



Sectoral and Inter-sectoral Integration of Biodiversity in Rwanda

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1. Introduction

Rwanda¹ (2009) reported that biodiversity mainstreaming in Rwanda is part of the general effort of mainstreaming environment in different sectors of development. It provides a general overview of Rwanda's efforts to integrate biodiversity conservation and sustainable use into relevant sectoral and cross - sectoral plans, programmes and policies as required by Article 6 (b) of the Convention. The report first gives information related to the integration of biodiversity into other sectors besides the environment, such as agriculture, education, health, rural development, forestry, mining, tourism, finance, trade and industry. Then it gives information on efforts made to mainstream biodiversity into national strategies and programmes such as the Economic Development and Poverty Reduction Strategy, as well as information related to the efforts made in the synergetic implementation of other environmental conventions.

2. Mainstreaming of biodiversity in other sectors

The overall objective of the Rwanda's Environment Policy is the improvement of man's well - being, the judicious utilization of natural resources and the protection and rational management of ecosystems for sustainable and fair development. Rwanda recognizes that some of development actions have some inherent competing nature with the environment. These include: agriculture and animal husbandry, industry - trade and tourism, energy and mining, infrastructure (transport), human settlement and sanitation, water, etc. It is in this regards, that the need to integrate environment in these sectors was recognized as primordial in the national efforts to sustainable development. Efforts to integrate biodiversity issues in other sectors than environment have been done as a part of a government effort to mainstream environment into different sectors, in the framework of implementation of the national environmental policy.

The integration of environment in different sectors was done using different mechanisms, including,

- An active participation in the development of different sectoral policies, drafting of laws, orders, administrative measures, regulations and
- Awareness raising and capacity building programs through training (short and long terms) in environmental management for REMA's staff and other institutions, trainings and equipment of District environment officers, media campaigns, consultative meetings with different stakeholders,
- Specific demonstration projects mainly implemented by local government in collaboration with the Private sector, CBOs, NGOs, TIG, HIMO, Women and Youth Councils, Schools environmental clubs,

¹ Rwanda (2009). Forth National Report to the Convention on Biological Diversity, Rwanda Environment Management Authority, Ministry of Natural Resources, Kigali, May 2009, 90 pp.

3. Agriculture, Livestock and Fisheries

Environment mainstreaming strategies and actions

Objective: Promote environment friendly agropastoral and fishing methods and techniques :

- Development of environment friendly agricultural production systems.
- Enhancement of livestock stabling practice to reduce risks of overgrazing and ensure that animal breeding does not exceed the capacity of grazing land;
- Regulation and improvement of fishing techniques and methods with consideration to biodiversity and water resource management

Achievements

- Integration of environmental concerns in the development of the National Agriculture Policy in 2004.
- Development of guidelines for mainstreaming environment for the agriculture sector in EDPRS (checklist for agriculture activities).
- Restoration of Rugezi wetland through an integrated watershed management approach.
- Soil conservation programs by the promotion of radical terracing and afforestation.

4. Trade, Industry and Tourism

Environment mainstreaming strategies and actions

Objective: Integration of environmental aspects in commercial and industrial activities and promote environment friendly tourism

- Regulation of location and management of industrial and market sites
- Promotion of use of biodegradable packing materials and the recycling of wastes
- Promotion of less polluting technologies and efficient waste treatment systems
- Promotion of ecotourism

Achievements

- Development and refinement of legal and regulatory framework, which includes the preparation of orders and administrative measures related to trade and industries
- Development of guidelines for mainstreaming environment for the trade and industry sector in EDPRS (checklist for Commerce and Industry activities).

- Awareness raising through workshops, trainings, and consultative meetings with trade and industry operators
- Publication of research studies showing the impact of industrial activities on environment
- Ban of plastic bags
- Establishment of Rwanda Cleaner Production Center

5. Energy and mining

Environment mainstreaming strategies and actions

Objective: To increase energy supply while minimizing the negative impact on environment and ensure compliance with the environmental dimension in mining and quarrying activities.

- Promotion of alternatives to the use of biomass in domestic and industries
- Regulation the exploitation of mineral resources in order to protect environment
- Achievements
- Integration of environmental concerns into the National Energy Policy.
- Development of guidelines for mainstreaming environment for the energy sector in EDPRS (checklist for energy).
- Development and refinement of legal and regulatory framework, which includes the preparation of orders and administrative measures related to mining sector
- Promotion of energy saving stoves
- Promotion of “briquettes” from household wastes as alternatives to charcoal.
- Promotion of biogas plants in: secondary schools, prisons and households and solar energy

6. Infrastructure and transport

Environment mainstreaming strategies and actions

Objective: To ensure compliance with environment in all infrastructure activities

- To ensure that the environmental impact assessment is conducted before embarking on any infrastructural activity
- Regulation of the infrastructure and transport sector taking into account environment

Achievements

- Development of guidelines for mainstreaming environment for the infrastructure sector in EDPRS (checklist for infrastructure).
- Development and refinement of legal and regulatory framework, which includes the preparation of orders and administrative measures related to infrastructure activities.
- Awareness raising through workshops, trainings, and consultative meetings

7. Human settlement and sanitation

Environment mainstreaming strategies and actions

Objective: To include human settlement and sanitation at the centre of environmental issues.

