

## Support for Protected and Conserved Areas and Governance in Iran

Workshop on Governance Assessment of Protected and Conserved Areas (PCAs) in Iran  
Workshop on Transboundary Conservation in Iran and Neighbouring Countries

30 July-7 August, 2016

Shahsevan Tribal Confederacy, Summering Grounds, Ardabil, Iran  
Jolfa, Aras Free Zone, East Azerbaijan, Iran



*Workshop on Governance Assessment of Protected and Conserved Areas (PCAs) in Iran, Takle Tribe  
summering grounds, Mount Savalan*

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## Description

- 1.1. Name of beneficiary of grant contract: Centre for Sustainable Development and Environment (Cenesta)
- 1.2. Name and title of the Contact person: Mohammad Taghi Farvar, Chair of the Board
- 1.3. Title of the Action: **Support for Protected and Conserved Areas and Governance in Iran**
- 1.4. Contract number: Project P01147, Award Number AVCH-00548, AVCH-00604
- 1.5. Start date and end date of the reporting period: 1 March 2016, 31 July 2017
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- 1.7. Final beneficiaries &/or target groups (if different): Some 1.5 million indigenous nomadic pastoralists in Iran, organised into about 600 independent tribes and 100 tribal confederacies. Department of the Environment of Iran, Forests, Rangelands and Watershed Management Organisation of Iran, Aras Free Zone, Succow Foundation (Germany), ICCA Consortium and its members, Civil Society Organisations, Community Based Organisations and Indigenous Peoples, other countries implementing similar projects from the IUCN, members of the Global Forest Coalition, UNDP-Global Support Initiative (GSI) and Cenesta.

## Executive Summary

With the technical support of IUCN and the ICCA Consortium and the financial assistance of IUCN, European Commission, Aras Free Zone Authority and the Succow Foundation (Germany), Cenesta organised two successive workshops on Governance Assessment of Protected and Conserved Areas (PCAs) and Transboundary Conservation in Iran and Neighbouring Countries. The Department of the Environment (DOE) and Forests, Rangelands and Watershed Management Organisation of Iran were among the main national supporting organisations.

Cenesta has worked with the indigenous nomadic tribes and local communities of Iran for decades and has gathered information and many examples of best practices on a large variety of sustainable and effective governance systems for conservation of nature and natural resources practiced by them. Realising the importance of governance diversity, Cenesta set up the workshops to be held at a critical time for Iran's official governance and management system of protected and conserved areas (PCAs). As Iran strives to reach the Aichi Targets by 2020 and to upgrade its National Biodiversity Strategies and Action Plan (NBSAP-II) a welcoming environment is created to facilitate the appropriate recognition of ICCAs as an IUCN-recognised governance system and to help recognise indigenous peoples and local community rights and responsibilities in governing their customary territories. This will help ensure governance diversity, quality and vitality for the future of PCAs. Cenesta has also worked in conservation projects such as the Asiatic Cheetah Project (where it acted on behalf of IUCN Commission on Environmental, Economic and Social Policy—CEESP) and on the governance system of PCAs in Iran and other countries. It has also worked on marine, coastal and island conservation.

The workshop on Governance Assessment of Protected and Conserved Areas in Iran was held between 30 July and 3 August 2016. It was held in a thriving ICCA; the Takle Tribe summering grounds of the Shahsevan Tribal Confederacy in North Western Iran on Mount Savalan, Iranian Azerbaijan region.

One of the most important outcomes of this workshop was the valuable alliances built between IPs/LCs and government agencies. This alliance will serve future endeavours relating to the appropriate recognition of Governance Type D (by indigenous peoples and local communities) both nationally and internationally—which will help in achieving Aichi Target 11. Additionally, the governance assessment and mapping exercises in the workshop were successful in demonstrating the views and suggestions of IPs/LCs, which were collected and later integrated within Iran's NBSAP-II. The participants became well familiar with the IUCN Matrix of PCAs and the traditions, and customary governance systems for conservation of the Shahsevan Tribal Confederacy.

The first multi-stakeholder and international workshop on transboundary conservation was held in the city of Jolfa, Aras Free Zone, East Azerbaijan province. Jolfa is near the borders of Azerbaijan and Armenia. Held between 3–7 August, the workshop attracted participants from Iran's terrestrial and marine neighbours. Results of this workshop include:

- Main biodiversity hotspots shared by various groups of countries identified;

- Most damaging invasive alien species preliminarily identified such as *mesquite* (*Prosopis juliflora*);
- Governance strategies of Iran and outputs of the workshop on governance assessment of protected and conserved areas in Iran shared with neighbouring countries;
- National experiences in governance diversity shared;
- Programmes and mechanisms of the IUCN explained to the participants



## 1. Workshop on Governance Assessment of Protected and Conserved Areas in Iran

### Workshop Preparations

In June and July 2016 weekly meetings were arranged with the office of the Deputy Head of the Department of the Environment (DOE) of Iran to discuss the participation and support of the DOE for the upcoming workshops. The set date for the workshop on Governance Assessment of PCAs in Iran was from 30 July to 3 August 2016 and the workshop on Transboundary Conservation was set to be held in the border city of Jolfa in North Eastern Iran between 3 and 7 August.

These dates would accommodate the only window of opportunity for the presence of Dr Trevor Sandwith, Director of Global Protected Areas Programme of IUCN, and Ziad Samaha, Programme Manager and Iran Focal Point in the Regional Office for West Asia of IUCN.

As both workshops were held back to back, a series of preparatory field visits were planned to both Jolfa and Takle Tribe of the Shahsevan Tribal Confederacy summering grounds. In June 2016 a team of documentary producers from Cenesta travelled to the Shahsevan summering grounds to film a documentary that was later premiered during the workshop. They managed to film some of the customary governance measures taken by the tribe for sustainable use of resources and conservation of nature such as preparing small water reservoirs for livestock and designating areas of their territory for regeneration and recovery of vegetation. Parts of this documentary focused on issues that the tribe faces due to lack of appropriate tenure of their lands and territory.

The workshop was hosted by Mr Naser Ahmadi, Head of Takle Tribe Community Based Organisation (CBO). He is an active member of the Tribe and has many contacts with government officials of the Ardabil Province. He facilitated the participation of many prominent government representatives in the workshop such as the District Governor of Sareyn and the Director General of the Agricultural Bureau of Ardabil Province.

In April during a meeting in Cenesta headquarters, the material that needed to be translated, produced, maps and booklets were discussed and selected. Large parts of the book; “Governance of Protected Areas: from Understanding to Action” were translated into Persian as well as A Primer of Governance for Protected and Conserved Areas. The Territorial Assessment Working Group of Cenesta produced the following maps for the workshops:

- Map of pilot ICCAs that Cenesta has worked with;
- The overlap of ICCAs and official protected areas;
- Map of Iran’s biomes;
- Map of Iran and neighbouring countries.

The IUCN Matrix of Protected and Conserved Areas was translated and printed on A0 papers to be used during the exercises of the workshops.

Negotiations with the DOE continued through June and July and they fully supported the workshops. The most recent map of the official PCAs in Iran was provided by the DOE. In July the Division of Biodiversity and the Natural Environment of the DOE introduced participants for both workshops from its provincial bureaux. Many of the high level officials of the DOE were invited to participate in the workshop such as Dr Farhad Dabiri; Deputy Director of the DOE, Dr Goshtasb Meiguni; Head of the Bureau of Protected Areas and experts from named office. Some 30 participants were invited to participate in the workshop as government representatives. Meetings were also held with the Senior Deputy Director of FRWO and the Bureau of Environment and Sustainable Development of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs.

In mid-July some Cenesta experts travelled to the Takle Tribe summering grounds to find a suitable location for the workshop. This location had to be at a reasonable distance from the City of Sareyn in case of any emergencies.

On 26 July four Cenesta experts travelled to the venue of the workshop to set up tents, hire and/or purchase needed equipment and arrange transportation from Sareyn District to Mount Savalan. The venue of the workshop is located in a remote area far from the nearest city with minimal equipment. The area is completely off grid and electricity is only available via small scale generators. The dispatched team hired and installed 4 electricity generators on location.

The water resource of the Takle Tribe is a spring located in a higher altitude, rather distant from the tent-hold of Mr Ahmadi. However, the tribe have used hose pipes to transport water to the surrounding tent-holds. Since water is available on site, the Cenesta team set up four latrines and three outdoor showers. With the help and assistance of tribe members, three traditional tents were raised for the workshop as well as a tent that served as kitchen.







*Figure 1. Workshop venue, assembly of traditional Shahsevan tents*

### Venue and ICCA Description

Takle is one of the 32 tribes of the Shahsevan Tribal Confederacy. It is composed of 120 tent-holds and 60 nomadic camps (*obas*). Their territory is approximately 12,000 hectares and they migrate some 200 kilometres between wintering grounds located in the Moghan Plain and their summering grounds on Mount Savalan heights.

The community based organisation of the Takle Tribe was formally established and registered in 2006 under the name “Sustainable Livelihoods Council of the Migrating Takle Tribe Fund”. This organisation was established to ensure conservation of biodiversity within the territories of the tribe, sustainable use of resources such as medicinal plants and pastures and maintaining traditional livelihoods through migration.

Livestock are the most prominent capital of migrating tribes. For centuries, the Shahsevan have been known for their native breed of *moghan* sheep. The Shahsevan sell thousands of kilos of red meat year round to national markets. The livestock feed from pastures, residues and manual feed. Types of feed differ based on time of year and the location of the tribe. Dairy products are a trademark of the Shahsevan. They produce milk, cheese and curd as well butter. Other livestock products include; wool, manure and leather.

