

Assessment of post-2010 National Biodiversity Strategies and Action Plans



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I. Introduction

National Biodiversity Strategies and Action Plans (NBSAPs) were always seen as a key instrument for national implementation of the Convention on Biological Diversity and other biodiversity-related multilateral environmental agreements (MEAs). This role was reinforced by the adoption, at the tenth meeting of the Conference of the Parties to the Convention on Biological Diversity in 2010, of the Strategic Plan for Biodiversity 2011-2020, including the Aichi

Biodiversity Targets.¹ Aichi Target 17 reads “By 2015 each Party has developed, adopted as a policy instrument, and has commenced implementing an effective, participatory and updated national biodiversity strategy and action plan”.

In 2014, the Fridtjof Nansen Institute conducted, for the United Nations Environment Programme (UNEP), an interim assessment of the 25 post-2010 NBSAPs submitted until May 2014. The purpose of the assessment was to evaluate countries’ consideration of the Strategic Plan for Biodiversity and their readiness to contribute to the Aichi Targets through national-level action.² It was completed in a limited period of time so that it could be presented at the fifth meeting of the Ad Hoc Open-ended Working Group on Review of Implementation of the Convention in June 2014. The present report provides a more comprehensive assessment of 115 NBSAPs submitted by September 2016.

As in the interim assessment, the overall aim here is to review how countries have progressed in NBSAP development and national implementation since the pre-2010 NBSAP assessment carried out by the United Nations University Institute of Advanced Studies³ and their readiness to meet the Aichi Targets. In particular, we examined Parties’ readiness to mainstream biodiversity concerns across sectoral and cross-sectoral plans and policies. Mainstreaming lies at the heart of the Convention on Biological Diversity, as reflected by articles 6 (b) and

10 (a) of the Convention. The Strategic Plan for Biodiversity and the Aichi Targets further underlined its importance: the first four Aichi Targets are grouped under Strategic Goal A: “Address the underlying causes of biodiversity loss by mainstreaming biodiversity across government and society”, and mainstreaming is also embedded in several of the other 20 targets.

NBSAPs submitted after May 2014 have been assessed against the same parameters as those used in the interim assessment, namely:

- The NBSAP preparation processes
- The legal preparedness of countries to implement NBSAPs, based on the information provided in the NBSAPs reviewed
- The extent to which NBSAPs encompass the Strategic Plan for Biodiversity 2011–2020 and the Aichi Biodiversity Targets
- Coverage of indicators and measures for monitoring and review
- How countries have responded to decision XI/4 of the Conference of the Parties to the Convention on Biological Diversity on resource mobilization

For all post-2010 NBSAPs, the assessment has had an additional, strong emphasis on mainstreaming and the extent to which NBSAPs provide for legal and policy frameworks to promote mainstreaming. Another added focus has been whether, and the extent to which, countries have integrated implementation of the other biodiversity-related conventions into the NBSAPs, including through the establishment of national coordination mechanisms. The assessment thus supports UNEP projects on improving the effectiveness of and

1 Decision X/2. Available from <https://www.cbd.int/doc/decisions/cop-10/cop-10-dec-02-en.pdf>.

2 Pisupati, B. and Prip, C., “Interim Assessment of Revised National Biodiversity Strategies and Action Plans (NBSAPs)”, (Cambridge, UNEP-World Conservation Monitoring Centre and Lysaker, Fridtjof Nansen Institute, 2015). Available from <https://www.fnj.no/getfile.php/132227/Files/Publikasjoner/Interim-Assessment-of-NBSAPs.pdf>.

3 Prip, C., Gross, T., Johnston, S. and Vierros, M., “Biodiversity Planning: an assessment of national biodiversity strategies and action plans”, (Yokohama, United Nations University Institute of Advanced Studies, 2010). Available from http://archive.ias.unu.edu/resource_centre/UNU-IAS_Biodiversity_Planning_NBSAPs_Assessment_final_web_Oct_2010.pdf.



cooperation among these conventions and exploring opportunities for further synergies.⁴

We used information gathered by the Secretariat of the Convention on Biological Diversity on NBSAP content and national biodiversity targets as a basis for the assessment, but also complemented the information on topics not addressed by the Secretariat of the Convention on Biological Diversity. In addition, the assessment provides closer analysis and discussion of the NBSAPs' findings in order to identify challenges, opportunities and lessons learned.

With regard to methodology, the assessment was conducted on the basis of desk studies of NBSAPs, Convention on Biological Diversity documents and other relevant documentation.

II. NBSAP preparation and adoption as a policy instrument

It is broadly recognized that the NBSAP process is successful if it adopts a participatory, bottom-up approach to obtain broad commitment to and ownership for the subsequent implementation.⁵ With the Aichi Targets and their stronger emphasis on mainstreaming, ecosystem services and NBSAPs as policy instruments, the need for broad stakeholder involvement has become even more obvious. Typical stakeholders to include are ministries, subnational governments, local authorities, indigenous peoples and local communities, the private sector, non-governmental organizations and the scientific community.

4 UNEP, Sourcebook of opportunities for enhancing cooperation among the Biodiversity-related Conventions at national and regional levels (Nairobi, UNEP Division of Environmental Law and Conventions, 2015). Available from <https://www.cbd.int/doc/nbsap/unep-sourcebook-web.pdf>.

5 Moreno, S. P. and Mueller, M., *Societal participatory processes in the revision of National Biodiversity Strategies and Action Plans (NBSAPs)* (2015). Available from https://www.iucn.org/sites/dev/files/import/downloads/iucn-participatory_processes_report_final.pdf.

First-generation NBSAPs have often been criticized for their shortcomings in both process and content, but in fact a large number of them report on broad participatory preparation processes.⁶ In this light, it is somewhat surprising that post-2010 NBSAPs generally report sparsely on preparatory processes, and many leave an impression of a rather short, narrow process, if any. Their preparation seems to have involved mainly government agencies, with non-governmental stakeholders involved to a much lesser degree. Most NBSAPs report some kind of stakeholder participation, typically through a technical preparatory committee with other government agencies participating and/or through individual stakeholder meetings and workshops, but mostly without revealing the effectiveness of the process or the extent to which stakeholder inputs were actually taken on board. This is also reflected in the NBSAP assessment of the Secretariat of the Convention on Biological Diversity.⁷

Among the countries that stand out with reports of particularly broad, extensive NBSAP processes are Antigua and Barbuda, Cabo Verde (see box 1) and Peru.

In 2015, the International Union for Conservation of Nature conducted a study of participatory processes in 10 countries. The study concluded, among other things, that countries vary considerably in terms of political and institutional set-up for biodiversity management. Their NBSAP processes therefore also vary. The study also found that stakeholder workshops – the tool most often used to engage stakeholders in the process – were often not attended by people in a position to take decisions on behalf of the institutions they were representing. Those people would later “filter” the outputs of the workshops.⁸ This touches on a tendency

6 Prip et al, 2010.

7 UNEP/CBD/COP/13/8/Add.1/Rev.1

8 Moreno et al., 2015. The countries reviewed are Antigua and Barbuda, Bhutan, Burkina Faso, Colombia, Georgia, Guatemala, Iraq, Namibia and the Philippines.

Box 1: Participative methodology used to prepare the second NBSAP of Cabo Verde

Second generation NBSAPs generally include limited information on preparation and who was involved in it. While the lack of information does not preclude the existence of a participatory process with many stakeholders, it implies that there was none.

One of the countries that actually reported on a multi-stakeholder process in its NBSAP was Cabo Verde. The process involved the various entities associated with the conservation and use of biodiversity, including government institutions, decentralized services, municipalities, civil society organizations, research institutions and the private sector.

