

NBSAP Training Package - Version II

Module 2

The Biodiversity Planning Process: How to Prepare or Update a National Biodiversity Strategy and Action Plan

Preliminary DRAFT for Consultation

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This module forms part of a seven-module NBSAP training package, which is currently being revised based on Parties' fourth national reports and NBSAPs, and recent COP decisions. The package is intended for national focal points and biodiversity planners and will be used in upcoming regional and sub-regional capacity building workshops on revising and updating NBSAPs. Each module will be made available on the CBD Secretariat's website (<http://www.cbd.int/nbsap/training/>) for consultation as it is revised. Your comments and input are welcome; please direct them to [secretariat@cbd.int](mailto:secretariat@cbd.int).

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Please note that the text of the modules are based, where relevant, on the draft decisions recommended by WGRI 3, pertaining to the revised Strategic Plan, NBSAPs and capacity building, and are thus provisional and contingent on the outcome of COP 10.

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1. Introduction

This Module explains how to prepare or update an NBSAP- the main instrument for implementation of the Convention at the country level. Many, perhaps most, of the users of this module will be from countries that have already developed an NBSAP (or equivalent instrument) and are approaching the need to revise and update it. When COP adopts the revised Strategic Plan and the new set of global targets for 2020 and 2050¹, parties will be requested to revise their NBSAPs accordingly. They will also be requested to develop national targets that correspond to the new global targets. This module provides an overview of biodiversity planning for those Parties who have yet to prepare their first NBSAP and for those preparing to revise their NBSAPs.

The module emphasizes that the NBSAP needs to be a nationally driven and owned process, which is cyclical – in the sense that the seven step process is periodically repeated, and adaptive – in the sense that the process, content and implementation of the NBSAP are adjusted based on continual review, feedback and learning.

The Module begins by providing guiding principles for the development and review of the NBSAP. These principles are drawn from the guidance provided by **COP decision IX/8 on NBSAPs**². The latter part of section two explains the possible forms and contents of an NBSAP. Section 3, the main body of the module, follows with a seven-step process for developing, implementing and updating the NBSAP.

2. Guiding Principles and Possible Forms of the NBSAP

Guiding Principles

- a) NBSAPs are **key implementation tools of the Convention**. They must **address all three objectives of the Convention**:
 - Conservation of biodiversity
 - Sustainable use of the components of biodiversity
 - Fair and equitable sharing of the benefits deriving from the utilization of genetic resources.
- b) The NBSAP should **highlight, and seek to maintain the contribution of biodiversity and ecosystem services** to human well being (including having the basics for a good life, health, good social relations, security and freedom of choice and action), poverty eradication, and national development as well as the economic, social, cultural and other values of biodiversity.

¹ This text presumes that COP X will adopt the decisions recommended by WGRI 3 including the revised Strategic Plan and recommended decisions pertaining to NBSAPs and capacity building.

² The full text of COP 9 Decision IX/8 can be found at: <http://www.cbd.int/decision/cop/?id=11651>

- c) The NBSAP is a **strategic instrument for achieving concrete outcomes**, and not a scientific study, review or publication that sits on a shelf. Its role is to identify and prioritize the **action required** in order to meet the objectives of the CBD at national level, and to devise a **plan of how to implement that action**.
- d) In order to be effective, it is important that the NBSAP be **jointly developed, adopted, and owned by the full range of stakeholders involved**. For this the NBSAP process must be open, participative and transparent. It is also important that **high-level government support be secured** in the process of developing, updating and implementing the NBSAP.
- e) The NBSAP **must include measures to mainstream biodiversity** into sectoral and cross-sectoral policies and programs. Conservation involves much more than protected area management and implementation of conservation actions; it necessarily requires mainstreaming. To an even greater degree, achieving sustainable use objectives will require mainstreaming.
- f) **Biodiversity planning is a long-term, cyclical and adaptive process**. It will involve continual monitoring, evaluation, and revision, as progress is made, conditions evolve, and lessons are learned.

Whatever recommendations or guidelines may be consulted for the biodiversity planning process (including these modules), the key elements of a successful NBSAP will be stakeholder buy-in, adaptability and creativity. The particular situation, resources and characteristics of each country will vary, and the NBSAP managers will need to objectively assess these, identify objectives, and determine how best to achieve these in light of the country's specific conditions and resources. It will require imagination, possibly new types of activities and, in some cases, breaking with past practice and the possible anxieties this can entail.

