



Sectoral Integration in Saint Vincent & the Grenadines

Contents

1. Introduction	3
Sectoral Coordination	3
2. Inter-Ministerial Coordination	3
3. The Environmental and Biodiversity Coordination Act.....	4
4. Multi-sectoral Committees	4
5. Co-management Partnerships	6
6. Professional Networks: Fostering Multi-scale Integration	6
Integration of biodiversity concerns in sectoral plans and policies.....	6
7. Forestry Sector plans and policies	6
8. Tourism Sector Plans.....	7
9. Fisheries Sector Policy.....	8
10. Agricultural Sector Policies	11
Cross-sectoral integration (Biodiversity mainstreaming)	11
11.The National Environmental Management Strategy and Action Plan (NEMS).....	11
12. The Interim Poverty Reduction Strategy Paper	12
13. The (draft) National Economic and Social Development Plan (NESDP).....	13
14. The (draft) National Physical Development Plan (NPDP).....	14
15. Integration of Biodiversity in EIAs and SEAs	14

16. The Effectiveness of Mainstreaming.....	15
The Way Forward: Enhancing Cross-Sectoral Integration (Mainstreaming) of Biodiversity in SVG.....	15
17.Sensitize key decision-makers/ policy-makers	15
18. Link the NBSAP process more closely to the National Planning Cycle.....	16
19. Adopt the Ecosystem Approach.....	16
20. More comprehensively address biodiversity in the Poverty Reduction Strategy Paper	16

1. Introduction

Saint Vincent & the Grenadines reported¹ on several fronts: sectoral coordination, such as inter-ministerial coordination, environmental and biodiversity coordination act, multi-sectoral committees, co-management partnerships, professional networks: fostering multi-scale integration; integration of biodiversity concerns in sectoral plans and policies, including forestry sector plans and policies, tourism sector plans, fisheries sector policy, agricultural sector policies; cross-sectoral integration (biodiversity mainstreaming), for instance, national environmental management strategy and action plan (NEMS), the interim poverty reduction strategy paper, (draft) national economic and social development plan (NESDP), (draft) national physical development plan (NPDP); integration of biodiversity in EIAs and SEAs; effectiveness of mainstreaming; ways forward for enhancing cross-sectoral integration (mainstreaming) of biodiversity in SVG, such as to sensitize key decision-makers/ policy-makers, link the NBSAP process more closely to the national planning cycle, adopt the ecosystem approach, more comprehensively address biodiversity in the poverty reduction strategy paper.

Sectoral Coordination

The following sections will outline the various mechanisms for coordination between the various agencies involved in biodiversity conservation and management in St. Vincent and the Grenadines.

2. Inter-Ministerial Coordination

The Ministry of Health and the Environment (MOHE) has overall responsibility for coordination of environmental management activities in SVG. However, several other government ministries, departments, statutory organizations and NGOs have varying responsibilities for different aspects of biodiversity management. Long-standing problems with this arrangement include:

- Inadequate cross-sectoral communication and coordination among key resource sectors
- Agencies environmental management functions are sometimes ambiguous and overlapping, resulting in redundancy and inefficiency
- Fragmentation of some key governmental environmental management functions like development control, resource protection, enforcement of existing regulations and resource development among different agencies.

Several studies of the institutional capacity for environmental management in SVG concluded that the Environmental Services Unit (ESU) of the Ministry of Health and the Environment (MOHE) was best poised to play the coordinating role in environmental management. Consequently, new framework legislation has been drafted (the draft Environmental Management Act, 2009) which has given a formal

¹ Saint Vincent & the Grenadines (2010). The Fourth National Biodiversity Report of St. Vincent and the Grenadines to the UNCBD, Ministry of Health and the Environment, March 2010, 114 pp.

mandate for coordination to the Environmental Management Department (a conglomeration of the environmental sub-units of the MOHE, including the ESU) for this role. The draft EMA (2009) has also set out provisions for the establishment of a broad-based National Environmental Commission (NEC) to assist the EMD in its function.