The methodology used is summarized as follows:

- i. Collection and review of available documentation
- ii. Meetings with actors on the field and conduct of surveys
- iii. Preparing the diagnosis on the status, causes and consequences of biodiversity loss
- iv. Holding of regional workshops to provide feedback on the diagnosis of the causes and consequences, and identification of national priorities, goals and actions
- v. Preliminary validation workshop with representatives of key institutions on priorities and targets for biodiversity conservation in Cabo Verde
- vi. Drafting of the NBSAP paper
- vii. National workshop to present the NBSAP and gather contributions

Source: Cabo Verde, Ministério do Ambiente, Habitação e Ordenamento do Território, *Estratégia Nacional e Plano de Ação para a Conservação da Biodiversidade 2015-2030* (2014). Available from <https://www.cbd.int/doc/world/cv/cv-nbsap-v2-en.pdf>.

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that also seems apparent in this NBSAP assessment and is further discussed below: the NBSAP processes have been more technical than political, and many NBSAPs thus hardly can be described as policy instruments.

Biodiversity planning should be first and foremost a political process driven by economic and social factors.⁹ This is recognized in both decision X/2 of the Conference of the Parties to the Convention on Biological Diversity and Aichi Target 17, where Parties are requested to adopt their NBSAPs as policy instruments. This request can be seen as an indication of the fact that many first-generation NBSAPs adopted before the Aichi Targets were technical rather than policy instruments.¹⁰

9 Carew-Reid, Jeremy, ed., *Biodiversity planning in Asia*, (Gland, International Union for Conservation of Nature, 2002). Available from http://www.icem.com.au/02_contents/06_materials/06-reports.htm#item02.

10 Prip et al, 2010.

A key factor for political NBSAP support is the political level of its endorsement. The NBSAP assessment by the Secretariat of the Convention on Biological Diversity revealed that a minority of post-2010 NBSAPs were adopted across governments/cabinets and a majority were adopted within the realm of the authority responsible for the Convention on Biological Diversity – typically the ministry of environment.¹¹ The NBSAPs of Hungary and

11 UNEP/CBD/COP/13/8/Add.1/Rev.1.



Box 2: An NBSAP as a white paper endorsed by parliament

Norway's 2016 NBSAP is exceptional among NBSAPs, having been endorsed as a white paper by the national parliament (Stortinget). A broad range of stakeholders were invited to contribute to the preparation of the white paper. The Government hosted meetings with environmental non-governmental organizations, research institutions and the business sector and received numerous contributions in writing or at the meetings. The discussion in Stortinget among the political parties led to amendments to the white paper put forward by the Government.

Source: Norway, Ministry of Climate and Environment, *Nature for Life: Norway's biodiversity action plan*, (2015). Available from <https://www.regjeringen.no/no/dokumenter/meld.-st.-14-20152016/id2468099/>.

Norway stand out here for having been adopted by the national parliament (see box 2).

For many NBSAPs prepared and adopted within ministries of environment or corresponding ministries, however, the political level at which they have actually been approved is unclear. A number are altogether silent on the question, while many include indirect endorsements through an introduction signed by the responsible minister. Others "only" have introductions by general directors or other ministerial officials, and some are not introduced by any high-level official whatsoever.

As reflected by the Secretariat of the Convention on Biological Diversity, some NBSAPs explicitly state that they provide "guidance" for the development of biodiversity policies by government rather than the policies themselves. For others, such a guiding role appears implicit in the language used, including the frequent use of verbs like "should" and "could" when addressing forward-looking activities. Another group of NBSAPs are intended to be policy instruments, but had not yet been endorsed as such at the time of submission (see box 3).

Another indicator of political NBSAP support is the establishment of a well-functioning coordination mechanism with cross-sectoral representation to oversee implementation. As stated in the assessment of first-generation NBSAPs carried out by the United Nations University Institute of Advanced Studies,

the ownership and commitment of key stakeholders built up during a consultative preparatory process will dissipate if there is no mechanism to involve these same stakeholders in the implementation process. In the self-evaluation of the state of implementation of first-generation NBSAPs, many revised NBSAPs indicate that such mechanisms were not established or quickly lost momentum. This is identified as a major obstacle to implementation.¹²

On this issue, NBSAPs can be divided into three groups. The largest group is not specific about any NBSAP coordination mechanism, while a smaller group establishes such mechanisms, in many cases by extending the mandate of existing mechanisms. As is the case with the overall political endorsement of the NBSAP, and linked to

¹² According to the Secretariat of the Convention on Biological Diversity, a majority of revised NBSAPs include such evaluations of previous NBSAPs (UNEP/CBD/COP/13/8/Add.1/Rev.1).



Box 3: NBSAPs as policy instruments – but not yet

A number of NBSAPs were submitted without political endorsement but indicate that such endorsement is envisaged or hoped for.

The Antigua and Barbuda NBSAP states that “the NBSAP objectives will not be achieved if the political directorate of Antigua and Barbuda does not sustain its actions in communicating the importance of the NBSAP to preserve the country’s biodiversity. It will also be very difficult to achieve the objectives if the political support is not forthcoming. As a result of this, the Cabinet of Antigua and Barbuda needs to endorse the NBSAP through a Cabinet decision indicating its support. It is anticipated therefore that the NBSAP will be guided by a Cabinet decision accepting this document as the road map for biodiversity conservation in Antigua.”

According to Lebanon’s NBSAP, “the endorsement of the NBSAP in the form of a Council of Ministers Decree is a crucial step in its implementation.”

Target 17.1 of Myanmar’s NBSAP states that “by 2016, the NBSAP is adopted by Cabinet as the nation’s over-arching policy framework for the conservation and sustainable use of biodiversity.”

Target 17 of the NBSAP of United Republic of Tanzania reads: “By 2016, Tanzania has adopted NBSAP as a policy instrument, and has commenced implementation with effective participation.”

Source:

Antigua and Barbuda, *National Strategic Biodiversity Action Plan*. Available from <https://www.cbd.int/doc/world/ag/ag-nbsap-01-en.pdf>

Lebanon, Ministry of Environment, Lebanon’s *National Biodiversity Strategy and Action Plan* (2016). Available from <https://www.cbd.int/doc/world/lb/lb-nbsap-v2-en.pdf>

Myanmar, Ministry of Environmental Conservation and Forestry, *National Biodiversity Strategy and Action Plan (2015-2020)* (2015). Available from <https://www.cbd.int/doc/world/mm/mm-nbsap-v2-en.pdf>.

United Republic of Tanzania, Division of Environment, *National Biodiversity Strategy and Action Plan (NBSAP) 2015-2020* (2015). Available from <https://www.cbd.int/doc/world/tz/tz-nbsap-v2-en.pdf>.

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that endorsement, quite a few countries (like Lebanon, Myanmar, Togo and Tuvalu) will only decide on the establishment of a coordination mechanism at a later stage; these constitute the third group. Some NBSAPs (like those of Myanmar and Togo) include targets on the establishment of the mechanism.

III. Biodiversity mainstreaming in NBSAPs

“Horizontal” mainstreaming

The integration of biodiversity values into cross-sectoral and sectoral plans, policies and activities – now referred to as “mainstreaming” – has always been a key aspect of the Convention on Biological

Diversity. The mainstreaming provision in article 6 (b) of the Convention appears as a twin provision to article 6 (a) addressing Parties’ obligation to prepare NBSAPs, thereby signalling that mainstreaming should be a component of national biodiversity planning and NBSAP development. Mainstreaming of biodiversity into national decision-making is further covered by article 10 (a).

Mainstreaming is about prevention rather than treatment of symptoms, and is closely related to the notion of biodiversity as underpinning essential ecosystem services for human health, climate resilience and food security, among others. The call for mainstreaming reinforces the need for broad participatory NBSAP processes and for NBSAPs to be policy rather than technical instruments. This is because mainstreaming implies coherence



of policies and actions across economic sectors and sectoral ministries that may have been quite incoherent before. Mainstreaming may and should lead to changes in values, decision-making and practices that can only be realized through political buy-in from those involved. Mainstreaming also has major importance for resource mobilization for biodiversity, with the potential to deliver shared benefits and open up additional sources of finance.¹³

Biodiversity mainstreaming has been difficult to put into practice at the national level. The assessment of first-generation NBSAPs in 2010 revealed that there was generally poor correlation between NBSAPs and sectoral and cross-sectoral policies, and that NBSAPs had thus not seriously affected the main drivers of biodiversity loss.¹⁴ The Strategic Plan for Biodiversity and its Aichi Biodiversity Targets therefore further underlined the importance of mainstreaming: the first four Aichi Targets are grouped under Strategic Goal A (“Address the underlying causes of biodiversity loss by mainstreaming biodiversity across government and society”) and mainstreaming is also embedded in several of the other 20 targets.

