



## Convention on Biological Diversity

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SUB-REGIONAL CAPACITY-BUILDING  
WORKSHOP FOR SOUTH ASIA ON THE  
CLEARING-HOUSE MECHANISM  
Dehradun, India, 12 - 16 December 2011

### **ELEMENTS FOR THE PROGRAMME OF WORK ON THE CLEARING-HOUSE MECHANISM**

*for consideration by the Informal Advisory Committee to the Clearing-House Mechanism*

#### **INTRODUCTION**

1. In decision X/15, the Conference of the Parties adopted the mission, goals and objectives of the clearing-house mechanism for the period 2011-2020. In paragraph 5(b) of that decision, the Executive Secretary was requested to prepare, in consultation with the informal advisory committee and interested Parties, a realistic work programme for the clearing-house mechanism, in line with the Strategic Plan for Biodiversity 2011-2020.

2. This document includes elements to be considered for inclusion in the programme of work on the clearing-house mechanism. They will form the basis for agenda item 7 of the capacity-building workshop (UNEP/CBD/CHM/CBW/2011/SA/1). The feedback received will be taken into account when preparing the corresponding pre-session document to be submitted to the fourth meeting of the Ad Hoc Open-ended Working Group on Review of Implementation of the Convention.

#### **APPROACH**

3. This programme of work builds upon the framework defined by the mission, goals and objectives of the clearing-house mechanism in support of the Strategic Plan for Biodiversity 2011-2020. For each objective, various activities are recommended, keeping in mind the following aspects:

(a) *Effectiveness* - There should be a sound rationale for undertaking activities so that they effectively contribute to the achievement of the intended objective;

(b) *Requirements* - The programme of work is expected to be realistic and a distinction should be made between what can be achieved with available capacity and what would be possible if further requirements were met;

(c) *Sustainability* - It is important to consider the long-term timeframe, especially in the context of the United Nations Decade on Biodiversity until 2020.

In order to minimize the environmental impacts of the Secretariat's processes, and to contribute to the Secretary-General's initiative for a carbon-neutral UN, this document is printed in limited numbers. Participants are kindly requested to bring their own copy to the meeting.

4. The recommended activities are based on the list presented to the tenth meeting of the Conference of the Parties (COP 10) in annex II of document UNEP/CBD/COP/10/15. These activities have been updated to take into account inputs from Parties as well as the recent evolution in the implementation of the clearing-house mechanism. For several reasons including the long-term timeframe, the uncertainty in the availability of resources, and the inherent differences between countries, it is not possible to provide an accurate timeframe. Therefore the following is recommended for planning and monitoring:

(a) Divide the implementation period until 2020 into five management stages corresponding to the intersessional periods between the tenth and the fifteenth meetings of the Conferences of the Parties (COP); Stage 1 would end at the eleventh meeting and stage 5 at the fifteenth meeting of the Conference of the Parties;

(b) Decide at each Conference of the Parties which activities should be undertaken on a priority basis during the next stage, taking into account progress made, available capacity, and evolving needs;

(c) Select a series of indicators to monitor progress and effectiveness, and establish processes to measure them.

5. The rest of this document is structured as follows to form a complete reference set:

(a) The vision of the clearing-house mechanism as expressed in the Strategic Plan for Biodiversity 2011-2020;

(b) The mission of the clearing-house mechanism for the period 2011-2020;

(c) The corresponding goals and objectives for the same period;

(d) The corresponding recommended activities to achieve these objectives.

## VISION

6. Collectively those involved in implementing the Convention have a wealth of experience and have developed many useful good practice cases, tools and guidance. There is additional useful information beyond this community.

7. A biodiversity knowledge network will be developed, including a database and network of practitioners, to bring together this knowledge and experience and to make it available through the clearing-house mechanism to facilitate and support enhanced implementation of the Convention.

8. National clearing-house mechanism nodes comprising networks of experts with effective websites should be developed and sustained so that in each Party, all have access to the information, expertise and experience required to implement the Convention. National clearing-house mechanism nodes should also be linked to the central clearing-house mechanism managed by the Secretariat of the Convention, and information exchange between these should be facilitated.

