

## PROJECT INFORMATION

### Feasibility study for nominating Georgia's Colchis forests and wetlands as a UNESCO natural World Heritage site



Valley in Mtirala National Park

Source: T. Garstecki

#### Background

The Caucasus, covering an area of 580,000 km<sup>2</sup>, is one of the world's biodiversity hotspots. In western Georgia, in the plain bordering the Black Sea, the Colchis region with its humid forests and wetlands is situated. As the ice ages left only a minor footprint on the region, it became a refuge for ancient and rare animal and plant species. Its biodiversity is unique in the world. Having recognized its importance, Georgia's authorities are aiming for an inscription of the existing protected areas in the list of UNESCO natural World Heritage sites.

#### Project details

The overall objective of the project was to promote the protection of the forests and wetlands of the Colchis region through increased international attention. For this purpose, the submission of a proposal for the nomination of the respective areas as a UNESCO World Heritage Site was sought. First, a feasibility study was carried out, which formed the basis for the selection of protected areas and for the development of a nomination strategy. For the nomination proposal, the Outstanding Universal Value of the selected sites were formulated, a global comparative analysis was carried out and the integrity and the current management of the areas were examined. A concept for an integrated management of the areas was developed. Awareness-raising activities and consultations with relevant stakeholders at national and local level have been carried out. Key achievements of the project include an improved information and knowledge base regarding the value of the sites, better understanding of the feasibility and strategy of a natural World Heritage nomination and finalisation and submission of a nomination proposal to UNESCO in Jan. 2019.

Updated: February 2019

**Target country:** Georgia

**Duration:** 09/2016 – 02/2019

**Beneficiaries:** Georgian Ministry for Environment, local community

**Implementing organisations:** Michael Succow Foundation in cooperation with WWF Caucasus Programme Office **Project number:** 76451

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