

UNEP-WCMC response to CBD Notification 2013-005: Identification of scientific and technical needs related to the implementation of the Strategic Plan for Biodiversity 2011-2020 and its Aichi Targets

15 March 2013

A. Policy support tools and methodologies developed or used under the Convention and their adequacy, impact and obstacles to their uptake, as well as gaps and needs for further development of such tools and methodologies

UNEP-WCMC would like to highlight the following policy support tools, which have not been developed by the Convention (although in some cases in collaboration with the CBD) but relate to issues under the Convention and support the implementation of the Strategic Plan for Biodiversity 2011-2020. They are also highlighted in the report on the implementation of the jointly agreed programme of work between the Secretariat of the CBD and UNEP-WCMC for 2010-2012.

1. National biodiversity indicators

A key component of the work of the Biodiversity Indicators Partnership (BIP) is supporting the development and use of indicators at the regional and national level ('BIP National'). The BIP and its Partners, including UNEP-WCMC, reviewed regional and national uptake of the indicator framework for the Strategic Plan 2002-2010. This review utilised a range of mechanisms to identify national biodiversity indicators and establish how they mapped against the previous Strategic Plan framework. The review entitled '*National Indicators, Monitoring and Reporting for the Strategic Plan for Biodiversity 2011-2020*', was conducted to support the AHTEG on Indicators for the Strategic Plan for Biodiversity 2011-2020. The BIP has participated in a number of the CBD regional and sub-regional capacity-development workshops on implementing NBSAPs, to provide technical support on the use of indicators as part of the NBSAP updating process. In addition, four regional workshops specifically to support indicator capacity strengthening for updated NBSAPs have been delivered in 2011 and 2012: in Uganda for Eastern Africa, Vietnam for ASEAN countries, Sri Lanka for South Asia and Peru for South America. Currently, the BIP envisages a significant expansion in national capacity-strengthening for the development and use of biodiversity/ ecosystem service indicators as part of NBSAP updating and implementation. The need to closely align with the CBD support to NBSAP updating and reviewing has been recognised and addressed. For more information see <http://www.bipnational.net/>.

2. A tool for biodiversity mainstreaming

The International Institute for Environment and Development (IIED) and UNEP-WCMC are implementing a project, funded by the Darwin Initiative of the United

Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland, with co-funding from UK Aid, focusing on mainstreaming poverty issues into second generation NBSAPs. This project is being carried out in collaboration with the CBD Secretariat and the UNDP-UNEP Poverty Environment Initiative. Focusing on Botswana, Malawi, Uganda, Namibia and the Seychelles, the project is intended to build African leadership in biodiversity mainstreaming through capacity building, tools development, technical support and peer-to-peer review. A key output of the project, launched at CBD COP 11 in October 2012, is “*Biodiversity Mainstreaming – Integrating Biodiversity, Development and Poverty Reduction – A Rapid Diagnostic Tool*”. The tool sets out a framework of issues and questions that can be used to: i) understand what progress has been made to mainstream biodiversity to date; ii) map and analyse the mainstreaming approaches that have been adopted; iii) assess how institutional structures and procedures support or inhibit biodiversity mainstreaming; iv) examine performance — internally (within the institution) and ‘on-the-ground’ (in terms of outcomes and impacts); and v) identify areas for change and improvement. More information is available at <http://povertyandconservation.info/en/pages/pclg-nbsaps>.

3. Policy support tools related to REDD+ and multiple benefits

The UN-REDD Programme supports countries to develop capacity to reduce emissions from deforestation and forest degradation, and undertake sustainable management of forest, conservation of forest carbon stocks and enhancement of forest carbon stocks (the five ‘activities’ of REDD+ as agreed under the UNFCCC). It is active in 46 partner countries spanning Africa, Asia-Pacific and Latin America & the Caribbean. UNEP-WCMC offers support to countries under the UN-REDD Programme to ensure that their plans for REDD+ take account of the potential risks and opportunities for biodiversity and ecosystem services. This involves working directly with countries to enhance capacity on REDD+ safeguards, to understand, map, and value multiple benefits and on monitoring the potential impacts of REDD+ on biodiversity and ecosystem services. It also involves global-scale work in collaboration with the broader UN-REDD team on safeguards; on decision-support tools and analyses, and through providing fora for raising awareness and sharing experiences. See: <http://www.un-redd.org/tabid/1016/Default.aspx>.

UNEP-WCMC has also undertaken similar capacity building and mapping work with additional countries, funded by the German government. UNEP-WCMC is currently engaged in the German-funded REDD-PAC scenarios project led by IIASA, which includes further mapping work in up to seven further countries, plus the Congo basin. See: www.carbon-biodiversity.net/OtherScales.

Together with FAO, UNEP-WCMC manages the Voluntary REDD+ Database on behalf of the REDD+ Partnership. The Voluntary REDD+ Database (VRD) provides information on REDD+ financing, actions and results that has been reported to the REDD+ Partnership. It aims to improve effectiveness, efficiency, transparency and coordination of REDD+ initiatives, and to support efforts to identify and analyze gaps

and overlaps in REDD+ financing. The Database relies solely on data voluntarily submitted by countries and institutions. There is an online query interface with statistics, maps and graphs: see <http://reddplusdatabase.org/>.