- Establishment of standards and regulation related to waste management ;
- Promotion of organized settlement schemes in urban and rural areas for a rational use of the land.

Achievements

- Integration of environmental concerns into the National Settlement Policy.
- Development and refinement of legal and regulatory framework, which includes the preparation of orders and administrative measures related to sanitation.
- National hygiene and sanitation strategy
- Development of guidelines for mainstreaming environment for the sanitation and health sectors in EDPRS (checklist for water and sanitation, checklist for health).
- Promotion of modern and efficient technologies for waste water treatment for building.

8. Water

Environment mainstreaming strategies and actions

Objective: To ensure that water is used in the various economic and social sectors without endangering environment.

- Take appropriate measures to maintain the balance of hydroecological processes;
- Establishment of a monitoring system for natural water resources (vegetation - forest - marshes cover) as part of environmental monitoring;
- ensure that development projects include prior assessment of environmental impact which will highlight the costs and benefits of the protection of watershed and other underlying ecosystems;

Achievements

- Integration of environmental concerns into the National Water Policy.
- Development of guidelines for mainstreaming environment for the water sector in EDPRS (checklist for water and sanitation).
- Promotion of water harvesting technologies
- Protection of river banks, lakes shores and their watershed through the promotion of integrated watershed management approach.

9. Environment mainstreaming in the Economic Development and Poverty Reduction Strategy (2008-2012)(PRSPII) and United Nations Development Assistance Framework (UNDAF)

REMA with support of a UNDP UNEP project (Poverty and Environment Initiative) advocated successfully in the inclusion of environment in the Economic Development and Poverty Reduction Strategy (2008 - 2012) (PRSPII). This was done through the following:

- Research aimed at generating evidence based advocacy tools (Economic Analysis of the Cost of Environmental Degradation and Pilot Integrated Ecosystem Assessment)
- Media strategy through radio programmes on environmental issues,
- Support to different sectors in EDPRS by developing guidelines to support sectors and monitoring and evaluation tools (Key performance Indicators and Poverty and Environment Indicators).

The result of this support include

- Environment is considered as a sector and as a cross - cutting issue in the EDPRS
- Environmental Sector guidelines prepared have been used to guide log frame development to integrate environmental issues
- Environment features among five areas selected under United Nations Development Assistance Framework (UNDAF) as Rwanda is among the 8 One - UN pilot countries.

Biodiversity in the Rwanda's EDPRS (2008-2012)

- Protected Areas (PA) and Wetlands have been identified for protection as one of the major contributors to national revenue. Therefore Rwanda plans to increase the proportion of Protected areas by 2% in 2012

- Five critically degraded ecosystems (Gishwati, Mukura, Rugezi, Kamiranzovu, Nyabarongo – Akagera network) are planned for rehabilitation for their biodiversity value.
- Rwanda plans to increase forest and agro - forest from 20% to 23% in the EDPRS period and to reduce by 30 % the annual wood consumption.
- Soil erosion and soil fertility decline will be reduced by 24%.

10. Environment mainstreaming in the Sector Strategic Plans and Districts Development Plans

The implementation of the EDPRS has a function – based dimension via sector strategic plans and an area - based dimension via District Development Plans. Sector Strategic Plans elaborate EDPRS objectives and strategies in more details while District Development Plans draw from the EDPRS and the Sector Strategic Plans in order to balance these national priorities with local needs identified at District levels. Both Sector strategic plans and Districts Development Plans have a five year time horizon.

Environmental mainstreaming in Sector Strategic Plans was done through the training of planning officers in environmental mainstreaming and participation in the development process of Districts Development Plans. Environmental mainstreaming in Districts Development Plans was done through the development of guidelines to assist the integration of environment, training of District planning and environmental officers in environmental mainstreaming and support in the development process of Districts Development Plans (REMA, 2009)

11. Biodiversity mainstreaming into other related convention processes

Through a UNEP pilot initiative, under a project “Capacity building to Alleviate Poverty through Synergetic Implementation of Rio - Multilateral Environment Agreements” , the Government of Rwanda, through REMA initiated a process of enhancing synergies in the implementation of the Rio convention.

In this regards,

- a national convention coordination unit have been established, this committee is comprised among other with national focal points for different multilateral environmental agreements
- a national integrated implementation plan and a national integrated reporting system on the three Rio Conventions have been developed, and
- capacity building programs for the harmonisation of activities related to the implementation of the Rio conventions and other conventions have been undertaken.

Apart the synergetic implementation of the Rio Convention, a collaborative mechanism has been established in the implementation of biodiversity related conventions such as Ramsar Convention on Wetlands and CITES convention. Examples of such close collaboration include

- The focal points of CBD and Ramsar have been designated as members of a technical group in charge of the development of a national regulation for wetlands management.
- The focal points of CBD and Ramsar are members of the regional working group on wetlands and biodiversity under the Nile Basin Initiative.
- The focal points of CBD and CITES are members of a technical group in charge of the development of the wildlife policy and act, and the development of biodiversity policy and act.