



Conflict Resolution Scheme to strengthen mutual understanding between PA authorities and surrounding communities in Georgia

BORJOMI-KHARAGAULI NATIONAL PARK

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ABBREVIATIONS

APA	Agency of Protected Areas
BKPAs	Borjomi-Kharagauli Protected Areas
CNF	Caucasus Nature Fund
EIEC	Environmental Information and Education Centre
LEPL	Legal Entity of Public Law
MENRP	Ministry of Environment and Natural Resources Protection of Georgia
PAs	Protected Areas
ToR	Terms of Reference
WWF	World Wildlife Fund

Summary

This Document was prepared within the framework of the initiative of the Caucasus Nature Fund (CNF) aiming at strengthening the capacities of Protected Areas to ensure an improved management. In this regards, better understanding of conflicts between PAs and local communities, as well as finding the ways for their solutions is a key aspect. The study had a specific objective to develop approaches for the timely identification, assessment and solution of conflicts relating to the proper functioning of the protected areas in Georgia based on the example of Borjomi-Kharagauli Protected Areas (BKPA), as well as developing specific recommendations for further support.

Total area of BKPA is 107 083ha 0 and it encompasses protected areas of 4 different categories: Borjomi Strict Nature Reserve (14 820,6 ha), Borjomi-Kharagauli National Park (61 234,84 ha), Nedzvi Managed Nature Reserve (8 992 ha), Goderdzi Petrified Forest Natural Monument (36 ha) and Ktsia-Tabatskuri Managed Nature Reserve (22 000 ha) which was established in 1995 was handed over for the management to the BKPA administration in September 2015. Borjomi Strict Nature Reserve was established in 1935 while the National Park and the Nedzvi Managed Nature Reserve - in 1995. The presented study does not cover Ktsia-Tabatskuri Managed Nature Reserve.

Land, as well as natural resources within the territory of Borjomi-Kharagauli Protected Areas is state-owned. Use of resources is permitted only in the traditional use zones of the BK National Park and Nedzvi Managed Nature Reserve, which amount 42% of the National Park and almost 80% of the Managed Nature Reserve. Population adjacent to the traditional use zones of Borjomi-Kharagauli Protected Areas is allowed to use non-timber resources and wood products of the forest, secondary wood materials, firewood and pastures, whereas in the traditional use zone of Nedzvi Managed Nature Reserve the use of timber is also permitted.

While more than two decades have passed since the establishment of Borjomi-Kharagauli National Park, the relationship with the local population remains sensitive. As shown by the conducted survey, conflicts relating to the use of natural resources (timber cutting and use of pastures) within the Protected Areas are particularly acute.

About 7000-8000 m³ firewood is obtained annually for heating and cooking by approximately 1000 households from the traditional use zones of the National Park and Nedzvi Managed Nature Reserve. The legislation prohibits selling firewood and timber obtained and produced within the Protected Areas, however, this remains the only source of income for certain part of population. Moreover, illegal cutting also takes place. Villages Akhaldaba, Baniskhevi and Rveli in Borjomi municipality represent particular “hot spots” in this regard. No forest inventory has taken place since the

establishment of the National Park, causing significant difficulties for planning the sustainable use of forest resources.

The main reasons causing conflicts with regard to the use of forest resources are following:

- Local population (Akhaldaba in Borjomi; Marelisi and Leghvani in Kharagauli) was mainly employed in timber processing (manufacturing of wood products and furniture) until the National Park was established. The necessary resources were obtained from the forests, which nowadays are within the Protected Areas. The loss of this significant source of income is particularly difficult for the local population as there are no other alternatives offered and restrictions imposed on the use of wood and timber resources is the main reason for their dissatisfaction. Some small furniture manufacturing plants are still operational in Akhaldaba and villages of Kharagauli municipality. Illegal cuts, as well as selling of firewood and timber harvested for social purposes (so called “social cuts”) within the Protected Areas that is prohibited by the legislation still takes place for income generation purposes.
- Households in the villages in vicinities to Borjomi-Kharagauli Protected Areas still depend on firewood for heating and cooking. The majority of villages adjacent to the Protected Areas are not supplied with natural gas. Even in the villages with natural gas supply the population uses firewood as they cannot afford costs of consumed natural gas.
- Population is in need of timber for their private use (for roofing, floors, fences and household facilities); however, only households residing in Akhaldaba, are allowed to harvest the timber within the territories of protected areas (specifically from Nedzvi Managed Nature Reserve). The rest of the population residing in the adjacent villages to Protected Areas can harvest timber for social purposes only from the remoted forest fund areas.
- Permit related procedure for social cuts is complicated and time consuming. Besides, they are not aware of the legal procedures and it is difficult for them to trace the status of their requests. The majority of local population cannot afford purchasing and transportation of timber from the market.
- Various technical problems are related to obtaining firewood from the Protected Areas, e.g. poor conditions of the forest roads, difficult access to the allocated cutting areas, limited timeframe allowed for timber production.
- The amount of firewood has significantly reduced in certain districts of the traditional use zone and the population has to harvest young trees as firewood. Absence of relevant data impedes sustainable forest use planning as no forest inventory was carried out since 1990s. The BKPA's Management Plan envisages determination of the volumes of timber production based on the inventory in compliance with conservation purposes of the Protected Areas that may be less than the demand forming the reasons for potential conflict.

The use of pastures is the second main conflict between local population and Borjomi-Kharagauli Protected Areas. Pastures in the alpine zone of the National Park are used by the population of

adjacent villages, mainly from Kharagauli and Adigeni municipalities bringing their livestock to pastures in summer (for approximately 3 months). As per monitoring data carried out by the administration during the last years, the number of livestock on alpine pastures of the National Park amount to approximately 4000-5000.

Pasture-related conflicts have the following reasons:

- Insufficient pasture areas – Number of livestock has increased in recent years. Population of the village Chrdili asks for allocation of additional pastures and pastures that were included within the National Park are already afforested.
- Some of the pastures are used by population from several villages (e.g. Lomismta) causing inter-community conflicts due to high number of cattle. It also worth to mention that part of pasturelands in traditional use zone of the National Park has already been degraded which creates an additional threat to the Park's conservation purposes.
- Disagreements relating to repair works of shepherds' shelters;
- Hay production within the National Park territory is strictly limited, including the areas previously used by local population for the above purposes. This has significantly reduced effects on pasture but enhanced the process of their natural afforestation.

Conflicts relating to the use of pastures are expected to be worsened after the study of the conditions and carrying capacity of the pasture is carried out as required by the Management Plan. Based on the information provided by the BKPA's administration, it is not clear when the study will be made; however, it is anticipated that the study results may reveal the need of changing the current regime of the use of pastures that may serve as the new wave of dissatisfaction and conflict with farmers and shepherds. The Administration of the Protected Areas anticipates the introduction of the fee for the use of pastures after the study is done. Introduction of fees for the use of the National Park's pastures may give an impetus to a new conflict with the local population. Potentially, conflicts may also arise due to the use of summer pastures by shepherds in the Ktsia-Tabatskuri Managed Nature Reserve. Currently some misunderstandings relating to the fees for the use of pastures have already been observed.

Hunting represents another threat to the fauna of Borjomi-Kharagauli Protected Areas. Georgian legislation prohibits hunting in Strict Nature Reserves and National Parks, as well as within the 500 m line around them. There are attempts of amateur hunting within the Protected Areas by local as well as hunters from various regions and mainly from Tbilisi. Currently, trend of hunting within the Protected Areas is decreasing, mainly caused by the improved law enforcement, high penalties on poaching, enhancement of protection of the Protected Areas and implementation of the patrolling programmes. However, full elimination of poaching within the Protected Areas is hampered by insufficient human resources in the Borjomi-Kharagauli Protected Areas, inadequate equipment, as well as improper sanctions for violations on the level of legislation. It has to be noted that the major

part of population considers prohibition of hunting as one of the positive results of the establishment of Protected Areas and supports operations of the Protected Areas in this regard.

Another reason for conflict between the Protected Areas and local population is intensified **attacks of predators on the domestic animals**. There are no legal procedures for compensating the damage caused by predators to the population.

In recent years, the conflicts were particularly acute in relation to **external borders of the Protected Areas**. Due to inaccuracies when marking the border lines some of the privately owned land plots were included within the boundaries of the National Park, causing conflicts between the National Park and local population. In 2014, relevant financial means were allocated from the budget to start demarcation process. Main works relating to border demarcation of Borjomi-Kharagauli Protected Areas are finished. The border lines will undergo registration with the Public Register in the nearest future. At the meetings held within the framework of the study the conflict related to the borders of Protected Areas was considered resolved by both the population and the Administration. However, final resolution of the conflict can be achieved after border demarcation is finished and borders are set apart in nature. It is significant to conduct the monitoring of the results.

The following aspects are also considered as reasons for conflicts between the parties concerned (local population, local self-government bodies, Agency of Protected Areas):

- Limited involvement of local population and local self-government bodies in management of the Protected Areas;
- Lack of communication between the Administration of Protected Areas and local population/self-government bodies;
- Limited involvement of local population in eco-educational and awareness raising activities;
- Lack of information, knowledge and experience of local population in creating touristic services relating to the Protected Areas;
- Lack of attention and efforts to create alternative ways of employment and new sources for income generation for population;
- Improper infrastructure impeding tourism development.

Last part of the Report provides a scheme for solving the conflicts, as well as their reasons, including the list of recommended actions, the role of BKPAs administration and other parties in their implementation. Part of the recommended actions are implementable within relatively short timelines and with little financial allocations, while other actions require legislative changes, decision making at national level and involvement of various public authorities.

1. Introduction

The total area of Protected Areas has significantly increased on a global level during the last decades. Moreover, it has been acknowledged that the establishment of Protected Areas only is not sufficient for biodiversity protection and preservation. Effective operation of the Protected Areas significantly depends on support from local communities that is, to certain extent, predetermined by the opinion of local population in relation to the impact the Protected Areas have on their well-being. Understanding the essence and causes for conflict between the Protected Areas and local communities is a precondition for its resolution and reaching a consensus that should involve all stakeholders concerned. The behaviour and attitude of local communities towards the Protected Areas should be achieved through implementation of the agreed compromises and decisions, which is difficult and sometimes a time consuming process. However, successful implementation of the activities agreed for conflict resolution will support prevention or easy management of possible conflicts relating to the same issue.

Protected Areas in Georgia are instrumental for maintaining biodiversity. During recent years, with support provided by donor organisations, Georgia managed to significantly strengthen the system of Protected Areas in the view of their territorial increase, as well as improved management. As of January 2015, total area of the protected areas of all categories (Strict Nature Reserve, National Park, Nature Monument, Managed Nature Reserve, Preserved Landscape) amounts to 600, 597.2 ha, i.e. 8,62% of total country area. As part of the strategy on ecoregion biodiversity conservation, common idea on strengthening cooperation between the Protected Areas and local communities, as well as adapting the management of the Protected Areas has already been developed, ensuring that the Protected Areas, in addition to conserving biodiversity, provide tangible social and economic benefits for local population. National Biodiversity Strategy and Action Plan of Georgia (2014-2020)¹ envisages increasing the involvement of stakeholders and, in particular, local population in planning and management processes of Protected Areas, as well as study and introduction of the opportunities for establishing mechanisms for effective biodiversity protection with the Protected Areas, compensation for their sustainable use and other positive encouraging tools.

It is important to note that the WWF Caucasus Programme Office already has implemented two pilot studies for identifying the input of Borjomi-Kharagauli and Mtirala National Park into the economic development. The UNDP/GEF Project “Catalyzing Financial Sustainability of Georgia’s Protected Areas System” defined the role of Tusheti Protected Areas. The above studies have shown the significance of these Protected Areas for developing tourism, hydro-energy production, mineral water production and agriculture sectors, as well as alternative income generation for local population.

¹ Approved by the Resolution N343 of the Government of Georgia, dated 8 May 2014

Despite the above mentioned, conflicts between local population and the Protected Areas remain an acute problem, which is caused by the high dependence of the communities on natural resources within the Protected Areas, uncertainties relating to land ownership and limited involvement of local population in planning and management of Protected Areas often serving as the basis for negative attitude of the population towards the Protected Areas. Limitations defined for the use of resources due to establishing new or widening existing Protected Areas often represent the cause for illegal obtaining of the resources by population that is a serious problem for the most part of the Protected Areas.

Illegal activities within the Protected Areas decreased to certain extent due to various measures taken for many years (strengthened law enforcement, high penalties, increased responsibility of employees, educational activities, communication with local population), however, illegal logging, hunting and overgrazing still remain the main threat to most of the Protected Areas.

This Document was prepared within the framework of the initiative of the Caucasus Nature Fund (CNF) aiming at strengthening the capacities of Protected Areas to ensure an improved management. In this regards, better understanding of conflicts between PAs and local communities, as well as finding the ways for their solutions is a key aspect.

