



Convention on Biological Diversity

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SOUTH-SOUTH COOPERATION ON BIODIVERSITY FOR DEVELOPMENT

Third meeting
Incheon City, Republic of Korea, 18-20 May 2011

SUPPORT FOR SOUTH-SOUTH COOPERATION ON BIODIVERSITY FOR DEVELOPMENT

Note from the Executive Secretary

A. The Role of South-South Cooperation in the Convention on Biological Diversity (CBD)

1. South-South cooperation focuses on the exchange of knowledge, best practices, technical support, human resources, trade and policy advice among developing countries. Within the Convention on Biological Diversity (CBD), South-South cooperation has been identified, in decisions IX/25 and X/23, as a key mechanism for scientific and technical cooperation in support of the implementation of the CBD Strategic Plan as a whole, not replacing but complementing North-South exchanges. South-South cooperation supported by developed countries and partners, known as “triangular cooperation”, can lead to increased ownership of projects by developing countries, and facilitates cost-effective and culturally and socially appealing solutions, as noted in by the United Nations General Assembly (A/64/504).

2. Specifically, South-South cooperation can play a unique yet critical role in the implementation of the Convention:

(a) **Preserving more than 70% of the world’s biodiversity as well as supporting development goals:** South-South cooperation on biodiversity aims at enhancing the institutional capacity of the South towards contributing to the global biodiversity targets through enhanced cooperation and exchange. Given that more than 70% of the world’s biodiversity is found within G-77 countries, where trans-boundary management is often needed, and that biological resources are a critical asset to developing countries for their economic development and people’s livelihood, South-South cooperation on biodiversity has a unique dimension of aligning the environmental priorities with development goals;

(b) **Contributing strategically to biodiversity mainstreaming:** Characterized by cooperation and partnership approach, South-South cooperation can cut across themes, issues and sectors and therefore be structurally and organically linked to a number of CBD programmes and mechanisms. The Conference of the Parties to the CBD has recognized connections between South-South cooperation and the Biodiversity Technology Initiative (BTI), the Clearing-house mechanism (CHM), the island biodiversity programme of work, the Biodiversity for Development and Poverty Reduction framework, and many others;

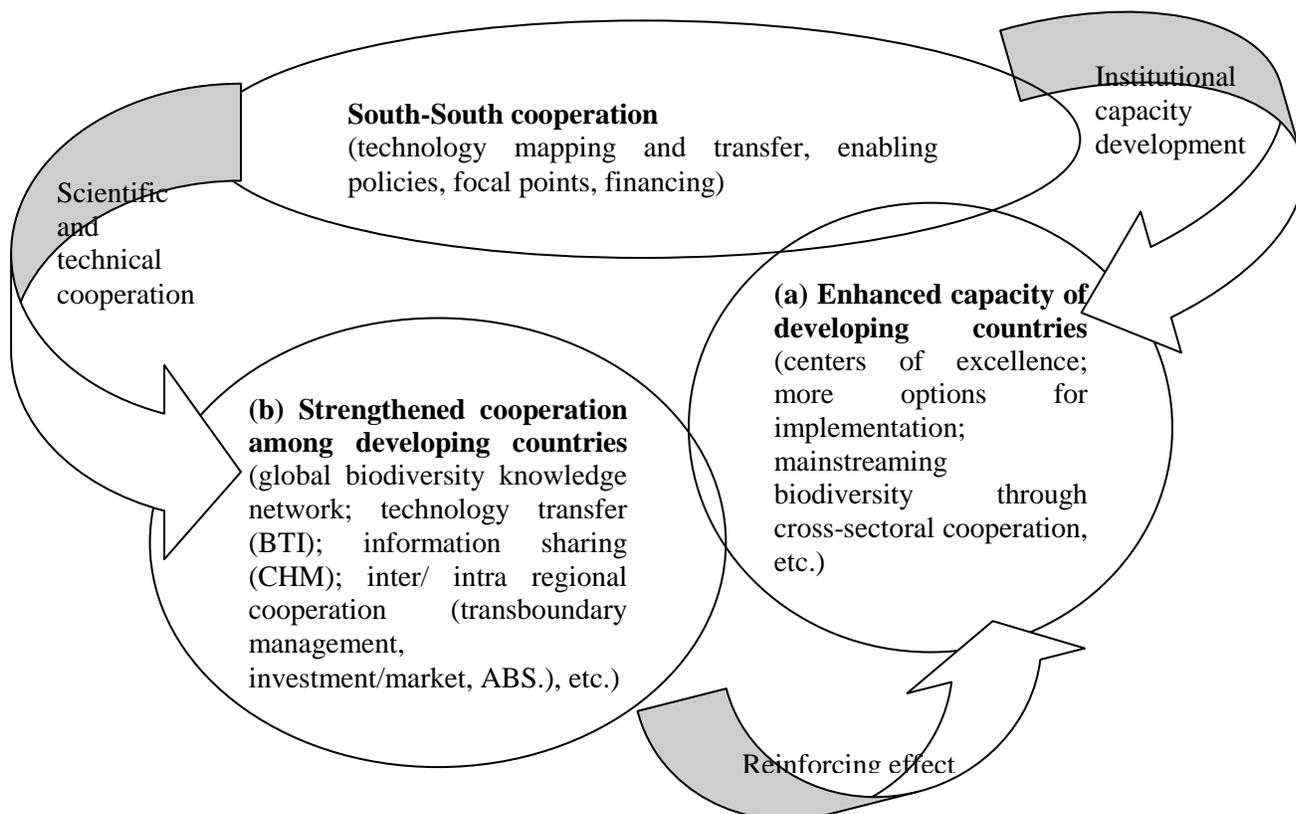
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(c) **Catalyzing expertise of developing countries cost-effectively and efficiently:** Since the launch of the CBD's first Strategic Plan in 2002, less than ten years ago, developing countries (which also harbour the majority of the planet's biodiversity) have accumulated an unprecedented critical mass of biodiversity-related knowledge, experience and achievements in various domains that are of great use in supporting other countries' development efforts. Transferring this experience can be particularly efficient and cost-effective between neighbouring or related countries which share similar environmental, cultural and social circumstances;