The indigenous knowledge of the Shahsevan governance of natural resources is incredibly smart. To conserve the biodiversity of their pastures they have developed a set of management methods that cater to their environment, such as:

- Seasonal migration;
- Assessment of destination pastures prior to migration;
- Rotational grazing;
- Seeding the natural pastures;

- Livestock diversity in each herd;
- Adjustment of livestock numbers based on pasture assessment;
- Conservation of pasture segments;
- Restoration of degraded pasture lands;
- Manual feed.

## Participating Stakeholders and Right Holders

Participants of this workshop included:

- Dr Trevor Sandwith, Director of Global Protected Areas Programme of IUCN, and Ziad Samaha, Programme Manager and Iran Focal Point in the Regional Office for West Asia of IUCN;
- Representatives from the Department of the Environment of Iran; both from the main office in Tehran and from provincial bureaux (some 20 participants);
- Representatives from the Forest, Rangelands and Watershed Management Organisation (FRWO), from the main office in Tehran as well as the Director General of the provincial bureau of Ardabil;
- Representatives from tribal confederacies and local communities from across Iran including:
  - Qashqai Tribal Confederacy;
  - Bakhtiari Tribal Confederacy;
  - Abolhassani Tribal Confederacy;
  - Shahsevan Tribal Confederacy;
  - Toroud Tribal Confederacy;
  - Lak Tribal Confederacies;
  - Baluch Peoples;
  - Qeshm Island community members;
  - Assalouyeh Arab community members.
- Bureau of Environment and Sustainable Development of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs;
- Representatives from 5 Civil Society Organisations working on environmental issues across Iran.

## 1.1 Workshop Programme

### Opening and Introduction Session

The workshop on Governance of Protected and Conserved Areas in Iran started on the evening of 30 July with an introduction session. Each participant introduced him/herself and their organisation, tribe and community. This session continued throughout the evening and in the end a documentary about nature conservation in the Shahsevan Tribal Confederacy and the Takle Tribe was shown to the participants. This documentary demonstrates the governance systems that the Shahsevan have developed for conservation (including sustainable use) of resources such as medicinal plants and water.



*Figure 2. Introduction session*



### First day events

The workshop officially opened with a presentation and speech from the Project Leader, Dr Taghi Farvar. Following the official opening Dr Trevor Sandwith presented two main topics:

- The promise of Sydney and its outcomes;
- The concept of governance quality, diversity and vitality.

This presentation elaborated upon the role of IPs/LCs in governance of PCAs worldwide, highlighted the importance of protected areas as sanctuaries for nature in a world that is facing environmental crisis, introduced the IUCN Green List of Protected and Conserved Areas and the importance of organising such alliance building workshops in order to enhance governance in Iran.



*Figure 3. Official opening, presentations by Dr Farvar and Dr Trevor Sandwith*

Later that day Dr Farvar presented a timeline of conservation of nature in Iran. Starting from 10 -12 thousand years ago, migrating pastoralist tribes started taking shape across Iran. Throughout history these tribes developed many systems to govern and manage their natural resource with sustainability at their centre. Around 3 thousand years ago, the first central government was organised in Iran bringing about hunting areas for kings. These types of governance, along with practices by local communities shaped the way Iranians used and optimized their natural resources until 1956. In this year the first official PA systems were shaped and various types of PCAs were established. Today the official system of PCAs consists of four categories whose governance is executed by the government. A chart on the timeline of nature conservation in Iran is available in Appendix 1.

The last session of the day was a set of round tables:

- Government representatives,  
In this round table members of the Natural Environment Bureau of the DOE elaborated upon their endeavours to diversify governance in certain zones within the official protected area system. When preparing management plans for protected areas, based on the ecological capacity of an area, special zones are dedicated to participatory management. By taking into consideration a set of specific standards, a memorandum of understanding is signed between the government and local communities present in the area to facilitate their participation in management of the

protected area. The government officials mentioned many successful examples of participation especially for wildlife conservation.

This group believed that satisfaction of both sides (government and local communities) is possible through the combination of science, technology and experience.

- CSOs,  
This group presented their work with indigenous peoples and local communities on various conservation subjects such as sustainable water management (*qanat*<sup>1</sup> restoration), re-empowerment of IPs/LCs, identifying complimentary livelihoods (especially for tribes and communities whose territories overlap with official PAs) and the preparation of Participatory Zoning Plan of Nayband National Park.
- Indigenous peoples and local communities,  
UNINOMAD members, including heads of Community Based Organisations (CBOs) explained their relationship with nature and natural resources:
  - Various ICCAs and governance systems such as; specifically protected zones within their territories that are not used for a period of time to allow recovery of vegetation, restoration efforts for rivers and reintroduction of native fish species within the ecosystem and areas of sea designated specially for the recovery of fish populations in Qeshm Island;
  - The indisputable reliance of IPs/LCs on the resources of their territories for maintaining traditional livelihoods;
  - The relationship between IPs/LCs and their environment is not limited to livelihoods. Nature is often referred to as “mother nature” with roots deep within the customs, traditions and handicrafts of IPs/LCs;
  - Participatory governance is a necessity;
  - Bearing the responsibility of nature conservation is only realised fully when ownership of the territory is given back to IPs/LCs collectively.

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<sup>1</sup> *Qanats* are a series of wells that transport water from mountain skirts to plains in arid areas.

This group believes that conserving their way of life, traditional livelihoods and livestock herding is only possible through sustainable use of natural resources and conservation of nature.



*Figure 4. Roundtable discussions of stakeholder groups*



## Second day events

A SWOT (strengths, weaknesses, opportunities, threats) analysis was carried out by three stakeholder groups; government representatives, CSOs and IPs/LCs in parallel. Each stakeholder group relocated to a separate *alachigh*<sup>2</sup> and through a brainstorming session, the strengths, weaknesses, opportunities and threats of their attribution to governance was written on idea cards (one idea per card). Later the idea cards were categorised and through a participatory problem analysis process a problem tree was produced for each stakeholder group.

### Government representatives group analysis of brainstorming and problem tree

At the beginning of the twentieth century modern states were formed in many developing countries including Iran. Since this development, many IPs/LCs have lost their land tenure rights which has weakened sustainable use of natural resources. Governance of PCAs became a completely governmental matter and the indigenous knowledge developed by IPs/LCs throughout history was neglected and set aside. This issue combined with modernisation and industrialisation undermined the safety net (their interaction with natural resources) of IPs/LCs.

The government of Iran has imposed many changes on land use and natural resource management since the decree of nationalisation of forests, pastures, and natural resources in 1963. This decree also abolished private participatory ownership of land by IPs/LCs. Much of the land repossessed by the government has been extremely degraded and over exploited under the pretext of development by a variety of sectors such as oil industry, agriculture, dam industry, etc. Since its establishment in 1956, the Department of Fish and Game which later evolved into the Department of the Environment of Iran has been the custodian of PAs but due to lack of resources (monetary, social, technical and scientific) has not been very successful in its conservation impact.

In recent years, the government has taken a gradual turn towards a participatory approach to the management of PCAs. The most recent development was the distribution of a set of guidelines on the participation of other stakeholders including IPs/LCs in at least one PA in each province of Iran. Relevant government organisations have increasingly become aware of the role of IPs/LCs and civil society organisations in the sustainable use of natural resources and nature conservation.

However, multi-stakeholder workshops in the subject of this discussion have shown that most government participants hold different views from other stakeholder groups. This difference is seen either in the content or the vocabulary used by their peers. There are many reasons behind this issue, such as:

- Different approach to sustainable use;
- Institutionalisation of the top-down approach;
- Substitution of conservation with pure protection;
- The potential role of stakeholders in the degradation of natural resources.

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<sup>2</sup> Alachigh is the name of the traditional Shahsevan tent

Preparation and implementation of new regulations to facilitate and authorise participatory activities are now more common due to the change in the attitude of relevant government organisations towards a more inclusive and participatory approach.

In this SWOT session, government representative initially focused on the perceived low capacity of IPs/LCs in contributing to participatory activities. Later during the discussions government representatives seemed to change their mind and elaborated upon the role and importance of IPs/LCs in governance and sustainable use of natural resources.

The most repeated weakness during the brainstorming session was the redundancy of projects and work carried out by different government organisations in the environmental sector. Lack of coordination among government bodies causes a bulk of parallel activities that often do not complement each other and waste the little financial resources of the environmental sector.



*Figure 5. SWOT exercise, government representatives group*

### **IPs/LCs group analysis of brainstorming and problem tree**

The most prominent feature of IPs/LCs in their relationship with nature is the special bond they have created through history and inherited from their ancestors. During the brainstorming session the IPs/LCs group emphasized their strong interaction with mother earth leading to its conservation (preservation, sustainable use and restoration).

Weakening of social structures and internal disputes among tribe members or community is one of the problems that has caused a decline within governance systems and degraded their traditional customs. In this regard, CSOs help to promote the participation of IPs/LCs in meetings and various workshops through advocacy with government authorities and capacity building workshops. Mainstreaming IPs/LCs role in nature conservation, empowering them to stand for their rights (for example recognition of ICCAs) and encouraging their participation in decision making processes, are also expected from events such as this workshop. The IPs/LCs insisted that they are wrongfully portrayed as “exploiters of nature” and that further restrictions on the exertion of their customary traditions and way of life will not help alleviate the state of nature conservation and governance systems in Iran. Until recent times, the misinterpretation of the role of indigenous knowledge and customary governance systems in nature conservation had been so heavily scrutinized that it caused serious damage to the self-belief and confidence within community and tribe members.