More recent developments have created further impetus for biodiversity mainstreaming. The Sustainable Development Goals adopted by the United Nations General Assembly in 2015 prominently reflect the need to safeguard biodiversity and ecosystems as an important component of sustainable development. Mexico, the host of the thirteenth meeting of the Conference of the Parties to the Convention on Biological Diversity in December 2016, used the high-level segment of the meeting to highlight the importance of biodiversity mainstreaming for

the achievement of not only the Aichi Targets but also the Sustainable Development Goals.¹⁵

The post-2010 NBSAPs clearly reflect the heightened attention to mainstreaming. Nearly all of the NBSAPs reviewed cite biodiversity mainstreaming as an overall objective and refer to it as essential for safeguarding biodiversity (see box 4). However, the degree of translation into concrete targets and actions varies, as further discussed below.

As regards alignment with broader cross-sectoral plans and policies, first-generation NBSAPs were generally prepared in isolation from, and poorly correlated with, such plans and policies. There has been a noticeable change with the second generation of NBSAPs, as also noted in the assessment by the Secretariat of the Convention on Biological Diversity.¹⁶ A large number of NBSAPs – and those of least developed countries in particular – now refer to and align themselves with broader cross-sectoral plans and policies on development and poverty alleviation.

In terms of mainstreaming with concrete sectoral plans and policies relevant to biodiversity, nearly all NBSAPs address the forestry, agriculture and fisheries sectors with objectives, targets and actions of some kind. The tourism sector is less commonly but also quite frequently addressed. Less focus is placed on other sectors affecting biodiversity, with just a few mentions of the extractive industries (like Guyana and Myanmar) and the energy sector (like Uganda and the United Republic of Tanzania). Only one NBSAP (Georgia) covers infrastructure development.

Even though post 2010-NBSAPs generally feature mainstreaming concerns more prominently, they also leave the impression that many countries are starting from a very early stage. While the majority of NBSAPs

13 “Report of the High-Level Panel on Global Assessment of Resources for Implementing the Strategic Plan for Biodiversity 2011–2020” (2012). Available from <https://www.cbd.int/doc/meetings/fin/hlpgar-sp-01/official/hlpgar-sp-01-01-report-en.pdf>.

14 Prip et al. (2010).

15 “Cancun Declaration on Mainstreaming the Conservation and Sustainable Use of Biodiversity for Well-Being”, adopted in Cancun, Mexico, 3 December 2016.

16 UNEP/CBD/COP/13/8/Rev.1.

Box 4: Examples of NBSAPs with mainstreaming as an overall objective

Hungary, under the heading “Future Vision”: “The main objective of the Strategy is to integrate the aspects of preserving biodiversity into cross-sectoral policies, strategies and programmes and in their implementation.”

Guyana’s vision: “By 2030, biodiversity is sustainably utilized, managed and mainstreamed into all sectors contributing to the advancement of Guyana’s bio-security, and socioeconomic and low carbon development.”

Kyrgyzstan, strategic target 1: “Integrate biodiversity conservation issue into the activities of state bodies and public organizations by 2020, as the basis of the human being and sustainable economic development of the Kyrgyz Republic.”

Botswana’s vision: “By 2025, ecosystem, species and genetic diversity is valued, protected, and used sustainably and equitably, through the involvement of all sectors of society and the provision of sufficient resources for its sound management.”

Source:

Hungary, *National Strategy for the Conservation of Biodiversity in 2015-2020* (2015). Available from <https://www.cbd.int/doc/world/hu/hu-nbsap-v2-en.pdf>.

Guyana, Ministry of Natural Resources and the Environment, *Guyana’s National Biodiversity Strategy and Action Plan (2012-2020)* (2014). Available from <https://www.cbd.int/doc/world/gy/gy-nbsap-v3-en.pdf>.

Kyrgyzstan, *Biodiversity conservation priorities of the Kyrgyz Republic till 2024*. Available from <https://www.cbd.int/doc/world/kg/kg-nbsap-v3-en.pdf>.

Botswana, Department of Environmental Affairs, *National Biodiversity Strategy and Action Plan* (2016). Available from <https://www.cbd.int/doc/world/bw/bw-nbsap-v3-en.pdf>.

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include an evaluation of the implementation progress of the first-generation NBSAP,¹⁷ many of them (like Nepal) report little progress on, and obstacles to, mainstreaming. Reflections on mainstreaming are most often broad and aspirational, without specifying what is required in terms of institutional and legal steps to achieve the general mainstreaming objectives. Some NBSAPs include targets to review policies and legislation relevant to biodiversity across sectors to collect baseline data – an essential step towards mainstreaming, but an initial one, and another indication of the preliminary stage that many countries are at in the process of mainstreaming. Some countries have moved beyond this point, and have initiated a dialogue between the competent authority for biodiversity and sectoral and cross-sectoral authorities and/or developed methodologies for mainstreaming (see box 5). Other NBSAPs (like those of Georgia and Saint Kitts and Nevis) go a step further in terms

of more concrete measures for achieving mainstreaming goals and targets.

The fact that many NBSAPs are not endorsed above the ministry directly responsible for biodiversity could be an indication that mainstreaming goals and targets have not always been coordinated at the political level with the relevant sectoral and cross-sectoral ministries. As mentioned above, some NBSAPs specify that this process remains to be done.

The model for ultimate NBSAP mainstreaming – the NBSAP as a compilation of strategies and action plans drawn up by the various sectoral ministries – was applied by some first-generation NBSAPs, including those of Cambodia, France and Norway. The model is not used in those countries’ second-generation NBSAPs, nor in any other NBSAPs, indicating a lack of success in the first attempt.



Box 5: Mainstreaming strongly reflected in the NBSAP of the Lao People's Democratic Republic

According to the NBSAP of the Lao People's Democratic Republic, biodiversity will be mainstreamed through four main processes:

- First, identify the important sets of principles, concepts or practices that need to be mainstreamed. Those practices are usually the innovative practices that have been piloted and demonstrated in specific areas for several years and have been proven to be effective.
- Second, identify the key policies, strategies and programmes in which the principles and practices would be incorporated. These policies, strategies and programmes are those that receive resources (manpower and financing) for implementation. Targets of mainstreaming may also include specific geographic areas or interest groups.
- Third, determine the effective ways in mainstreaming the principles and practices into the targeted policies, strategies and programmes. These would involve a range of approaches such as identifying entry points, participatory action research, participation in policy dialogue, participation in mid-term reviews and various information and communication strategies.
- Fourth, ensure implementation of NBSAP considering the priorities and interests of all relevant biodiversity conventions that are currently being implemented in the country.

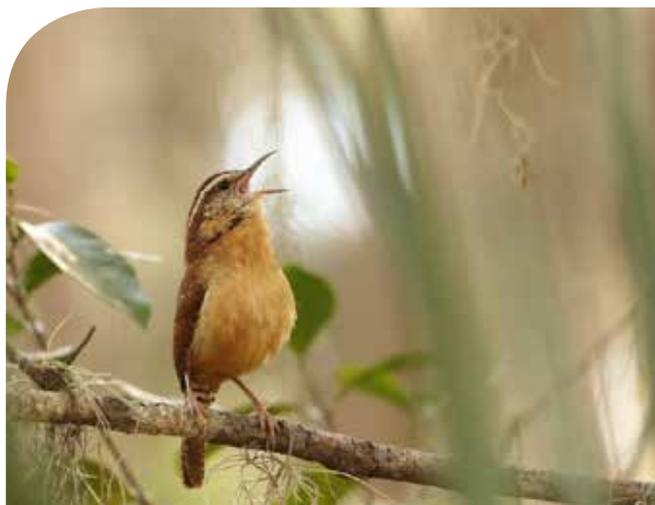
The NBSAP further sets the following target 5.1.2. for 2025: "Strengthened institutional mechanisms to increase participation of biodiversity stakeholders in land use decision making are in place in at least 3 key economic sectors (energy, agriculture and forestry), and locally in at least 3 provinces."