(d) **Responding to the need of ratifying the Nagoya Protocol on Access to Genetic Resources and the Fair and Equitable Sharing of Benefits arising from their Utilization:** A new role for South-South cooperation has emerged with the recent adoption of the Nagoya Protocol on ABS. The Protocol is built on an essential foundation of cooperation, partnership and exchange-- providers and users of biological resources (particularly those in developing countries, which will share many of the challenges and experiences) need partnerships to share them fairly and rely on a well-functional exchange mechanism to overcome information barriers and technological disparity for the implementation of the Protocol.

B. Conditions for making South-South cooperation work

3. Successful South-South cooperation requires an enabling environment, in which developing countries can take part in the process for continued development of their own capacity through enhanced cooperation and effective cooperation resulting from a facilitated exchange mechanism and increased capacity. The two aspects of the process reinforce each other and lead to optimal utilization of resources and knowledge in the South for the implementation of the Convention.



4. **Enabling environment for South-South cooperation:** From past experience, South-South cooperation has been most successful in countries where collaborating governments have:

(a) Identified optimal matches between available technology (benchmarking of centres of excellence and best practices) and needs assessed in recipient countries (the significance of the technology or experience to be transferred), ^{1/} It should be noted that in many cases both partners have technologies to exchange (i.e., South-South cooperation is not necessarily a one-way avenue, and centers of excellence also learn in the process of transferring technology); ^{2/}

(b) Put in place explicit policies for South-South cooperation linked with a national development planning process; ^{3/}

(c) Established strong focal points for South-South cooperation for all parties involved, with managerial capacity to support transfers and/or acquisitions, and with the necessary supporting structure; ^{4/}

(d) Earmarked national budgetary allocations or devised means for innovative use of external assistance, including triangular cooperation. ^{5/}

5. Centers of Excellence as cooperation “nodes” for the Plan: Based on the examples of the Biodiversity Clearinghouse Mechanism and the Climate Technology Initiative (which has also inspired the guidance for the Biodiversity Technology Initiative as part of the CBD’s decisions on Technology Transfer), efforts towards an enabling framework for SSC are best aimed at increasing the capacity of institutions in developing countries which, through their knowledge basis and capacity, can be called “Centers of Excellence in South-South cooperation on biodiversity for development”, agencies and organizations that promote collaboration using best practices in implementing the CBD and its Strategic Plan to drive results in five areas:

(a) Support to Parties and their partners, through services needed, compilation of expertise or by providing subject matter experts;

(b) Guidance on standards, methodologies, tools and knowledge repositories;

(c) Shared learning through training and supply of educational opportunities on CBD-related issues, skills and needs assessments, team building, standards and policy design, and a central repository for research and study materials;

(d) Monitoring and evaluation, developing and measuring indicators and monitoring of success criteria to demonstrate they are delivering the valued results that justified their support;

(e) Governance in allocating limited resources to ensure investments in the most valuable projects, creating economies of scale for their service offering.