Generally, government administration without the participation of IPs/LCs, suffers from lack of popular support which in its own place causes many problems. If this trend continues, not only will it not reverse the degradation of ecosystems but will intensify it.



*Figure 6. SWOT exercise, IPs/LCs representatives group*

### **CSOs group analysis of brainstorming and problem tree**

The current way of nature conservation and governance in Iran is changing in favour of participatory and inclusive approaches. However, achieving good governance in PCAs faces many challenges. The challenges are categorised into five groups:

- Weakness in sovereignty, management and supervision;
- Top- down approach in governance of PCAs and sustainable development plans;
- Existence of gaps in laws and regulations;
- Insufficient knowledge;
- Inefficient approach to sustainable development.

To overcome the obstacles in governance diversity, quality and vitality the following suggestions were offered by the CSO group:

- Appropriate recognition of ICCAs: CSOs can play an effective role in mainstreaming ICCAs and building networks between communities, tribes, other CSOs and the government;
- Improvement of laws and regulations related to participation of all right-holders and stakeholders: participation of CSOs and CBOs in preparation of laws and regulations can facilitate the appropriate recognition of ICCAs;
- Participation of all right-holders and stakeholders in decision making processes and implementation of resolutions: to achieve effective participation, capacity building and empowering of right-holders and stakeholders is necessary. CSOs can assist and share their knowledge during the process of decision making, preparation of management plans and re-empowerment of IPs/LCs;
- Advocacy for the recognition of all governance types: The four types of governance categorised by the IUCN are a result of accumulating years of best practices and experiences word wide. Appropriate adoption of governance diversity can improve the quality of governance in Iran. As the nomadic tribes of Iran migrate through some



59% (Organisation for Nomadic Peoples of Iran) of the country's total area adapting and implementing governance type D in the country would positively affect governance quality. ICCAs can serve as corridors and buffer zones that connect ecosystems and maintain their integrity;

- Participatory and accumulative environmental impact assessment, integrated land planning and monitoring;
- Improving monitoring, planning assessment methods: taking advantage of the capacities of CSOs and CBOs can improve monitoring on ecosystem functions, biodiversity, restoration projects and implementation of management plans;
- Building alliances among relevant government organisations such as the FRWO and DOE;
- Mainstreaming nature conservation concepts among all right-holder and stakeholder groups: By using their extensive networks CSOs can facilitate the mainstreaming of nature conservation concepts among government organisations as well as society as a whole;
- Use of international experiences and fulfilling Iran's international obligations in the environmental sector.

The goal of this exercise was to identify key issues in fields such as;

- Governance diversity;
- Identification of obstacles (legal, social, belief system, etc.) that prevent the participation of IPs/LCs in governance of PCAs and consequentially degrade governance quality and vitality;
- Finding common issues that challenge all stakeholders in nature conservation;
- Preparing the stakeholder groups to come together and envision a future for nature conservation in Iran;
- Preparing a strategy and action plan for future endeavours in governance and nature conservation.



*Figure 7. SWOT exercise, CSO representatives group*

At the end of the second day, all groups joined together and presented their SWOT analysis and problem trees. The presentations and following discussion were quite heated with

participants talking over each other and sometimes causing pandemonium, showing their enthusiasm.

### Third day events

The third day started with all participants sitting in stakeholder groups in an *alachigh*. They elaborated visions for a desirable future in governance and conservation of natural resources. The three groups had much in common when envisioning a future in which the difficulties and hindrances in nature conservation were no longer there. Since there were many similarities in the visions, representatives from the three groups decided to join in a session to prepare the participatory common vision of all groups (table 1).

**Table 1. The common vision of the three stakeholder groups, based on five main topics**

<b>Governance</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Integrity and connectivity of ecosystems within and among PCAs and indicator species are ensured using diverse governance types and through connecting PCAs;</li> </ul>
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Indigenous community conserved areas and their customary governance systems are appropriately and fully recognised as a system of governance of nature conservation;</li> </ul>
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>In 30 years' time, the government has become much smaller and is performing very well its support function for civil society and IPs/LCs;</li> </ul>
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>The governance of rangelands and nomadic territories is given back to the tribes;</li> </ul>
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>The rangelands and the environment of the territories of IPs/LCs are lively thanks to community management and government support;</li> </ul>
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Governance of PCAs is completely participatory;</li> </ul>
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Governance of PCAs and natural resources is exerted by IPs/LCs and CSOs with the support of the government;</li> </ul>
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Ecosystem management for natural landscapes is carried in the country with the participation of all stake-holders.</li> </ul>
<b>Legal</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Laws and regulations for nature conservation have been integrated together and are designed, implemented and monitored and assessed in a participatory manner;</li> </ul>
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Designated representatives in the parliament from IPs/LCs have decision making authority;</li> </ul>

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Article 50<sup>3</sup> of the constitution has been completely carried out;</li> </ul>
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Inconvenient laws in nature conservation have been omitted;</li> </ul>
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Knowledge and culture of all strata of society in different subjects (legal, conservation, social and economic) have reached their height;</li> </ul>
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Nature protection laws and regulations have been improved towards participatory governance systems;</li> </ul>
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>The private sector is aware of, and committed to, it's Social Corporate Responsibilities (CSRs).</li> </ul>
<b>Education</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Specific courses in universities are designated to indigenous knowledge;</li> </ul>
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>The higher education system of the is commensurate with sustainable development concepts and includes the conservation of nature;</li> </ul>
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Educational systems are commensurate with the regional specificities and the needs and structures of indigenous peoples and local communities and are in interaction with indigenous knowledge.</li> </ul>
<b>Livelihoods</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Sustainable livelihoods for IPs/LCs have been achieved;</li> </ul>
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Younger generations are working in their own native territories;</li> </ul>
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>In 30 years' time, IPs/LCs have strong management structures and international economic activities;</li> </ul>
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Fishing grounds are restored and fisher-folks no longer have the livelihood worries and there is no unemployment.</li> </ul>
<b>Sustainable development</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Dam construction is stopped and water transport between watersheds requires participatory decision making processes by the agreement of stakeholders involved;</li> </ul>
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>The concept and approach of sustainable development and participatory conservation (preservation, sustainable use and restoration) have been institutionalised in all of society and all stakeholder and right-holder groups and are implemented in a participatory manner;</li> </ul>

<sup>3</sup> Article 50 of the constitution of the I.R.I



	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Land use planning is implemented optimally;</li> </ul>
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>All industries in the country are now green industries.</li> </ul>
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Road construction and infrastructure development in the territories of IPs/LCs is based on their customary architecture;</li> </ul>

The last step in utilising the outputs of the SWOT analysis was preparing the Strategy and Action Plan. Participants were divided into smaller multi-stakeholder groups to prepare three short term (1-2 years), mid-term (5 years) and long-term (30 years) action plans. Time based action plans help build alliance within stakeholder groups and aligns their action plan with the 5-year development plans of the government. This alignment will facilitate taking advantage of all available resources including political, financial and legal resources to further the case of participatory governance and effective conservation of nature.

The action plan of the governance assessment workshop was prepared based on six main categorisations;

**Table 2. Action plan based on six main categories**

	Sort-term	Mid-term	Long-term
<b>Governance</b>	Identification of capacities and weaknesses within PCAs, as well as in relevant stakeholders and right-holders	Building trust and empowerment of CBOs for carrying out joint activities with the government	Implementation of management plans for PCAs with the participation and governance of IPs/LCs
	Identification of capacities and weaknesses in areas, stake-holders and right-holders	Mainstreaming the concept of integrated resource management and building alliance among CBOs and various government organisation such as Regional Water Organisations, Industry and Mining Institutes and ONPI	Assessment of the results and feedback of governance by IPs/LCs in pilot PCAs and, if positive, extending the approach to other PCAs
	Strengthening CBOs and increasing the number of CBOs within tribes and communities across Iran and their strong participation in governance of PCAs	Capacity and trust building among Community Based Organisations (CBOs) and between them and the government	The government play its supportive role by providing financial support for restoration
	Updating the maps of territories of IPs/LCs across Iran	Participation of CBOs in policy making processes and implementation of laws, regulations and guidelines	

	The implementation of governance by IPs/LCs as an example in each province of Iran	Identifying all stake-holders and right-holders for the governance of natural landscapes	
	Mainstreaming and building alliances for integrated land management on local, provincial and national levels by the government, CSOs and parliament with the help of media outlets, universities and educational systems	Agreement between IPs/LCs and the government for the integrated management and governance within PCAs and customary territories	
	Strengthen the quality and quantity of information given by media outlets, in particular by television and radio	Taking advantage of CSOs capacities in participatory activities and changing the general approach to participation of all stakeholders and right-holders	
		Formation of specialized committees and expert review by relevant organs such as FRWO, ONPI, Water Organisation, local communities, Land Affairs Organisation, industry and mining with the supervision of DOE	
		Decreasing bureaucratic processes for participatory management	
		Winning the confidence of IPs/LCs and CBOs for the governance of PCAs through organising educational sessions and promoting solidarity	
		Identifying suitable governance types and elaborating a management plan for each of the identified areas in a participatory manner based on capacities and	