The Report focuses on Borjomi-Kharagauli Protected Areas. The study had a specific objective to develop the approaches for timely identification, assessment and solution of conflicts relating to operation of the protected areas in Georgia based on the example of Borjomi-Kharagauli Protected Areas, as well as developing specific recommendations for further support.

First stage of the study implied working meetings and interviews with the administration of Borjomi-Kharagauli Protected Areas, the representatives of the Agency of Protected Areas (APA), the Majoritarian members of the Parliament of Georgia and representatives of self-governing bodies of Borjomi and Kharagauli municipalities, during which the information about existing and potential conflicts between the local communities and Borjomi-Kharagauli Protected Areas was obtained and main conflict types as well as communities involved in conflicts revealed.

In-depth interviews were held with representatives of the communities concerned for assessing the scope, as well as the development stage of conflicts and identifying the opinions of local population towards the possible ways forward. Based on the information obtained the draft report was developed and discussed at the meetings in Borjomi and Kharagauli with the participation of the representatives of the Ministry of Environment and Natural Resources Protection of Georgia (MENRP), the Agency of Protected Areas, Administration of Borjomi-Kharagauli Protected Areas, local self-governing bodies of Borjomi and Kharagauli municipalities, as well as local communities, non-governmental

organisations and mass media. During the meetings the parties discussed existing conflicts and the ways of their resolutions, including examining the recommendations and determining the role of each party concerned in solving the problem.

The meetings, with the participation of all key parties, formed a good basis for reaching compromise for conflict resolution. Based on the proposals and recommendations reached during the meetings the final version of the report was developed, describing existing and potential conflicts between Borjomi-Kharagauli Protected Areas and local communities, the reasons for conflicts, legal and institutional frameworks relating to the conflict, parties to the conflict, as well as recommendations for resolving/mitigating the conflicts.

2. Background information

Borjomi-Kharagauli Protected Areas is located in the southern part of Georgia and encompasses Eastern part of the Lesser Caucasus Mountains. Its total area is 107 083 ha and consists of Borjomi Strict Nature Reserve (14 820,6 ha), Borjomi-Kharagauli National Park (61 234,84 ha), Nedzvi Managed Nature Reserve (8 992 ha), Goderdzi Pertified Forest Natural Monument (36 ha) and Ktsia-Tabatskuri Managed Nature Reserve (22 000ha).

Borjomi Strict Nature Reserve was established in 1935 and it represents one of the oldest Protected Areas in Georgia. Establishment of Borjomi-Kharagauli National Park started in 1995 and embraced forests around the existing Borjomi Strict Nature Reserve, Kharagauli, Akhaltsikhe, Khashuri, as well as Adigeni municipalities. The same year Nedzvi Managed Nature Reserve was established, however, the territory was transferred under the management of the National Park Administration in 2006 only. Goderdzi Pertified Forest Natural Monument was established in 2013 and Ktsia-Tabatskuri Managed Nature Reserve – in 1995. Ktsia-Tabatskuri Managed Nature Reserve was handed over to the BKPAs administration in September 2015.

As mentioned above, Ktsia-Tabatskuri Managed Nature Reserve is not covered by this report.

Borjomi-Kharagauli National Park was the first Protected Areas in South Caucasus that complied with the international standards. In 2007 the National Park became a member of the European Protected Areas' Network - Pan Parks that required introduction of high standards of management in the view of conservation, as well as sustainable development (*the network does not exist anymore*).

BKPAs is managed by the laws of Georgia on “The System of Protected Areas”, “Establishment and Management of Borjomi-Kharagauli Protected Areas”, “Red List” and “Red Book” of Georgia”, Forest

Code of Georgia, as well as the Resolution N242 of the Government of Georgia on “Adoption of the Rules of Forest Use”, dated 20 August 2010.

BKPAs Management Plan was adopted by the Governmental Resolution N13, dated 3 January 2014. The Management Plan defines long-term goals of the Protected Areas, zones of the National Park and Nedzvi Managed Nature Reserve, as well as permitted activities in each zone, existing threats, programmes and action plans to be implemented.

75% of Borjomi-Kharagauli Protected Areas is covered with pristine mixed forests. Spruce, fir and pine forests are widespread at 1400-1800 m above the sea level. Among the broadleaf trees *Quercus iberica* and *Carpinus caucasica* prevail in the lower belt, whereas *Fagus orientalis* dominates in the upper belt; *Castanea sativa* from the “Red List” of Georgia is also spread. Hardwood species form diverse combinations in various belts and habitats. The mixed forests of spruce and fir, pine and spruce, beech and hornbeam, chestnut and beech and other, can also be observed.

Almost one fourth of the National Park is occupied by subalpine and alpine grass and bunchgrass meadows.

The Protected Areas preserves many species or sub-species of large mammals and birds that are rare or face the threat of extinction, included in the Red List of Georgia, such as: *Cervus elaphus*, *Ursus arctos*, *Lynx lynx*, *Rupicapra rupicapra*, *Tetrao mlokosiewiczii* etc. Forest also represents a house for *Sus scrofa*, *Capreolus capreolus*, *Canis lupus*, *Felis silvestris*. Mountain rivers have preserved numerous population of *Salmo fario trutta*.

Borjomi-Kharagauli Protected Areas includes territories from six municipalities – Borjomi, Kharagauli, Akhaltsikhe, Adigeni, Khashuri and Baghdati. Administrative Centre of the National Park is located in Borjomi, whereas Visitors’ Centres are placed in Borjomi and Kharagauli. Access to the National Park territory for the visitors is possible from the central entry located in Borjomi. Apart from this, additional entrances are arranged in Likani, Qyabiskhevi, Atskuri, Zanavi, Abastumani, Marelisi and Nunisi.

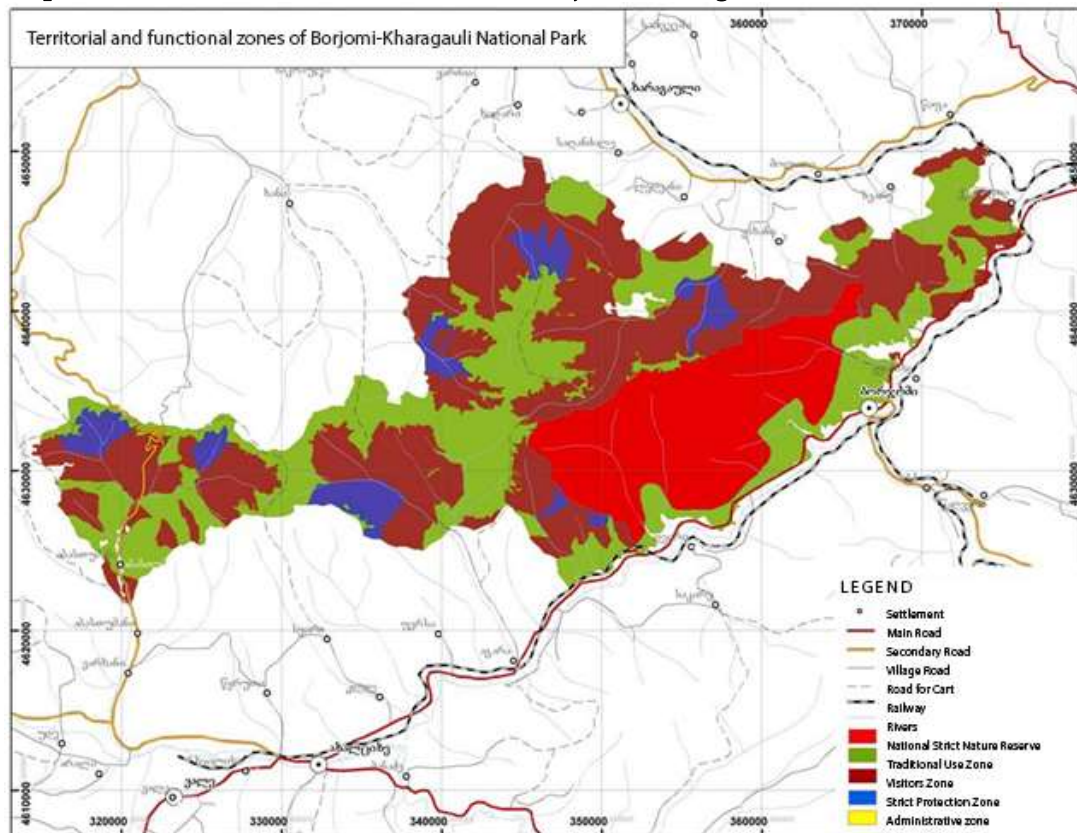
Land within the Borjomi-Kharagauli Protected Areas is state-owned.

Borjomi-Kharagauli National Park includes: strict protection zone (5 455,9 ha), traditional use zone (25 948,89 ha), visitors zone (29 824,45 ha) and administration zone (5,6 ha). Nedzvi Managed Nature Reserve has strict protection zone (1 814 ha) and traditional use zone (7 178 ha). There is no zoning in Borjomi Strict Nature Reserve.

In Borjomi Strict Nature Reserve, National Park and Nedzvi Managed Nature Reserve only the following activities are permitted: scientific research and monitoring of minor impact, educational activities, arranging for protected infrastructure and fire protection platforms, fight against pests with biological means. Visitors in the visitors' zone of the National Park may walk, ride or move using motor transport in agreement with the Administration. It is also admitted in the visitors' zone of the National Park to establish and use the infrastructure necessary for eco-tourism.

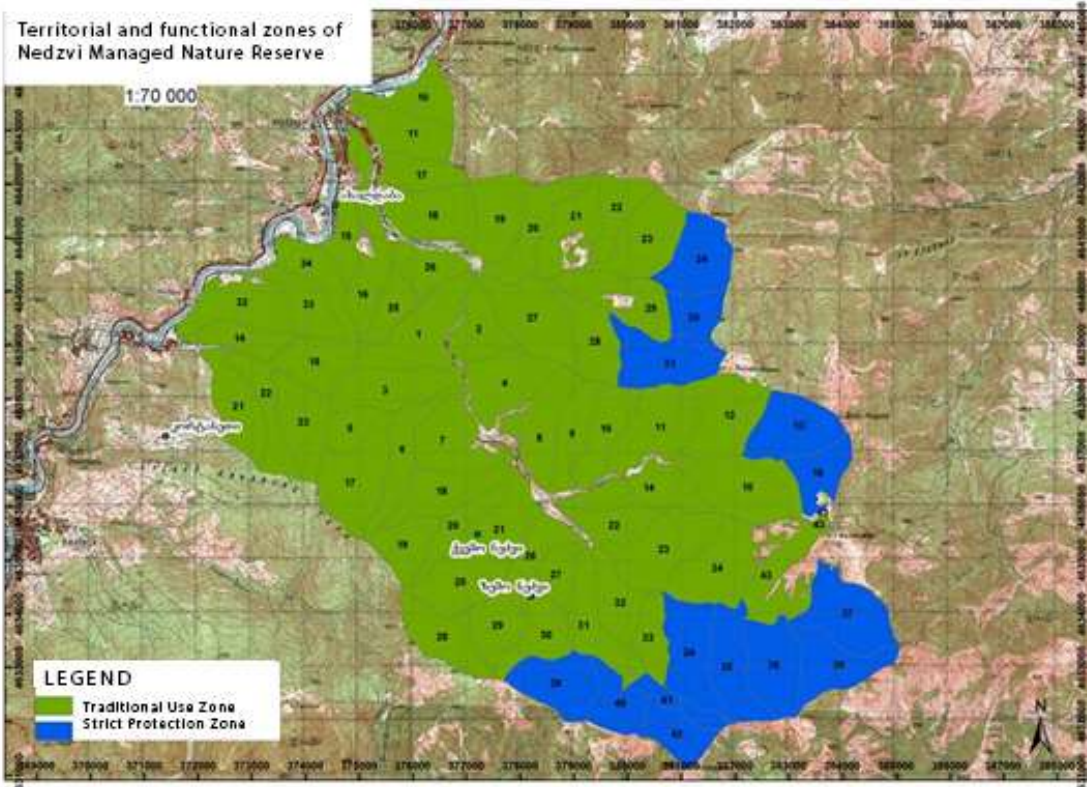
In the traditional use zones of the National Park (42% of the National Park's territory) and Nedzvi Managed Nature Reserve (almost 80% of the Reserve's territory) population adjacent to Borjomi-Kharagauli Protected Areas are allowed to use non-timber forest resources, forest wood products, secondary forest materials, firewood and pastures. The use of timber is allowed in the traditional use zone of only Nedzvi Managed Nature Reserve.

