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REGIONAL WORKSHOP FOR SOUTH, SOUTH-EAST AND EAST ASIA ON CAPACITY-BUILDING FOR NATIONAL BIODIVERSITY STRATEGY AND ACTION PLANS AND MAINSTREAMING OF BIODIVERSITY
Singapore City, Singapore, 14-18 January 2008

VOLUNTARY GUIDELINES TO PARTIES FOR REVIEW OF NATIONAL BIODIVERSITY STRATEGIES AND ACTION PLANS

Note by the Executive Secretary

1. In decision VIII/8, paragraph 4, the Conference of the Parties, in preparation for in-depth review of goals 2 and 3 of the strategic plan, invited Parties to provide an update on the information in the third national report, on a voluntary basis and taking note of the of the guidelines provided in annex I to the present decision, on:

(a) The status of national biodiversity strategies and action plans, their implementation and updating, and the extent to which biodiversity concerns have been effectively mainstreamed in accordance with Article 6(b) of the Convention on Biological Diversity;

(b) The main obstacles to implementation of the Convention at the national level, including: (i) obstacles to the implementation of national biodiversity strategies and action plans; and (ii) the effective integration of biodiversity concerns into relevant sectors (using as a framework the list of obstacles identified in the Strategic Plan); and (iii) ways and means by which these identified obstacles might be overcome;

(c) An update on actions taken in response to paragraph 41 of decision V/20 on reviewing implementation at the national level;

(d) The availability of resources, in particular those from the Global Environment Facility.

2. The guidelines referred to in decision VIII/8 are annexed to the present note.

ANNEX: VOLUNTARY GUIDELINES TO PARTIES FOR REVIEW OF NATIONAL BIODIVERSITY STRATEGIES AND ACTION PLANS

A. INTRODUCTION

Purpose

The purpose of these voluntary guidelines is to:

(a) Serve as a practical tool for use by Parties on a voluntary basis as they review implementation of their national biodiversity strategies and action plans in order to assist Parties to improve implementation;

(b) Elicit consistent information from Parties supplementary to that provided in the third national report that will assist the Conference of the Parties to complete an in-depth review of implementation of national biodiversity strategies and action plans under the Convention and to help mobilize international resources to address priority needs.

For each section of the guidelines, if Parties have already provided the relevant information in their Third National Reports, they are asked to refer to those reports and only give updates if new or additional information is available.

Parties that have undertaken national capacity self-assessments may wish to draw upon the results of those assessments in undertaking a review of national biodiversity strategies and action plans.

The guidelines are framed for those Parties that have national biodiversity strategies and action plans already in place, although it is recognized that some Parties may still be in the process of developing their strategies and/or action plans.

(a) For those Parties that do not have national biodiversity strategies and action plans, but do have other equivalent programmes in place to meet their obligations under the Convention, we ask that you indicate as such, and adapt these guidelines to your particular programme(s);

(b) For those Parties that have not yet begun or are in the process of developing national biodiversity strategies and action plans, we ask that you complete parts 1 and 5 only. In your answer to part 1, please provide an indication of when national biodiversity strategies and action plans will be available, and (if possible) what their scope will be. For part 5, your answer can discuss obstacles to the preparation of national biodiversity strategies and action plans, and national needs for overcoming these challenges.

Style and length

The format of the report is left to the discretion of individual Parties, although suggestions are given in the guidelines. It is suggested that you keep the report brief, and attach more detailed information, as required, in annexes.

If possible, it would assist the Secretariat if your report could be submitted electronically, as well as (or instead of) in paper form.

Approach

The biodiversity planning process, including the work of review, should be as participatory as possible. Parties may wish to assemble a team to undertake the review, composed of representatives from lead institution(s), other government sectors, local and indigenous communities and other stakeholder groups. There should be an emphasis on concrete outcomes (reviewing what has been achieved in terms of meeting national biodiversity priorities) rather than on simply reporting whether or not activities have taken place. Wherever possible, Parties are asked to document these outcomes, through indicators or other means.

B. GUIDELINES

Part 1. Status of national biodiversity strategies and action plans

This section will serve to give a brief overview of the status and scope of your country's biodiversity strategies and action plans.

