



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 Convention on Biological Diversity (CBD)

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)

Innovation Centre, Reading, United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland

6-8 July 2009

Lessons from regional use of biodiversity indicators

The SEBI 2010 project

Support for the workshop provided by the following:



Lessons from regional use of biodiversity indicators - the SEBI 2010 project

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SEBI 2010 (Streamlining European Biodiversity Indicators for 2010) is a process initiated in 2005 to select a set of indicators to monitor progress towards 2010 in Europe. Its institutional partners are the European Environment Agency (and its European Topic Centre on Biological Diversity), the European Centre for Nature Conservation, the United Nations Environment Programme World Conservation Monitoring Centre (UNEP-WCMC), the European Commission, the Joint Secretariat of the Pan-European Biological and Landscape Diversity Strategy (PEBLDS), and the Czech Republic (as lead country for the Kiev Resolution on Biodiversity's Action Plan on Monitoring and Indicators). The SEBI 2010 process covers 53 countries across Europe.

SEBI 2010 built on the conceptual framework provided by the CBD, and worked with a set of headline indicators within the CBD focal areas.

Key lessons from SEBI 2010 to date include the following:

1. Policy context and organisation of the process: experts, countries, institutional partners

SEBI 2010 benefited from existing networks and processes:

- SEBI 2010 links to policy at the national, regional and global level. It has benefited from existing frameworks such as EEA member states and the European Environment Information and Observation Network (EIONET); EU policy framework; Pan-European Biological and Landscape Diversity Strategy (PEBLDS) and the Kiev Resolution on Biodiversity. Especially the existing network of EEA member countries was instrumental in the involvement of experts from many countries.
- A Coordination Team was established to oversee and guide the work of SEBI 2010. It is composed of representatives from SEBI 2010 institutional partners as well as chairs and coordinators of expert groups.
- Nominations for experts (from national administration, research, NGOs) to participate in working groups were solicited from all countries. For nominations of experts from national administration or institutes, the endorsement of the EEA National Focal Point was required. Over 120 experts participated in the SEBI process to date. In the first phase, the experts were organised in six Expert Groups. Each of the groups examined candidate indicators for one or more of the headline indicators in CBD focal areas. The CT was in charge for a few headline indicators. In the second phase, the expert groups were replaced by working groups on interlinkages, communication and climate change.

2. Selection of the indicators

A thorough selection process was used to select specific indicators. The final selection was of course to some extent based on expert opinion and driven by the need to select at least one indicator per headline.

- All candidate indicators were described in detail in a standard “documentation form”, with sections describing policy relevance, geographical and temporal coverage, methodology etc. In addition, each indicator was “scored” using criteria based on CBD criteria (e.g. biodiversity relevance, methodology well founded, sensitivity).
- The Coordination Team met in October 2006 to decide which of the 70+ indicators under consideration would be ready by the end of 2006, and hence could be proposed for inclusion into a first set. Approximately 50 indicators were deemed sufficiently developed to be discussed at a workshop held in Copenhagen in November 2006. Whilst in some cases it was possible to select a single indicator to reflect the EU headline, in most cases the EU headline could not be reduced to one indicator and should therefore be represented by a small set of indicators or sub-indicators. Following the workshop, the Expert Groups and Coordination Team continued to prepare documentation forms describing each candidate indicator, its data requirements, methodology, strengths and weaknesses, and presentation.
- The Coordination Team then met in January 2007 to review the outcome of the November workshop and the draft documentation forms. It drew up the list of 26 indicators presented in this report to put forward to the EU and PEBLDS for endorsement within Europe.

3. Strengths and weaknesses of the process and the set

The process was transparent and involved a wide range of experts from governments, research and NGOs. Stronger direct links with countries to compare national sets with the SEBI set would be useful. While geographical coverage is good for EU countries and EEA member states, coverage for European countries further East is not satisfactory.

The set must be considered the best available now, but there certainly is room for improvement. Some indicators provide specific measurements and trends on genetic, species and ecosystem/landscape diversity, but many have a much more indirect link to biodiversity. Very few were established specifically to assess biodiversity. Coverage of the components of biological diversity (especially genetic diversity) needs to be improved and the focal areas of access and benefit-sharing and sustainable use need to be strengthened.

