

Prepared by Dr. Goetz Schuerholz

PROJECT BRIEF

1. IDENTIFIERS

PROJECT NUMBER:
NAME OF PROJECT: Georgia: Conservation of globally unique Colkhic Forest/Shrub communities in the Western Section of Georgia's Small Caucasus.
DURATION: Nine Years (Phase 1: 3 Years; Phase 2: 6 Years)
IMPLEMENTING AGENCY: UNDP
EXECUTING AGENCY: Autonomous Region of Ajara under the auspices of the autonomous Department of Protected Areas of Georgia and the Ministry of Environment
REQUESTING COUNTRY: Georgia
ELIGIBILITY: Georgia ratified the CBD in April 1994
GEF FOCAL AREA: Biodiversity
GEF PROGRAMMING FRAMEWORK: OP#3: Forest Ecosystems
 Cross Cutting (Land Degradation)

SUMMARY: The project aims to protect a representative sample of globally unique ecosystems characteristic for the Lesser Caucasus of Georgia. These ecosystems are a rich storehouse of forest/shrubland biodiversity with numerous endemic species. The area of concern is included in the list of the "100 European Forests We Should protect Now", established by the WWF/World Bank Alliance. Although the natural integrity of this protected area is largely intact, the same ecosystems in its neighbourhood are increasingly threatened by overgrazing, collection of fuel wood and minor forest products, and is potentially at risk from agricultural expansion, and uncontrolled land use development. The project would mitigate such threats by: (a) establishing the first protected area in Georgia under regional jurisdiction; (b) implementing the progressive state-of-the-art management plan for the Regional Wilderness Park "Mtirala" and its support zone; (d) installing new conservation operations in the Ajara Region; (e) promoting and implementing conservation compatible land uses in the Ajara Region and (f) strategically expanding the environmental management framework to the entire Ajara Region. Management would be effected by actively involving local communities and other stakeholders in activity implementation, including the private sectors, in a manner suited to the local context. Interventions would be partitioned into phases and sequenced to enable learning and adjustment. Management operations would target principally the Wilderness Park and its support zone. Operations would gradually be consolidated across the Region's landscape as regional institutional capacities are developed. Conservation objectives would be spearheaded at the wider landscape level by enhancing knowledge of the geo-environmental processes that sustain biodiversity, instituting new decision-making instruments for conservation, and strengthening environmental management functions. The project would be enhanced through a well placed awareness and education campaign to promote conservation compatible livelihood alternatives in the Region.

3. COSTS AND FINANCING (US\$):

UNDP	Phase 1	700,000	
	Phase 2	300,000	
	Subtotal GEF:		1.000,000
Co-financing	Phase 1	????????	
	Phase 2 (to be confirmed during Phase 1)	????????	
	GoG	????????	

NGO ?????????
Sub Total Co-financing

TOTAL PROJECT COST: ?????????

4. **ASSOCIATED FINANCING:** Baseline financing costed at US\$????????? over the next 9 years

5. **OPERATIONAL FOCAL POINT ENDORSEMENT:**
Name: Chairman of the Council of Ministers, or Minister of Environment ???????????????
Title: ????????????????????
Organisation: ???????????????? **Date:** ???????????

6. **IA CONTACT:** ???????????????? include name, address, title, telephone, fax, E-mail etc.,

List of Acronyms

ARA	Autonomous Republic of Ajara
BKNP	Borjomi- Kharagauli National Park
BMZ	Bundesministerium fuer wirtschaftliche Zusammenarbeit
CITES	Convention on International Trade in Endangered Species
CBD	Convention on Biological Diversity
DPA	Department of Protected Areas
FD	Forestry Department
EU	European Union
GEF	Global Environment Facility
GIS	Geographic Information System
GO	Government
GOG	Government of Georgia
IUCN	International Union for Conservation of Nature
GPS	Global Positioning Satellite System
KfW	Kreditanstalt fuer Wiederaufbau
MAB	Man and the Biosphere Programme
MoE	Ministry of Environment
MoU	Memorandum of Understanding
NBSAP	National Biodiversity Strategy and Action Plan
NGO	Non-governmental Organization
PA	Protected Area
PAS	Protected Area System
PSC	Project Steering Committee
WB	The World Bank
RWPM	Regional Wilderness Park Mtirala
WWF	World Wide Fund for Nature

CONSERVATION OF COLKHIC FOREST COMMUNITIES IN THE WESTERN SECTION OF GEORGIA'S LESSER CAUCASUS

Project Document

PROJECT BACKGROUND AND CONTEXT:

1. General Context: Georgia has a total land surface area of 70 000 sq.km with a stable population of approximately 5.5 Million (s. Map 1). Approximately 220,000 has are currently under protection in form of 15 State Nature Reserves and 5 "Managed Nature Reserves". The protection category "Nature Reserve" corresponds to IUCN's category I: "Strict Nature Reserve" which according to Russian law did not permit resource utilization, access to the public and/or human settlements. Most reserves protect subalpine forests and alpine grasslands. At the local level, each reserve has its own management personnel. Recognising the need for an expansion and adaptation to a more progressive management of the protected area system, Georgia, with the help of the World Wide Fund for Nature (WWF), embarked on an ambitious protected area program in 1990. The major objectives of this movement were, to (a) set aside as protected areas representative samples of all of Georgia's ecosystems for a sustainable biodiversity conservation and (b) to structure protected areas by categories which are internationally recognised and adapted to local needs. This movement gained momentum after President Shevardnadze's announcement in 1996 to convert 20 % of Georgia's territory into protected areas as a 'gift to the earth'. This commitment was made as a contribution to the WWF 2000 -The Living Planet Campaign.

2. In early 1996 the Parliament of Georgia approved a new legislation for the creation and management of Protected Areas. The new legislation provides much needed guidelines for the expansion and management of the existing but insufficient system of protected areas and defines the role and management of support zones. The new legislation provides a sound basis for foreign investments in the area of biodiversity conservation.

3. It is widely accepted, that nature protection in general and the designation and management of protected areas in particular increasingly become a regional concern. This applies especially to small size areas which may not fit as much the national as the regional concern. Smaller sized protected areas, supplementary to large protection units play a pivotal role in biodiversity conservation by providing critical ecological stepstones in the overall network of a protected area system (e.g., ecological connectivity, prevention of population fragmentation). At current, Georgia has 14 nature reserves under national jurisdiction. The 14 reserves do not include all of the country's ecosystems. Numerous ecosystems are either under-represented or not covered at all. Although the new Georgian legislation on protected areas specifically stipulates the creation of regional protection units under regional authority, there is none to date. The proposed Wilderness Park Mtirala (RWPM) will be the first of this type and will therefore serve as a model for the rest of the country. (see Map 1, Annex 1). The autonomous Region of Ajara is very supportive of biodiversity conservation and very much favours the establishment of regional protection units. Presently, there is only one protected area in Ajara - Kintrishi State Nature Reserve (13,893has), which still leaves critical ecosystems of global significance in this region without protection.

4. Environmental Context: Biogeographically, the Ajara Region is considered the northernmost extension of the sub-tropical realm. The area represents an ecotone where subtropical- and temperate

broadleaf forests meet. Geologically, the region is characterised by Tertiary volcanic bedrock (i.e., Tuff and Andesite) and Quaternary sediments. Orographically, the Kobuleti-Chakvi mountain range divides Ajara into a western (coastal) and eastern (inland) section with elevations ranging from 0-3000 m (i.e., Mount Khino). The relief is very diverse, typified by deep gorges, volcanic plateau and petrified lava flows. The climate is characterised by high precipitation with an annual mean value of 2000 mm in the coastal zone and a maximum of 4000 mm in higher elevations. The unique exception is the middle section of the Ajaristckali river gorge where the annual precipitation sinks below 600 mm. The mean annual air temperature varies by elevation, averaging 14,4⁰C in the Batumi area. The region's hydrology is dominated by the rivers Chorokhi /Ajaristskali and their tributaries forming part of the Black Sea basin. The Kobuleti wetlands in the Ajara district are noteworthy because of their outstanding biodiversity.

5. The Ajara region is the biologically most diverse section of the western Caucasus supporting numerous endemic Tertiary relic plant species which survived the ice ages through being sheltered in this region. 1700 vascular plants have been identified for the region of which 45 species of evergreen woody plants are recorded and of which 41 species are listed in the Red Data Book of Georgia. Mixed-broad leafed forests, beech-chestnut forests with Colchic evergreen understory, as well as oak-pine and spruce-fir forests, birch and oak elfin woods, alpine and subalpine grasslands are dominant plant communities. For the Wilderness Park Mtirala, a total of 284 vascular plant species of 202 genera and 68 families have been identified. 16 of these species are endemic to the region. The fauna is equally diversified. Detailed inventories, however, are lacking. 18 species which are known to occur have been listed as "rare" in Georgia's Red Data Book. The Caspian snowcock and the Caucasian Black grouse are only two of the species threatened with extinction. Many others are listed in IUCN's Red data book.

6. Socio-Economic Context: The Ajara Autonomous Republic (AR) has a total land surface area of 3,000 km² with a stable population of approximately 400,000. Half the population is found in rural areas. The population density indicator for Ajara is twice as high as Georgia's average indicator. More than 85% of the population lives in the foothills of the Caucasus and the plains below 400 m elevation. The region is composed of 329 villages, 7 settlements and 2 townships. To the very end of the 19th century Ajara remained a predominately agricultural region. The region historically has been characterised by cattle-breeding, agriculture (mainly corn and potatoes in the less humid areas), horticulture (fruit production such as apple, pear, plum, and fig), tobacco cultivation, apiculture (honey production). Wild chestnut and cultivated walnut are part of the traditional local staple diet.

7. During the first part of the 20th century, the Ajara region experienced a dramatic industrial development with Batumi becoming a major seaport, mostly for export of Caspian oil. At the same time, but mostly during the second part of this century, agriculture in the area experienced a revival through the introduction and large scale cultivation of tea and citrus (i.e., tangerine, lemon and orange) in the foothills of the Caucasus. Today, tea plantations cover 8,300has, with a production of more than 53,700 tons of tea leaves per year. Citrus is a highly priced market commodity. There are 8,900 has of citrus plantations, producing more than 165,000 tons of fruit per year. Other lucrative cash crops in the region include tung-tree, bamboo, laurel and eucalyptus. Tobacco culture still is a major source of income for people living in the mountainous areas. Tobacco plantations cover approximately 2,200has, producing 5,400 tons of leaves per year.

8. Because of its favourable climate, diversified landscapes and numerous cultural historic sites, the Ajara region historically has been a prime tourist destination in the country. The tourism industry in the

Ajara region reached a peak by the end of the 80s with more than 250,000 visitors per year, mostly originating from Russia. Since political independence in 1991, the tourism industry has been steadily declining in this area as in the rest of the country. Currently, Ajara -as all of Georgia- is undergoing a serious social-economical crisis while trying to adjust to a market economy. Tea, citrus and tobacco production in particular are down. Most affected are the people living in the mountain region, earning their livelihood largely through subsistence agriculture. Poverty in rural areas has become a serious problem, at the same time posing a threat to the ecological integrity of the region.

9. Policy and Legal Context: Georgia ratified the Convention on Biological Diversity (CBD) in April 1994 and is also party to the Western Hemisphere, CITES, and RAMSAR Conventions. In 1996 the Parliament of Georgia approved a new legislation for the establishment and management of protected areas. The new legislation provides much needed guidelines for the expansion and management of the existing but insufficient system of protected areas. In principle, the frame law has adopted the official IUCN protection categories with all its implications. The frame law provides an excellent basis and opportunity for a critical review of the existing nature reserves and the creation of new areas adapted to local conditions. The country has established policies, strategies, and institutions to protect biodiversity; has created new protected areas; and is drafting a National Territorial Zoning Plan which will delineate land uses, including conservation-specific uses, and provide a framework for land use management, including the Ajara Autonomous Republic. With assistance from the GEF, the Government of Georgia (GOG) has prepared a National Biodiversity Strategy and Action Plan (NBSAP); analyses to support the effort place a high priority on the expansion of the protected area network. The proposed wilderness park "Mtirala" will be established within this new legal framework, authorising the autonomous Republic of Ajara to manage this and similar areas under its own jurisdiction. As part of its commitment to biodiversity conservation, the GOG has produced a new forest legislation and forest practices code in 1999 with emphasis on sustainable forest management and biodiversity conservation, addressing and recognising the multiple functions of forests.

10. However, due to funding and other constraints, the GOG has been unable to operationalize basic conservation functions in many of the protected areas, including the park "Mtirala". The GOG is seeking to remedy this weakness but requires assistance. The intention in the medium term is to expand the system of protected areas and to provide increasing autonomy to the regions which includes biodiversity conservation. Recognising its responsibility for conservation oriented land use planning, the Autonomous Republic of Ajara has taken the lead role in establishing the first regional protected area in Georgia. Conscious of the ecological frailty of the area, the Regional Government is seeking to integrate socio-economic development strategies with environmental management objectives in the support zone of Mtirala supported by a strict conservation management of the core area. This presents a unique opportunity to modify planned development pathways in this region to ensure their compatibility with the objectives of biodiversity conservation and sustainable bioresource use.

11. Institutional Context: Responsibility for discharging the government's environmental policies has been vested in the Ministry of Environment (MoE). The semi-autonomous State Department of Nature Reserves, Protected Areas (PA) and Hunting Economy (DPA) is responsible for the management of the country's PA system, except for specially designated forests lands, and green belts which fall under the jurisdiction of the semi-autonomous State Department of Forest Economy (FD). The 1966 legislation which amongst other things, regulates the management of protected areas, provides the Ministry of Environment with the mandate to establish new protection units in an effort to expand the PA system.

12. The Ajara region is politically one of the oldest areas of Georgia. Bordered to the west by the Black Sea, to the south by Turkey and to the north and east by the Small Caucasus it proudly carries its status as "Autonomous Republic". It has its autonomous own Government and Supreme Council. The Ajara Republic is composed of 5 administrative districts. Its capital is Batumi. The Ajara Government actively promotes and supports regional biodiversity conservation, fully recognising the important role of protected areas. The Mtirala Wilderness Park falls under the jurisdiction of Ajara's Forestry Department which reports to the Council of Ministries of the Autonomous Ajara Republic. The legal document for the establishment of the park is based on the resolution of the Council of Ministries "On the measures to be carried out for establishing the Regional Wilderness Park "Mtirala" (i.e. No 173, 11 August 1998)". Based on this document, a Memorandum of Understanding is in the process of being finalised. Signatories will be Georgia's Ministry of Environment (MoE), the Department of Protected Areas (DPA), the FD and the Ajara Government.

BASELINE COURSE OF ACTION

13 Threats: Because the Mtirala proposed Wilderness Park is in a relatively remote location and because it includes the former Tsiskara Nature Reserve, it has been shielded from severe anthropogenic pressures. Inside the park, only few man-made alterations are found, mostly associated with traditional livestock grazing and grass cutting inside the forest belt. The core zone of the park is free of road access and human activities. Chronic energy shortages in the region, however, are directly responsible for the dangerous increase in pressure on the park and the increasing destruction of Ajara's forests in general, mostly for fuel-wood generation. This applies in particular to the predominantly rural areas in the support zone of the Mtirala Wilderness Park where many people live at subsistence level, mostly without the most rudimentary social infrastructure. This has led to encroachment on the park area, mostly for the collection of fuelwood and minor forest products (see Map 2, Annex 1). Except for the extreme eastern section of the park, the still un-marked park boundaries are highly vulnerable. Trespassing livestock and illegal grass-cutting activities in forest/shrub communities pose a threat to the ecological integrity of the fragile park ecosystems. Poaching and subsistence hunting are common practices in absence of effective control.

14. Due to the current economic hardships in Georgia, linked to the difficult transition into a market economy, there is limited enforcement of conservation regulations in the region. This is caused by funding problems, conflicting priorities, and inadequate cooperation within and between government ministries. Although there may be some conservation awareness there is a perceived lack of connection between conservation values and the village economy. Insufficient knowledge of the ecological dynamics of the area complicates the task of environmental management. There is a real danger that, without intervention to integrate conservation and development objectives, many threats to biological diversity will gradually accelerate.

15. Baseline: The baseline course of events in a business-as-usual scenario is described below for the 'bundles' of interventions deemed needed to conserve the priority forest ecosystems of the Mtirala Wilderness Park. Annex D summarises baseline expenditures and provides information on funding sources.