Possible Forms of the NBSAP

The NBSAP is often thought of as a single document or instrument. In many cases the visible 'product' of the NBSAP is a document. However **the *real* 'products' of the NBSAP are the principles, priorities, policies, instruments and programs that the country identifies as the way to achieve the three objectives of the Convention** in the country. Producing a document may be a useful way of consolidating and disseminating these myriad elements, and many Parties have submitted NBSAPS in this form. However, this is not the only form that an NBSAP can take.

Rather than a single document, the NBSAP may consist of several different 'stand alone' elements that work in a complementary fashion to implement the Convention in the country. In this sense, **the NBSAP can be seen like an envelope, or portfolio**, containing the measures, mechanisms and procedures that are required to meet the country's

biodiversity objectives. These elements may be brought together and made available on a web site (which could form part of the national Clearing House Mechanism). This has the advantage that new aspects can be introduced, or existing information updated, continuously, making the NBSAP a truly **live process** rather than a document that risks being put on the shelf. It also has the advantage of avoiding re-drafting and re-publishing the entire NBSAP when parts need to be updated. (Box 1 shows three alternative forms of NBSAP, those used by Brazil, France, and South Africa; Box 2 in Module 1 provides summaries of a broader sample of NBSAPs).

What is important is not the form of the NBSAP but rather that it serves the function of helping to mobilize and organize the relevant national stakeholders to identify, prioritize and materialize action to implement the Convention in their country and to mainstream biodiversity concerns into their sectoral and cross-sectoral planning.

Box 1 Alternative NBSAP Forms

Brazil came to the conclusion that its NBSAP would consist of a legal framework for the conservation and sustainable use of biodiversity and for access to genetic resources and benefit sharing; plans and programs for increasing knowledge of biodiversity; actions for conservation and sustainable use; and mechanisms to regulate access to genetic resources and associated traditional knowledge and benefit sharing. These elements were not brought together in a single NBSAP document, but are published electronically as a NBSAP website as part of the national biodiversity clearing-house mechanism.

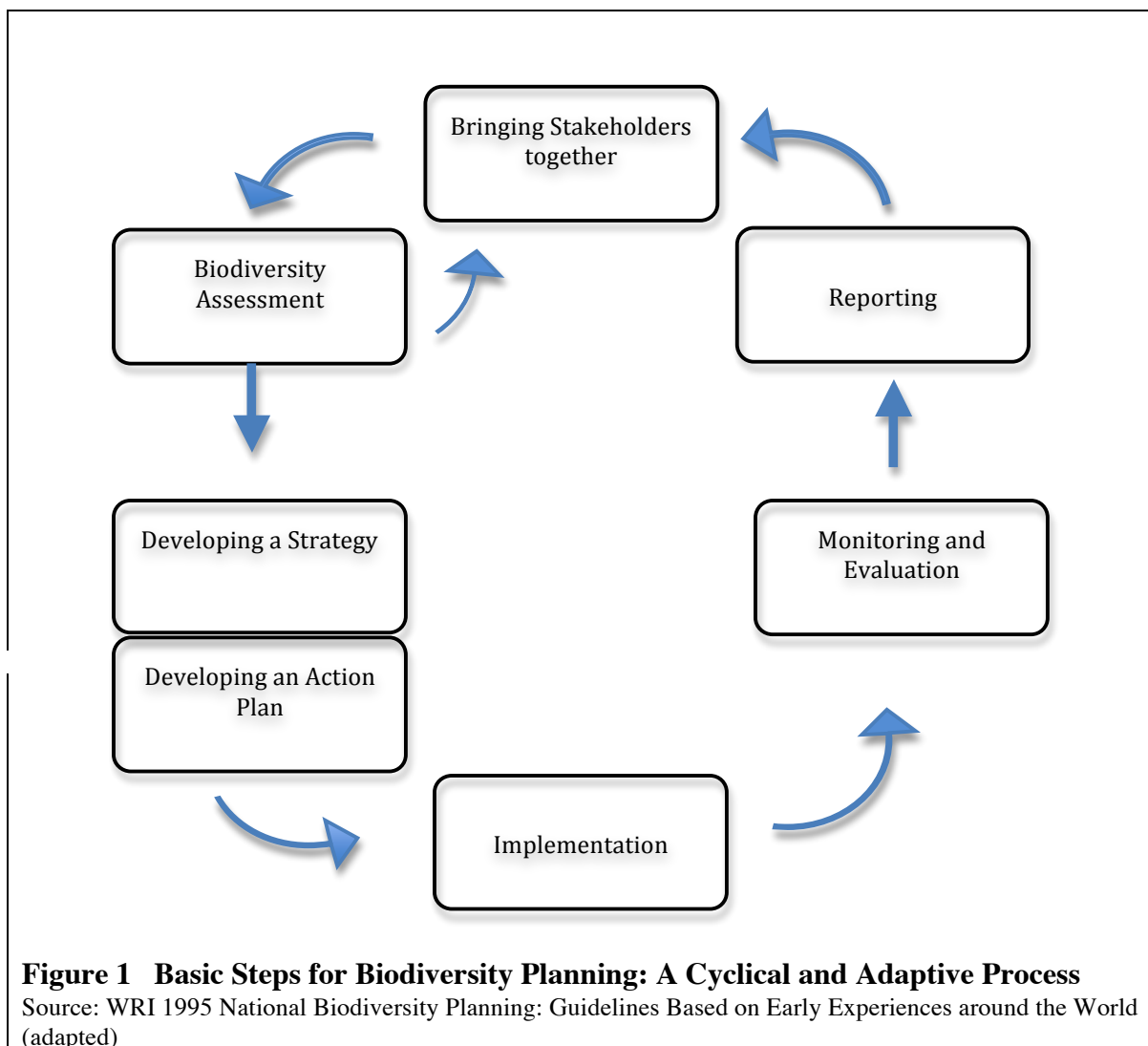
France's NBSAP consists of ten sectoral biodiversity action plans each coordinated by their corresponding ministry. A technical committee from the Ministry of Ecology, Energy, Sustainable Development and the Sea brings together the technical leads of each ensuring their implementation, the coherence of action, and the exchange of information.
(Source: France 4th National Report)