Source: Lao People's Democratic Republic, Ministry of Natural Resources and the Environment, *National Biodiversity Strategy and Action Plan 2016-2020* (2016). Available from <https://www.cbd.int/doc/world/la/la-nbsap-v2-en.pdf>.

Closely related to biodiversity mainstreaming is the notion of biodiversity as underpinning ecosystem services for humans and thus as an important factor for sustainable development. NBSAPs generally relate ecosystem services to biodiversity, often referring to the need to safeguard biodiversity and ecosystem services on an equal footing. In that connection, valuation of biodiversity and ecosystem services has been stressed as an important tool. While a majority of NBSAPs do not cover this topic at all, a large minority address valuation of some kind, but again in a preliminary, agenda-setting way, where action has yet to be taken. A smaller minority of NBSAPs report that valuation studies have already been done.¹⁸

"Vertical" mainstreaming

The assessment carried out by the United Nations University Institute of Advanced Studies argued that NBSAPs will have limited impact on the ground if they are not translated into subnational actions, because decisions



¹⁸ UNEP/CBD/COP/13/8/Add.1/Rev.1, pp. 9–10.

and actions that affect biodiversity are often taken and felt most directly at the local level. Thus, subnational authorities have an important role in biodiversity management and should develop their own biodiversity strategies and action plans in support of the NBSAP. Besides moving decisions closer to where the impact of biodiversity is felt, such decentralization could lead to better awareness-raising, cross-sectoral mainstreaming and cost-effectiveness.

While this vertical mainstreaming has received considerably less attention than horizontal mainstreaming and is poorly reflected in first-generation NBSAPs, noticeably more attention now appears to be paid to the devolution aspect. The Secretariat of the Convention on Biological Diversity has collected information from 19 countries that have experience with subnational biodiversity plans, and a large number of NBSAPs are explicit about the need for action at the local level. The Peru NBSAP has a particularly strong focus on this, guided by principles of subsidiarity and participatory governance and recognizing that governance (legislative, political or economic)

achieves greater efficiency, effectiveness and citizen involvement when decentralized and as close as possible to the resources to be managed. Other countries with a similar approach include Cambodia, the Lao People's Democratic Republic, Myanmar (see box 6), Nepal and Togo.

IV. The use of national targets in NBSAPs

When adopting the Strategic Plan for Biodiversity and the Aichi Targets, countries were invited to set their own national targets and include them in their revised NBSAPs, using the Aichi Targets as a flexible framework. In fact, the Conference of the Parties, at its third meeting, held in 1995, had already invited countries to set measurable targets,¹⁹ but not many pre-2010 NBSAPs responded to that invitation.

The Secretariat of the Convention on Biological Diversity conducted a thorough

¹⁹ Decision III/9.

Box 6: Biodiversity strategies and action plans (BSAPs) at the subnational level

Second-generation NBSAPs widely recognize the need for biodiversity planning and management at the subnational level. In Myanmar's NBSAP, for instance, action 3.1.3 is to "Mainstream conservation into national and district level land use planning, improve inter-ministerial coordination and provide technical support to districts."

Moreover, target 17.3 reads "By 2020, BSAPs are under preparation in at least three states/regions." This is to be done in a participatory process involving government, civil society, local communities, academia and the private sector, with guidelines and principles for BSAP preparation developed to ensure consistency of approach and integration with the NBSAP. Thus, the NBSAP stresses that subnational biodiversity planning cannot take place in isolation from national planning. It explains that the role of the competent authority, the Forest Department (FD), "will become increasingly important as authority over natural resources and land use becomes decentralized to the states/regions. Regional experience shows that without strong central oversight, the local incentives for economic growth will dominate conservation concerns and that this can trigger a wave of deforestation and industrial pollution. In sum, FD will aim to operate less as a manager of its partners and more as the conductor of an orchestra, organising and leading partners to achieve what they cannot do alone."

Source: Myanmar, Ministry of Environmental Conservation and Forestry, *National Biodiversity Strategy and Action Plan (2015–2020)* (2015). Available from <https://www.cbd.int/doc/world/mm/mm-nbsap-v2-en.pdf>.



assessment of national targets reflected in NBSAPs and national reports and how they correspond to the Aichi Targets.²⁰ The assessment reveals that less than 50 per cent of the NBSAPs reviewed include national targets (or similar commitments) directly or indirectly corresponding to the Aichi Targets. The assessment largely reveals the same pattern as the interim assessment of 25 post-2010 NBSAPs conducted in 2014:²¹ national targets aligned with the Aichi Targets that address the direct causes of biodiversity and more “traditional” nature conservation measures are considerably more frequent than those that address the underlying causes of biodiversity loss and therefore typically require commitment and action beyond the “conservation realm” and across sectors. As a result, Aichi Targets 1 (raising public awareness), 8 (pollution control), 9 (combatting invasive species), 11 (protected areas), 12 (protecting threatened species) and 19 (improving the knowledge base) are among those most frequently reflected in national targets. Among the least reflected are Aichi Targets 2 (mainstreaming and valuation in general), 3 (incentives), 4 (sustainable production and consumption), 6 (sustainable management of aquatic living resources), 10 (protecting vulnerable ecosystems from climate change induced pressures) and 14 (protection of ecosystems that provide essential services). The Secretariat of the Convention on Biological Diversity notes that even for the Aichi Targets most frequently reflected in national targets, the number of NBSAPs that reflect them rarely surpasses 20 per cent of the NBSAPs submitted.²²

Moreover, the Secretariat of the Convention on Biological Diversity concludes that the national targets set are more general and lower than the Aichi Targets or fail to address all of their elements.²³ An assessment of national reports by the Convention on

Biological Diversity indicates that the progress reported by countries will generally not be sufficient to meet the Aichi Targets without additional measures.²⁴

As noted above, the assessment by the Secretariat of the Convention on Biological Diversity includes both targets and “similar commitments” related to the Aichi Targets, and therefore does not fully reveal the degree to which NBSAPs actually include the “targets” that the Conference of the Parties, at its tenth meeting, urged countries to include. As there is no common definition of the term “target”, it may be difficult to distinguish those targets from other types of commitments expressed. However, various elements of NBSAP guidance, including the NBSAP capacity-building modules of the Secretariat of the Convention on Biological Diversity, highlight that national targets should be “SMART” (specific, measurable, ambitious, realistic and time-bound).²⁵ According to the guidance, such targets are appropriate because they:

- Inspire programmes for change
- Provide a focus for concerted action
- Help to measure and report on progress
- Establish accountability in the conservation and sustainable use of biodiversity
- Communicate the status of and trends in biodiversity to policymakers and the public²⁶

A majority of post-2010 NBSAPs clearly reflect awareness of the SMART targets format. Most targets are quite specific,

²⁴ Ibid.

²⁵ Secretariat of the Convention on Biological Diversity, “NBSAP training modules version 2.1 – Module 4: Setting National Biodiversity Targets in line with the Framework of the Strategic Plan for Biodiversity 2011-2020, including Aichi Biodiversity Targets.” (Montreal, 2011). Available from <https://www.cbd.int/doc/training/nbsap/b4-train-national-targets-revised-en.pdf>.

²⁶ Ibid.

²⁰ UNEP/CBD/COP/13/8/Add.2/Rev.1.

²¹ Pisupati and Prip, 2015.

²² UNEP/CBD/COP/13/8/Add.2/Rev.1.