Map 1 . Territorial and functional zones of Borjomi-Kharagauli National Park



Source: Management Plan of Borjomi-Kharagauli Protected Areas

Map 2. Territorial and functional zones of Nedzvi Managed Nature Reserve



Source: Management Plan of Borjomi-Kharagauli Protected Areas

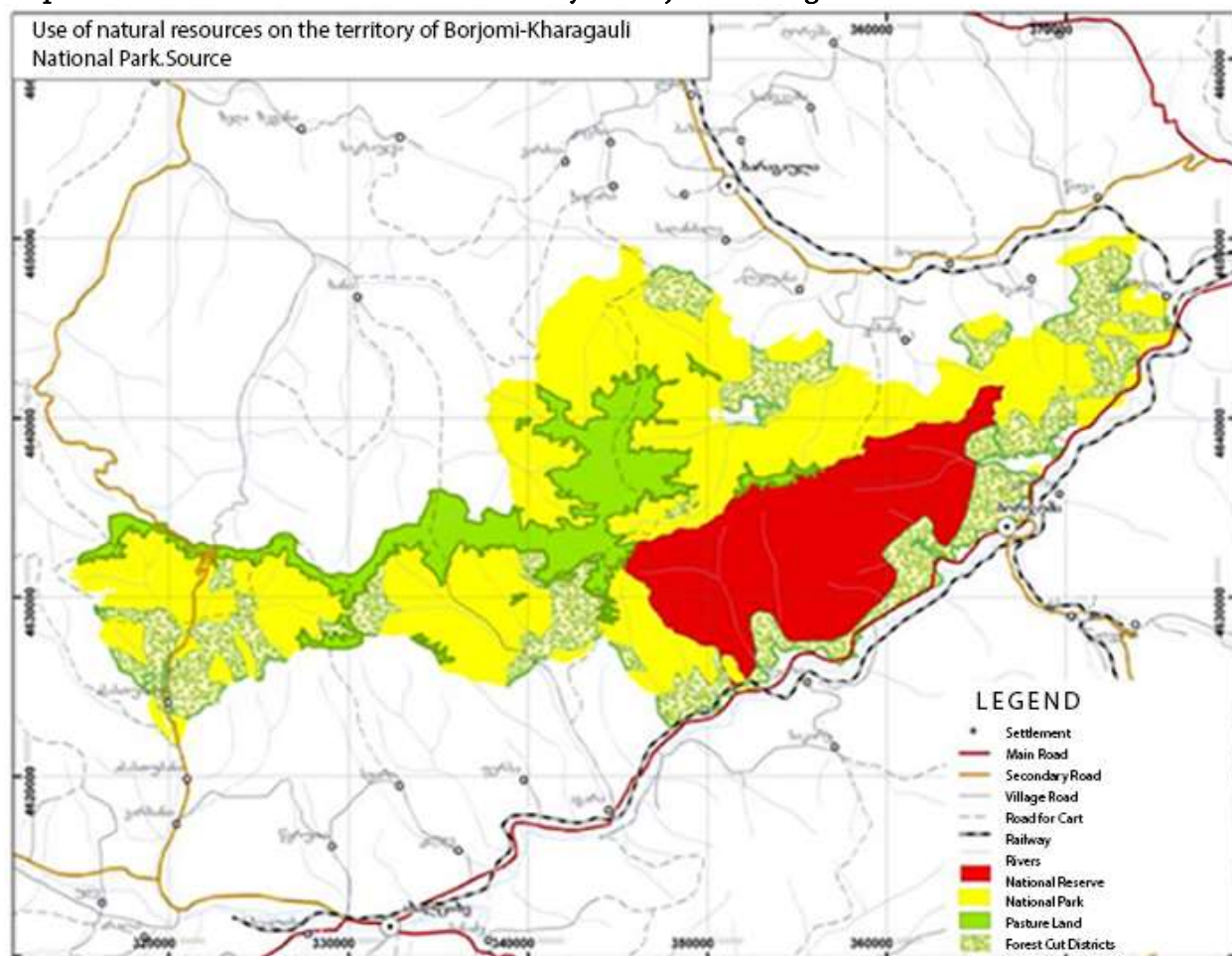
3. Existing and potential conflicts

3.1 Conflicts relating to the use of natural resources

More than two decades have passed since the establishment of Borjomi-Kharagauli National Park, but still, the relationship with the local population remains sensitive. As shown by the conducted survey, conflicts relating to the use of natural resources within the Protected Areas are particularly acute.

Borjomi-Kharagauli National Park was established under poor social and economic conditions. Even nowadays, population employment rate in municipalities adjacent to the Borjomi-Kharagauli Protected Areas is low that significantly increases local population's dependency on the resources of Protected Areas.

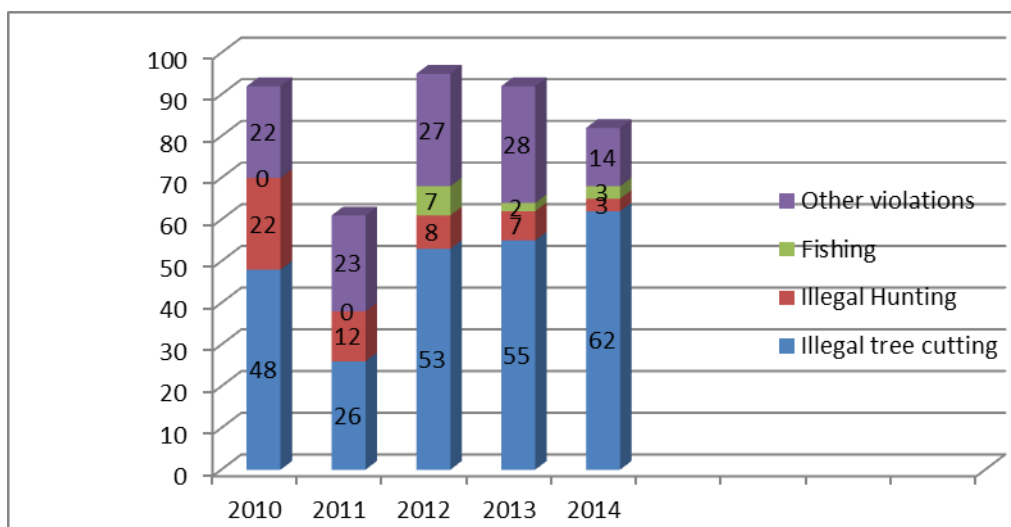
Map 3. Use of natural resources on the territory of Borjomi-Kharagauli National Park



Source: Management Plan of Borjomi-Kharagauli Protected Areas

Due to the gradual improvement of resource use management, as well as the increase of effectiveness of protection measures, conflicts with local population is less acute compared to previous years. It has also to be noted that as per information of the local self-government, the number of overwintering households in the villages adjacent to Borjomi-Kharagauli Protected Areas has significantly decreased compared to the figures in 90s and the reduction in number is mainly affected by people with ability to work. Due to these factors local population's pressure on the Park eco-systems has been reduced. However, a number of problems related to the use of resources remain unsolved that drives population to act illegally on the one hand, and threatens the biodiversity of the Protected Areas on the other hand. According to the data of the administration of Borjomi-Kharagauli Protected Areas, more than 400 cases of illegal use of resources was recorded in 2010-2014 and illegal cut is the most frequent violation (60% of revealed violations).

Diagram 1. Violations detected within the territory of Borjomi-Kharagauli Protected Areas



Source: BKPA's Administration

**Other Violations include breaking the regime of protected areas for example, entering the PAs with guns.*

The use of natural resources is more intensive in those areas of Borjomi-Kharagauli Protected Areas that are close to settlements.

3.1.1 Conflicts relating to the use of forest and wood resources

3.1.1.1 Social, economic, legal and ecology aspects of the use of wood and forest resources

Logging within Borjomi-Kharagauli Protected Areas often causes problems between the administration of Protected Areas and local population particularly in the villages, for which the

Protected Areas represent the only alternative for obtaining firewood. Cutting areas allocated in the State Forest Fund are inaccessible for these villages due to their remoteness or absence of forest roads. Timber stock in nearby forests is extinguished as a result of intensive cuts during past years.

As per the Management Plan of Borjomi-Kharagauli Protected Areas, use of wood and forest resources is admitted in the traditional use zones of Borjomi-Kharagauli National Park and Nedzvi Managed Nature Reserve, from where firewood is obtained by 1000 families on average. According to the Management Plan up to 10 m³ firewood may be issued from traditional use zones of the National Park and Nedzvi Managed Nature Reserve per household; as for the construction timber, local population may make use of 800 m³ construction timber per annum from the traditional use zone of only Nedzvi Managed Nature Reserve.

In reality, the administration of the Protected Areas allocates 7000-8000 m³ firewood and 800 m³ construction timber per year that is distributed among the population of the villages adjacent to the Protected Areas. Each household receives up to 5-7 m³ firewood.

In the traditional use zone of the National Park firewood is extracted by the population of the following villages:

- Abastumani (Adigeni municipality);
- Atskuri, Gurkeli, Tsinubani, Zikilia, Agara, Sakuneti (Akhaltsikhe municipality);
- Part of Borjomi city, Kvabiskhevi, Likani, Chitakhevi, Zoreti, Bankiskhevi, Sveli, Zanavi, Kortaneti, Akhaldaba (Borjomi municipality);
- Bulbuli fortress, Kvishkheti Monastery (Khashuri municipality);
- Marelisi, Vakhani, Nunisi, Chrdili (Kharagauli municipality).

Pine, spruce, fir, hornbeam, beech are cut as firewood and beech and coniferous species – as construction timber.

Table 1: Amount of firewood consumed by households within the Borjomi-Kharagauli Protected Areas resulting from social cuts (by cutting areas allocated in 2015)

Municipality	Community	Number of households	Number of households consuming firewood from the National Park	Firewood consumption by households	Firewood consumption by community
Adigeni	Abastumani	300	150	7	1050
Akhaltsikhe	Atskuri	680	35	7	250

	Gurkeli	45	4	7	28
	Tsinubani	106	4	7	28
	Zikilia	118	17	7	120
	Agara	130	2	7	14
Borjomi	City of Borjomi (Vashlovani)		79	7	558
	Kvabiskhevi	165	132	7	930
	Likani	120	102	7	717
	Baniskhevi	70	65	7	455
	Rveli	180	20	7	145
	Zanavi	110	30	7	210
	Kortaneti	120	52	7	366
	Akhaldaba	750	245	7	1716
Khashuri	Bulbuli fortress	60	17	7	119
	Kvishkheti Monastery	800	25	7	175
Kharagauli	Marelisi	201	10	7	70
	Nunisi	15	9	7	63
Total		3970	998 (23% of households in BKPA adjacent villages, except for Borjomi)		7014

Firewood is extracted in cutting areas annually allocated by the PAs administration considering various criteria, such as forest conditions (*prior to allocating a cutting area, it is examined by the rangers of Protected Areas and relevant report is drawn up*), availability of access roads, demand from local population, previous years statistics (*e.g., volumes of firewood distributed last year*). Cutting areas for allocation are approved by the Agency of Protected Areas.

Cutting of trees for the purpose of meeting social demands of population is made in coordination with the local self-government bodies. Most of all, an agreement is reached about the volumes of firewood to be provided to the communities in need in the current year.

Social and economic aspects

According to the Rules of Forest Use and the Management Plan of Borjomi-Kharagauli Protected Areas, tree cutting within the Protected Areas may be undertaken only for the purpose of meeting the social needs of local population. This means that a person gaining firewood or construction

timber within Borjomi-Kharagauli Protected Areas does not have the right of its alienation. Sale of firewood resulting from social cuts implies an administrative fine in amount of GEL 500. To ensure that harvested tree is in fact used as firewood and not sold as a construction timber, the person, entitled to harvest certain amount of firewood, is obliged to fragment the cut tree into 1 m long pieces prior to removing it from the forest².

However, it seems that part of population receives certain income through selling firewood. They also find the ways to sell timber allocated for social needs as well as firewood for construction purposes (as noticed from interviews).

The following steps should have been undertaken by a local dweller for obtaining firewood within the National Park territory:

- Register in the electronic system of wood resources management³ through the municipal government (Gamgeoba) (*for registration in the electronic system of wood resources management, municipal government will submit to the LEPL National Forestry Agency data of one member of the families*);
- Apply to the administration of Borjomi-Kharagauli Protected Areas about the use of firewood (*the administration reviews only the applications of population living in the villages adjacent to the Protected Areas, who are registered in the electronic system of wood resources management*);
- Pay the fee for use of natural resources in the designed bank in amount of GEL 3 for m³ for deciduous trees (beech, hornbeam) and GEL 2 for conifers (pine, spruce, fir)⁴ in addition to service fee payable for each m³ in amount of GEL 3;
- Get the wood production ticket in the administration of Protected Areas; wood production tickets are also issued by the bank after the volume of the wood allocated to the user by cutting areas is reflected in the electronic system of wood resources management;
- A ranger indicates cutting area with marked trees to be cut;
- After the harvesting the firewood the ranger verifies the compliance and issues a document certifying lawfulness of the firewood to be transported from the forest to home.