## MISSION

*To contribute significantly to the implementation of the Convention on Biological Diversity and its Strategic Plan for Biodiversity 2011-2020, through effective information services and other appropriate means in order to promote and facilitate scientific and technical cooperation, knowledge sharing, and information exchange, and to establish a fully operational network of Parties and partners.*

## GOALS AND OBJECTIVES

***Goal 1: The central clearing-house mechanism provides effective global information services to facilitate the implementation of the Strategic Plan for Biodiversity 2011-2020.***

- 1.1. The Secretariat of the Convention on Biological Diversity has the capacity to sustain an effective central clearing-house mechanism.
- 1.2. A high-quality CBD website is available in all United Nations languages.
- 1.3. Effective information exchange services are fully operational.
- 1.4. The Secretariat of the Convention on Biological Diversity facilitates the development of a network of experts and practitioners among Parties and partners.
- 1.5. Guidance is available for Parties and partners to exchange information through the clearing-house mechanism network.

***Goal 2: National clearing-house mechanisms provide effective information services to facilitate the implementation of the national biodiversity strategies and action plans.***

- 2.1. All Parties have the capacity to sustain effective national clearing-house mechanisms.
- 2.2. High-quality national clearing-house mechanism websites are available.
- 2.3. National information is exchanged through the clearing-house mechanism network.
- 2.4. Parties collaborate and share knowledge through the clearing-house mechanism network.
- 2.5. Partners and the Secretariat of the Convention on Biological Diversity have contributed to the development of national clearing-house mechanisms.

***Goal 3: Partners significantly expand the clearing-house mechanism network and services.***

- 3.1. Partners can sustain their participation in the clearing-house mechanism.
- 3.2. High-quality regional and thematic clearing-house mechanism websites are available.
- 3.3. Partner information is exchanged through the clearing-house mechanism network.
- 3.4. Partners collaborate and share knowledge through the clearing-house mechanism network.

## ACTIVITIES

***Goal 1. The central clearing-house mechanism provides effective global information services to facilitate the implementation of the Strategic Plan for Biodiversity 2011-2020.***

- 1.1. The CBD Secretariat has the capacity to sustain an effective central clearing-house mechanism.**

### *Recommended Activities*

- 1.1.1. Prepare for each Conference of the Parties a list of priority activities to be undertaken on the central clearing-house mechanism during the next intersessional period, taking into account progress made, available capacity, and evolving needs.
- 1.1.2. Gradually establish processes to monitor the development and effectiveness of the central clearing-house mechanism with indicators.

- 1.1.3. Strengthen the Secretariat's capacity in information technology particularly to further develop the CBD website and other modern information services of the central clearing-house mechanism.
- 1.1.4. Strengthen the Secretariat's capacity to manage knowledge and information, including terminology and documentation management.
- 1.1.5. Identify, assess, and adopt appropriate publicly-available tools or services that increase the capacity and sustainability of the central clearing-house mechanism in a cost-effective manner.
- 1.1.6. Optimize the process of maintaining the CBD website in all United Nations languages by making sound use of modern translation technology.

*Potential indicators*

- i.1. Number of operational indicators monitoring the clearing-house mechanism.
- i.2. Staff and expertise made available to the central clearing-house mechanism.
- i.3. Number of entries and categories in the CBD terminology.
- i.4. Number and type of tools adopted, starting with the content management system.
- i.5. Average time and cost to translate web content.
- i.6. Resources available to translate web content.

*Rationale*

9. It is strategically important to adopt good planning and monitoring practices, as well as to be able to measure the effectiveness of the central clearing-house mechanism in order to determine how to prioritize actions for further improvements.

10. To be able to contribute significantly to the implementation of the Convention and its Strategic Plan for Biodiversity 2011-2020, the central clearing-house mechanism must have the necessary capacity to provide effective information services to exchange information and knowledge across the whole network. An analogy can be made with a circulatory system where the blood carries the knowledge to the muscles performing the implementation. The central clearing-house mechanism is the heart powering the network, but this heart should be strong and healthy.

11. The use of publicly available tools and services is important to avoid reinventing the wheel by developing information services that can be available out-of-the box. This is particularly true for the content management system (CMS) of the CBD website which must be a reliable and extensible platform able to meet existing and future needs.

12. Website translation is costly and time-consuming. With modern technology, this process can be streamlined in a cost-effective way that improves consistency.

