



# BioTopic

## National Biodiversity Monitoring System (NBMS) of Georgia

### Background

During the last decades Georgia's Biodiversity has been severely affected by the destruction of habitats through large-scale transformations of forests into agricultural land and grassland, as well as through various unsustainable practices in using natural resources. In addition to the destruction of habitats, a lot of species are endangered of extinction or became already extinct in Georgia through exploitive hunting practises and poaching activities. Nowa days, additional factors like urban sprawl for road and house construction as well as the development of industrial regions and the large-scale development of recre-

ational areas (e.g. skiing sites) are endangering the existence of a lot of species. With reference to the United Nations Convention on Biological Diversity (CBD), Georgia has developed a National Biodiversity Strategy and Action Plan (2005) outlining its future policy in the field of biodiversity protection. A key issue of this strategy which has been agreed among the concerned parties is the implementation of a national biodiversity monitoring system.

### Objectives

The monitoring of biodiversity is a precondition for taking decisions on

suitable measures to minimize or stop the loss of biodiversity or even to improve the situation of threatened species. The biodiversity monitoring data, together with other environmental data, form an important basis for the future nature conservation policy and for other policy areas that have a significant impact on biodiversity such as agriculture and forestry, road construction and land-use planning. The results of biodiversity monitoring are therefore relevant information to the Government and policy makers in various sectors.

### Implementation

The establishment of the NBMS is a governmental initiative under the guidance of the Ministry of Environment Protection and Natural Resources (MEPNR). With the establishment of the NBMS, the MEPNR would like to offer its close collaboration with national organizations (universities, governmental as well as non-governmental organizations) in the field of biodiversity protection. The NBMS is inspired





by the realization, that the challenge of biodiversity protection and the sustainable use of biodiversity need a pool of all knowledge, experience and resources available in Georgia:

#### *Ministry of Environment Protection and Natural Resources*

Within the NBMS the MEPNR is represented by the Biodiversity Protection Service (BPS), which has the co-ordinating role and is recipient of recommendations related to the improvement of policies and the legal framework for biodiversity protection. It will play an active role in intra-ministerial collaboration as well as in the preparation and acquisition of projects and design of measures to implement actions in the field of biodiversity protection and its sustainable management. The BPS is in charge of reporting on the results of the NBMS to the public.

#### *The Task Group on the NBMS*

The Task Group on NBMS consists of representatives of different units of the Ministry as the BPS, the Forest Department as well as the Agency of Protected Areas (APA), Universities and NGOs. It works in close co-operation with BPS and manages the process of the implementation of the NBMS.

#### *National organizations*

National organizations and entities dealing with biodiversity protection and being involved in biodiversity monitoring are invited to participate in the NBMS. This includes governmental and non-governmental organizations, consulting companies

and scientific institutions. All participating organizations are invited to register for their involvement in NBMS at the BPS. The participating national organizations form a non-formal consultative group on NBMS and will be invited for consultations by the task group on NBMS.

## Indicators

The conceptual basis of the NBMS is built by 25 indicators, which have been selected according to the internationally accepted and widely used OECD Model. Through the regular assessment of these 26 indicators the overall status and trends of biodiversity in Georgia can be monitored as well as threats for biodiversity be identified. The effectiveness of nature protection and conservation measures will also be made visible. The NBMS is built on the following three types of indicators:

*Pressure Indicators* describe the various factors which affect species diversity. This set of indicators includes aspects like fragmentation of landscape, agriculture, hunting or fishery.

The *State Indicators* give a firsthand description of both the state and the development of biodiversity. State Indicators are covering the following three levels of diversity: genetic diversity, diversity of ecosystems and habitats as well as species diversity.

*Response Indicators* measure the trends and the development that contribute to maintaining biodiversity, e.g. change in number and size of adequately protected areas, change in financial resources for nature and landscape conservation, change in the total area under organic farming.

## Current Status

The legal basis for the establishment of the NBMS is the Ministerial Order nr. 293 as of May 22, 2009 of the Minister of Environment Protection and Natural Resources. All indicators have been defined, the task group is established. Until end of 2009 the methodologies for monitoring all indicators are supposed to be elaborated. From 2010 on biodiversity monitoring activities will be launched.



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