

PROJECT NAME:	GLOBAL ENVIRONMENTAL FACILITY (GEF) BIODIVERSITY AND NATURAL RESOURCES MANAGEMENT PROJECT
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GRANT AMOUNT: US\$8.2 million

DURATION: 2000-2007

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BACKGROUND: Turkish biodiversity is of major international importance. 75% of the 12,000 plant species that occur in the whole of Europe are in Turkey and one third of the flora occurs only in Turkey. In addition, it is one of the three major flyways for millions of migratory birds, which move between the Western Palearctic and Africa each year, passes through Turkey. However Turkish biodiversity has been under threat from a variety of unsustainable land and natural resource use pressures, which have been exacerbated by the population increase that has taken place in the country over the last 60 years. These include: overgrazing and other unsustainable agricultural practices; unsustainable use of forests; conversion of wetlands and other critical natural habitats to agriculture or other land development; interference with the hydrological regime of wetlands for agriculture, municipal and industrial use of water; pollution, hunting and unsustainable harvesting of wild plants and tubers. Designated protected area coverage is only 1% of the country however, the traditional focus of national parks management has been the provision of recreational facilities for the public, often to the detriment of the ecological integrity of internationally important sites. These concerns prompted the Government of Turkey to request World Bank assistance in preparing and implementing the Biodiversity and Natural Resources Management Project, (the second GEF funded project in Turkey), in order to strengthen the capacity for preparation and implementation of protected area and conservation management plans at both the field and central levels. The project (within the context of integrated conservation and sustainable land use plans for protected areas and the lands surrounding them) would establish effective, decentralized and sustainable protected areas and natural resource management at the country's most important biodiversity sites.

PROJECT OBJECTIVE: The project's global objective is to sustainably conserve the biological diversity and ecological integrity of selected forest, wetland, steppe and alpine ecosystems that are representative of Turkey's four major bio geographical zones, which include the Black Sea and Caucasian mountain region, the Central Anatolian plateau, and the European and Mediterranean regions.

The project's development objective is to establish effective intersectoral, participatory planning and sustainable management of protected areas and natural resources at four selected biodiversity conservation sites and build capacity at the national level to facilitate replication of these activities at priority conservation sites throughout Turkey.

PROJECT DESCRIPTION: The project has three components: (a) Strengthening the National Framework for Biodiversity Conservation; (b) Developing Prototypes for Effective Protected Area Management and (c) Project Management and Monitoring. Successful implementation of these three components will help establish effective participatory systems for sustainable conservation and natural resource management at the four pilot sites and will build the national capacity and public support to develop a nationwide network of protected areas. It will also review the legal and regulatory framework for biodiversity conservation and explore opportunities for mainstreaming biodiversity conservation in forest planning and management, local land use planning, tourism development, agricultural extension and environmental management of water systems.

IMPLEMENTING AND MONITORING: The project is being implemented by the General Directorate of Nature Protection and National Parks and the General Directorate of Environmental Protection of the Ministry of Environment and Forests. The project is being implemented over a six year period and is expected to be completed by December 31, 2006.

BENEFITS: Effective implementation of the project will result in local, regional and global benefits. The project will develop and implement conservation management strategies and action plans appropriate to local needs and conditions. Local government, local communities and NGOs will participate in planning and implementation of the project, which will focus on working with buffer zone communities and other stakeholders to bring about sustainable natural resource management and conservation of landraces and biodiversity in the production landscape. Investments, training and institutional arrangements funded under the project would address priority conservation planning and management problems that are common to many important and threatened biodiversity sites throughout Turkey and would therefore allow for replication throughout the country. Beneficiaries will include local communities and other stakeholders at the four project demonstration sites, and implementing agencies (government, NGO and private sector).

PROJECT STATUS: The project was approved by the Board on June 13th, 2000, the Grant Agreement was signed on July 12, 2000 and the project became effective on July 14, 2000.

With regard to the project's first aim - to establish effective, intersectoral, participatory planning and sustainable management of protected areas and natural resources at four selected biodiversity conservation demonstration sites - since the outset, the project has struggled with introducing the innovative model of protected area management envisaged during project preparation. Having said this, all four sites have overcome, to a great extent, the conceptual and management challenges of working in this new area and are providing good lessons for the rest of the national system of protected areas. While progress has been quite good at two of the project sites (Sultan Sazlığı and Köprülü Kanyon), performance at a third site (Camili) has been modest, and at the fourth site (İğneada) has been somewhat problematic. Still, it is important to note that solutions to performance difficulties have been sought and are being implemented.

In meeting the project's second aim - building the capacity at the national level to help replicate these activities at priority conservation sites throughout Turkey - progress continues in seeking to learn lessons from the protected area management experience so far, and to disseminate these lessons to other sites in Turkey. Investments are being made in building capacity in a way which is much more strategic. Conservation objectives are being incorporated into forest management planning. Four particular outcomes are worth noting.

- A strategy for replication has been developed building on the approaches piloted in the first four sites, and an additional six sites have been identified where activities will be launched over the remaining project period. The key challenge will be to ensure that activities in these four sites become firmly institutionalized before the project's close.
- A new legal framework for biodiversity conservation is in preparation, complementing and building on the EU Habitats and Birds Directives, but going far beyond these in terms of articulating a framework for protected area planning and management. Preparation has sought to integrate a wide range of

stakeholders concerns in the drafting process. For this outcome to be fully successful, the Ministry will need to move forward with the process for eventually approving new legislation.

- As a result of the NGO strategy, the project has catalyzed NGO action in the area of biodiversity conservation, providing a platform for discussion of critical issues with partners in Government, particularly in the Ministry of National Education, the Ministry of Agriculture and Rural Affairs, and MEF and creating the incentive to draft a protocol which describes how NGOs and Government agencies might work together.
- As a result of the work of the Camili PAMA and the PMU, and with the cooperation of various project implementation units, Camili has been established as Turkey's first UNESCO Biosphere Reserve.