Identification

(a) Please provide the title and date of adoption for your country's:

- Original national biodiversity strategy and action plan
- Updated national biodiversity strategy and action plan (if applicable)
- Any sub-national biodiversity strategies and action plans (if applicable)

(b) If any of these documents are available on the internet, please provide the website address.

Scope

(a) If biodiversity strategies and action plans have been updated since first adopted, what updates were made and why? (i.e., were the updates made in response to new guidance generated by the Conference of the Parties since the national biodiversity strategy and action plan was first developed, or put in place for another reason?);

(b) Does the most recent version of your biodiversity strategy and action plan address all of the major thematic areas and cross-cutting issues of the Convention relevant to your country and national priorities? (See list A). List here any major issues not covered, and briefly explain why each issue is not considered in existing national biodiversity strategies and action plans;

(c) Does the most recent version of your available biodiversity strategy and action plan include national targets and indicators? Are these consistent with the framework for monitoring implementation of the Convention and achievement of the 2010 target? Please append a list of these.

NB. Parties can refer to their third national reports if they have already provided information on NBSAP targets and indicators, and are asked only to give updates here if new targets/indicators have been developed since the report was completed.

Part 2. Development of national biodiversity strategies and action plans

In this section, you are asked to provide a brief description of the methodology followed in developing (and, if applicable, in updating) the above biodiversity strategies and action plans.

Your response can be in the form of a narrative answer.

Please include in your answer information on:

- Which institution(s) took the lead in preparing the NBSAP;
- Whether, and which, guidelines were used;
- Whether, and how, different sectors and stakeholders (including local and indigenous communities) were involved in the process;
- Whether, and what, financial or technical support was received;
- The principal advantages and limitations of the methodology followed.
- Timelines and financing issues.

Appendices:

If your country has developed its own guidelines for developing and/or updating national biodiversity strategies and action plans, or has prepared reports on the NBSAP process, please append these to your report.

Please append a list of groups that were involved in the preparation of the national biodiversity strategy and action plan, including an indication of the type of group (NGO, government, private sector, etc.) and the extent of their involvement.

NB. If this information is already available (e.g., in the NBSAP itself, or in an accompanying report) please simply refer to those documents.

Part 3. Evaluation of implementation

In this section, Parties are asked to review progress made in implementation, based on the framework provided by their own national biodiversity strategy and action plan. Progress should be considered in terms of concrete outcomes, with Parties asking, for each element identified under their national biodiversity strategy and action plan: To what degree has implementation helped to achieve national biodiversity priorities?

Options for demonstrating concrete outcomes include, but are not limited to:

- Using the global framework indicators adopted by decision VII/30;
- Using indicators developed nationally, as called for in decision VII/8
- Citing specific legislation, regulations or national strategies developed in response to specific elements.

Parties should pay particular attention to identifying obstacles or challenges encountered in implementation, as this forms the basis for completing part 5 of the report.

Although Parties are free to structure their report as they see fit, one option is to present information on progress in implementation in a table, such as follows:

Element	Status of Implementation	Outcome	Obstacles
…			
…			

where:

"Elements" might correspond to specific goals or targets, objectives, activities or other organizational category, depending on the structure of the national biodiversity strategy and action plan under review.

"Status of implementation" provides information on the extent to which the element has been implemented. Parties may wish to use process indicators to measure state of implementation, such as whether a budget line exists for this element, staff have been assigned, etc.

"Outcome" corresponds, wherever possible, to concrete evidence of progress, as explained above.

"Obstacles" include challenges specific (though not necessarily unique) to this element. Obstacles might include, but not be limited to, those identified in the Strategic Plan (presented in List B).

Part 4. Integration of biodiversity concerns

Parties are asked to review whether biodiversity concerns are being effectively integrated into relevant sectors. Integration can be considered in terms of:

- Other sectors besides the environment, such as agriculture, forestry, fisheries, mining, finance, trade and industry;
- Other national and sub-national programmes and strategies, including Poverty Reduction Strategy Papers, national reports on implementation of the Millennium Development Goals, National Development Plans, National Plans to Combat Desertification, and others;
- Other convention processes besides the Convention on Biological Diversity, such as the four other biodiversity-related conventions (CITES, CMS, Ramsar, WHC), the Rio conventions (UNCCD, UNFCCC) and others.

