forests, basic scientific inventories and development/maintenance of visitor facilities and services are considered to be the priorities.

13. Finland has got financial assistance for the establishment and management of protected areas from the internal financial sources of the European Union (e.g. Life Nature, structural funds). In 2001, 5% of the funding of the NHS of Metsähallitus originated from the EU sources.

14. The constraints to implementation and management of protected areas are assessed as a part of the annual and long-term business planning of Metsähallitus and Forest Research Institute together with the Ministry of the Environment.

15. Metsähallitus has developed indicators for the management effectiveness of protected areas utilising both the IUCN/WCPA framework, experiences from other countries (e.g. New Zealand) and private-sector approaches, such as the balanced score-card (BSC). The information is mostly collected annually and used in the planning and target-setting of future work.

16. The value of the material and non-material benefits and services that protected areas provide have been assessed in several case studies covering individual protected areas, such as the Oulanka National Park and Koli National Park. The ecological, economic and socio-political impact of both the Natura 2000 network and the conservation programme of the forests in southern Finland were assessed according to the EIA procedure as required by the legislation. See e.g. Hildén, M., Tahvonen, O., Valsta, L., Ostamo, E., Niininen, I., Leppänen, J. & Herkiä, L. 1998: Impacts of the Natura 2000 network in Finland (in Finnish). 92 p. Finnish Environment Institute, ISBN 952-11-0274-8.

17. Finland has a systematic approach in developing and management of transboundary protected areas especially with Russia, but also with Norway and Sweden (for further information, see <http://www.metsa.fi/natural/cooperation/>). Metsähallitus has also been actively involved in developing the guidelines for the management of transboundary parks in the EUROPARC Federation.

19. Yes, but the UN List of the protected area management categories is under revision. The guidelines available for classification of protected areas into different IUCN management categories lack clear diagnostic characters of the categories thus seriously diluting the scientific accountability of such assessments.

20. Finland has reported separately e.g. on the wetland areas belonging to the Ramsar Convention and on the UNESCO Biosphere Areas just to mention a few of the several multilateral conventions relevant to protected areas. The reports are attached. Finland reports the European Commission as regards to the Natura 2000 programme.

21. Finland has significant experience on transboundary parks between countries with different political and cultural conditions. The Finnish protected area management system has also a lot of experience on sophisticated ways of running visitor facilities (e.g. in a form of a customer service chain), modern visitor counting techniques and modelling customer satisfaction. Furthermore, a lot of valuable work has been carried out in developing learning communities and best practices, e.g. in the case of field work and ranger activities. Finland has also excellent experience, very relevant to protected area management, as regards to red data books and assessment of threatened species, utilising the revised IUCN/SSC criteria.

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