REVIEW OF IMPLEMENTATION OF THE PROGRAMME OF WORK ON PROTECTED AREAS OF THE CBD IN URUGUAY

Goal: To establish and strengthen national and regional systems of protected areas integrated into a global network as a contribution to globally agreed goals.

Key evaluation questions:

- **Is the existing national protected area system comprehensive, ecologically representative and effectively managed (provide number of existing protected areas, total area covered, and type and percentage of biomes covered)?**
- **Do new protected areas established since COP-7 cover underrepresented ecosystems and biomes (number of new protected areas since COP-7, area covered by them, type and percentage of biomes covered by them)?**
- **Are there plans for the establishment of additional protected areas by the year 2010 (terrestrial) and 2012 (marine)?**
    - Have plans or actions for protected area system (incorporating elements for filling ecological gaps, securing financial resources, capacity-building, addressing policy, legislative and institutional barriers) been developed?

To date, 26 areas have been afforded legal protection status through different laws, national decrees, or municipal resolutions, and have heterogeneous characteristics and objectives. As a whole, they cover 300,000 hectares, approximately 1.7% of the national territory. Only 16 out of the 26 areas fit two criteria simultaneously: (a) They have significant biodiversity values (including rare and threatened species on the IUCN red list, migratory species, sites with critical landscape functions, etc.) and (b) have had or currently have some type of management. These areas do not include a representative sample of the country's biodiversity, thus many elements of significant value (mainly grasslands and marine ecosystems) lie outside protected areas (PA) and are subject to different levels of threat. Furthermore, they operate as individual units rather than a PA "system" and the majority are performing below the level of effectiveness required for adequate protection and sustainable use of biodiversity.

To change this situation, the country is taking fundamental steps towards designing and implementing a National Protected Area System (NPAS) that effectively conserves a representative sample of Uruguay's biodiversity, is consistent with the country's socio-economic context, and facilitates the integration of PAs with other relevant territorial, social, economic, and institutional frameworks and systems. A first step was the passing of Law 17.234 (2000) which gave the creation a National Protected Area System the status of "general interest" and provided an essential tool for planning and management of its constituent PAs. The corresponding Statute of 2005 details the objectives of management categories defined in the law and proposes two additional ones (basically equivalent to IUCN categories II, III, IV, V, and VI).

Considering current barriers, support was requested from the Global Environment Facility (GEF) and the international community to assist the GoU in this task. Following a participatory preparatory phase, in August 2006 the Project *"Catalyzing the Implementation of Uruguay's National Protected Area System"* was approved by the GEF Council. This UNDP/GEF project will be executed by the National Environment Agency (DINAMA) of the Ministry of Housing, Land Planning and Environment (MVOTMA) with co-financing from the National Government, several local governments, the French Cooperation, and the Spanish Cooperation, among others. This is a 5-year project and estimated starting date is second quarter of 2007.

The project will strengthen key capacities to design and set up a NPAS and effectively manage PAs, at the systemic, institutional and individual level through: (i) developing an enabling

environment through supportive legal and policy frameworks; (ii) strengthening institutional capacities through the definition of appropriate institutional arrangements, structures, responsibilities, and occupational standards, (iii) enhancing knowledge, skills and competencies, and (iv) increasing societal appreciation of the benefits of PAs and the value of services they provide.

Among key elements this Project will develop a national-level protected area *Strategic Plan*, which will set out the design of an ecologically comprehensive and representative protected area system that reflects the new political, management and environmental trends in the country as well as the advances in the state of the art for PA systems worldwide. The Plan will define the fundamental guidelines for policies and strategic planning of the System and constituent PAs for the short (5 years), medium (10 years) and long term (15 years). The project will provide the strengthening of the existing regulatory and legal framework to enable the implementation of the Plan and for the sustainability of the ensuing NPAS.

To prepare the ground for the NPAS design, key activities were developed during 2006, including the identification of priority biodiversity elements for maintaining the composition of Uruguay's biodiversity and a preliminary GAP analysis (which did not consider the marine domain).

