

Cultural and Spiritual Significance of Nature in the Management and Governance of Protected and Conserved Areas: Phase 2

Concept note for developing a network, training modules, and best practice guidelines

*Proposed by: IUCN WCPA Specialist Group on Cultural and Spiritual Values of Protected Areas (CSVPA)
 and The Mountain Institute (TMI)*

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Introduction:

To be sustainable, effective, and equitable, approaches to the management and governance of protected and conserved areas need to be grounded not only in solid scientific research and practice, but also in deeply held cultural, spiritual and aesthetic values and ideas capable of inspiring conservation of biological and cultural diversity. Otherwise, they risk failing to win the broad support of key stakeholders, ranging from Indigenous Peoples and local communities to followers of mainstream religions, and members of the general public. With the expanding range of different kinds of protected areas around the world, it is critical to expand the scope of protected area management and governance to acknowledge and take into account the rights and aspirations of stakeholders from a variety of cultural and religious backgrounds.

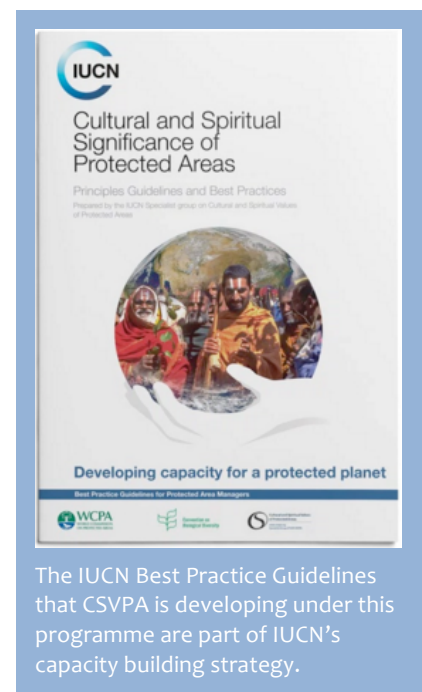
What is this programme about?

Develop Phase 2 of a project initiated at the last World Parks Congress in 2014 to promote the role of the cultural and spiritual significance of nature in the management and governance of various kinds of protected areas, ranging from national parks to community conserved areas, with a focus on the simultaneous development of three components:

1. CSVPA network of practitioners and professionals, see www.csvpa.org
2. IUCN WCPA Best Practice Guidelines (BPG)
3. Training modules and on the ground training.

What do we want to achieve?

- Broaden the scope of protected and conserved area management and governance to include the cultural, historic, social, spiritual, and aesthetic significance that natural features, landscapes, seascapes, and concepts of nature have for people of diverse societies and cultures, both traditional and modern.
- Highlight and promote the role of the cultural and spiritual significance of nature in engaging local communities, indigenous traditions, mainstream religions, and the general public in supporting protected and conserved areas in order to reach a larger audience and have a wider appeal and impact.



- Build on collaborations in such fields as interpretation, management, governance, conservation, and best practice implementation in order to help protected and conserved area managers and planners to:
 1. Incorporate and promote cultural and spiritual perspectives
 2. Improve their relationships with all stakeholders, inclusive of Indigenous Peoples and local communities
 3. Garner additional, more sustainable support from the general public and mainstream religions.



The sacred peninsula of the Mount Athos World Heritage site in Greece has been governed and managed as an autonomous Christian monastic republic for over one thousand years in accordance with religious views and, recently, in collaboration with outside environmental organizations.

How will we do this?

- Focus on protected and conserved area decision makers, management staff, and conservation practitioners interested in the cultural and spiritual significance of nature who are positioned to introduce and implement these approaches in their organisations or protected and conserved areas.
- Bring together and engage the different kinds of stakeholders that manage and govern protected and conserved areas - including protected area managers, representatives of indigenous traditions, mainstream religions, and environmental organizations representing the general public working in various areas related to the topic.
- Work with a core team of people developing the network and BPG and conducting training modules.