16. Biological assessments and Framework Conditions: The last several years have seen increasing baseline investment in environmental management aspects of natural resources and biodiversity conservation as well as in overall environmental policy development. The first step was the creation of a new Ministry of Environment (MoE). Subsequently, the Government of Georgia (GOG) through the MoE has created and adopted a progressive legislation for biodiversity conservation to be based on the expansion of the existing protected areas system (1996). With the assistance of WWF, a management plan was elaborated for the country's first National Park Borjomi Kharagauli. The National Park, its management plan and support zone was approved by the GOG in 1997. In 1998 the GOG entered an agreement with KfW to finance and implement the management plan for Borjomi Kharagauli NP (Grant of DEM 5 Mio.) with additional funding of DEM 14 Mio. for the sustainable economic development of the park's support zone development. With assistance of a GEF grant the GOG is in the process of finalising a national biodiversity strategy which recognises the importance of protected areas as the backbone of conservation efforts. Furthermore, the GOG, in co-operation with FAO and The World Bank has developed a forest sector strategy, firmly embedded into a new forest legislation which has been approved in 1998. Despite these significant increases in baseline investment, however, there

continues to be an urgent need to strengthen the planning processes and to assist in the implementation of the resulting plans.

17. With the assistance of WWF, the Autonomous Republic of Ajara (ARA) has produced a state-of-the-art management plan for the Mtirala Wilderness Park as the first protected area in Georgia which has been created and will be managed by a regional authority. The plan was developed truly participatory, involving key local stakeholders. The plan has delineated a support zone of approximately 100,000, earmarked for sustainable economic development. The Government of Ajara, however, although dedicated and committed to biodiversity conservation and the creation of regional protected areas, is unable to provide the financing for the implementation of the management plan and the sustainable economic development of Mtirala's support zone. At current, the ARA has practically no staff or field infrastructure to implement this task without outside financial assistance.

18. Sustainable financing: Aside from a small Government budget, the grants by GEF and KfW, and the continuous support by WWF, there is no source of sustainable financing for biodiversity conservation in Georgia. The funding sources listed above help support the work of the DPA and the MoE, but existing financing is tied to a limited number of on-going projects and does not adequately address the full range of needs for *in situ* conservation.

19. PA Management Capacity: Capacity to perform traditional management functions, such as threats appraisal, data gathering, surveillance, and enforcement, is weak. Currently, the DPA lacks staffing, equipment, and infrastructure of any kind. The semi-autonomous DPA of Georgia is chronically understaffed and under-budgeted and therefore unable to fulfil its most basic functions and responsibilities. Although the 1966 legislation generally strengthened its position by providing clear guidelines and mandates for an expansion of the country's PA system, the DPA remains powerless without sufficient funding. Budgets for the DPA headquarters and field offices are insufficient to cover wages of PA personnel. Wages are below subsistence level forcing PA staff into alternative work. There is practically no money to cover other operational costs. Despite the desolate situation, the majority of PA staff has maintained its dedication to the cause, hoping for an improvement in the country's economy.

20. At current, only three management plans have been finalised, the Mtirala plan being one of them. The management plan for Kolkheta national park has been financed by GEF, awaiting Cabinet approval. The management plan for Borjomi-Kharagauli national park (BKNP) has been financed by WWF; the implementation of the plan is covered by a KfW grant. There is little doubt that there is a much better chance for regions to generate sustainable financing for PAs than for the DPA. In this light the creation of the Mtirala park has to be seen. Regional commitment is a critical requisite for success. The ARA has made this commitment but needs seed money to initiate the process.

21. Sustainable Use Management: If conservation is to compete with other land uses in the long-term, the relative values of components of biological diversity will need to be enhanced. This can only be achieved through participatory management of protected areas and sustainable economic development of the support zones of PAs. This has been fully recognised for the BKNP which now serves as a model to other PAs in the country. Major emphasis in the BKNP management plan is placed on the economic development of the support zone, involving support zone communities and pilot projects which are compatible with overall biodiversity conservation objectives. Focus is placed on an aggressive job creation program and the development of projects which provide alternative sources of income to mostly

impoverished rural people. The Mtirala management plan has been modelled after this very successful scheme.

22. Conservation awareness: Stable conservation will only be achieved if key decision makers in government, the private sector, and civil society are sensitised to the conservation value of Georgia's ecosystems. Historically, Georgian people have been very much in tune with nature; nature always has contributed to the country's identity. The President's personal commitment to conservation is a reflection of the public attitude. Public awareness of conservation values is growing in Georgia. Media coverage of conservation issues is growing, with increasing coverage of the issues governing the future of protected areas, but the conservation movement is still largely hampered by widespread economic hardships..

23. Environmental education in Georgia has become an integral part of the Ministry of Education agenda. In close co-operation with WWF, the Ministry of Education has incorporated environmental education in school curricula for years. WWF has taken a lead role in environmental education in the country being involved in formal and in-formal education on all levels addressing diverse target groups. With financial assistance of the German BMZ, WWF has established ecological training centres in strategic locations in the country as basis for environmental education, awareness and advocacy programs.

24. Landscape-level Planning and Conservation: Georgia has fully embraced the very progressive concept of an ecosystem approach to landscape planning. This approach will be applied to the entire country. The focus of this relatively new concept is placed on a comprehensive protected area system with PAs under national and regional authority. This would include the entire range of PA categories from strictly protected to actively managed ecosystems, allowing for multiple land use management with optimum resource allocation as well as safeguarding ecological connectivity through a network of different sized protection units.

25. This approach has officially been introduced at a workshop in Borjomi, Georgia (i.e., October 1989) on sustainable forest management, sponsored by The World Bank/WWF Forestry Alliance. The centrepiece of the concept is an ecological gap analysis to result in an ecological sensitivity map. The latter will provide the underpinnings for sound regional land use planning. Several thematic layers of GIS maps have been produced already. The Ajara region will take a lead role in this process.

ALTERNATIVE COURSE OF ACTION

26. Project Development: WWF Georgia and the ARA have shared the project development costs. PDF activities included: 1) An assessment of social feasibility; 2) An appraisal of conservation needs; 3) An assessment of sustainable use management needs; 4) participatory stakeholder workshops; 5) participatory preparation of a management plan and operational plan for the Mtirala Wilderness Park; 6) continuing stakeholder consultations; 7) Separation of baseline and incremental costs and negotiation of cofinancing; and 8) Preparation of this proposal.

27. The goal of this project is to conserve a representative sample of the globally unique forest/shrubland ecosystems of the Small Caucasus in Georgia through effective protection management of the Regional Wilderness Park Mtirala (RWPM) using a two-pronged approach. The first immediate

objective is to operationalize conservation functions of the RWPM in order to create an effective refuge against direct threats to biota. This will be achieved through timely implementation of the management plan which has been elaborated for the park. The second immediate objective is to build a conservation overlay into the environmental management framework for the support zone of the RWPM and the ARA at large. This overlay is needed to prevent impairment of ecological structures by anthropogenic activities occurring at the landscape level.

28. The Regional Wilderness Park Mtirala is located between 41° 50' lat. east and 41° 40' long. north. Its boundaries have been identified and approved by the ARA Council of Ministries but have not been surveyed and/or demarcated to date (see attached map section). The RWPM covers an area of 16,027 has and a support zone of approximately 100,000 has. 98 % of the park is covered by pristine forest ecosystems and 1.4% of the park's area is set aside for agricultural use by the villagers of Chakvistavi (the only settlement inside the park; see map 2, Annex 1). There is consensus in Georgia's Academy of Sciences that this park will be sufficiently large in size to safeguard the ecological integrity of the globally significant ecosystems it aims to protect. According to its management plan, the RWPM has been zoned into strategic management units ranging from core areas to a traditional use zone which satisfies the demands of the Chakvistavi enclave (see Map 3, Annex 1). Of critical importance to project success is the implementation of the support zone program as proposed in the management- and operational plans.

29. “Traditional” is defined as “historic use” having taken place well before the legal creation of the park. Such use has been identified for the park enclave Chakvistavi./ The villagers have depended on parkland for centuries without visible impacts. Traditional use has been confined to limited subsistence agriculture, the collection and gathering of minor forest products and fuel-wood, grass cutting and an livestock grazing. The management plan asks for a continuation of low impact use because (a) a ban on such use would cause undue economic hardships to the economically less privileged people and would threaten their livelihood; (b)the use can be controlled effectively and stays within the limits of carrying capacity; and (c) no mutually acceptable alternatives have been found to date for re-settlement outside the park area. The Chakvistavi villagers are allowed to practice controlled cattle breeding, apiculture, and corn cultivation on designated, privately owned land inside the enclave. These activities will be strictly controlled through a well established monitoring system in order to prevent or minimise adverse impacts on native flora and fauna. Special restrictions may apply which require special assistance.

30. To secure early global benefits, conservation operations would initially focus on the protection unit. Following successful containment of threats at these sites, PA operations would be expanded to consolidate protection of the core and support zones (see Map 2 for support zone boundaries). Management needs in the support zone would be addressed under the second objective. The conservation strategy is to fully integrate support zone communities and other stakeholders into management processes. Effective integration would greatly improve the chances of stable conservation. The systemic capacities needed to operationalize participatory management are promising, although a long-term time horizon may be needed to engender a fully participatory management approach. This goal is expected to be accomplished as soon as the economic conditions in the RWPM improve and alternative sources of income for the impoverished support zone communities are established. A nine-year time frame is thus proposed for project implementation, broken into two phases. The log frame provides details of the proposed sequencing of activities between the two phases, and lists triggers, or prerequisites, to be satisfied prior to completion of phase 1 and graduation to phase 2 (see Annex E).

31. Cofinancing for the project would be provided by the GOG, the ARA and WWF. Synergies are expected from linking the project to the World Bank Forestry Sector loan activities, the on-going KFW financed implementation project of the Borjomi Kharagauli national park management plan and the GEF grant for the country's biodiversity conservation.

Immediate Objective 1: The ecological integrity of the Regional Wilderness Park Mtirala is safeguarded as a result of the implementation of the park's management plan in partnership with the stakeholders from the support zone.

Output 1: The Protection Program is implemented.

32. This program is critical for the sustainable protection of the ecological integrity of the park. Current control and enforcement activities are mostly confined to the core area (i.e., former Nature Reserve). The control and enforcement is inadequate due to lacking infrastructure and equipment. None of the park boundaries are demarcated which makes control and enforcement even more difficult. This applies in particular to more populated areas of the support zone where encroachment on the park is more common. There are several road access points into the park which currently are not controlled. It is quite evident that a major expansion in terms of staff, infrastructure and equipment is needed in order to comply with the minimum requirements for sustainable protection.

33. The current enforcement staff is insufficiently trained for the multifaceted tasks they are expected to implement in the future. Training will therefore be a critical component of the protection program. It is suggested that a minimum of 12 rangers are needed to implement the control, enforcement and other tasks specified in the different programs of the operational plan. This figure is based on time estimates required to implement specified tasks.

34. In due consideration of Georgia's difficult economic situation the proposed infrastructure for the protection program is confined to a necessary minimum (there is little sense in proposing elaborate infrastructure which later cannot be sustained due to lack of operational funds). For optimum savings and most efficient use of limited funds and staff available, an attempt is made to combine as much infrastructure measures for the different programs as feasible. This applies in particular to the protection and public use programs. Each of the 3 ranger stations which controls a park entrance is therefore combined with a small picnic area and an information booth for the benefit of park visitors (see attached map 4).

35. Since proper communication is of special importance for control and enforcement, each station is equipped with a mobile radio. Additional mobile radios are required for control inside the park. Due to the difficult terrain and poor accessibility of the park horses will be the primary mode of transport inside the park. A total of 6 rustic shelters will be constructed inside the park in order to accommodate rangers while on overnight patrols; the shelters are of special importance in winter when patrols may only be conducted on foot due to unfavourable snow conditions. The use of the shelters is confined to rangers on control duty; some of the shelters are shared with park visitors on overnight expeditions (see attached map 4).

36. There is consensus that the park represents a true wilderness area, mostly suited for

adventure/active tourism. It therefore seems prudent to confine public use activities to hiking and trekking. No opportunities are offered for vehicle based activities inside the park. All roads inside the park will therefore be permanently closed to vehicle use by the public. Vehicle use by park personnel inside the park will be confined to an absolute minimum and over time may be phased out completely. The proposed infrastructure and investment measures for the protection program are summarised in Annex B 1. They include (a) boundary demarcation, (b) permanent road closures and access control, (c), construction of ranger shelters and ranger stations and the (d) 'clean-up' activities in the park. The proposed activities and infrastructure development for the protection program are illustrated in map 4 (see Annex 1).

Output 2: The Public Use Program is implemented.

37. There are expectations that the RWPM will become an important tourist destination in the region. In an attempt to accommodate the demands of a broader spectrum of visitors, shorter and easier trail circuits will be provided in strategic locations with easy access from population centres in the support zone. Some of the trails are self-guided to make proper use of the opportunity for environmental education. With increasing visitor numbers the park will be an important tool for the environmental education and public awareness, hence complying with one of the primary objectives of the RWPM.

38. The proposed infrastructure for the public use program is concentrated on the parks' periphery in order to provide easy public access and to maintain the ecological integrity of the park (see map 5, Annex 1). Infrastructure development will be kept at a minimum because visitor demand, potential visitation rates and visitor numbers are difficult to predict at this point in time. The intention is a cautionary approach with the possibility for expansion as required. Carrying capacity problems as related to high visitor numbers, are not expected to occur in Mtirala in the near future and will therefore not be addressed at this point. To the contrary, at current it seems more important to attract visitors to the area and the ARA at large. Provisions will be made to achieve this objective, enhanced through the planned visitor centres at Chakvistavi and the planned environmental education centre in Batumi. The proposed development for the "public use program" is described in Annex B 2.

Output 3: The Research and Monitoring Program is implemented.

39 This program specifies pertinent research and environmental monitoring as related to the management of the planning region. It specifies the implementing agencies and co-operative agreements. Through this program baseline information for an effective management of the RWPM and the sustainable conservation of its ecosystems is obtained. It is understood that research is not a function of RWPM staff. Research inside a PA should be carried out by universities and institutes which are properly equipped to do this work. The park will only provide assistance and logistic support as required and feasible. The RWPM staff will identify the baseline data needed for the management of the RWPM and, subsequently, prepare and sign contracts with the implementing institutions. Priority will given to applied research with practical management application. The research program would include rapid biological appraisals across the landscape of the RWPM and its support zone, to map constituent alpha and beta diversity and assess the applied management needs of ecosystems.

40. In contrast, most of the monitoring activities identified as prerequisites for sound management, will be the responsibility of RWP personnel. Sophisticated monitoring may require assistance of properly equipped and specialised institutes. MoUs which identify co-operation, have to be prepared accordingly. All RWPM management programs will take part in the monitoring program. Important monitoring

activities will focus on the traditional use zone, special management zone and the public use program. The monitoring data would be added to the existing GIS, providing maps for management planning and monitoring.

41. The project would also include in-depth baseline social assessments in the park enclave, support zone communities and hamlets, adding precision to appraisals orchestrated during project development. The proposed assessments would include social mapping; human capital appraisal and training needs assessments; resource mapping, using participatory resource appraisal tools; and conflict-risk assessment. The assessments would be used to design community-specific approaches to social organisation and capacity development and incentives to establish a participatory framework.

42. Regular monitoring and evaluation of social and biological processes and impacts would be conducted to provide a scientific and empirical basis for adaptive conservation management. Field monitoring would be conducted biennially, with social assessments undertaken periodically. In-depth impact monitoring would be conducted in year 5 and prior to project termination. To supplement formal scientific assessments, local biological and social monitoring capacities would be built by training park rangers and management personnel in field monitoring and data recording methods. The results of monitoring would be presented to stakeholders, including all participating local communities, and their evaluation of results would provide a basis for management decision making. Essential infrastructure needs for the research and monitoring program will be confined to two meteorological stations, to be located at Mount Patara Mtirala and in the village of Chakvistavi

43. There may be some need for long-term research to understand the biological dynamics of the park and support zone and for effective adaptive management. While the project would not finance research per se, it would encourage applied research by framing a Research Plan that articulates management-oriented research priorities, as well as encourage funding bodies (domestically and internationally) to sponsor research. The park management personnel would work with WWF and others to expedite approval of research.

Output 4: The Environmental Education Program is implemented.

44 The environmental education and public use programs are closely linked with each other. Together with the research and monitoring program they produce the information materials for park visitors and the environmental education in the support zone. Major information materials produced annually or periodically are: (a) a well illustrated park brochure (every third year or as required); (b) information bulletins and fact sheets on park ecosystems, flora and fauna (twice annually); and (c) posters, calendars, etc. The promotion of the park requires involvement of park personnel in social events in the support zone.

