



International Expert Workshop on the 2010 Biodiversity Indicators and Post-2010 Indicator Development

A workshop convened by the UNEP World Conservation Monitoring Centre (UNEP-WCMC)

In cooperation with the Secretariat of the Convention on Biological Diversity (SCBD)

Hosted by the UK Department for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs (Defra), with funding provided by the European Commission (EC), the UK Joint Nature Conservation Committee (JNCC), and the United Nations Environment Programme (UNEP)

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Workshop Summary

Support for the workshop provided by the following:



1. INTRODUCTION

In 2010, Parties to the Convention on Biological Diversity (CBD) will review the extent to which progress has been made in meeting the global biodiversity target, and to develop a new, post-2010 strategic plan and associated target(s). Progress towards the 2010 target is being tracked using a framework of indicators, and the extent to which policy-makers and society will be able to assess their achievements, and identify suitable responses, is largely dependent upon the information provided by such indicators.

In July 2009, the Secretariat of the Convention on Biological Diversity (SCBD) and the UNEP World Conservation Monitoring Centre jointly convened a meeting to review the use and effectiveness of the 2010 biodiversity indicators and to consider the implications for the development of post-2010 targets and indicators. The meeting was hosted by the UK Department for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs (Defra), whilst additional financial support was provided by the United Nations Environment Programme (UNEP), the European Commission (EC) and the UK Joint Nature Conservation Committee (JNCC). The workshop brought together over 70 participants including government-nominated experts and representatives of biodiversity-related conventions, UN agencies, academic and research institutions and other relevant international, inter-governmental and non-governmental organizations. This is a summary of that meeting.

2. KEY LESSONS FROM THE 2010 BIODIVERSITY INDICATORS PROCESSES

The following are the summarised key lessons identified at the workshop after working group discussions on the first day. They fall roughly into three categories: lessons regarding the framework, lessons regarding the indicators themselves, and lessons regarding communication.

A. Framework logic and content

- a. The flexibility of the framework, which enables its implementation at a variety of scales, has facilitated its political adoption, which, in turn, has boosted support for developing the detail of the indicators under the framework.
- b. The framework is comprehensive, and can be mapped to other frameworks (such as DPSIR), but there have been problems showing how it fits together to integrate the indicators into a coherent story.
- c. The framework is primarily structured around CBD priorities, but its relevance to other sectors / MEA processes is less clear, thereby hindering its uptake and use, beyond the CBD.
- d. The parallel development of the CBD targets and goals, and the indicator framework, has led to a disconnect which was not intended.
- e. The complexity of biodiversity, and of the framework, is a continuing problem in terms of communicating to disparate audiences.
- f. The current indicator set is incomplete in a number of areas; e.g., wild genetic resources, ecosystem quality, ecosystem services, sustainable use, human well-being, ABS and indigenous local knowledge, and both threats and responses more broadly.

B. Indicator development

- a. There is a tension between scientific rigour and communicating the results of the indicators to a variety of audiences. Both are needed.
- b. Some indicators are well developed, but others are still under-developed.
- c. The representativeness and adequacy of the data underlying the indicators needs to be transparently documented, and their geographic / taxonomic / temporal coverage needs to be improved.
- d. Methods for assessing the significance of change, and distance to target are underdeveloped.
- e. There is no clear process or criteria for evaluating the scientific rigour of the indicators.

C. Communication

- a. Focussing on outcomes has concentrated minds and spurred engagement, but the absence of clear targets and awareness raising is a barrier to arousing public interest.
- b. The communication that has taken place has been *ad hoc*, opportunistic, and more focussed on reporting than a systematic effort to convey the lessons from the indicators; there is an especial challenge of communicating 'bad news'.
- c. Biodiversity means different things to different sectors – the messages from individual indicators, and the set as a whole, do not take this fully into account.

3. CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS FOR POST-2010 INDICATORS

The choice of indicators for the post-2010 period will depend on the target(s) adopted by the CBD. However these targets must be measurable, which in turn depends on our scientific capability to develop and deliver the appropriate indicators to track progress. Thus, the development of targets and indicators must be undertaken in tandem through an iterative process.

A. Principal recommendations for the post-2010 indicators

The workshop crafted a series of recommendations of which the following were voted the most important:

- a. A small set of (10-15) broad headline indicators, clearly linked to the main target and sub-targets and underscored by more specific sub-indicators/measures, should be maintained/developed, in order to communicate the indicator set through key storylines and clear, policy relevant messages, while maintaining a flexible framework to cater for national/regional needs.
- b. The current framework of global indicators should be modified and simplified into four 'focal areas': Threats to Biodiversity; State of Biodiversity; Ecosystem services, and; Policy responses. Existing indicators should be re-aligned with the new framework, as appropriate, in order to maintain continuity and enhance their use. The relationships between the focal areas and between indicators and targets should be clearly explained and documented, including their

scientific basis and assumptions.