Legal		weaknesses in each area	
		Identifying priority areas for participatory management and governance and bringing about connectivity among various ICCAs and private protected areas	
		Transfer of governance of some PAs to IPs/LCs in various biomes as a pilot experience	
	Revision in the constitutions of organisations that are currently custodians of natural resources and PCA systems;	Preparation and advocacy for ratification of laws and regulations that recognise the rights of IPs/LCs	Creation of a national fund that functions as financial compensation, insurance for damages, finding practical solutions, awareness raising among communities involved and identify the causes and types of damages;
	Participatory preparation of laws and regulations for sustainable use of natural resources	Preparation of laws and regulations on controlling and eradicating invasive alien species;	Integrated protection laws adopted by the Parliament to prevent contradiction between the laws of the DOE and the FRWO;
		Inviting lawyers to inform and educate local communities and tribes about legal issues	
		Building trust among CBOs, CSOs and the government and reducing the number of cumbersome laws and regulations	
		Reformation of laws and regulations related to the management of PCAs (natural areas);	
		Review and integration of the reparation of management plans of PCAs by the relevant government organisations;	
		Concrete attempts to implement customary	

		governance systems alongside the existing rules;	
		Revision and reformation of laws and regulations on regional, provincial and national levels;	
		Enforcing the use of sustainable use guidelines of natural areas by all stakeholders and right-holders;	
Education	Capacity building for the elevation of indigenous knowledge to match current status of natural resource availability;	Support for traditional educational methods common among IPs/LCs;	Promote public awareness and determination at all levels to support the action plans in implementing the opinions of all peoples.
	Preparation of programs that mainstream nature and natural resources as well as indigenous knowledge as a conservation instrument on national media outlets;	Mainstreaming of biodiversity and its function in life sustaining ecosystems cycles;	
	Identification of Indigenous knowledge in all areas related to nature conservation;	Environmental conservation education from kindergarten level and in national media;	
	Including indigenous knowledge within university syllabuses via holding meetings with university professors and authorities;	Practical education of nature conservation in primary schools and promotion of the further engagement of national media outlets in nature conservation subjects;	
	Identification of efficient and formidable talents and abilities and applying them;	Embedment of four courses in the higher education system, in all disciplines (as one of the public courses) for understanding the concepts of nature conservation, including three aspects of conservation and promotion of indigenous knowledge;	
		Carrying out comprehensive	

		studies in research centres and universities to identify ecological, social and economic resources;	
		Promotion of nomadic lifestyle and it's values through national media outlets;	
		Developing properties in areas with the use of indigenous knowledge education system white beard and white hair leaning on the customs of the natives and potential areas for self-sufficiency.	
Livelihoods	Setting up local markets that guarantee sale of traditional products of IPs/LCs such as dairy products and handicrafts	Supporting the enhancement of infrastructure for eco-tourism;	
	Supporting IPs/LCs in finding complimentary livelihoods in order to decrease pressure on natural resources	Supporting a system that would gradually eradicate middle men for identifying markets and selling traditional products of IPs/LCs;	
	Employing IPs/LCs in Green Industries in relevant areas.	Supporting the economic enhancement of infrastructure for handicrafts;	
		Identification of complementary livelihoods via consultations with IPs/LCs to reduce the exploitation of areas with high degradation of natural resources;	
		Creating local and traditional restaurants in natural areas;	
		Setting up sustainable livelihoods for IPs/LCs to create enough motivation for their participation in governance of natural resources;	
		Downstream agricultural development with the	

		involvement of local communities;	
		Trust building between government organisations and indigenous knowledge in agriculture to promote employment of IPs/LCs;	
Sustainable development	Attracting international interest and support for promotion and mainstreaming of best practices in sustainable use of natural resources	Transfer of knowledge from developed countries for greening industries	
		Integrated land use planning across the country;	
		Participatory management plans for PCAs;	
		Prevention of road-building and construction projects and participatory action research of environmental impacts of each construction project prior to implementation;	
		Participatory preparation of management plans by taking advantage of indigenous knowledge, modern science and government facilities;	
		Governors of each province diligent in carrying out land use planning and implementation;	
		Adoption and implementation of development projects taking into consideration the regional and provincial environmental impact assessments;	
		Carrying out participatory action research based on climate and vegetation of each territory and combining IK with modern science to ensure effectiveness.	
Ec os	Preparing maps of areas	Gathering reliable information	



	with particular importance and corridors	on social, ecological, existing governance structures and customary laws of IP/LC territories that overlap with PCAs	
	Accurate delineation of PCAs	Restoration of life sustaining ecosystems such as rivers, coral reefs, native tree species, etc.	



*Figure 8. Preparing the common vision and action plans*

The session ended with the presentation of the action plans.

### **IUCN Matrix; A practical exercise**

The third exercise of the workshop was based on the IUCN Matrix of PCAs. Since participants of the workshop were from a wide geographic range (most of the 31 provinces of Iran), the exercise saw the six multi-stakeholder sub-groups organised based on the biome with which they resonated. Maps of Iran's biomes were printed as well as the IUCN Matrix and each group was provided with a copy of a map and the Matrix. First, the participants (mainly government representatives) placed sticky notes with the name of the official PA on

the chart (governance type A). At the same time, IP/LC representatives started brainstorming the areas they designate for preservation, sacred sites, areas with sustainable use and areas with the most siting of wildlife. The CSO representatives also provided their information and the Matrix was slowly covered with sticky notes. Discussions in each group (especially if an overlap of ICCA and PCA was present) led to a re-categorisation of official PAs and ICCAs within different governance types and different protected area categories. Sticky notes with separate colours were used to demonstrate the re-categorisation.

The goal of this exercise was to:

- Examine the conformity of the official PA system of Iran with the IUCN definitions of protected areas;
- Examine governance diversity within the PCA system;
- Identify areas with high potential for governance type D (ICCAs);
- Identify ICCA and PA overlap instances in which governance type B (co-management) is plausible;
- Demonstrate the lack of engagement of other sectors within the official PCA system (in the begging only columns related to governance type A (by government) were filled);
- Recognise that inadequate laws and regulations are a major factor in the prevention of governance diversity and vitality.





*Figure 9. IUCN Matrix exercise and presentation of group work outputs*

The outputs of the sub-groups were later presented to all participants. A general consensus on the potential of re-categorisation and expansion of PCA networks was visible in the outputs, although a legal process may be needed to implement some of these recommendations.

The closing event of the workshop was the NBSAP-II exercise. During this exercise the draft Strategies and National Goals of the NBSAP-II were distributed among participants. Members of the steering committee of NBSAP-II preparation and the drafting group facilitated the exercise and gathered the inputs and suggestions of participants.

The exercise was carried out to:

- Share and include the suggestions, pressing issues and required resources of various stakeholder groups within the strategies and action plans of the draft NBSAP-II;
- Endeavour to prepare a multi-stakeholder National Action Plan;
- Identify areas in conservation and governance that lag behind and incorporate them within the National Action Plan (such as specific patches of rare plant species and/or presence of keystone, flagship or umbrella species of fauna and flora);
- Introduce various stakeholders to international processes and the role of stakeholders in achieving international obligations of Iran.

The outputs of the workshop were incorporated within the draft NBSAP-II of Iran. A copy of this draft version is available in Appendix 2.



*Figure 10. NBSAP-II drafting group and the NBSAP-II exercise session*

A field visit to the ICCA of the Takle Tribe was organised before the closing of the workshop. The head waters of Ali Darvish River and some tribal tent-holds were visited.

The workshop closed at approximately 8 pm on 3 August. During the last evening on Mount Savalan, community members and tribesmen, government and CSO representatives, Trevor Sandwith and Ziad Samaha and Takle Tribes-men and -women gathered together around a bonfire and sang tribal and nostalgic songs of their communities.

## 1.2. Assessing Governance of Protected and Conserved Areas in Iran

To assess governance of PCAs in Iran, Cenesta followed the Framework introduced by the IUCN in the *Governance of Protected Areas: from Understanding to Action* publication. The workshop was designed in a way to follow the steps of the Framework while adapting them to the cultural, social and governance situation and needs of Iran.

### Listing and mapping

The system of official protected areas in Iran comprises four levels of conservation status:

1. National Park (highest conservation status);
2. Wildlife Refuges;
3. National Monuments;
4. Protected Landscapes and Seascapes.