45. The project would support a sustained media campaign to impart awareness of the conservation program and the values of biodiversity and to inform the public of threats to park. The campaign would be orchestrated at several levels. A media unit would be established, spearheaded by the co-ordinator of the environmental education program, to prepare press releases to the print media and develop radio messages dealing with conservation-linked themes. Second, a newsletter would be prepared to showcase activities related to the park and support zone for dissemination within the region and to international constituencies via the Internet. Third, the planned visitor centres would be used to provide training and workshops, and to display interpretation materials to raise awareness of conservation values and needs. Fourth, targeted awareness raising workshops would be convened with different stakeholding constituencies, including public leaders, teachers, management personnel of private industry; environmental technicians from the public sector; municipal- and land use planners and local non-government organisations. Advocacy operations would seek to raise the profile of the project amongst political leaders. The efficacy of the campaign would be monitored by conducting structured interviews

with stakeholders, and the content and strategy of the campaign would be adapted over time. Cofinancing for this component would be provided by the Georgia's Ministries of Environment and Education and WWF Georgia (in kind support extended by the media, private sector/ NGOs is not costed).

Output 5: Adaptive and participatory management are operationalized

46. This output would be achieved mostly through the implementation of the “administration program” as outlined in the management plan for the RWPM. This program includes: (a) infrastructure development and equipment purchase for the administration; (b) establishment of an efficient administrative structure; and (c) recruitment and training of personnel for the park.

47. Infrastructure development of for the RWPM administration covers purchase and upgrading of a suitable building in the settlement of Makhinjauri which is strategically located regarding park access. The administrative headquarters will accommodate 5 offices, one archive, a guest quarter for VIP visits, one conference room and small visitor reception area. A backup UPS power supply system will be installed and a mobile radio base station which enables vital communication links with ranger stations and patrols. The administrative structure, personnel requirements and staff functions and responsibilities are described in Annex B 2 c.

48. Furthermore, the successful implementation of the support zone program (see following chapters) will be of critical importance to achieving this output.

Immediate Objective 2: The sustainable economic development of the support zone is safeguarded

Output 6 Implementation of the support zone program.

49. The focus of the support zone program is sustainable economic development compatible with the overall conservation objectives for the RWPM. The project would include financing for activities designed to remove barriers to ecologically and economically sustainable uses of bioresources in order to (a) promote conservation compatible land uses in the support zone by enhancing the relative value of wild resources, and (b) identify economic alternatives for support zone communities and enclave population for foregoing access to core areas. Identified focal areas of the proposed intervention in the support zone of the RWPM are: (a) development of a regional land use plan; (b) sustainable forest management including forest restitution and the establishment of a model community forest); (c) development of the tourism sector; (d) development of traditional cottage industry (i.e. handicraft and traditional agricultural crops; cultivated medicinal plants); and (e) the development of alternative energy sources. The guiding principle is that economic support zone development will be compatible with overall biodiversity conservation objectives.

Output 7: A Regional Land Use Plan has been elaborated

50. The project would finance the implementation of a regional ecological gap analysis which will identify ecologically sensitive areas with special protection needs in the support zone of the RWPM. Identified areas will then be gazetted, their status legalized and be incorporated into the regional network of protected areas. This is of critical importance to prevent biodiversity fragmentation by providing ecological stepstones, hence safeguarding ecological connectivity. This exercise will result in a digitized ecological sensitivity map to serve as base map for ecologically oriented land use planning in the support zone and the on-going development of the regional land use plan.

Output 8: Capacity development for the support zone communities has progressed

51. Capacity development would be mediated by fielding social outreach teams, based on the experience from Brjomi Kharagauli national park. The teams would build capacity iteratively, based on the specific needs of target groups. Activities would: (a) impart awareness of conservation values, focusing on customary resources uses; (b) build a common understanding of the determinants of threats to biodiversity; (c) work with each community to identify locally appropriate strategies to strengthen management controls; (d) provide training and other support, as appropriate to strengthen decision making processes; (e) provide training in conflict resolution, to enable communities and governmental organisations to settle disputes; (f) provide training to enable designated community members to participate in PA planning and management, including in surveillance, reporting, and enforcement operations; and (g) give voice to community concerns and seek to strengthen social relations between community leaders and other stakeholders involved in management. Capacity support would be interwoven with activities spearheaded under other Outputs. A Multi-Stakeholder Reserve Management Board would provide a vehicle for facilitating co-operation between stakeholding groups and for managing conflicts, should they arise.

52. Capacity would systematically be built within Government agencies and community groups to jointly effect participatory land use planning of the support zone, regulation establishment and planning and ensure meaningful public involvement. Park boundaries and regulations would be clarified with the public by convening a series of public consultations. The Management Plan for the RMWP would be endorsed by the ARA and necessary legislative approvals obtained to revise land use classifications and execute proposed management strategies. Open access dilemmas would be addressed by according specific legal rights to local residents for consumptive and productive harvests of wild resources within designated areas and adapted as new conservation operations are implemented and scientific assessments performed. New capacities within ARA would enable annual operational plans to be framed to guide short-term work programs and fine tune field operations to improve performance.

Output 9: Sustainable forest management is being practiced

53. As a first step, the forests of the support zone would be re-classified by using a landscape approach to ecosystem classification. The forest would then be divided into management units. For each unit a management plan would be developed with stakeholder participation, addressing the widely recognized multiple use concept of forests in Georgia. Forest restitution will be a critical element in the process of sustainable forest management for the RWPM. The project will finance the development of a community forest to be modelled after the concept of the pilot project to be implemented in the support zone of the BKNP.

54. Synergy effects will be achieved through links with (a) the World Bank forestry sector loan to Georgia in support of sustainable forest management; (b) support by WWF to the forestry sector in the support zone of the RWPM based on activities initiated through the World Bank/WWF Forestry Alliance; and (c) through linking the project to pilot projects implemented in the "laboratory" zone specified for the forestry sector loan. Georgia's new forestry legislation and forest development strategy (i.e., financed by FAO and finalized in 1998) provide a sound basis for the successful implementation of a sustainable forest management in the ARA.

55. Re-vitalization of a wood based cottage industry in the support zone of the RWPM and the development of pilot projects for value added forest products will become an important part of the

forest sector development. This also will include cooperation agreements with international partners interested in certified wood products (i.e., cooperation with the Forest Stewardship Council), an important aspect in the proposed marketing strategy.

Output 10: Nature based tourism contributes to local economy

56. The project would provide funding for: (a) Feasibility assessment and subsequent development of a Regional Tourism Management Plan for the park and support zone, with input from local communities and the industry, that defines the role of the communities, the park, measures to mitigate ecological impacts and cultural externalities, the zoning regime, fair pricing standards based on willingness to pay, and measures for reinvesting profits from tourism in conservation management; (b) Development of interpretation facilities to educate tourists on local ecology and culture; and (c) Institution of the proposed pricing regime. A review of the impact and feasibility of allowing sports hunting and fishing in concession areas would be performed. Co-financing would be provided by WWF, and the MoE and the DPA, and tour operators for tourism promotion, improving the tourism product by expanding services, and training tourist guides.

Output 11: Community-based sustainable use management models are piloted and replicated

57. Prior to replication, the status of target populations and ecosystems would be determined; the market for the commodities would be evaluated; sustainable harvest limits established; scientific oversight sought; management plans prepared; institutional arrangements to regulate use and open access strengthened; and environmental education imparted to pilot communities. The program would be effected in accordance with the principles of the Man and Biosphere program and, where pertinent, CITES rules. The project would also formalise use rights for the enclave of the RWPM and selected support zone communities to enable them to harvest wild resources in designated areas. The aim is to galvanise adaptive community-based management of wild resources.

Output 12: Alternative energy sources are piloted and utilised

58. Due to the chronic energy shortage in Georgia, rural people depend predominately on fuelwood as principle energy source. This has placed a heavy burden on local forests, in particular the former cooperative forests, which are generally heavily degraded as a result of over-utilization and livestock grazing. Although most of the local fuelwood supply in the support zone of the RWPM could be provided from local State forests, this is currently not possible due to management deficiencies. The project (i.e., output 8) would assist in capacity building and strengthening of the forestry sector in order to cover the local demand on fuelwood without jeopardizing the ecological integrity of the forest ecosystems.

59. The project would finance a feasibility assessment in the hydro-energy sector, in particular, the local potential for the establishment of micro-hydro-powerplants. The park area protects watersheds of locally important streams and rivers with potential for the establishment of micro-turbines in the support zone of the park. This applies in particular to the south-east section of the park area, located in the small caucasus. Local production of hydro-power could assist in long-term sustainable financing of the operational cost for the RWPM.

Output 13: Long-term financing mechanisms for conservation are tested and in place

60. The ARA would be responsible for absorbing the recurrent costs of park management following project termination. To enhance the long-term predictability of budgetary appropriations, and as a means

of insuring against risk, the project would strengthen budget negotiation capacities, and test, and introduce viable alternative conservation financing vehicles. First, the project would finance an economic evaluation of conservation values of the park and support zone that would generate qualitative and quantitative information that may be used by the park when negotiating budgets. Second, the project would sponsor technical assistance to develop new fiscal tools for funding, including concession fees for tourism ventures and a conservation levy on resource extraction (i.e., potable water, forest, wildlife utilisation etc.), and mechanisms to compensate for the external costs of development in ecologically sensitive areas (i.e., mitigation banking). This could provide a means of securing predictable funding for priority conservation activities from forestry and agricultural ventures operating outside the park. The various options would be investigated during phase 1, with funding provided for feasibility assessments, and concrete recommendations would be provided and agreed upon prior to commencement of the second phase. Further assistance would then be extended to operationalise the instruments -and monitor their application. Finally, training in fundraising methods would be provided to local NGOs and community-based organisations, enabling them to better access domestic and international sources of funding for biodiversity preservation. The ARA and GOG would finance this component in phase 2.

Output 14: Environmental management frameworks are adapted to accommodate conservation needs 61. The project would finance surveys to map critical natural habitats in the support zone of the RWPM (see outputs 7 and 8). Cofinancing would be secured from WWF, the Forestry Department and the MoE. A multi-attribute data base of the environmental and geological characteristics of the area will be established, and integrated analysis work supported so as to develop a better understanding of the ecological structure and dynamics of the region and the potential impact of anthropogenic disturbance of active physical processes. The information would be combined to develop a geo-environmental characterisation model and atlas of these active processes as a tool for development planning and environmental management.

62. Project associates and GOG would finance the development of training materials so that these tools can be used by regional planners. The project would provide funding to strengthen EIA procedures and environmental management requirements in areas defined (following scientific assessments) as “ecologically sensitive,” including the immediate watersheds of distributaries flowing through the core of the RWPM. A landscape level system action plan would be prepared for these areas, following consultation with national, regional, community, and private sector stakeholders. Decision-makers would be sensitised to the tradeoffs between conservation and development objectives, mitigation options (based on good science), and technologies available to resolve conservation issues. Finally, a regional technical forum would be convened to integrate development planning with conservation strategies and programmes. Membership of the forum would include ARA, MoE, the DPA, the Academy of Sciences, WWF Georgia and other relevant regional stakeholders to co-ordinate efforts to add a biodiversity management overlay to regional development.

63. End of Project Situation: Conservation management would be operationalized within the RWPM and support zone in accordance with national park management principles. Local communities would participate in the management of the park. Attitudes of local people towards the park would have shifted, with recognition that conservation favours their interests and cultural values. Ecotourism concessions would be generating new sources of revenue for biodiversity conservation. An environmentally friendly cottage industry and harvest of forests and minor forest products would be more tightly regulated, with better enforcement. Local communities would have a greater capacity to plan and execute management

programs to ensure the sustainability of their traditional lifestyles and would be accessing scientific expertise. Open access problems would have been addressed by clarifying use rights. Systemic capacities to integrate conservation and development objectives in the support zone of the RWPM would have been developed. This would be evidenced by a better understanding of the ecological dynamics of the regional ecosystems and of the prerequisites of management needed to protect biodiversity and application of that knowledge in environmental management programs. Collectively, the aforementioned outcomes would be reflected in the maintenance of the area's global conservation values, authenticated by an assessment of the status of threatened ecosystems and species.

64. **Project Beneficiaries:** The biological diversity of the ARA accords a range of benefits at the global and national levels—with associated direct use, indirect use, option, and existence values. The global community would benefit from the protection of important wilderness areas, habitats, and species, unique to Georgia and the world, that would otherwise be extinguished. At the national and local levels, the project would maintain the option to use biological diversity for consumptive and productive purposes. Local communities would benefit materially as ecotourism and other conservation compatible sectors are developed and from interventions that enhance the ecological sustainability of their traditional lifestyles. Other beneficiaries include government personnel and local NGOs who would benefit from additional training and experience.

65. **Eligibility under CBD:** The proposal is consistent with the precautionary principle embodied in the Convention on Biological Diversity. OP#3 stresses the need to protect Forest Ecosystems. Specifically, the project's focus on protected area management explicitly furthers the goals of Articles 6 and 8 of the Convention which deal with General Measures for Conservation and Sustainable Use and In Situ Conservation respectively. By integrating conservation objectives into cross-sectoral plans and programmes at local (Outputs 1-5) and regional levels (Outputs 6-14), the project would fulfil the requirements of Article 6 of the CBD, General Measures for Conservation and Sustainable Use. Operationalisation of conservation in the RWPM would fulfil Article 8, In Situ Conservation. Outputs 3 and 6 would identify and monitor the status of components of biodiversity (Article 7, Identification and Monitoring). Outputs 1, 6 and 8 would build the management capacity of conservation resource managers by providing training (Article 12). Output 4 would impart conservation awareness to stakeholders (Article 13) and facilitate information exchange (Article 17). Finally, Outputs 7, 8, 9, 10 and 11 would advance sustainable use management objectives for bioresources (Art. 10).

66. **Eligibility for UNDP Financing:** The project is eligible for UNDP assistance under Operational Programme Number 4, Conservation of Forest Ecosystems, meeting the eligibility criteria by: 1) Safeguarding sizeable global conservation benefits; 2) Being nested firmly within the nation's biodiversity conservation strategy; 3) Financing the agreed incremental costs of measures to secure global benefits; 4) Providing for institutional and financial sustainability; 5) Following guidance regarding public participation; and 6) Including a strong monitoring and evaluation component that would document and disseminate lessons learned during the course of activity implementation. Georgia is also eligible for GEF funding support under paragraph ??? of the GEF Instrument.

67. **Linkages with GEF Initiative:** A World-Bank-GEF initiative is currently being executed by the Ministry of Environment of Georgia. The project includes the development of a biodiversity conservation strategy for Georgia, the establishment of a protected area network, capacity building in the areas of environmental monitoring, impact assessments and planning. The two initiatives are highly

complementary, the existing GEF project focusing on the national level, the proposed project on the regional level. The two projects would share lessons learned during the course of implementation.

68. **Implementation and Execution Arrangements:** The project would be executed by the Autonomous Republic of Ajara in co-operation with WWF Georgia, under tight systems of accountability administered by UNDP- Georgia. Environmental education and capacity building in the support zone (Outputs 3,4,and 8) will be co-ordinated by WWF Georgia with participation of the Ministries of Environment and Education, the Academy of Sciences and Universities, based on their expertise. A regional Project Steering Committee (PSC) consisting of representatives from ARA, DPA, RWPM, WWF, other local NGOs, the Ministry of Agriculture, and Environment, the Department of Forestry and support zone communities would oversee project operations and ensure strong inter-agency co-ordination of both baseline and incremental activities. The Project would be managed by the Management Unit of the RWPM and by contracted parties following tender, with final selection based on the technical capacities, experience, reputation, and competitiveness of bidders. The Management Unit would be responsible for work programming and monitoring, certifying expenditures, and preparing Terms of Reference for consultants and tender documents for subcontracts. UNDP would maintain the project accounts. Financial transactions would be subject to annual audits by a recognised auditor.

69. **Stakeholder Participation:** The project strategy departs from the traditional way of managing Georgia's conservation estate by seeking to enlist local communities as conservation partners. Extensive efforts have been made to identify and involve all major stakeholders during the process of project development. Aside from national and State government authorities, stakeholders include support zone communities, the enclave, the private sector and NGOs. These groups have been consulted in different ways and at different times. Numerous workshops and meetings have been organised with stakeholders under the leadership of WWF for the preparation of the management plan for the RWPM. The local communities and other stakeholders have expressed considerable support for the project. Extensive contacts have been made with the private sector with the objective of building a public-private partnership. The consultations and planning partnerships have provided an opportunity for stakeholders to guide project design.

70. The project would consciously seek to incorporate the support zone communities into the management of the RWPM and support zone. Project activities would seek to build individual and institutional capacities with the ARA and community-based groups to engage in collaborative management activities, including participatory planning, management, oversight, and enforcement. Local community representatives would be represented on the RWPM's Management Board and would receive first preference in recruitment for ranger and other approved PA positions. Following training needs assessment, relevant and priority training programs would be designed and executed (Outputs 1 and 6). Besides focusing on the more traditional conservation functions, training would seek to boost conflict mediation skills, and empower interest groups to participate in decision-making fora. Social mobilisation activities would seek to construct conservation alliances between community groups, providing a powerful tool for influencing public opinion and building awareness. The sustainable use demonstrations would be designed to maximise wider application by using a contact specialist approach, involving designated community members as demonstrators and educators. The efficacy of these measures would be subject to regular evaluation, and lessons documented.