Transportation of firewood from the forest is made by oxen to the motor road, or by sliding and with a motor car afterwards. For removing firewood from the forests the majority of population is hiring oxen from their neighbours; cars are being rented as well.

² According to the Rules on Forest Use approved by the Resolution N242 of the Government of Georgia on 20 August 2010

³ Rules relating to registration and rights of the wood and forest users are defined by the Decree N118 of 30 April 2014 of the Minister for Environment and Natural Resources Protection on “Adoption of the Instruction on Maintenance of the Electronic System of Wood Resources Management”.

⁴ In accordance with the Law of Georgia on Use of Natural Resources (Articles 5.2 and 7.4).

The majority of village population arranges production of allocated firewood on their own. Part of families cannot produce firewood themselves; therefore it is common to pay a neighbour for firewood production and transportation. Part of population does not consume allocated firewood, in particular, so-called seasonal dwellers residing in villages only in summer. Part of them, presumably, allows their co-villagers to use firewood allocated for them (also presumably against certain price). Thus, firewood production becomes certain source of income for small part of local population.

Wood and timber production is very intensive in September-October.

Cost for production of 7 m³ firewood is approximately 400 GEL, including labour, pulling force and car rent. Average annual benefit received by local population as firewood from the Protected Areas (excluding labour and transportation costs) is estimated at approximately 470 000 GEL⁵.

Production of construction timber on the territory of Nedzvi Managed Nature Reserve is allowed only for the purposes of meeting the social needs of local population. The request on production of construction timber by means of social cuts is submitted by the State Governor to the Agency of Protected Areas. The Agency assesses the opportunities for issuing wood resources and submits the information to the Governor, who, in turn, studies the reasonableness of the demand of local population. The volume of the wood is justified based on the results of the study and if changed, new request is re-submitted to the Agency, after which construction timber is allocated to concrete households.

Legal aspects

Although local population has an opportunity of extracting firewood and construction timber in the traditional use zones of the National Park and Nedzvi Managed Nature Reserve, illegal cutting still occurs. In 2014, damage⁶ caused to the Protected Areas from illegal cuts amounted to 26 879 GEL and in 2010-2014 –to 85 000 GEL⁷.

In the view of illegal cutting villages Akhaldaba, Baniskhevi and Rveli in Borjomi municipality represent particular “hot spots”. Illegally obtained wood is mainly sold as construction timber in Akhaldaba or Khashuri. As per the National Park administration, there are up to 25 villagers involved in illegal wood production, who have been fined for illegal wood production several times already.

⁵Flores, M., Adeishvili, M., 2011. Valuation of the Contribution of Borjomi-Kharagauli and Mtirala National Parks Ecosystem Services to Economic Growth and Human Well-being. Prepared for WWF Caucasus, 2011

⁶ Damage is calculated according to the volume and type of trees

⁷ based on information provided by the BKPA's administration and Environmental Supervision Department

Control on illegal cuts is mainly carried out by the rangers of the Protected Areas. Rangers are allowed to stop and check the documents and permits on extraction of natural resources and notify the administration about violations; however, currently they are not authorised to detail the offender on the spot. Act on violation drawn up by a ranger is send to the court. Notification on violation is also sent by administration to the local division of the Ministry of Internal Affairs. In case the damage caused to the environment by illegal wood production exceeds 1000 GEL, criminal proceedings are instituted. Fine defined by the “Administrative Violations Code” for illegal cut of the trees in the zones of Protected Areas, where cut of hardwood trees is allowed, amounts to 400-500 GEL plus compensation of the damage caused to the environment.

The authority of controlling the use of wood and forest resources is also granted to the Environmental Supervision Department (sub-agency of the Ministry of Environment and Natural Resources Protection). The administration of the Protected Areas is not obliged to notify the Environmental Supervision Department about the revealed violations.

It has to be noted that illegal wood and timber production is mainly done in a manner that the damage caused to the environment does not exceed the amount, which would qualify for instituting criminal proceedings. Such cases did not occur last year. Penalties and fines defined for illegal extracting of little amounts of wood and timber is rarely executed due to poor law enforcement.

Ecological aspects

Firewood from Borjomi-Kharagauli Protected Areas has been issued for already 20 years. No inventory was undertaken during this period; therefore, it is hard to estimate the impact of cuts on the forest eco-systems. As noted by the population, the resources in the allocated cutting areas are significantly reduced. Often damp trees are marked for cutting due to limited wood resources. Population mainly removes the logs from the forest, while the crown part is mostly left in the forest unprocessed, causing contamination of the forest with waste and creating herds for spread of pests. As per information provided by local population, the degradation of forests has already negatively affected water resources near the village Qvabiskhevi, where water level has significantly dropped.

BKPAs Management Plan envisages undertaking forest inventory in traditional use zones to the extent allowing determination of wood and timber production volumes in compliance with the conservation goals of the Protected Areas.

3.1.1.2. Specific reasons causing conflicts relating to the use of wood and forest resources

Non-availability of alternative income

Until the establishment of the National Park, forests of the Protected Areas represented source for use of wood resources for local population.

Firewood and construction timber extracted by local population from the forests nowadays within the Protected Areas was the main source of livelihood for significant part of population. Loss of this significant source of income was particularly difficult for the local population as there were no other alternatives offered and limits imposed on the use of wood and timber resources is the main reason for their dissatisfaction.

Population of the village Akhaldaba in Borjomi, and Marelisi and Leghvani in Kharagauli municipalities was mainly dealing with the manufacturing wood products and furniture. Construction timber was obtained from the Forest Fund territories that are now included in the Protected Areas. After the establishment of the Protected Areas, construction timber turned non-available for the population dealing with furniture production, significantly lessening their income and livelihoods. Part of workers found jobs in Tbilisi and visits the villages only seasonally.

There was an operational furniture plant in the village Akhaldaba employing up to 600 local dwellers. The furniture plant was closed in 90s; however, by opening small furniture industries, furniture manufacturing remained main source of income for the local population. Construction timber is produced in Nedzvi forests. In 2006, Nedzvi Managed Nature Reserve protection measures were launched, and forest roads and sawmills closed. Wood materials became inaccessible for local workers. Small furniture production plants are operational in Akhaldaba even today, serving as the main source of income for certain part of local population. Wood materials are purchased at the market, as well as unofficially from the persons, for whom the wood resulting from the social cuts is allocated.

Furniture plant was also operational in Kharagauli with 300-400 employees. After the closing down the plant, part of the workers established their own small furniture workshops. Until today, timber and furniture production is seen as the only source of income and local population requests the allocation of the construction timber from the National Park territory.

Furniture production is a traditional activity for this part of population of Akhaldaba and Kharagauli villages and alternative opportunities of employment are hardly thinkable for them.

Population is also not happy with the annual volume of firewood (7 m³) allocated per household despite the fact that the amount of firewood should actually suffice for heating and cooking for the whole year, in particular in Borjomi municipality, where the villages adjacent to the National Park are supplied with natural gas. The demand is rather caused by the fact that firewood production implies certain income for the local population and they would like to receive more firewood. This is evidenced by the fact also that population is discontented with the obligation to fragment firewood in 1m long parts prior to its removal from the forest. During the meetings held within the study it was also mentioned that the population should be allowed to dispose the cut wood at their discretion – for heating purposes or for sale.

Inaccessibility of the alternative sources of energy

Households residing in the villages adjacent to the Borjomi-Kharagauli Protected Areas still depend on firewood for heating their homes and cooking. Most of the villages nearby the Protected Areas are not supplied with natural gas. Due to high costs population cannot afford to use electrical energy. Even in the villages with natural gas supply the population prefers the firewood because it is cheaper. The survey within the study showed that firewood remains the cheapest and most accessible source for heating and cooking.

Among the BKPAs adjacent communities, natural gas is supplied only to those villages in Borjomi municipality that were supplied with natural gas within the social and economic development programme of the support zone. Due to un-profitableness (remoteness from the main pipe, small number of population, in particular during winter), the issue of supplying gas to the villages in Kharagauli municipality is not being discussed.

Despite that fact that, as per information of local population, obtaining firewood from the BKPAs is associated with numerous problems, there is little interest towards alternative sources for heating and cooking as the firewood is considered cheapest and easiest available source. Biogas is not regarded by the population as an alternative due to difficulties relating to the use of relevant equipment and lack of livestock.

Limits on access to the construction timber for social needs

As mentioned above, construction timber is allocated only within the traditional use zone of Nedzvi Managed Nature Reserve for the population of village Akhaldaba (as the forests neighbouring to this village are included in the BKPAs). However, demand on construction timber is high in other villages adjacent to the Protected Areas as well. For example, population of the resort Nunisi in Kharagauli municipality is in need of timber for renewing their guesthouses or construction the new ones that is

important for attracting the tourists. Meeting the demands of local population on construction timber should in first place be ensured using the state forest fund, but they are remote. Complex and time-consuming procedures for wood production resulting from social cuts create another problem. It is difficult for the population of the villages remote from administrative centres to follow information about their requests to obtain timber from social cuts; moreover, they are not aware of the legal procedures and it is difficult for them to trace the status of their requests. Moreover, the amount of construction wood allocated for social cuts is in some cases less than the demand from local population. The majority of local population cannot afford the purchase and transportation of construction timber.

Technical difficulties relating to firewood production

Among technical difficulties relating to the firewood production improper forest roads is the first one to mention. The responsibility for maintaining the roads leading to the cutting areas allocated with the Protected Areas lies with the local municipality. In some instances, due to non-availability of appropriate equipment or finances local municipal governments fail to maintain the forest roads, thus making allocated firewood inaccessible for the population. According to the Rules on Forest Use, the responsibility of arranging and maintaining forest roads for the purpose of social cuts, if necessary, also rests with the BKPA's administration. However, it does not possess either technical equipment or relevant human resources. Improper forest roads are a particular problem in Abastumani and Akhaldaba, as well as Rveli, Bankiskhevi and Qvabiskhevi.

Distribution of trees marked for cutting causes disagreements between local populations. Marked trees are allocated to households by the administration of Protected Areas in sequence. The families addressing the administration earlier than others get closer or better accessible cutting area and this causes dissatisfaction of those families, who are forced to harvest firewood from more remote or badly accessible areas.

Logging period and deadlines is another reason for dissatisfaction of the population. Administration of the Protected Areas allows timber production and logging (issues wood production tickets) no earlier than September. The period before September is used by the Protected Areas' administration for allocating the cutting area and getting approval on that from the APA. As a result, trees which are harvested in autumn fail to properly dry out and are less effective for heating. Therefore, the population demands logging to be allowed from spring time. Moreover, wood production ticket is valid for 30 calendar days, which is considered as a highly limited timeline by the population. For various reasons (non-maintained forest roads leading to the cutting area, no sufficient labour and force for removing firewood from forest) the households fail to comply with the deadlines and produce firewood, and extension of the validity of wood production ticket is associated with

additional time and expenditures. Even in case the cutting areas are allocated on time, the population is late with firewood and construction timber production. For example, in 2015 population was allowed to extract firewood and construction timber from the Nedzvi Managed Nature Reserve from 1 August, however, as of one month period, only 48 m³ of firewood was cut (out of 2 200 m³ allocated). Population names lack of transportation means for removing cut wood and timber from the forests as the main reason causing delays from its side.

Insufficient data for planning sustainable use of wood resources

As mentioned above, no forest inventory, which would serve as the basis for developing a sustainable forest use plan, has been undertaken in the traditional use zones of the BKPAs for many years, where wood and forest resources are used. The number of trees applicable for firewood is significantly decreased in the traditional use zones, which makes it necessary to mark damp trees for cutting. The mentioned problem is particularly acute in the territory adjacent to the village Qyabiskhevi. Existing situation indicates the lack or weakness of forest use planning. Apart from this, potential conflicts may arise from determining the acceptable volumes (for BKPAs) for wood production and logging based on inventory as the determined volumes may turn less than the demand on firewood.

