



Mongolia takes first steps towards PoWPA implementation



Workshop participants with the map they created of protected areas activities in Mongolia.

Implementation of the CBD Programme of Work on Protected Areas (PoWPA) is a step closer in Mongolia following a workshop that, for the first time, brought together diverse stakeholders to support the Mongolian government's continuing commitment towards a representative, effectively managed, and sustainably financed network of protected areas in the country. The concrete outcomes of the workshop will be used to develop a specific action plan for PoWPA implementation in Mongolia, outlining streamlined, coordinated activities for all involved parties. The workshop clearly demonstrates that the CBD PoWPA is an excellent framework for bringing stakeholders together and creating synergies in protected areas work.

Protected areas in Mongolia: the current situation

Mongolia has a long tradition of protecting its natural landscapes and biodiversity, and of venerating sacred mountains. In 1778, the state proclaimed Bogd Khaan Mountain to be the first strictly protected area in the world. Since then, the Mongolian government has committed to creating protected areas covering 30 per cent of its territory by 2030.

Currently, 60 protected areas have been established, covering 215,800km² or 13.8 per cent of the total territory of Mongolia. Local administrative units (*aimags* and *soums*) have protected

an additional 150,000km² of areas with natural and historical importance.

PoWPA: a new opportunity

The Convention on Biological Diversity's (CBD) Programme of Work on Protected Areas is an historic commitment by 190 governments to create a global network of comprehensive, well-managed, and representative protected areas (see Box 1). Made in 2004, this commitment is monumental event: a

Box 1. Overall purpose of the CBD Programme of Work on Protected Areas

'The overall purpose of the Programme of Work on Protected Areas is to support the establishment and maintenance by 2010 for terrestrial and by 2012 for marine areas of comprehensive, effectively managed, and ecologically representative national and regional systems of protected areas that collectively, *inter alia* through a global network contribute to achieving the three objectives of the Convention and the 2010 target to significantly reduce the current rate of biodiversity loss at the global, regional, national and sub-national levels and contribute to poverty reduction and the pursuit of sustainable development, thereby supporting the objectives of the Strategic Plan of the Convention, the World Summit on Sustainable Development Plan of Implementation and the Millennium Development Goals.'

Box 2. Example priority PoWPA activity, with identified gaps and proposed actions

PoWPA ELEMENT 1: Direct actions for planning, selecting, establishing, strengthening, and managing, protected area systems and sites

PoWPA Goal 1.1: To establish and strengthen national and regional systems of protected areas integrated into a global network as a contribution to globally agreed goals

PoWPA activity to achieve this goal, identified as a high priority for Mongolia:

1.1.7 Encourage the establishment of protected areas that benefit indigenous and local communities, including by respecting, preserving, and maintaining their traditional knowledge in accordance with article 8(j) and related provisions.

Identified gaps:

- Protected areas currently set up based on biodiversity/conservation priorities rather than addressing local needs
- Gap in participatory management planning
- Rights and response of local users not clear
- No-go (grazing) areas based on biodiversity needs (zoning)

Proposed actions:

- Limit protected area use
- Revise status and borders of some protected areas
- Revise protected area categories
- Consult with local people

one-in-ten-year opportunity to ensure on-the-ground conservation action around the world.

Many governmental and international organizations are currently working towards the protection and conservation of biodiversity in Mongolia, and thus contributing to PoWPA implementation as well as sustainable development and poverty reduction in the country. However, these activities would be much more effective and efficient if coordination among these organizations could be ensured and strengthened.

Coordination workshop for PoWPA implementation

Recognizing this, Mongolia's Ministry of Nature and Environment, with support from conservation organization WWF and the German development agency GTZ, organized and hosted a Coordination Workshop on the Implementation of the CBD Programme of Work on Protected Areas in Mongolia, held in Ulaanbaatar from 15–16 November 2007. Around 70 participants from all relevant government institutions, bilateral donors, multilateral donors, embassies, large non-governmental organizations (NGOs), scientific national institutions, and relevant civil society partners attended. The goal was to streamline the protected areas activities of all involved parties and relevant stakeholders, and develop the first building blocks for a specific action plan for PoWPA implementation in the country.

Outcomes

The first day of the workshop featured presentations on different organizations' activities in and around Mongolia's protected areas. These activities were mapped geographically, as well as in relation to the targets of the PoWPA. This information will promote better coordination and synergies in future work on protected areas in Mongolia.

The second day of the workshop was devoted to prioritizing PoWPA activities, and identifying gaps and proposed actions for each activity (see Box 2 for an example).

Action plan for PoWPA implementation

The identified priority activities and gaps will form the basis for the development of a specific action plan for coordinated and efficient implementation of the PoWPA in Mongolia. This action plan will identify priorities, next steps, budget, responsibilities, and timelines. It will identify how different organizations should collaborate, including which organization takes the lead on each issue. It will also serve for better coordination among, and discussion with, donor organizations.

Next steps

1. A working group to develop the action plan for PoWPA implementation in Mongolia will be established by the Ministry of Nature and Environment, and with support from WWF and GTZ. The working group will consist of experts on protected area management and biodiversity conservation in Mongolia.
2. The Ministry of Nature and Environment together with the working group will identify a coordination council, which will be composed of representatives from the Ministry of Nature and Environment, donor projects, and NGOs. The council will monitor the implementation of the PoWPA.
3. The Ministry of Nature and Environment will discuss the action plan with donor organizations, to help advise donor projects to provide assistance in the implementation of the PoWPA in Mongolia.
4. The action plan will also be presented at the Ninth Meeting of the Conference of the Parties to the CBD (COP9) in May 2008, in Bonn, Germany.

For more information

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