Financial Arrangements

71. Cost-effectiveness: The future costs of restoring the forest ecosystems in the Autonomous Republic of Ajara, should they be further degraded, would be very costly, particularly given the sensitivity of these ecosystems to disturbances. The loss of biodiversity induced by forest destruction, overgrazing of sub-alpine meadows and land alienation would likely be irreversible. A precautionary approach to conservation is cost-efficient.

72. Incremental Costs: Total project costs are US\$ 7,039,531; the incremental costs to be financed by UNDP amount to US\$ 1,000,000 and co-financing to US\$5,919,531. UNDP investments represent approximately 20 % increment to Georgia's own commitments to the project. UNDP recognises that extractive resource industries must be made responsible for the quality of their environmental stewardship. UNDP funds would not be used to clean up environmental damages wrought by the private sector and would not be a substitute for baseline environmental management.

SUMMARY BUDGET (ANNEX C refers)

Project Outputs	Phase 1 (US\$)		Phase 2 (US\$)		TOTAL
	UNDP	Cofinancing	UNDP	Cofinancing	
Output 1: The Protection Program is implemented		Total: GOG: Public:		Total: GOG: ARA: MoE:	
Output 2: The Public Use Program is implemented		Total: GOG: NGO:		Total: GOG: Other:	
Output 3: The Research and Monitoring Program is implemented		Total: GOG: Instit.:		Total: GOG: Other:	
Output 4: The Environmental Education Program is implemented		Total: GOG: NGO:	0	Total: GOG: Other:	
Output 5: Adaptive and participatory management are operationalized		Total: GOG: Other.:	0	Total: ARA: Other:	
Output 6: Implementation of the support zone program (cost included in following outputs).					
Output 7: A Regional Land Use Plan has been elaborated		Total: GOG: Other:		Total: ARA: Other:	
Output 8: Capacity development for the support zone communities has progressed (cost included in other outputs)					
Output 9: Sustainable forest management: Model Forest and community forest		Total: GOG: WB: Other.:		Total: ARA: DPF: WB:	
Output 10: Nature based tourism		Total: Private Sector		Total: Private Sector	
Output 11: Community-based sustainable use management models are piloted and replicated		Total: GOG: Comm.: Other:		Total: Private Sector and NGOs (except hydro-energy)	

Project Outputs	Phase 1 (US\$)		Phase 2 (US\$)		TOTAL
Output 12: Alternative energy sources are piloted and utilised (cost included in "pilot projects")					
Output 13: Long-term financing mechanisms for conservation are tested and in place (included in other outputs)					
Output 14: Environmental management frameworks are adapted to accommodate conservation needs (included in other outputs)					
Contracts					
Project management Fees					
Total Full Project					
GRAND TOTAL (PHASE 1 + PHASE 2)					

SUSTAINABILITY OF PROJECT RESULTS:

73. Project Risks: The previously described root causes of threats to biodiversity in the project area have guided the design of project interventions. Project planners have carefully weighed the likelihood of these fundamentals changing over the course of implementation and assessed the impact on outcomes. The proposed adaptive management strategy is to mitigate the risk of such impacts. It should be emphasised, however, that as long as the economic crisis in Georgia is not resolved, the root threats will persist. The project also promotes activities designed to generate economic benefits for the region and provide incentives to maintain a development strategy with a strong conservation focus. Georgia and ARA have clearly demonstrated its willingness to pursue conservation and development in tandem and further capacity building efforts sponsored by the project would help strengthen conservation activities. Risks associated with inadequate absorptive capacities for conservation implementation would be addressed through capacity building activities and operationalisation of an approach that scales up interventions in line with capacity development. The Autonomous Republic of Ajara and the project management unit make provision for regular independent auditing of finances and associated financial management support in order to ensure full accountability and transparency in all operations.

Risk	Rating	Abatement Measure
National Government unwilling to devolve management responsibility to the Autonomous Region of Ajara	[M]	Government officials support the project strategy and conflict resolution services will be supplied over the course of implementation; management incapacity of the DPA warrants a gradual decentralisation of functions as capacities are formed
Mismatched programming of project and baseline activities	[L]	Strong management can reduce this risk; The PSC would play a pivotal role in assuring joint programming of the

Risk	Rating	Abatement Measure
		project and baseline
Conflict of interest between stakeholders	[M]	Stakeholder meetings; conflict resolution training; encourage open communication of project objectives and stakeholder interests/needs
Insufficient incentives for sustainable use of bioresources	[M –L]	The project would focus sustainable use interventions on industries where economic returns appear promising. Demonstrations would focus on economic and ecological determinants of sustainability. This risk would lessen over time as barriers to management are removed
Political cycles – changes in administration shift priorities and level of support for project	[L]	Five-year phasing follows political cycles; a strong emphasis would be placed on achieving political neutrality and maintaining lines of communication with all political groups, particularly locally

Rating L=Low; M=Medium; H=High

74 Sustainability: Institutional sustainability would be assured through capacity building of RWPM and ARA personnel), community leaders and other selected target groups (Outputs 1, 4 5, and 8) and by strengthening the capacity of communities to engage in conservation management (Outputs 5 and 6). Over the longer-term, new conservation partnerships between government authorities, NGOs, the private sector, and communities would increase conservation awareness and serve to create a conservation constituency vital to sustainability. Provisions for engendering financial sustainability are made under Outputs 6 and 12 and include strengthening the RWPM's budget negotiation capacities.

MONITORING, EVALUATION, AND LESSONS LEARNED

75. Monitoring and Evaluation will involve several components. The first is a learning system that will ensure that key RWPM staff, WWF and UNDP counterparts meet annually during the first five years of operation to review the RWPM's infrastructure development, operations and field implementation and assess whether new priorities require a shift in the types of interventions receiving funding. The second component will involve data collection and assessment of field implementation by the RWPM management personnel, who will report to the PSC. The third component will comprise external evaluations conducted by independent consultants. Three independent external evaluations are scheduled, one in year 3, one in year 5, and one following project termination in year 9. These would provide an independent perspective of project performance, comparing implementation outcomes against the predetermined success indicators set out in the log frame, and assessing lessons. The second evaluation would assess whether the triggers for graduation to phase 2 have been satisfied. The fourth component will involve ongoing monitoring and evaluation conducted by UNDP, to assess the progress of implementation. The Logical Framework sets out a range of impact/implementation indicators that will be used to gauge impact. Baselines for biological monitoring will be concretised following the establishment of the corresponding management program (Outputs 1, 3 and 6). Indicators for sustainable use demonstrations would include number of visitors to the park and support zone; gate fees; and the successful establishment of harvesting wild resources programs. Forest use and grazing regimes would also be monitored as a means of determining management priorities for enforcement operations (in space and time). Surveys would also chronicle the social and economic impacts of project interventions and

appraise social relations and conflicts between different stakeholders and stakeholder perceptions of the project's impact.

76. The results of monitoring operations would be presented to the PSC to inform decision making in the park (i.e., ensure that management shadows both ecological and social trends), and to ARA to guide decision making pertaining to environmental management of the landscape. In addition, Participatory Evaluation Exercises would be undertaken annually with local community and NGO representatives. Activity Progress Reports would be submitted to UNDP prior to each meeting of the Project Steering Committee. Quarterly progress reports would also be submitted to UNDP and would be reviewed against work plans prior to authorisation of subsequent fund disbursements.

77. The lessons learned from similar integrated conservation and development initiatives have been incorporated into design. The KfW sponsored Borjomi Kharagauli National Park project is the most relevant and served as model for the RWPM management plan and this financing proposal. Lessons learned from the BKNP model are summarised as follows.

Lessons Learned	Design Feature
Need to ensure that all primary stakeholders understand project objectives and their role in activity implementation and have realistic expectations of outcomes	Addressed during design; lesson would be addressed through on-going community liaison activities; stakeholder roles would be periodically re-assessed as capacity develops
Generate conservation-based economic benefits for local populations; incentives for conservation must be sustainable and economically attractive	Sustainable use (Outputs 8-12) pilot projects; awareness activities would impart knowledge of the economic values of natural ecosystems (Outputs 2,4 and 8)
Work with successful programs already in the area— build on successes and involve associates in training, planning, implementing, monitoring, and evaluation activities	Partnerships established with existing institutions active in the region, including WWF and University of Tbilisi and Academy of Sciences) and the private sector ; strong interest has been indicated in the project. Initial pilot areas include communities motivated during project preparation phase
Sustainable use can only occur with close monitoring of the resources under exploitation. Activities should be structured as to be adaptable to changing conditions; barrier removal is complex, and it is advisable to start small and scale upwards as lessons are learned	Train locals in monitoring and adaptive management activities; conduct iterative lessons learned analyses and make changes to programs if needed; initiate a few sustainable use pilot activities that can then be used as models to inform decision making and encourage replication

List of Annexes

Annex A: Map Section

Annex B: Infrastructure Development and Activities to be financed by the UNDP grant

Annex C: Budget for the Implementation of the Management Plan RWPM and
Operational Cost for the Management of the RWPM during and on completion of the intervention

Annex D: Incremental Cost

Annex E: Logical Framework Matrix

Annex F: Root Causes and Management Issues

Annex A Maps

Annex B Infrastructure Development and Activities to be financed by the UNDP grant

1 Proposed Infrastructure Development for the Protection Program

- a **Boundary demarcation.** The demarcation of the RWPM boundaries is urgently needed to avoid growing land tenure conflicts and to facilitate control and enforcement. Current pressures on the RWPM originates mostly from support zone communities in the Keda, Khelvachauri and Kobuleti districts (see map.4, Annex 1). Although the current state law prohibits privatization of lands bordering the park, land has been sold illegally throughout these areas causing encroachment on designated park land. Boundary demarcation will be kept simple, confined to survey posts and signs in strategic locations.gazetted locally. The total length of the park boundary is 100 km. Its demarcation will be spread over a two years period. During the first year, boundary the high risk boundary sections will be completed. In the second year, the more inaccessible boundary sections will be demarcated, requiring less signs and survey pillars due to inaccessibility. Park Rangers will be used for the demarcation work, supplemented by contract laborers from the support zone.
- b **Road closures and access control** As has been mentioned before, the RWPM is classified as a typical wilderness park with little suitability for vehicle based tourism activities. Park control will therefore be implemented on foot and/or using horses. Except for rustic ranger and tourist shelters, no other structures are planned for the RWPM. This implies that all road access to the park will be terminated as soon as the planned construction and ‘clean-up’ activities are completed. As a first measure, all roads inside the park will be closed to public vehicular traffic. Some roads will be incorporated into the public use program but only to be accessed by foot. Until completion of the planned clean-up activities of the park area (removal of old structures and accumulated garbage) all road access will be destroyed (i.e., 8 access points), except for the three points of park entry which will require a barrier. Abandoned roads will be , without intervention unless required to prevent ecological degradation.
- c **Construction of ranger stations.** The proposed 3 ranger stations (Chakvistavi, Khorolistavi, Makhuntseti) will be located in the vicinities of the park entrance gates (see map 4, Annex A). The stations will protect and control the access to the RWPM. The stations will be equipped for four rangers. The floor space of each station will be approximately 100 m² (i.e., two bedrooms, kitchen, office, and bathroom). Two rangers would be on duty at a time at each station.
- d **Construction of rangers shelters.** Six rustic ranger shelters will be constructed at following locations: Mount Melistsikhe (750 m a.s.l.), Mount. Kuchugula (1300 m), Mount Orbeza (1400 m), Mount Agaristavi (1100 m), Mount Kharkhani (1300m) and Mount Kavkveti (900 m). The single room shelters will be equipped with basic furniture and a wood-burning stove. Each shelter will have an outhouse and an outside water source.
- e **Removal of structures and park clean-up.** Related activities are self-explained. The program covers the removal of several unsightly structures inside the RWPM. This includes fences, buildings etc., but also the clean up of garbage. This will be done by the RWPM rangers to be assisted by contract labour. The garbage will be disposed off at designated dump sites outside the RWPM.

2. Proposed Infrastructure for the Public Use Program.

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a Entrance gates and trails. Three entrance gates are planned for the RWPM: two with access from the West (Chakvistavi and Khorolistavi) and one from the South (Makhuntseti). The proposed infrastructure development is illustrated on Map 4, Annex 1).

i) Access point Chakvistavi. At this entrance gate, which also accommodates a ranger station, a small picnic area with parking and sanitary facilities will be established, to be serviced from the same station. At the entry gate an information board will provide details on the location and the trail system of the park. General information materials on the park will be available at the information booth incorporated into the ranger station. The road from the park entrance to Chakvistavi will be upgraded (i.e., 8 km). Two major trail circuits start from this point of entry: (a) the 14 km trail (400-1400 m.) from village Chakvistavi to Mount Bezoni and return, leading to the gorge of the Chakvistavi river; and (b) the 30 km circuit (400-1350 m) traversing Mount Korkha, Patara Mtirala and Didi Mtirala. This trail requires overnight stays at the Didi Mtirala tourist shelter.

ii) Access point Korolistavi. This access point will have the same basic tourist facilities as described for Chakvistavi. It is the starting point of two trails: (a) The first trail is 19 km in length (300-1300 m), leading to Mount Khorolistavi, Mount Patara Mtirala and Mount Korkha. This trail offers overnight facilities at the Patara Mtirala. (b) The second trail is 26 km long (300-1350 m) and leads from Khorolistavi to Mount Patara Mtirala, traversing Didi Mtirala and terminating at the village of Makhuntseti. This trail requires two days and offers overnight opportunity at the Patara Mtirala tourist shelter.

iii) Access point Makhuntseti. This access point has the same basic tourist facilities as Chakvistavi. From this gate a 17 km long trail leads to Mount Didi Mtirala, Mount Korkha and Mount Chakvistavi. The trail has an altitudinal range of 1000 m. Along the trail overnight facilities are offered at the Didi Mtirala tourist shelter.

b Tourist shelters. The three tourist shelters at Mount Didi Mtirala, Mtirala and Bezoni are designed to accommodate 10 visitors each. They will be rustic and equipped with basic furniture only. To keep maintenance costs at a minimum, the shelters will be “self-maintained” (i.e., visitors cleaning the premises after use and taking their garbage back out of the park).

c Visitor centers. The main visitor center will be located at the village Chakvistavi. It will be a rustic wooden building, composed of a visitor reception area with an information booth and a large display hall with permanent exhibits explaining the ecology of the RWPM. Audio-visual facilities will be available for group information/education. This facility will also be used for training and environmental education events for other park management programs.

3. Administration Program

a Organisational structure and personnel requirements

Figure 1 shows the proposed organizational structure for the RWPM administration. The RWPM would be headed by a Park Director, supported by the coordinators of the management programs (a) protection, (b) public use, (c) research and monitoring and (d) environmental education. The program co-ordinators report to the park director. The co-ordinator for the protection program will be responsible for the 3 senior- and 9 junior rangers. The co-ordinators of the public use program will have one assistant

who also will share responsibilities for other management programs. Program co-ordinators will jointly be responsible for liaison work in the support zone, unless a full time co-ordinator for the support zone program is required. There will be one administrator to be assisted by a bookkeeper and a 'cashier'.

Figure 1 Proposed organisational structure of the Park administration

Insert organizational chart from management plan here

The RWPM director will be advised by a coordination council. This should be composed of stakeholders and community representatives from the support zone, resource agencies and a park representative (i.e., the Director or delegated representative). The council's principle function will be to evaluate and approve the park's sector-specific annual work plans and budgets and to deal with general and contentious issues regarding the support zone and the park at large. The council should convene twice annually and should be on call to solve issues of urgency. The chairman should be elected by council members for a 2 year period. Details on representation, functions and organization of the council still have to be elaborated and formalized.

b Staff functions and responsibilities

The position titles in the following chapter are chosen arbitrarily. Titles have to conform to service structure standards set by the Georgian Government. Detailed job descriptions and skill requirements have to be elaborated for each position. If no suitable candidates can be located for a position, provisions for training and skill development have to be made accordingly. The management plan indicates the need for a minimum of 25 permanent employees in order to safeguard the ecological integrity of the park. Sustainable protection may only be achieved through motivated and properly trained personnel. Both requirements are currently lacking. Motivation will be achieved through opportunities for career advancement, training and attractive wages. Staff wages will be increased by 50 % over official rates. Functions and responsibilities of senior staff may be described as follows:

- i) Park Director. The principle functions and responsibilities are: to represent the park on all park and park/support zone related matters; to assume overall responsibility for park staff and management; to prepare and present consolidated annual budgets and work plans to the Co-ordination Council and to generally lobby park matters. Requirements: an academic degree, preferably in a resource management related field, sound experience in management of people and administration, skills in dealing with the public and proven leadership qualities. Minimum of 8 years professional experience.
- ii) Assistant Director. The functions are in principle the same as specified for the park director; in addition, the assistant director will assume responsibilities for the protection program (i.e., co-ordinator). Requirements: an academic degree in a resource management related field and basic management experience. Minimum of 4 years professional experience.
- iii) Administrator. The administrator will be responsible for all aspects of office administration (headquarters and ranger stations), the preparation of job descriptions and contracts, preparation of annual budgets for office operations, payroll, the maintenance of office records and archives and the purchase of equipment and supplies for all management programs. Requirements: academic degree or equivalent experience in office and public service administration, financial management, archiving and organizing and managing contractual work. Minimum of 6 years experience.