With respect to the marine domain, currently there are four areas in the process of becoming coastal-marine PAs. One is a new area: Cerro Verde & La Coronilla islands; the others are coastal PAs that have been redesigned to include marine zones (Laguna de Rocha, Cabo Polonio and Isla de Flores).

Goal: To integrate protected areas into broader land- and seascapes and sectors so as to maintain ecological structure and function

Key evaluation questions:

- **What measures haven been taken for developing enabling environment (legislation, policies, tools) for integrating protected areas into broader land and seascapes and sectoral interests (i.e. agriculture, infrastructure, energy)?**
    - Are the needs of protected areas taken into account in the wider land and seascape to address the need for connectivity, including ecological networks?
    - Has the concept of the "ecosystem approach" been applied while developing protected area system?

As a conceptual framework for the constitution and operations of the NPAS, the strategic plan mentioned above will define the relationship between the various System components and between the NPAS and other relevant territorial, social, economic, and institutional frameworks and systems.

To address ecological sustainability the protected area system design will integrate protected areas into broader land- and seascapes and sectors by applying the ecosystem approach and establishing and managing buffer zones and/or ecological corridors, so as to maintain ecological structure and functions. For this purpose, the project will promote close coordination of activities with other biodiversity programmes and projects, in particular with the GEF/WB Project on Responsible Production (PPR), which is being implemented by the Ministry of Livestock, Agriculture and Fisheries and whose objective is to mainstream conservation of biodiversity in rural production systems.

Other initiatives from the Government, like the Sustainable Development and Land Planning Bill and the Coastal Zone Management Guidelines, currently under discussion and elaboration processes, will contribute to integrate protected areas into a broader territorial approach.

The project will promote an awareness building programme for encouraging the support of sectoral stakeholders (agricultural, forestry, tourism, and businesses) in conservation, fostering local collaborative partnerships between public and private sector bodies, assisting in mobilizing new sources of funding for PAs and the NPAS, and for changing negative behaviors for biodiversity conservation. Communications strategies aimed at political representatives, policy makers and decision makers will be promoted to facilitate the sharing of information on conservation issues, the integration of PAs into local and national economic development planning, and increase support for PA legislation and policies.

Goal: To establish and strengthen regional networks, transboundary protected areas (TBPAs) and collaboration between neighboring protected areas across national boundaries.

Key evaluation questions:

- **What collaboration across national boundaries has been implemented in relation to protected areas?**
    - Has any consultation process been established to identify potential transboundary, including marine, protected areas?
    - How many protected areas feature in regional networks and how many of these are transboundary?
    - Has the potential for regional cooperation under relevant conventions been utilized for the establishment of migratory corridors?

A Biodiversity Strategy for the MERCOSUR Region was signed during the COP-8 of the CBD in Curitiba, Brazil, in 2006. This document was signed by the Ministers of Environment of Argentina, Brazil, Paraguay and Uruguay, who agreed upon coordinating actions regarding neighbor protected areas in the future.

In 2005, during a participatory process to elaborate a bi-national strategy between Argentina and Uruguay for marine biodiversity, four priority areas for future bi-national marine protected areas were identified. This process was undertaken in the context of the GEF-funded programme FREPLATA (www.freplata.org).

In the context of the GEF/WB OAS Guaraní Aquifer System Project (PSAG), that seeks to advance sustainable management and use of this water body that involves Argentina, Brazil, Paraguay and Uruguay, transboundary protected areas are seen as a vital component of conservation and planning of fresh water resources.

Goal: To substantially improve site-based protected area planning and management.

Key evaluation questions:

- **What percentage of protected areas (area and number) have up-to-date science-based management plans that**
    - **a) Are under development?**
    - **b) Are under effective implementation?**
    - Have consultation been undertaken involving protected area functionaries, local stakeholders and researchers to identify science-based biodiversity conservation targets?