4. Ecosystem-based approaches for adaptation

The concept of ecosystem-based approaches for adaptation (EbA) refers to the use of biodiversity and ecosystems to help people adapt to the adverse effects of climate change, including through sustainable management, conservation and restoration of ecosystems, as part of an overall adaptation strategy. This is a key focus of UNEP-WCMC's work on climate change adaptation and biodiversity. Other related areas of work include links between community-based adaptation and biodiversity, and between mitigation and adaptation. A new, systematic review of the state of the evidence-base for EbA effectiveness has been carried out to highlight the knowledge gaps. This research was undertaken as collaboration between BirdLife International, UNEP-WCMC, IIED and the University of Cambridge. The review concludes that the evidence-base suggests that EbA/EbA-relevant interventions can be effective and deserve greater policy attention and political support to reach their full potential. For more information see http://www.unep-wcmc.org/does-eba-work-a-review-of-the-evidence-on-the-effectiveness-of-ecosystem-based-approaches-to-adaptation_764.html. This complements a review of good practice examples of ecosystem-based approaches to climate change mitigation and adaptation in Europe (<http://www.unep-wcmc.org/medialibrary/2012/08/01/397177f9/BfN%20EbAreport.pdf>).

The project *Ecosystem Based Adaptation in Mountain Ecosystems* is a collaborative project between UNEP, UNDP and IUCN in Nepal, Peru and Uganda, funded by the German Federal Ministry for the Environment, Nature Conservation and Nuclear Safety. UNEP-WCMC's support to the project has included a systematic literature review on ecosystem resilience to climate change, developing climate change vulnerability assessment guidance that considers ecosystem resilience, and hosting a workshop on mapping vulnerability to climate change and the potential for EbA. How to monitor and evaluate EbA practice will also be explored. For more information see <http://www.ebaflagship.org/ecosystems/mountains>.

B. Adequacy of observations, and of data systems, for monitoring the biodiversity attributes addressed in the Aichi Biodiversity Targets

We would like to address the third question asked under this item in the Annex to the notification: “*What are the opportunities to make enhancements in the following areas: (i) in situ observations, (ii) remote sensing information, (iii) data management, (iv) data analysis and (v) preparation of decision support tools (e.g. indicators)?*”

Data analysis

Least developed countries and small island development states have stressed that **data and information management at the national level** needs to be done in a way that serves the reporting and implementation requirements of all relevant multilateral environmental agreements. This is one of the key outcomes of the 2010-2013 UNEP/GEF project *Piloting Integrated Processes and Approaches to Facilitate National Reporting to Rio Conventions* (FNR_Rio), for which UNEP-WCMC provides the Executing Agency. The project aims to i) develop integrated approaches to data collection/analysis and information management of relevance to the three Rio Conventions at the national level; ii) increase synergies in the process of reporting to the three conventions without compromising relevant COP decisions; and iii) contribute to improved overall planning and decision-making processes at the country level related to the implementation of the three conventions. During the project implementation the significance of adequate management of data and information for reporting to and implementing the Rio Conventions has been stressed by all six pilot countries (least developed countries and small island development states: Afghanistan, Eritrea, Lao PDR, Liberia, Mauritius and Palau). The countries have developed recommendations and plans for organising their environmental data in a way that makes them accessible and available to the national focal points for preparing the national reports to, and for wider implementation of, the Rio Conventions, for example through the establishment of one central environmental information system. Information on the project is available at http://www.unep-wcmc.org/integrated-reporting-to-the-rio-conventions_675.html.

A key issue of concern is that there are **barriers to accessing existing data, information and knowledge**, and a need to remove these barriers so as to ensure effective use of this data, information and knowledge. At the request of the Executive Secretary, and working closely with the Global Biodiversity Information Facility and others involved in promoting the Conservation Commons, UNEP-WCMC prepared an information document for COP 11 that reviewed barriers to the sharing of biodiversity data, information and knowledge, and made recommendations on how these barriers might be eliminated. In paragraph 13 of decision XI/2, the COP noted the recommendations, and called upon Parties and other stakeholders to consider how they can most effectively address the barriers to data access under their direct control. SBSTTA was requested to develop further guidance on this, and UNEP-WCMC will work with the CBD Secretariat to support SBSTTA in developing that guidance. It is also worth noting that during the negotiations on establishment of the Intergovernmental Science-Policy Platform on Biodiversity and Ecosystem Services, a number of Governments have highlighted access to data, information and knowledge as a key capacity building need.

Preparation of decision support tools (e.g. indicators)

See also above and below on the work of the Biodiversity Indicators Partnership at national and global scale.