- iv) Bookkeeper. The bookkeeper will assume full responsibility for the financial affairs of the park. He will work in close co-operation with the administrator and program co-ordinators. Requirements: preferably a degree in business administration and finances. Proven experience in bookkeeping of at least 4 years.
- v) Cashier. The cashier will handle all cash funds for the park. He will be responsible for wage payments, payment of contract labor and all other activities requiring the handling of cash money. Requirements: Good references and experience in this area of expertise.
- vi) Co-ordinator Protection Program Principle functions and responsibilities are: to prepare and oversee the implementation of annual work plans and budgets for the protection program; to assume overall responsibility for all protection related matters; to establish protocols and agreements for co-operation with other enforcement agencies; to prepare job descriptions for ranger positions and to hire rangers; to assist in the preparation of training programs and the establishment of ranger beats; to co-ordinate activities with other management programs as needed. The co-ordinator of this program will lead and manage all senior and junior staff under his command. Requirements: sound experience in wild land management and protection, law enforcement and public relations; technical degree in wildlife management or related area; proven skills in people management and staff training; leadership qualities. Communication and people management skills are critical requisites for this position.
- vii) Co-ordinator public use program Principle functions and responsibilities are: to assume overall responsibility for this program; to prepare and (assist in the implementation) annual work plans and budgets; to produce information materials such as brochures, fact sheets, the park information bulletin etc. in close co-operation with the co-ordinator of the environmental education and research programs; to design and help to establish the park entrance information boards; to train the rangers in dealing with the public and keeping visitor logs at the park gates. Requirements: academic degree and experience in business administration, preferably from the tourism sector; experience in dealing with the public; writing skills. Minimum of 5 years experience. His assistant should have at least a technical education, proper computer skills and appropriate working experience.
- viii) Environmental Education and Research-Monitoring program Co-ordinator. Main functions and responsibilities are: to assume overall responsibility for the programs; prepare annual work plans and budgets for environmental education and research-monitoring programs and provides their implementation; process monitoring data and maintain an ecological data bank; assist in ranger training; co-operates with local NGOs; compile and process baseline data; produce information materials for the education and visitor programs. Requirements: academic degree, preferably in wildlife ecology, environmental education or in natural resources management; computer skills are a must, as well as high level of literacy, written skill and word processing abilities. Proven capability in dealing with people and the public; minimum work experience 5 years.
- x) Rangers. All staff taken over from the former forest districts which are now incorporated into the park area have forest background. Functions and responsibilities of rangers will be multifold and closely tied to the different management programs. Although the principle function of the rangers will be law enforcement and protection of the RWPM, rangers will also assist in the implementation of the other programs. Rangers will play a pivotal role in the support zone program (i.e., park neighbour relationship). Skill development will be an integral part of the park training program. Basic ranger training will be achieved through formal seminars and on-the-job training (i.e., 2 weeks formal training/year, including all 12 rangers. The training courses will be implemented in the park headquarters, alternatively, the Batumu Ecocentre. On-the-job training will be provided by local specialists (i.e., 3

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weeks/ year/ ranger. Special training will cover amongst other, the compilation and processing of ecological baseline data, identification of flora and fauna, environmental monitoring, communication skills, basic computer skills, operation of GPS and other technical equipment, monitoring of rangeland etc. Training needs for the park director and the management program coordinators still need to be identified.

Annex C**Budget for the implementation of the management plan RWPM and operational cost for the management of the RWPM during and on completion of the proposed intervention**

1. Investment cost

The cost for the proposed investment measures are calculated by management program. Costs for the construction of buildings are calculated per m², based on locally assessed current construction costs. Pricing of materials and equipment is based on current market prices in Tbilisi. The results are presented in the following table:

Proposed investment measures

Management Program	Budget				Calendar		
	Unit	Quantity	Unit Price	Total	Year 1	Year 2	Year 3
s, PROTECTION PROGRAM				158,300	71,000	67,300	20,000
1.1 Land transfer				20,000	8,000	12,000	
prepare land-use documentation and maps	ha	16,000	0.5	8,000	8,000		
boundary demarcation	km	100.0	100	10,000		10,000	
land title registration	lumpsum	1.0	2,000	2,000		2,000	
1.2 Infrastructure development				82,000	45,000	22,000	15,000
construct ranger stations	building	3.0	15,000	45,000	45,000		
construct ranger shelters	building	6.0	5,000	30,000		15,000	15,000
arrange access controls	barrier	3.0	1,000	3,000		3,000	
arrange permanent closures	barrier	8.0	500	4,000		4,000	
1.3 Furniture				6,000		6,000	
ranger stations	lumpsum	3.0	1,000	3,000		3,000	
ranger shelters	lumpsum	6.0	500	3,000		3,000	
1.4 Equipment				45,300	18,000	27,300	
uniforms	set	12.0	500	6,000	6,000		
standard equipment for rangers	lumpsum	12.0	700	8,400	8,400		
horses and complete horse gear	item	9.0	400	3,600	3,600		
basic VHF receiver	item	3.0	800	2,400		2,400	
mobile VHF radios	item	6.0	400	2,400		2,400	
generators	item	3.0	1,000	3,000		3,000	
vehicles (UAZ)	item	3.0	6,000	18,000		18,000	
basic tools	lumpsum	3.0	500	1,500		1,500	
1.5 Removal of structures/clean up				5,000			5,000
2 VISITOR PROGRAM				309,500	70,000	153,200	86,300
2.1 Infrastructure development				162,400	60,000	94,200	8,200
park entrances		3.0	7,000	21,000	21,000		
Hiking trails and circuits	km	41.0	400	16,400		8,200	8,200
Road rehabilitation	km	26.0	1,500	39,000	39,000		
construct visitor center	center	1.0	50,000	50,000		50,000	
construct tourist shelters	building	3.0	12,000	36,000		36,000	
2.2 Furniture				14,000			14,000
visitor center	lumpsum	1.0	8,000	8,000			8,000

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	tourist shelters	lumpsum	3.0	2,000	6,000			6,000
2.3	Equipment				5,100			5,100
	basic VHF receivers	item	1.0	800	800			800
	mobile VHF radios	item	2.0	400	800			800
	audio-visual, etc.		1.0	3,000	3,000			3,000
	generator		1.0	500	500			500
2.4	Information materials				18,000		9,000	9,000
	arrange display hall in visitor center	lumpsum	1.0	5,000	5,000			5,000
	publish color brochure	brochure	1.0	5,000	5,000		5,000	
	publish color leaflets	leaflet	2.0	4,000	8,000		4,000	4,000
2.5	Promote tourism development				110,000	10,000	50,000	50,000
	develop marketing plan	days	20.0	500	10,000	10,000		
	promote family tourism in Chakvistavi	lumpsum	1.0	100,000	100,000		50,000	50,000
3	RESEARCH AND MONITORING PROGRAMME				10,900	2,000	3,900	5,000
3.1	Creation of database				3,000	2,000	1,000	
	prepare digital map layers	lumpsum	1.0	2,000	2,000	2,000		
	acquire and document data in GIS format	lumpsum	1.0	1,000	1,000		1,000	
3.2	Infrastructure development				5,000			5,000
	arrange meteorological stations	station	2.0	2,500	5,000			5,000
3.3	Equipment				2,900		2,900	
	mobile VHF radio	item	1.0	400	400		400	
	Global positioning system (GPS)	item	1.0	500	500		500	
	binoculars	item	2.0	250	500		500	
	digital video/photo camera	item	1.0	1,500	1,500		1,500	
4	COMMUNICATIONS AND AWARENESS PROGRAM				35,300	6,100	20,100	9,100
4.1	Media coverage				5,800	1,600	2,100	2,100
	TV spots	spot	6.0	500	3,000	1,000	1,000	1,000
	articles in newspapers	article	6.0	300	1,800	600	600	600
	press-trips	trip	2.0	500	1,000		500	500
4.2	Advertising materials				20,000	3,000	11,500	5,500
	web page		1.0	1,500	1,500		1,500	
	color calendars	calendar	3.0	3,000	9,000	3,000	3,000	3,000
	stickers, badges, pens, T-shirts, etc.	lumpsum	1.0	5,000	5,000		2,500	2,500
	information billboards	board	3.0	1,500	4,500		4,500	
4.3	Public relations				6,500	500	5,500	500
	printing materials for local population		3.0	500	1,500	500	500	500
	orientation meetings in rural areas	meeting	10.0	500	5,000		5,000	
4.4	Arranging 4 VIP visits	visit	3.0	1,000	3,000	1,000	1,000	1,000
5	ADMINISTRATION PROGRAMME				286,000	188,400	76,600	21,000
5.1	Up-grade management plan				15,000	15,000		
	local experts	month	5.0	500	2,500	2,500		
	international consultant	days	15.0	500	7,500	7,500		
	travel and accommodation	lumpsum	1.0	3,000	3,000	3,000		
	miscellaneous	lumpsum	1.0	2,000	2,000	2,000		
5.2	Training of park personnel				57,000	15,000	21,000	21,000
	in-service training of park rangers	course	3.0	7,000	21,000	7,000	7,000	7,000
	on-the-job training of park rangers	course	3.0	5,000	15,000	5,000	5,000	5,000
	in-service training of park management	course	3.0	3,000	9,000	3,000	3,000	3,000
	training trips abroad for park management	trip	2.0	6,000	12,000		6,000	6,000

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5.3	Infrastructure development				130,000	120,000	10,000	
	purchase building for administration center	building	1.0	80,000	80,000	80,000		
	purchase and rehabilitate building	building	1.0	120,000	40,000	40,000		
	site development	lumpsum	1.0	10,000	10,000		10,000	
5.4	Furniture	il			15,500			15,500
	offices	lumpsum	5.0	1,000	5,000		5,000	
	conference room	lumpsum	1.0	2,500	2,500		2,500	
	Visitor reception area	lumpsum	1.0	1,500	1,500		1,500	
	storage and archives	lumpsum	1.0	500	500		500	
	living quarters	lumpsum	3.0	2,000	6,000		6,000	
5.5	Equipment				68,500	38,400		30,100
	computers	item	5.0	1,000	5,000		5,000	
	printer (A3)	item	1.0	2,500	2,500		2,500	
	photocopier (A3)	item	1.0	2,500	2,500		2,500	
	fax	item	1.0	800	800		800	
	telephone and computer network	item	1.0	5,000	5,000		5,000	
	VHF receiver base station	item	2.0	2,500	5,000		5,000	
	basic VHF receiver	item	1.0	800	800		800	
	mobile VHF radios	item	2.0	400	800		800	
	uninterrupted power supply (UPS)	item	6.0	500	3,000		3,000	
	flipcharts	item	2.0	250	500		500	
	pinboards	item	2.0	300	600		600	
	overhead projector	item	1.0	700	700		700	
	screen	item	1.0	500	500		500	
	TV-set	item	1.0	900	900		900	
	videorecorder	item	1.0	500	500		500	
	basic tools (mechanic, gardening, etc.)	lumpsum	1.0	1,000	1,000		1,000	
	uniforms	set	4.0	400	1,600	1,600		
	standard equipment	set	4.0	700	2,800	2,800		
	mobile phones	item	4.0	250	1,000	1,000		
	vehicle (NIVA)	item	3.0	6,000	18,000	18,000		
	mini-bus (4 x 4)	item	1.0	15,000	15,000	15,000		
6	IMPLEMENTATION COSTS				200,000	74,400	65,800	59,800
6.1	Personnel				62,400	22,800	22,800	16,800
	project coordinator	month	36.0	800	28,800	9,600	9,600	9,600
	operational assistant	month	36.0	600	21,600	7,200	7,200	7,200
	construction supervisor	month	24.0	500	12,000	6,000	6,000	
6.2	Operational costs				24,000	8,000	8,000	8,000
	vehicle maintenance and gasoline	lumpsum	1.0	9,000	9,000	3,000	3,000	3,000
	travel and accommodation	lumpsum	1.0	12,000	12,000	4,000	4,000	4,000
	office running costs	lumpsum	1.0	3,000	3,000	1,000	1,000	1,000
6.3	Purchasing of equipment				8,600	8,600		
	computer	item	1.0	1,000	1,000	1,000		
	mobile phones	item	2.0	300	600	600		
	vehicle	item	1.0	7,000	7,000	7,000		
6.4	Management costs				105,000	35,000	35,000	35,000
	core costs recovery	year	3.0	10,000	30,000	10,000	10,000	10,000
	overheads	year	3.0	25,000	75,000	25,000	25,000	25,000
	TOTAL				1,000,000	411,900	386,900	201,200

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The following table 2 details the administrative cost for the project.

ITEM	Year1 year	Year2 year	Year 3	Total
1 Project Management Team				
1.1 Personal				
1 project co-ordinator (US\$ 600 / per month)				
1 regional co-ordinator (US\$ 500 / per month)				
1 assistant/driver (US\$ 400 /per month)				
1.2 Equipment				
2 mobile telephones				
1 jeep (4x4)				
1.3 Operational costs				
travelling costs				
maintenance of vehicle (includes gasoline)				
office running expenses				
2 Overhead for Implementing Body				
Total				

2. Operational costs

Table 3 shows the annual operational costs for the RWPM, calculated for a 5 years period. It is assumed that the proposed infrastructure development, recruitment of staff and basic staff/ranger training will be completed within three years. The operational costs are expected to stay at the same level after year five, not including wage increase, depreciation and/or replacement cost of equipment and inflation.

	Year 1	Year 2	Year 3	Year 4	Year 5
1 Staff	11,100	13,500	13,500	15,700	15,700
1.1 Wages	11,100	11,100	11,100	11,100	11,100
1 Director (US\$60 / per month)	720	720	720	720	720
1 Deputy Director (US\$50 / per month)	600	600	600	600	600
2 program coordinators (US\$45/per month)	1,080	1,080	1,080	1,080	1,080
1 book-keeper (US\$45 / per month)	540	540	540	540	540
1 administrator (US\$40 / per month)	480	480	480	480	480
3 senior rangers (US\$40 / per month)	1,440	1,440	1,440	1,440	1,440
9 rangers (US\$35 /per month/per person)	3,780	3,780	3,780	3,780	3,780
1 assistant (US\$35 / per month)	420	420	420	420	420
1 cashier (US\$30 / per month)	360	360	360	360	360
1 secretary (US\$30 / per month)	360	360	360	360	360
2 drivers (US\$30 / per month)	720	720	720	720	720
1 security guard (US\$25 / per month)	300	300	300	300	300
1 office-cleaner (US\$25 / per month)	300	300	300	300	300
1.2 Other expenses		2,400	2,400	4,600	4,600
Patrols of RWPM (US\$50 / per month / rangers station)		2,400	2,400	2,400	2,400
Expenses related to 4 senior staff, all inclusive (US\$250/person)				1,000	1,000
Training 12 rangers (US\$100 x 12 persons)					

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				1,200	1,200
2 Maintenance and other expenses		13,300	18,300	27,900	31,100
2.1 Boundaries, entry gates and trails				5,500	5,500
100 km park boundary (US\$10 / km)				1,000	1,000
4 road closures				200	200
3 park entry gates				900	900
30 km road (US\$80 / km)				2,400	2,400
100 km visitor trails (US\$10 / km)				1,000	1,000
2.2 Maintenance of Structures and Buildings			5,000	7,100	9,300
1 administrative center			2,000	2,500	3,000
1 visitor center			1,000	1,500	2,000
3 ranger stations			900	1,200	1,500
6 ranger shelters			600	1,200	1,800
3 tourist shelters			300	500	800
2 meteorological stations			200	200	200
2.3 Equipment				2,000	3,000
ranger equipment				500	1,000
Other equipment (radiotelephones etc.)				1,500	2,000
2.4 Maintenance of Vehicles, including gas and lubricants		10,900	10,900	10,900	10,900
1 car		2,000	2,000	2,000	2,000
3 jeeps (4x4)		4,500	4,500	4,500	4,500
1 pickup (4x4)		1,400	1,400	1,400	1,400
1 mini-bus (4x4)		1,000	1,000	1,000	1,000
1 lorry(4x4)					

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		2,000	2,000	2,000	2,000
2.5 food and tackle for 12 horses		2,400	2,400	2,400	2,400
3 Miscellaneous recurring costs				2,500	5,500
assistance to research/monitoring program				1,000	1,000
publication of brochures, posters, stickers etc.					3,000
participation in public events				1,500	1,500
Total		11,100	26,800	31,800	46,100
				46,100	52,300

Annex D: Incremental Cost Analysis

Broad Development Objectives:

1. ARA's development objectives for the region seek to catalyse investment in social and economic infrastructure to ameliorate poverty. Conscious of the ecological frailty of the interior and Caucasian forest and sub-alpine ecosystems, the Autonomous Republic of Ajara is seeking to integrate conservation objectives into development strategies and programs in order to safeguard the integrity of natural ecosystems. Human development needs foreclose application of intensive conservation management regimen across the landscape of the region, and the ARA is advancing different land use objectives in different areas with the objective of creating a spectrum of resource uses and management approaches. The eastern section of the ARA region supports forest ecosystems in the western most extension of the Small Caucasus which are largely intact, mostly due to poor access and low population density. This area is being zoned for biodiversity conservation and sustainable bioresource use, and it is here that ARA has created the first protected area in Georgia to be administered by a regional authority. It is hoped that the Regional Wilderness Park Mitralla (RWPM) will serve as model to other regions in Georgia.