3.1.2 Conflicts relating to the use of pastures

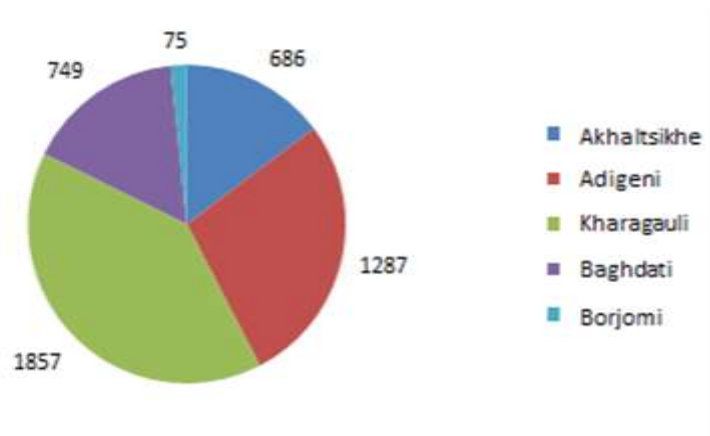
3.1.2.1 Social, economic, legal and ecological aspects of the use of pastures

Alpine meadows of Borjomi-Kharagauli National Park were used as summer pastures for centuries. Alpine pastures (up to 11 000 ha) are located in the traditional use zone of the National Park – Lomismta (Borjomi and Kharagauli municipalities), Ochora and Amarati mounts (Akhaltzikhe municipality), Zekari pass (Adigeni municipality), Sametskhvareo mountain (Kharagauli municipality)

In summer (approx. for 3 months) these pastures are used by villages in the vicinities of the Protected Areas: Abastumani, Zekari, Gvakhani from Adigeni municipality; Khani from Baghdati municipality, Qyabiskhevi from Borjomi municipality, Marelisi, Chrdili and Zvare from Kharagauli municipality.

As of 2014, the number of livestock registered on alpine pastures of Borjomi-Kharagauli National Park was distributed by municipalities as follows:

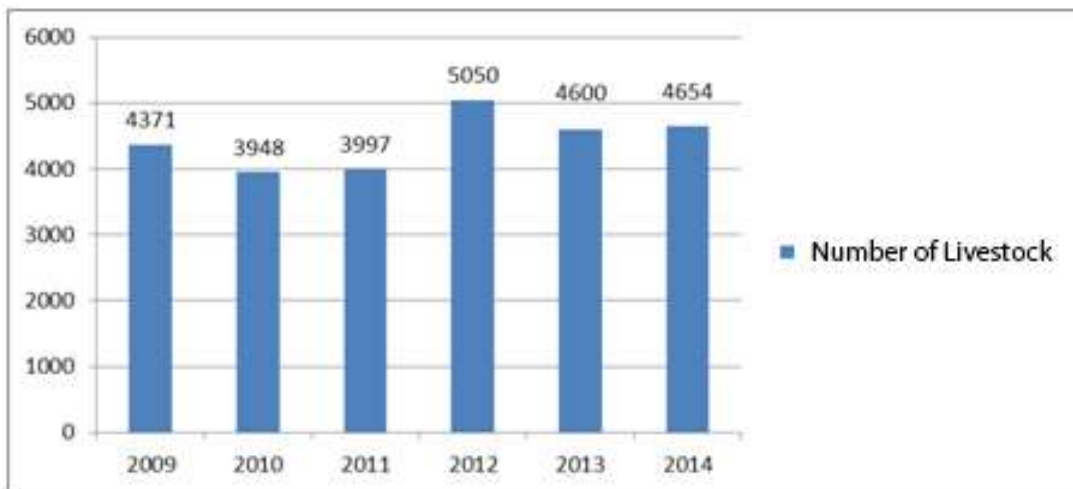
Diagram 2. Distribution of livestock registered on alpine pastures of Borjomi-Kharagauli National Park



Source: Borjomi-Kharagauli National Park administration, 2014

As per monitoring data undertaken by the administration of late years, the number of livestock on alpine pastures of the National Park amounts to approximately 4000-5000 units.

Diagram 3 . Number of livestock registered on alpine pastures of Borjomi-Kharagauli National Park in 2009-2014



Source: Borjomi-Kharagauli National Park administration

Summer pastures are used by population from May-June to the end of August. Pastures are used for non-dairy cattle.

The group of shepherds takes care of the cattle of the villagers on summer pastures, price for which is GEL 25 per unit cattle in the season. In some villages the population forms groups of 4-5 persons to take care of the cattle on summer pastures in turns.

Each village avails of shepherds' shelters on summer pasture. Altogether there are 48 shelters in the traditional use zone of the National Park; among them 21 belong to the villages of Kharagauli municipality.

Population of adjacent villages produces hay in the traditional use zone of the National Park. According to the Management Plan, mowing is allowed in the visitors' zone also of the National Park during the period of 10 July – 10 September with the purpose to prevent wildfires. This activity has almost no impact on the meadows of the National Park. Local population, in particular in Kharagauli municipality, is of opinion that hay production on the National Park territory is too strictly limited. Hay production is prohibited at the places that were used by population in the past. This reduced the pressure on the haylofts, but supported the process of their natural afforestation (mainly, with alder (*Alnus barbata*) coppice shoots. The attitude of the population is that limits relating to the hay production represent one of the barriers to the development of cattle-breeding and farming.

Social and economic aspects

Cattle grazing on the National Park territory provides livelihood for many families residing in the vicinities of the National Park. Most of the households in the villages adjacent to the National Park avail of 2-3 units of livestock. The majority of farmers produce small amounts of cheese for sale on domestic markets. Certain part of farmers owns 5-15 units of livestock. This group of farmers purchases young cattle from smaller farmers and feed them for a number of months for sale as meat.

Local population does not own the pastures, nor do they receive pastures under long-term lease from the state. They use the summer pastures of adjacent communities and the National Park. As of today, the use of the National Park pastures is free.

There are no statistics available about the development of cattle-breeding on the territories adjacent to the National Park until its establishment. However, population claims that the number of livestock has dropped as a result of imposed restrictions to the use of pastures and haylofts due to the establishment of the Protected Areas, as well as frequent attacks from predators.

Legal aspects

Shepherds are obliged to compensate the owners the damage caused by death of livestock. On the ground of frequent attacks⁸ to the livestock by predators on the National Park territory the shepherds request to be granted the right to carry hunting guns. However, movement with the guns on the National Park territory is legally prohibited. As per the administration of the National Park, the main motivation for the shepherds requesting the right to carry guns is hunting on the National Park territory. There were even cases, when livestock died due to some disease, but the shepherds insisted the reason being the attack from the predators.

Ecological aspects

As per the Management Plan of Borjomi-Kharagauli Protected Areas, overgrazing in the traditional use zone is defined as one of the threats to the Park eco-systems. There are cases of erosion on the National Park territory, in particular, in the area of Lomismta and Sametskhvario Mountain. Roads used for the livestock are also eroded. Consequently, “prevention of further degradation of the pastures in the traditional use zone of Borjomi-Kharagauli National Park, as well as restoration of the degraded area in parallel to the permitted grazing” is defined as one of the goals of the natural resources protection, conservation and sustainable use programme. For reaching this goal, it is planned to conduct a study for determining grazing capacity, as well as establish procedure for regulating the use of pastures for ensuring the relevant grazing capacity is met.

As noted by local population and the representatives of the self-government bodies, the process of pasture afforestation is on-going in the area outside the traditional use zone and population is not allowed to use these pastures.

It has to be noted that Pasture Management Plan was developed in 2002-2003 with support of the World Wildlife Fund (WWF); however, due to the lack of funding, a number of measures defined by the Management Plan could not be implemented.

⁸ In total 71 units of livestock have been recorded to be damaged by the predators in last five years (2010-2014), out of which 50 units damaged have been recorded in 2013-14 (34 and 16 in 2013 and 2014 respectively)

3.1.2.2. Specific reasons causing conflicts relating to the use of pastures

Conflicts relating to the use of pastures also arise between various communities, when one pastureland is used by a number of villages. For example, Lomismta pastures are used by the villages of Kharagauli and Borjomi municipalities.

Village Chrdili (Kharagauli municipality) is in need of pasture nearby to the village territory, for which the municipal government has applied to the BKPA's administration. However, part of the territory requested by the villagers is outside the National Park and part of which is afforested, serving as the ground for the administration to reject the request of the population.

Insufficient area of pastures nearby the villages, restrictions imposed on the use of pastures and haylofts within the National Park territory are the main reasons, for which local population considers the development of farming less viable that could serve as an alternative source for employment and income. Remoteness from the central road and non-maintained local roads represent other barriers to the farming development.

There are disagreements in relation to repair works of the shepherd's shelters. Due to the restrictions within the Protected Areas, wood materials, needed for repairing the shelters, cannot be used from the National Park; at the same time, transportation of the materials within the National Park territory is permitted only by horses. Wood materials can be transported from Kharagauli side via the existing road in traditional use zone; however, this road does not run till the shelters.

The conflict relating to the use of pastures may even deepen after the study for assessing pasture conditions and determining its carrying capacity is made. It is expected that the study will result in introducing changes to the existing pasture management regime that may become a reason for a new conflict with the farmers and shepherds. Restrictions may include the number of admitted livestock, territories; livestock vaccination may become mandatory etc. Limitation of the number of livestock will deepen the conflict with the Protected Areas, as well as between the municipalities.

The administration of the Protected Areas assumes that the pasture assessment will result in determining the fee for the use of pastures. The introduction of the fee for the use of the National Park pastures may become another reason for conflict with local population.

3.1.3 Conflict relating to hunting

Hunting represents one of the threats to the fauna of Borjomi-Kharagauli Protected Areas. Georgian legislation prohibits hunting in Strict Nature Reserves and National Parks, as well as within the 500

m line around them. It has to be noted that apart from the Borjomi-Kharagauli Protected Areas, hunting was prohibited on the entire forestry territories of Borjomi and Bakuriani. However, uncontrolled hunting in 90s resulted in dramatic reduction of the populations of deers, wild goats, bears, wild boars, roes etc. In 70-90s of the last century, the deer population in the Borjomi Strict Nature Reserve amounted to 680-1000 units, whereas in 1999 – only 39 units the reason for this being poaching.

Currently, trend of hunting within the Protected Areas is decreasing, mainly caused by the improved law enforcement, high penalties on poaching, enhancement of protection of the Protected Areas and implementation of the patrolling programmes. Installation of trap cameras also supported reduction of poaching – this already had a positive impact on the number of populations of bears and deer. The number of deer has increased by almost 11 times compared to 1999. By 2014 427 units of deer were registered within the BKPA.

There are attempts of hunting within the Protected Areas by locals, as well as hunters from various regions, mainly Tbilisi.

The poachers are equipped with radio stations that make their control difficult. Due to high costs the administration of Protected Areas cannot purchase the portable radio transmitters. The administration is also unable to effectively control poaching due to limited human resources. Rangers are mainly dealing with the arrangements and control of the use of wood and forest resources. As per legislation, entry into and movement within the Protected Areas with firearms is regarded a violation, which may result in non-deprivation of the hunting arms. In reality, the firearms are not confiscated for the attempt to hunt within the Protected Areas that, if deprived, would be a significant restraint for hunters.

It has to be noted that the major part of population considers prohibition of hunting one of the positive results of the establishment of Protected Areas and supports operations of the Protected Areas in this regard.

3.2 Human–wildlife conflict

Increase of frequency of attacks by the predators on the livestock is another reason for conflict between the Protected Areas and local population. In 2011-2014 the administration of the Protected Areas has registered 71 units of cattle damaged by wildlife. There were also cases of the wild animals damaging the crop fields nearby the Protected Areas. The attitude of local population to the predators, in particular, wolves, is strictly negative. However, local population admits that the beasts of prey mainly attack the unattended livestock in the forests. Increased number of wildlife within the

National Park causes damage to the livestock while on summer pastures that affects the shepherds in particular, as they are obliged to compensate the damage to the cattle owners.

There still is a widespread opinion among the population that on initiative of an environmental non-governmental organisation, so-called red wolves were released within the Borjomi-Kharagauli National Park, that were reproduced and these are the predators causing damage to the cattle, which clearly indicated the lack of their awareness to the issue of concern.

According to the Rules on Wildlife⁹ the municipal government may seek for approval of the Ministry of Environment and Natural Resources Protection for removing from the environment the animals causing threat to the life or property of population. However, the approval procedure is not flexible and the decision making is time consuming (the final decision on each individual case is taken by the Government of Georgia). Moreover, local government does not have enough capacity to carry out the regulation procedures. Regulating procedures do not apply to the Protected Areas as it contradicts with the legislation regulating Protected Areas.

One of the important reasons for the conflict is that there are no legal grounds for compensating the damage caused by predators to the population.

3.3 Conflicts relating to the land ownership

During the recent years, the conflicts were particularly acute in relation to **external borders of the Protected Areas**. Final justification, marking and demarcation of the borders of Borjomi-Kharagauli National Park and Borjomi Strict Nature Reserve was made with significant deficiencies in 2001-2002. Due to inaccuracies when marking the border lines some of the privately owned land plots were included within the boundaries of the National Park, causing conflict between the National Park and local population. Due to restrictions imposed in the National Park, the land owners were rejected to connect to the energy, natural gas and water supply systems. Total number of such families residing nearby the National Park was more than 1000. Some of the families have applied to the court. In 2008, inter-agency commission established by the Government of Georgia confirmed the need for the National Park borders to be adjusted and newly delimited. In 2014 relevant financial means were allocated from the budget to start demarcation process. Main works relating to border demarcation of Borjomi-Kharagauli Protected Areas are finished. The border lines will undergo registration with the Public Register in the nearest future.