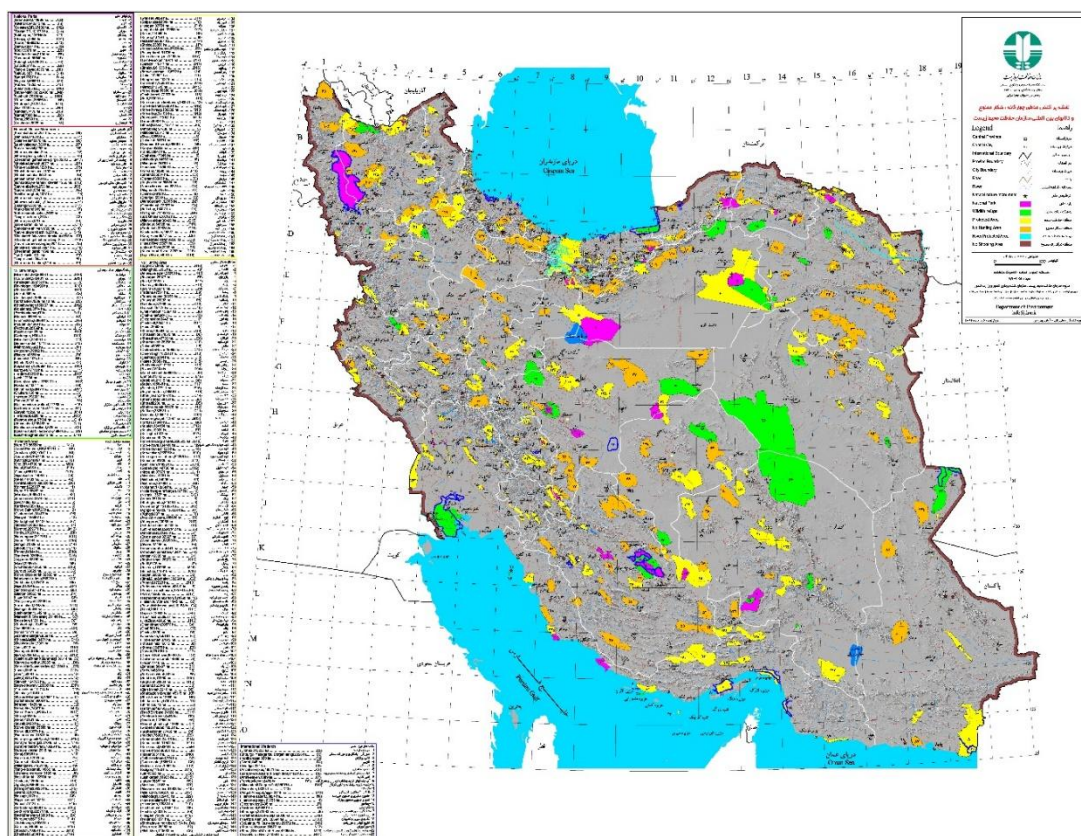


Figure 11. Official Protected Areas in Iran, managed and governed by DOE<sup>4</sup>

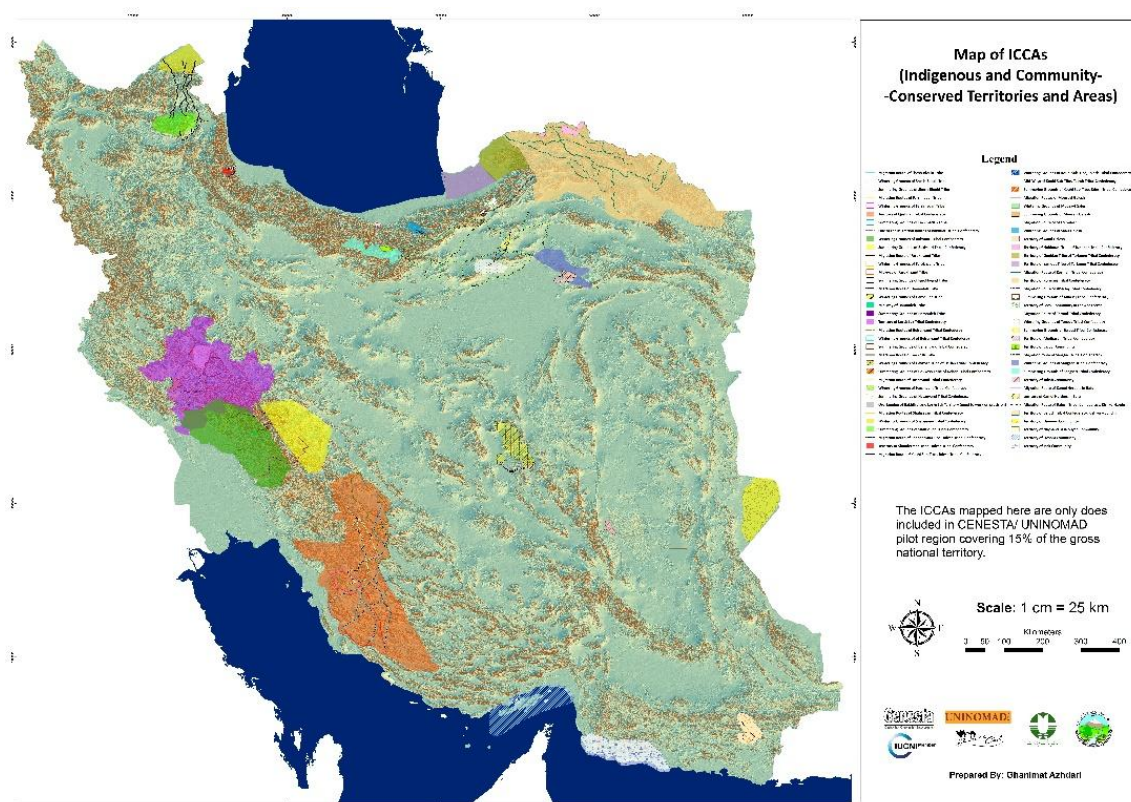
The governance carried out in the four categories above is enforced by the Department of the Environment of Iran. The National Parks, which hold the highest status of conservation, all

<sup>4</sup> High resolution copies of the maps used in the workshops have been uploaded on [www.cenesta.org](http://www.cenesta.org) and are accessible via the following link; <http://documents.cenesta.org/iucn-workshops-2016/IUCN-Workshop-maps.zip>, username and password are being sent by email.

have a management plan that is usually prepared by consultancy companies and are implemented by the provincial authorities and national park staff. The Forests, Rangelands and Watershed Management Organisation of Iran is the legal owner of much of the country's lands including the territories of indigenous nomadic tribes and local communities (following the so called "nationalisation decree" in 1963). The form of use exerted by the FRWO is in the shape of grazing permits and no-go areas. The FRWO has also designated over 70 forest areas as Forest Parks. It also maintains a system of Forest Genetic Reserves that are distributed all over the country. An atlas of all areas conserved by the FRWO is being published at the urging of Cenesta. The areas conserved by the FRWO are shown with purple dots in Figure 11. Naturally, the FRWO is an important player in nature conservation and governance of PCAs in Iran as they are custodians of large areas of land and various ecosystems in the country. These areas deserve to be included towards achieving Aichi Target 11. Figure 11 is a map of all 275 protected and conserved areas managed and governed by the DOE in Iran. This map is on a scale of 1:2,500,000 and demonstrates the four categories of conservation by the DOE in different colours as seen in the legend.

Another type of governance in the country which is unofficial but effective, sustainable and adapted to Iran's diverse ecosystems is exercised by the IPs/LCs since time immemorial. The indigenous nomadic tribes and pastoralists have developed ways of sustainable governance of natural resources on which they rely for their livelihoods. The nomads have been migrating through the mountains and plains of Iran for centuries, conserving nature including preserving parts of it, sustainably using its resources and restoring degraded ecosystems. To facilitate the recognition of the rights of indigenous nomadic tribes and mainstreaming their governance of biodiversity and natural resources, Cenesta has been using participatory mapping methods (PGIS) to delineate their territories. The map below demonstrates select territories of communities that have worked with Cenesta in various projects.





*Figure 12. Cenesta's select pilot ICCAs*

Over the past 30 years Cenesta has carried out various participatory projects within the customary territories of the nomadic tribes and local communities across Iran. Some of these tribes include:

- Shahsevan Tribal Confederacy (location of the Governance Assessment Workshop)
- Abolhassani Tribal Confederacy
- Sangsari Tribal Confederacy
- Qashqai Tribal Confederacy
- Bakhtiari Tribal Confederacy
- Baluch Peoples
- Qeshm Islands Indigenous Communities



## Actors and Institutions

Actors and institutions with direct responsibilities in protected and conserved area management	The actor or institution is hierarchically subordinated to:	Finances protected and conserved area management	Defines strategy, initiates designation	Approves designation	Elaborates management plans	Manages protected areas	Evaluates outcomes and performances	Surveillance, control	Has no role yet, but claims one/ is ready to help
<b>National Level</b>									
Department of the Environment	The Director of the DOE is the Vice President of Iran	X	X	X	Commissions consulting firms to do so	X	X	X	NO
Forests, Rangelands and Watershed Management Organisation of Iran	Ministry of Agriculture and Rural Development of Iran	X	X	X	NO	X	X	X	NO
CSOs	Civil society organisations are independent	Some-times	Some-times	Some-times	Some-times	NO	Some-times	Some-times	Some-times
<b>Regional Level (see note 1)</b>									
Provincial Bureaus of DOE	DOE	X	X	X	Commissions consulting firms to do so	X	X	X	NO
Provincial Bureaus of Natural Resources	FRWO	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	NO
CSOs (see note below 2)	Civil society organisations are independent	NO	NO	NO	NO	NO	NO	NO	X
Community Based Organisations (see notes 3 & 4)	CBOs are independent								
<b>Local Level</b>									
District Bureaus of Natural Resources	Provincial Bureaus of Natural Resources	X	NO	X	NO	X	X	X	NO
CSOs (see note 2)	Civil society organisations are independent	NO	NO	NO	NO	NO	NO	NO	X
Community Based Organisations (see notes 3 & 4)	CBOs are independent								

Notes:

1. The National Research Institute for Forests and Rangelands has recently undertaken pilot activities which will be described in Technical Report Number 3.
2. CSOs are included within a regulation sent out to provincial bureaus of DOE for assistance in governance, management, implementation and assessment of PCAs across Iran. This regulation was put into force following the workshop and progress is intended to be included in the Technical Report Number 3. Some of the larger CSOs have their own corresponding branches in some of the provinces in Iran who may get involved in above responsibilities.
3. CBOs (both registered and customary) exert many of the activities above but are not officially recognised.
4. The customary CBOs of the 700 nomadic tribes and tribal confederacies do not take into account administrative and political divisions of the country. These divisions are not applicable to the governance systems of the IPs/LCs.