South Africa has developed a policy and legislative framework for biodiversity management to support the CBD objectives. Among the key policies in this framework is the Biodiversity Act, which established the South African Biodiversity Institute, and the National Biodiversity Framework. This Framework, building on the original NBSAP and the National Spatial Biodiversity Assessment, coordinates and aligns the efforts of many stakeholders involved in conserving and managing South Africa's biodiversity in support of sustainable development
(Source: South Africa 4th National Report)

3. A Seven-Step Process to Developing and Updating the NBSAP

Many of the countries who have developed NBSAPs over the past ten years have followed the seven-step biodiversity planning process suggested in the national biodiversity planning guidelines prepared by the World Resources Institute (WRI), IUCN and UNEP and recommended to Parties by the Conference of the Parties in 1995. These guidelines explain biodiversity planning as a cyclical and adaptive process, and illustrate this by showing the seven steps in the form of a flow diagram (see Figure 1). Those responsible for the

development and updating of the NBSAP will need to assess how to carry out these steps in light of the specific conditions in their country and the resources available.



The process for revising an NBSAP follows the same steps as recommended for developing the previous NBSAP. Being a cyclical and adaptive process, revising and updating the NBSAP implies re-visiting the seven steps and adapting content, processes, tools and practices based on what was learned in the previous round. While the steps are the same, the revision process is likely to be deeper, more comprehensive, and more targeted. It is also likely to be less difficult as some experience has already been gained in the previous planning and implementation phase.

The previous NBSAP phase(s) may have identified new or persisting gaps and needs, established and fully engaged a multi-stakeholder NBSAP community, begun the mainstreaming of biodiversity throughout government and economic sectors, and/or identified stakeholder categories that have yet to be brought into the process. Moreover, the monitoring and evaluation of the development and implementation of the previous NBSAP

phase may have produced important lessons for the new NBSAP phase. Many of these lessons may have been reported and analyzed in the country's fourth national report.

The seven steps of the process for developing or updating the NBSAP are as follows:

1: Identifying and Engaging Stakeholders

The process of developing and revising the NBSAP should be driven by the body responsible for national implementation of the CBD. This is often (though not always) the environment ministry or agency. However no single body will have the information and experience to develop the NBSAP on its own. And even if one did, it is important to involve as many relevant societal stakeholders as possible because their buy-in and participation is key to the effective implementation of the NBSAP. So, **the first task is to identify the main stakeholders who should be involved in this NBSAP process and to bring them together.**

Most countries will have already been through this initial process. However, **it is important to re-visit this first step when planning to update or revise the NBSAP** or to develop a new one. This is because some stakeholders may have been forgotten or overlooked in the previous round, and new stakeholders may have emerged during the implementation of the first NBSAP. This may be the case, for example, of some sectoral ministries or other government departments who were not responsive when the first NBSAP was being prepared but whose interest in biodiversity issues may have been heightened during the implementation of the previous NBSAP.

Revisiting the first step of the NBSAP development process should be an opportunity to ask:

- Who are the stakeholders? (Whose input/participation could help to improve the NBSAP and its implementation? Who is being affected by biodiversity loss? Who is affecting biodiversity? ...)
- Who, other than those already implementing the NBSAP, needs to be brought into the planning process?