An assessment of management effectiveness using the WB/WWF Management Effectiveness Tracking Tool (METT), conducted for the first time in the country during the preparatory phase of the NPAS Project, showed that only 56% of 16 evaluated areas have a management plan or is in the process of elaborating one, but none of these plans are currently being totally implemented. Four areas (25% of the sample) lack a management plan. Three areas have a

management plan which is under development; of these, two are only being partially implemented because of funding constraints or other problems.

Many of existing plans require updating and none of evaluated areas has established a calendar and procedures for revising and updating these plans. Furthermore, 50% of evaluated areas have no annual operations plans. None of the areas have set specific science-based conservation targets.

Law 17.234 sets out that protected area managers shall promote the drafting of management plan to be presented to the Ministry of Environment for its approval. The statute specifies that DINAMA shall define specific guidelines for management planning including provisions for involvement of multidisciplinary teams and effective participation of local stakeholders in the planning process and M&E activities.

During 2006 a number of workshops involving researchers from different institutions were held as a starting point for discussing and identifying science-based conservation targets for the NPAS and its areas.

Goal: To prevent and mitigate the negative impacts of key threats to protected areas.

Key evaluation questions:

- **What measures have been put in place to identify, prevent and/or mitigate the negative impacts of threats?**
  - What measures have been taken to restore and rehabilitate the ecological integrity of protected areas?

The NPAS Law, in its Article 8, includes a list of activities that can be banned within protected areas (e.g., mining, fisheries, hunting, infrastructure development, urbanization, change of hydrological cycles, and introduction of alien species, among others.

As a strong complement of PA legal framework, the current legal framework to address prevention and mitigation of negative impacts to biodiversity is the Environmental Impact Assessment Act (Law 16.466) of 1994 and its corresponding statutes, defining a number of activities which require an early environmental clearance from DINAMA (e.g., mining, intensive agriculture, development of infrastructure, hydrological projects, industries, tourism projects, etc.). The abovementioned Law implies the fulfillment of Article 14 of the CBD regarding EIA and biodiversity and is a complementary regulatory framework for the prevention of impacts to protected areas and their surroundings.

Goal: To promote equity and benefit sharing.

Key evaluation questions:

- **What legislative or policy frameworks are in place to establish frameworks for the equitable sharing of costs and benefits arising from the establishment and management of protected areas?**
  - Have assessments been made of the economic and socio-cultural costs and benefits of protected areas, particularly for indigenous and local communities?
  - What measures have been taken to avoid and mitigate negative impacts on indigenous and local communities?

The NPAS Law promotes diverse protected area governance and management models and the participation of stakeholders, to enable the equitable sharing of costs and benefits arising from the management of protected areas, across a broad spectrum of institutions, organizations, and individuals, taking into account the cultural aspects of the local communities. Indeed one of the objectives of the NPAS as set out in Article 2h of the NPAS Law is to contribute to sustainable local development through the involvement of local communities and equitable sharing of costs and benefits arising from the management of protected areas.

In view of the high proportion of privately owned lands the NPAS Project will explore and define financial needs and possible funding sources for different scenarios and mechanisms, including conservation leases, easements, and the development of incentives for private PAs. Mechanisms will include both direct incentives (whether monetary or in kind) and indirect incentives (fiscal instruments and service incentives). Among direct incentives the possibility and feasibility of promoting subsidies, soft credits, etc. will be explored. Lessons learnt from two demonstration pilots in private lands will be used to evaluate different types of incentives. In this context the project will support economic valuation and evaluation studies to determine the values of resources provided by PAs and the opportunity costs for different types of landowners that may wish to implement private reserves. These will enable the definition of criteria and procedures to provide incentives for encouraging private parties in the establishment and management of PAs.

The NPAS Project will provide ground testing and best practices for a variety of PA governance models and management types, as part of the strategy to develop a multi-stakeholder NPAS and to share the responsibilities and costs of PA management across a broad spectrum of institutions, organizations, and individuals. Pilot sites will be used to apply the new legal and policy frameworks and to test and develop new tools for enhancing PA management effectiveness.

Goal: To enhance and secure involvement of indigenous and local communities, and relevant stakeholders.