### **Conservation *de jure***

The governance of official PCAs in Iran is the responsibility of the DOE. Approval of designation and overall regulations are the responsibility of the High Council for the Environment which is chaired by the President of the Republic. Proposal of designation, strategies of conservation, evaluation, monitoring, assessment and control of PCAs are all done by the DOE. Until recent years the legislation, laws and regulations of Iran have not included governance diversity. However as mentioned throughout the report, the attitude of the DOE and the FRWO towards participation of IPs/LCS and CSOs has changed for the positive.

Earlier in 2016 the Office of the Deputy Director of the DOE for Biodiversity prepared a set of guidelines for the participation of IPs/LCs in the management of select wildlife refuges and protected landscapes and seascapes in each province of Iran. The selection of the PAs will be based on the proximity of the IPs/LCs to the PAs and ecotourism potentials of the PAs.

### **Active damage and risk analysis for Areas of Particular Importance (APIs)**

The information on damages and risks for APIs, conservation and diversity in governance was analysed during the SWOT session of the workshop. The three stakeholder groups (government, CSOs and IPs/LCs) compiled the information on weaknesses and threats based on their experiences and approach to nature conservation.

Government representatives;

- Threats
  - Drought;
  - Soil erosion;
  - Sharing of common ecosystems between livestock and wildlife;
  - Desertification;
  - Alien invasive species.

- Weaknesses
  - Lack of comprehensive eco-tourism plans;
  - Mismanagement of livestock grazing;
  - Inefficient educational system;
  - Inefficient laws and regulations for nature conservation.

IPs/LCs representative;

- Threats
  - Degradation of social structures within tribes and communities;
  - Lack of legal and financial support;
  - Degradation of indigenous governance systems because of direct interference of government organisations;
  - Lack of awareness among IPs/LCs on their rights.
- Weaknesses
  - Regional offices do not hold enough authority in monitoring PCAs;
  - Lack of stability among governmental management due to frequent changes in administration;
  - Basing management decisions on personal preferences;
  - Degradation of self-confidence among IPs/LCs.

CSO representatives;

- Threats
  - Lack of commitment and awareness in the official education system;
  - Lack of consideration for ethnic and linguistic diversity within the official education system;
  - Implementation of destructive laws and regulations in the environmental sector;
  - The invasion by multi-national corporations (GMO producers and oil corporations).
- Weaknesses
  - Lack of an integrated land management plan;
  - Lack of environmental conservation approach among the executive organisations of the government (except the DOE and the FRWO);
  - Conservation is conceived of only limited to the official PCAs;
  - Limited accountability of executive organisations of the government in cases of environmental destruction.

## IUCN Protected Area Matrix Analysis

An exercise was designed to work with the IUCN Matrix of protected areas in which all participating stakeholders familiarised themselves with the Matrix.

There are five biomes in Iran:

1. Irano-Touranian,
2. Gulf and Omani (Khalijo Omani),
3. Qara Dagħ Forests (Arasbaran/ Caucasus forests),
4. Zagrossian,
5. Kopet Dagħ,
6. Hyrcanian Forests.

Participants were divided into groups based on geography. Each group would situate the PCAs within their designated biome in the Matrix. The distribution of official PCAs was even with all of them being situated into governance type A. The IP/LC representatives also situated their territories within the protected area categories of the Matrix and chose governance type D. Even though this type of governance is not officially recognised by the government, there was consensus among participants that its appropriate recognition (without interference with their usually customary governance system) could help in the sustainable and effective management of PCAs. It was also mentioned that governance type D facilitates the achievement of Iran's international obligations (Aichi target 11).

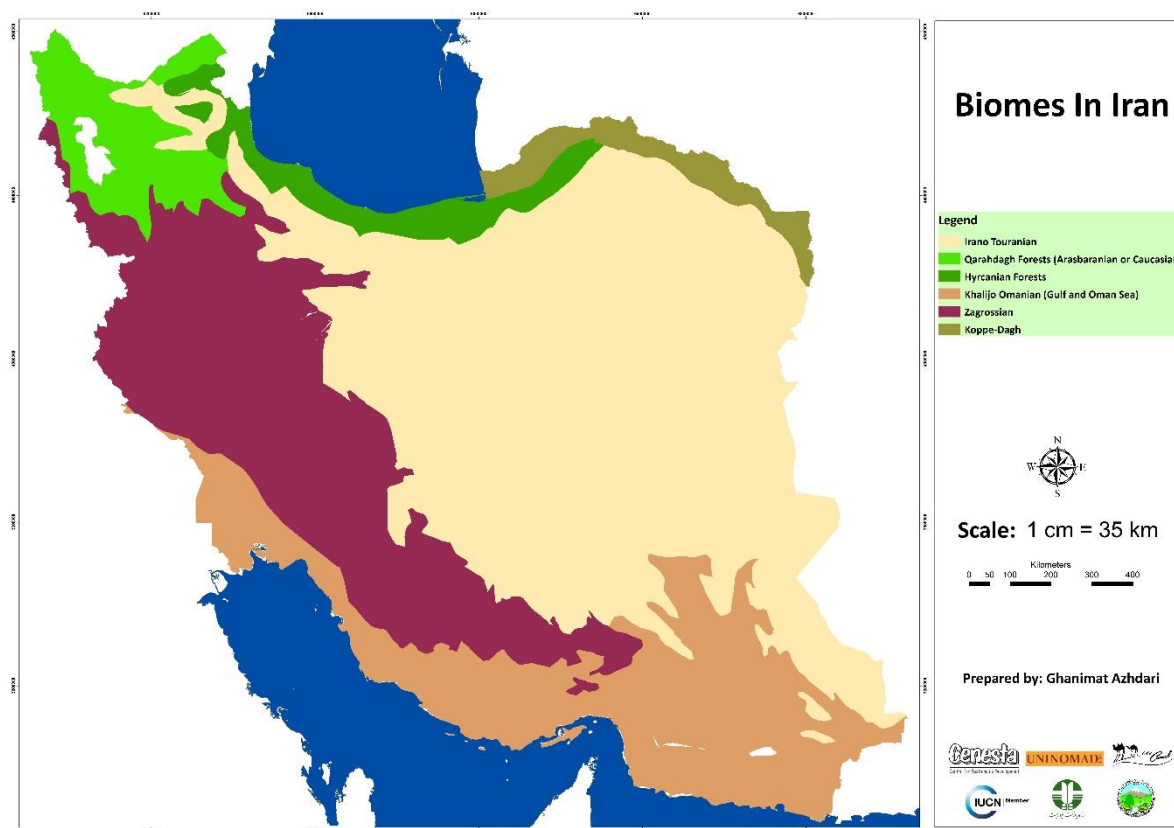


Figure 13. Map of Biomes in Iran

## Workshop on Transboundary Conservation in Iran and Neighbouring Countries



*Workshop on Transboundary Conservation in Iran and Neighbouring Countries Jolfa, Western Azerbaijan, Aras Free Zone*





The first international Workshop on Transboundary Conservation in Iran and Neighbouring Countries was held 3–7 August 2016 in the city of Jolfa, Aras Free Zone, Iranian Azerbaijan. Participants, including government, civil society, and indigenous peoples' and local community representatives from Iran and all terrestrial and marine neighbours of Iran were invited to participate in the multi-stakeholder workshop. Representatives from the government, CSOs and community members of Iraq, Turkey, Armenia, Azerbaijan, Pakistan and Kuwait were among the international participants of the workshop.

## Workshop Preparations

In July Cenesta experts travelled to Jolfa and held meetings with the Aras Free Zone Authority and Norduz Border Police (border of Iran and Armenia). To arrange an excursion for the participants of the workshop, approval of both organisations was necessary. The Aras Free Zone welcomed the idea of transboundary conservation and promised to become a co-sponsor for the workshop. They believe that the Aras River which runs along the borders of Azerbaijan, Iran and Armenia has many important conservation values and must be free of pollutants, degradation and overexploitation of its water resources. The Border Police and the Bureau of Sustainable Development and Environment of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs were informed about the workshop and both announced their readiness in participating as well as supporting it. Both the DOE and the Ministry of Foreign Affairs have been very supportive of transboundary conservation and have already undertaken formal agreements and memorandums of understandings with some of Iran's neighbours.

Jolfa is located in East Azerbaijan province. The capital city of this province is Tabriz and the provincial Bureau of Environment is located there. Before the workshop Cenesta, DOE and the provincial bureau coordinated the locations which were to be visited during the excursion of the transboundary conservation workshop. The contiguous protected areas along the Irano-Armenian border were selected for the excursion since there is already a formal transboundary protected area existing in the zone.

The idea of an Iranian-Armenian transboundary protected area originally started in 2012 when Tehran and Yerevan signed an agreement to establish a natural reserve on either side of their border to symbolize and cement growing cooperation between the two neighbouring states. The park will cover around 65,000 hectares of land straddling the Aras River, which marks the border of Iran and Armenia. The project would not only protect wildlife and flora in the mountainous area but also promote ecotourism (<https://armenpress.am/eng/news/750041/iran-armenia-hold-final-talks-on-building-peace-park-in-joint-border-area.html>).



*Figure 14. Dizmar-Arevik Transboundary Protected Area, Armenpress*

Cenesta contacted the Succow Foundation from Germany and informed them of the signing of the contract with the IUCN and the dates and programme of the transboundary workshop. This foundation is working with various institutions and CSOs in the region on nature conservation including transboundary conservation. The Foundation expressed their readiness to participate, introduce Armenian nature conservation specialists and make a modest financial contribution to the workshop.