⁹Approved by the Decree N214 of the Minister of Environment and Natural Resources Protection of Georgia on 31 October 2014

At the meetings held within the framework of the study the conflict relating to the borders of Protected Areas was considered resolved by the population and the Administration. However, the issue may be considered finally resolved only after border demarcation is finished and borders delimited. In this regard it is important to monitor the results.

4. Parties to the conflicts

4.1 Local population

Borjomi-Kharagauli Protected Areas is neighboured by populous territories of Borjomi, Bagdati, Khashuri, Akhaltsikhe and Adigeni municipalities. The local population is mainly active in agriculture. With regard to the Protected Areas, the local population is mainly using its wood and forest resources and pastures, produces hay, collects small amount of non-timber products and uses the windows (openings) in the chestnut forests for placing the beehives.

Certain part of the local population acknowledges the positive impact of operation of the Protected Areas more and more. “Annual social and economic surveys show that increasing number of local population admits of making use of and benefit from the Protected Areas” – it is stated in the Management Plan of Borjomi-Kharagauli Protected Areas.

Population nearby the National Park territory, up to 1000 families, annually extract 7000-7500 m³ firewood within the traditional use zone. Up to 6000 families collect wild fruits, bladder nut (*Staphylea colchica*) and mushrooms. Population also collects conifer cones and dust as traditional healing means. Annual income of the local population received from the use of non-wood resources is assessed to be 1 04 250 GEL (455 000 Euro). The collectors of non-wood resources are mainly women. The establishment of Borjomi-Kharagauli Protected Areas has positively affected honey production and quality. Approximately 160 families residing in the support zone of the Borjomi-Kharagauli National Park are engaged in bee breeding. Annual income received from bee breeding is approximately 5 500 GEL per family. Adjacent families use pastures within the traditional use zone of Borjomi-Kharagauli National Park. Average annual income of these families, including income received from sale of meat and dairy products, amount to 3 000 GEL per annum¹⁰.

Despite the above-mentioned, part of local communities residing nearby Borjomi-Kharagauli Protected Areas consider that the establishment of the Protected Areas has not impacted their livelihoods in a positive way. Only the villagers of Nunisi noted that the existence of the National Park significantly increases the value of Nunisi – one of the well-known balneology resorts.

¹⁰ Flores, M., Adeishvili, M., 2011. Valuation of the Contribution of Borjomi-Kharagauli and Mtirala National Parks Ecosystem Services to Economic Growth and Human Well-being. Prepared for WWF Caucasus, 2011.

Local population names the restrictions relating to the use of wood and forest resources as the main conflict area. Population of Kharagauli municipality has problems also in relation to the use of pastures within the Protected Areas. Part of local population previously employed in the sector of timber processing and furniture production considers the establishment of the Protected Areas the very reason for them losing significant source of income. Until today they cannot think of any other field than timber production and require access to wood and timber.

Small part of local population benefitting from the existence of the National Park is the one, who developed guesthouses or offered various touristic services to the National Park visitors. In this regard the guesthouses in Marelisi (Kharagauli municipality) and Atskuri (Akhaltikhe municipality) are of particular note. These guesthouses also offer to the National Park visitors' horse riding tours. Although in Atskuri this direction has significantly improved, more development is needed in the view of taking care of horses, as well as availability of necessary equipment in Marelisi. Some local people also provide tourists with guiding services.

The establishment of the National Park, with regard to supporting tourism development, has brought certain benefit to the population of only those villages, where entrances to the Protected Areas are located, mainly in Borjomi, Atskuri and Marelisi. Population and local self-governments note that the expectations relating to the establishment of the National Park, namely, the development of the support zone and creating alternative sources of income for local population were not met. Population cannot really feel that they live in the vicinities of the National Park. This applies to the villages of Kharagauli municipality in particular, where the number of tourists and tourism business is not high and active enough to provide alternative income. The attitude of population of these villages towards the development of tourism is sceptical. In their opinion, 20 years of existence of the Protected Areas is enough for showing that tourism sector has small potential for development, all the more so if the roads to the villages adjacent to the National Park are not repaired and the villages are not supplied with natural gas. However, it has to be noted that local communities are not active and does not show initiative in creating and developing tourism services and products. They do not have relevant knowledge and experience in this regard, neither have they relevant financial resources available.

Income generation from tourism for local population is hindered by the short duration of stay of visitors within the National Park – most of visitors stay for one day only. Only 10-15 percent of visitors stay overnight (1-3 days) in the Park or its adjacent villages that is caused by the lack and improper planning of infrastructure, as well as high prices in local guesthouses. For example, in Nunisi, guesthouses are used only by holiday makers. National Park visitors use camping sites arranged by the National Park.

After the implementation of the programme supporting the development of support zone in parallel to the establishment of Borjomi-Kharagauli Protected Areas no similar programmes were undertaken, nor was an assessment of social and economic problems and needs done in any of the communities.

Representatives of local communities find the communication from the BKPAs administration with them insufficient and not intensive. The relations between the BKPAs administration and local communities are limited with notifying population about restrictions and prohibitions within the Protected Areas. The population is not always properly and within due times informed about production of firewood and construction timber. Confidence of the local population towards the Protected Areas administration is disturbed by all of the above. Informational, educational and awareness raising activities targeting local communities or local target groups are very rarely undertaken. Local schools are also insufficiently involved in eco-educational activities of the BKPAs.

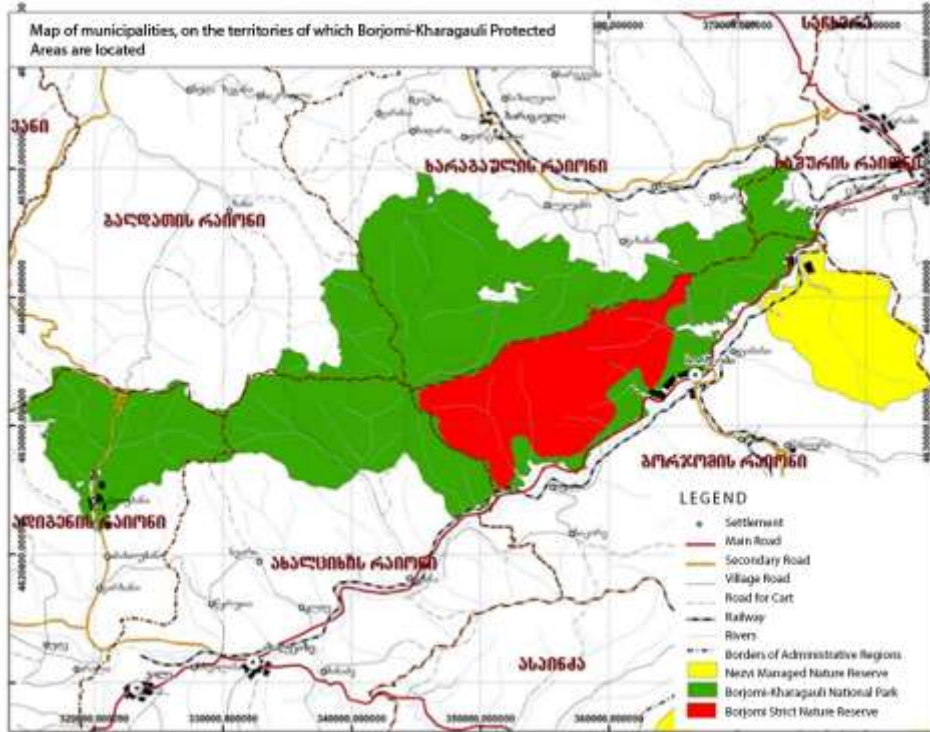
The population is afraid that regulations relating to the use of natural resources within the National Park may become stricter and even totally prohibitive. The rights of population in this regard are not protected on a legal level. In case of Borjomi-Kharagauli Protected Areas, the opportunities, limits and conditions for the use of the Protected Areas' resources by local population is laid out in the Management Plan. According to the Law of Georgia on "The System of Protected Areas", population is entitled to participate in the process of review and adjustment of the Management Plan; however, there is no effective mechanism for realising this right. The law does not define the obligations of the administrations of Protected Areas towards local population. There are no mechanisms for involving local population in or regularly consult with them about the management of Protected Areas.

According to the law on "The System of Protected Areas", scientific-advisory boards should be established for each protected areas with the purpose to cooperate with municipalities and other authorities. The composition of the board is to be approved by the Minister. There is an ongoing process of establishing this board for BKPAs. Although, this scientific-advisory board does not necessarily imply involvement of representatives of local population, it may serve as a good mechanism for involving local population. However, it will be more effective to establish a separate consultation board focusing on communication with local communities and other stakeholders.

4.2 Local self-government

Borjomi-Kharagauli Protected Areas include territories of six municipalities – Borjomi, Kharagauli, Akhaltsikhe, Adigeni, Khashuri and Baghdati.

Map 4. Map of municipalities, on the territories of which Borjomi-Kharagauli Protected Areas are located



Source: Management Plan of Borjomi-Kharagauli Protected Areas

Representatives of local government consider insufficient support in creating livelihoods for local population and alternative income generating ways the main issues, especially considering the fact that the traditional field of employment of local population – timber processing – was subject to certain restrictions.

The representatives of local self-government bodies of the above municipalities acknowledge the role of Borjomi-Kharagauli Protected Areas, the importance of the maintenance and conservation of forest eco-systems and wildlife. They also note that prior to the establishment of Protected Areas large volumes of wood and timber were exported from the region, but it had little impact on income of local population. Therefore, they do acknowledge the need of preserving the forest eco-systems for maintaining and further developing the potential of local resorts, tourism and recreation.

Local self-government bodies give their positive feedback to the fact that the process of the establishment of the National Park was headed by the process of intensive consultations with local population as well as the representatives of the self-government. Recommendations developed during the meetings were taken into account in the social and economic development programme of the support zone of National Park; however, part of promises were not implemented, particularly those relating to the support to alternative income-generating activities for local population.

Local self-government bodies do agree that destruction of forest eco-systems cannot serve as the alternative for employment of local population; however, on the other hand, it is absolutely necessary to provide local population with firewood and construction timber. The representatives of local government deem transfer of the forests around the villages under the management of local self-governments, as well as regulating the process of wood and timber production the way forward for solving the above problem. The representatives of local authorities believe that logging and delivery of timber from forest should be done by the qualified group of foresters. Both timber and firewood should be supplied to the local population with affordable price. This type of approach can resolve the problems relating to wood processing. It will also decrease the pressure on forest ecosystems and promote rationale use of timber resources as not only timber, but also branches and other secondary wood resources will be used to meet the demand for firewood from local population.

Despite the good understanding of the importance of PAs for the development of tourism in the region, local self-government bodies (like local population) do not feel and acknowledge the fact that the establishment of Borjomi-Kharagauli National Park has, to certain extent, positively affected tourism development in the region, supported prolongation of tourism season, attracted foreign tourists and had, in general, positive impact on increasing tourism attraction and recreation potential of the region. All of these, in its turn, has attracted investment for developing the network of hotels and supported increase of the real estate price. The local government expresses interest in the development of tourism sector, but does not avail of sufficient financial resources for this purpose. It is believed that the administration of the Protected Areas has more responsibility in this regard. In the opinion of local authorities of Kharagauli municipality, the National Park administration and Visitors' Centre in Kharagauli do not undertake sufficient activities for attracting tourists and developing tourism infrastructure. Administration staff is mainly busy with physical protection of the National Park. Local government has negatively assessed the abolishment of the position of Deputy Director of Protected Areas in charge of managing the office in Kharagauli. Presence of a relevant authorised person in Kharagauli could have a positive impact on planning and development of tourism infrastructure and other important projects relating to the National Park.

In Kharagauli municipality improper roads to the villages, from where visitors could enter the National Park (Marelisi, Nunisi) is a significant problem. Roads leading from the central highway to the National Park are unsurfaced that causes heavy dust in dry weather and makes it difficult to move during the rain. However, rehabilitation works Chumateleti-Dzirula road and access road to Marelisi (where is the entrance in the BK National Park) will start in the nearest future that will improve the access to the National Park. Moreover, within the initiative for developing tourism potential of Imereti Region a project aiming at developing and arranging tourism zone at Ubisa Monastery is ongoing (with the World Bank financial support). Road rehabilitation, further improvement of tourism

infrastructure, setting up tourism attractions are important preconditions for tourism development in Kharagauli municipality.

Lack of information about availability of entrances to the National Park, as well as tourist paths from Kharagauli side provide obstacles to attracting visitors from Kharagauli municipality.