Remember that these questions should not only be answered by those leading the NBSAP process but also by the stakeholders already involved. (Module 5 goes into detail about how to choose and engage stakeholders and how to establish a participatory process for developing the NBSAP).

By the end of this stage you should aim to have:

- *A small, representative group of stakeholders willing to form part of the NBSAP committee/working group.*
- *A broad range of participants engaged in the (larger) process - want to be consulted but not involved in drafting, organizing, consulting.... (Box 2 explains how Canada has assigned the roles of developing the NBSAP and advising on its contents).*
- *Participants are motivated to follow through to implementation*

- *Participants are actively participating – contributing to discussions, providing information, seeking solutions, open to dialogue...*
- *Added stakeholders to the group involved in the previous round; particularly important to have added decision makers from core government ministries (planning, finance,...), sectoral ministries, private sector, NGOs, indigenous and local communities....*

Box 2 Canada's Biodiversity Working Group and Advisory Group

In Canada, the primary responsibility for conserving biodiversity and ensuring the sustainable use of biological resources is shared among provincial, territorial and federal governments. Therefore, an intergovernmental **Biodiversity Working Group**, with representation from every jurisdiction, was established to develop the Canadian Biodiversity Strategy. Private property owners, businesses, indigenous people, conservation organizations, research institutions, foundations, and other groups also play an essential role in conserving biodiversity and sustainably using biological resources. Thus, a national non-governmental **Biodiversity Advisory Group** was established to provide advice to the Working Group.

Source: Canada NBSAP <http://www.cbin.ec.gc.ca/strategiesstrategy/default.cfm?lang=eng>

2: Assessing National Biodiversity and its Links with Human Well-being

The assessment stage of developing the NBSAP is designed to 'take stock' of what is already known about:

- a. The status and trends of the nation's biodiversity and biological resources; and an evaluation of the possibility of reducing loss of each biodiversity component in question.
- b. The drivers of biodiversity loss. Both the direct drivers (such as land use change, climate change, invasive species, over-exploitation, pollution) and the indirect drivers (such as changes in human population, incomes and/or lifestyle, and economic, socio-political, cultural and religious, and technological forces);
- c. The relationship between biodiversity and human well-being in the country;
- d. The country's framework of biodiversity relevant laws, policies, programmes, and expenditures; and an estimation of the ways in which different policy instruments might work to reduce the loss of biodiversity.
- e. The relevant national organizations, and human and technical capacity;
- f. Lessons learned from the planning and implementation of the previous NBSAP (if your country is developing its second or third NBSAP).
- g. Gaps and unmet needs

Much of this information will already be available in the country's fourth national report. While a-c above will have been addressed in chapter 1, d-g will be found in chapters 2 and 3. (Box 5 in Module 3 gives a detailed list of types of information that could be useful for Mainstreaming)

The assessment should not involve conducting new research but should concentrate on bringing together existing information. This may be achieved by organizing a national biodiversity assessment workshop with expert institutions and individuals. Countries' 4th National Reports, thematic reports to the CBD, and reports to other biodiversity-related multilateral agreements should contain much of this information and will be a good place to start in gathering and consolidating information. As is mentioned below in the reporting step of the biodiversity planning process, reporting should not only be seen as an obligation to COP, rather every effort should be made to make the reporting process as useful as possible in feeding into the NBSAP process information regarding status and trends and importantly regarding the effectiveness of measures taken to implement the Convention.

Many countries' first NBSAP contains a component for carrying out a deeper scientific assessment of the status and trends of aspects of national biodiversity, identified in the initial assessment. When the time comes to revise the NBSAP, countries are likely to have a better knowledge of their national biodiversity and its links with human well-being and development. They are also likely to have a better understanding of what they don't know about national biodiversity and this more precise identification of knowledge gaps can help to orient research activities included in the NBSAP. **The generation of new knowledge/information, when deemed necessary, should be undertaken simultaneously with other activities in the biodiversity action plan, rather than before other actions are taken.**

The knowledge and information consolidated in this stocktaking exercise will form the basis for the **establishment of goals and objectives** of the revised NBSAP. It will also help to **determine what actions are necessary** in order to implement the Convention at the national level. This information will also be crucial in **making the case** for conservation, sustainable use and equitable benefit sharing through a communication strategy for the NBSAP and its components. (Module 7 goes into more detail on developing a communication and public awareness strategy).

