

PRIORITIES FOR IMPROVING FINANCIAL SUSTAINABILITY TO PROTECTED AREAS IN THE MEDITERRANEAN

The purpose of this session was to assess Mediterranean priorities for securing a better financial future for Protected Areas. This prioritization was based on the regional, national and local action points of the Durban Action Plan. Representatives of the Mediterranean countries were asked to point out the actions that they perceived as key in promoting financial sustainability of protected areas, and identify concrete activities towards that end.

There were six actions that were identified (numbered as they appeared in the Durban Action Plan), and they are listed below in order of priority, along with the specific activities that Mediterranean countries should pursue in order to achieve a sustainable financing future for protected areas.

ACTION 13 (Local Action)

Creative combinations of financial and other economic mechanisms for conservation and poverty reduction should consider income generation opportunities through the creation of small businesses and employment associated with protected area management. (i.e. Para-taxonomists, ecotourism service providers, guides and other visitor services, conservers of traditional knowledge, etc.) And payments linked to improving the health of protected areas

Specific activities under Action 13

- Marketing the products of National Parks
- Promoting small businesses to provide services to protected areas (PAs)
- Getting support from financial entities to support PAs
- Documenting success stories and making them available throughout the region
- Improving exchange of information on financing mechanisms

ACTION 8 (National Action)

Governments should distribute income flows from protected areas to improve their management and increase such flows as needed in view of the intrinsic benefits to society

Specific activities under Action 8

- Improving the awareness of governments and try to influence government policy in favour of PAs
- Distributing the Durban Accord to governments who sent delegates to Durban
- Avoiding governments taking advantage of what PAs offer in terms of tourism and taking the revenue away from PA (review/improve institutional arrangements)
- Capturing information on level of government investment in PAs

ACTION 4 (National Action)

Governments nationally and locally should regularly assess the full benefits that protected areas generate at different levels (local, national, global) and increase their funding commitments accordingly

Specific activities under Action 4

- Proving/assessing the economic value of PAs and conveying it to decision-makers
- Providing awareness to governments to increase PA budget
- Making PA accounts available
- Highlighting the role of the private sector in identifying investment opportunities
- Making benefits of PA known through NGOs, Local Groups...
- Presenting PAs as a component of the overall development thinking and using actors other than conservationists to make the case

ACTION 1 (Regional Action)

Governments should agree to strengthen existing instruments and encourage new regional instruments which will contribute to increased funding that secures the effective, efficient and equitable management of the region's protected areas

Specific activities under Action 1

- Promoting the participatory approach throughout the planning and management of PAs
- Creating a mechanism/network where PA in the Mediterranean that attract more revenue could support other PA
- Developing capacities of scientific institutions and other directly dealing with PA management
- Promoting coordination and cooperation activities and avoiding replication
- Maintaining permanent contacts among PA of the Mediterranean region highlight the value of Mediterranean PAs
- Revising laws and improving legal instruments to support better governance of PA
- Sharing lessons from twinning arrangements that are effective and learning from them

ACTION 5 (National Action)

Collaborative partnerships of governments and the private sector should be used to establish new and expanded funding for the protected areas network

Specific activities under Action 5

- Involving financial entities and linking them to specific PA programmes, as well as promoting sponsorship initiatives of PA activities and organisations

- Harnessing partnerships across boundaries – Looking at partnerships that already exist with the private sector and finding out whether there is interest in extending the partnership to another country
- Looking at innovative approaches that could support PA financing and that have been successful in other countries (i.e. lottery funds)

ACTION 6 (National Action)

A range of instruments, such as taxes, tradable or market permits and environmental bonds which discourage activities that damage natural resources should be used to produce income for protected areas and provide benefits to those areas and their host human communities

Specific activities under Action 6

- Investigating new innovative partnerships and PA support fund/endowment funds (i.e. Waqf funds: IUCN WESCANA experience or other experiences from different countries that IUCN could bring to the region)
- Setting the proper institutional framework to accommodate future possible instruments
- Reaching out and investigating legislative instruments that support a more secure financial future to PAs – The IUCN Commission on Environmental Law could provide possible support

Besides the priority actions underlined, this session was also concluded with some general remarks that intend to enhance securing a better financial future for Mediterranean PAs, and these mainly referred to:

- Developing capacity of actors and partners working in PA issues to make sure they face the ongoing challenges of PA management – A training course on Sustainable Financing for PA managers in the region could be a very useful initiative to embark on
- Providing and sharing information on tools that support PA financing as well as on success and failure stories among Mediterranean countries
- Providing a Mediterranean platform for exchange of experiences – This platform has been previously provided by the IUCN Centre for Mediterranean Cooperation within several similar occasions, and IUCN is ready to maintain this active dialogue
- Encouraging exchange visits among PA in the Mediterranean to exchange experiences and looking at North-South cooperation as an opportunity to support PA financing