Key evaluation questions:

- **What mechanisms have been implemented to ensure full and effective participation of indigenous and local communities, in full respect of their rights and recognition of their responsibilities, consistent with national law and applicable international obligations, in the management of existing, and the establishment and management of new, protected areas?**
- **What mechanisms have been put in place to ensure the participation of relevant stakeholders, in the management of existing, and the establishment and management of new, protected areas?**

There are several levels of participation in the process to establish a new protected area under the NPAS Law. At the national level, there is a *National Protected Areas Advisory Commission* (NAC) chaired by MVOTMA through DINAMA, which includes delegates from a broad group of public, private and civil society stakeholders. The first step in the process of establishing a new protected area involves the presentation of a proposal to the NAC. Following this, and in accordance with Article 7, the proposal should be posted for 60 days to receive comments from stakeholders (public statement). Finally, a public hearing is necessary to present the project to the public and receive comments from the civil society seeking a strong public participation before the decision to incorporate a new protected area to the National System.

At the level of each PA to be incorporated into the System, regulations call for the creation of *Specific Advisory Commissions* (SAC). The Commissions will be chaired by MVOTMA and will be integrated by a broad variety of participants related to each PA. These commissions represent the importance of the participation of local communities in the management of the protected areas and also the fair sharing of the benefits and costs derived from PA management.

Goal: To provide an enabling policy, institutional and socio-economic environment for protected areas.

Key evaluation questions:

- **Are the appropriate policy, institutional and socio-economic frameworks in place to value goods and services and enable more effective establishment and management of protected areas?**

- **What kind of social and economic valuation methods and incentives for more effective establishment and management of protected areas are developed and incorporated into national policies, institutional and socio-economic structures?**
    - What are the main impediments to effective establishment and management of protected areas? Have measures been taken to overcome these?

In view of the high proportion of privately owned lands in Uruguay (over 90% of the territory) the NPAS will need to work closely with landowners to establish PAs in key locations. Considering the economic situation of the country, which determines that social emergency issues be the main priority in the political agenda, it is unlikely that new financial resources would become available for expropriations in the short-medium term. Even though many private landowners are interested in participating in conservation activities, if these areas are to form part of a national system to conserve the country's heritage, guarantees would be required to ensure that biodiversity-friendly land uses continue in the long term. This would clearly require specific legal instruments and policies (including incentives) to facilitate participation of the private sector in the establishment and management of PAs, which are unlikely to be developed in the baseline scenario.

The NPAS Project will support economic valuation and evaluation studies to determine the values (both market and non-market) of resources and services provided by PAs and the opportunity costs for different types of landowners that may wish to implement private reserves. These will enable the definition of criteria and procedures to provide incentives for encouraging private parties in the establishment and management of PAs.

Goal: To build capacity for the planning, establishment and management of protected areas.

Key evaluation questions:

- **Has a comprehensive capacity-needs assessment for protected areas management been carried out?**
- **What capacity-building programmes have been undertaken or are being undertaken. How successful have the completed programmes been?**
    - Does your country consider a multidisciplinary approach to protected areas management?

A rapid capacity assessment undertaken in 2006 revealed that current staff has a low skills base in key competency areas for effective PA management. For example, over 60% of managerial/higher technical staff shows deficiencies in financial management and almost 50% of this staff lacks adequate skills in natural resource conservation, monitoring, and assessment. There is still little or no experience in the application of modern approaches for planning, e.g., ecosystem management, systematic conservation planning, bio-regional planning[1]. At the technical/supervisory level, main deficiencies include financial management and recreation and tourism management (with over 90% of current staff showing deficiencies), socioeconomic and cultural assessment/community development (almost 90% of staff), PA policy, planning and management (85% of staff) and project development and management (80% of staff). Among park rangers, deficiencies in key areas for the function include socioeconomic and cultural assessment/community development (90% of staff), financial management (80%), and recreation and tourism (70%). Finally among unskilled field workers, 100% of current staff has deficiencies in natural resource conservation, monitoring, and assessment and 80% has deficiencies in enforcement and control capacities.

