Executive summary

The National Forest Administration - Romsilva (RNP-Romsilva) is the major administrator of the Romanian protected areas, managing 22 out of 29 National and Nature Parks, by contracts signed with Ministry of Environment, for a period of 10 years. Currently, the budget allocated to each administration is based on the terms of contracts signed in 2004. Year by year, the activity of protected areas has become more complex, and also their financial needs. Recently, in order to continue all these contracts, Romsilva had to develop a complex analysis on the activity of protected areas managed, where the biodiversity should be one of the most important indicators.

Because the RNP-Romsilva does not have a method regarding the biodiversity evaluation of its protected areas, it is possible that the biodiversity was not taken into due consideration in the past. Consequently, it is possible that decisions regarding the management of protected areas have not been taken in the most appropriate way.

Because of this, the biodiversity of PAs under the management of RNP-Romsilva needs to be evaluated, among other things. The opportunity to be involved in the Klaus Toepfer Fellowship Programme (KTF), and the knowledge gained through the programme has been used to initiate this evaluation.

The purpose of the project has been to evaluate - on a pilot basis - the biodiversity of PAs managed by the RNP-Romsilva, in order to consider this value in resource prioritization among them. This document represents a preliminary approach. The prioritisation of PAs is needed to justify different internal decisions (e.g. financial investments or other resources, analyses) and for reports and briefings to the Ministry of Environment.

From the 22 national and nature parks administrated by Romsilva, six sites were selected for the first initiative: 3 National Parks (Rodna Mountains, Piatra Craiului and Retezat) and 3 Nature Parks (Maramures Mountains, Bucegi and Apuseni). Because the habitats and ecological characteristics differ considerably between those PAs, I grouped the sites for comparing into types of similar areas, e.g. by biogeographical region. Taking into account that the majority of parks administrated by RNP-Romsilva are in the Carpathians, we choose the Alpine bioregion as a primary focus.

An adapted methodology was applied for the evaluation of biodiversity value, and for our own internal institutional purposes, where the numbers of protected species and habitats present within six PA’s was measured.
Through the project, the selected PAs are prioritized and compared in terms of biodiversity value according to four specific criteria that can be applied to the whole RNP-Romsilva’s portfolio. These include the presence of: A–threatened and protected species; B–species diversity; C–protected habitats and D–conservation designations.

The evaluation is intended to be a first step in improving the decision-making process at RNP-Romsilva level regarding the management of PA’s managed, through a better understanding of the distribution of biodiversity among them. Also the results can represent the first step in order to setting conservation action priorities.