



# NATURAL RESOURCES MANAGEMENT & ENVIRONMENT

PROTECTED AREA MANAGEMENT  
FOREST LANDSCAPE RESTORATION  
ENVIRONMENTAL GOVERNANCE  
PAYMENT FOR ENVIRONMENTAL SERVICES  
MARINE AND COASTAL GOVERNANCE



# PROTECTED AREA MANAGEMENT



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## CHALLENGES

As a leading consultancy firm since 1982, GFA has long-standing experience in protected area (PA) management and biodiversity conservation. With more than 60 conservation specialists as well as subsidiaries and strategic partners in many countries, GFA provides successful and efficient conservation solutions that balance the needs of people and the environment. GFA works in a broad range of coastal and inland PAs – transboundary conservation areas, national parks, wildlife reserves and sanctuaries, and eco-corridors. We assist governmental and non-governmental organizations as well as local communities in reinforcing sustainable management principles.



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GFA is convinced that long-term success in PA management depends on an integration of PAs and their management into the wider land- or seascape and the concerns of society as a whole. The core of the GFA approach is based on an integrative spatial planning and management approach that focuses on balancing conservation objectives and local economic development. This, we believe, will reduce poverty, enhance ownership and, as a result, will decrease the pressure bearing on PAs.

Involving the private sector in the development of sustainable business opportunities in PAs and the intervening landscape is an essential element of our concept. Our key objective is to foster forest-dependent people, intermediary bodies and partners through capacity building so they can develop organizationally, ecologically and socially in a sustainable and self-determined way. This is in line with CBD principles emphasizing the importance of sustainable use strategies addressed by a combination of participatory, ecosystem and governance approaches. The new challenges for national PA systems are connectivity and representation of all ecosystems (Aichi Targets). PA management by objectives and financial sustainability are crucial elements to these principles as well.

## GFA CONCEPT AND SERVICES

GFA's range of services in PA management is related to three building blocks:

- protected area planning and management
- protected area governance and capacity building
- community-based natural resources management

We focus on helping our partners efficiently manage conservation projects. Our range of services entails studies as well as conceptual, strategic, and technical consultancy in a wide variety of fields. Integrated PA planning and management including related infrastructure development and gazettelement is the heart of the matter. Strengthening PA governance incorporates co-management structures and mechanisms such as anti-poaching systems or human-wildlife conflict management. We advise biodiversity conservation and valuation by making use of wildlife survey techniques and managing sustainable financing mechanisms such as REDD+ or payment for ecosystem services (PES). As mentioned, support to socio-economic development based on sustainable production by developing non-timber forest product value chains or ecotourism is an important element of the GFA approach. Reliable monitoring systems making use of remote sensing technologies and GIS as well as the conceptualization and implementation of awareness raising campaigns and human capacity development programs support the surveillance of ecosystem functions of PAs.



# FOREST LANDSCAPE RESTORATION

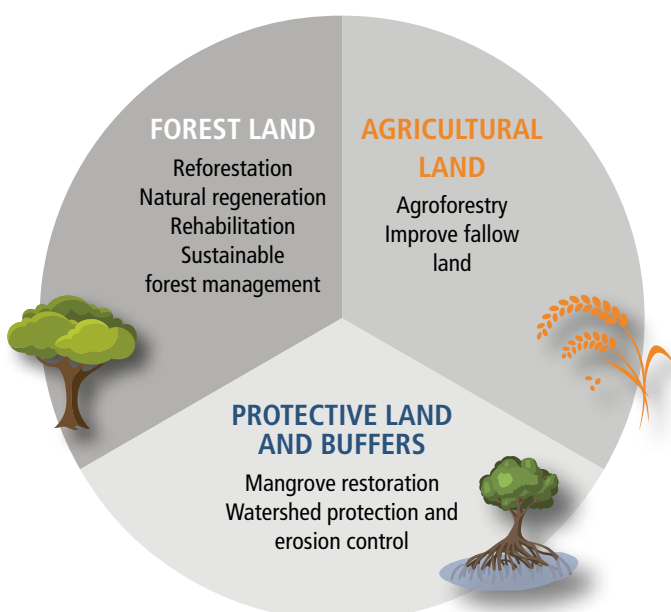


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## CHALLENGES

Forest landscape restoration (FLR) is the ongoing process of regaining ecological functionality and enhancing human well-being across deforested or degraded forest landscapes. FLR focuses not only on forests but on the restoration of the whole area, to create multiple benefits and different land uses.

FLR landscapes are typically categorised into three land use types, each incorporating different options for forest landscape restoration:



With more than 30 years of experience working on projects related to the restoration and protection of forest landscapes in Asia, Africa, Latin America and the Middle East, GFA provides profound expertise in FLR. GFA experts have already implemented more than 170 projects realising different types of FLR, such as reforestation, agroforestry, watershed management, and sustainable forest management and protection. They have also contributed to the development of environmentally-friendly income-generating strategies in boreal, sub-tropical and tropical areas. This encompasses private, communal and state-owned forests, plantations, agricultural land and natural or secondary forests in buffer zones and protected land.