Global Environmental Objectives:

2. The RWPM and its support zone is an exceptionally rich repository of biological diversity, providing a refuge for several threatened and endemic species of flora and fauna. The Ajara area is the biologically most diverse part of the Colchheti region which provided climatic shelter during the ice ages. This has resulted in very unique ecosystems of global importance. The RWPM remains one of the least impacted areas of the Small Caucasus, but faces gradually increasing anthropogenic pressures. The magnitude of the region's conservation challenge is amplified by its extraordinary species richness. There are a large number of priorities for conservation management, covering a range of ecoregions and habitats. While the Ajara Region comprises such a conservation priority, neither the Government of Georgia nor the Government of the ARA, acting unilaterally, are able to finance the high initial start up costs of conservation operations in the immediate term. There is a very real danger that human-induced pressures will extinguish vital global conservation values unless precautionary steps are taken to safeguard critical natural habitats. The proposed project would establish the systemic capacities needed to engender stable biodiversity conservation, in part by creating new partnerships between conservation authorities, local communities and the private sectors. These efforts would in turn, safeguard the global conservation value of the Ajara region's diverse ecosystems.

Baseline:

3. The root causes of the current and emergent threats to biodiversity in the Ajara Region are mostly the result of the on-going economic crisis of the country, typifying the transition into a market economy. Determinants include, *inter alia*, the lack of capacity at the systemic, entity and individual levels to protect biodiversity and manage harvests of wild flora and fauna, policy weaknesses, inadequate awareness of conservation values amongst decision makers and civil society, and inadequacies in public knowledge, including understanding of the distribution of critical natural habitats and the ecological processes that sustain them, that hamper efforts to prevent ecological damage. The chronic energy shortage in the Ajara region is directly responsible for the increasing pressure on the region's forests for fuelwood. Over-grazing by livestock in sub-alpine shrub-meadow plant communities and lowland forests

is another factor seriously threatening the integrity of the forest ecosystems in the Ajara region. A number of interventions are planned to address these problems in the baseline scenario, costed over a 9 year period.

4 Biological and Sociological Assessment: A number of biological and sociological assessments have been performed in the Ajara Region prior to and in preparation of this project. This includes complex biophysical studies of Ajara's ecosystems (i.e., geology, surficial materials, soils, hydrology and flora and fauna) and social assessments, thanks to Georgia's highly active Academy of Sciences and the University of Tbilisi. A conservative estimate of these investments total **US\$ 1.2 million**, however, as they were appropriated prior to project inception, they are treated as sunk costs, and are not factored into the baseline estimate. The baseline includes investment by WWF Georgia, the ARA and the University of Tbilisi for rapid ecological and socioeconomic assessments of the Ajara Region (**US\$ 84,000**). The baseline aggregate, not calculating the sunk costs, is **US\$ 84,000**. Further investment is needed to obtain baselines and conduct long- term biological/ ecological impact monitoring in the support zone of the RWPM, and to perform social appraisals.

5 Participatory Planning and Management of the RWPM: Baseline costs include the preparation of a management plan for the Regional Wilderness Park Mtirala (RWPM) during 1998/1999, spearheaded by WWF Georgia with financial assistance of the German Ministry of Cooperation and Development (BMZ), estimated at approximately **US \$ 68,000** and the development of GIS capacity under leadership of WWF Georgia with financial assistance of WWF International and the German BMZ (approximately **US\$ 200,000**). The management plan was elaborated in close cooperation with stakeholders from the support zone of Mtirala, Mtirala management personnel, the Government of ARA, scientific institutions and the private sector. Other baseline costs include enforcement activities and current management of the former Mtirala reserve, and forest blocks in the support zone under the umbrella of the Department of Forestry, the Department of Protected Areas and the ARA Forestry Service, estimated at **US\$ 150,000**. The baseline aggregate for this sector is **US\$418,000**. Appropriations are insufficient to insulate the Mtirala Wilderness Park and its support zone from threats, and financing is needed to operationalise basic conservation functions and support community based conservation processes and activities.

6 Sustainable Use of Ecosystems: A number of interventions are expected to be sponsored in the near future in the Ajara region, including the elaboration of a regional land use development plan for the support zone of the RWPM (ARA with assistance of GOG and NGOs), revival of the traditional tourism industry in the Ajara Region, capacity building for cottage industries producing handicrafts for tourists (financed by WWF and CUNA), the development of an eco-village as tourist destination, the development of plans to engender sustainable farming systems using traditional crops and fruit trees, and support for micro-enterprise development. The baseline includes continued support for the handicrafts industry (CUNA **US\$48,000**), sustainable forestry (co-financed by the World Bank through the Forest Sector Loan, estimated at **US\$ 850,000**) community based sustainable use management models supported through the private sector and NGOs (**US\$ 800,000**) and capacity building oriented towards sustainable use and the development of the tourism sector (NGOs and ARA: **US\$ 80,000**). These interventions total **US\$ 1,778,000**. Efforts need to be strengthened to ensure sustainable use management of bio-resources and to integrate biodiversity management objectives into regional economic development.

7 Fund Raising: Plans are embedded in the baseline to develop new financing instruments for conservation and to cover the recurring costs for the management of the RWPM. Contributions to sustainable financing of the annual operational costs for Mtirala are expected to originate amongst others from (a) local resource taxes from the forestry sector, (b) use of potable water and water used for

irrigation, (c) sustainable use of wildlife and hunting; (d) a tax on tourist overnight stays in hotels has been considered.

8. Environmental Awareness (media programs over landscape): An environmental awareness campaign is currently being implemented by WWF Georgia in cooperation with the Ministries of Environment and Education. The program is financed by the German BMZ and WWF International. Related baseline costs are **US \$ 250,000**.

9. Environmental Planning & Management: The ARA, the University of Tblisi and members of the Georgia Academy of Sciences have conducted disparate assessments of geology and hydrology (sunk cost estimated at **US\$ 280,000**). This information is incomplete and has yet to be synthesised. Additionally, understanding of the inter-relationships between hydrological, geological and ecological processes is inadequate. Additional baseline investments are needed. An understanding of the relationship between geological, hydrological and ecological structures must be established to effect conservation management. A major management asset in the Ajara region is that decision-makers and environmental managers have the appreciation and understanding of the means to conserve critical habitats in the region. However, there is presently no planning or institutional co-ordination mechanism in the Ajara Region to ensure that development policies and interventions are advanced in a manner that sustains vital ecological processes.

10. Georgia's Ministry of Environment (MoE), together with their counterparts from the Autonomous Republic of Ajara would ultimately be responsible for regulating the environmental impacts of development, including planning, scientific assessment, approving EIAs, and monitoring execution of impact abatement interventions in the Ajara Region (**US\$ 500,000 annually**). It is assumed that part of the current GEF grant to the MoE would be allocated to the Ajara Region to strengthen environmental management functions of the ARA. There is presently weak integration between biodiversity management and baseline environmental management programs, caused partly by a lack of information on ecological processes (including the location of ecologically sensitive areas), partly by institutional weakness, and partly by a weak understanding of the trade-offs between conservation and development. There are no plans to address this gap in the baseline scenario. At present, environmental monitoring is not conducted on a comprehensive regional, nor is it geared to assessing impacts on ecologically sensitive ecosystems or critical habitats. The total cost of the environmental planning and management baseline is difficult to assess; a conservative estimate is **5,000,000**.

11. Pollution abatement: Activities to control pollution, treat waste, and monitor contaminants would be financed as part of the efforts of individual industries to comply with existing environmental regulations. Sunk costs of an estimated **US \$2,000,000** have been incurred in the Ajara Region between 1989 and 99. Studies to contain and treat wastes are in the design stage in the ARA and MoE, to be financed in parts by the current GEF fund to the MoE. Further investment is needed to protect the fragile ecosystems of the region. Projected baseline investments in pollution abatement infrastructure include community operated solid waste disposal sites, installation of treatment and liquid waste processing plants, and infrastructure development for the management of waste products in the Ajara Region. Baseline costs are estimated at **US\$ 1,200,000**.

UNDP Alternative:

12. The UNDP Alternative has two immediate objectives. The first is to address direct threats to biota in the Ajara Region, including those engendered by subsistence and commercial hunting, fishing and

forest use by operationalizing basic conservation operations in the Regional Wilderness Park Mtirala. The second is to foreclose potential threats rooted in the wider productive landscape and support zone of the RWPM by integrating conservation objectives into sectoral development agendas. Both objectives are essential to protect the biodiversity of the Ajara region i.e., to address all threats as part of an ecosystem approach to biodiversity protection. The project would be implemented through a participatory paradigm, involving all major stakeholders, and support zone communities in particular, and the establishment of new conservation partnerships between the public and private sectors.

13. Five outputs are proposed under the first- and 9 outputs under the second immediate objective. The UNDP grant of US \$ 1,000,000 would be allocated as follows: the major part of the UNDP grant (except US\$ 120,000 for project management fees would be allocated to outputs 1-5 of the first immediate objective to be utilised within phase 1 of the project. These funds are matched through US\$ 1,600,000 cofinancing. The remainder of the UNDP US\$ 120,000 would be allocated to project management for the second phase of the project. A detailed breakdown of allocation of UNDP funds by output is provided in the budget tables for the project i.e., Annex C.

Incremental Costs:

14. The scope of analysis is defined geographically by the Regional Wilderness Park and its support zone, covering an area of approximately 100,000 has. The boundary was established following consultations with scientists to capture the principal anthropogenic impacts on environments of the RWPM. The systems boundary is also defined temporally by the life of the project (9 years), and thematically, by the bundles of interventions proposed to protect biodiversity, and their accompanying baselines. The baseline cost estimate captures the projected expenditures of public, non-government and private entities.

15. The business- as-usual baseline has been costed at US\$

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8.730.000 over the next 9 years; an additional sum of US\$ 20,228,129 has been secured to finance activities yielding mainly domestic benefit under the alternative (i.e. to establish a sustainable development baseline). Incremental costs amount to US\$ 12,404,359, of which the GEF would fund US\$9,498,802. The GEF contribution amounts to 7 % of the cost of the alternative (US\$136,975,121), including the baseline, sustainable development baseline, and increment. The GEF would provide funding for activities that generate clear global benefit. Sustainable use support activities promoted under Output 3 and Output 6 would produce some domestic benefits, although these are uncertain insofar as they are contingent upon the successful removal of barriers to management. Output costs have thus been partitioned between the GEF and non-GEF sources. Venezuela would capture a portion of the global benefits of conservation in the longer run and has consequently agreed to co-finance a portion of the incremental costs of the project in addition to absorbing the recurrent costs of conservation.

INCREMENTAL COST MATRIX

Annex E: Logical Framework Matrix

objectives	Indicators	Means of Verification	Assumptions and Risks
<p>Goal: A representative sample of the globally unique forest/shrubland ecosystems of the Small Caucasus in Georgia is protected.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Forests of the Wilderness Park are strictly protected; • Sustainable forest management is applied to the support zone meeting local fuelwood demand; • Illegal grazing inside core area is terminated; • Viable populations of key indicator species remain in the core area at project closure; 	<p>Biological surveys;</p> <p>Environmental monitoring;</p> <p>Decreasing number of infractions</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The Regional Wilderness Park Mtirala is of sufficient size to maintain long-term ecological processes; • The GOG is willing to fully delegate mandate for regional protected areas to regional authorities; • The Government of the Ajara Region expands the regional network of protected areas to safeguard ecological connectivity; • Local communities are willing to change resource use practices to conserve biodiversity; • Stakeholders in the Ajara region collaborate with the project;
<p>Immediate Objective 1: The ecological integrity of the Regional Wilderness Park Mtirala (RWPM) is safeguarded as a result of the implementation of the park's management plan in partnership with the stakeholders</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The park boundaries are surveyed and demarcated, the park clean-up is completed and the access is properly controlled; • The park is officially registered as regional entity; • Management personnel and park rangers have been hired and trained according to schedule; • The park is well recognized and respected by the support zone communities which participate in the decision making and management process of the park; 	<p>Field inspection</p> <p>Official Gazette</p> <p>Progress reports</p> <p>Socio-economic monitoring</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Support zone communities and the private sector have positive incentives to conserve biological diversity; • ARA allocates additional funds to the RWPM and support zone; • Support zone communities accept land and resource use restrictions in the park area; • Stakeholder conflicts and park boundary disputes can be resolved;

<p>from the support zone.</p>			<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • No significant increase in direct threats (i.e. fuelwood collection, livestock grazing and poaching inside core area);
<p>Immediate Objective 2: The sustainable economic development of the support zone compatible with biodiversity conservation is safeguarded.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • ownership by the support zone communities regarding the concept of biodiversity conservation and representation on the Technical Steering Committee for the park • The development of a land use plan is well advanced three years after inception of the project Ecologically sensitive areas in the support zone of the RWPM have been identified and are protected • The use of bioresources in the support zone is well regulated and controlled • Environmentally friendly pilot projects are firmly established; 	<p>Field inspection reports;</p> <p>Progress reports</p> <p>Environmental monitoring reports;</p> <p>Pilot projects generate income;</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • There is political will to integrate conservation objectives into development activities and enforce compliance with regulations; • No significant increase in landscape level threats beyond projected levels three years after inception of the project;
<p>Focus: Immediate Objective 1; the Regional Wilderness Park Mitrالا</p>			
<p>Output 1: The protection program for the park is efficient and successful.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Park boundaries are surveyed and demarcated; • The number of rangers proposed in the management plan are hired by the end of year 2 and have been trained and equipped according to schedule; • Ranger patrols of the core area are well established and efficient; • The park clean-up has been successfully completed and the permanent road closures are in place after year 3; • The infrastructure proposed for the protection program is in place (year 3) • The enclave community complies with the 	<p>Quarterly progress report</p> <p>Annual job performance appraisal reports</p> <p>Decreasing number of infractions;</p> <p>Site inspection reports;</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The ARA officially approves surveyed boundaries of the RWPM; • ARA will assume commitment to cover operational costs for the RWPM; • The support zone communities and enclave people are familiar with the conceptual framework for the park and support zone and the rules applied;

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	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> rules applying to resource use; Support zone communities are compliant with the rules of the RWPM; 		
<p>Output 2: The tourism industry is revitalized in the Ajara Region.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> The infrastructure proposed for the visitor program inside the park is completed after year 3 (i.e., tourist shelters, hiking trails and self-guided nature trails, visitor center, park entrance gates, picnic areas etc.); Park entrance fees and visitor logs are well established after year 3; In close cooperation with the private sector the ARA is in the process of developing a regional tourism plan after year 2; Information materials about the RWPM and destinations in the support zone have been produced and are disseminated; The number of visitors to the park and support zone is steadily increasing; Tourist facilities are established in the support zone; 	<p>Visitor records from the park entrance gates and region;</p> <p>Revenue is generated from park visitors;</p> <p>Progress reports from park;</p>	<p>Commitment by the private sector to rehabilitate tourism infrastructure in support zone;</p> <p>Sufficient funding for development and maintenance of tourist destinations in the support zone;</p>
<p>Output 3: Applied research and the monitoring program specified in the management plan have led to higher quality management of the RWPM.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> The park coordinator for the research and monitoring program has been recruited after year 1; Memoranda of Understanding have been signed for the implementation of research and monitoring in the RWPM with research institutions and Government agencies; A research need assessment has been implemented and an activity schedule developed accordingly; Biophysical inventories are updated as planned; 	<p>MoUs;</p> <p>RWPM records and annual reports;</p> <p>Ecological data bank for the park;</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Applied research and environmental monitoring are necessary to raise profile of conservation values, galvanize political support for conservation action and provide sound basis for RWPM management; Institutions and researchers have funding to conduct research specified for the RWPM and its support zone and are granted permissions accordingly;

