Resource Mobilization Information Digest N° 223 March 2013

Sectoral and Cross-Sectoral Integration of Biodiversity in Finland

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1. Introduction

Finland reported [1] on governance structure; key means to mainstream biodiversity issues; mainstreaming biodiversity into international co-operation, including EU co-operation and biodiversity, the EC mid-term review and the 2010 target, Green Diplomacy Network (GDN), biodiversity and climate change, the science/policy interface, development co-operation, financial resources, international evaluations of biodiversity in Finland; regional co-operation, such as Finland in Nordic co-operation on biodiversity, co-operation between Finland and Russia on nature conservation, and Arctic co-operation on biodiversity issues.

2. Governance structure

Finland is committed to the objectives of the Convention on Biological Diversity (CBD), which include the conservation and sustainable use of biodiversity, and the fair and equitable sharing of the benefits arising out of the utilization of genetic resources. As a party to the CBD, Finland is committed to promoting the conservation and sustainable use of biodiversity in activities in all sectors of society. Finland is also committed to the more effective implementation of these objectives so as to significantly reduce the rate of loss of biodiversity by 2010 at global, regional and national level.

Finland has promoted the conservation, management and sustainable use of biodiversity for more than a decade on the basis of the principles defined in the CBD. During the years 1996–1997 a National Action Plan for Biodiversity in Finland was drawn up by the National Biodiversity Committee, which brought together representatives of ministries, key business sectors, research institutes, environmental organizations and other stakeholder groups. This plan covered the period 1997–2005, and included 124 measures designed to promote the conservation, management, and sustainable use of biodiversity, to be implemented by 2005. The Action Plan was drafted according to a Government decision-in-principle of 21.12.1995, aiming to promote co-operation between different administrative sectors on the implementation of the CBD.

On 21st December 2006 the Finnish Government made a decision-in-principle on the National Strategy for the Conservation and Sustainable Use of Biodiversity in Finland 2006–2016. This new national biodiversity strategy and action plan (NBSAP) has a timeframe of ten years. Extensive co-operation will be ensured between the ministries and other organizations working for the conservation and sustainable use of biodiversity.

An implementation and monitoring body has been set up and chaired by the Ministry of the Environment to supervise and monitor the implementation of NBSAP 2006–2016. This body is also

[1] Finland (2009). Fourth National Report on the Implementation of the Convention on Biological Diversity in Finland, Ministry of the Environment, 156 pp.

responsible for evaluations of trends in the state of biodiversity in Finland, assessments of the need for revisions to the NBSAP, and the establishment of constructive dialogues between administrative bodies.

3. Key means to mainstream biodiversity issues

The principle of sectoral responsibility has been adopted in the conservation of biodiversity, meaning that each sector takes responsibility for reducing its harmful impacts on the natural environment. Progress towards such responsibility has been made within Finland's national administration, thanks to renewed legislation, developments related to biodiversity, and intensified co-operation between the administrative sectors concerned and other stakeholder groups. Biodiversity considerations have been favourably integrated into new and revised Finnish legislation including the Land Use and Building Act, the Penal Code and the Gene Technology Act and Decree, as well as the Nature Conservation Act, the Forest Act, the Water Act and the Wilderness Act.

Sectoral responsibility for the conservation, management and sustainable use of biodiversity as specified in the First and Second National Biodiversity Strategies and Action Plans has been duly adopted by the various branches of the administration. Stakeholder groups are also committed to maintain biodiversity. In particular, the Ministries of Agriculture and Forestry, the Environment, Transport and Communications, Defense, and Education have developed their activities and planning procedures, and provided training for personnel working within their administrative spheres on issues related to biodiversity.

Key tasks related to biodiversity are conducted under the administrative supervision of the Ministry of the Environment by the Finnish Environment Institute and Finland's 13 regional environment centres. The biodiversity activities of Metsähallitus and the Finnish Forest Research Institute are supervised by both the Ministry of the Environment and the Ministry of Agriculture and Forestry. Tasks related to forestry are conducted under the supervision of the Ministry of Agriculture and Forestry by the regional forestry centres and the Forestry Development Centre Tapio. The Finnish Game and Fisheries Research Institute and Agrifood Research Finland (MTT), both of which work under the supervision of the Ministry of Agriculture and Forestry, today play an increasingly important role in the conservation of biodiversity. Experts from the Game and Fisheries Research Institute are responsible for research and monitoring work related to many threatened species, and the institute runs several important monitoring schemes. The Ministry of Transport and Communications supervises the work of the Finnish Institute of Marine Research, which also closely consults with the Ministry of the Environment whenever research concerns environmental issues such as chemical and biological research or the monitoring of the state of the Baltic Sea.

