IUCN Category VI - Protected Area with Sustainable Use of Natural Resources

ACRONYMS | AREAS | COUNTRIES | MARINE | TERMS

DEFINITION

Generally large areas, with most of the area in a natural condition, where a proportion is under sustainable natural resource management and where low-level non-industrial use of natural resources compatible with nature conservation is seen as one of the main aims of the area.

DESCRIPTION

Category VI (Protected area with sustainable use of natural resources) refers to areas defined by IUCN as *"generally large, with most of the area in a natural condition, where a proportion is under sustainable natural resource management and where low-level non-industrial use of natural resources compatible with nature conservation is seen as one of the main aims of the area"*. [1] The primary objective of protected areas in this category is to protect natural ecosystems and use natural resources sustainably, when conservation and sustainable use can be mutually beneficial. Other objectives include the promotion of social and economic benefits to local communities and to facilitate inter-generational security for local communities' livelihoods.

SUPPORTED BY

Developed by the International Union for Conservation of Nature (IUCN) with support of the World Commission on Protected Areas (WCPA) and other international institutions such as the Convention on Biological Diversity (CBD), and assigned by national governments.

YEAR OF CREATION

The current IUCN Categories were approved in 1994, and revised guidelines were published in 2008. [1]

COVERAGE

Globally applicable.

CRITERIA

As with all of the IUCN protected area categories, there are no formal criteria. However they generally have the following distinguishing features: [1]

- These areas aim to conserve ecosystems and habitats, together with associated cultural values and natural resource management systems. Therefore, this category of protected areas tends to be relatively large (although this is not obligatory).
- They are unique in that they have the sustainable use of natural resources as a means to achieve nature conservation, together and in synergy with other actions more common to the other categories, such as protection.
- The category is not designed to accommodate large-scale industrial harvest.
- In general, IUCN recommends that a proportion of the area is retained in a natural condition, which in some cases might imply its definition as a no-take management zone. Some countries have set this as two-thirds; IUCN recommends that decisions need to be made at a national level and sometimes even at the level of individual protected areas.

MANAGEMENT

Management of these areas can be carried out by a range of actors depending on the governance type of the area (see Protected Areas for information on governance types). Human occupation and intervention is to be expected in these areas, although most practices will be traditional and low-impact as sustainable use is actively promoted. As a result people who live and manage the land under traditional and sustainable practices act as the main stewards of these protected areas. Unlike category V, intervention within these areas is aimed at maintaining or restoring predominantly natural ecosystems.

BUSINESS RELEVANCE

Legal and compliance – The classification of a category VI protected area requires that such areas are managed for conservation by legal or other effective means, and therefore legal recognition and protection at the national or sub-national level is likely to be present for these sites. The level of legal protection will however vary between countries, and will depend on the governance type of the area, as they receive differing levels of recognition by government in different countries. Nonetheless a number of national laws are likely to apply to these sites that restrict large-scale economic activities in order to maintain the conservation values of these areas.

As designated protected areas, these sites receive international attention and have been incorporated into a number of environmental safeguard standards. These include those of multilateral financial institutions such as but not limited to the World Bank [2] and the International Finance Corporation [3]. For details on environmental safeguard standards which are applicable to all protected areas, please see the Protected Areas page.

In addition, a number of sector specific safeguard standards refer to protected areas, many of which are related to certification programs, including the standards of the Alliance for Responsible Mining (ARM) [4] and the Responsible Jewellery Council (RJC) [5] that requires members to identify and respect legally protected areas. For details on certification programmes which are applicable to all protected areas, please see the Protected Areas page.

Biodiversity importance – Category VI areas are unique among the IUCN Categories as they seek to achieve biodiversity conservation through a synergy between the sustainable uses of natural resources together with protection. These areas tend to be relatively large and are particularly relevant for the application of landscape approaches to conservation. As intervention within these areas is aimed at maintaining or restoring natural ecosystems, they can be anticipated to have high biodiversity values, and may include no-take areas as an integral part of maintaining these values.

Socio-cultural values – These areas can be expected to hold significant socio-cultural value. While industrial use is not expected, sustainable use by local and traditional communities is a key criterion, and the maintenance of these sustainable practices is as important as the maintenance of the natural resources on which people rely.

REFERENCES & WEBSITE

1. Dudley, N. (Ed.) Guidelines for Applying Protected Area Management Categories (2008).
2. The World Bank. World Bank Operational Manual. Revised Version 2013. OP 4.04 Natural habitats (2013).
3. International Finance Corporation (IFC). Performance Standard 6: Biodiversity Conservation and Sustainable Management of Living Natural Resources (2012).
4. Alliance for Responsible Mining. Fairmined Standard for Gold From Artisanal and Small-Scale Mining, Including Associated Precious Metals. Version 2.0. (2014).
5. Responsible Jewellery Council. Code of Practices (2013).



Lagoon house of the Mesologgi area, Greece (IUCN Management Category VI). Georgios Alexandris/Shutterstock.com

Category:

Protected areas

Related pages

IUCN Protected Area Management Categories (Areas)

IUCN Category Ia - Strict Nature Reserve (Areas)

IUCN Category Ib - Wilderness Area (Areas)

IUCN Category II - National Park (Areas)

IUCN Category III - Natural Monument or Feature (Areas)

IUCN Category IV - Habitat / Species Management Area (Areas)

IUCN Category V - Protected Landscape / Seascape (Areas)

IUCN Category VI - Protected Area with Sustainable Use of Natural Resources (Areas)

Tools

Protected Planet a tool for visualizing information on protected areas at the site level, country level, regional level and global level. This includes information on the IUCN category where known. Protected Planet brings together spatial data, descriptive information and images from the World Database on Protected Areas, WikipediaTM and PanaramioTM.

The Integrated Biodiversity Assessment Tool (IBAT) provides a visualisation and GIS download tool for protected areas, including the IUCN category where known.

Page last updated 24 December 2020