To overcome these barriers, the NPAS Project will provide opportunities for the strengthening of individual capacities required to help narrow this gap, in parallel to, and in accordance with,

[1] It should be noted that in the country currently there is no supply of specific post secondary programs in PA planning and management or conservation biology.

the strengthening of systemic and institutional capacities. The Project shall promote targeted training to maximize skills for sustainability and to adapt roles and functions to modern conceptual models for conservation; the development and adoption of agency training strategies; and the development of a tertiary education strategy and curricula that would be aligned with NPAS staff and competence targets.

The training strategies of lead PA institutions will guide the development of in-service training programmes for the different staff levels which will build upon occupational standards to be fine tuned and agreed upon during the and identified needs. Considering that the financing gap —not only budgetary but also in terms of skills and capacities— constitutes a fundamental barrier to achieving biodiversity conservation goals, special attention will be given to capacity building of PA practitioners to set up and operate financial planning and other business systems.

Goal: To develop, apply and transfer appropriate technologies for protected areas.

Key evaluation questions:

- **What new innovative approaches and technologies have been identified, developed and implemented for protected areas establishment and management on the national and regional level?**
    - Has there been collaboration within the country and/or with other countries to share information and technologies?

Uruguay's NPAS is being designed using innovative approaches for biodiversity conservation, including systematic conservation planning, gap analysis, optimization methods, ecosystem management approach, GIS. In this process, collaboration agreements have been made with a number of national institutions, including different departments at the University of the Republic, the Ministry of Livestock, Agriculture and Fisheries, the Ministry of Transportation, the National Institute for Agricultural Research (INIA), the Botanic Garden and Museum of Montevideo, other projects, among others for the generation and sharing of information.

Also important contributions of information about these topics are provided by the Ministry of Foreign Affairs (Environmental Department) and from the synergies with others multilateral environmental Conventions, like Climate Change, Desertification, RAMSAR, etc.

Coping with the tension between planning and implementation has posed a significant challenge in this process; i.e., for many stakeholders it is hard to understand the advantages of systematic conservation planning compared to *ad hoc* approaches, and the progressive approach which will be necessary to follow in order to implement a representative and sustainable NPAS. Thus, there's significant pressure to start creating and implementing individual PAs.

Goal: To ensure financial sustainability of protected areas, and national and regional systems of protected areas.

Key evaluation questions:

- **Have financial needs been identified? What are the results of this needs assessment (quantitative and qualitative)?**
- **What strategies are in place to meet these needs, and in particular to secure long-term funding for the national protected areas system?**
    - What financial support has been given to developing countries and countries with economies in transition and small island developing States?
    - What proportion of the budget is dedicated to supporting the national protected areas system (What proportion of the total funding for the national protected areas comes from private and public funding sources, and how much from the state budget?)
    - Have studies been made on the efficient use of the resources in contribution to financial sustainability of protected areas?

Political will to designate PAs in Uruguay has preceded governments' ability to allocate the necessary resources to protect them. Consequently, funding for current PAs and the central regulatory bodies is quite scarce. An initial assessment developed in 2005 showed that annual costs for PA management are US$700,000, which represents less than 0.01% of the country's GDP. Out of this total, US$500,000 is covered by contributions from the National Government and, to a lesser extent, from some Municipal Governments. The remaining US$200,000 comes from income generated by a range of sources in PAs (e.g. entrance fees, product sales, NGO contributions, international funding). The contribution by private parties and other institutions is very limited.

The allocation of resources to PAs is determined independently of actual PA management requirements, as standard operational costs for different management categories and threats and land tenure scenarios are not known by managers. To estimate these costs, a sample of 10 PAs were analysed during the preparation of the NPAS Project. These covered a range of situations (land tenure structures, sizes, and management categories) and included areas that had high probability of being incorporated to de NPAS in the short-medium term. The exercise included estimating costs for implementing key interventions to develop critical management functions and improve current levels of management effectiveness (e.g., investments in public use infrastructure and equipment to enhance ecotourism opportunities as revenue generating source, implementing fees and licenses for different uses within PAs, realigning staffing tables, etc.). According to this exercise, operational costs at the "system" level (i.e., for the whole set of areas analysed) were estimated in US$ 1.5 million per year, with an investment of around US$ 2 millions during the initial five years (i.e. about US$ 400.000 per year)[2]. The exercise also estimated that these areas could generate about US$ 600.000 annually, but only based on mechanisms that were considered easy to implement in the short term, among them: recreation and tourism entrance and user fees, merchandising of products, extraction fees.