As part of a wider agenda for developing and operationalising ecosystem indicators, UNEP-WCMC works with the Council for Scientific and Industrial Research (CSIR, South Africa) on a project that aims to enhance the development, utility and uptake of **indicators and approaches for assessing the wider consequences of changes in ecosystem services** and their implications for society, human well-being and poverty alleviation, at sub-global scales. The project has found that a set of indicators which measure the social and ecological attributes of ecosystem services (e.g. water supply and water access), the bundle of ecosystem services provided by the ecosystem (e.g. water and food production), the management of the ecosystem (e.g. water allocation process) and the human well-being dimensions of relevance (e.g. health, material needs) are all necessary to be able to measure progress to Aichi Target 14. The project has led to a newly established network called the Southern African Program on Ecosystem Change and Society – a component of the ICSU Program on Ecosystem Change and Society. This network currently includes 30 scientists and practitioners working in the area of ecosystem services. The project has engaged with the IPBES and its associated work programmes, especially around the development of a conceptual framework for IPBES into which ideas from this project can be drawn. See http://www.unep-wcmc.org/ecosystem-services--assessment_83.html for more information.

C. Scientific and technical needs related to the implementation of the Strategic Plan for Biodiversity 2011-2020 and its Aichi Biodiversity Targets

We would like to address two of the questions from the Annex to the notification, by highlighting two relevant partnerships and two capacity-building support initiatives (the latter two are already referred to in section A above):

- 1. What global initiatives and partnerships are available to support implementation of the Strategic Plan? What are the gaps?*

The **Biodiversity Indicators Partnership** (BIP) is the global initiative to promote and coordinate development and delivery of biodiversity indicators in support of the CBD, other multilateral environmental agreements, IPBES, national and regional governments and a range of other sectors. The Partnership brings together over forty organizations working internationally on indicator development to provide the most comprehensive information on biodiversity trends. The BIP works closely with the CBD Secretariat on the development and implementation of the framework of targets and indicators for the Strategic Plan for Biodiversity 2011-2020. The Partnership also provides support to Parties for the development and use of indicators at the national level, in the framework of the updating and reviewing of NBSAPs. See <http://www.bipindicators.net/> for more information.

The **NBSAP Forum** is a community of practice that offers countries support in transforming and implementing their National Biodiversity Strategies and Action

Plans. The Forum aims to provide easy-to-access, targeted information such as best practices, guidelines and learning tools. It also enables diverse actors to come together, online and in person, to share knowledge, experiences and resources. The Forum, launched at CBD COP 11, is a partnership between the CBD secretariat, UNEP (including UNEP-WCMC), UNDP, governments, NGOs and others, all working to reverse the loss of biodiversity by 2020 and to achieve the Aichi Targets (see <http://nbsapforum.net/>).

The **Sub-Global Assessment (SGA) Network** seeks to create a common platform for practitioners involved in ecosystem assessment at regional, sub-regional, national and sub-national levels. With a Secretariat provided by UNEP-WCMC with The Cropper Foundation, the intention is to promote and facilitate improved capacity in undertaking and using assessments. Achievements of the SGA Network will support relevant global processes such as the Intergovernmental Science-Policy Platform on Biodiversity and Ecosystem Services (IPBES) and the multilateral environmental agreements. The Sub-Global Assessment Network has developed as a result of the global Millennium Ecosystem Assessment (MA). Since the MA many other ecosystem assessments have been conducted at various scales; some building on the methodology of the MA such as the UK National Ecosystem Assessment. For more details see www.ecosystemassessments.net and <http://uknea.unep-wcmc.org/>.

The **Global Island Partnership (GLISPA)** assists islands in addressing one of the world's greatest challenges — to conserve and sustainably utilize invaluable island natural resources that support people, cultures and livelihoods in their island homes around the world. It is a partnership for all islands, regardless of size or political status, to take bold steps towards greater sustainability. It provides a global platform that enables islands to work together to develop solutions to common problems and to take high-level commitments and actions that address these global challenges. GLISPA is a mechanism for enhancing the implementation of the CBD Programme of Work on Island Biodiversity and the island-related aspects of the Strategic Plan for Biodiversity 2011-2020 and the Aichi Targets. UNEP-WCMC has been represented on the GLISPA Steering Committee and has worked with GLISPA partners on the development of the Global Island Database. See <http://glispa.org/> and http://www.unep-wcmc.org/global-islands-database_534.html for more information.

2. What capacity building support is provided by the CBD Secretariat and partners for implementing the Strategic Plan? What are the gaps?

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indicators and establish how they mapped against the previous Strategic Plan framework. The review entitled ‘*National Indicators, Monitoring and Reporting for the Strategic Plan for Biodiversity 2011-2020*’, was conducted to support the AHTEG on Indicators for the Strategic Plan for Biodiversity 2011-2020. The BIP has participated in a number of the CBD regional and sub-regional capacity-development workshops on implementing NBSAPs, to provide technical support on the use of indicators as part of the NBSAP updating process. In addition, four regional workshops specifically to support indicator capacity strengthening for updated NBSAPs have been delivered in 2011 and 2012: in Uganda for Eastern Africa, Vietnam for ASEAN countries, Sri Lanka for South Asia and Peru for South America. Currently, the BIP envisages a significant expansion in national capacity-strengthening for the development and use of biodiversity/ ecosystem service indicators as part of NBSAP updating and implementation. The need to closely align with the CBD support to NBSAP updating and reviewing has been recognised and addressed. For more information see <http://www.bipnational.net/>.

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