3. The Environmental and Biodiversity Coordination Act

A draft Act on Environmental and Biodiversity Coordination was developed in 2006 as part of an OECS effort to develop and harmonize comprehensive biodiversity legislation across the territories. The key objectives sets out in the Act were as follows:

- (a) To enable compliance with the obligations of global MEA's including the Convention on Biological Diversity (CDB), the Convention on the international Trade in Endangered Species of Wild Fauna and Flora (CITES), the SPAW Protocol to the Cartagena Convention, the Convention on Wetlands of International Importance especially as Waterfowl Habitat (Ramsar Convention), and the Convention concerning the Protection of the World Cultural and Natural Heritage (World Heritage Convention).
- (b) To provide for the sustainability of biodiversity, culture, livelihoods, heritage, watershed protection and other ecosystem services through an adaptive approach;
- (c) To protect wilderness areas;
- (d) To facilitate the implementation of the requirements, goals, and aims of applicable international agreements
- (e) To assist in the mitigation of natural and anthropogenic disasters; and
- (f) To prepare for and respond to the impacts of climate change.

However, this Act was subsumed by the draft Environmental Management Act (2009) and therefore has no legal standing of its own.

4. Multi-sectoral Committees

The Physical Planning Development Board- The Physical Planning Unit performs its duties with the help of the Physical Planning Board; whose members include: The Director of Planning; the Manager of the Development Corporation; the Chief Engineer; the General Manager of the Central Water and Sewerage Authority (CWSA); the General Manager of the St. Vincent and the Grenadines Electricity Services Ltd.; the Commissioner of Police; and 3 persons who are not in the Public Service and appointed by the Cabinet of Ministers. This is the largest multi-sectoral board in SVG and it makes decisions on a range of issues ranging from development control to forward planning (including allocation of Forest Reserves and National Parks). Decisions on EIAs therefore falls directly under the mandate of the Board; making it an important platform for ensuring integration of environmental (including biodiversity) considerations into national physical development decisions.

The National Environmental Advisory Board (NEAB)- The NEAB is a multi-disciplinary, multi-sectoral, statutory body established in by Cabinet 1996 to guide implementation of the National Environmental Management Strategy (NEMS). The Board was also required to advise the Minister on all environmentally-related matters; and to oversee, review and monitor all projects and development activities with environmental considerations. The 11 member Board consisted of the Environmental Services Coordinator (Chairman) and representatives from the following sectors:

- Ministry of Communication and Works,
- Community Development,
- Legal Department,
- Planning Division,
- Forestry,
- Fisheries,
- Agriculture,
- Environmental Health Department,
- National Trust,
- National Youth Council; and
- an NGO representation

Although the NEAB was an important mechanism for improving environmental coordination (integration), its effectiveness was limited by a number of factors. Among these were:

- Slowness of decision-making- the board only met once every 2 months
- Lack of decision-making authority- the board's role was largely advisory
- Inconsistent participation- Many times junior staff (with limited experience or authority) were sent as representatives to attend board meetings.
- Lack of compensation for board members – Members of similar national boards received compensation whereas the NEAB was entirely voluntary

Consequently, the NEAB has been practically defunct for a number of years.

The National Environmental Commission- Provision for the creation of this new multi-sectoral board has been set out in the draft EMA (2009).

5. Co-management Partnerships

The National Parks and Protected Areas System Plan indicates that the “Government’s policy to involve community NGOs and Community Based Organizations (CBOs) will be advanced through co-management arrangements for heritage sites and selected Cultural or Natural Landmarks where appropriate”. These arrangements will be formalized through memoranda of understanding (MoUs) made between the NPA and qualified NGOs or CBOs. It further states that private sector participation would be encouraged through incentives to stimulate enterprise development associated with protected areas and heritage sites, and by negotiated concessions to operate in selected sites. Public/private sector partnerships are also expected to be forged in cooperative arrangements to support effective management of important heritage assets.

6. Professional Networks: Fostering Multi-scale Integration

In the Agricultural Sector, networks have been developed with various organisations that promote sustainable agriculture and plant conservation. The organisations include the Caribbean Agricultural Research and Development Institute (CARDI), the Inter-American Institute for Cooperation on Agriculture (IICA), the U.N. Food and Agriculture Organisation (FAO), CAB International, University of the West Indies (UWI) and the Consultative Group on International Agricultural Research (CGIAR), among others.