Thus, in this alternative scenario, the difference between total estimated costs and potential revenues would be of US$ 1,300,000. Considering budgetary appropriations and revenues of 2005, the financing gap would be of US$ 600,000 per year. The GoU has committed to gradually increase national budgetary appropriations for PAs. Indeed, the initial commitment has already been made, with a budget increase for the next five years that could cover about one third of estimated financial gap. However, over reliance on the National Budget within the context of a small, developing country whose investment priorities are linked to social emergency issues constitutes a serious limitation for PA financing and prevents the establishment of new areas. Therefore, diversification of revenue sources is needed to help bridge the financing gap and increase the long term income potential of the future NPAS.

The NPAS Project will place emphasis on developing strategies and instruments for reducing the current funding gaps for PAs to achieve the new operation standards for each management category (to be defined in the Strategic Plan) and improve the long term sustainability of the NPAS. This will take into account both the possibility of income generation from the system's PAs and contributions of related stakeholders (i.e. resource "supply"), the funding needs for adequate operations of PAs and the System (i.e. resource "demand"), and the financial planning that is required to balance both sides of the financial equation. A key element will be the definition of a national strategy and action plan for sustainable funding of protected areas. This strategy will address major elements needing government decisions, including: institutional responsibilities to be defined, revenue retention and allocation, revenue generation mechanisms, staffing, incentive structures, business planning requirements. Adequate legal and policy

[2] These findings were compared with those of other studies at the international level regarding PA operational costs per land unit. It was found that mean recurrent costs for PA management in Uruguay run at about US$ 144/sq km, which is intermediate considering that minimum operations costs for different countries range from US$ 100 to US$ 300/sq km. On the other hand, for a significant improvement in management effectiveness, these values should increase substantially. Recurrent costs needed for effective PA management were estimated in about US$ 400/sq km, which is also intermediate considering international values range from US$ 200 to US$ 900/sq km.

frameworks will be created or amended to enable the rest of the PA financing system to develop. For example, based on the NPAS Law, specific legal and policy tools that enable and regulate revenue generation and sharing, and delegation of PA management (for concessions and co-management) will be defined and implemented. Policy frameworks will be linked to criteria to optimise allocation and distribution of funds across the PA system (e.g. based on management plan objectives and performance).

Considering difficulties in determining actual cost and revenue data at site and system levels (which is crucial for planning and budgeting), procedures for managing PA finances will be improved. Financial management information and tracking systems will be strengthened and budget reporting procedure revised and implemented to measure performance against indicators.

Goal: To strengthen communication, education and public awareness.

Key evaluation questions:

- **Is there a review mechanism for public education programmes to measure if they have been effective in communicating the basic biodiversity values of protected areas?**
  - What education measures and programmes have been developed and implemented regarding protected areas, including for raising public awareness?

Several activities were undertaken by DINAMA in the field of strengthen education and public awareness regarding protected areas. One of them starts in 2006 with the launched of the National Network to the Education and Sustainable Development. This network includes different stakeholders from the educational sector, also includes civil society representatives. In this context the issue of education of biodiversity conservation and protected areas going to have an important role.

In 2005, a logo for the national protected area system was designed and launched.

Considering that many of the barriers to the effective PA management in Uruguay, as well as various threats to biodiversity, are related to the low levels of understanding regarding the importance of PAs in conservation and sustainable development, the NPAS Project will invest in awareness raising and education. Key activities for this include: 1) designing and implementing an educational programme targeting mainly primary and junior high schools; 2) awareness building programmes for policy makers and several stakeholders (agricultural, forestry, tourism, and businesses), and 3) the development of the institutional image of the NPAS and general public communications strategies. In addition, the project will promote the definition of general guidelines for developing coherent non formal educational and awareness building activities at the site level.