Lack of communication with the administration of Protected Areas is considered as one of the causes of conflicts by local government representatives. In their view, cooperation with the National Park administration should be strengthened and their involvement in the management of National Park ensured. In this regard, the suggestion on establishment of a Consultation Board is positively assessed with all stakeholders.

4.3 Agency of Protected Areas and the park administration

Agency of Protected Areas is a Legal Entity of Public Law (LEPL) within the system of the Ministry of Environment and Natural Resources Protection of Georgia responsible for managing, protecting, conserving or enhancing protected areas, as well as organising their monitoring and research, developing management plans, carrying out construction and maintenance works necessary for operation of protected areas and cooperating with other relevant organisations at national and international levels.

APA manages protected areas through territorial administration units responsible for physical protection of the protected area, cooperation with local self-government bodies and population, use of natural resources and visitors' control, prevention of violations within its competence, drawing up the protocols and their submission to relevant authorities for further follow-up.

The Agency of Protected Areas, as well as the administration of Borjomi-Kharagauli Protected Areas considers illegal use of wood/timber resources and hunting as the main causes for conflicts with local population. According to their information, main reason why illegal use of the resources cannot be prevented is the weakness of law enforcement. Namely, violators often do not pay penalties imposed by the court as there is no real and/or personal property registered on their name, which makes the enforcement of the imposed penalty impossible. Local population is well aware that people committing violation within the Protected Areas are rarely penalised, which encourages them towards violations.

Second significant factor hindering the conflicts prevention and their effective solution relates to insufficient human resources in the BKPAs administration. At the National Park administration mainly rangers, Protection Division and the Director are involved in conflict resolutions. When the BKPAs administration cannot settle the conflicts, APA gets involved. There is no assigned staff member responsible for managing the conflicts within the Protected Areas administration with

relevant education or qualification and skills required. Within various support programmes the administration staff is provided with trainings in management and communication that, to certain extent, cover conflict related issues; however, none of the staff members has undergone specific intensive training course in this regard. Consequently, BKPA's administration staff members are not familiar with the conflict resolution techniques and tools and do not possess relevant knowledge and skills for managing conflicts. Administration employees consider acquisition of certain knowledge and skills in this direction necessary in order to obtain more information about the tools and methodologies for conflict management through provision of relevant training courses.

Administration of Protected Areas does not have an action plan for assessing, preventing, solving or mitigating conflicts. Management Plan of Borjomi-Kharagauli Protected Areas does not include a comprehensive analysis of the problems originating from the use of resources and, consequently, does not include an adequate programme and action plan.

It has to be noted that the BKPA's administration provides support to local population with regard to small business marketing e.g. provides trainings in managing small hotel business, plans honey tours within the new project and, thus, cooperates with local honey producers on the packaging and labelling honey products. In cooperation with the International Migration and Development Centre the BKPA's administration has undertaken activities towards developing horse guiding services and implements a programme for educating guides with support of the Government of Poland. However, the capacities of BKPA's administration in terms of introducing alternative ways of employment for local population are strictly limited. For ensuring better results it is necessary to implement large-scale, consistent and long-term programmes based on stakeholder cooperation on central and local levels. The Agency of Protected Areas stands ready for providing support to local population in developing tourism services and attracting donors, however believes that the initiative and interest in this regard should come from the population.

Despite the fact that the intensity of educational activities of the administration of Borjomi-Kharagauli Protected Areas is quite high, the activities are less oriented on local population. At the initial stage after the establishment of National Park its eco-educational unit held informational meetings with students and teachers of local schools, supported establishment of eco-clubs at schools, implemented trainings with participation of local school students. It seems that last few years more emphasis is put on informing and involving youth at national level (school and high school students). For example, since 2013, the National Park administration has been hosting volunteer students. Relevant subject-matter students also have practical trainings and sessions on the territory of the National Park. The number of participants to the eco-educational activities of the Protected Areas is annually growing, though the need for enhanced involvement of local population and implementing more target oriented activities is evident.

Diagram 4

Number of participants to the eco-educational activities within Borjomi-Kharagauli Protected Areas in 2010-2014

■ 2010 ■ 2011 ■ 2012 ■ 2013 ■ 2014

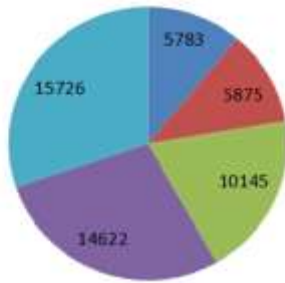
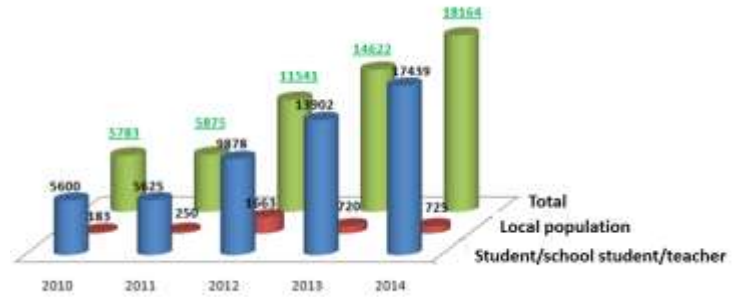


Diagram 5

Number of participants to the activities within Borjomi-Kharagauli National Park in 2010-2014

■ Student/school student/teacher ■ Local population ■ Total



Source: Administration of Borjomi-Kharagauli Protected Areas

5. Conflict Resolution Scheme

This part of the Report provides a scheme for solving the above-mentioned conflicts, as well as eliminating their causes, including the list of recommended activities and authorities to be involved in their implementation. The implementation of some recommended activities deems possible within relevant short timelines and less financial implications, while part of them requires legislative changes, decision-taking on national level, as well as involvement of various public authorities.

Priorities are given to the resolution of following issues:

- Provision of the BKPA's adjacent villages with firewood and timber;
- Sustainable management of pasturelands within BKPA's;
- Strengthening the cooperation with self-governing units, especially in Kharagauli;
- Setting up the mechanisms of communication with local population.
- Raising the awareness of local communities and authorities on the importance of nature protection

Type of Conflict	Cause of Conflict	Recommended actions for conflict resolution/mitigation	Role of the administration of BKPA	Other authorities/parties and resources to be involved
Using timber/wood resources of the Protected Areas	Lack of data and opportunities for planning sustainable use of forest resources	Conduct forest inventory in traditional use zone of BKPA's and develop plans for sustainable forest use	Prepare the Terms of Reference (ToR) and preliminary budget	APA
		<i>Inventory will enable to define the volumes of firewood and construction wood to be harvested without damaging the forest ecosystem</i>	Present ToR to APA Supervise the implementation process	MENRP External experts as well as external financial resources will be needed for conducting inventory
		Increase the level of qualification of BKPA's rangers	Request the LEPL Environmental	APA

Type of Conflict	Cause of Conflict	Recommended actions for conflict resolution/mitigation	Role of the administration of BKPA	Other authorities/parties and resources to be involved
		<p>on sustainable forestry issues¹¹</p> <p><i>Scope of responsibilities of a ranger covers selection of cutting areas, marking the trees to be cut, controlling the cuts. Majority of rangers have educational background in forestry. However, they lack adequate knowledge and skills for sustainable forestry. Consequently, capacity building of rangers in this regard through providing trainings is essential</i></p>	<p>Information and Education Centre (EIEC) under the MENRP through APA to adapt their training modules to the specific needs of the BKPA's as well as to plan and organize trainings</p>	EIEC
	<p>Technical difficulties relating to the production of firewood and construction timber</p>	<p>Undertake the temporary measures aiming at mitigating the existing technical difficulties</p> <p><i>Organizing the provision of the requested firewood and construction timber depends on the inventory results. However, before the inventory is conducted the BKPA's administration may only implement measures to mitigate existing bottlenecks related to the wood harvesting.</i></p> <p>Improve the state of the forest roads</p>	<p>Allocate forest cut areas and agree with APA in a timely manner</p> <p>Distribute the marked trees among the beneficiaries in agreement with them (distribution may take place at a community meeting through achieving consensus)</p> <p>Inform local population through social network, web-site and publications on firewood/construction timber planning (procedures, main steps) as well as on expected results</p> <p>Prepare information on roads to be repaired and conduct negotiations with the local municipalities at early budget planning stage</p>	<p>APA</p> <p>Local authorities of Borjomi and Adigeni Municipalities</p> <p>Representatives of the beneficiary communities</p> <p>Donors</p>

¹¹ BKPA's administration prefers to make more focus on outsourcing logging services rather on training of rangers in sustainable forestry. However, as outsourcing needs special studies, legal amendments, etc. for the time being the recommendation is to strengthen the capacities of rangers in sustainable forestry. In the long run, the overall recommendation is to shift to forest fund for providing local communities with firewood.

Type of Conflict	Cause of Conflict	Recommended actions for conflict resolution/mitigation	Role of the administration of BKPA	Other authorities/parties and resources to be involved
		<p>Conduct a Feasibility Study of the outsourcing logging and firewood producing services for local population</p> <p><i>The study should assess the appropriateness of outsourcing for logging and wood production by the qualified group of people. Price, modality of supply, etc. for timber and firewood to local population should also be assessed.</i></p>	<p>Prepare the Terms of Reference (ToR) and preliminary budget</p> <p>Present it to the APA</p> <p>Hold consultations with the Forestry Policy Service and National Forestry Agency as well as with the local authorities of the BKPA adjacent municipalities</p> <p>Support the preparation of Feasibility Study and plan the further actions according the findings of the study</p>	<p>APA</p> <p>Forestry Policy Service National Forestry Agency</p> <p>External expert</p> <p>Donors</p>
		<p>Conduct a feasibility study for the outsourcing the logging and firewood producing services in the forest fund territories located close to the BKPA</p> <p>Implement the pilot project based on the study findings to improve the provision of timber (for social purposes) and firewood to the local population.</p>	<p>Conduct consultations with the Forest Policy Service and National Forestry Agency</p> <p>Initiate this issue through APA</p>	<p>APA</p> <p>MENRP</p> <p>National Forestry Agency</p> <p>External experts</p>
	Limiting local population's access to construction timber for their social needs (for renovation houses, fences,	Monitor the use of construction timber resulting from social cuts from Nedzvi Managed Reserve	<p>Monitor and prepare the relevant report for APA, MENRP and local authorities of adjacent municipalities with the support of external expert</p> <p><i>The report should include information on reasonability of the social cuts, for specifically what purposes it was used, what are the</i></p>	<p>APA</p> <p>MENRP</p> <p>National Forestry Agency</p>

Type of Conflict	Cause of Conflict	Recommended actions for conflict resolution/mitigation	Role of the administration of BKPA	Other authorities/parties and resources to be involved
	ancillary facilities, outside toilets and kitchens)	<p>Prioritize BKPA's adjacent villages when allocating construction timber from the forest fund</p> <p><i>Construction timber for social purposes is reasonable to be allocated from the forest fund. In general, logging of both firewood and construction timber should gradually be "shifted" to forest funds and this should be supported through introducing the outsourcing practice (see the above recommendation) and proper communication with the local population.</i></p> <p><i>To ensure the revision of construction timber cuts from the forest fund the following actions should also be implemented:</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> -Revise the procedure relating to allocation of construction timber through social cuts; -Inform local population about the existing procedures and the opportunity to trace the process of decision-making about their requests; -Monitor the use of construction timber resulting from social cuts; -Reveal the opportunities for the use of alternative materials and supporting the implementation of 	<p><i>alternatives including price estimations)</i></p> <p>Initiate and lobby the issue of priority allocation of the construction timber from the forest fund to adjacent villages of BKPA's through APA</p> <p>Cooperate with the local NGOs with the purpose to ensure effective information sharing with the local population on procedures for social cuts and the opportunities for tracing the process of decision-making about their requests;</p>	<p>Local self-government</p> <p>Local NGOs</p> <p>External experts</p>

Type of Conflict	Cause of Conflict	Recommended actions for conflict resolution/mitigation	Role of the administration of BKPA	Other authorities/parties and resources to be involved
		pilot projects.		
	Unavailability of alternative sources of energy	Carry out activities aiming at reduction of firewood consumption – development and implementation of pilot projects relating to the use of energy-efficient ovens and insulation of houses / public buildings	Identify the NGOs of the appropriate profile and establish partnership Conduct series of consultations with the partner NGOs and define the potential project ideas Support the preparation/implementation of the pilot project(s) within its mandate	NGOs
		Plan and implement subsidiary programme for the provision of natural gas to those villages, which are highly dependent on firewood to be allocated from the territories of BKPAs	Initiate and support within its mandate a cost-effectiveness analysis of the subsidiary programme (with the support of external expert) <i>The analysis may include identification of the approximate figures for subsidy and how it may decrease the use of fire wood from BKPAs</i> Initiate through APA and participate in the consultations with the MENRP, Ministry of Energy, local authorities, natural gas provider company on above issue and lobby its implementation	MENRP Ministry of Energy Local authorities Natural gas provider company External expert
		Conduct a technical and economic feasibility study for supplying gas to additional villages nearby the	Initiate through APA and participate in the consultations with the MENRP, Ministry of Energy, local authorities, natural gas provider	MENRP

Type of Conflict	Cause of Conflict	Recommended actions for conflict resolution/mitigation	Role of the administration of BKPA	Other authorities/parties and resources to be involved
		BKPAs within the “Gas Supply to the Regions of Georgia” programme ¹²	company on these issues as needed	Ministry of Energy Local authorities Natural gas provider company External expert
	Lack of alternative income for local population	Implementation of the BKPAs support zone development project <i>Small grants project should be developed based on the assessment of existing problems, as well as the needs of communities adjacent to the BKPA aiming at developing traditional and environment-friendly activities, such as the development of guesthouses, catering sites, horse and guided tours, small animal farms, trout farming, bee breeding, cheese production, agro tourism etc. Marketing networking should also be taken into account aiming at supporting sale of produced products and services. Women’s and women groups’ active involvement in the programme implementation should be encouraged. Cooperation with the Borjomi Mineral water company should also be promoted with the purpose to involve the company as partner</i>	Prepare a project concept with the support of external expert Consult with the APA and MENRP with the purpose to identify the potential donor(s) Participate in the Project proposal preparation process Supervise the project implementation process	APA MENRP External experts Donor organizations

¹² It is well evidenced that populations of many villages, which are supplied by gas, cannot afford to pay and still rely on firewood. However, in case of gas supply, firewood will not be used at least in summer period. Therefore, this should be the subject of technical and economic feasibility study.