Many countries have seen the lack of country-specific information as a major obstacle in biodiversity planning. While knowledge and information gaps are important, there are **many sources of available information outside environment ministries and authorities** that could be very useful. These sources include:

- Other government departments
- Non-governmental organizations (environmental NGOs and others working on development more broadly)
- Universities
- UN agencies working in the country
- International Environmental NGOs' working in the country – including IUCN, Birdlife International, TNC, WWF etc.
- Development cooperation agencies that work in the country
- CGIAR Centers and other international research entities working in the country

By the end of this step you should aim to have:

- *A reliable picture (even if it is based on expert opinion) of what is already known about the status and trends of national biodiversity, the threats it faces and the origins of these threats.*
- *A clear understanding of why, and in what ways, biodiversity is important for the country.*
- *A firm understanding of the national legal and administrative framework, and existing institutional and human capacities.*
- *A list of gaps and unmet needs (from implementation of previous NBSAP or other environment related programmes).*

3: Developing a Strategy

Once the relevant stakeholders have been identified and engaged (step 1), and the available information has been consolidated (step 2), it is time to develop the national biodiversity strategy. **The strategy is a statement of *where the country wants to go and which route it will take to get there*.** In order to develop a strategy the biodiversity planning committee must agree on the **principles** that will guide the NBSAP, **set priorities** for the coming NBSAP phase, and reach consensus on acceptable **targets** for the coming NBSAP phase.

- The statement of **principles** consists of the **values and beliefs** underlying the NBSAP. It will be up to each country to decide what the appropriate set of principles should be, in light of its particular circumstances, biodiversity and issues identified. **Principles could include:** the importance of biodiversity; the benefits it provides to the security and well-being of the population; the role it currently plays in the national economy and the role it could play in meeting national development objectives; the need for all stakeholders to become engaged; the principle that mainstreaming will be key to the NBSAP's successful implementation; the importance of education and outreach, among others
- The **priorities** will be that set of **most pressing issues** that can feasibly be addressed in the NBSAP period. Among these will be the sectoral and cross-sectoral plans that will be targeted for mainstreaming. These are difficult decisions to take, especially if a number of critical issues have been identified in the assessment. It is however essential to be realistic and retain focus, even if this means putting off some serious issues to a future phase. It is better to identify the real key issues and concentrate on making progress on these, than to spread efforts and resources too thinly with the risk of being ineffective on all fronts.
- The **targets** of the NBSAP will be the **national targets** established to correspond with the new global targets established at COP 10. These will necessarily be developed iteratively with their corresponding indicators (Module 4 goes into more detail on establishing targets).

Figure 3 explains how the assessment and strategy development stages of the Brazilian NBSAP were carried out.

Once a draft strategy has been developed, it is time to develop a corresponding action plan. **It is not unusual for the strategy and action plan steps to be iterative** - meaning that there will probably be some back and forth between these two stages. In fact, some prefer to see these two stages as one. While some countries have chosen to have public consultations or a national dialogue after developing the strategy, others have waited until both the strategy and action plan have been drafted. It will be up to the NBSAP working committee of each country to decide on which process is best in their contexts.

4: Developing a Plan of Action

The principles and priorities from the strategy will need to be turned into specific sets of activities to be carried out within the implementation period of the NBSAP in order to meet its goals, objectives and targets. The action plan is thus the *vehicle for implementation*; it is ***how we are going to get to where we want to go***.

Developing an action plan thus involves:

- a. Identifying the **action required** in order to meet the NBSAP goals, objectives and targets established in the strategy. These actions will arise from the priorities established during the strategy development step (i.e. If the strategy prioritizes raising awareness of biodiversity issues among youth, the action plan should include some activity that will be aimed at achieving this; if the strategy prioritizes making national fisheries sustainable, then the action plan should include measures such as limiting total allowable fish catch, regulating allowable fishing gear, establishing marine protected areas and no-take zones, or any other measure deemed appropriate in the particular context).

Contents of the action plan could include:

- Developing or amending and implementing policies, legislation, and institutional arrangements,
- Putting into place or amending regulations and procedures
- Using approaches and tools such as biodiversity inclusive strategic environmental assessment for mainstreaming
- Establishing a national environmental management capacity development program,
- Communication, education and public awareness activities,
- Conducting research activities,
- Implementing resource mobilization activities
- Creating and/or enhancing the national Clearing House Mechanism
- Protecting a sensitive ecosystem
- Development of indicators

(Module 1 goes into more detail on COP 9 Decision IX/8, which provides guidance on NBSAP content and processes)

Figure 2 How the Assessment and Strategy Development Steps were Carried Out in Brazil's NBSAP Planning Process

This diagram from Brazil's NBSAP website shows the sequence of steps followed:

Assessment:

- Biodiversity reviews by biome;
- Reviews of the legal framework, institutional capacity, CBD provisions;
- Sectoral and state level consultations.