Public and semi-public institutions that can constitute Centers of Excellence in South-South cooperation are either national agencies that, due to their specialization and experience, also act as regional reference centers (such as SANBI), and regional multilateral agencies with a mandate to support the implementation of the CBD (such as SPREP, ACTO, ASEAN Center for Biodiversity, South Asia Co-operative Environment Programme (SACEP), COMIFAC, and others).

^{1/} *Forging a Global South*, United Nations Day for South-South Cooperation, UNDP, 2005.

^{2/} *Windows on the South* newsletter, UNDP, 2006.

^{3/} “Pivotal Countries, an issue paper”, UNDP/Special Unit for Technical Cooperation among developing Countries, 2003

^{4/} Cooperation South newsletter, UNDP 2006 - Juma, C., Gitta, C., DiSenso, A. and Bruce, A., “Forging new Technology Alliances: the role of South-South Cooperation”.

^{5/} UNDP/Japan Partnership Supporting South-South Cooperation, Innovative Triangular Cooperation towards the Millennium Development Goals, 1999-2004, UNDP, Special Unit for SSC.

6. **A comprehensive framework engaging all stakeholders (The Multi-Year Plan of Action for South-South Cooperation on Biodiversity for Development):** While South-South cooperation has been incorporated into many agreements related to trade, economic, and technological development, general issues relating to environment and specifically to biodiversity have yet to be approached in a comprehensive way in the three Rio Conventions and in the CBD in particular.

In response to this need and to signify the role of biodiversity for development, a *Multi-Year Plan of Action for South-South Cooperation on Biodiversity for Development* has been developed as a result of a consultative process spanning four years (2006-2010)⁶, with initial financial support from the Global Environment Facility (GEF), led by the G-77 and China in collaboration with the Secretariat of the CBD. The CBD COP 10 adopted **decision X/23** welcoming the Multi-Year Plan of Action as adopted by the G-77 and China at the South-South Cooperation Forum held on 17 October 2010, in Nagoya, Japan (UNEP/CBD/COP/10/18/Add.1/Rev.1). In the decision, Parties also provided important guidance to the further development of the Plan, requesting the Working Group on Review of Implementation, at its fourth meeting, to examine and further develop the Plan for consideration at the eleventh meeting of the Conference of the Parties to the Convention on Biological Diversity, taking into account synergies with, among others, a Biodiversity Technology Initiative and a Framework for Capacity-building for the Integration of Biodiversity into Poverty Eradication and Development.

The Plan is recognized as an important contribution to the implementation of the 2011-2020 Strategic Plan of the Convention, and indicative implementation activities have been identified. Parties, other governments, regional and international organizations, UN agencies and NGOs are requested to contribute to the further development of the Plan and to find ways and means for mainstreaming South-South Cooperation into national planning.

7. **Financing:** Although South-South and triangular cooperation projects are often very effective, very few dedicated funding pipelines operate to support capacity building for the institutions in the South and knowledge/ information exchanges among them. Furthermore, given the relatively recent consolidation of centers of expertise, NGOs and consulting networks based in developing countries, agencies based in developed countries often have a “pioneer” advantage through their experience and links in accessing development funds. Even when their skill base and actual know-how is globally relevant, institutions in developing countries may have lower levels of preparedness to access funds related to biodiversity, particularly for their own capacity development and in their ability to transfer capacity at regional level. Overall trends in international cooperation (towards more immediate concrete deliverables) also make it more challenging to build the capacity of institutions in developing countries. In conclusion, support to South-South cooperation on biodiversity for development so far has failed to fully take advantage of its growing demand.

In order to increase the capacity of centers of excellence in the global South to act as regional hubs for technology transfer and technical and scientific cooperation, several financing arrangements can be considered:

(a) Direct multi-and bilateral investments by Parties (as a follow up to paragraph 5 of decision X/23);

(b) Established mechanisms such as the United Nations Trust Fund for South-South Cooperation (UNFSC) and the Perez-Guerrero Trust Fund for Economic and Technical Cooperation among Developing Countries, channelled through the United Nations Development Programme;

(c) Creation of a dedicated trust fund through the Global Environment Facility’s (GEF) to support projects and activities for institutional capacity development and to enable cooperation and exchanges.