*Requirements and sustainability*

13. With available capacity, the Secretariat of the Convention can gradually carry out activities related to optimization and efficiency. However, the limited throughput of this capacity is a bottleneck likely to cause implementation delays and insufficient quality of service. These issues can be addressed in a sustainable and cost-effective way if additional expertise is made available on a continuous basis to achieve activities 1.1.3 and 1.1.4.

**1.2. A high-quality CBD website is available in all United Nations languages.***Recommended Activities*

- 1.2.1. Prepare a web content strategy for the CBD website.
- 1.2.2. Maintain and improve the CBD website and its related portals in terms of content, services, appearance, user-friendliness, usability and accessibility taking into account user feedback.
- 1.2.3. Make the CBD website available in all United Nations languages.
- 1.2.4. Expand the CBD website in support of the Strategic Plan for Biodiversity 2011-2020 and in accordance with decisions adopted by the Conference of the Parties.

*Potential indicators*

- i.7. Availability of a web content strategy.
- i.8. Website statistics, such as visitors and page views per website section.
- i.9. Number of negative and positive feedback items from web users.
- i.10. Number of broken links.
- i.11. Number of technical issues and their status.
- i.12. Total number of web pages and number of pages which have been reviewed.
- i.13. Number of pages translated, and speed of the translation process.

*Rationale*

14. The CBD website is the main communication platform of the central clearing-house mechanism. A web content strategy is a means to clarify how its role translates into content and services for its target audiences. This strategy should also determine how to reach the expected level of quality, and how to manage content in all United Nations languages.

15. Many decisions of the Conference of the Parties in various programmes areas include components related to the clearing-house mechanism, and they account for a significant part of the work on the CBD website.

*Requirements and sustainability*

16. With existing capacity, the CBD website can be maintained in English. Translation of web content into other United Nations languages is an ongoing requirement which should preferably be covered by a specific component in the core operational budget of the Secretariat of the Convention on Biological Diversity. Any expansion of the CBD website is also subject to additional resources.

**1.3. Effective information exchange services are fully operational.***Recommended Activities*

- 1.3.1. Expand the knowledge base in a way that allows easy access and cross-references by continuously incorporating Convention-related information such as decisions, work programmes, targets, indicators, implementation activities, online sources, reference documents, case-studies, best practices, training materials, organizations, experts, contacts, events, maps, multimedia resources, and other relevant items.

- 1.3.2. Integrate collaboration tools in a user workspace encouraging Parties, experts, practitioners, and other stakeholders to maintain contact, share ideas, and work together, while providing quick access to information directly related to each user's role and activities.
- 1.3.3. Implement the online submission system as the update mechanism of the knowledge base and the collaboration tools in order to enable Parties and all stakeholders to make contributions related to the Convention and its implementation.
- 1.3.4. Implement specialized information services in accordance with decisions adopted by the Conference of the Parties.
- 1.3.5. Expose data held by the central clearing-house mechanism through modern interfaces based on open standards as a way to promote free and open access to biodiversity data.
- 1.3.6. Provide tools enabling national clearing-house mechanisms to automatically access and display relevant information from the central clearing-house mechanism.
- 1.3.7. Continue to develop and use information exchange services to make Convention-related information easily and widely accessible, in line with technological and social trends.

*Potential indicators*

- i.14. List of available information services.
- i.15. List of information types available in the knowledge base and for online submission.
- i.16. Number of user accounts, and frequency of access to the user workspace.
- i.17. Number of entries in the knowledge base.
- i.18. Number of online submissions.
- i.19. Availability of an open interface exposing data held by the central clearing-house mechanism.
- i.20. Number of national CHM websites interoperable with the central clearing-house mechanism.
- i.21. Usage of each information service.

*Rationale*

17. User feedback has revealed that the CBD website has established too many independent information services. As a result, users experience difficulties in finding information scattered across various systems. The solution is to offer three consolidated services able to respond to most of users' needs:

(a) A knowledge base acting as the central registry of all information and knowledge in a way that allows easy access and cross-references;

(b) A user workspace providing collaboration tools while providing quick access to information directly related to each user's role and activities;

(c) A submission system allowing users to make contributions related to the Convention and its implementation;

18. More specialised services can be developed if requested by the Conference of the Parties.

19. Today, web technologies are widely based on open standards operating on heterogeneous platforms. Hence, it is possible to establish a standard information exchange mechanism for the clearing-house mechanism while promoting free and open access to biodiversity data, which can have a network effect.