## GFA CONCEPT AND SERVICES

The GFA implementation strategies are based on combining international best practice with local knowledge and methods, and field experience with scientific knowledge. This paired with extensive knowledge of financial and institutional requirements ensures services that meet customers' demands. Working in cooperation with stakeholders in the public and private sectors as well as civil society groups, GFA balances innovation and reliability to meet local needs.

Due to the interaction between FLR and combating illegal timber trade, we offer integrated assistance in sustainable silvicultural techniques, responsible investments and the implementation of national and international policy initiatives to reduce deforestation and forest degradation. However, such efforts to tackle deforestation and degradation need to be supplemented by ambitious restoration activities to reduce the pressure on existing forests and provide alternative sources, to improve soil fertility and reduce erosion and to generally contribute to carbon-sequestering land uses. GFA therefore complements other approaches to food security improvement and climate change mitigation and adaptation, including smart agriculture and REDD+.

Planning and implementing reforestation measures and strengthening forest governance are further key elements of GFA consulting services. Moreover, GFA assists national forest certification initiatives, elaborates forest monitoring and timber tracking systems, develops supply chains for forest products and agricultural goods and supports ministries and government administrations in implementing national programs and regulations for forest rehabilitation and protection.

# ENVIRONMENTAL GOVERNANCE



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## CHALLENGES

As a leading consultancy firm since 1982, GFA has a long-standing experience in helping national ministries, regional bodies and municipalities to strengthen their country's environmental governance. In this context, GFA experts work with subsidiaries and strategic partners to craft tailor-made interventions in response to needs related to three main pillars, i.e. goal-oriented policy and legislation, institutional capacity for planning, implementation and enforcement, and evidence gathering and interpretation.

Relevant, evidence-based policies focus on priority public health and environmental issues. Effective governance requires that involved line ministries and other stakeholders identify with such policies.

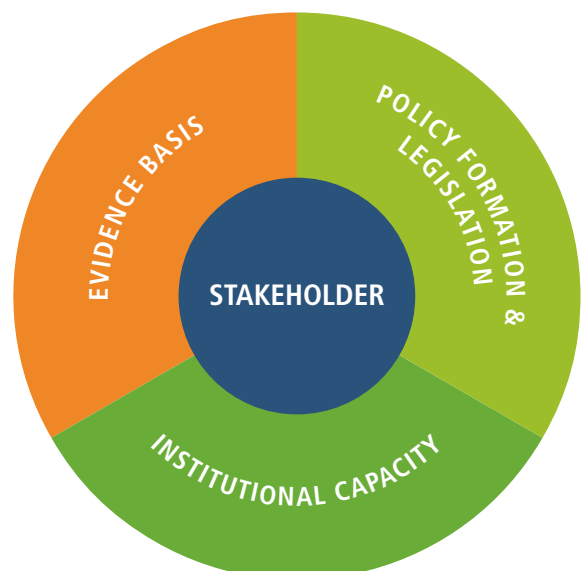
Often, ministries responsible for environmental management have adopted narrow, legalistic methods, engage only to a limited extent with their regulated sectors and associated ministries, and are significantly under-resourced. Compounding these challenges, government communication with stakeholders and the general public may be weak in terms of providing information and a platform to hear people's voices. GFA provides direct support to ministries and other actors to overcome these challenges and to make best use of available resources.

## GFA CONCEPTS AND SERVICES

GFA aims at promoting and supporting a sustainable governance framework appropriate to a country's traditions while taking into account relevant international standards and the legitimate interests and needs of sectoral stakeholders and the general public.

As part of the evidence pillar, our consultancy services include the assessment of actual environmental and ecological monitoring systems as well as specifying improvements and facilitating their implementation. Advising on environmental information systems and using them to assess the impacts of policy implementation is an equally important task. GFA experts advise on available policy options and analyze and discuss with our partners the development of policy measures and standards. Where needed and requested they draft suitable legislation and implementing regulations.

Institutional capacity building is an integral task. GFA advises on appropriate structures, administrative processes, personnel numbers and skills, budgetary and equipment needs. Our teams of experts identify and facilitate the implementation of essential information and communication technology. We assess priority training needs and provide targeted training as well as on-the-job support. GFA emphasizes effective communication. Therefore, we provide stakeholder liaison and coordination services, develop information networks and design communication strategies. In addition, we assist in the implementation of related measures and support awareness raising activities and outreach programs.



# PAYMENT FOR ENVIRONMENTAL SERVICES

## PRESERVING ECOSYSTEMS BY VALORISING ITS SERVICES

The degradation of habitats, the loss of biodiversity and the consequent deterioration in ecosystem services witnessed over the past 60 years ultimately reflect a historic failure to properly value the benefits we derive from nature. The imbalance, created by the valuation of some ecosystem services, such as food and timber, while others, like water protection and carbon sequestration that are equally vital to our continued well-being, have no financial value, which has led to a focus on short-term financial gains and overexploitation of many natural assets. However, in recent years significant advances have been made in our understanding of and capacity to communicate the benefits that ecosystem services provide for human well-being and to establish the values that people place on these services. Payments for environmental services (PES) confront the market failure problem of ecosystem services with the potential to meet the objectives under all three Rio Conventions and the sustainable development goals. Therefore, the growing interest in PES is driven in part by the general failure of command and control approaches and integrated conservation and development projects.