²³ Ibid.

typically with a number of sub-targets and/or actions, although many of the NBSAPs have only broad targets more of the character of aims or objectives. Most NBSAPs are also measurable, being accompanied by indicators, although a number specify that indicators are yet to be developed. A majority of NBSAP targets are time-bound, although some are to be met later than the Aichi Target deadline of 2020 (typically in 2025 and 2030). Whether they are ambitious and/or realistic depends very much on national context. Here it should again be recalled that many NBSAPs do not have high-level political endorsement, others will only seek political endorsement at a later stage and some are characterized as guidance rather than policy documents. A realistic resource mobilization strategy is also a key factor in this respect; in many countries, such strategies are yet to be developed.

V. NBSAPs as a tool for implementation of other biodiversity-related conventions

NBSAPs should cover biodiversity as a whole. As such, they were always considered a relevant tool for the implementation of not just the Convention on Biological Diversity but also the other global biodiversity-related conventions in the so-called biodiversity cluster of MEAs, namely the Convention on International Trade in Endangered Species of Wild Fauna and Flora (CITES), the Convention on the Conservation of Migratory Species of Wild Animals (CMS), the Convention on Wetlands of International Importance Especially as Waterfowl Habitat (Ramsar Convention), the Convention concerning the Protection of the World Cultural and Natural Heritage (World Heritage Convention), the International Treaty on Plant Genetic Resources for Food and Agriculture (ITPGRFA) and the International Plant Protection

Convention. The first-generation NBSAPs, however, only used opportunities for synergies to a very modest extent.²⁷ The Strategic Plan for Biodiversity and the Aichi Targets created renewed momentum for a second generation of NBSAPs that address the coherent implementation of the biodiversity-related conventions. The Strategic Plan for Biodiversity has been acknowledged as a universal framework for action on biodiversity, and the governing bodies of five of the six other biodiversity-related conventions have expressed support for the plan.²⁸ Two of the conventions, CITES and CMS, have developed guidance to countries on how to reflect implementation of their conventions in NBSAPs.²⁹

Coherent implementation also makes good sense in financial terms. All biodiversity-related conventions can benefit from the fact that the Global Environment Facility (GEF) is the financial mechanism for the Convention on Biological Diversity. A key entry point here is the Strategic Plan for Biodiversity with the Aichi Targets, and thus the integration

²⁷ Prip et al. 2010.

²⁸ Convention on International Trade in Endangered Species of Wild Fauna and Flora, Notification to the Parties No. 2011/021. Available from: <https://cites.org/sites/default/files/eng/notif/2011/E021.pdf>.

UNEP/CMS/resolution 8.18. Available from: http://www.cms.int/sites/default/files/document/CP8Res_8_18_Integration_MigratorySpecies_Natl_Biodiversity_E_0.pdf.

International Treaty on Plant Genetic Resources for Food and Agriculture Notification: National Biodiversity Strategies and Action Plans under the Convention on Biological Diversity, PL 40/31 NCP GB6 NBSAPs (2013). Available from: <http://www.fao.org/3/a-bc741e.pdf>.

World Heritage Convention decision 37 COM 5A: Report of the World Heritage Centre on its activities and the implementation of the World Heritage Committee's Decisions. Available from <http://whc.unesco.org/en/decisions/4974/>

Convention on Wetlands resolution XI.6. Available from: <http://www.ramsar.org/sites/default/files/documents/pdf/cop11/res/cop11-res06-e.pdf>.

²⁹ Mathur-Fillipp, Jyoti, "Contributing to the development, review, updating and revision of National Biodiversity Strategies and Action Plans (NBSAPs): A Draft Guide for CITES Parties" (2011). Available from <https://www.cites.org/sites/default/files/eng/notif/2011/E026A.pdf>.

CMS Secretariat and Prip, C., "Guidelines on the integration of migratory species into National Biodiversity Strategies and Actions Plans (NBSAPs)" (2011). Available from <https://www.cbd.int/doc/nbsap/NBSAP-guidelines-CMS.pdf>.



of activities, projects, programmes and objectives of the other biodiversity-related conventions into NBSAPs.³⁰ The Biodiversity Focal Area Strategy in the GEF-6 Programming Directions states that "... due to the inclusive and comprehensive nature of the GEF biodiversity strategy, ample opportunity exists for the inclusion of pertinent GEF-eligible activities, as prioritized in the country's revised NBSAPs, to exploit this synergy amongst the conventions and advance shared objectives".³¹

In 2014, UNEP conducted a survey on the benefits, opportunities and barriers experienced by national focal points and other key stakeholders involved in the implementation of the biodiversity-related conventions. The respondents to the survey generally saw great benefit in coherent implementation of the conventions through NBSAPs.³² In its "Sourcebook of

opportunities for enhancing cooperation among the Biodiversity-related Conventions at national and regional levels", issued in 2015, UNEP provided a number of case studies of countries that have included national focal points of biodiversity-related conventions other than the Convention on Biological Diversity – information that is not always possible to read out of the NBSAPs themselves.³³ These are Belgium, Bhutan, Cameroon, Côte d'Ivoire, Fiji, Mozambique and Nepal. The sourcebook also gives examples of NBSAPs in which concerns for the other biodiversity-related conventions are integrated into NBSAPs, either through direct references to the conventions or references to coherent implementation (Belgium, Bhutan, Cameroon, Finland, Nepal and Republic of Korea).

The current assessment shows that considerations for coherent implementation are generally scarce in post-2010 NBSAPs, not least when taking into account the extensive attention this topic has received, as described above. Commonly, NBSAPs refer to the Ramsar Convention in the context of protected areas, to CMS and CITES in relation to species protection, and to ITPGRFA in relation to plant genetic resources. Some NBSAPs also include broad statements on better coherence among MEAs. Among

³³ Ibid.

- ³⁰ UNEP, *Sourcebook of opportunities for enhancing cooperation among the Biodiversity-related Conventions at national and regional levels* (Nairobi, UNEP Division of Environmental Law and Conventions, 2015). Available from <https://www.cbd.int/doc/nbsap/unesp-sourcebook-web.pdf>.
- ³¹ GEF/R.6/20/Rev.01 (2013), p.8. Available from https://www.thegef.org/sites/default/files/council-meeting-documents/GEF_R.6_20_Rev_01%2C_Programming_Directions%2C_Final%2C_November_26%2C_2013_4.pdf
- ³² UNEP, *Sourcebook of opportunities for enhancing cooperation among the Biodiversity-related Conventions at national and regional levels* (Nairobi, UNEP Division of Environmental Law and Conventions, 2015). Available from <https://www.cbd.int/doc/nbsap/unesp-sourcebook-web.pdf>.

Box 7: Integrated implementation of the biodiversity-related conventions

As something quite unique for NBSAPs, Bahrain has a table showing the alignment of its 12 NBSAP targets with the goals of the biodiversity-related conventions. This alignment is to be achieved "through direct contact and the establishment of formal institutional arrangements settings to ensure regular follow up and avoid the duplication of efforts and for resource mobilization".

The appendix of Botswana's NBSAP "highlights where the NBSAP targets and strategic actions overlap with other MEAs of interest and relevance to Botswana so that approaches to biodiversity conservation and environmental protection generally can be developed".

Source:

Bahrain, *The National Biodiversity Strategy and Action Plan, Kingdom of Bahrain, 2016–2021* (2016). Available from <https://www.cbd.int/doc/world/bh/bh-nbsap-v2-en.pdf>.

Botswana, Department of Environmental Affairs, *National Biodiversity Strategy and Action Plan* (2016). Available from <https://www.cbd.int/doc/world/bw/bw-nbsap-v3-en.pdf>.

the few countries whose NBSAPs explicitly refer to synergizing implementation of the biodiversity-related conventions and express a general intent to do so are Bahrain (see box 7), Belgium, Cameroon, Georgia, Guyana, the Lao People's Democratic Republic, Malaysia, Nepal, the Republic of Korea and the United Republic of Tanzania.