The Ministry of Education and Culture oversees the work of the Finnish Museum of Natural History, whose services are widely used by the Ministry of the Environment. These two ministries are jointly building up a new administrative system for the museum to strengthen its role as a national centre for biological information. Where international issues related to the conservation of biodiversity are concerned, there is close administrative collaboration particularly between the Ministries of the Environment, Foreign Affairs, Agriculture and Forestry, and Trade and Industry. A project focusing on

the overall productivity of the nature conservation administration in Finland has been initiated as part of the Environment Ministry's own productivity programme, aiming to clarify the main responsibilities of each organization on the basis of their core tasks and processes.

The implementation of the new national biodiversity strategy and action plan (NBSAP) in the public administration is largely a matter of continuing to promote the ongoing favourable trends towards greater sectoral responsibility. The objectives of the conservation and sustainable use of biodiversity will be adopted as key principles in all administrative sectors. This involves the incorporation of these issues into strategic sectoral planning.

Many municipalities have already set good examples by incorporating the conservation and management of biodiversity into their own development processes. The State should encourage and support such efforts, and help to inform local residents and other municipalities about good practices. Non-governmental organizations (NGOs) and other interest groups involved in the national action plan have also significantly promoted the conservation, management and sustainable use of biodiversity.

Through international negotiations and co-operation in the context of the CBD, a set of principles and guidelines has been developed for a model known as the ecosystem approach, which aims to provide a comprehensive overview for the purposes of planning the conservation, management and sustainable use of natural areas and natural resources. The ecosystem approach stresses the importance of preserving in various ways the natural ecological structures and functions of habitats so as to safeguard the beneficial natural values and processes that form the basis for vital ecosystem services. Several features from the ecosystem approach are being implemented in Finland by various sectors (in single-sector-based management). Methods and tools derived from the ecosystem approach are applied for instance in the planning and use of water resources, in the regional planning of forestry in private forests, and in the management of all state-owned forests. However, there is still a need to integrate the principles of the ecosystem approach into a comprehensive and holistic management framework between different sectors (agriculture, fisheries, forestry, water resources, and regional planning related to the management and use of natural resources). During the first phase of this work, concrete examples of this kind of multi-sector-based management must be built up, including pilot projects.

The CBD requires environmental assessments (EA) to be conducted for any projects, programmes and plans likely to entail considerable harmful impacts on biodiversity, so as to avoid or minimise such impacts. In Finland environmental impacts are routinely assessed as an integral part of land use planning, and in assessments carried out in relation to Natura 2000 sites under Section 65 of the Nature Conservation Act, as well as in the EIAs conducted for plans, programmes and individual projects. The ecosystem approach can particularly be applied in EIAs at the level of plans and programmes, where alternatives and wider regions can more easily be assessed.

Public participation and dialogue is important for successful implementation of EIAs. The aim is to give the views of the public more weight in addition to those of the experts. Assessments should pay

attention to the practical benefits that can be obtained from biodiversity, and examine how projects will affect the availability of such benefits to different groups.

Adopting the ecosystem approach, safeguarding ecosystem services, and conducting EIAs are all important ways to ensure that the conservation and sustainable use of biodiversity is considered in all administrative sectors. These processes can also help to clarify the responsibilities of different actors.

Administrators must also collaborate with the scientific community, local authorities, NGOs, the private sector and other stakeholders. The wide-ranging and challenging nature of these tasks necessitates the application of best administrative practices and management methods suited to cross-sectoral co-operation. In this context it is important to build on experiences gained during the recent implementation of strategic developments in government circles such as project portfolios and policy programmes.

Since the year 2000 it has been possible to establish national urban parks to protect and maintain biodiversity together with the cultural or natural landscape values of urban environments.

The concept of National Urban Parks (NUP) as a new instrument for preserving biodiversity in urban environments. The designation of National Urban Parks became possible in Finland when the renewed Land Use and Building Act was passed in 2000, with provisions on the establishment and management of such areas. NUPs have the following goals, according to section 68 of the Land Use and Building Act: "A national urban park may be established to protect and maintain the beauty of the cultural or natural landscape, biodiversity (added in 2009), historical characteristics or related values concerning the townscapes, social, recreational or other special values of an urban environment." Finnish legislation on NUPs has several notable features. Decisions on NUPs are always dependent on initiatives taken by the local authorities, and the NUPs are formed according to plans made by municipalities themselves, though the ultimate decision to establish a national urban park is made by the Ministry of the Environment. After an establishment decision is approved, a management plan is drawn up for the NUP by the local authority in close collaboration with residents and other relevant parties. Management plans must also be approval by the Ministry of the Environment. The identification of potential NUP areas is based on four technical criteria defined by the Ministry of the Environment: 1. Breadth and content, 2. Extent and contiguousness, 3. Ecology and continuity, and 4. Urban centrality. All NUP areas must fulfil all four criteria. Decisions on the establishment of NUPs are preceded by consultative co-operation between the municipality and the Ministry, and a detailed field evaluation.