⁶ <http://www.cbd.int/cooperation/SouthSouthcooperation.shtml>

C. Resource mobilization for South-South cooperation on biodiversity

8. To fully realize the potential of South-South cooperation as a key mechanism for the implementation of the 2011-2020 Strategic Plan, in accordance with decision X/23, resources will be needed at three levels: support to developing Parties to engage in bilateral and multilateral cooperation, support to the network of Centers of Excellence to act as sub-regional and regional hubs for scientific and technical cooperation, and coordination at the global level (the Secretariat of the CBD, for instance, has no staff assigned permanently to support South-South cooperation). While many bilateral and multilateral agencies currently provide support on South-South cooperation, the GEF, as the primary financial mechanism for the implementation of the three Rio Conventions, is arguably best placed as a reference. To address this challenge, in its decision X/23, the Conference of the Parties invites the Global Environment Facility (GEF) to consider establishing a dedicated South-South biodiversity cooperation multilateral trust fund for the implementation of the 2011-2020 Strategic Plan of the Convention based on voluntary contributions.

9. **Consideration for creation the SSC biodiversity trust fund through the GEF:** The Global Environmental Facility is the largest multilateral funder of projects to improve the global environment and is entrusted as the financial mechanism for the three Rio Conventions (CBD, UNFCCC and UNCCD), The GEF's investment strategy results from negotiations with its 182 member governments in partnership with international institutions, nongovernmental organizations, and the private sector. The GEF has invested at least \$227 million in projects supporting south-south cooperation in biodiversity, leveraging close to \$700 million. These projects serve as a solid platform for future cooperation activities, particularly in the areas of knowledge/information exchange, networking and technology transfer. Forty projects funded by the GEF involving south-south and triangular cooperation had an average of six participating countries. Some prevailing themes were biodiversity information, inventories and knowledge, management effectiveness of protected areas, agro-biodiversity, marine biodiversity, sustainable forest management, REDD+, payment for ecosystem services and invasive alien species.

10. This experience is indicative of a solid and growing demand for this type of activity. On the other hand, as mentioned above, it is also noticed that with the GEF increasingly embracing a results-based framework, the opportunities for the introduction of south-south cooperation components into GEF-funded projects and programs are becoming quite context specific. Furthermore, with the GEF allocating its resources to countries through the STAR system (System for Transparent Allocation of Resources), there are less incentives to address the financing of stand-alone capacity-building initiatives in south-south and triangular cooperation.

11. In conclusion, drawing on 20 years of experience of managing a significant portfolio of related projects, the GEF emerges as the institution with the greatest comparative advantage in hosting a funding window specifically dedicated to a new generation of south-south cooperation projects in biodiversity and development. Because the GEF also funds other focal areas (climate change mitigation and adaptation, land degradation and international waters), it can also make use of important synergies and linkages to foster the emergence of innovative concepts in south-south and triangular cooperation throughout the developing world.

12. The concept of the South-South trust fund is to provide financial support for systematically building institutional capacity of developing countries and regional and national centers of excellence, and for facilitating cooperation and exchange in the long run. The voluntary fund is therefore to be used as a complement to the GEF project-based trust fund, and its creation before COP 11 is critically important for the further development and implementation of the Multi-Year Plan of Action for South-South Cooperation on Biodiversity for Development in synchronization with the implementation of the 2011-2020 Strategic Plan.

13. Indicative areas where financial support is needed, and specific activities and expected outcomes include:

Incorporating South-South cooperation approach across the CBD thematic programme areas for the implementation of Convention. Opportunities and needs for South-South cooperation exist in all the thematic programmes and cross-cutting issues of the CBD. For example, the CBD South-South cooperation has linked up the regional leaders of the Amazon basin, Central African and Southeast Asian-three most important forest basins in the world- to explore inter-regional cooperation for preserving forests and more than 80% of the forest biodiversity of the world housed in these regions.

(a) Activities: (i) promoting scientific cooperation and transboundary ecosystem management in CBD thematic programmes, particularly, agriculture, forests, island biodiversity, water and marine biodiversity; (ii) supporting South-South information exchange on thematic and cross-cutting issues, including ABS, control of invasive alien species, taxonomical issues and others;

(b) Expected outcomes: (i) Enhanced scientific cooperation, transboundary management and information exchange in CBD thematic programmes through South-South cooperation, in response to the need of the developing countries on biodiversity for sustainable development; (ii) a roster of experts from the South with expertise on a range of biodiversity issues that requires significant regional cooperation.