VI. Developing and developed country NBSAPs

While there are no distinct differences between the NBSAPs of developing and developed countries, there are nonetheless some different tendencies. The NBSAPs of developing countries are generally more consistent with the Convention on Biological Diversity than those of developed countries, and many of them clearly reflect the guidance provided by the Secretariat of the Convention on Biological Diversity in the NBSAP capacity-building modules. Targets set by developing countries have a high degree of "Aichi consistency", and it could be argued that developing country NBSAPs are more ambitious. This should, however, be outweighed by another tendency, namely that of developing country NBSAPs generally appearing to have a lower level of political endorsement than those of developed countries. Thus, the latter have more of a character of policy instruments than the former.

Some developed country NBSAPs (like those of France and Greece) are also quite "Aichi consistent", but their approach tends to be more detached from the Convention on Biological Diversity and the Aichi Targets. A number of them either do not include specific targets or include rather broad ones, more of the nature of aims or objectives. Such targets typically cover areas beyond the Convention on Biological Diversity agenda and have a more traditional nature conservation approach



Photo: © Samuel Scrimshaw Unsplash

than an ecosystem services approach, which is the predominant approach of developing country NBSAPs (see box 8, also including an exception to that pattern.)

One explanation of the different trends between developed and developing countries could be their different points of departure. Many developed countries have long-established policies and legislation on biodiversity and nature conservation dating from before the Convention on Biological Diversity. In contrast, the Convention on Biological Diversity and NBSAPs are the starting point for national biodiversity policies for many developing countries, and the second-generation NBSAP might even be considered the true starting point given the low impact of many first-generation NBSAPs according to country evaluations.



Box 8: Denmark and the Netherlands - developed countries with NBSAP approaches outside the mainstream

While the developing-country approach to NBSAPs is generally very close to the Aichi Targets and Convention on Biological Diversity guidance, the approach of the developed countries is typically more independent in both form and content. Many do not include SMART targets and focus on traditional conservation rather than biodiversity as a basis for ecosystem services.

This includes the policy document approved by the Danish Government, with a vision that "By 2050 Denmark will be a greener country with more diverse nature, and in particular it will be a country in which internationally protected natural areas, large forests, national parks and most important habitats for endangered species – including marine environments – will be more coherent." The policy contains 22 initiatives in three main focus areas:

- (i) to establish more and better interconnected nature (including marine habitats);
- (ii) to strengthen initiatives for wild animals and plants; and
- (iii) to improve a sense of community through nature experiences and outdoor activities.

While also being distinct from the mainstream NBSAP approach without specific targets, the policy document of the Netherlands takes quite a different anthropocentric approach to biodiversity and nature. Here, the emphasis is placed on strengthening the economy-ecology relationship, with four main themes:

- (i) sustainable production and consumption and sustainable supply chains;
- (ii) sustainable fisheries and protection of marine biodiversity;
- (iii) sustainable agriculture and protection of biodiversity; and
- (iv) valuing natural capital.

Source:

Denmark, *Danish Nature Policy: Our Shared Nature* (2014). Available from <https://www.cbd.int/doc/world/dk/dk-nbsap-v2-en.pdf>.

Netherlands, *Natural Capital Agenda: conservation and sustainable use of biodiversity* (2013). Available from <https://www.cbd.int/doc/world/nl/nl-nbsap-v4-p1-en.pdf>.

VII. Legal preparedness³⁴

The rule of law has been recognized by the United Nations General Assembly as essential for the realization of sustainable development and related global goals.³⁵

³⁴ In 2016, IDLO, SwedBio and the Fridtjof Nansen Institute published a report entitled "Review of Post-2010 National Biodiversity Strategies and Action Plan: Legal Preparedness for Biodiversity Mainstreaming", authored by Christian Prip. The findings of the review, which covers 20 post-2010 NBSAPs, are included in this chapter. The review is available from <http://www.idlo.int/sites/default/files/pdf/initiatives/NBSAP%20Review%20of%20Legal%20Preparedness%20for%20Biodiversity%20Mainstreaming%20%20-%20FINAL.pdf>.

³⁵ Sustainable Development Goal 16 is to: "Promote peaceful and inclusive societies for sustainable development, provide access to justice for all and build effective, accountable and inclusive institutions at all levels". Target 16.3 is to: "Promote the rule of law at the national and international levels and ensure equal access to justice for all." Available from http://www.un.org/ga/search/view_doc.asp?symbol=A/RES/70/1&lang=E.

Law in relation to biodiversity is often used in the narrow sense of "traditional" command and control regulation on, for example, taking of threatened species or protected areas. However, the broader approach of biodiversity mainstreaming across sectors and geographical scales also requires legal approaches to set a clear framework for its use. Legal approaches should ensure political buy-in for the transformative changes that need to take place in values, decision-making and practices. By creating incentives and recognizing rights and responsibilities, laws can act as empowering tools to engage local governments, individuals, indigenous peoples, local communities, entrepreneurs, businesses and others to take action for

Box 9: Mainstreaming through legislation

One of Georgia's 20 national biodiversity targets is: "By 2020, sustainable use and the economic values of biodiversity and ecosystems are integrated into legislation, national accounting, rural development, agriculture, poverty reduction and other relevant strategies; positive economic incentives have been put in place and incentives harmful to biodiversity have been eliminated or reformed."

In this context, the Georgian NBSAP calls for several cross-cutting legal and institutional measures and sector-specific measures, including for environmental impact assessment and strategic impact assessment; distribution of competencies between national and local authorities; licensing and permit issuance for the use of national resources; intellectual property rights; biosafety; sustainable forestry; invasive alien species; pollution control; sustainable management of pastures; sustainable hunting; *ex-situ* collections of agro-genetic resources; and access to genetic resources.

Source: Georgia, *National Biodiversity Strategy and Action Plan of Georgia 2014–2020* (Tbilisi, 2014), pp. 65, 66, 67, 68, 71, 74, 76, 79, 90 and 93. Available from <https://www.cbd.int/doc/world/ge/ge-nbsap-v2-en.pdf>.

biodiversity. Importantly, legal approaches allow enforcement by administrative and judiciary bodies.

The NBSAP process provides an opportunity for countries to assess their legal frameworks for biodiversity and fill in the gaps where necessary.

In general, the revised NBSAPs incorporate law and various legal approaches for biodiversity to a greater degree than first-generation NBSAPs. For example, the NBSAP of Jordan highlights good governance as a prerequisite for biodiversity management, underpinned by three fundamental pillars: a clear legislative framework, an effective decision-making structure, and a strong culture of justice based on the principles of equity, participation and accountability.³⁶

Most NBSAPs aim for legal reforms of some kind, either through direct commitments to take legal measures under specified subject areas and sectors (like those of Afghanistan, Georgia (see box 9) and the United Republic of Tanzania), or through calling for subsequent reviews and gap analysis of existing legal

frameworks against NBSAP objectives, targets and actions (like those of Guyana, Myanmar and Tuvalu). Such reviews also aim to identify and do away with legislation that is inconsistent horizontally³⁷ and counter to locally adopted laws.³⁸

Insufficient legislation and weak enforcement are often mentioned as impediments to implementation, and many NBSAPs thus intend to build capacity to strengthen enforcement, both generally and with reference to concrete legal frameworks. Some NBSAPs (like that of Timor Leste) have targets for broad, consolidated biodiversity laws.

A majority of NBSAPs include objectives for the introduction of legal frameworks to regulate access and benefit sharing in order to implement the Nagoya Protocol on

37 As an example, Nepal's NBSAP includes the following priority action: "Promotion of synergy among various legislations (e.g., Forest Act, Water Resources Act, Environment Protection Act, Electricity Act, Local Self-governance Act, Mines and Minerals Act, National Parks and Wildlife Conservation Act, and Public Roads Act) through necessary amendments, by 2018". Nepal, Ministry of Forests and Soil Conservation, *National Biodiversity Strategy and Action Plan 2014-2020* (2014), p. 88. Available from <https://www.cbd.int/doc/world/np/np-nbsap-v2-en.pdf>.