The workshop main sponsors include:

- IUCN (financial support is provided in the context of the UNDP-GEF project “Inspiring Protected Areas Solutions” co-financed by the German International Climate Initiative (IKI)-funded project “Global Support Initiative for Indigenous Peoples and Community Conserved Areas and Territories” – GSI for short—implemented by the UNDP-GEF Small Grants Programme in partnership with IUCN Global Protected Areas Programme, the ICCA Consortium and UNEP WCMC).
- Federal Ministry for the Environment, Nature Conservation, Building and Nuclear Safety of Germany<sup>5</sup>

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<sup>5</sup> This project was partly funded through the Succow Foundation by the German Federal Environment Ministry’s Advisory Assistance Programme (AAP) for environmental protection in the countries of Central and Eastern Europe, the Caucasus and Central Asia and other countries neighbouring the European Union. It is/was supervised by the Federal Agency for Nature Conservation (BfN) and the German Environment Agency (UBA). The responsibility for the content of this publication lies with the authors.

- Aras Free Zone Authority
- Succow Foundation (Germany)
- European Commission (through EuropeAid/135713/C/ACT/TPS)
- Department of the Environment of Iran
- Ramsar Regional Centre for Central and West Asia
- Forests, Rangelands and Watershed Management Organisation of Iran
- ICCA Consortium
- UNINOMAD

From the beginning of May, a list of potential participants from CSOs and IPs/LCs were compiled by Cenesta experts. The potential participants were selected based on previous project collaborations and experiences as well as ICCA Consortium and Cenesta networks.

The DOE and provincial bureaus representatives were introduced by the DOE. The DOE has investigated the establishment of transboundary conserved areas with countries such as Armenia, Iraq, Pakistan and Turkmenistan and they have many contacts in the environmental institutions of the neighbouring countries. To facilitate the visa application procedure, the DOE suggested that the invitation letters be co-signed by Mr Sadegh Sadeghzadegan, Executive Director of the Ramsar Regional Centre for Central and West Asia.

Invitation letters to the participants were sent out in July and visa application processes started simultaneously. Unfortunately, expected participants from Afghanistan and some from Pakistan and Iraq could not obtain a visa in time to participate in the workshop. The representative from Turkmenistan also missed her flight and consequentially missed the workshop. However, they are included within the transboundary conservation movement in the region and will continue to be informed and engaged in any further development, workshop and event in the region. Following the complications of the coup d'état in Turkey, only one of the seven invited participant was able to make his way to the workshop.

## Workshop Programme

### Introduction session

The session started on the evening of 3 August in the conference hall of Aras Hotel. All present participants (some arrived on 4 August) introduced themselves in a round table including:

- Trevor Sandwith; Director of the Global Programme on Protected Areas, IUCN;
- Ziad Samaha; Programme Manager—Focal Point of Iran in the Regional Office for West Asia, IUCN;
- Esther Kuisch Laroche; Director and Representative of UNESCO Cluster Office in Tehran,
- Uli Gräbener; CEO of Succow Foundation;
- Kianoosh Davoodi; Department of Environment of Iran, Director for Protected Areas Management Plans;

- Other government representatives including from the Ministry of Foreign Affairs and DOE;
- Indigenous peoples and local communities of Iran and neighbouring countries such as Pakistan and Azerbaijan;
- Representatives of civil society organisations from Iran and neighbouring countries.



*Figure 15. Introduction Session*

The list of all participants in the workshop is available in Appendix 3.



## First day Events

### Opening and key speeches

The workshop was officially opened by Taghi Farvar on 4 August. He gave a brief summary of the goals of the workshop and a brief history and importance of Transboundary Protected and Conserved Areas (TBCAs). The main purpose of the workshop is to protect and conserve ecosystems, species and genetic resources of joint interest and distribution. This includes species with home ranges beyond political boundaries of the countries, such as the Persian leopard in the Caucasus. The next speaker, Mr Arab-Baghi, Executive Director of the Aras Free Zone Authority, mentioned some of the most important steps taken by that organisation in nature conservation.

The day continued with presentations and discussions of the various participating national and international stake- and right-holders.

Mr Mahfouzi, Division of Natural Environments and Biodiversity of the DOE, gave a brief summary on the history of activities carried out by his department regarding transboundary conservation between Iran and its neighbours (Iraq, Armenia, Turkmenistan, Afghanistan and Pakistan).

Ms Laroche elaborated the activities of UNESCO regarding transboundary conservation among the following four countries: Iran, Afghanistan, Pakistan, and Turkmenistan. The work of UNESCO focuses on the four areas of culture, education, communication, and science. She believes due to the strong cultural connection between Iran and its neighbours there is plenty of room and potential for discussion and alliance building. The UNESCO Cluster Office in Tehran has already undertaken some preliminary work on transboundary conservation between Iran and Pakistan in Hamoun Lakes and Govater Bay. Promotion of transboundary conservation between Iran and Afghanistan in the subject of Hamoun Lakes would strongly benefit both countries.

Hamoun Lakes fed by the Helmand River that stems from the Helmand Basin in Afghanistan. Long periods of drought and river flow controlling structures such as the Kajaki Dam in Afghanistan have been the main causes of degradation and in recent years, nearly complete dryness of the wetland. Once a thriving ecosystem, the wetland provided sufficient water for agriculture and livestock as well as sustaining fishermen livelihoods. The Sistani Cattle and the Hamoun fish were among the main biodiversity based products exported across Iran from the Hamoun Wetland. The dramatic changes that have happened to this wetland have affected wildlife, livelihoods and the general climate conditions of the region. During the summer months as strong winds passed over the Hamoun wetland they would play the role of a natural cooler and condition the weather. This function has been completely lost and with no more water, the winds cause severe sand storms in East and South East Iran. Another function that the water saturated winds would provide, was the humidification of vast areas of desert land surrounding the wetlands, generating the growth of vegetation used seasonally by the many nomadic tribes of the region as pastureland for grazing their herds. The unique Sistani cattle lived on the many human-made islands in the wetlands, essentially taking care of their own feeding cycles based on the vast growth of reeds which they controlled perfectly. Now, the marshes occasionally come to life when there are exceptional raining periods (even short-lived ones).



Mr Gräbener gave an overview on the Succow Foundation and its missions and activities around the world and in Iran. The foundation is currently carrying out the Community-Based Adaptation to Climate Change in Dena Biosphere Reserve project in Iran. They are also evaluating the capacity of potential transboundary conservation activities in the region and are prepared to support future transboundary activity.

### **An introduction to Transboundary conservation**

The session continued with a presentation by Trevor Sandwith on “Towards a regional programme of initiatives for transboundary governance and cooperation between Iran and its neighbours”. In this presentation, the IUCN’s point of view regarding transboundary conservation between Iran and its neighbours was explained. He defined transboundary conservation as a process of cooperation to achieve conservation goals across one or more international boundaries. He listed some of the objectives of transboundary conservation happening around the world like: biodiversity conservation, cultural heritage and exchange, communities and traditions, international cooperation, fostering peace and security, promotion of sustainable development, regional economic integration, restitution of land tenure and rights, local economic development and poverty alleviation. Then he mentioned that the cooperation among neighbouring countries could be done at different levels of authority; from the local communities at the bottom to the most powerful governmental departments on the top. There are different models of cooperation such as; communication or information sharing, consultation, coordinated action and joint implementation of decisions. Some instruments for achieving agreement were introduced e.g. transboundary world heritage sites, transboundary biosphere reserves, transboundary flyways and migration routes, regional agreements, bilateral or multilateral treaties, and memoranda of understanding between countries. Later, a possible way forward for the region which supports transboundary initiatives, development of professional capacity, advocacy of information and knowledge and policy and establishing learning networks was elaborated. All models and ways are published in the IUCN World Commission on Protected Areas (WCPA) guidelines on transboundary conservation under the title of “*Transboundary Conservation: A Systematic and Integrated Approach*”<sup>6</sup>.

The presentation also defined three different types of transboundary conserved areas. The first type is transboundary protected area defined as a geographical space which includes ecologically connected protected areas across one or more international boundaries and involves some form of cooperation to address its connectivity issue. The second type is transboundary conservation landscape/seascape defined as an ecologically connected protected/multiple resource areas across one or more international boundaries and involves some form of cooperation to address its connectivity issue. The third type is transboundary migration conservation area which caters to wildlife habitats in two or more countries necessary to sustain populations of migratory species and involves some form of cooperation. A park for peace is a special designation which could be applied to any of these three types of transboundary conservation areas.

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<sup>6</sup> Vasilijević, M., Zunckel, K., McKinney, M., Erg, B., Schoon, M., Rosen Michel, T. (2015). Transboundary Conservation: A systematic and integrated approach. Best Practice Protected Area Guidelines Series No. 23, Gland, Switzerland: IUCN. xii + 107 pp.

Then Dr Sandwith briefly explained the IUCN Protected Areas Governance Matrix which addresses the diversity of governance types. Moreover, he addressed the development of transboundary vision, spectrum of ecological relationships between adjacent areas and step-wise analysis of threats and opportunities for transboundary natural resource management. Finally, the procedure of putting principles into practice through common stages of a transboundary conservation process by diagnosing and designing the plans, taking actions for the inputs and evaluating outputs was elaborated.



