

A brief summary of the National Biodiversity Strategy and Action Plan (NBSAP) document of Bhutan

On the process:

1. This NBSAP is the third revision of the Biodiversity Action Plan in keeping with the principle of maintaining it as a living document which takes into account the changing needs and priorities of the country in biodiversity management.
2. A National Task Force (NTF) carried out the revision of the document with members from government agencies, civil society organization and a donor agency, under the coordination of the National Biodiversity Centre (NBC). Unlike the past, no consultants were fielded for this work and the NTF members drafted the document.
3. The current NBSAP has 20 national targets, which were drawn from key issues identified through extensive consultations and discussions at the sub-regional and national level.
4. The NTF met more than 16 times to draft the document, over almost two years (from December 2012 to September 2014)
5. Three sub-regional workshops and one national level stakeholder workshop was organized from 2013 to 2014 with key biodiversity stakeholders.
6. The draft NBSAP was also shared with the International Conservation Agencies in the Asia region for their comments as well as in the public domain in the country for national feedback.
7. The final draft NBSAP was also presented and cleared by the Ministry of Agriculture and Forests (key implementing agency) for policy endorsement.
8. It was then endorsed by the National Environment Commission, the highest decision-making body on the environment in the country, chaired by the Prime Minister of Bhutan.

9. As a next step, the document will be submitted to the Gross National Happiness Commission (apex national planning body) as a guiding policy document for mainstreaming biodiversity management in the country.
10. As part of the awareness series on the NBSAP, the document was also presented to the Environment Committees of both the Houses of Parliament.
11. The revised NBSAP will be officially launched in the country in November 2014.

On the NBSAP document:

12. In keeping with Bhutan's commitment as a CBD party, all the 20 national targets have been aligned with the relevant Aichi biodiversity targets and synergies with other Multilateral Environment Agreements have been identified.
13. The key shortcoming of the past BAP documents was the lack of mainstreaming and ownership by relevant biodiversity stakeholders. To overcome this shortcoming, the current document has endorsement from the highest level and will become the guiding document for Biodiversity Management in the country.
14. Other significant shortcomings of the past BAPs were the lack of Monitoring and Evaluation (M&E) and coordination mechanisms for implementation as well as resource mobilization. To address these issues, the current NBSAP has an Implementation Plan, which includes coordination structure as well as a resource mobilization approach.
15. On the technical aspect, although the past BAPS had good strategies and actions and have made significant achievements, the lack of targets and indicators made it difficult to review national progress. To overcome this issue, this current NBSAP has 20 prioritized national biodiversity targets with indicators, which are measurable and realistic and a proper mechanism for M&E.