20. Communication platforms beyond the CBD website can also be effective in contributing to the implementation of the Convention. Applications for smart phones and other handheld devices are becoming increasingly popular and widely used.

#### *Requirements and sustainability*

21. With available capacity, the main requirement to implement the above services is time. Implementation is expected to span over several years due to maintenance constraints and other time-bound activities. The first priority is to strengthen the core infrastructure. Then, a gradual migration process is expected to follow. Many legacy services are planned to be phased out once these consolidated central information services are operational, which is expected to have a positive impact on sustainability.

22. With additional resources, implementation delays can be reduced if appropriate expertise is provided on a continuous basis in order to avoid further delays caused by learning curves of short-term staff and consultants. Additional resources are also required to implement specific services arising from various programme areas, and to maintain them operational in the long-run.

#### **1.4. The CBD Secretariat facilitates the development of a network of experts and practitioners among Parties and partners.**

##### *Recommended Activities*

- 1.4.1. Establish a global contact database including national focal points, experts, practitioners, and other relevant contacts with a user-friendly and open sign-up system to encourage participation.
- 1.4.2. Promote networking of Parties and partners by linking the central and national clearing-house mechanisms.
- 1.4.3. In collaboration with Parties and partners, identify existing experts and practitioners, and invite them to join the network.
- 1.4.4. Organize communities of practices by common goals and interests and identify active leaders that will promote knowledge sharing, collaboration and human networking.

##### *Potential indicators*

- i.22. Number of entries in the global contact database.
- i.23. Availability of an open sign-up system.
- i.24. Number of national clearing-house mechanisms linked to the central clearing-house mechanism.
- i.25. Number of contributions and exchanges made through collaboration tools.
- i.26. Number of Parties and partners involved in identifying experts.
- i.27. Number of established communities of practices, and number of identified leaders.
- i.28. List of goals and common interests identified by communities of practices
- i.29. Feedback on benefits arising from collaboration and networking.

##### *Rationale*

23. Contact information is essential for the operations for the Secretariat of the Convention and for establishing a fully operational network of Parties and partners, as envisaged by the mission of the clearing-house mechanism. Such contact information is also the basis for the user workspace, which must be intuitive and user-friendly to facilitate collaboration and networking.

24. While it is technically possible to interconnect the central and national clearing-house mechanisms through interoperability mechanisms, manual links are still needed to address specific networking needs.

25. Identifying experts and practitioners is an ongoing activity needed to build and expand the network. The objective is to establish communities of practices sharing common goals and interests and benefiting from collaboration and networking.

*Requirements and sustainability*

26. The global contact database can be established with resources available to the central clearing-house mechanism. Time is required to migrate existing contact information from various sources into an integrated global database and certain pre-conditions must be met for not disrupting CBD operations. Nevertheless, the expected benefits remain high in terms of data quality and sustainability.

27. Other activities require the involvement of leading experts and practitioners, starting with programme officers and national focal points. This assumes that common goals and benefits have been identified to generate interest.

**1.5. Guidance is available for Parties and partners to exchange information through the clearing-house mechanism network.**

*Recommended Activities*

1.5.1. Establish and publish specifications to exchange information through the clearing-house mechanism network, including interoperability protocols, common formats, controlled vocabularies, application programming interfaces, and other technical guidelines.

1.5.2. Provide guidance to Parties and partners on how to exchange information through the clearing-house mechanism network.

*Potential indicators*

i.30. List of available specifications.

i.31. List of guidance provided.

i.32. Feedback on usage and effectiveness of the guidance.

*Rationale*

28. Information exchange assumes the specification of a common interface. In addition, guidance is needed to describe how to setup and use the exchange mechanism.

*Requirements and sustainability*

29. With existing capacity, general guidance can be provided. A pre-condition for the publication of technical specifications is the start of activity 1.3.5 whose purpose is to expose data held by the central clearing-house mechanism through modern interfaces. The specifications should be updated when new versions are made available and an effort should be made to maintain backward compatibility.

