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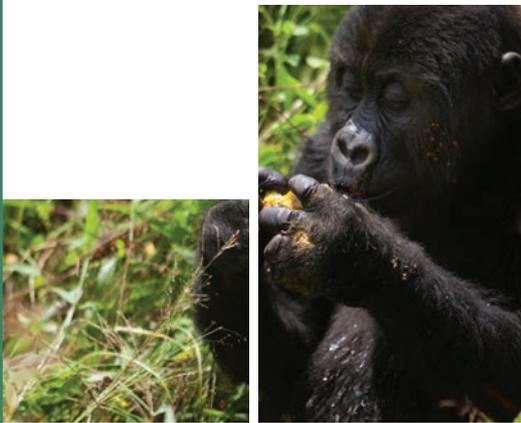
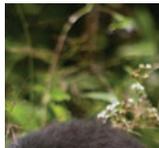
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ELABORATION OF OPTIONS FOR ENHANCING SYNERGIES AMONG BIODIVERSITY-RELATED CONVENTIONS



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Publication: Elaboration of options for enhancing synergies among biodiversity related conventions.

Published in March 2016

ISBN No: 978-92-807-3525-3

Job No: DEL/1948/NA

Produced by UNEP Division for Environmental Law and Conventions

Director of Publication: Elizabeth Maruma Mrema

Project Managers/Coordinators: Balakrishna Pisupati (UNEP/DEL/C), Margaret Oduk (UNEP/DEL/C) and Jerry Harrison (UNEP/WCMC)

Co-Chairs of the process in developing the document: Ms. Tita Korvenoja (Finland) and Dr. Alfred Oteng-Yeboah (Ghana)

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Citation

UNEP (2016) Elaboration of options for enhancing synergies among biodiversity related conventions. United Nations Environment Programme (UNEP), Nairobi, Kenya

This publication is available online at: www.unep.org/environmentalgovernance/

Design and Typesetting

Division of Communication and Public Information, UNEP



United Nations Environment Programme

P.O. Box 30552

Nairobi, 00100, Kenya

Tel: (+254) 20 7621234

E-mail: publications@unep.org

Web: www.unep.org

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Abbreviations

ASEAN	Association of Southeast Asian Nations
CITES	Convention on International Trade in Endangered Species of Wild Fauna and Flora
ECOLEX	Environmental Law Information Service
FAO	Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations
GEF	Global Environment Facility
InforMEA	United Nations information portal on multilateral environmental agreements
IUCN	International Union for Conservation of Nature
NBSAP	National Biodiversity Strategy and Action Plan
PIMS	Programme Information Management System
SADC	Southern African Development Community
UNDP	United Nations Development Programme
UNEP	United Nations Environment Programme
UNESCO	United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization
WCMC	World Conservation Monitoring Centre

Executive summary

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Over the past decades, countries have negotiated and agreed to be bound by a number of biodiversity-related conventions and other multilateral environmental agreements. These efforts have put in place a comprehensive governance regime addressing the conservation and sustainable use of biodiversity and ecosystem services. As, however, the number of obligations under such legal instruments has grown, so have concerns about how to implement them effectively and coherently, and about the possibility that there might be duplication of efforts. As a result, significant efforts have already been made to improve alignment among the biodiversity-related conventions, and to identify and build on opportunities for collaboration, cooperation and coordination, and this work continues.

The options for enhancing synergies between the biodiversity-related conventions (focusing on the global level) set forth in the present paper respond to calls by the governing bodies of conventions, the United Nations and the United Nations Environment Programme (UNEP), to explore opportunities for synergies, in order to achieve more coherent and effective implementation of the biodiversity-related conventions. The present paper is one of several outputs being delivered by the UNEP project on improving the effectiveness of and cooperation among biodiversity-related conventions and exploring opportunities for further synergies.

The preparation of the paper began with online surveys, sent by UNEP to national focal points, authorities and convention secretariats in early 2014, which helped to inform the elements of an initial draft docu-

ment, which was discussed at a first expert meeting in August 2014. Based on the inputs received during this meeting, a first draft of the paper was completed in late 2014, and subsequently sent out for review to key stakeholders, including the convention secretariats. Following the review period, a revised version was finalized, providing input to a second expert meeting in May 2015, which further refined and elaborated the options, as set out in the present paper.