Strategy development:

- Synthesis of stocktaking;
- First draft of the strategy;
- Regional meetings;

- Meetings of the National Biodiversity Commission;
- Second draft;
- National workshop;

- Final version of the strategy, subsequently approved by Parliament and enacted into



law.

The components of the strategy (i.e. the **priorities**) were identified as being:

- knowledge of biodiversity
- conservation of biodiversity
- sustainable use of the components of biodiversity
- monitoring, assessment, prevention and mitigation of impacts on biodiversity
- access to genetic resources and to associated traditional knowledge and benefit sharing
- education, public awareness, information and dissemination on biodiversity
- legal and institutional strengthening for biodiversity management

Source: www.mma.gov.br/index.php?ido=conteudo.monta&idEstrutura=37&idConteudo=2044

The **policies** to be identified in the action plan will be those that can be expected to

successfully address the NBSAP priorities in the most democratic and cost-effective way. It is important at this stage to assess how the NBSAP and related national policies – such as a national sustainable development policy, national policy for meeting the Millennium Development Goals, or policies contained in national poverty reduction plans – can be made mutually supportive. It is also important to seek synergies with the policies being considered in the national implementation of other biodiversity-related conventions and agreements.

- b. Identifying and securing the **human, technical and financial resources** necessary to carry out these actions (Module 6 explains how to develop a resource mobilization strategy for financing NBSAP implementation).

Some countries **mistakenly see the ‘action plan’ part of the NBSAP as a list of projects they would like to undertake**. While the first steps of the biodiversity planning process will shed light on many unmet needs that could form the basis for convincing proposals, the NBSAP action plan is intended to consist of **actions that will be implemented**, and for which human, technical and financial resources have already been identified/earmarked, or for which there is a clear plan for obtaining the necessary resources. It is in this latter sense that resource mobilization activities can form part of the action plan.

- c. **Programming** which will involve determining:

- **Who does what?** – Which organizations (public or private) will be charged with implementing which activities arising out of the strategy;
- **Where?** – In what biomes, regions, or other national geographical category will the priority NBSAP activities take place (if the strategy has not already determined these)
- **When?** – What are the time phases for activities, how long is each activity expected to take, how much is each expected to have achieved by the time of the next revision of the NBSAP and what are the critical milestones that need to be identified in order to ensure that the lessons of implementation are available for the next revision process;
- **How?** – The resources (people, institutions, facilities, and funds) that will be allocated to different activities.

- d. **Establishing indicators** by which progress towards national targets will be measured and reported, and deciding on monitoring and evaluation mechanisms.

Given the concrete nature of the action plan, it is very likely that its development may shed light on the realism and attainability of the strategy and may even require revisiting the strategy and adjusting it to what is realistic and attainable within the time frame, resources and socio-economic and political reality of the country. It should be expected that the strategy and action plan steps of the biodiversity planning process will be iterative.

5: Implementing the NBSAP

NBSAP implementation involves carrying out the agreed plan of action in the way envisaged, within the allocated time frame. Implementation will occur on several fronts and by different actors simultaneously, for example:

- Preparing, negotiating and adopting legislative and administrative measures will be carried out by civil servants and politicians.
- Carrying out the scientific and research activities in the plan of action will be carried out by scientists in universities or research institutes;
- Undertaking specific projects in particular biomes and/or with particular economic sectors or stakeholders may be carried out by national or international NGOs, or by local governments.
- Carrying out education and public awareness activities may be charged to educational institutions.

One key to successful implementation will be to establish an effective **NBSAP management unit** that will have at all times a reliable and comprehensive overview of how implementation is proceeding, what issues are arising, what adjustments can be made in the course of implementation and what needs to be fed into the next review. This group can also keep track of interesting developments that can be fed into the NBSAP communication strategy and reporting content. **However the need for the NBSAP managers to maintain such an overview does not mean that they should centralize or seek to control implementation activities.** The NBSAP is a partnership in which partners should be granted the autonomy to carry out activities in the way they feel best reflects their preferences and expertise. Implementation is an iterative and cyclical process in which successive plans of actions will be jointly agreed on the basis of the experience of implementation and the conclusions of the monitoring and evaluation mechanisms built into the process.