**Goal 2:** *National clearing-house mechanisms provide effective information services to facilitate the implementation of the national biodiversity strategies and action plans.*

**2.1. All Parties have the capacity to sustain effective national clearing-house mechanisms.**

*Recommended Activities*

- 2.1.1. If not yet done, designate, as soon as possible, a national focal point for the clearing-house mechanism, as requested by paragraph 7 of decision II/3, with the appropriate expertise to coordinate and implement the national clearing-house mechanism.
- 2.1.2. Prepare a national implementation strategy for the clearing-house mechanism, where appropriate, preferably as a component of the national biodiversity strategy and action plan, based on identified needs.
- 2.1.3. Establish a national structure, as appropriate, to coordinate the development of the clearing-house mechanism, such as an inter-institutional steering committee with participation of relevant biodiversity-related organizations and stakeholders.
- 2.1.4. Mobilize and allocate resources for strengthening the institutional capacity to implement the national clearing-house mechanism and for sustaining its operations.
- 2.1.5. Define roles and responsibilities for collecting, reviewing and disseminating information, managing website content, and for outreach activities.
- 2.1.6. Identify, assess, and adopt appropriate publicly-available tools or services that increase the capacity and sustainability of the national clearing-house mechanism in a cost-effective manner.

*Potential indicators*

- i.33. Existence of a clearing-house mechanism national focal point.
- i.34. Existence of a national strategy for the clearing-house mechanism.
- i.35. Existence of a national structure to coordinate the clearing-house mechanism and its composition.
- i.36. Resources made available to the clearing-house mechanism.
- i.37. List of roles and responsibilities.
- i.38. Number and type of tools adopted, starting with the content management system.

*Rationale*

30. The process of establishing a national clearing-house mechanism starts with the designation of a national focal point in charge of this mission. It is recommended to prepare an implementation strategy in order to define how the national clearing-house mechanism is expected to contribute to the implementation of the Convention at the national level. This strategic approach should facilitate high-level support which is essential for long-term sustainability.

31. The community of national practitioners implementing the national biodiversity strategy and action plans can greatly contribute to the effectiveness of the national clearing-house mechanism if:

- (a) They are represented in the high-level national coordination structure, so that their views and needs are well taken into account when planning the development of the national clearing-house mechanism;

(b) They become familiar with the information services provided by the national clearing-house mechanism by using them, for their own needs and for the common needs of the community.

#### *Requirements and sustainability*

32. Without a firm high-level commitment to establish a national clearing-house mechanism, it will be difficult to acquire the resources to do so. Getting this commitment typically means convincing decision-makers that the clearing-house mechanism is a cost-effective investment that facilitates the implementation the Convention.

### **2.2. High-quality national clearing-house mechanism websites are available.**

#### *Recommended Activities*

- 2.2.1. Prepare a web content strategy for the national clearing-house mechanism website serving as a key means for the implementation and review of the national biodiversity strategy and action plan, including by providing information on implementation activities, scientific data, expertise, and technologies.
- 2.2.2. Maintain and improve the national clearing-house mechanism website in terms of content, services, appearance, user-friendliness, usability and accessibility taking into account users' feedback.
- 2.2.3. Whenever applicable and feasible, make the national clearing-house mechanism website available in various national and local languages.
- 2.2.4. Identify relevant biodiversity-related information sources at the national level and promote them through the national clearing-house mechanism, and if not yet done, first provide basic information on national contacts, and on biodiversity in the country.

#### *Potential indicators*

- i.39. Availability of a web content strategy.
- i.40. Website statistics, such as visitors and page views per website section.
- i.41. Number of negative and positive feedback items from web users.
- i.42. Number of broken links.
- i.43. Number of technical issues and their status.
- i.44. Total number of web pages, and number of pages which have been reviewed.
- i.45. Number of pages translated, and speed of the translation process.

#### *Rationale*

33. The web content strategy is important to clarify the type of content and services that should be provided by the national clearing-house mechanism website. This strategy should also determine how to reach the expected level of quality and how to manage content.

