

## **MAIN OUTCOMES OF THE EXPERT MEETING ON MAINSTREAMING BIODIVERSITY IN DEVELOPMENT COOPERATION**

The Expert Meeting on Mainstreaming Biodiversity in Development Cooperation took place in Montreal, in the offices of the Secretariat of the Convention on Biological Diversity, from 13 to 15 May 2009<sup>1</sup>. This meeting was held in line with an effort that started in Paris, in September 2006, at the Conference on Biodiversity in European Development Cooperation and in response to 3 decisions adopted during the ninth meeting of the Conference of the Parties to the Convention on Biological Diversity. The overall goal of biodiversity mainstreaming is to help reduce the negative impacts that productive sectors exert on biodiversity, particularly outside of protected areas, and highlight the contribution of biodiversity to economic development and human well being, through enhanced collaboration with development sectors and actors.

The meeting gathered 45 representatives from development cooperation agencies, development banks, United Nations agencies and international non-governmental organizations involved in development to exchange on the best means to integrate biodiversity in the development cooperation agenda. The meeting was structured in three main sessions: an update session summarizing the state of affairs and introducing available tools and approaches for biodiversity mainstreaming; an exchange of experiences and lessons learned from developing countries and development cooperation agencies; and a consideration of options for future action.

Participants identified obstacles and challenges to biodiversity mainstreaming and recognized a range of concepts and approaches that are useful for mainstreaming biodiversity into development cooperation including: application of the ecosystem approach; using ecosystem goods and services to highlight the links between biodiversity and human well being; spatial planning and Strategic Environmental Assessment. They reviewed tools and instruments available at different levels within partner countries and donors' internal processes. Participants also proposed considerations for a more effective inclusion of biodiversity in development cooperation processes.

### **KEY CONCLUSIONS**

If participants identified a series of challenges that stand in the way of effective mainstreaming, the spirit of the meeting was outward looking, constructive and focused on solutions. Recommendations were proposed in that light. They include:

- a) Biodiversity mainstreaming efforts should take advantage of the fact that poverty reduction takes an important place on the agenda of development cooperation agencies. Greater convergence between poverty reduction activities and biodiversity conservation strategies at the country level are needed;
- b) Development cooperation agencies should use National Biodiversity Strategies and Action Plans (NBSAPs) for development planning on the one hand, while contributing to their successful implementation on the other;
- c) A common development framework based on OECD/DAC's Rio Markers methodology should be worked on to cover the Rio conventions;
- d) Joint Assistance Strategies (JAS) should be used to integrate biodiversity considerations more effectively in National Development Plans (NDP) and Poverty Reduction Strategy Papers (PRSPs) with the active participation of environmental ministries;
- e) The value of biodiversity should be established for different economic sectors to explain the cost of non-action to decision makers – using the conceptual framework of ecosystem goods and services;

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1. The report of the meeting, as well as other related documents can be found at: <http://www.cbd.int/development/emmbdc-01.shtml>

- f) Development practitioners should work through donor coordination mechanisms to achieve greater impact at the systemic level in ensuring the environmental sector works upstream with other relevant sectors to integrate environmental objectives. This is especially important since many donors emphasize wider programmatic approaches to development;
- g) The donor community should promote a systematic and coherent use of SEA across sectors and make sure SEA frameworks are used in exchanges with ministries and appropriate budgets should be earmarked to implement SEA;
- h) A set of criteria should be worked out to track how well biodiversity and development are linked. In this regard, case-studies (including examples of good practice) are useful for illustrating the mainstreaming of biodiversity into development cooperation including the application of relevant tools and guidance.
- i) A set of biodiversity-friendly sector development toolkits should be prepared for the use of, *inter alia*, sector representatives, local authorities and donors.
- j) Recognize the need for champions to drive changes within institutions and enhance institutional capacity at the country level. Work in specific countries to strengthen links between planning/finance ministries and ministries responsible for the Convention could be developed building on existing initiatives such as the UNEP/UNDP PEI and Poverty and Environment Partnership (PEP).

### **STEPS FOR MOVING FORWARD**

The group decided to build on the momentum created by instituting an informal network of practitioners on biodiversity, development cooperation and poverty reduction. It is expected in a first stage that members of the network will share best practices to support the refining of mainstreaming practice and guidance. The Swedish International Development Cooperation Agency (Sida) and the Swedish International Biodiversity Programme (SwedBio) offered to help coordinate the network's activities. The German Federal Agency for Nature Conservation (BfN) offered to host the next meeting. The meeting may very well focus on lessons learnt from sector specific case-studies and on ways to operationalize biodiversity mainstreaming in these sectors. Practical experiences could also be shared through country level workshops.

Participants would promote the conclusions outlined above. Possible areas for further action were discussed. These include:

1. Setting up a web-based exchange platform on the Secretariat's website to serve as a forum to share existing documents and guidance related to biodiversity mainstreaming produced by organizations active in this practice;
2. Calling for case-studies related to biodiversity mainstreaming (agencies will be invited to provide case-studies or links to agency data sets), and compilation of case-studies by sector with a focus on success stories coming from development agencies;
3. Taking stock of existing guidance tools, and developing further biodiversity mainstreaming toolkits as needed
4. Training on the application of the ecosystem approach targeted for field offices;
5. Undertaking a study of mainstreaming efforts in various organizations to inform future discussions;
6. Developing and applying an umbrella framework linking biodiversity (including the work of the CBD) and poverty alleviation (including the MDGs) in consideration of NBSAPs and PRSPs;
7. Identification of pivotal development sectors as initial grounds for action;
8. Enhancing collaboration and cooperation with the secretariats of the Rio conventions to benefit from synergies such as that of using a resilience or ecosystem based adaptation to climate change approach.