Linkages are also facilitated through the Caribbean Agricultural Science and Technology Network System (PROCICARIBE) and its associated thematic networks. PROCICARIBE was set up by CARDI in response to a mandate given by Caribbean Heads of Government to provide an “institutional framework within which Caribbean governments, R&D institutions, the private sector, NGOs, farmer groups and other stakeholders design and implement strategies for the integration and co-ordination of agricultural research and development efforts at both the national and regional levels with linkages to international organisations.” The main purpose of the network is to foster “the sustainable development of the Caribbean’s agricultural sector while ensuring food security, poverty alleviation and environmental protection”. In Fisheries, similar arrangements exist between the Caribbean Regional Fisheries Mechanism (CRFM) and other agencies.

These networks foster the integration of the national, regional and global scale actors involved in shaping sectoral policies and their implementation.

Integration of biodiversity concerns in sectoral plans and policies

7. Forestry Sector plans and policies

Various elements of the forest Programme of Work (PoW) have been incorporated into the Forestry Resource Conservation Plan, the Forestry Department Corporate Plan, and the Integrated Forest Management and Development Programme (IFMDP). This incorporation is, however, not by design but because national policies, plans and programmes share a number of common goals with the PoW on Forest Biodiversity.

Priority actions outlined in the Forestry Department Corporate Plan include:

- Maintenance of forest boundaries
- Forest protection
- Wildlife management
- Sustainable utilization of forest resources
- Environmental education
- River bank Stabilization
- Reduction of forest fires through public education, advocacy and involvement of stakeholders

Priority actions outlined under the Integrated Forest Management and Development Programme (IFMDP) includes:

- Development of appropriate policy and legislative framework
- Increasing awareness at all levels of society about the importance of forest conservation
- Implementation of an alternative livelihoods programme for forest farmers
- Promotion of community initiatives to manage forest resources
- Strengthening of the Forestry Department
- Protection of forest biodiversity
- Development of appropriate coordinating mechanism

To address the threats to the St. Vincent Parrot, the Forestry Department runs a captive breeding programme at the Nicholls Wildlife Complex housed in the Botanical Gardens. There is also an international consortium (St. Vincent Parrot Conservation Consortium) of persons who acquired St. Vincent Parrots before 1987 when the Wildlife Protection Act came into force. After 1987, it became illegal to acquire these parrots.

8. Tourism Sector Plans

In response to the economic downturn in the agricultural sector, the Government made a strategic decision to fill the void in the national economy by specifically targeting development of the tourism sector. The government was assisted in its thrust through the European Union funded, Tourism Development Project (TDP). The project sought to diversify the tourism product beyond the traditional sun, sea and sand that is promoted in the Grenadines, towards a more comprehensive one. Recognizing that healthy natural ecosystems are the basis for sustaining the industry, development of a system of

national parks and protected areas was seen as the most practical mechanism for addressing the interlinked concerns of tourism, the environment and rural development in an integrated and holistic manner. The TDP therefore aimed to achieve this by:

1. Upgrading and developing infrastructure at 19 designated sites.
2. Developing a National Parks System the components of which are:
 - Building capacity of CBOs to undertake local management of the sites
 - Assisting with the development and strengthening of the recently launched National Parks Authority.
 - Development of an SVG National Parks and Protected Areas System Plan through a collaborative process which includes public participation.
 - Development of MoUs between the NPA and the key stakeholders (government, NGOs, and CBOs)
 - Developing the Regulations and Orders for the National Parks Act 2002.
 - Development of a Financing Plan for the SVG National Parks System.
 - Develop a monitoring and auditing system for the NPA

Develop and implement a marketing programme for the designated sites

Over the medium term, the government intends to further develop a master plan for tourism development that will encompass issues such as the management and operation of designated sites; protected area; recreational sites; and natural and natural and man-made attractions.

9. Fisheries Sector Policy

The policy framework for the SVG fisheries sector is based on the expansion of fish production on a sustainable basis to provide a key source of protein for the national population at a competitive price. In order to support increased production of fish, it is essential that the marine environment is adequately protected.

The specific fisheries management objectives are:

- Develop and increase the potential of marine living resources to meet human nutritional needs, as well as social, economic and development goals;
- Ensure that the fishing industry is integrated into the policy- and decision-making process concerning fisheries and coastal zone management;

- Take into account traditional knowledge and interests of local communities, small-scale artisanal fisheries and indigenous people in development and management programmes;
- Maintain or restore populations of marine species at levels that can produce the maximum sustainable yield, as qualified by relevant environmental and economic factors, taking into consideration relationships among species;
- Promote the development and use of selective fishing gear and practices that minimize waste in the catch of target species and minimize by-catch of non-target species;
- Ensure effective monitoring and enforcement with respect to fishing activities;
- Protect and restore endangered marine species;
- Preserve rare or fragile ecosystems, as well as habitats and other ecologically sensitive areas, especially coral reef ecosystems, estuaries, mangroves, seagrass beds and other spawning and nursery areas;
- Promote scientific research with respect to fisheries resources;
- Cooperate with other nations in the management of shared or highly migratory stocks.