38 This includes the NBSAP of Tuvalu. Tuvalu, *Tuvalu National Biodiversity Strategy and Action Plan 2012–2016*, p. 40. Available from <https://www.cbd.int/doc/world/tv/tv-nbsap-01-en.pdf>.

36 Jordan, *The National Biodiversity Strategy and Action Plan 2015–2020*, p. 38. Available from <https://www.cbd.int/doc/world/jo/jo-nbsap-v2-en.pdf>.



Access to Genetic Resources and the Fair and Equitable Sharing of Benefit Arising from their Utilization.

Overall, the lack of strong policy and a legislative framework for action on biodiversity is noted as a key challenge to NBSAP implementation by many countries whose NBSAPs were reviewed.

Legal preparedness for biodiversity mainstreaming

Most NBSAPs mention the need to strengthen legal approaches in general, but do not elaborate much on what is generally needed in terms of legal measures to get actors to commit across sectors and translate the broad policy objectives into practice.

A number of NBSAPs propose legal reforms to promote the sustainable use of natural resources within particular sectors such as forestry, fishery, hunting and rangeland management. This includes Afghanistan, Dominica, Georgia, Kyrgyzstan, Myanmar and Sudan. The legislation is typically aimed at regulating the use of natural resources through government authorization to set quotas and issue licences for use.

A few NBSAPs offer more details on the types of legal approaches to be taken to support their efforts to mainstream biodiversity. The following provide some examples:

Environmental impact assessment (EIA) is the process of evaluating the likely environmental impact of a concrete project. EIA is currently likely the approach where legal measures have and can have the most tangible impact on biodiversity mainstreaming. It is a concept that is already well-established in environmental law and widely incorporated into national legislation throughout the world. However, the review of NBSAPs reveals that in some countries, biodiversity concerns are insufficiently

covered by EIA legislation or have a weak status in its practical application. A number of NBSAPs call for a stronger standing for biodiversity in EIAs. Better enforcement of EIA requirements is also highlighted in some NBSAPs. Jordan has adopted an EIA bylaw that will enter into force in 2017, “introducing improved legal tools and mechanisms on biodiversity safeguards and management”.³⁹

Strategic environmental assessment (SEA) is the process of evaluating the environmental consequences of plans, programmes and policies, or, in other words, impact assessment further “upstream” in the planning process than EIA. SEA is generally not as widely applied as EIA, and in the NBSAPs assessed, SEA is only modestly addressed. The NBSAPs of Georgia and Jordan provide for this instrument to be introduced to enhance biodiversity mainstreaming.

One legal approach relevant for mainstreaming that appears not to be very widespread is spatial planning. This tool contributes to integrated area-based management both at land and sea, and thus has close ties to the ecosystem approach, which the Conference of the Parties to the Convention on Biological Diversity has designated as the primary framework for action under the Convention and endorsed as “a strategy for the integrated management of land, water and living resources that promotes conservation and sustainable use in an equitable way.”⁴⁰ Spatial planning is addressed by a few countries in their NBSAPs (like Myanmar) as a means of mainstreaming conservation into national and district-level land use planning. Togo plans to develop a national planning strategy by 2017, specifying the areas devoted to human settlements, agriculture, aquaculture, forestry and the conservation of biological diversity, and Sudan will develop and operate land-use plans and laws governing land tenure and land use.

39 Jordan, *The National Biodiversity Strategy and Action Plan 2015–2020*, p. 43. Available from <https://www.cbd.int/doc/world/jo/jo-nbsap-v2-en.pdf>.

40 Decision V/6

Box 10: Elimination of negative incentives for biodiversity through legal means

Goal 12 of Mongolia's NBSAP is to "create a legal environment where subsidies or financial assistance are prohibited for use in agriculture, mineral resource extraction, infrastructure, energy, light industry, food manufacturing, and service industry projects and actions deemed to be harmful to or potentially harmful to biological diversity in accordance with environmental strategy evaluations."

One of the outputs of this goal is: "By 2020, strategic environmental assessment in main economic sectors like agriculture, mineral resource extraction and processing, infrastructure is conducted."

Source: Mongolia, Ministry of Environment, Green Development and Tourism, *National Biodiversity Program (2015-2025)* (2015). Available from <https://www.cbd.int/doc/world/mn/mn-nbsap-v2-en.pdf>.

Using the Aichi Targets as a basis, most of the NBSAPs reviewed address the use of economic instruments and valuation of biodiversity in some general way. They thus subscribe to biodiversity as "natural capital" that generates and helps to maintain ecosystem services essential for human well-being and economic development.⁴¹ However, the NBSAPs do not provide much clarity as to which measures, including legal

measures, are needed to implement these complex, cross-cutting policy objectives. One exception is Mongolia (see box 10).

With respect to mainstreaming at the vertical level, both the Convention on Biological Diversity itself and many Convention on Biological Diversity work programmes and decisions stress the close, traditional dependence on biological resources of many indigenous and local communities and their resultant important role as biodiversity custodians. The current assessment reveals that this role has been addressed and acknowledged to a larger extent in the newer, revised NBSAPs than in first-generation NBSAPs.

⁴¹ This is expressed, for instance, in CBD preambular paragraph 1: "Conscious of the intrinsic value of biological diversity and of the ecological, genetic, social, economic, scientific, educational, cultural, recreational and aesthetic values of biological diversity and its components" and paragraph 20: "Aware that conservation and sustainable use of biological diversity is of critical importance for meeting the food, health and other needs of the growing world population, for which purpose access to and sharing of both genetic resources and technologies are essential."



Box 11: Benefitting biodiversity and local livelihoods through participatory management

Nepal reports on implementing participatory forest management programmes that have made a substantial contribution to forest conservation, enhancement of local livelihoods and strengthening of biodiversity-livelihood linkages. The Nepal Community Forest Act of 1993 gives local people significant control over the management and harvesting of forest resources. This has sped up the community forest hand-over process. Forest degradation and loss has declined substantially and even reversed in many areas, and by 2013 more than 18,000 community forest user groups involving 2.24 million households were managing 1.7 million hectares of forestland under the community forestry programme. Although the planning and design of community forest management has not specifically considered biodiversity, improvement in forest conditions under communities' management has positively contributed to biodiversity through the creation of habitat corridors and development of successive stages of forests. Nepal has also had successful experience with community-based management in the field of agricultural approaches for conservation and use of agro-genetic resources.

The Peru NBSAP is guided by principles of subsidiarity and participatory governance, recognizing that governance (legislative, political or economic) can result in greater efficiency, effectiveness and citizen involvement when decentralized and as close as possible to the resources to be managed. The NBSAP therefore includes a target of strengthened decentralized governance of biodiversity under a participatory approach with intercultural, gender and social inclusion, by 2021. It further includes a sub-target of a 20 per cent increase in the number of actions to strengthen institutional capacities at all levels of government, as well as the number of qualified institutions to ensure effective and efficient management of biodiversity, by 2018. A number of time-bound concrete activities are outlined to achieve these targets.

Source:

Nepal, Ministry of Forests and Soil Conservation, *National Biodiversity Strategy and Action Plan 2014-2020* (2014). Available from <https://www.cbd.int/doc/world/np/np-nbsap-v2-en.pdf>; and Murari Raj Joshi, "Community Forestry Programs in Nepal and their Effects on Poorer Households". Available from <http://www.fao.org/docrep/ARTICLE/WFC/XII/0036-A1.HTM>

Peru, Ministry of Environment. *La Estrategia Nacional de Diversidad Biologica al 2021 y su Plan de Accion 2014-2021* (Lima, 2014). Available from <https://www.cbd.int/doc/world/pe/pe-nbsap-v2-es.pdf>.

Box 12: Legal action to promote community management of biodiversity

Myanmar has set a target of having the national legal framework on tenure encourage conservation and sustainable management by 2020. To reach this target, rules and regulations that recognize smallholder and customary tenure of land, freshwater and marine resources will be developed.