The development of NUP network forms part of both Finland's national biodiversity strategy and the national Countdown 2010 process. The NUP network aims to complement other national networks of national parks and Natura 2000 sites. So far four national urban parks have been established, in Hangö, Hämeenlinna, Heinola, and Pori. All of these towns are located in Southern Finland, and all the NUPs contain diverse natural areas including Natura 2000 sites, sites protected at national level protected sites and areas included in various national conservation programmes. The NUP of Hangö, established in 2008, includes approximately 6,000 ha of marine and coastal environments in the southernmost part of

Finland. It also combines several smaller protected areas and areas important for the preservation of threatened species, and constitutes an "ecological marine bridge" between the Achipelago Sea Biosphere Reserve and the Ekenäs Archipelago National Park. The NUP Concept seems to be a successful tool to gather protected areas of different kinds under the same land use and management regime, and thus prevent the isolation of protected sites within larger urban environments. In some cases the natural features of Finland's NUPs can be even more diverse than those found in more conventional national parks.

4.. Mainstreaming biodiversity into international co-operation

Supporting the implementation of international environmental agreements is also an integral part of the Finnish government's development co-operation programme. Ecosystem services are a major factor behind almost all of the UN's Millennium Development Goals. Biodiversity thus plays an important role in economic development as a whole, in addition to its importance as a factor in environmentally sustainable development.

A review of the development co-operation carried out by Finland's environmental sector was completed in spring 2006. The guidelines for Finland's development co-operation incorporate the sustainable use of biodiversity as a key factor behind efforts to reduce poverty. The environmental sector's development co-operation work is being improved with the help of objectives and measures related to the conservation, management and sustainable use of biodiversity.

EU co-operation and biodiversity

Austria and Finland, who both held the EU presidency during 2006, prepared a common programme for their consecutive presidencies, with biodiversity as a priority issue.

During the Austrian presidency, Austria and Finland jointly organized a Meeting of European Nature Directors. During the Austrian presidency, Finland supported Austria in the coordination of EU participation in the COP8 meeting in Curitiba, and worked as part of the EU Troika. Finland was also responsible for EU coordination on Biodiversity and Climate Change issues.

Also in 2006, the Commission published the Communication Halting the Loss of Biodiversity by 2010 and Beyond, and an accompanying action plan defining key policy areas and setting out priority objectives for 2007–2013. Finland ensured that the preparation of Council conclusions was included on the agenda of the Presidency. The Council supported the objectives of the communication and endorsed the strengthening of the integration of biodiversity and ecosystem services into relevant policies.

Finland as an EU member has been focusing on how best to take forward the elaboration and negotiation process of the international regime on access and benefit sharing (ABS). In this context, the EU has emphasized that such a regime could be composed of one or more legally binding or non-binding instruments where some elements form an integral part of existing international instruments, institutions and fora, while others are developed as self-standing elements within the framework of the

CBD, in synergy with other relevant international institutions and fora. The negotiations of the ABS regime are due to be concluded by 2010 and the CBD's COP10.

The EC mid-term review and the 2010 target

The Commission has published a mid-term review of the implementation of the Communication on Halting the Loss of Biodiversity by 2010 and Beyond. Based on the findings of the review, the results of reporting under the Habitats and Birds Directives, and the 2010 evaluations, Finland will review its National Biodiversity Strategy and Action Plan for 2006–2016.

In its June 2009 Conclusions, the European Council raised the question of invasive alien species (IAS) and expressed the growing threats and impacts these species are causing to the environment, economic activities and human health. The Council also called on the Commission to develop an EU Strategy on Invasive Alien Species by 2010. One of the objectives of the Finnish National Strategy and Action Plan for the Conservation and Sustainable Use of Biodiversity is to control alien species in Finland through co-operation between officials both nationally and internationally, and one of its measures concerns the preparation of a national strategy and action plan for alien species, as required under the CBD. The preparation process of the National Strategy and the Action Plan on IAS was launched in Finland at the end of 2008, with a steering group and four separate sub-groups appointed for the preparation work. The national strategy is due to be completed by the end of 2010. In the meantime Finland will continue to observe and contribute to the preparation process of the EU strategy.

Green Diplomacy Network (GDN)

The Green Diplomacy Network is a tool used by the EU and coordinated by the Presidency of EU for using foreign ministries' diplomatic channels (demarches) to prepare the EU's outreach and positions for meetings including the CBD COPs. The aim is to disseminate information on the EU's positions and actively approach other parties to obtain feedback before COPs.