Management Objectives of the Fisheries Sector Plan for addressing threats to marine biodiversity

The Over-exploitation of Shallow-shelf and reef-fish resources

Management measures include size and gear limits, close areas and seasons; effort reduction and co-management arrangements. So far, the modification of traps to improve selectivity has not yet been implemented, primarily as a result of declining use of traps. Exploratory fishing for deep-slope demersals and large pelagics are continuing as an initial step in the diversion of effort from the shallow shelf and reef fishery. Management teams have been appointed to manage the Tobago Cays Marine Park. Permission for the use of spear guns is granted only to commercial fishers.

The (Possibly) Underexploited Deep Slope Fish Resource

There are no specific regulations for this fishery except the restriction on mesh size for traps. Joint management with Grenada is seen as necessary since St Vincent and the Grenadines share the banks and shelf area with Grenada. The main management objective of this fishery is to maximize catches within the limits of the potential yield. It was recognized that can be achieved by (1) minimizing illegal foreign fishing; (2) protecting stock from overfishing, by the adoption of appropriate management measures to limit fishing effort, particularly during the spawning season for groupers; and (3) integrating and improving the collection of biological and catch and effort data.

Current government policy is that the St Vincent and the Grenadines Coastguard Services designate 15 sea days to fisheries surveillance and enforcement. Data on catch rates and size frequency are also being routinely collected for a number of grouper and snapper species.

The Moderately exploited Coastal Pelagics

Currently, there is a size restriction on mesh gear, with the use of trammel (tangle) nets prohibited and restriction on the use of ballahoo nets. The management objectives are: (1) to encourage co-management of the fishery; and (2) maintain the artisanal nature of the fishery.

Management measures in place include (1) minimum mesh size for seines (this has already been legislated); (2) expansion of the marine reserve areas; and (3) control of land based pollution and coastal development.

The Over-exploited Lobster Resource

Management objectives have implications for the level and methods of resource utilization and the management of the resources. The general management objectives for the lobster resources are:

(1) to manage the resource on a sustainable basis – Resource depletion can be prevented, where it has not already occurred, by controlling fishing effort. This would contribute to the maximization of net national benefit, including maximization of foreign exchange earnings; and

(2) to rebuild stock in depleted areas – this could be accomplished by various management measures. Unless fishing pressure is reduced, the viability of the fishery is threatened, and could result in complete loss of foreign exchange earnings, employment and income.

Further potential management measures include:

- enforce more rigorously the existing regulations;
- control land-based pollution and coastal development;
- enforce regulations on illegal fishing;
- evaluate the feasibility of using artificial habitats to rebuild depleted stocks; and
- initiate collection of biological data and improve the collection of catch and effort data.

The Threatened Conch Fishery

The general management objective for the conch fishery is to manage the resource on a sustainable basis, preventing resource depletion – where it has not already occurred – by controlling fishing effort.

Other management measures in place are: (1) more rigorous enforcement of existing regulations; (2) efforts initiated to map the critical habitat of conch to refine estimates of potential yield; (3) expansion

of marine protected areas; and (4) support to CITES conservation measures regarding Appendix II. St Vincent and the Grenadines is party to the CITES convention and participates in all CITES meetings. CITES forms are issued for all conch exported from St Vincent and the Grenadines.

Conservation and Sustainable Use of Biodiversity is clearly high on the fisheries sector policy agenda but the ability to achieve these objectives hinges on a multiplicity of factors, including the availability human, financial and technical resources.