Sudan intends to clarify land tenure and resource rights to strengthen policy and legislation towards local management of resources. Moreover, Sudan will issue national legislation regulating access to plant genetic resources and associated traditional knowledge that recognizes the rights of farmers and local communities.

Source:

Myanmar, Ministry of Environmental Conservation and Forestry, *National Biodiversity Strategy and Action Plan (2015-2020)* (2015). Available from <https://www.cbd.int/doc/world/mm/mm-nbsap-v2-en.pdf>.

Sudan, Ministry of Environment, Natural Resources and Physical Development, *National Biodiversity Strategy and Action Plan 2015-2020* (2015). Available from <https://www.cbd.int/doc/world/sd/sd-nbsap-v2-en.pdf>.

Some NBSAPs report of progress for biodiversity and strengthening of biodiversity-livelihood linkages that have already taken place as a result of local, participatory management (see box 11).

A number of NBSAPs aim for legal reforms such as strengthening smallholder and customary tenure rights to provide incentives for local people to protect biodiversity (see box 12).

VIII. Financial preparedness

Adopting the NBSAP as a policy instrument with political ownership is important, not least for mobilizing the necessary resources for implementation and building capacity. Lack of resources has been recognized as a serious deficiency for the implementation of first-generation NBSAPs and to combat biodiversity loss in general.

As shown in the assessment by the Secretariat of the Convention on Biological Diversity, only a small minority of NBSAPs include resource mobilization strategies, while a large majority have set targets to develop such strategies later. Some countries (like Dominica, India, Kyrgyzstan, Nepal, Togo and Uganda) have estimated the cost of implementing their NBSAP, which is an important step towards a resource mobilization strategy. Most developing countries declare themselves to be dependent on external support, but also acknowledge, to a much larger degree than in first-generation NBSAPs, the need for allocation of means for biodiversity in their national budgets.

Mainstreaming's potential for "innovative" funding mechanisms, like payments for ecosystem services, biodiversity offsets, environmental fiscal reforms, green markets and climate financing, is only covered by a

few countries (like Comoros, Lao People's Democratic Republic, Malaysia and Uganda).

More information about countries' performances with regard to resource mobilization is available in national submissions under the Financial Reporting Framework adopted by the Conference of the Parties to the Convention on Biological Diversity at its twelfth meeting, in 2014, to obtain information from Parties on their contributions to achieving global targets on resource mobilization.⁴² However, only around one-third of Parties responded to the Financial Reporting Framework.

Both the NBSAPs and the Financial Reporting Framework reveal a progressive trend in terms of resource mobilization, but countries are generally still at a very early stage in terms of mobilizing more resources for biodiversity purposes. A number of countries seem to

42 UNEP/CBD/COP/13/11/Rev1. Available from <https://www.cbd.int/doc/meetings/cop/cop-13/official/cop-13-11-rev1-en.pdf>. The targets are:

- (a) Double total biodiversity-related international financial resource flows to developing countries, in particular least developed countries and small island developing States, as well as countries with economies in transition, using average annual biodiversity funding for the years 2006–2010 as a baseline, by 2015, and at least maintain this level until 2020, in accordance with Article 20 of the Convention, to contribute to the achievement of the Convention's three objectives, including through a country-driven prioritization of biodiversity within development plans in recipient countries;
- (b) Endeavour for 100 per cent, but at least 75 per cent, of Parties to have included biodiversity in their national priorities or development plans by 2015, and to have therefore made appropriate domestic financial provisions;
- (c) Endeavour for 100 per cent, but at least 75 per cent, of Parties provided with adequate financial resources to have reported domestic biodiversity expenditures, as well as funding needs, gaps and priorities, by 2015, in order to improve the robustness of the baseline;
- (d) Endeavour for 100 per cent, but at least 75 per cent, of Parties provided with adequate financial resources to have prepared national financial plans for biodiversity by 2015, and that 30 per cent of those Parties have assessed and/or evaluated the intrinsic, ecological, genetic, socioeconomic, scientific, educational, cultural, recreational and aesthetic values of biological diversity and its components;
- (e) Mobilize domestic financial resources from all sources to reduce the gap between identified needs and available resources at the domestic level, for effectively implementing by 2020 Parties' national biodiversity strategies and action plans, in accordance with Article 20. (Convention on Biological Diversity decision XII/3).



be on a good track in terms of mapping domestic biodiversity-related expenditures, but countries have generally not come far in identifying funding needs, gaps and priorities. As mentioned above, very few countries have developed national resource mobilization strategies.

IX. Conclusion and discussion

Second-generation NBSAPs are more targeted than first-generation NBSAPs, and are thus better suited to serving as a framework for implementation. The Strategic Plan for Biodiversity 2011–2020 with its Aichi Biodiversity Targets has been a key factor in this development. In addition, the strong reiteration of mainstreaming in the Aichi Targets has meant that mainstreaming has received considerably more attention in the second-generation NBSAPs. The new NBSAPs generally seem to be prepared in correlation with sustainable development and/or poverty reduction strategies rather than in isolation from them. This offers good prospects for synergistic and mutually supportive implementation of the NBSAPs and the Sustainable Development Goals and potentially of other related plans on climate change, health, rural development, poverty, etc. The new NBSAPs also show progress on “vertical” mainstreaming by empowering regional and regional institutions, as well as indigenous peoples and local communities.

The post-2010 NBSAPs have further been improved by putting more emphasis on tools for implementation – institutional, legal and financial. Many NBSAPs call for legal reforms either immediately or on the basis of reviews and gap analysis of existing legal frameworks. While only a minority of NBSAPs include resource mobilization strategies, most countries have set out steps to prepare such plans, and many of the NBSAPs include cost estimates for fulfilling their concrete

goals, targets and actions. The “wish-list” approach of many first-generation NBSAPs of developing countries – to conceive of the action plan as a list of project proposals relying solely on external funding – has not been repeated. Actions are often prioritized, and NBSAPs generally reflect the recognition that funding has to come from different sources, including from the country’s own budget.

Goals, targets and actions are much more direct and action-on-the-ground-oriented for traditional nature conservation aimed at mitigating the direct causes of biodiversity loss than when NBSAPs are seeking to approach the underlying causes through mainstreaming, economic instruments and a natural capital approach. Such goals and targets are often expressed in general, aspirational terms, without specifications as to how they could be operationalized. Many countries seem to be at a preliminary stage in terms of mainstreaming, due to the fact that a necessary first step is a basic review of all policies and legislation relevant to biodiversity. Other countries have moved a step further and, through their NBSAPs, have triggered a dialogue between the authority responsible for biodiversity and the relevant sectoral and cross-sectoral stakeholders and set targets for mainstreaming. A few countries have moved beyond this point and have used the NBSAP process to draw up more concrete measures for implementation of their biodiversity mainstreaming goals, including strengthening of specific legal measures.

The fact that many NBSAPs have not been endorsed above the ministry directly responsible for Convention on Biological Diversity implementation and have not been prepared through a very participatory process could indicate that mainstreaming goals and targets may not always have been fully coordinated at the political level with the sectoral and cross-sectoral ministries within which biodiversity is supposed to be

mainstreamed. Some NBSAPs specify that this remains to be done.

All in all, the post-2010 NBSAPs seem to be on the right track and biodiversity mainstreaming is gaining recognition. However, the process is at a very early stage and a considerable amount of political and legal work still needs to be done before tangible results can be achieved on the ground - work seems to be behind schedule with regard to achieving the Aichi Targets. This is also because the national targets generally do not match the level of ambition of the Aichi Targets, as pointed out by the Secretariat of the Convention on Biological Diversity in its assessment.

There are no shortcuts in this process, but countries could use the momentum of the NBSAP process to gain as much ground as possible, even if this could lead to a longer NBSAP revision process than envisaged. Investing from the beginning in building political credibility, ownership and commitment pays off in the end.



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