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Research institutions have been identified and contracted to implement specified research and monitoring activities; • An ecological data bank has been established for the RWPM; 		
<p>Output 4: Support zone communities and the general public are well informed about the RWMP, biodiversity conservation in general and the need for sustainable bioresource use.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Well qualified specialists are in place to implement the environmental education program in close cooperation with the park coordinator for this activity; • MoUs between park administration, the Ministry of Environment and qualified NGOs regarding program implementation are in place; • Outreach operations to support zone communities are well established after year 1 and operations continue until the end of year 9; • Educational material covering formal and informal environmental education are being developed and amended throughout the life of the project; • Capacity building of identified target groups proceeds throughout the 9 year project; • Mass media are fully engaged in the process; 	<p>Progress reports;</p> <p>MoUs and letters of agreement;</p> <p>Independent evaluation and technical reports;</p> <p>Activity plans;</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Government has commitment to working with non-governmental organizations and community based organizations (NGO) in environmental education; • Well qualified NGOs are available to spearhead the program; • Willingness of target groups to cooperate; • Willingness of media to cooperate in environmental education;
<p>Output 5: Adaptive and participatory management are operationalized.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The administrative infrastructure for the RWPM is finalized after year 3; full complement of park staff delegated to the field after year 1; staff training proceeds to schedule (on-going for the duration of the project); • The Project Steering Committee (PST) with representation from major stakeholders from the support zone is in place after year 1; • The five year management plan, supported by 	<p>Site inspection;</p> <p>Operational plan and annual workplans;</p> <p>Progress reports;</p> <p>External evaluation (after</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Government continues to show willingness to cooperate with stakeholders; • Qualified park personnel is available; • Agreement can be reached between the PST members on conservation management needs for the RWPM and support zone; • Community participation in conservation operations is enabled

	annual workplans and operational plans for the RWPM have been implemented after 5 years;	year 1, mid-term review and year 8 assessment); Training Plan;	through iterative capacity development program;
<p>Immediate Objective 2: The sustainable economic development of the support zone is safeguarded</p>			
<p>Output 6: Implementation of the support zone program.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The priorities identified in the support zone program of the Mitralla management plan are adopted by the regional authorities and projects implemented accordingly; • Outputs 2 and 4 as integral parts of the support zone program are implemented according to schedule; • Economic alternatives for support zone communities and the enclave are identified; 	<p>Sociological assessment;</p> <p>Minutes of stakeholder meetings;</p> <p>Annual progress reports;</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Support zone communities share information regarding resource use practices; • The private sector recognizes the conceptual framework of sustainable economic development; • The Enclave community is willing to cooperate in the development of economic alternatives; • Funding has been located for the implementation of designated priority projects; • Civil obedience by support zone people and law enforcement permit biodiversity conservation;
<p>Output 7: Regional Land Use Plan is elaborated.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Ecologically sensitive areas have been identified through a GAP analysis, have been mapped and their legal status approved by the ARA at the end of project year 3; • Biophysical and socio-economic baseline data have been compiled and digitized (GIS maps); • Regional planning personnel has the technical and financial capacity to produce a participatory regional land use development plan to be finalized by project year 5; 	<p>Base maps;</p> <p>Progress reports presented to the PSC;</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Official approval by ARA of the results from the GAP analysis; • Official designation of identified ecologically sensitive areas; • Land tenancy and use rights are clearly defined and understood; • Availability of qualified planning experts for the regional development plan; • Availability of sufficient funds for the

			<p>land use planning and base map production;</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Public acceptance of the development plan;
<p>Output 8: Capacity development for the support zone communities has progressed.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Targeted workshops and seminars for planners, community leaders and sector specialists to raise awareness of threats to sustainable resource use result in changing attitudes; • Participatory management of the RWPM involves stakeholders from support zone communities; • The PSC functions well with impact on land use decisions in the support zone; 	<p>News releases, TV. Radio programs, reports;</p> <p>Need Assessment study results;</p> <p>Pre-post workshop evaluations;</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Target audiences is receptive to conservation messages and micro-planning of proper land-resource use in the support zone; • Educators and extensionists are available to spearhead activities; • Willingness of stakeholders to play a significant role in the PSC;
<p>Output 9: Sustainable forest management is practiced in the support zone.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Suitable forest lands have been designated by the FD for 1) the model forest, and 2) a community forest project; • The policies and management guidelines for both components have been developed in a participatory manner, addressing the multiple use functions of forests; • Management and operational plans have been developed for both areas and are being implemented with participation of all stakeholders; 	<p>MoU between FD, ARA and pertinent support zone communities;</p> <p>Management plans for both pilot projects;</p> <p>Progress reports;</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Willingness of communities to embark on community model forest project; • Willingness of GOG and FD to develop model forest; • Funding through World Bank Sector loan for both pilot projects;
<p>Output 10: Nature based tourism contributes to local economy.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Tourist numbers and mean length of stay show steady increase in the RWPM and support zone; • Regional tourism development plan has been developed with participation of major stakeholders; • Tourist destinations in the support zone have been identified and re-habilitated; • Fair pricing standards, reflecting willingness to 	<p>Visitor records;</p> <p>Gate fees;</p> <p>Management guidelines, training reports;</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Technical assistance will be available to ensure quality planning inputs; • Nature based tourism is recognized by the public as an attractive economic alternative compatible with sustainable biodiversity conservation;

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	<p>pay in place by yr. 5;</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Visitor management guidelines promulgated by yr.2 	Regional tourism development plan;	
<p>Output 11: Sustainable use management models are in place.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Conservation plans regulating consumptive uses will have been prepared with communities by yr3; social and biological assessments in subsequent years confirm their application; • An eco-village has been established to demonstrate environmentally friendly land use and as tourist destination in the support zone; • Pilot projects in horticulture and traditional crop cultivations have been established in an effort to re-vitalise the sector; 	<p>MoUs with selected communities and the PSC;</p> <p>Operational plans for pilot projects;</p> <p>Progress reports;</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Target groups are receptive to selected pilot projects; • The private sector is willing to finance projects; • Stakeholders are willing to cooperate in implementation; • Government shows interest in working with non-governmental organisations and community based organisations in the conservation arena and to apply best co-management principles; • Agreement can be reached between local communities, government, NGOs and other stakeholders on conservation planning needs; • Community participation in conservation operations is enabled through iterative capacity development program
<p>Output 12: Alternative energy sources are piloted and utilized.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Completed feasibility assessment for the establishment of small-sized hydro-power-plants; • Buy-in by stakeholders and commitment by communities. 	<p>Feasibility report;</p> <p>Site inspection reports;</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Terrain suitability for environmentally compatible small scale hydropower development; • Economic feasibility of hydro-power; • Sufficient funding for project development;
<p>Output 13: Long-term</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Resource taxes from the support zone (i.e., 	Budget records;	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The private sector is willing to

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<p>financing mechanisms for conservation are tested and in place.</p>	<p>forestry, water and wildlife) are officially designated to contribute to cover operational costs for the RWPM;</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • A tourist tax, levied on overnight stays of tourists in the support zone, contributes to sustainable financing; • New fiscal mechanisms for biodiversity conservation are agreed by yr.4 (trigger for phase 2); • Park personnel and support zone communities receive training in fund raising methods (year 3 and 4); 	<p>EIA legislation and enforcement;</p> <p>Grants for training programs;</p>	<p>finance conservation including through new fiscal instruments;</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Government is willing to dedicate part of resource taxes to sustainable biodiversity conservation and financing the operational budget of the park; •
<p>Output 14: Environmental management frameworks accommodate conservation needs.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The ecological sensitivity assessment of the support zone (i.e., ecological gap analysis) conducted on landscape scale by year 3 (trigger for phase 2); • Framework legislation for the implementation of the regional land use development plan (RLUDP) in place by year 5; • The RLUDP is operationalized by year 6; 	<p>Filed surveys;</p> <p>Progress reports;</p> <p>Plan is endorsed by multi-sectional group and approved;</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • There is political will to integrate conservation objectives into development activities and enforce compliance with regulations; • Impact of population growth in the region remains limited; • No significant increase in landscape level threats by year 4;

Phase I Activities for the RWPM (Year 1-5)	Phase II Activities year 6-9
<p>1. Protection Program</p> <p>1.1 Survey and demarcate park boundaries: year 1-2;</p> <p>1.2 Install barriers for 8 access points to the park: year 1 (i.e., permanent road closures);</p> <p>1.3 Construct three entrance gates to the park year 1;</p> <p>1.4 Construct and equip 3 ranger stations year 1-2;</p> <p>1.5 Construct 6 ranger stations inside the RWPM: year 1-2;</p> <p>1.6 Park clean up and removal of man-made structures: year 1-3;</p> <p>1.7 Recruit coordinator for protection program and rangers: year 1-2;</p> <p>1.8 Elaborate control system and work-programs for rangers: year 1;</p> <p>1.9 Provide training to rangers (2 weeks/year): year 1-3 (continues);</p> <p>1.10 Elaborate annual workplans and budgets for this program;</p>	<p>1.11 Continuous protection of the park's ecological integrity;</p> <p>1.12 Increasing involvement of rangers in public relation and biodiversity conservation in the support zone;</p> <p>1.13 Finding income generating alternatives for enclave people outside park area;</p> <p>1.14 Phasing out vehicle roads inside park;</p> <p>1.15 Secure public participation in control and law enforcement activities;</p> <p>1.16 Confirm and formalise agreements regarding boundary maintenance of the park;</p>

Phase I Activities for the RWPM (Year 1-5)	Phase II Activities year 6-9
<p>2. Public Use Program</p> <p>2.1 Establish visitor infrastructure at the 3 entrance gates: year 1-2;</p> <p>2.2 Establish 42 km visitor trails: year 1-2 (i.e., trekking);</p> <p>2.3 Rehabilitate 21 km vehicle road for enclave and park use: year 1-2;</p> <p>2.4 Construct and furnish 3 tourist shelters inside RWPM: year 2-3;</p> <p>2.5 Establish visitor centre at Chakvistavi: year 2-3;</p> <p>2.6 In close cooperation with program 3 elaborate info materials;</p> <p>2.7 Market the RWPM as tourist destination: continuing;</p> <p>2.8 Prepare annual workplan and budget: continuing;</p>	<p>2.9 Re-assess and enhance visitor program for the park;</p> <p>2.10 Expand educational opportunities inside the RWPM and at the entrance gates;</p> <p>2.11 market the park as tourist destination as part of package trips to Georgia and/or the Ajara region in cooperation with the regional and national tourist association;</p> <p>2.12 strengthen working relationship with regional tourist association and tour operators specialising on nature based tourism;</p> <p>2.13 Increase involvement of park staff in the development of regional tourism plan;</p>
<p>3. Education Program of the RWPM</p> <p>3.1 Elaborate activity program: year 1;</p> <p>3.2. Arrange working agreements with NGO's: year 1-3;</p> <p>3.3 Produce brochures and information on the park: 1-5, continuing;</p> <p>3.4 Prepare audio-visual presentations: continuing;</p> <p>3.5 Prepare and implement VIP visits to the park: continuing;</p> <p>3.6 Participate in public events in the support zone: continuing;</p> <p>3.7 Implement poster campaign: year 3;</p> <p>3.8 Arrange for TV and radio spots: continuing;</p> <p>3.9 Prepare annual workplan and budget: continuing;</p>	<p>3.10 Continue production of the park newsletter;</p> <p>3.11 Assess efficacy of phase 1 media communications and adapt programmatic strategies and content;</p> <p>3.12 Design radio awareness programs;</p> <p>3.13 Develop interpretation materials;</p> <p>3.14 Conduct targeted workshops for private industry; municipal planners and potential financiers to galvanise broad based support for conservation;</p> <p>3.15 Implement advocacy operations with relevant decision makers</p>
<p>4. Research and Monitoring Program</p> <p>4.1 Install 2 meteorological stations: year 1-2;</p> <p>4.2 Elaborate applied research and monitoring activity schedule: y 1;</p> <p>4.3 Prepare and sign MoUs with research institutes and individuals;</p> <p>4.4.Prepare annual workplan and budget: continuing;</p> <p>4.5 Enhance available baseline on biodiversity (alpha and beta diversity);</p> <p>4.6 Undertake annual monitoring of ecological and biological impacts;</p> <p>4.7 Perform additional social assessment for enclave community;</p> <p>4.8 Conduct biennial assessment of social impact on park;</p> <p>4.9 Concretise biological/ecological and socio-economic database;</p>	<p>4.10 Monitor biological/ecological impacts and evaluate trends for adaptive management purposes;</p> <p>4.11 Update biological/ecological data base and GIS;</p> <p>4.12 Monitor and evaluate social/ economic change in support zone;</p> <p>4.13 Update social/ economic data base and GIS;</p> <p>4.14 Continue training as necessary to develop monitoring and assessment capacities;</p> <p>4.15 Expand technical assistance to support zone monitoring program;</p>

Phase I Activities for the RWPM (Year 1-5)	Phase II Activities year 6-9
<p>5. Administration Program</p> <p>5.1 Establish park headquarters in Makhinjauri: year 1-3;</p> <p>5.2 Hire management staff as specified in management plan;</p> <p>5.3 Equip park headquarters and staff according to specifications in the management plan: year 1-3;</p> <p>5.4 Conduct training need assessment of park personnel: year 1;</p> <p>5.5 Provide training as specified in need assessment: continuing;</p> <p>5.6 Prepare annual workplans, progress reports and budgets;</p> <p>5.7 Hire architect and construction supervisor for 3 years: year 1-3;</p> <p>5.8 Initiate annual auditing for the park from year 1 continuing;</p> <p>5.9 Ensure regular maintenance of park infrastructure and equipment;</p>	<p>5.10 Reinforce conservation skills of PA staff by providing refresher training geared to client need;</p> <p>5.11 Train budget officers to interpret valuation assessment;</p> <p>5.12 Supply technical assistance (legal, economic and financial services) to institute agreed mechanisms;</p> <p>5.13 Monitor results and provide ‘trouble shooting’ services to address problem areas;</p> <p>5.14 Ensure that RWPM negotiates with concerned authorities to earmark revenues for park management;</p> <p>5.15 Review and modify (if needed) park management plan and long-term operational plan after year 5;</p>
Phase I Activities for the Support Zone of the RWPM (Year 1-5)	Phase II Activities year 6-9
<p>6. Regional Land Use Development Plan</p> <p>6.1 Conduct an ecological gap analysis for the support zone;</p> <p>6.2 Prepare ecological sensitivity map (ESM) based on gap baselines;</p> <p>6.3 Use ESM as base map for land use decisions;</p> <p>6.4 Improve biophysical and socio-economic baseline maps/GIS overlays for land use planning process;</p> <p>6.5 Start participatory planning process for the regional land use plan involving all major stakeholders;</p>	<p>6.6 Continue and finalise the planning process;</p> <p>6.7 Obtain official approval of regional land use development plan;</p> <p>6.8 Maintain dialogue with public about the planning process and implement public consultative workshops throughout the process;</p> <p>6.9 Establish and formalise administrative, management and cooperative mechanisms for plan implementation;</p>
<p>7. Capacity Development for the Support Zone Communities (covered by outputs 3, 6, 8, 9 and 10)</p>	
<p>8. Sustainable Forest Management</p> <p>8.1 Obtain official approval for designation of a model forest and a community forest;</p> <p>8.2 Identify suitable areas and obtain cooperation agreement with corresponding communities and the Forestry Department;</p> <p>8.2 Clarify forest ownership of community forest and transfer additional part of State forest to selected community (ies) if required;</p> <p>8.3 Formalise cooperation agreements with all stakeholders;</p> <p>8.4 Adapt concept of community forest model Borjomi-Kharagauli to local conditions in the Ajara Region and design management plan;</p>	<p>8.11 Develop community forest as model for the Ajara Republic;</p> <p>8.12 Use the model forest area as training field for Ajara foresters;</p> <p>8.13 Develop marketing plan for wood products involving local and international markets;</p> <p>8.14 Search for "twinning" and foreign investment opportunities for the two project components;</p> <p>8.15 Develop website for both components and stimulate international feedback;</p>