10. Agricultural Sector Policies

Due to the decline in the banana industry, the main policy position of the government has been to “diversify around banana” and to increase production and exports of root crops, fruits and vegetables. The major components of St. Vincent’s Agricultural Policy Framework (1997-2006) were as follows:

- (i) Export development based on selected commodities including fisheries to generate higher levels of foreign exchange earnings
- (ii) Food and nutrition security through the production of selected commodities including fish and fish products. Affordable food prices, self-sufficiency and environmental sustainability
- (iii) Import substitution which involves production of special commodities for import replacement, saving foreign exchange, increasing linkages particularly the tourism sector, and development of export-based agro-industries
- (iv) Employment creation for the rural population with particular emphasis on the fisheries sub-sector. Protection and preservation of the environment

Although there is no policy specifically governing plant genetic resources in food and agriculture (PGRFA), the main thrust of the Government has been to “diversify around banana” and to increase production and export of root crops, fruits and vegetables. The goals of management within the crop development programmes, are to meet the challenges of life style diseases (obesity, diabetes, high blood pressure and certain types of cancer), of climate change and the changing tastes of the populace for home grown foods, herbs, spices and herbal medicines. Special efforts are invested into processing and exporting local products from hot pepper (*Capsicum chinense* Jacq.), cassava and herbs.

Cross-sectoral integration (Biodiversity mainstreaming)

11. The National Environmental Management Strategy and Action Plan (NEMS)

The NEMS was developed in 2004 through a process of district and sectoral consultations and review of key national policies and programmes. The NEMS was intended to guide programmes in environmental management over the long-term, but was designed with an initial 3 year implementation period (2004-2006) in consideration of ongoing funding cycles and public sector investment programmes. The document’s structure mirrors that of the St. George’s Declaration of Principles for Environmental Sustainability in the OECS (SGD).

The NEMS attempted to address what were regarded as the major hindrances to the effective utilization of most existing national strategies and action plans. The first was that these strategies and plans were not integrated into the work programmes of existing institutions; and the second, the prevailing misconception they added strain on the human, financial and material resources of these agencies for their implementation. To correct this, “approximately 80% of the activities in the NEMS came from the operational plans the Government agencies which have a mandates that affect environmental management, taking into consideration approved annual budget estimates. These agencies were expected to adopt the relevant sections of the NEMS into their workplans, then at the end of the initial period, review progress and plan for the next 3-year cycle; in keeping with adaptive management.

Nevertheless, the NEMS implementation has been less than desirable and the document has not been updated since 2004.

12. The Interim Poverty Reduction Strategy Paper

The Poverty Reduction Strategy Paper (PRSP) is intended to be the blue print for developing policies and programmes to address key elements of Poverty Reduction in the short, medium, and long term. Specific mention of Biodiversity is not made in St. Vincent’s Interim Poverty Reduction Strategy Paper.

However, it does recognize that environmental sustainability is “a critical component of poverty reduction strategies” and highlights the nexus between environment and poverty alleviation. It also acknowledges that despite “the progress made over the last decade in strengthening the policy and institutional arrangements for natural resource planning and management at the national and regional level, the environment in the region is still gravely at risk.” (p.37).

The IPRSP further notes that:

“SVG must put in place policies that ensure close regional cooperation and collaboration in developing environmental policies. In addition, policies that support education, sensitisation and strict enforcement of environmental contraventions need to be urgently effected. Such policies will include land and sand use management; solid waste management; “cleaner and more energy efficient and environmentally desirable technologies, systems and methods”. All sectors of civil society must be involved in the understanding and fulfilment of their responsibilities in maintaining environmental quality and sustainability”. (p.37)

Specifically in relation to the policy on job-creation and livelihood security in the agricultural sector, a strategy on implementation of soil and water conservation measures and management of marine resources is also proposed in the document. Further, with regards to supporting job creation in the tourism sector, there is mention of the need for public education programs and training in and out of schools on, among other things, environmental protection. Despite the general recognition of the importance of environmental sustainability in the document, “the environment” is not part of the “recommended strategic programmes” on Agriculture, or any other sector. This may have been an oversight in the design of the document.

Another related issue addressed in the IPRSP is the need for strengthening data collection and management “so that policies and programmes could be guided by accurate and objective data”. It notes that “it is imperative that systems be in place to increase and ensure sound capacity for improved data generation and analysis”, and recommends that “a Monitoring and Coordinating Unit be established in order to operationalize the recommendations of the I-PRSP and to develop the parameters of actions that would comprise the full PRSP that should be completed by 2004”. (p.39) Such a Unit should no-doubt, be able to assess progress in implementation of the environmentally related recommendations of the PRSP and would, perhaps, serve a vital function in achieving environmental mainstreaming.