*Requirements and sustainability*

34. In the long run, the quality and sustainability of a national clearing house mechanism website is in direct relation with the capacity of the team in charge of it. In a mid-size national clearing-house mechanism, such a team would typically include the following roles and expertise, at least on a part-time basis:

- (a) A project manager, who could be the national focal point for the clearing-house mechanism;
- (b) A web content editor, in charge of keeping the content up-to-date and interesting;
- (c) A web designer, in charge of the visual look-and-feel and attractiveness of the site;
- (d) An expert in information and communication technology (ICT), in charge of databases, online services, and website configuration.

35. The challenge is to achieve sustainability while not underestimating the human expertise needed to ensure quality and effectiveness.

**2.3. National information is exchanged through the clearing-house mechanism network.**

*Recommended Activities*

- 2.3.1. Whenever possible, develop information exchange mechanisms with relevant national databases, making use, whenever applicable and appropriate, of well-established open standards.
- 2.3.2. Whenever feasible and appropriate, make use of tools to exchange information with the central clearing-house mechanism.

*Potential indicators*

- i.46. Number of national databases connected automatically to the national clearing-house mechanism.
- i.47. Availability of an information exchange mechanism with the central clearing-house mechanism.

*Rationale*

36. By interconnecting the national clearing-house mechanism with both national databases and the central clearing-house mechanism, valuable national information can be made more prominent and accessible at the global level. Automation allows to reduce low-level IT tasks and to concentrate on high-level activities.

*Requirements and sustainability*

37. Establishing an interconnection, connecting the national clearing-house mechanism and other websites assumes that a sufficient level of expertise is available at the national level.

**2.4. Parties collaborate and share knowledge through the clearing-house mechanism network.**

*Recommended Activities*

- 2.4.1. Undertake a national biodiversity knowledge management initiative that identifies knowledge needs and sources for the implementation of national biodiversity strategies and action plans.
- 2.4.2. Develop a knowledge-sharing culture to ensure that information and knowledge from various national sources is effectively provided and published on the national clearing-house mechanism.

- 2.4.3. Whenever possible, develop links between the national clearing-house mechanism and existing networks.
- 2.4.4. Encourage the use of the national clearing-house mechanism as a tool to dialog with the civil society, major groups and stakeholders.

*Potential indicators*

- i.48. Existence and outcomes of a national biodiversity knowledge management initiative.
- i.49. Number of information sources providing information to the national clearing-house mechanism.
- i.50. Number of links established with existing networks.
- i.51. Tools available to dialog with civil society and their usage.

*Rationale*

38. In order to gradually build a biodiversity knowledge network as envisaged by the Strategic Plan for Biodiversity 2011-2020, a number of major activities should be undertaken at various levels to fully engage Parties and partners, to mobilize communities of practice, to capture relevant knowledge and map it to identified needs, and to enhance the information exchange infrastructure of the clearing-house mechanism.

*Requirements and sustainability*

39. Resources are required for carrying out a biodiversity knowledge-management initiative at the national level. As far as collaboration is concerned, it assumes the existence of an active group sharing common goals and interests.

**2.5. Partners and the CBD Secretariat have contributed to the development of national clearing-house mechanisms.**

*Recommended Activities*

- 2.5.1. Provide guidance to Parties on how to develop their national clearing-house mechanisms.
- 2.5.2. Organize capacity-building workshops to assist Parties in developing their national clearing-house mechanisms, including through organizations which are present and active at the national or regional levels, and based on the special capacity-building needs of developing countries and on the status of their national clearing-house mechanisms.

*Potential indicators*

- i.52. List of available guidance.
- i.53. Number of partners involved in capacity building.
- i.54. Number of capacity-building workshops and budget allocated for them.
- i.55. Number of countries and participants that have benefited from capacity-building initiatives.
- i.56. Number of national clearing-house mechanism websites established or strengthened through capacity-building

*Rationale*

40. Most Parties need guidance and support to develop their national clearing-house mechanism in an effective way. Cooperation and partnerships can make a difference in building capacity, particularly in developing countries.

*Requirements and sustainability*

41. Guidance can be provided with existing capacity. Capacity-building workshops require specific funding.

**Goal 3: Partners significantly expand the clearing-house mechanism network and services.**

**3.1. Partners can sustain their participation in the clearing-house mechanism.**

*Recommended Activities*

- 3.1.1. Identify the benefits of participating in the clearing-house mechanism in line with the organization's mandate and strategy.
- 3.1.2. Designate an appropriate contact or focal point for the clearing-house mechanism.
- 3.1.3. Mobilize and allocate resources for contributing to the clearing-house mechanism.