Activities for the programme components:

The three project components (network, guidelines and training modules) are interrelated and will be developed simultaneously. The CSVPA network will be engaged through international workshops, surveys, and an online community in order to further the BPG and the training modules, which in turn will inspire the networks' members to share and develop activities that they can implement in their own protected and conserved areas.

Activities Developing Training Modules and Best Practice Guidelines (BPG)

- Develop in tandem training modules and BPG on integrating the cultural and spiritual significance of nature into protected area management, governance, and conservation. The strength of this approach lies in the synergies between the coordinated development and testing of both products.
- Conduct a workshop on developing the modules and BPG at the World Conservation Congress in Hawai'i in 2016 (currently unfunded) and two workshops in 2016 and 2017 on the Isle of Vilm funded by the German Federal Agency for Nature Conservation (BfN).
- Research, write, edit, design, and publish BPG in tandem with developing training modules and workshops that make use of them.
- Explore and share other ways, in addition to workshops and training modules, of disseminating best practice experiences and implementing BPG more suited to certain cultural contexts.



A hiker contemplates mountains in the Dolomites of northern Italy. The inspirational value of nature motivates members of the general public to support protected areas around the world.

- Develop, disseminate, and conduct modules for training protected and conserved area managers in ways of making their work more equitable, sustainable, and effective by integrating spiritual and cultural perspectives into their approaches to conserving natural heritage and fully involving local communities and other stakeholders with interests in their protected areas.
- Design modules to fit into larger and more general conferences, training programs, and workshops that management staff and others are coming to for a number of other reasons, thereby extending the reach of the modules well beyond the more limited range of stand-alone workshops.
- Transform training modules into interactive e-modules that would stand on their own to be accessed on or downloaded from the web.



The Dhimurru Indigenous Protected Area (IPA) is governed and managed by the Dhimurru Aboriginal Corporation. While the IPA's governance is guided by the traditional law of the Yolngu people, the area is managed up to IUCN Category V standards following a principle of “both ways” management that involves Yolngu as well as external experts.

Activities Developing a CSVPA Network to Sustain the Project

- Strengthen and extend the CSVPA network of those interested in integrating spiritual and cultural values into protected and conserved area management and governance.
- Establish connections with protected and conserved area managers interested in taking the new BPG back to their protected areas and having workshops or modules done there in their training programs.
- Make use of and further develop the website (www.csvpa.org), including discussion groups where people can continue to share experiences and come for advice and assistance in consultation.
- Disseminate lessons learned, best practices, and case studies in a peer reviewed book for policy makers, conservationists, academics, and protected and conserved area managers.

How can you support this programme?

The programme collaborates with IUCN, The Mountain Institute, and others organizations. Donors such as The Christensen Fund and The German Federal Ministry for Nature Conservation (BfN) have supported parts of the programme. If you interested in supporting or collaborating on the programme or if you have further questions, please do not hesitate to contact the CSVPA Co-chairs: Edwin Bernbaum and Bas Verschuuren.

Cultural & Spiritual Nature Programme

Recognition and Promotion of the Cultural and Spiritual Significance of Nature in the Management and Governance of Protected Areas

Hosted by: The Mountain Institute.

Contact: CSVPA Co-chairs: Edwin Bernbaum: ebornbaum@mounain.org and Bas Verschuuren: basverschuuren@gmail.com

Support: The project is open to parties interested in collaborating and/or supporting the project in kind or financially. Currently The Christensen Fund, The World Commission on Protected Areas and the German Federal Agency for Nature Conservation (BfN) are supporting the project.

[BEST PRACTICE GUIDELINES](#)
[TRAINING MODULES](#)
[FORUM DISCUSSIONS](#)

Visit the CSVPA website at www.csvpa.org to learn more about our Programme on the Cultural and Spiritual Significance of Nature in Protected and Conserved Areas Management and Governance.