Establishing stronger links between the indicators is essential to draw policy relevant conclusions. In the next assessment based on the set (due to be published in 2010) the following elements will be elaborated more strongly:

- **The state of biodiversity.** More information is required to better assess trends in the components of biodiversity.
- **Target values and baselines.** Within the SEBI 2010 process and within the context of the global indicators used to assess global progress towards 2010, work is under way to determine target values and baselines for each indicator where possible.
- **Responses — what has worked and what has not.** Where the current report has given a detailed assessment per focal area, the assessment in 2010 will

focus more strongly on interactions, responses and integration of biodiversity concerns into sectoral policies.

- **The marine environment.** As the EU is discussing reforms to the Common Fisheries Policy, addressing anthropogenic impacts on the marine environment will become a policy priority.
- **Europe's impact.** A deeper analysis will be done of the impact of Europe and its policies on biodiversity in the world.

4. Challenges for 2010 and beyond

The indicator framework for monitoring progress towards the new post-2010 target could be based on the current CBD framework around focal areas, but add specific targets on threats and ecosystem services. This would allow for a stronger sectoral approach and focus on drivers, which would be required to influence sectors more effectively. It may also be useful to include a focal area on responses. At the global and regional level discussions on shaping the indicator framework are ongoing and they will continue as a target is adopted.

One problem with the current 2010 target is that it is not really measurable but is still considered as a target of which the achievement should be assessed. It is helpful to make a distinction between an overall target (or “goal”) without a time limit, and a set of subtargets which may have a specific time frame. The overall target can be ambitious and long term (cf. the first Millennium Development Goal “Eradicate extreme poverty and hunger”) and does not necessarily need to be measurable. The subtargets can then be elaborated to be SMART, and they can also be evaluated, updated or replaced as appropriate.

5. Initial ambition and results to date

Challenges remain for several of the envisaged outputs of SEBI 2010:

- To provide an initial set of indicators available at EU and pan-European levels: This has been achieved, but pan-European coverage remains a distant aim.
- To provide a coherent European programme for the progressive development of biodiversity indicators, including the exploration of funding mechanisms for timely production and delivery of agreed indicators: The development of a programme may have been overtaken by national developments, but sharing of information for streamlining is certainly happening; SEBI 2010 has raised the issue of funding at several levels but this remains a challenge.
- To provide proposals and guidance on the development, production and delivery of agreed indicators: This has happened in practice through exchanges between experts in the SEBI process as well as policy makers at several levels.
- To provide proposals, guidance, recommendations and information for presentation to the appropriate European governance groups developing biodiversity policy for formal adoption: This has happened through participation in meetings, processes etc.

- To provide information to the CBD Secretariat advisory and governance processes on the results of the work being undertaken: Regular interaction with CBD Secretariat as well as 2010 BIP has taken place.
- To provide a recommendation for an approach to using the agreed indicators for measuring the progress of national governments, the EU and the pan-European community towards achieving the 2010 target: This happened in practice through the production of reports.
- To provide advice on relating changes in biodiversity at EU and pan-European level to policy measures adopted at these levels, so as to help the EU and countries to adjust or strengthen the measures concerned: A first attempt has been made in the recently published report, and this will be further developed in the 2010 assessment report; SEBI 2010 has directly fed indicators and assessments into the review process of the EU Biodiversity Action Plan.

Further reading:

EEA 2007. Halting the loss of biodiversity by 2010: proposal for a first set of indicators to monitor progress in Europe. EEA Technical report No 11/2007. European Environment Agency, Copenhagen, Denmark. Available at: www.eea.europa.eu/publications/technical_report_2007_11

EEA, 2009a. Progress towards the European 2010 biodiversity target. EEA Report 04/2009. Available online at <http://www.eea.europa.eu/highlights/publications/progress-towards-the-european-2010-biodiversity-target/>

EEA, 2009b. Progress towards the European 2010 biodiversity target — Indicator fact sheets. EEA Technical report No 05/2009. European Environment Agency, Copenhagen. Available at www.eea.europa.eu/publications/progress-towards-the-european-2010-biodiversity-target-indicator-fact-sheets/