*Taghi Farvar, Cenesta*



*Mr Arab Baghi, Executive Director of the Aras Free Zone Authority*



*Mr Mahfouzi, DOE, Division of Natural Environments and Biodiversity*

*Ms Laroche, Director and Representative of UNESCO Cluster Office in Tehran*



*Uli Gräbener, CEO of Succow Foundation*



*Trevor Sandwith, Director of the Global Protected Areas Programme, IUCN*

*Figure 16. Images from the first day presentations and events*

Mr Gräbener held a discussion on the main projects of the Succow Foundation in Iran related to the developing of a transboundary conserved area (TBCAs) between Iran and Armenia. For this project, they are studying other potential areas of transboundary conservation between Iran and its neighbours. To this end, they look at the ecological values of transboundary conservation and evaluate the social, economic and political impacts. He described briefly some of these potential areas of transboundary conservation between Iran and Iraq, Turkey, Armenia, Azerbaijan, Turkmenistan, Afghanistan and Pakistan. He mentioned the importance of transboundary cooperation on thematic conservation issues. For this type of cooperation, he emphasised using the Silk Road or the Persian Gulf as a theme for international cooperation on conservation among the countries in this region.

### **Panel discussions**

The government representatives shaped the first panel discussion of the workshop. Each panel member represented one of the Bureaux of the Environment of a border province of Iran as well as representatives from the central DOE office. They explained their experiences in international negotiations, identifying Areas of Particular Importance (APIs) lying on political borders and assessing the feasibility of a potential TBCA.

A short presentation on the Workshop on Governance Assessment of Protected and Conserved Areas was given by Cenesta experts. After the presentation Trevor Sandwith held a discussion on the lessons learned from the workshop of governance assessment, emphasising the following questions:

- How are we able to institutionalise a multi-stakeholder process?
- What legal instruments can we use to revisit the existing governance plans?



- How can we seek appropriate recognition for all stakeholders and help them become a fundamental part of governance processes?

Mr Arash Kheirandish, an eco-tourism expert, presented his work in an area close to the border of Turkmenistan. He elaborated upon the financial benefits of eco-tourism in TBCAs. Mr Kheirandish used the example of the Turkman horse breed (a famous breed used for competitions) for TBCA eco-tourism potentials.

International participants all presented the biodiversity of their countries and the conservation measures, governance systems and PCA systems of their respective countries;

- Dr Manaf Behbahani, University of Kuwait, professor of Marine Sciences;
- Mohammed Saif, Kuwait fisheries expert;
- Yilderay Lise, Nature Conservation Centre, Turkey;
- Aram Aghasyan, Head of the Specially Protected Areas Division; Armenia and Ramaz Gokhelashvili, Georgia;
- Ahmed Nadeem, Baluchistan Coastal Development Authority; Pakistan
  - Presented the case of the Govater Bay Ecologically and/or Biologically Important Marine Area (EBSA) in the Oman Sea, the only transboundary EBSA in the region.
- Sevinj Sarukhan, WWF Azerbaijan and Tamam Samadova IP/LC representative from Azerbaijan
  - Presented the case of the Persian Leopard habitats that are shared between Iran, Azerbaijan and Armenia;
  - Tamam, a nomadic tribal member described the issues that were caused by border issues for migration and nomadic way of life.
- Dr Ali Allami, Former Advisor to the Minister, Ministry of Environment Iraq;



*Government Panel*



*Presentation by Cenesta experts*



*Figure 17. Presentations of the first day of the workshop*



## Second day events

The second day consisted of an excursion to:

- Kiamaky Wildlife Refuge;
- Aras river along the border of Iran, Azerbaijan and Armenia;
- Environmental Management and Monitoring Centre of the Transboundary Conserved Areas of Iran and Armenia;
- Dizmar-Arevik area.



*Figure 18. Excursion*

This excursion was instructive in learning

- Connectivity and continuity of ecosystems beyond borders (Iran, Armenia and Azerbaijan);
- The existence of common species of endangered wildlife especially the Persian leopard;
- The existence of local communities and indigenous peoples who have had a long history of nature conservation;
- The existence of reasonably competent government agencies;

- The existence of good will and friendly neighbourly relations.

All of the above factors can contribute to further effective measures for conservation involving a diversity of governance types and stakeholders. On the evening of the second day Ziad Samaha and Trevor Sandwith both presented some of the regional and international functions of ROWA and the IUCN. Ziad discussed the four-year programme of ROWA. He further elaborated on the way ROWA evaluates different proposals or projects. As an example, he briefly summarised the key processes of the recent Cenesta workshops and the challenges facing the evaluation process. He mentioned that developing capacities for sustainable development and biodiversity is another major theme. ROWA also promotes collaboration among local communities, CSOs and government departments to support state members for developing their own national environmental plans. Dr Sandwith talked briefly about the process of volunteering in IUCN which has diverse Commissions and anyone can join one of them based on her/his own personal interests.

### Third day events

The day started with a presentation by Areg Karapetyan on a successful implementation of privately protected areas in Armenia known as the Caucasus Wildlife Refuge and compared private protected transboundary areas to other types of governance systems. Local communities are also engaged in this project. He finally discussed possible joint activities for transboundary ecotourism among Iran, Armenia, Turkey, Azerbaijan, and Georgia.

### Participatory map-work on TBCAs

After the presentation, participants were divided into four multi-stakeholder groups based on geographical proximity. Each group would work on a map of Iran and its neighbours to identify:

1. What activities can be carried out in the next 1-5 years to facilitate the creation and expansion of TBCAs in the region?
2. What kinds of projects or initiatives do we need to foster these activities?

Using sticky notes, participants situated their answers to the questions upon the maps and later presented their outputs;

- Iran, Armenia and Turkey
  - Initiating a process to delineate the Iranian-Anatolian ecological region (part of the Critical Ecosystems Partnership Fund);
  - Identifying migrating species of the region, their conservation status and needs;
  - Transboundary cooperation for conservation involving the Ararat National Park;
  - Transboundary cooperation for conservation of traditional grassland and pasture management;
  - Mapping the migration routes of migratory bird species;
  - Establishment of a biosphere reserve on the border of Iran and Armenia including to track different species;
  - Access to various national and international funds.
- Pakistan, Kuwait, Iraq and Iran

- Establishing a steering committee comprised of the countries in the Persian Gulf and Oman Sea region to discuss different issues like marine pollution and mangrove forests;
- Conservation of marine and terrestrial species;
- Afghanistan, Turkmenistan and Iran (participants stood for the two countries that had no representatives)
  - Designation and establishment of the Kope-Dagh TBCA with the participation of nomadic tribes (Turkman & Kurmanj) on both sides of the border of Iran and Turkmenistan;
  - Promotion of TBCAs for the participatory conservation of different species.
- Iran, Shahsevan tribal members and Azerbaijan
  - Initiating transboundary cooperation for ecological participatory mapping of this region;
  - Designation of TBCAs with diverse governance types to promote the integration of local communities on both sides of the border;
  - Setting up an expert network for the transboundary cooperation on the conservation of Hyrcanian forests;
  - Initiating governmental cooperation on land-use management;
  - Establishing a CBO with members of nomadic tribes on both sides of the border to create a peace park (transboundary ICCA).







*Figure 19. Group work and presentations*



## Closing ceremony

The closing ceremony started with a presentation by Dr Dadashzadeh, Deputy Director for Culture, Society and Tourism Office of the Aras Free Zone Authority. He expressed his interest in working with all sides to help further the cause of transboundary cooperation and conservation in the region.



*Figure 20. Closing ceremony*

### 3. Work plan

Activities	Mar 2016	Apr	May	Jun	Jul	Aug	Sep	Oct	Nov	Dec	Jan 2017	Feb	Mar	Apr	May	Jun	Jul
1. Signing the contract Between Cenesta and the IUCN																	
2. Setting up a support system via a series of meetings with the DOE, FRWO and other agencies																	
3. Participatory preparation of the NBSAP-II document for Iran in co-sponsorship with the DOE, FRWO and UNINOMAD																	
4. Field visit to the Shahsevan Tribe summering grounds to help select a suitable camping spot for the upcoming workshop.																	
5. NBSAP-II workshop held in the DOE, co-sponsors include UNEP, SCBD, DOE and Cenesta																	
6. Field visit to the Shahsevan Tribe																	

summering Grounds in order to produce a documentary on the ICCA and their governance of natural resources																	
7. Meeting with Aras Free Zone and border control officials in the city of Jolfa in order to make preparations for the TBC workshop																	
8. Workshop on Governance of PCAs in Iran and TBC in Iran and neighbouring countries																	
9. Follow-up multi-stakeholder workshop for NBSAP-II document for Iran held in Cenesta headquarters to include the outputs of the workshop within the document																	
10. Participation of Project Leader and Coordinator in the IUCN WCC																	
11. Advocacy for the appropriate recognition of governance type D including a workshop																	

held in the City of Bojnourd in North Khorasan Province																	
12. Preparation of documents necessary for registering ICCAs of Iran in the WCMC																	
13. Several workshops in Tehran, Cenesta headquarters, among participating CSOs/CBOs for better cooperation for affecting policy makers in governance of PCAs																	
14. Assessment and recommendation of priority areas for trans-boundary conservation action																	
15. Participation of Project Leader and Cenesta members in COP 13, Cancun																	
16. Workshop with UNINOMAD and UNICAMEL elders of CBOs in Tehran for finding the best practices for strengthening community conservation																	
17. A set of participatory																	



good governance indicators adapted to local conditions for governance type D emanating from the above best practices																	
18. A multi-stakeholder initiative to improve governance diversity and quality in pilot areas																	
19. A set of multimedia outputs on the process of governance of PCAs in Iran (such as photo-stories, booklets, posters, policy briefs, reports and documentaries)																	
20. Assessment of governance quality in pilot areas of PCAs in Iran																	
21. Recommendations or guidelines for elaboration of participatory governance plans for the pilot TBCs																	