

# A Typology of Transboundary Protected Areas: Different Approaches for Different Needs

IUCN defines a **transboundary protected area** as: "an area of land and/or sea that straddles one or more borders between states, sub-national units such as provinces and regions, autonomous areas and/or areas beyond the limit of national sovereignty or jurisdiction, whose constituent parts are especially dedicated to the protection and maintenance of biological diversity, and of natural and associated cultural resources, and managed cooperatively through legal or other effective means".

Furthermore, **Parks for Peace** are defined as: "transboundary protected areas that are formally dedicated to the protection and maintenance of biological diversity and of natural and associated cultural resources, and to the promotion of peace and cooperation".

However, transboundary conservation can include a wide variety of different approaches, linked by the common theme that they extend across international borders. Examples range from two protected areas in different countries sharing a common border and cooperating, to a mosaic of land uses in three or more countries contributing to biodiversity conservation. The nature of the relationship between various protected areas can vary from a formal recognition of the transboundary protected areas, defined legally in the two or more countries involved and with support from the highest political level, to a much simpler and less formal arrangement of cooperation and sharing of information, skills and resources.



Photo: Eva Müller

As we learn more about practising conservation

across borders, the range of different approaches to creating and managing transboundary protected areas continues to expand. At a workshop organised jointly by IUCN - The World Conservation Union and the International Tropical Timber Organisation in Ubon Ratchathani, Thailand in February 2003, participants developed a typology that describes five different types of transboundary protected area. These are listed and some examples of each given below.

- Two or more contiguous protected areas across a national boundary
- A cluster of protected areas and the intervening land
- A cluster of separated protected areas without intervening land
- A trans-border area including proposed protected areas
- A protected area in one country aided by sympathetic land use over the border

## Examples of the Typology

- **Two or more contiguous protected areas across a national boundary:** This is what most people visualise when they hear about a transboundary protected area, but is only one model. An example is Park "W", which is shared by Benin, Burkina Faso and Niger and is being managed cooperatively for common conservation aims.
- **A cluster of protected areas and the intervening land:** Is more ambitious in that it attempts to balance strict protection with sustainable management in buffer zones and other parts of the landscape. The World Bank is currently developing such a project in the West Tien Shan Mountains of Central Asia, which will focus first on four protected areas and later extend over parts of Uzbekistan, Kazakhstan and the Krygyz Republic.



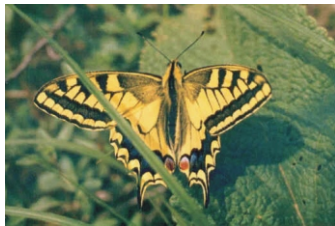
Photo: Sarawak Forestry Department

***A cluster of separated protected areas without intervening land:*** In practice, it is not always politically or practically possible to include intervening land and some successful transboundary initiatives have involved protected areas that are geographically separated but share common ecology or problems, and usually have some interchange between species. An example currently under development with support from IUCN is a transboundary initiative in the Great Lakes region of Africa involving Kibira National Park in Burundi, Virunga National Park in the Democratic Republic of Congo and Volcanoes National Park in Rwanda, which all have common management aims but no control over intervening farmland.

- ***A trans-border area including proposed protected areas:*** Some transboundary initiatives have started with protected areas in one country or region, with the hope of extending protection across the border, but without any formal agreement. This might be a transitional stage, with the area later becoming, for example, two or more contiguous areas across a national boundary. The Pha Taem Trans-border Initiative between Thailand, Laos and Cambodia, is developing a complex including four existing and one proposed protected areas in Thailand as well as proposed protected areas in Laos and Cambodia.

- ***A protected area in one country aided by sympathetic land use over the border :*** Sometimes there will be no realistic expectation (or perhaps no need) for protected areas on both sides of a border, but a need for sympathetic management in one country to safeguard a protected area in its neighbour's country. An example is in the island of Borneo, where improved forest management on the Malaysian side of the border is helping to preserve populations of large animals in the adjoining Kayan Mentarang National Park in Indonesia.

This theme paper was prepared by Nigel Dudley for IUCN, drawing on results of an ITTO/IUCN workshop.



Photos: Talgat Kerteshev