Synergizing South-South cooperation with other relevant CBD programmes and mechanisms, for the further development of the Plan (X/23) and its implementation

(a) Activities: (i) supporting “centers of excellence” in developing countries on biodiversity technology transfer, addressing capacity and institutional gaps, in connection with BTI gap-analysis; (ii) mapping and inventorying of existing South-South cooperation initiatives; (iii) disseminating innovative solutions emerged from South-South cooperation in the Framework for Capacity-building for the Integration of Biodiversity into Poverty Eradication and Development; (iv) building South-South exchange platform to enrich the clearing-house mechanism (CHM); (v) supporting the integration of South-South cooperation in National Biodiversity Strategy and Action Plan (NBSAP) revision and national report.

(b) Expected outcomes: South-South cooperation is incorporated in the relevant CBD programmes and mechanisms in support of the coherent and effective implementation of the Convention.

Facilitating active information exchange and knowledge management

(a) Activities: Supporting a sustainable cooperation mechanism, through linking centers of excellence into a Global Knowledge Network, to support long-term active cooperation and exchange.

(b) Expected outcomes: Linking “centers of excellence” in both developed and developing countries into an active Global Biodiversity Knowledge Network, facilitated by the Secretariat of the CBD/ the G77 and China.

Mainstreaming biodiversity through South-South cooperation. South-South cooperation has been incorporated into many agreements related to trade, economic, and technological development, although issues relating to biodiversity have yet to be approached in a comprehensive way. The existing platforms and partnerships on South-South cooperation provide unique opportunity for engaging other stakeholders across the society to mainstream biodiversity.

(a) Activities: (i) Supporting communication campaign and other approaches for creating entry-point for biodiversity to the existing non-biodiversity South-South cooperation platforms and frameworks; (ii) Supporting the inter-agency coordination on South-South cooperation, to mainstream at

policy level and implementation level; (iii) Supporting business engagement for innovation- translating solutions into economic benefit for developing countries and communities; (iv) Promoting South-South cooperation on biodiversity across the UN system (UN South-South Day, Global South-South Development Expo, etc.); (v) Promoting South-South cooperation on biodiversity in multilateral funding mechanisms (the GEF, World Bank, UNDP) and bilateral development agency policies; (vi) Promoting South-South cooperation on biodiversity in broad scope of sustainable development through exhibitions and events at UNCSD, Rio+20, and other occasions.

(b) Expected outcomes: (i) Biodiversity being mainstreamed in the international development agenda through South-South cooperation; (ii) more stakeholders being engaged in the implementation of the Multi-Year Plan of Action with respective roles and capacities; (iii) more innovative solutions emerged from South-South cooperation on biodiversity for development.

Annex I

IMPORTANT DATES FOR RESOURCE MOBILIZATION (2011-2012)

1. The 3rd South-South cooperation on biodiversity for development expert meeting in Korea (May 18-20, 2011)
2. The 37th GEF Council Meeting in Washington D.C., USA (May, 2011)
3. The 38th GEF Council Meeting in Washington D.C., USA (November 2011)
4. Global South-South Development Expo (UNDP), (November 2011)
5. UN South-South Day for 2011 (December 16, 2011)
6. The First Partnership Forum for South-South and Triangular Cooperation, at the fourth meeting of the Working Group for Review of Implementation (WGRI-4) in May 2012
7. The 2nd Forum on South-South Cooperation on Biodiversity for Development, at CBD COP11, in India, November 2012
8. CBD NBSAP workshops 2011-2012

Annex II

**LIST OF CENTERS OF EXCELLENCE IN DEVELOPING COUNTRIES (TENTATIVE, AS OF
27 APRIL 2011)**

South African National Biodiversity Institute (SANBI, South Africa)

National Commission for the Knowledge and Use of Biodiversity (CONABIO, Mexico)

Brazilian Agricultural Research Corporation (EMBRAPA, Brazil)

Korea National Institute of Biological Resources (NIBR, Korea)

China International Center for Economic and Technical Exchanges (China)

National Biodiversity Authority in Chennai (India)

Iwokrama Rainforest Centre (Guyana)

University of the Western Indies

University of the South Pacific

Caribbean Community Center on Climate Change (BELIZE)

ASEAN Biodiversity Centre

Amazon Cooperation Treaty Organization (ACTO, Brazil)

South Asia Co-operative Environment Programme (SACEP)

Central African Forest Commission (COMIFAC)