In June 2003, the European Council agreed to launch an initiative to promote the integration of environmental issues into external relations by creating an informal network known as the Green Diplomacy Network. The main tasks of the GDN are:

• To promote the use of the EU's extensive diplomatic resources (diplomatic missions, development cooperation offices) in support of environmental objectives, orchestrating campaigns and demarches.

• In line with the European Council's mandate of promoting the integration of environment into external relations, the GDN examines how foreign ministries are integrating environmental concerns into their working processes across the spectrum.

The GDN consists of officials dealing with international environmental and sustainable development issues in full association with the Commission, in the EU's Ministries of Foreign Affairs and their diplomatic missions. The network focuses on environmental issues relevant to the EU's external relations, such as climate change, biodiversity, desertification and renewable energy. As the external dimension of the EU's environmental policy is increasingly prominent in international affairs, the GDN

plays an important role in increasing the coherence, consistency and effectiveness of European actions in the environmental domain.

The network held its first meeting in Athens in June 2003, producing a draft Action Plan and a work programme. The second GDN meeting in Rome in November 2003 resulted in the endorsement of "Working guidelines for the Network". EU Presidencies in 2006 and 2008 (AT and SI) actively coordinated the EU's work with other parties in this regard.

In line with the Working Guidelines, the GDN bases its work on EU positions as agreed in the Council. Responsibility for the coordination of the network resides with each EU Presidency in full association with the Commission. For more information on the Green Diplomacy Network see: http://ec.europa.eu/environment/international_issues/green_diplomacy_en.htm.

Biodiversity and climate change

Finland considers biodiversity and climate change and synergies between the two Rio Conventions as one of its top priorities, and has hosted several CBD ad hoc open-ended working group meetings (AHTEGs) on these topics. The most recent second AHTEG, focusing on climate change adaptation and biodiversity, was held in Helsinki in April 2009, in response to Decision IX/16 of the CBD. The purpose of the AHTEG was to provide biodiversity-relevant information to the UNFCCC in the form of scientific and technical advice on the integration of the conservation and sustainable use of biodiversity into climate change mitigation and adaptation activities. The report and related conclusions are compiled in the CBD technical series. Ecosystem-based adaptation can implement a range of strategies for the management, conservation and restoration of ecosystems to provide services that enable people to adapt to the impacts of climate change.

Responses to climate change for indigenous and local communities and their impact on traditional knowledge related to biodiversity in the Arctic region

In the context of the CBD, Finland has continued to contribute to work on biodiversity and climate change. On the basis of the country’s northerly location, it is natural that Finland’s interests extend to the Arctic. Participation in the work of the Arctic Council has particularly brought Finland closer to the indigenous peoples of the Arctic.

The international expert meeting on responses to climate change for indigenous and local communities and their impact on traditional knowledge related to biological diversity in the Arctic region was convened by the Finnish Government in Helsinki in March 2008, and included participants from throughout the Arctic region. The report of this meeting was presented as an information document to CBD/COP9 in May 2008, with results also compiled in a brochure.

Climate change is a major threat to the future of arctic indigenous peoples. The Saami People of Lapland have over the centuries adapted to changes in their natural environment or the climate by changing the locations of their settlements, migrating, and learning new livelihoods. This adaptation is reflected in their traditional ecological knowledge. From the perspective of preserving traditional Saami livelihoods

it would be essential to establish a specific climate change adaptation plan. There is already evidence that activities such as reindeer grazing will become more difficult because of increased winter snow cover and harder snow crusts. This would make it difficult for people to continue to live in their traditional homelands and follow traditional subsistence practices. These changes will affect the foundations of Saami culture materially and socially. To combat climate change, the traditional cultural knowledge of the Saami People must be combined with scientific knowledge in new research. Such research can identify new ways to adapt to climate change. This will require the training of indigenous researchers and an increase in research funding.

The eighth session of the United Nations Forum on Forests (UNFF8) in April 2009 addressed environmental issues related to forests, including forests and biodiversity conservation both inside and outside protected areas. In September 2008 Finland organised and hosted a Pan-European workshop "Forests in the Changing Environment", which provided a forum for discussion and the elaboration of a contribution from Europe to the UFF8. The workshop was part of the work programme of the Ministerial Conference on the Protection of Forests in Europe (MCPFE). The workshop was attended by 51 participants from 18 countries and 13 organizations from Europe and other regions.

Finland has supported the work of the United Nations Forum on Forests (UNFF) financially by sponsoring the participation of representatives from developing countries in UNFF sessions and country-led Initiatives. In addition, a junior professional officer funded by Finland has worked at the UNFF Secretariat since November 2008.

