

Protected Areas and Climate Change

Climate change has species on the move, which poses challenges for protected areas management and planning. The GEF-CI research project SPARC will explore the ecological impacts of climate change and propose solutions to establish protected areas in the best places to respond to climate change. Panelists will discuss the science of SPARC, practical experiences in climate-resilient protected areas planning and possible extensions of SPARC research into the marine realm.

Panelists: Rosina Bierbaum, STAP Chair (moderator)

Thomas E. Lovejoy, UN Foundation; SPARC Science Advisory Panel

Carlos Manuel Rodriguez, Minister of Energy and Environment – Costa Rica

Pablo Imbach, Climate and Ecosystems Scientist – CIAT (Hanoi)

Mark Zimsky, GEF Biodiversity Focal Area Coordinator

Date: June 24, 2018

Time: 18:00-19:30

Location: Phong Nha Room – Furama Resort



Description

Climate change is causing species ranges to move upslope and to higher latitudes. These range shifts take place at paces unique to each species, resulting in rearrangement of plant and animal associations. The result is species moving, sometimes to areas entirely outside their current range, the formation of novel ecosystems, and the movement or disappearance of current ecosystems across parts or all of their ranges. Protected areas must be placed carefully to be effective in the face of these changes. Protected areas are fixed in place, so they can only capture range movements when they are properly sited to take advantage of elevational shifts that are limited in extent or are large enough to encompass latitudinal shifts. However, most protected areas have not been sited explicitly to be effective in the face of climate change. Rather, many current protected areas were designated to protect areas with unusual natural features or to take advantage of available land of little value for agriculture or urban development. As a result, existing national protected areas systems are not well designed to deal with climate change – they are likely to suffer loss of species and ecosystem representation as climate change unfolds.

This session will present the **Spatial Planning for Protected Areas in Response to Climate Change (SPARC)** initiative. SPARC is a medium-sized, GEF-funded project designed to address the challenges that a rapidly changing climate implies for protected area planning and management. The goal of SPARC is to provide countries in the Neotropical, Afrotropical and Indo-Malayan biogeographic realms with the comprehensive assessments and data needed to improve planning, design and management of terrestrial protected areas for climate change resilience. Speakers will provide an overview of the project and results, including information on knowledge products designed to share the recommendations emanating from the project.

Speakers

- **Rosina Bierbaum**, GEF STAP Chair (moderator)
- **Thomas Lovejoy**, UN Foundation; head of the SPARC Science Advisory Committee -- will discuss the science behind SPARC
- **Carlos Manuel Rodriguez**, Minister of Energy and Environment Costa Rica -- will speak on policy challenges and possible marine applications of SPARC science
- **Pablo Imbach**, Climate Change and Ecosystem Scientist at CIAT (Hanoi) --will describe the SE Asia and Neotropics SPARC assessment teams
- **Mark Zimsky**, GEF Biodiversity Focal Area Coordinator — will provide GEF perspective of climate change and protected areas as well as sustainability of protected area systems