Type of Conflict	Cause of Conflict	Recommended actions for conflict resolution/mitigation	Role of the administration of BKPA	Other authorities/parties and resources to be involved
		<i>organization in the implementation of various grant programmes</i>		
		Intensify actions for attracting visitors to the BKPAs	Place the advertising banners and signs indicating the entrance of the National Park from the Kharagauli side Organize trainings for the employees of the Visitor Center (especially in Kharagauli) through the Environmental Information and Education Centre Organize a study tour for the local guest house managers (especially from Kharagauli) and other target groups to Tousheti PAs with the purpose to share their experience Distribute the information materials on services and tours offered by the BKPAs administration in nearby hotels and guest houses	APA local self-government bodies National Tourism administration EIEC
		Involve local farmers in BKPAs eco-tourism programme	Conduct consultations with local population with the purpose to reveal those services/products which can be obtained from them and at the same time which might be subject of interest for the visitors Support the branding process of local products (e.g. Honey, cone jem, cheese, wood	Local farmers External experts on marketing Local authorities

Type of Conflict	Cause of Conflict	Recommended actions for conflict resolution/mitigation	Role of the administration of BKPA	Other authorities/parties and resources to be involved
			<p>handicrafts, etc.)</p> <p>Create a special corners in the BKPA's visitor's centers (both from Borjomi and Kharagauli side) where the branded products of BKPA will be sold</p> <p>Negotiate with the Tourism Information Centres of adjacent cultural heritage on creating a special corners for popularizing the BKPA and where the branded products of BKPA will be sold</p> <p><i>Tourism Information Centre has been constructing in the Kharagauli Municipality near the Ubisa Monastery. The similar tourism Centres are planned to be constructed in Abastumani and Akhaltsikhe.¹³ In Borjomi Tourism Information Centre already is in place.</i></p> <p>Assess the possibility of appointing a short tourist tour from Ubisa Monastery (Kharagauli Municipality) to the Protected Area and provide support to organize this kind of tours.</p>	Markets managers

¹³ In this context, tourism centers are those centers which are either under construction or are planned to be constructed within the regional development program implemented by the Municipal Development Fund (MDF) under the Ministry of Regional Development and Infrastructure of Georgia.

Type of Conflict	Cause of Conflict	Recommended actions for conflict resolution/mitigation	Role of the administration of BKPA	Other authorities/parties and resources to be involved
Using of pasturelands within the BKPA	Restrictions related to the renovation of shepherd's shelters with the materials from the national park ¹⁴	Achieve a consensus with the shepherds on the rehabilitation of the shelters ¹⁵	Assess the state of the shepherds' shelters early spring of each year with participation of shepherds, representatives of local communities using the pastures Agree the terms for necessary materials and means of transportation for the rehabilitation of the shelters in an official way (written way) and present the copies of the agreements to the local authorities of relevant municipalities.	Local farmers Shepherds Local authorities External experts
		Prepare the project for the traditional shelter for shepherds Rehabilitate the existing or construct new shelters	Prepare ToR for the development of the project for shelter rehabilitation Support the identification of the source of financing with the assistance of APA Supervise the process	APA External experts Local authorities Local farmers Shepherds
	Lack of communication with local farmers and shepherds	Improve communication with the local farmers, communities and other stakeholders	Prior the summer grazing season, conduct a series of meetings with the relevant communities of Adigeni, Borjomi, Kharagauli and Baghdati municipalities with the purpose to provide detailed information on rules and	Local authorities Local farmers Shepherds

¹⁴ The use of construction materials from BKPAs is prohibited by the law. That's why it is recommended to achieve consensus with shepherds on one hand and on the other hand inform about this municipalities, because the shepherds complain to municipalities about restrictions, which causes additional dissatisfaction from municipalities to PKPAs. Construction of more stable shelters may be a good solution as it is recommended.

¹⁵ Recommended actions should be considered while developing the pasture management plan.

Type of Conflict	Cause of Conflict	Recommended actions for conflict resolution/mitigation	Role of the administration of BKPA	Other authorities/parties and resources to be involved
			<p>limitations on the territory of the National Park defined by national legislation</p> <p>Achieve an agreement in a formal (written) way</p> <p>Present copies of agreement to the local authorities of relevant municipalities</p>	
	Expected changes to the pasture management regime	Conduct the assessment of pastureland in traditional use zone with the purpose to identify the carrying capacity of the pastures and optimal regime of grazing and prepare the pasture management plan in close cooperation with the direct stakeholders	<p>Prepare the relevant ToR and agree with APA</p> <p>Define the source of financing with the support of APA</p> <p>Supervise the process</p> <p>Ensure that all relevant stakeholders (local self-government, farmers, and shepherds) are involved from the earliest stage in the pastures assessment process and development of the pasture management plan. <i>Detailed process and methodology of pasture monitoring should be envisaged by the pasture management plan. Monitoring results should be available to the users. Pasture management plan should be agreed with all stakeholders. The process of introducing fees for the use of pastures should be treated with particular care by means of consultations with the users of pastures and only in case a consensus is reached.</i></p>	<p>Local farmers/shepherds</p> <p>External Expert</p>

Type of Conflict	Cause of Conflict	Recommended actions for conflict resolution/mitigation	Role of the administration of BKPA	Other authorities/parties and resources to be involved
			<p>Conduct an information campaigns in all communities using the pastures of PAs in order to provide local population with full and comprehensive information about the need and importance of changes.</p> <p><i>Information campaigns should be provided for the shepherds, as well as direct users of pastures on new regulations of the pasturelands.</i></p>	
Illegal use of resources (illegal logging, poaching)	Weak law enforcement	Prepare legal amendments aiming at imposing stricter sanctions for violations within the Protected Areas, including mandatory deprivation of guns or fishing means in cases of illegal entry into or movement within the Protected Areas and strengthening sanctions for repeated violations	<p>Prepare a solid justification with support of expert (if needed) for the legal amendments and present to the APA.</p> <p><i>The justification should include detailed violation statistics, status of payment of penalties and cases of repeated violation</i></p>	<p>MENRP</p> <p>Ministry of Justice</p> <p>External experts</p>
		Strengthen the cooperation with the Ministry of Internal Affairs for prevention and detection of violations within the Protected Areas;	Conduct consultation meetings with the support of APA and MENRP with the local representatives of the Ministry of Internal Affairs on implementing joint actions aiming at revealing violations (illegal logging, hunting)	<p>APA</p> <p>MENRP</p> <p>Ministry of Internal Affairs</p>
		Carry out capacity building of the BKPA administration	Request the Environmental Information and Education Centre (EIEC) under the MENRP through APA to adapt their training modules to the specific needs of the BKPA as well as to	<p>APA</p> <p>EIEC</p>

Type of Conflict	Cause of Conflict	Recommended actions for conflict resolution/mitigation	Role of the administration of BKPA	Other authorities/parties and resources to be involved
			plan and organize trainings	
		Increase the number of rangers and improve equipment	Prepare the adequate justification on necessity of increased number of rangers and present to APA	APA MENRP
		Improve patrolling	Incorporate hunting-related specific issues in patrolling plans Strengthen patrolling during hunting seasons and hotspots	
Conflict with local government and communities	Lack of involvement of local self-government and population in BKPA Management	Establish the Consultation Board for Borjomi-Kharagauli Protected Areas, involving local self-governments of all municipalities and the Governors of the villages using natural resources of the Protected Areas. <i>Consultation Board should gather at least twice in the year in order to ensure effective information sharing, as well as dialogue on issues of concern. The Board should be allowed to conduct ad-hoc meetings. It is recommended to organise one meeting in the beginning of year to present the results of previous year and discuss the action plan for upcoming year, and another one – in early autumn aiming at discussion of emerging problems during the logging period.</i>	Prepare a draft charter for the Consultation Board and agree with APA Define the composition of the Consultation Board and approach officially the relevant organization on nomination the candidates for the board Establish a Board and organize regular meetings as recommended	APA Local authorities Local communities local NGOs Other local interested groups

Type of Conflict	Cause of Conflict	Recommended actions for conflict resolution/mitigation	Role of the administration of BKPA	Other authorities/parties and resources to be involved
	Lack of information and awareness of population	Allocate/designate a special staff member in the BKPA's administration responsible for the environmental education and community outreach <i>(one additional staff member in Borjomi and one – in Kharagauli)</i>	Prepare a justification for adding a special positions (2 positions) for environmental education and outreach specialist and present to the APA Before the decision is made designate 2 acting administration staff members (one from Borjomi and another one from Kharagauli visitor centers) for this task	APA
		Train the staff of administration and rangers on public relation and outreach as well as conflict management skills and effective communication	Plan and organize trainings in cooperation with the Environmental Information and Education Centre (EIEC) under the MENRP with the support of APA	APA EIEC
		Improve the information sharing on BKPA's activities	Prepare and distribute information newspapers quarterly and distribute among the local authorities and local population with the purpose to share information on implemented and planned activities including the issues related with the use of pasturelands, timber, etc. Request APA to consider related costs during the budget planning process	APA
		Organize summer schools for the students and others from the adjacent villages (for example, Akhaldaba, Nunisi), where English, computer and other needed programmes can be taught.	Conduct consultations with the local authorities of municipalities and local communities Organize a summer school for local youth in cooperation with the local authorities of municipalities	EIEC NGOs Local Media

Type of Conflict	Cause of Conflict	Recommended actions for conflict resolution/mitigation	Role of the administration of BKPA	Other authorities/parties and resources to be involved
			<p><i>BKPAs administration should make efforts to mobilize and involve volunteers as mentors/trainers for the summer school including the native English speakers.</i></p>	
		<p>Intensify the cooperation with the local major groups (youth, women, teachers, etc)</p> <p><i>(NP administration carries out quite active environmental educational programs for the schools and educational institutions. However, improving and spreading the programs in every region is needed. Public relations and eco-educational activities should focus more on local population and the communities in particular. It is essential to involve even more intensively school students from such communities in the activities such as eco camping, organised by the BKPAs administration, as well as other organisations. Enhancing communication with and arranging informational and educational activities focused on local population (teachers, school students and women's groups in particular) will support creation of positive attitude among population, especially youth that already has a distinguished perception, opinion and attitude to their neighbouring Protected Areas.</i></p>	<p>Organize the regular tours and eco-camps in BKPAs and Ktsia-Tabatskuri Managed Nature Reserve for the school students from the adjacent villages</p>	<p>Local schools</p>
Human-wildlife	Absence of	Conduct a feasibility study for developing adequate	Review the similar studies (if any) and held a	Farmers using the

Type of Conflict	Cause of Conflict	Recommended actions for conflict resolution/mitigation	Role of the administration of BKPA	Other authorities/parties and resources to be involved
conflicts	adequate mechanisms for securing the livestock/property of population	mechanisms, including the compensation one, minimizing the damage caused by wildlife to population.	<p>consultation meeting with the relevant organizations (e.g. NGO NACRES)</p> <p>Prepare the ToR</p> <p>Support the Study preparation process</p>	<p>National Park pastures</p> <p>NACRES/other organizations</p> <p>External experts</p>