*Potential indicators*

- i.57. Expected benefits from participation in the clearing-house mechanism.
- i.58. Existence of a contact or focal point.
- i.59. Contributions made by the partner to the clearing-house mechanism.

*Rationale*

42. A partner is unlikely to participate in the clearing-house mechanism if it has not identified any benefit in doing so. This is typically determined by the partner's mandate and strategy. Then, the designation of an appropriate contact is recommended to facilitate planning and implementation of collaboration initiatives based on available resources.

*Requirements and sustainability*

43. The partner needs to be sustainable independently of its participation in the clearing-house mechanism.

**3.2. High-quality regional and thematic clearing-house mechanism websites are available.**

*Recommended Activities*

- 3.2.1. Establish or further develop regional clearing-house mechanisms that contribute to the development of national clearing-house mechanisms.
- 3.2.2. Establish or further develop thematic clearing-house mechanisms that contribute to thematic programmes of the Convention.

*Potential indicators*

- i.60. Number of regional and thematic clearing-house mechanism websites.

- i.61. Number of regional and thematic websites with a strategy defining the purpose, target users, content, and services of their website.
- i.62. Website statistics, such as visitors and page views per website section.
- i.63. Number of negative and positive feedback items from web users.
- i.64. Capacity available to develop and maintain each regional or thematic website.
- i.65. Contributions made by each regional or thematic clearing-house mechanism.

*Rationale*

44. Regional clearing-house mechanisms are in a good position to provide appropriate support to a group of national clearing-house mechanisms sharing regional commonalities. Thematic clearing-house mechanisms can act as centres of excellence in specific biodiversity areas relevant to the implementation of the Convention.

*Requirements and sustainability*

45. In addition to requirements for objective 3.1, sustained capacity is needed to establish and maintain the corresponding websites, particularly in terms of content and services.

**3.3. Partner information is exchanged through the clearing-house mechanism network.**

*Recommended Activities*

- 3.3.1. Collaboratively investigate ways for partners to make their Convention-related information accessible through the clearing-house mechanism.
- 3.3.2. Establish, through technical collaboration, information services enabling global access to relevant information from the Rio conventions and other multilateral environment agreements.
- 3.3.3. Develop, through technical collaboration between the Secretariats of the Global Environment Facility (GEF) and the Convention on Biological Diversity, an interoperability mechanism that facilitates access to information on GEF-funded projects related to the implementation of the Convention.

*Potential indicators*

- i.66. Number of partners which have made their information available through the clearing-house mechanism.
- i.67. List of information services enabling global access to information from multilateral environment agreements.
- i.68. Number of projects made accessible through the interoperability mechanism with GEF.

*Rationale*

46. A collaborative approach is recommended to assess which information should be exchanged, and to agree on the common mechanisms and interfaces to do so.

*Requirements and sustainability*

47. Technical expertise is usually required on each side to design and implement an information exchange mechanism.

**3.4. Partners collaborate and share knowledge through the clearing-house mechanism network.***Recommended Activities*

- 3.4.1. Whenever possible, undertake initiatives to generate, capture, organize, package or transfer information and knowledge relevant to the implementation of the Convention.
- 3.4.2. Contribute to the knowledge base by submitting information related to the implementation of the Convention, such as projects, case-studies, and other relevant resources.
- 3.4.3. Encourage experts and practitioners to participate in the communities of practice related to their expertise.

*Potential indicators*

- i.69. Information and knowledge compiled by partners.
- i.70. Number of knowledge base entries provided by partners.
- i.71. Number of experts and practitioners participating in the clearing-house mechanism.

*Rationale*

48. Around the world, there is a wealth of information and knowledge held by various actors in the field of biodiversity. If partners carry out the above activities, valuable information and knowledge will be gradually collected and made globally available through the clearing-house mechanism network. This is expected to benefit practitioners who implement the Convention.

*Requirements and sustainability*

49. Establishing a worldwide biodiversity knowledge network is a collective goal that requires a firm high-level engagement from major actors in the biodiversity community.

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