During implementation the number of stakeholders, including ones not so far identified or engaged, is likely to change (some stakeholders will fall out while others will get involved). The implementation of the NBSAP is likely to draw the attention of those governmental, private sector and civil society bodies that operate in economic or policy sectors that depend, and have an impact, on biodiversity. This must be encouraged and every effort should be made to bring these and other relevant stakeholders into the NBSAP process, to elicit their views and to understand their relationship with biodiversity, such that they may become involved in the implementation of the NBSAP, and/or fully engaged and incorporated into the next revision cycle.

6: Monitoring and Evaluating Implementation of the NBSAP

The NBSAP managers will need to be able to measure the effectiveness of activities carried out under the plan of action and to systematize and validate the assessment of outcomes so that they will have a reliable basis on which to conduct the process for reviewing and

updating the NBSAP. It is also important to monitor and evaluate the process by which the NBSAP was developed and implemented (i.e. Who was involved, what their roles were, how decisions were made, when and how public consultation was done, how new stakeholders were approached, etc.) in order to have a basis on which to improve the process itself and make it more effective. Information generated through these evaluations will be extremely useful in preparing national reports to the CBD and possibly also for other reporting requirements.

Monitoring and evaluation mechanisms and procedures need to be built into the plan of action, and need to be set in place at the start of the implementation phase. Project planning often involves the preparation of a logical framework consisting of objectives, activities, indicators, means of verification, and assumptions and risks. Preparing such frameworks for each set of activities can be useful in keeping track of outcomes in relation to objectives and activities, and thus in gleaning lessons from the planning and implementation process to be fed into the next NBSAP planning cycle.

For other elements of the plan of action – for example, developing a legal and administrative framework, carrying out scientific research or building capacity – such logical frameworks may not always be feasible or appropriate. It will therefore be important to identify appropriate baseline data and indicators of progress in order to be able to evaluate the outcomes of activities carried out and their effectiveness in meeting their objectives.

When deciding on a monitoring and evaluation approach, it is important to keep in mind that monitoring and evaluation is also **preferably done by a range of stakeholders, or by independent bodies**, in order to assure the accuracy and the balance of the information generated. Box 3 explains the experience of Finland in reviewing the implementation of their NBSAP.

Box 3 Finland Commissions Independent Review of NBSAP

The Finnish Government became the first European country to adopt its revised biodiversity strategy at the end of 2006. The Finnish Ministries of Environment, Agriculture and Forestry, Transport and Communications, and Foreign Affairs jointly commissioned a major evaluation of the country's first NBSAP (1997-2005) to inform its revision. The evaluation – conducted in 2004-5 by an independent team of researchers drawn from a number of Finnish research institutes – used 75 indicators. It aimed to assess: the state and trends of biodiversity in Finland; the effectiveness of the Action Plan and its impacts on these trends; prospects for reaching the 2010 target and new measures needed. The evaluation found that while the Action Plan had led to a number of favorable changes, measures taken so far are not sufficient to halt the loss of biodiversity by 2010. The analysis showed that not all sectors had taken full responsibility for biodiversity conservation in their own areas.

The evaluation results included the following recommendations:

- New measures are needed for halting biodiversity loss;
- Emphasize sector responsibility;
- Monitoring needs to be improved;

- Establish planning and information systems related to biodiversity;
- Implement permanent mechanisms for gathering data and establishing relevant indicators including interaction between society and research;
- Social, cultural and economic incentives need to be created.

These results have been used in developing Finland's revised NBSAP (2006-2016), entitled "Saving nature for people". It aims not only to halt the decline of biodiversity but also to prepare, by 2016, for climate change and other global changes that may threaten the natural environment in Finland.

A National Commission including all ministries and stakeholder groups coordinated the development of the 2nd NBSAP. A key objective is intensifying sector responsibility. The associated Action Plan includes 110 measures for the implementation of the National Strategy, and, for each one, the Plan defines which ministries are responsible. The Plan is closely linked to each of the Convention's Programmes of Work. An online implementation table with public accessibility will be finished by autumn 2008.

Source: Presentation by representative from Finland at the Regional Capacity Workshop for Europe on NBSAPs and Mainstreaming Biodiversity, in Vilm, Germany, April 2008.

7: Reporting

Parties to the CBD are required to present to COP periodic reports on measures they have taken to implement the Convention and the effectiveness of these measures³. The reporting format is decided by COP and is specifically designed to provoke countries into reviewing the action they have taken to implement specific COP recommendations contained in its decisions, the CBD programmes of work, and their NBSAP.

Many countries have found that the experience of preparing their fourth national reports identified gaps in the NBSAP and issues, which required special attention. In addition to generating the national report then, this process also provided the basis for a proposed revision of the NBSAP. Box 4 gives an example of this.