13. The (draft) National Economic and Social Development Plan (NESDP)

The NESDP is intended to be the primary document that will guide economic and social development in St. Vincent and the Grenadines between 2010 and 2020. The plan was developed in a bottom-up fashion wherein a wide-reaching series of consultations were held to solicit the views of nationals living both within the State and throughout the Diaspora on their “vision 2020; that is, what they would like the country to be like in 10 years time. The resulting plan consists of 5 goals and accompanying objectives and strategies. Of particular relevance is goal four (4): Improving Physical infrastructure, preserving the environment and mitigating the impact of climate change. Objectives 4.4, 4.5 and 4.6 especially address issues that are relevant to the UNCBD. The details of these Objectives and their associated strategies are outlined in table 1.

By far the NESDP is perhaps the most comprehensive strategy that can act as an instrument of cross-sectoral integration of biodiversity in St. Vincent and the Grenadines.

Table 1. Biodiversity-related objectives and strategies of the SVG 2010-2020 NESDP

Objective	Strategic Interventions
4.4 To conserve the natural resources of the country through effective utilization and management.	4.4.1 Develop appropriate measures to protect and restore the rich natural resources of the country. 4.4.2 Develop alternative and sustainable livelihood programmes for local communities in protected areas. 4.4.3 Develop and employ methodologies for the economic assessment and accounting of natural resources.
4.5 To preserve or effectively manage the biological resources.	4.5.1 Manage and restore where possible the biological diversity. 4.5.2 Develop and implement an Integrated Watershed management plan. 4.5.3 Develop and implement a Coastal Area Management Plan. 4.5.4 Adopt measures to restore environmentally degraded areas. 4.5.5 Strengthen the capacity of non-governmental organisations in environmental management. 4.5.6 Strengthen the existing legal and institutional frameworks to discourage environmental degradation. 4.5.7 Generate and maintain wildlife buffer stock for reintroduction into their natural habitat. 4.5.7 Develop research on biological resources, their management and their intrinsic socio-economic and cultural values.
4.6 To ensure a clean, safe and healthy environment.	4.6.1 Adopt and implement appropriate measures to adequately manage solid and liquid waste, including hazardous waste, and atmospheric pollutants. 4.6.2 Develop a sustainable waste management system. 4.6.3 Manage terrestrial, marine and atmospheric resources, organisms and eco-systems in a sustainable manner. 4.6.4 Encourage the adherence to SVG's commitment under Multilateral Environmental Agreements (MEAs). 4.6.5 Enhance the capacity at the ministry responsible for the environment as well as NGOs in environmental protection and management. 4.6.6 Develop fiscal and other policy incentives to encourage environmentally sustainable imports and the use of local products with low waste degradable content.

14. The (draft) National Physical Development Plan (NPDP)

A draft National Physical Development Plan was prepared in 2001 by the Ministry of Finance and Economic Planning.. It was intended to outline a set of appropriate policies and strategies that would promote sustainable integrated national development through judicious spatial planning. Some of the key provisions related to the protection of biodiversity articulated in the draft plan include:

- Facilitation of poverty alleviation initiatives;
- Conservation and protection of the country's natural resources;
- Promotion of order in the settlement pattern in the country;
- Promotion of satisfactory standards in the built environment;
- Development of an efficient system of transportation and public utilities;
- Allocation of land and infrastructure for adequate housing;
- Guarantee of an equitable distribution of community social facilities.

However, this plan is yet to be completed. Furthermore, because of the changes in circumstances that have taken place since the preparation of the original draft, the plan is also in significant need of updating.

15. Integration of Biodiversity in EIAs and SEAs

The Town and Country Planning Act, 1992 provides a mechanism for consideration to be given to environmental consequences of national projects, by requiring EIAs required for projects likely to have adverse effects on the environment. EIAs are also required for Government projects with external funding. The Act gives the Physical Planning and Development Board the authority to require EIAs for projects likely to cause pollution or have adverse effects on the environment. Nonetheless, EIA requirements in the Town and Country Planning Act do not guarantee adequate consideration of environmental impacts of development projects and current actions to minimize adverse impacts on biodiversity are inadequate. Efforts should be made to apply the Guidelines for Incorporating Biodiversity-related Issues into EIA legislation or Processes and in Strategic Impact Assessment.