As in reviewing implementation, progress made in integration should be considered in terms of concrete outcomes for achieving the priorities of the national biodiversity strategy and action plan. (See part 3 for some ideas of how to measure outcomes).

Although Parties are free to structure their report as they see fit, one option is to present information on the integration of biodiversity in a table, such as follows:

Sectoral Plan, Programme or Policy	Manner in which biodiversity is integrated	Outcome	Obstacles
…			

Part 5. Ways and means

Success stories and lessons learned

Parties are invited to share any success stories and lessons learnt in overcoming obstacles to the development, implementation, cross-sectoral integration, evaluation and/or update of their national biodiversity strategies and action plans, specifically for the information of other Parties and of the Conference of the Parties as it seeks to update guidance on these processes.

Specific mention of factors that facilitated NBSAP processes would be particularly useful. For example,

- Technical or financial support received
- Political mandates and national priorities
- Facilitating legal frameworks
- Engagement of civil society and the private sector.

Parties may also wish to comment on whether the framework for monitoring implementation of the Convention and achievement of the 2010 target was useful in developing national biodiversity strategies and action plans and in prioritizing appropriate actions for implementation.

Needs for further support

In light of the review process (reported on in Parts 3 and 4), Parties are asked to consider what resources they would need in order to overcome obstacles to implementation of NBSAPs, and obstacles to the integration of biodiversity concerns into other sectors. These needs might include, but need not be limited to, technical support from developed countries.

Please be specific in your response, and prioritize those needs that will make the greatest difference to implementation and integration.

List A

MAJOR THEMATIC AREAS AND CROSS-CUTTING ISSUES UNDER THE CONVENTION ON BIOLOGICAL DIVERSITY

Thematic areas	
Agricultural biodiversity	Island biodiversity
Dry and sub-humid lands biodiversity	Marine and coastal biodiversity
Forest biodiversity	Mountain biodiversity
Inland waters biodiversity	
Cross-cutting issues	
Access to genetic resources and benefit-sharing	Impact assessments
Invasive alien species	Indicators
Biological diversity and tourism	Liability and redress – Article 14(2)
Climate change and biological diversity	Protected areas
Economics, trade and incentive measures	Public education and awareness
Ecosystem approach	Sustainable use of biodiversity
Global Strategy for Plant Conservation	Technology transfer and cooperation
2010 Biodiversity Target	Traditional knowledge, innovations and practices
Global Taxonomy Initiative	

List B

OBSTACLES TO THE IMPLEMENTATION OF THE CONVENTION ON BIOLOGICAL DIVERSITY

(Reproduced from the appendix to the Strategic Plan, decision VI/26, annex)

1. Political/societal obstacles
    a. Lack of political will and support to implement the Convention on Biological Diversity
    b. Limited public participation and stakeholder involvement
    c. Lack of mainstreaming and integration of biodiversity issues into other sectors, including use of tools such as environmental impact assessments
    d. Political instability
    e. Lack of precautionary and proactive measures, causing reactive policies.
2. Institutional, technical and capacity-related obstacles
    a. Inadequate capacity to act, caused by institutional weaknesses
    b. Lack of human resources
    c. Lack of transfer of technology and expertise
    d. Loss of traditional knowledge
    e. Lack of adequate scientific research capacities to support all the objectives.
3. Lack of accessible knowledge/information
    a. Loss of biodiversity and the corresponding goods and services it provides not properly understood and documented
    b. Existing scientific and traditional knowledge not fully utilized.
    c. Dissemination of information on international and national level not efficient
    d. Lack of public education and awareness at all levels.
4. Economic policy and financial resources
    a. Lack of financial and human resources
    b. Fragmentation of GEF financing
    c. Lack of economic incentive measures
    d. Lack of benefit-sharing.
5. Collaboration/cooperation
    a. Lack of synergies at the national and international levels
    b. Lack of horizontal cooperation among stakeholders
    c. Lack of effective partnerships
    d. Lack of engagement of scientific community.
6. Legal/juridical impediments
    a. Lack of appropriate policies and laws
7. Socio-economic factors
    a. Poverty
    b. Population pressure
    c. Unsustainable consumption and production patterns
    d. Lack of capacities for local communities.
8. Natural phenomena and environmental change
    a. Climate change
    b. Natural disasters.