The state of the world's forest genetic resources was on the agenda of the 19th Session of the Forestry Committee of the UN FAO in March 2009, where the EU made a common statement on this issue.

The conservation of biodiversity is an essential element of European co-operation on forests, and the preparatory and monitoring work of the Ministerial Conferences on the Protection of Forests in Europe (MCPFE). Many European organizations also participate actively in this co-operation. The MCPFEs were launched in 1990 through a Finnish-French initiative.

Additionally, Finland has participated in the EU Forest Law Enforcement, Governance and Trade (FLEGT) as well as in the regional ENA FLEG initiative.

The science/policy interface

Finland has actively supported the UNEP's initiative to establish an Intergovernmental Platform for Biodiversity and Ecosystem Services (IPBES). The multilateral environmental agreements (MEAs) in the biodiversity cluster rely on various science-policy interfaces. However, the current fragmented landscape of science-policy interfaces is unable to provide the required policy support for coherent and effective decision-making. From Finland's viewpoint, there is a need for an independent panel or platform that would provide different clients and knowledge users, in particular the scientific bodies of the biodiversity-related MEAs, with timely, credible and legitimate advice. Finland has emphasized that

the panel/platform should not contribute to improved decision-making concerning both conservation and sustainable use, to help achieve sustainable development and poverty eradication.

The European Platform for Biodiversity Research Strategy (EPBRS) is a forum where natural and social scientists, policy-makers and other stakeholders identify, structure and focus the strategically important research that is essential to conserve biodiversity, to use its components in sustainable ways, to make sure that the arising benefits are shared equitably, and last but not least, to stop biodiversity loss. The EPBRS forum was launched during Finland's first EU presidency in the second half of 1999. Finland is an active member of the EPBRS, which functions in the science-policy interface at the European level. In line with the recommendation of the meeting of the EPBRS held under the Finnish EU Presidency in 2006 concerning actions for the 2010 biodiversity target in Europe, it was concluded that: "There is a need to look beyond 2010 towards a longer-term vision as a framework for policy". Participants agreed that if society wishes to halt biodiversity loss by 2010, and then reverse loss beyond 2010, an unprecedented effort will be required including research, implementation and communication actions that must receive high priority and adequate financial support. For more information on the EPBRS, see http://www.epbrs.org/epbrs/static/show/docments

Development co-operation

Poverty eradication and ecologically sustainable development are the most important objectives of Finland's development co-operation in line with the United Nations' Millennium Development Goals.

According to the principles of Finland's Development Policy (2007), Finland strives to ensure that all the work done in various forums to promote ecologically sustainable development, preserve biodiversity, combat climate change, prevent desertification and impoverishment of the soil, and protect the environment, should form a cohesive whole with an effective impact on all developments in both the developed and the developing world.

The principles of Finland's Development Policy point out that the developed and developing countries are parties to a number of key Multilateral Environmental Agreements (MEAs). These conventions cover, for example, climate change, protecting biodiversity, combating desertification, and international controls over chemicals. Implementing and complying with environmental conventions demands huge efforts from poor countries, not least in the context of developing their environmental administration, reporting systems and monitoring mechanisms. Supporting the developing countries' efforts to fulfil the wide-ranging objectives of the MEAs also furthers the achievement of the UN Millennium Development Goals.

Finland's new Development Policy, adopted in 2007, has a strong emphasis on ecological sustainability, and many of the consequent new Finnish projects and programmes are still under development. This work is done in close collaboration with partner countries in line with their own priorities, according to the principles of the Paris Declaration on Aid Effectiveness. Finnish embassies in developing countries are in close contact with the respective government officials, looking for ways and means to support ecologically sustainable development. During the EU Presidency of 2006 Finland organised in

collaboration with IUCN and France an international conference on Biodiversity in European Development Co-operation. On the basis of this conference, EU Council Conclusions were prepared (Doc. no 184/06 DEVGEN). The importance of biodiversity in the context of development cooperation is also highlighted in the National Strategy for the Conservation and Sustainable Use of Biodiversity in Finland 2006–2016. Finland has supported the recommendations of the Biodiversity in European Development Co-operation Conference follow-up, and these recommendations have also been integrated into EU development co-operation. Finland has additionally provided funding of €50,000 to support the IUCN's subsequent Poverty Reduction and Environmental Governance Initiative 2008–2016 (PREGI).

Finland has been supporting the environmental administrations of Afghanistan, Georgia, Kyrgyzstan, Nepal, Nicaragua, South Africa (see e.g. Environment Outlook for North West Province http://soer.deat.gov.za/newsDetailPage.aspx?m=66&amid=5423) and Zambia, to help them fulfil the obligations of MEAs. Major partners have included the national environment ministries responsible for implementing MEAs. Such projects also support vital collaboration between these authorities and local NGOs and private sectors.