In this issue (education and public awareness) several workshops, educational activities, etc are being carried out by the academic and NGOs sector. Also several projects like PROBIDES and ECOPLATA developed activities in this way lately.

An important event in 2007 was the joint celebration of the IV National Congress on Protected Areas and the 5th National Ecotourism Conference (Trinidad) was the first step to coordinate the public and private sector about both issues in order to harmonize the efforts and strengthen the feedback between ecotourism and protected areas. During this meeting, an Itinerant Exhibit about the NPAS, supported by the Spanish Cooperation, was launched. It is expected that this exhibit will travel throughout the country during the next year and contribute to increase public awareness and appreciation of protected areas.

Goal: To develop and adopt minimum standards and best practices for national and regional protected area systems.

Key evaluation questions:

- **Have standards, criteria and best practices for a) site selection, b) management, c) governance, and d) long-term monitoring of outcomes been applied and documented? (Please provide a reference).**

Regarding criteria and approaches for *site selection*, during 2006 DINAMA began developing the first steps in a systematic conservation planning process for the design of the national system of protected areas. This included the selection of indicators for biodiversity composition at the level of species, ecosystems, and landscapes.

At the level of species, a first set of criteria for defining conservation priorities included:

1. Restricted-range species (<200.000 km2). Species whose geographic range is restricted to Uruguay or a sector of South America that includes part of the Uruguayan territory, but total range is less than the Uruguayan land area.
2. Threatened species on the IUCN Red List, with particular attention to species listed as Vulnerable, Critically Endangered and Endangered (www.iucnredlist.org).
3. Migratory species that use part of the Uruguayan territory during their lifecycle
4. Species which are found in less than 10% of the Uruguayan territory (<20.000 km2)
5. Species where populations have declined by >20% in Uruguay in the last 20 years. his reduction could be inferred from
    a) reduction in the extension of their habitat
    b) systematic removal of individuals, linked to observed declines in abundance of the species in specific locations
    c) lack of recent records of the species (in the last 10 years) in locations where the species had been previously registered
6. Threatened species at the national level, as identified by previous research
7. Taxonomic or ecological uniqueness, including keystone and bio engineer focal species
8. Species of medicinal, cultural, or economic value, including wild relatives of domesticated or cultivated species (Soutullo, A., 2006).

At the level of ecosystems and landscapes, some preliminary operational classifications were drafted, considering that to date the country lacks an agreed upon classification.

It should be noted that this first approach did not include the marine domain.

With regards to management and governance, lessons learned form the field demonstrations to be pursued through the NPAS project will be used to generate standards and best practices, that will feed into the NPAS strategic plan and information management system to facilitate their uptake by other areas.

Goal: To evaluate and improve the effectiveness of protected area management.

Key evaluation questions:

- **Has your country evaluated management effectiveness of protected areas in a systematic way? If yes,**
    (a) What percentage of national protected area system surface area has been evaluated?
    (b) What are the conclusions for the national protected areas system and to what extent were results incorporated into management plans and strategies?

During the preparatory phase of the NPAS project, an assessment of management effectiveness was conducted using the WB/WWF Management Effectiveness Tracking Tool (METT), slightly adapted by the project team and PA managers so as to render it more adequate to the context and terminology used in the country. This was the first evaluation of this nature ever carried out in the country. It showed that management effectiveness of the majority of the 16 sample PAs (56%) is fair; 37% of areas are perceived as having poor management; only 6% (one area) are considered as being well managed. Within this, the lowest scores elements of the management cycle were (a) *Planning* (which refers to appropriateness of PA legislation and policy, design,

management planning), (b) *Inputs* (resources needed to carry out management), and (c) *Outputs* (assessment of the implementation of management programme). The results of the METT analysis provided valuable baseline upon which the strategy of the NPAS was built and will contribute to strengthen the political will that the Government of Uruguay has to reach a strong National Protected Areas System.