The EMA (2009) outlines the requirement for some plans, policies and programmes likely to have a significant impact on the environment to undergo Strategic Environmental [Analysis] Assessment upon recommendation by the Director of the EMD. But the specific requirements are not outlined in this act.

The application of strategic environmental assessment would ensure that implementation of the different sectoral and cross-sectoral plans have minimal adverse impacts on biodiversity and better contribute to the objectives of the convention. It would be easier to identify perverse incentives and to spot opportunities for more win-win strategies.

16. The Effectiveness of Mainstreaming

The purpose of mainstreaming is to generate a “better understanding of the capabilities of environmental assets, the consequences of environmental hazards and the real or potential impacts of development on the environment”. The hope is that this new understanding would lead to better decision-making. Consequently, the mere existence of policies that have in one way or another incorporated biodiversity or wider environmental considerations are not in themselves indicative of the effectiveness of mainstreaming in St. Vincent and the Grenadines. More often than not, many plan and policies are not widely utilized by all the key agencies in their planning and decision making. There is still widespread concern among environmental professionals that the environment is still somewhat of an after-thought and that the consequences for biodiversity are still steeply rising. Furthermore, the lack of sustained funding and resources to support implementation of the plans makes it extremely difficult to coordinate and enforce the requirements for the protection of habitat areas which support important biodiversity components.

The Way Forward: Enhancing Cross-Sectoral Integration (Mainstreaming) of Biodiversity in SVG

17. Sensitize key decision-makers/ policy-makers

There is a need to promote greater understanding and awareness of the ecosystem services that biodiversity provides. A clearly defined communication, education and public awareness strategy must be developed and implemented. Champions for conservation must be identified both within government and civil society, and used as mouth-pieces for biodiversity issues.

Other tools/ strategies which should be more effectively utilized to encourage better decision-making regarding biodiversity conservation and sustainable use include:

- Payment for Ecosystem Services and other economic incentives
- Involving key stakeholders in all aspects and at all stages of environmental mainstreaming. This involves: stakeholder analysis; participatory mapping; collective or community visioning; conflict management; facilitating effective multi-stakeholder processes; participatory policy processes; partnership building; strategic alliances; stakeholder mobilisation.
- Lobbying, advocacy by environmental NGOs
- Multi-agency committees/interagency collaboration
- Data-sharing and accessibility protocols, databases

By implementing these tools in a more coordinated and systematic manner, more effective mainstreaming is likely to take place.

18. Link the NBSAP process more closely to the National Planning Cycle

The NBSAP should not be a static document, but rather should be continually revised and updated as more information about threats and trends in biodiversity are understood. Revisions should therefore be tied to other national planning cycles so that the changes could be more effectively integrated into other sectoral and cross-sectoral plans and policies.

Many stakeholders are desperate to find out how they could better “tap-in” to the national planning and decision-making process at the most appropriate stages. The National Capacity Self Assessment identified that “the absence of a policy manual at the departmental level that can serve as an easy reference to guide operations within a department, between departments and between departments and third parties” is a major constraint in this regard. Such a document is greatly needed as it would “lead to consistency, clarity and accountability in programme delivery” and would identify greater opportunities for collaboration between agencies.

19. Adopt the Ecosystem Approach

The COP describes the ecosystem approach as the primary framework for action under the Convention. It is a strategy for the integrated management of land, water and living resources that promotes conservation and sustainable use in an equitable way. Thus, the application of the ecosystem approach will help to reach a balance of the three objectives of the Convention: conservation; sustainable use; and the fair and equitable sharing of the benefits arising out of the utilization of genetic resources.

Although all OECS countries have committed to adopting the ecosystem approach in the form of Island Systems Management, as outlined in the St. Georges Declaration of Principles for Environmental sustainability; none of the current national plans nor policies in St. Vincent have adopted an ecosystem approach. This should therefore be a top priority.

20. More comprehensively address biodiversity in the Poverty Reduction Strategy Paper

Currently, although general recognition is given to the importance of environmental management to poverty alleviation, none of the recommended strategic programmes specifically address environmental or biodiversity conservation. As St. Vincent moves towards from an I-PRSP towards a full Poverty Reduction Strategy paper; it is critical that biodiversity conservation and sustainable usage be more explicitly addressed in this key policy document. Clearer linkages between biodiversity and MDG targets should be stated.