Finland has also supported several bilateral and regional programmes that promote synergy between MEAs. The Biodamaz project in Peru, for instance, is geared towards the sustainable use of the biodiversity in the Peruvian Amazonian, but through the Instituto de Investigaciones de la Amazonía Peruana (IIAP) its outcomes can also be used in work related to other MEAs. The Biodamaz project ran during the period 1999–2007 and its good practices are being replicated in the regional project BioCan (http://www.comunidadandina.org/biocan/) in collaboration with the Andean Community (CAN) which involves Bolivia, Columbia, Ecuador, and Peru.

At the national level co-operation between conventions has been promoted through initiatives including a joint report produced by the Ministry for Foreign Affairs and the Ministry of the Environment on international environmental conventions and Finland's development co-operation programme. In future it will be important to ensure that the implementation of environmental agreements is well integrated into both national and international sustainable development strategies.

The Ministries of Environment and Foreign Affairs publish a book on MEAs and their relevance to development policy, which is updated frequently (1st edition 2005, 2nd 2007, 3rd due in 2010). Authors include the officials responsible for the implementation of each MEA. The book briefly outlines each MEA and describes the related challenges for development policy. In a related lecture series held at Helsinki University the same officials present the respective MEAs to environmental sciences students.

Financial resources

Finland's contribution in 2008 to the UNEP Environmental Fund amounted to USD 4,539,370. Finland additionally contributed to special funds that aim to support various UNEP activities such as the work of climate treaty coordinators in South East Asia, the implementation of the international chemicals strategy, the disposal of toxic waste, and post-conflict work.

Finland has a special programme to support young professionals (JPO; APO) in the UN system. An increasing number of young professionals are now stationed in biodiversity related organisations and institutions. Finland will support a Junior Professional Officer at Biodiversity International who will start work during 2009. Young professionals both from Finland and partner countries are also engaged in bilateral and regional projects.

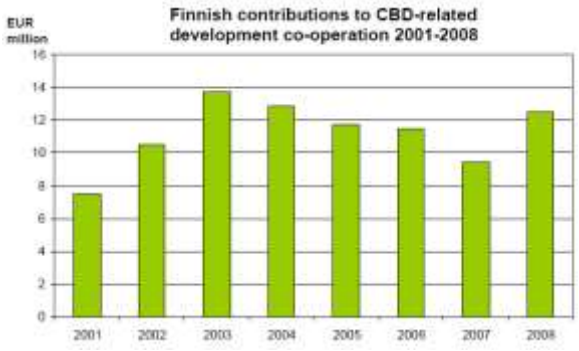

Figure 1. Finnish development co-operation funding supporting the objectives of the CBD 2001–2006

Synergic co-operation between the CBD and multilateral environmental agreements (MEAs), and the work of the Global Environment Facility (GEF)

Finland's contributions to the biodiversity activities of the Global Environmental Facility (GEF) will amount to an estimated 2.2 million euros a year over the 4th replenishment period 2006–2010.

Finland contributes about 60,000 euros per year towards the CBD's Secretariat's efforts to enhance the participation of developing countries' representatives in MEA negotiations and MEA synergies.

Development co-operation resources can be used to promote the strengthening of an enabling environment for development in the poorest countries, in order to improve the conditions for investment and trade, and to achieve economic growth.

Finland additionally channels support for developing countries' conservation and use of their Plant Genetic Resources (PGR) through the Consultative Group on International Agricultural Research (CGIAR) system, and appoints experts to international PGR programmes and authorities. Finland also supports projects in developing countries coordinated by the Nordic Genetic Resource Centre (NordGen).

Finland supports international co-operation to promote synergies between multilateral environmental agreements. In association with the OECD, the Ministry of the Environment arranged a conference in Helsinki in 2005 to consider ways to encourage private investment to promote the implementation of the Rio Conventions.

The cost-efficiency of the various international agreements related to natural resources should be purposefully improved, as recommended in the conclusions of the OECD's environmental performance review in 2008.

Convention secretariats should continue to actively seek synergies between different agreements, and strive to eliminate unnecessary structures. The agendas of the three Rio conventions alone schedule some 230 days of international meetings each year. National reporting obligations for different conventions should also be rationalized to maximize the resources available for the most important tasks, namely the practical implementation of the conventions.

International evaluations of biodiversity in Finland

The Environmental Performance review for the period 1997-2008 (2009) examines Finland's progress since the previous OECD Environmental Performance Review in 1997, and the extent to which the country has met its domestic objectives and honoured its international commitments. The report also reviews Finland's progress in the context of the OECD Environmental Strategy for the First Decade of the 21st Century.