- c. Some additional measures on threats to biodiversity, status of diversity, ecosystem extent and condition, ecosystem services and policy responses should be developed in order to provide a more complete and flexible set of indicators to monitor progress towards a post-2010 target and to clearly link actions and biodiversity outcomes to benefits for people.
- d. National capacity for framework application, indicator development, data collection and information management should be further developed and properly resourced in order to strengthen countries' ability to develop, monitor and communicate indicators in a participatory, sustained and integrated way; and to link with other processes e.g., MEAs at all levels.
- e. Priority must be given to developing a communication strategy for the post-2010 targets and indicators in order to inform policy discussions and ensure effective communication of messages coming from the indicators into all sectors (including *inter alia* delivering stories relevant to human well-being, identifying champions, promoting a regular reporting process, etc).
- f. A flexible and inclusive process/partnership for post-2010 indicator development should be maintained and adequately resourced in order to increase collaboration in the development, quality control, implementation and communication of indicators at all levels, including the sharing of experience and the building of capacity.

B. Additional recommendations and action points

The following additional recommendations were made in relation to the target, the framework, the indicators and the process:

- a. The post-2010 target should take account of biodiversity, ecosystem services and human well-being, recognising the linkages between them, in order to communicate effectively and improve understanding of their interdependence.
- b. The target timeframe should incorporate a long enough period required to improve the state of biodiversity as well as interim milestones that satisfy the more rapid reporting required for policy relevance.
- c. The target should be formulated in terms of a level or change rather than rate of change (e.g., maintain and restore levels rather than reduce the rate of loss), in order to facilitate reporting and communication of all indicators.
- d. Target-setting should take into account, but not be constrained by, data availability, baselines and scales, in order to allow the development of meaningful indicators.
- e. The process of indicator development should follow best available scientific practices that would allow the development of a clear and credible set of indicators, and that each indicator has a clearly documented, peer-reviewed, published methodology; with access to underlying data; data quality control; subject to initial testing and periodic independent review of results, in order to obtain meaningful, scientifically sound indicator results.
- f. Among existing indicators, those where there is little prospect of collecting data and their continuing importance/relevance is low should be dropped, in order to focus the use of limited

financial and human resources.

- g. Synergies in indicator use across MEAs should be sought, using the best available and established information methods, networks and data sets, in order to streamline reporting processes thereby increasing efficiency and cost effectiveness.
- h. A high priority should be given to expanding the taxonomic, biome and geographic coverage of existing indicators (especially biodiversity status indicators), e.g., through increased funding of in-field data collection (and capacity building) especially in biodiversity rich regions, through a coordinated global biodiversity monitoring strategy, in order to provide a more robust, reliable and representative assessment of the status of biodiversity, threats to it, and actions being taken.
- i. Indicators within the 'Threats to biodiversity' focal area should be expanded to include additional direct and indirect drivers (or threats) as they apply or relate to biodiversity, ecosystem services and human well being, taking advantage where possible of already collected data (e.g., World Bank, climate change etc). Such threat indicators should be closely linked to appropriate biodiversity measures so that it can be clear to policy makers how actions to reduce threats affect biodiversity change.
- j. Individual indicators should be capable of disaggregation, for example into functional groups, taxonomic groups, biome and geographic areas, in order to allow the identification of trends and priorities for action at meaningful scales.
- k. A wide ranging, but cost-effective process for review, (including independent inputs) of the indicator suite, at appropriate intervals (taking account of the need for stability as far as possible) should be adopted at the outset, to allow adaptation to new needs and lessons learned from experience, in order to keep the indicators fit for purpose.

4. NEXT STEPS

The full report of the workshop considerations and conclusions will be made available in early September (see www.cbd.int/doc/?meeting=EMIND-02), and will be submitted to the Secretariat of the CBD for inclusion as an information document at SBSTTA 14, and as a contribution to other events in the process of developing a post-2010 CBD strategic plan. Its findings will also be distributed more widely for use by other MEAs, by related initiatives, and by regional and national indicator processes.

The workshop is expected to stimulate additional follow-on activities, including further development and elaboration of proposed indicator frameworks. As far as possible these will be tracked by the 2010 BIP Secretariat at UNEP-WCMC and reported through the 2010 BIP website (www.twentyten.net).

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