## GFA CONCEPTS AND SERVICES

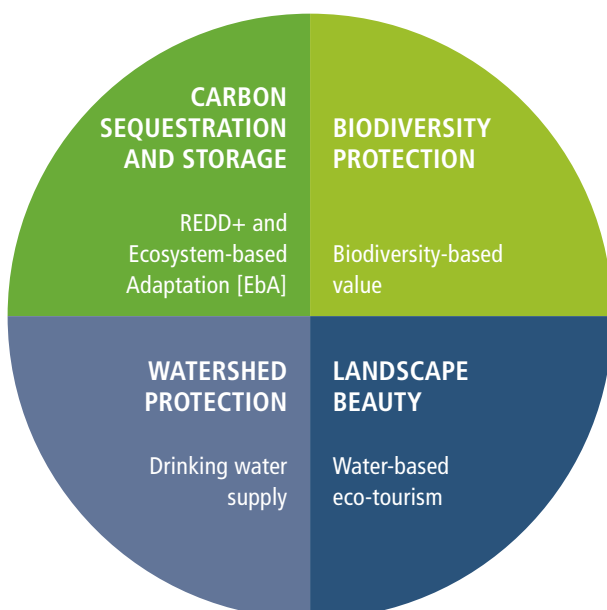
GFA has engaged in pioneering the development and implementation of PES schemes. Building on the working definition of PES as a voluntary, conditional transaction between at least one seller and one buyer over a well-defined



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environmental service, GFA provides services in the following four PES types: Most of the PES projects supported by GFA have been designed to support conservation efforts in Africa, Asia, and Latin America. In accordance with the nature of GFA's main area of intervention, we have taken a practical approach to PES and mainly serve the governments of member countries with the efficient management of PES projects, while at the same time exploring mechanisms for the private and public sectors to invest in conservation and sustainable development. GFA's range of services includes the implementation of studies, as well as conceptual, strategic, and technical advice in:

- Building the human and institutional capacity to develop and implement PES schemes,
- economic valuation of ecosystem services,
- development and implementation of pilot PES schemes in all four PES types,
- policy development and implementation to integrate and increase the relevance of PES in policy making,
- design and establishment of sustainable financing mechanisms for biodiversity, water and carbon users (Conservation Trust Funds, REDD+, etc.),
- mainstreaming PES schemes into land-use planning and management tools,
- forest management and Chain of Custody certification according to FSC and PEFC standards,
- design and implementation of awareness raising campaigns and training programs on PES.





# MARINE AND COASTAL GOVERNANCE



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## CHALLENGES

The oceans cover almost three quarters of the Earth's surface and provide food for billions of people. Jobs and income for communities worldwide depend on them, especially in developing countries. Specifically, coastal and marine areas account for economic, environmental, social and cultural values.

Yet, the resilience of coastal socio-ecological systems is increasingly tested through the impacts of climate change and developments associated with rapid population and economic growth. Following the Blue Economy business model, exploitation of seas and oceans must balance economic productivity and associated human use with the protection of different habitats and species. Over 90 % of all fish stocks are exploited beyond their sustainable limits. As millions of tons of waste end up in the oceans every year, land- and sea-based marine litter is a global concern with far-reaching consequences for ecosystems, the economy, human health and food supplies.

Therefore, effective and sustainable coastal and marine governance is of increasing importance. It has to take into account a multitude of topics such as conservation and management of marine and coastal biodiversity, sustainable fisheries and aquaculture, sustainable tourism development, pollution control and waste management as well as disaster risk and climate change mitigation and adaptation. But spaces and processes associated with coastal and marine

areas are often not bound by sectors or administrative borders, hence tackling these challenges and their related objectives requires cross-sectoral, inter-regional and international stakeholder coordination and cooperation.

## GFA CONCEPTS AND SERVICES

Taking the multidisciplinary and cross-sectoral nature of marine and coastal governance into consideration, GFA offers a holistic approach. Apart from an internal thematic working group, the company benefits from its interdisciplinary regional departments, supported by the expertise of technical departments and teams. From feasibility studies to practical implementation advice and policy support, GFA and its partners offer a broad range of expertise and services:

- Coastal and marine protected areas
- Climate change adaptation and mitigation
- Marine spatial planning
- Integrated coastal area management
- Sustainable fisheries and aquaculture
- Disaster risk reduction & coastal protection
- Marine pollution and waste management
- Sustainable tourism development
- Offshore energy and resource use



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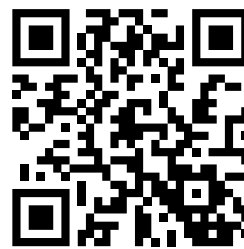
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