According to the OECD review published in 2009 the integration of biodiversity and nature conservation concerns into Finland's national legislation has been strengthened. Finland has ratified most international agreements in the field of nature and biodiversity conservation. There have been positive developments in the protection of species including migratory species and aquatic wildlife. Management plans have been established for several game species. A national strategy on invasive alien species is under preparation to prevent their spread.

Finland's implementation of the EU Habitats Directive and the related conservation status have been reported for the period 2001-2006 in line with the directive's article 17. The reported results have also been published on the website www.ymparisto.fi.

Trends in biodiversity in the Nordic Countries are presented in a Nordic report published in 2009. The aim of this project was to evaluate progress towards the 2010 target using selected indicators. The report comprises the most comprehensive documentation of land use in the Nordic Countries to date. The areas of important biotopes such as mires, grasslands and heathlands have decreased significantly over recent decades, whereas the areas of built-up land, including urban areas and transport networks, have grown considerably in all of the Nordic Countries. Each of these trends in land use is associated with a decline in biodiversity in all of the Nordic Countries since 1990. Looking into qualitative aspects of biodiversity, the results reveal that two-thirds of the quality indicators show declines and the remaining one-third show improvements or stability. Most of the indicators used in the Nordic report have been further improved in the Finnish indicator set presented at www.biodiversity.fi.

5. Regional co-operation

Finland in Nordic co-operation on biodiversity

Finland has been implementing the Nordic Environmental Action Plan for 2005–2008 together with the other Nordic Countries. Nordic co-operation on biodiversity strives to realise the international CountDown 2010 target of halting the loss of biodiversity by 2010, as well as action on other

environmental themes. Various co-operation projects have been carried out on a Nordic scale financed by the Nordic Council of Ministers www.norden.org.

The project Nordic Nature – trends towards 2010 is a communications project aimed at the wider public, NGOs, interest groups and partners in the scientific community at national level, within the Nordic region and globally.

The project publishes electronic fact sheets and other information on Nordic biodiversity, describing best practices and success stories, as well as cases where mitigation measures are needed to counter negative developments. The fact sheets are published in all the Nordic languages and in English on the project's web pages. The project will also elaborate recommendations for actions to halt the decline of biodiversity.

The project is being led by the Finnish Environment Institute (SYKE). Other participating organisations include Denmark's Agency for Spatial and Environmental Planning, Norway's Directorate for Nature Management, Sweden's Naturvårdsverket, Greenland Home Rule, Greenland Representation, the Faroe Islands' Museum of Natural History, and the Environment Agency of Iceland.

Other Nordic biodiversity projects financed by the Nordic Council of Ministers

State of biodiversity in the Nordic Countries – an assessment of progress towards the target of halting biodiversity loss by 2010 has been published by the Nordic project NordBio2010. The state of biodiversity in Finland is much the same as in the other Nordic Countries, which have all agreed to the common target of halting the decline in biodiversity by 2010.

The North European and Baltic Network on Invasive Alien Species (NOBANIS) has grown from a Nordic initiative to become a stable platform for discussions on invasive alien species in the Nordic region and elsewhere in Europe. The NOBANIS web-portal provides a gateway to information on alien species.

The main purpose of the project Nordic Nature Indicators of Climate Change Effects NICC is to identify measurable parameters or indicators to facilitate the monitoring of the impacts of climate change on nature. The compilation of a list of climate indicators relevant for the Nordic region facilitates the coordinating and optimization of biodiversity monitoring in the Nordic Countries.

The project Local Contributions to meet the 2010 target to halt the loss of biodiversity has established a network of local authorities in the Nordic Countries who intend to carry out concrete actions on a local level and exchange their experiences. Municipalities are the key authorities responsible for land use planning, and an emphasis is placed on the role of local communities in achieving the target of halting the loss of biodiversity by 2010.

Other projects dealing with the impacts of climate change on biodiversity and its sustainable use in the Nordic Countries have been carried out over the period 2005–2008. For example, in August 2007, the Nordic environmental ministers commissioned a report about opportunities to enhance co-operation and co-ordination between the biodiversity-related MEAs. This report was completed in March 2008.

Co-operation between Finland and Russia on nature conservation

Since 1997 Finland's Ministry of the Environment has been implementing the Finnish-Russian Development Programme on Nature Conservation in Northwest Russia.

