

Sida's work under the Convention on Biological Diversity

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During 1998 the Swedish International Development Cooperation Agency (Sida) developed a paper called "Sida and the Convention on Biological Diversity" which constitutes Sida's strategy for work in the field of biodiversity.

BIODIVERSITY - INTEGRATION

An important point of departure in "Sida and the Convention on Biological Diversity" is the integration of biological diversity into ongoing programmes in bilateral and regional development cooperation. In 1998–2000 a special effort was made to investigate how this integration could be performed. Three case studies were made of ongoing programmes to see how issues concerning biological diversity could be integrated better into development cooperation. In 2000 a study was also initiated of how the TRIPS agreement under the WTO affects developing countries and what implications this has on Sida's development cooperation. The TRIPS agreement concerns intellectual property rights, for example patents, and affects access to plant material and medicines and, in the long run, food security, health and biological diversity.

In Sida's Guidelines for Environmental Impact Assessment in development cooperation, there are questions relating to biological diversity included as an integral part of relevant checklists. The issue of biological diversity is also included as an important component in Sida's environmental training courses. Work is under way to improve the integration of aspects of biological diversity into country strategies. A few years ago a group called the Life Group was formed at Sida to try to bridge different disciplines through which officers working with trade, agriculture, research support, biotechnology contributions, NGO-support, environment policy issues, etc. can meet and discuss. One outcome of this group is a discussion paper called "Can genetically modified crops contribute to alleviating hunger in the world?". Sida is also working on having biological diversity included as part of the EU's ordinary work and is participating actively in the international policy dialogue, particularly where plant genetic resources are concerned, and has also actively participated for example in the EC/IUCN/DFID led Biodiversity in Development Project and in the EC member states' Tropical Biodiversity Adviser Group.

BIODIVERSITY - SUPPORT

According to the strategy "Sida and the Convention on Biological Diversity" Sida shall give priority to support to:

- ◆ work to respect, maintain and develop knowledge on the conservation and sustainable use of biological diversity in local communities and indigenous populations including support for strengthened local control, by both women and men, over the use of biological resources and the fair and equitable sharing of the benefits of biological resources and of the use of local knowledge.

- ◆ conservation and sustainable use of biological diversity in areas which are cultivated by human beings including agriculture, forestry and fisheries. The focus should lie on mechanisms that make it possible to continue to maintain the sustainable use of biological diversity at higher levels of production and on mechanisms which permit the fair and equitable sharing of the benefits of such use of biological diversity.
- ◆ policy research and policy development in respect of access to and the fair and equitable sharing of genetic resources and knowledge of biological diversity. This shall include support for the work of developing mechanisms to ensure that compensation is given to farmers and societies that have developed and managed knowledge and genetic resources which are today utilised commercially, the so-called farmers' rights, in a way which is realistic and practicable. Support should also be given for capacity building in respect of biosafety and for the management of biotechnology.

Support to increase the participation of developing countries on the part of governments, NGOs and other interested parties in the international policy work is emphasised in the strategy.

The estimated cost of contributions directly related to the convention amounted to SEK 250 million (USD 25 million) in 2001. All contributions are not registered in the statistical system Sida has, therefore this is just estimation. It can also be discussed whether or not a contribution shall be registered as contributing to the goals of the convention when a project deals with biodiversity in a general way. Below are some examples of Sida's contributions.

Conservation and sustainable use

General support for conservation and sustainable use of biological diversity was given to: the Global Taxonomy Initiative associated with the Convention on Biological Diversity; research and education on dry areas biodiversity; Ramsar convention for the protection and sustainable use of wetlands; the work of international organisations and NGOs, for example support to International Centre for Living Aquatic Resources (ICLARM), World Wildlife Fund (WWF), the World Conservation Union (IUCN), World Resources Institute (WRI), International Institute for Environment and Development (IIED), Swedish Society for the Nature Conservation's (SSNC) north/south program, Instituto Nacional de Biodiversidad (INBio), Centre for Information on Low External Input and Sustainable Agriculture (ILEIA), among others. Sida also supports activities that contribute to the possibilities for developing countries to implement the biodiversity convention, as for example contributions to environmental authorities. Sida also supports activities at a national level, which contribute to sustainable use of natural resources and biodiversity.

Plant Genetic Resources

During 2001 Sida supported for example: Crucible II, 1994–2001, which takes up and works with scientific and policy development in respect of genetic resources, for example developing alternatives for developing countries prior to the revision of the WTO's agreement on trade-related intellectual property rights concerning the ownership of biological material, access to genetic resources and traditional knowledge; the International Centre for Trade and Sustainable Development (ICTSD) to strengthen their capacity for negotiations for example the revision of

WTO's TRIPS-agreement; FAO for international work on genetic resources, agriculture and food security, for example in relation to the treaty for plant genetic resources and the global action plan for plant genetic resources; a study on the harmonisation of national policies for the management of plant genetic resources in the light of the FAO negotiations on a multilateral agreement for plant genetic resources for agriculture and food and CGIAR's research agenda; international agriculture research through the Consultative Group for International Agriculture Research (CGIAR) for the collection, classification, analysis, refinement and sustainable use of genetic material; gene banks such as the SADC Plant Genetic Resource Centre (SPGRC), which goal is to through conservation of local plant genetic resources contribute to establishing an improved plant breeding and sustainable agriculture in the southern part of Africa; the Community Biodiversity Development and Conservation Programme (CBDC) for their work to strengthen farmers' capacity for conservation and sustainable use of plant genetic resources in situ (in the field); support to the work of other NGOs on sustainable use of genetic resources and work for the equitable sharing of benefits, for example through support via the Swedish Society for Nature Conservation (SSNC), Genetic Resources Action International (GRAIN) and the ETC group, former Rural Advancement Foundation International (RAFI).

Biosafety Protocol

During 2001 Sida supported for example: Bio-Earn working with bio-policy development (bio-technical research cooperation, policy development etc. including capacity building in biosafety issues) in East Africa; African Centre for Technology Studies (ACTS) for biopolicy work incl. biosafety; a regional research meeting in Asia on biopolicy and biosafety issues; and the publication and dissemination of the newspaper "Biotechnology and Development Monitor". Sida also contributes to NGOs working with capacity building, for example a program via GRAIN for capacity building on biosafety issues in Africa and the Third World Network (TWN) for work on establishing national institutes and mechanisms to implement the biosafety protocol.