Box 4 An example of the preparation of the National Report leading to the revision of the NBSAP

The process of preparing Brazil's Third National Report to the CBD in early 2005 identified existing gaps in implementation of the National Biodiversity Policy and led to preparation of a document containing a draft revision of the National Biodiversity Policy. This was distributed to stakeholders and opened for public consultation via the national clearing-house mechanism. Stakeholders were requested to identify omissions, additional gaps, priority actions to cover the gaps and indicators for monitoring. 780 proposals were received and were consolidated into a single document that formed the basis for a national workshop in August 2005 involving 130 participants from NGOs, the private sector, research institutions, state and federal governments

³ Article 26 of the CBD. Module [8] addresses the process of national reporting

and members of the National Biodiversity Commission. This workshop identified 494 proposed activities for the revised biodiversity strategy and action plan. At the end of a six-month period of consolidation and review, in February 2006 the “Guidelines and Priorities of the Plan of Implementation of the National Biodiversity Policy”, a revised and updated strategy comprising 142 activities, was approved.

Source: http://www.mma.gov.br/estruturas/chm/_arquivos/panbio%20final.pdf

In addition to the national report to the CBD, countries may be obliged to prepare other reports on biodiversity policy or implementation of the CBD – for example, to Parliament or to national audit offices. The preparation of any report will constitute an opportunity to identify gaps, opportunities and weaknesses and provide the basis for revising the NBSAP.

The process of preparing the national report to the CBD (and any other report on biodiversity planning and its effectiveness) should be a fully participative national process, involving all the stakeholders involved in the development and implementation of the NBSAP.

The Conference of the Parties has decided that national reports should be submitted at four-yearly intervals. Given this link between preparation of the national report and identification of the need to revise the NBSAP, it will be logical and cost-effective for countries to operate a similar four-year cycle for updating the NBSAP.

Placing the National Reports in the official CBD website is done for the benefit of many actors. For example NBSAP country managers are encouraged to regularly examine reports from other countries especially those with similar biodiversity challenges as them. This encourages South-South information exchange and learning. Good practices and ideas from other countries may greatly assist others who may be doing their planning slightly later.

Conclusion

This module has explained why the development and implementation of the NBSAP has to be an iterative and cyclical process. In the early stages the status and trends of national biodiversity will not be fully known, not all threats will have been identified and assessed, understanding of the goods and services provided by biodiversity and the economic and societal values of these will not be widespread, and many sectors will not fully comprehend the connections between their activities and policies and the status of biodiversity.

As implementation proceeds, more reliable scientific data will be obtained, the outcomes of different policy options and types of activities will become apparent, the range of stakeholders will expand, and progress towards mainstreaming will be made. These developments will provide opportunities for expanding and perfecting policies and actions, rethinking policies and engaging more stakeholders, and identifying gaps and needs. Progress will be made in some issues, which will allow other priority issues to be addressed. The broader socioeconomic and political contexts may change.

The NBSAP will be in a state of constant flux, changing in response both to its own internal dynamics and to the external context. Faced with this, it must be periodically reviewed and updated in order to remain an effective and strategic instrument for achieving concrete outcomes, by driving public policy and generating the activities and changes that will achieve the objectives of the CBD at national level.

As noted before, many readers will be from countries that have by now developed a first NBSAP and learned from the experience of the first phase of implementation. Their challenge now is to update the NBSAP to take into account this experience. The module has tried to illustrate that the updating process will follow the same sequence of steps as the initial development of the NBSAP, although with a greater capacity to identify the key issues and revised priorities and with the fuller participation of an expanded range of stakeholders.

Resources

- WRI National Biodiversity Planning: Guidelines Based on Early Experiences around the World (1995): <http://pubs.wri.org/nationalbiodiversityplanning-pub-2667.html>
- UNEP Guidelines for Country Studies on Biological Diversity (1995): <http://www.biodiv.org/doc/meetings/sbstta/sbstta-01/information/sbstta-01-inf-03-en.pdf>
- The website of the Biodiversity Planning Support Programme contains much useful material, including biodiversity planning guidelines and models: <http://www.undp.org/bpsp>
- The CBD website provides access to NBSAPs: <http://www.cbd.int/reports/list.aspx?type=nbsap>

List of Acronyms

BPSP Biodiversity Planning and Support Programme
CBD Convention on Biological Diversity
COP Conference of the Parties (to the CBD)
IUCN World Conservation Union
NBSAP National Biodiversity Strategy and Action Plan
PRSP Poverty Reduction Strategy Paper
UNEP United Nations Environment Programme