Co-operation projects run during the years 2006–2009 have protected biodiversity and enhanced the network of protected areas around the Finnish-Russian border and deeper in NW Russia. This co-operation incorporates nature inventories and the harmonisation of biodiversity research to provide a basis for regional and federal decisions on protection that can be well-founded ecologically, economically and socially. Other broader international co-operation has also been enhanced in addition to bilateral Finnish-Russian co-operation. In 2008 the International Contact Forum on Habitat Conservation in the Barents Region (HCF) took on an official position as the Nature Protection Subgroup of the Barents Euro-Arctic Council's environmental working group. The goal of this subgroup is to promote co-operation and coordination in biodiversity conservation with the aim of maintaining biodiversity in the Barents Euro-Arctic Region. During the period 2006–2009 the subgroup has based its work on forest protection, the ecosystem approach, the development of networks of protected areas, the conservation of natural and cultural heritage, and the integration of biodiversity considerations into economic activities and planning of adaptation to climate change.

Conservation of valuable environmental areas along the Finnish-Russian border

Two major projects within the Finnish-Russian Development Programme on Nature Conservation implemented since 2006 are due to be completed by the end of 2010. Both projects are being carried out in six administrative regions of Northwest Russia: in the Republic of Karelia, in the regions of Arkhangelsk, Leningrad, Murmansk and Vologda and in the City of St. Petersburg.

The first project – GAP Analysis in Northwest Russia (GAP) – has identified, analysed and assessed the representativeness of the protected areas' network, and the gaps in the network. It will produce recommendations to enhance the network based on scientifically determined conservation needs. Recommendations issued together with GIS cartographical material will form valuable tools for land use decision making in NW Russia. Finland's contributions to the joint project over the period 2006–2009 amounted to €870,000.

The second project – Development of Regional Protected Areas in Northwest Russia (RPA) – has enhanced the management of regional status protected areas by assessing management effectiveness; by organising training and workshops on legal issues, public participation, co-operation with other regions, NGOs, local and indigenous peoples; through study tours examining management practices in Finland; through the drafting of management plans for individual protected areas, and through the national and international networking of protected areas. The main partners in the project have been Metsähallitus Natural Heritage Services in Finland and the Baltic Fund for Nature in Russia. Finnish contributions to the joint project over the period 2006–2009 amounted to €260,000. For an example of transboundary co-operation between Finnish protected areas and areas in neighboring countries.

Green Belt of Fennoscandia: Wide-ranging co-operation has been conducted between protected areas on both sides of the 1,250 km long border between Finland and the Russian Federation. This co-operation ultimately aims to create a chain of transboundary parks along the Finnish-Russian border from the Gulf of Finland to the River Paatsjoki in Inari. The protected areas along this Green Belt of Fennoscandia will make a unique contribution to nature conservation in Europe. Norway is also participating in cooperation on the Green Belt of Fennoscandia. So far four pairs of twinned transboundary parks have been set up along Finland's eastern border, and a further four pairs are projected. The achievements of active collaboration between protected areas in the green belt have so far included: 1) the internationally acclaimed collaboration between the national parks of Oulanka and Paanajärvi; 2) the establishment of the bilateral Friendship Nature Reserve, which consists of the Friendship Park in Finland and Kostomuksha Strict Nature Reserve in Russia; 3) close collaboration between Finland's Urho Kekkonen National Park and Russia's Lapland Strict Nature Reserve; and 4) trilateral collaboration between the Vätsäri Wilderness Reserve in Finland, Norway's Ovre Pasvik National Park, and Russia's Pasvik Strict Nature Reserve.

The above-mentioned projects are a logical extension of the longer-term Twin Park Co-operation that has been implemented by Metsähallitus Natural Heritage Services for four existing pairs of Finnish-Russian twinned parks. This twinning co-operation involves joint research and inventory projects, the creation of infrastructure and service facilities, improving prospects for nature tourism, measures to improve nature education and raise public awareness of nature protection, and the provision of training for the management and staff of protected areas. Finnish contributions to this twinning co-operation over the years 2006–2009 have amounted to €320,000. The establishment of a chain of functioning Finnish-Russian twinned parks extending northwards from the Gulf of Finland to the Barents Sea will connect both regional and national level current and planned protected areas on both sides of the border to form the extensive Green Belt of Fennoscandia.

Arctic co-operation on biodiversity issues

Finland has supported the development of the infrastructure of the Circumpolar Biodiversity Monitoring Programme (CBMP) financially since 2006. Finnish experts have also been nominated to the CBMP's Terrestrial and Freshwater Expert Monitoring Group. These experts contribute to development of an Arctic Species Trend Index, which is one of the headline indicators for the CBMP, run by the Arctic Council's secretariat for the Conservation of Arctic Flora and Fauna (CAFF). This index will contribute to the CBD's Global Biodiversity Outlook 3 report, as well as CAFF's own Arctic Biodiversity Assessment.