Phase I Activities for the RWPM (Year 1-5)	Phase II Activities year 6-9
<p>8.5 Based on the experience from the World Bank sponsored model forest in Georgia and models elsewhere design management plan for the Ajara model forest;</p> <p>8.6 Develop operational plans in collaboration with major stakeholders;</p> <p>8.7 Ensure funding of the two components through the Forestry Sector Loan;</p> <p>8.8 Secure local processing of forest products (i.e., value added products);</p> <p>8.9 Collaborate with the Forest Stewardship Council for forest management- and wood product certification;</p> <p>8.10 Develop marketing strategy for forest products;</p>	
<p>9. Regional Tourism Development</p> <p>9.1 Build capacity to manage ecotourism</p> <p>9.2 Obtain stakeholder consensus on tourism management goals, strategies and programs;</p> <p>9.3 Establish regional tourism board;</p> <p>9.4 Identify and map potential regional tourist attractions and compile other relevant baseline;</p> <p>9.4 Develop regional tourism plan;</p> <p>9.5 Develop fair pricing standards based on economic investigation</p> <p>9.6 Maintain linkage with tourism promotion, product development, and training programs of partner agencies</p>	<p>9.7 Develop tourism guidelines/goals and management plan with community participation;</p> <p>9.8 Implement new fee schedules;</p> <p>9.9 Design interpretation materials for tourists;</p> <p>9.10 Provide guide training in visitor management methods;</p> <p>9.11 Chronicle and disseminate lessons;</p> <p>9.12 Monitor and maintain links with tourism promotion and product development activities financed by project partners</p>
<p>10. Community-Based Sustainable Use Management Models and Capacity Building</p> <p>10.1 Prepare operational plan for years 1 and 2</p> <p>10.2 Field social outreach team to execute cycles of capacity development for target communities</p> <p>10.3 Develop and draft a sustainable use conservation plan with stakeholder participation;</p> <p>10.4 Work with private and public partners to pilot field demonstrations of sustainable traditional crop management (i.e. fruit-trees, tea, medicinal plants);</p>	<p>10.12 Monitor and evaluate the ecological and economic impacts of pilot projects (with partners);</p> <p>10.13 Ensure conservation objectives are integrated into baseline bioresource use (including enforcement, training and other regular management programs);</p> <p>10.14 Assess effectiveness of conservation easements and obtain collaborate agreements on ways and means of remedying weaknesses;</p> <p>10.15 Ensure effective delivery of co-financed technical assistance packages for sustainable use;</p> <p>10.16 Assess efficacy of partner programs and catalyse improvement</p>

Phase I Activities for the RWPM (Year 1-5)	Phase II Activities year 6-9
<p>10.5 Provide technical assistance to integrate conservation objectives into field demonstrations;</p> <p>10.6 Build the capacity of the local communities to sustain traditional uses of bioresources;</p> <p>10.7 Facilitate people- driven priority setting exercise for sustainable use management;</p> <p>10.8 Re-assess use rights and access rights within the RWPM;</p> <p>10.9 Negotiate conservation easements;</p> <p>10.10 Provide scientific know-how to identify, strengthen and adapt traditional management paradigms to enhance their compatibility with biodiversity conservation;</p> <p>10.11 Prioritise, co-ordinate and leverage investments from project associates to support the sustainability of traditional uses</p>	<p>where necessary to maximise conservation impact;</p> <p>10.17 Provide awareness raising and training to support the sustainability of traditional uses;</p>
<p>11. Long-term and Sustainable Financing</p> <p>11.1 Co-ordinate cofinancing and fund raising to support Project activities in Phase II;</p> <p>11.2 Provide technical support to local non government and community based groups to strengthen fund raising capacities</p> <p>11.3 Identify and assess the feasibility of introducing new fiscal mechanisms for conservation (i.e. mitigation banking and user fees);</p> <p>11.4 Ensure that the RWPM obtains necessary policy and legal sanctions from government authorities to implement financial mechanisms;</p> <p>11.5 Ensure that RWPM negotiates agreements with concerned authorities to earmark revenues for park management</p>	<p>11.6 Train budget officers to interpret valuation assessment;</p> <p>11.7 Supply technical assistance (legal, economic and financial services) to institute agreed mechanisms;</p> <p>11.8 Ensure that RWPM negotiates with concerned authorities to earmark revenues for park management;</p>
<p>12. Environmental Management Framework</p> <p>12.1 Operationalise a multi-stakeholder RWPM Project Steering Committee;</p> <p>12.2 Prepare an awareness needs assessment for different constituencies;</p> <p>12.3 Develop and execute a communications strategy;</p> <p>12.4 Keep stakeholder groups informed about project activities;</p>	<p>12.8 Evaluate and revise operational plans to achieve adaptive management;</p> <p>12.9 Provide technical assistance to enable ARA to raise minimum standards for environmental mitigation in ecologically sensitive areas (to protect conservation values);</p> <p>12.10 Convene a regional planning forum to integrate conservation & development strategies;</p>

Phase I Activities for the RWPM (Year 1-5)	Phase II Activities year 6-9
<p>12.5 Convene media events to publicise project milestones;</p> <p>12.6 Prepare fact sheets for media on conservation themes relevant to the region;</p> <p>12.7 Ensure effective execution of pollution abatement needed to reach the sustainable development baseline (investments to be cofinanced)</p>	<p>12.11 Adapt conservation operations in accordance with emergent management priorities;</p> <p>12.13 Strengthen internal capacities to execute conservation functions in target communities;</p> <p>12.14 Execute community enforcement of regulations as part of management;</p> <p>12.15 Evaluate emergent lessons and adapt management strategies;</p> <p>12.16 Build skills in adaptive planning and management</p> <p>12.17 Chronicle and disseminate lessons</p>

ANNEX F: THREATS (ROOT CAUSES AND MANAGEMENT ISSUES)

1. The core zone of the Regional Wilderness Park Mtirala (RWPM) is formed by the former Tsiskara Nature Reserve which effectively has been shielded against anthropogenic pressures until Georgia's independence.. This prolonged isolation has allowed the survival of much of the area's original biological make-up. This makes the RWPM the largest, most complex, diverse and pristine area left in the western Caucasus.
2. The Ajara region is one of the most densely populated areas of Georgia (i.e., 138 persons/km²) with proportionately one of the largest autochthonous population in the country (i.e., 85%). Within the last century the region's population has increased from 73 thousand to over 400 thousand by 1999. The past 20 years have seen large-scale immigration to the Ajara region from other parts of Georgia, mostly from people displaced by wars and natural disasters in search of land and employment opportunities. But also widespread natural disasters within the mountainous area of the Ajara Republic itself (i.e., floods, mudslides, landslides, large scale erosion etc.) have forced many people to leave their traditional land for the coastal zones. The damage caused by natural disasters in the mountainous area of Ajara between 1995 and 1996 alone is estimated at US 75 million. 81% of the Ajara population is now found in the coastal districts of Batumi, Kobuleti and Khelvachauri.
3. Due to its strategic location as a major Black Sea port, Batumi has become a focus of economic development in the Republic of Ajara. Its importance as seaport for oil transport is growing. Historically, Ajara's economic profile has been characterised by agriculture and tourism. Agriculture in the past concentrated on sub-tropical crops (i.e., tea, citrus, tobacco, bamboo, laurel etc.). Traditionally grown sub-tropical crops, however, are increasingly replaced by corn and nut plantations (i.e., the latter produced for export).
4. The support zone of the RWPM is famous for its orchards and vineyards and the large scale production of nuts and berries by its montane forests. Before 1990, this area produced up to 1200 tons of forest fruit per year. The harvest of minor forest products has been declining ever since, mostly due to failing markets. The support zone of the park, rich in multi-species broad-leaved forests, has a recognised potential for apiculture.
5. Although tourism at the Black Sea coast and in the Ajara mountains has a long standing tradition in Georgia, this sector has declined sharply after independence with the break-up of the Soviet Union and the resulting overall poverty in the country. The potential for tourism, however, is outstanding throughout the Ajara Republic. Numerous cultural historic sites, an extensive sea-coast and the forests in the foothills of the western Caucasus offer a wide spectrum of tourist destinations in the region. It is expected that the RWPM will become a focal area for nature based tourism.
6. To the west and south-west the RWPM is bordered by densely populated areas. It is along these boundaries that the ecological integrity of the core zone of the park is threatened through uncontrolled collection of fuelwood, livestock grazing and over-utilisation of minor forest products. And it is mostly in this section of the support zone that forests have come under

pressure due to over-utilisation of timber products and livestock grazing. The only settlement inside the proposed park is the village of Chakvistavi. The village lands (i.e., 1.4% of the park area) are mostly comprised of orchards, vegetable gardens and fields for the cultivation of annual cash crops. The Chakvistavi enclave will not pose a threat to the park's ecological integrity as long as its development and enhancement will proceed according to the guidelines described in the management plan. It is intended to convert the enclave into an "eco-village" with potential as tourist destination. At present, poaching and subsistence hunting inside the park and its support zone are common in absence of controlled wildlife management.

7. Today, economic hardship in the predominantly rural areas of the RWPM's support zone has been recognised as the single most threat to the biodiversity of the park and its ecological integrity. The following matrix reviews this threat and its root causes and summarises activities that are required for its mitigation. These activities were identified through a series of participatory workshops held during the different phases of project formulation in the Ajara region with representation from a diverse range of stakeholders. These threats and proposed activities form the basis on which the project has been designed. Finally, the issue of population growth has been included under a separate heading.

THREATS MATRIX

ROOT CAUSES OF THREAT	ACTIVITIES TO MITIGATE THREAT
<p>Proximate Threat 1: Destruction of Forests: Chronic energy shortages in the region are directly responsible for the alarming increase in forest destruction in the A applies in particular to the predominantly rural areas of the support zone of the RWPM where many people live at an low level, mostly without the most rudimentary social infrastructure. This has lead to encroachment on the park area, mostly of fuelwood and minor forest products. The unmarked boundaries of the park and the lack of law enforcement aggravate the situation. Overutilization of the low montane forests and sub-alpine areas by livestock pose a serious threat to the integrity of the park. Habitat degradation is the most immediate concern regarding biodiversity loss. Illegal timber cutting and timber export to Turkey accelerates forest destruction. Despite these trends, the vast majority of endemic biodiversity is still largely intact. In some cases habitat disruptions are believed to be reversible.</p> <p>1. <u>Economic hardship</u> in rural areas of the support zone of the RWPM.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Disrupted energy supply in the Ajara Republic causes pressure on forests for fuelwood production. • Illegal timber cutting (i.e., "sanitary" felling) threatens forest integrity. • livestock grazing and grass cutting in forests pose threat to biodiversity. • Illegal hunting and fishing have adverse impact on wildlife populations. <p>2. Inadequate measures for <u>prevention</u> of forest and biodiversity destruction.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Insufficient law enforcement due to deficits in equipment, insufficient staff capacity and low public awareness of ecological problems. • Overlapping legislation, lack of clear mandates and poor co-ordination between the different institutions designated with enforcement authority. • Insufficient norms and procedures to control illegal activities. <p>3. Insufficient <u>capacity to deal with problems</u> , for example, Technical and operational capacities in the Department of Protected Areas and/or the regional authorities are below those required to adequately address the problems. Enforcement and awareness campaigns require high level and consistent funding, well-developed long-term planning capacities, highly trained staff, well-developed co-ordination mechanisms and high levels of awareness in local populations to better accept and direct potential resource allocation to actions that produce benefits to communities.</p> <p>4. <u>Insufficient Funding:</u> At current, there is no funding available for the implementation of the Mtirala management plan and/or the environmental action plan.</p> <p>5. Inadequate <u>community awareness</u> of the importance of biodiversity conservation and the role of the support zone forests and the RWPM for the support zone communities. While this awareness is growing it is not</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ⇒ Develop sustainable alternatives to fuelwood removal. ⇒ Elaborate and implement progressive forest management plans in the support zone. ⇒ Provide assistance to livestock holders to reduce livestock, alternative sites for grazing and improve production. ⇒ Enhance animal husbandry as alternative source of protein to poached wildlife (i.e., fish, birds, rabbits, pigs etc.). ⇒ Strengthen control over illegal logging and increase monitoring of park. Improve natural resource exploitation in the support zone by developing regulatory mechanisms and enforcing them in this sector. ⇒ Improve local operators' capacity for sustainable tourism ventures ⇒ Develop economic alternatives in the support zone compatible with biodiversity conservation. ⇒ Convert the enclave into an "eco-village" as part of the management plan. ⇒ Consolidate the prevention system by strengthening implementation of prevention and detection of adverse environmental impacts and improve capacity of key institutions to execute the plan. ⇒ Strengthen the technical and operational capacity of local authorities for planning and implementation of enforcement and support zone programs. ⇒ Locate sufficient funding for the implementation of the management plan (i.e., this fund-raising activity). ⇒ Implement the management plan for the support zone. ⇒ Increase the awareness of local residents.

ROOT CAUSES OF THREAT	ACTIVITIES TO MITIGATE THREAT
<p>fully reflected in practices of the resident population.</p> <p>6. Sectoral and inter-disciplinary planning, particularly in the rural areas, does not sufficiently address the issue of adverse impacts on forest ecosystems due to the various types of over-utilisation.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Unclear land tenure issues pose a threat to successful regional land use planning. • Insufficient expertise and capacities compromise land use planning efforts in the region. 	<p>environmental problems in the region RWPM and participatory planning a</p> <p>⇒ Implement the action plan for environ as proposed in the management plan</p> <p>⇒ Develop capacities for regional land compatible with overall conservatio</p> <p>⇒ Elaborate participatory, integrated m plan to be based on an ecological ga</p> <p>⇒ Elaborate regional tourism develop on the RWPM and support zone.</p> <p>⇒ facilitate stakeholder participation in programs detailed in the managemen</p> <p>⇒ Identify and develop sustainable fun sustainable management of Mtirala</p> <p>⇒ Develop an agricultural and livestoc strategy that accommodates conserv incorporates incentives for the prod traditional crops and outlines measu rehabilitation of degraded lands.</p> <p>⇒ Increase the awareness and knowled agriculturists and livestock owners practices.</p> <p>⇒ Increase local support for sustainab development and environmental cor the implementation of environmenta and model projects in the support z</p> <p>⇒ Develop criteria and guidelines to b sectoral planning to minimise the ris poor land use practices and resourc</p>
<p>Proximate Threat 2: Contamination of land and marine ecosystems</p>	
<p>There is growing contamination of terrestrial and aquatic habitats in the Ajara region, especially in the rather densely west of the RWPM and the coastal zone. Although the significance of this to biodiversity loss in overall terms is very impacts do occur although these have yet to be fully measured.</p>	
<p>1. Insufficient basic sanitation systems for the increasing resident human population is resulting in uncontrolled discharge of untreated effluents near human settlements and infiltration to ground water through poorly constructed septic facilities. Solid waste disposal further contribute to contamination of ground water.</p> <p>2. Poor control of agricultural chemicals, such as pesticides, fungicides and fertilisers will increase the level of contaminants in cultivated areas and</p>	<p>⇒ Improve solid and liquid waste disp support zone communities and enha measures which include the develop guidelines that regulate waste contin that limit the production and stimula management of domestic and indust implement solid and liquid disposal</p> <p>⇒ Strengthen the capacity of agricultu producers to implement sustainable</p>

ROOT CAUSES OF THREAT	ACTIVITIES TO MITIGATE THREAT
disrupt the fragile ecosystems and habitats that characterise the Ajara region.	⇒ Provide official guidelines for safe u agriculture.
<p>Critical Root Cause: Human Population Increase</p> <p>Due to favourable climate and access by land and sea, the Ajara region has historically been a place of preference to live. Changes in the region during the last century have been dramatic (i.e., a six-fold population increase). This has caused localised pressure on biodiversity through habitat degradation at sites where human settlements have developed. However, in terms this effect on biodiversity is low compared to the significance that human population increase has as a root cause of threats to biodiversity. Of special significance in this context are resource over-exploitation and habitat destruction (timber). Increase in the population in the Ajara Republic is due to immigration and a relatively high natural birth-rate in comparison to the national average. The increasing number of residents do not have a longstanding commitment to the conservation in the region or a comprehension of the uniqueness of the region's sub-tropical ecosystems which are of global significance. Furthermore, some agricultural practices and habits from other parts of Georgia that may have adverse conservation implications.</p>	
<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Immigration rates from other parts of Georgia have been high (approx. 80 000 people within the past 5 years). <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Living conditions are less severe in the Ajara region than in other parts of Georgia. • In some sectors salaries are higher in Ajara than the rest of the country. • With dramatically increasing importance of the coastal ports -especially for oil and gas transit- and with the opening of the Turkish border, the economic future of the region is highly attractive. 2. Weak development planning and absence of clear population policies including land use, resource allocation and infrastructure guidelines appropriate for the Ajara region, have led to poor use of space and degradation of habitats in and around human settlements. 3. Poor community support in implementation of immigration control. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ⇒ Review the price and salary policies for compatibility with country levels and provide social services and thus remove apparent causes to immigration. ⇒ Solve the land tenure issues. ⇒ Embark on participatory regional development planning involving key stakeholders. ⇒ Strengthen the capacity of regional planning and develop guidelines for sector development. Define a population zoning policy that incorporates the need for impact assessments to regulate activities in urban growth and infrastructure. ⇒ Increase the awareness in the residence about the impact of immigration on conservation.