Through seven linked thematic areas, the paper provides 28 options (see list below), under which 88 actions have been identified for various actors, including Governments, convention secretariats, UNEP and other relevant United Nations bodies. These options and actions take into account relevant completed, existing and planned initiatives undertaken by a number of actors.

The options are proposed to achieve two main outcomes: first, implementation of the biodiversity-related conventions in an increasingly coherent manner, involving greater collaboration and cooperation among convention parties, convention secretariats and key partners, leading to more efficiency and effectiveness in achieving the aims of those conventions; and, second, increased collaboration and cooperation in the implementation of the biodiversity-related conventions at all levels, facilitated engagement with other sectors, and improved opportunities for mainstreaming biodiversity objectives into other policies and sectors (including through the United Nations development assistance frameworks and in furtherance of the Sustainable Development Goals).

1. National biodiversity strategies and action plans, the Strategic Plan for Biodiversity and the Aichi Biodiversity Targets

OPTIONS:

- 1.1 Taking into account already existing materials, prepare streamlined and simple guidance and tools for facilitating the development, revision and implementation of national biodiversity strategies and action plans (NBSAPs) across the conventions.
- 1.2 Support the integration of NBSAPs and the Aichi Biodiversity Targets into different sectors, the United Nations Development Assistance Framework and sustainable development instruments at all levels.
- 1.3 Support parties in promptly obtaining funding provided through the Global Environment Facility (GEF) for the development, revision and implementation of NBSAPs, through the promotion of coherent implementation of the biodiversity-related conventions in a coordinated manner among their respective national authorities.
- 1.4 Support the exchange of experience on the development and implementation of NBSAPs and voluntary peer review of NBSAPs, including through the NBSAP Forum, with a particular focus on the coherent implementation of biodiversity-related conventions.
- 1.5 Explore the use of regional approaches to address transboundary issues identified in NBSAPs, by focusing efforts on collaboration between national focal points, authorities and stakeholders involved in the implementation of NBSAPs in different countries.
- 1.6 Elaborate on the role of each convention and United Nations body in contributing to the achievement of the Aichi Biodiversity Targets.

2. Reporting, monitoring and indicators

OPTIONS:

- 2.1 Building on present work, and recognizing the existing reporting obligations under each of the conventions, explore the possible benefits of using a shared modular reporting approach, and develop and test such an approach by addressing the identified benefits.
- 2.2 Enhance coherence in reporting through supporting indicator development and monitoring, building on existing work, including that of the Biodiversity Indicators Partnership.
- 2.3 Further develop online reporting and information management systems and continue working to ensure their interoperability.
- 2.4 Continue support for reporting processes through joint (regional) capacity-building activities.
- 2.5 Increase reporting on enhanced synergies across the conventions.

3. Intergovernmental Science-Policy Platform on Biodiversity and Ecosystem Services and strengthening the science-policy interface

OPTIONS:

- 3.1 Conventions should continue a close dialogue with the Intergovernmental Science-Policy Platform on Biodiversity and Ecosystem Services on the timely and coherent communication of key findings across the governing bodies and the scientific advisory bodies of the biodiversity-related conventions.
- 3.2 Conventions should consider and identify common issues for closer cooperation in developing and making future requests of the Platform, so that the priorities requested address areas of common interest.



Photo: Andrew Winning/Reuters

- 3.3 Efforts should be stepped up to ensure that the governing and subsidiary bodies of conventions and convention secretariats interact with the Platform in a coherent and timely manner.

- 5.3 Promote ways to strengthen coherent system-wide action on capacity-building for facilitating cooperation and collaboration in the implementation of the biodiversity-related conventions.

4. Information management and awareness-raising

OPTIONS:

- 4.1 Develop shared approaches for the more effective use of global information management tools.
- 4.2 Deliver joint information and awareness campaigns, including in the context of the United Nations Decade on Biodiversity (2011–2020).

5. Capacity-building

OPTIONS:

- 5.1 Strengthen the support provided by UNEP regional offices for implementation of the biodiversity-related conventions, and secure funding for sustaining the functions of the multilateral environmental agreement focal points.
- 5.2 Identify immediate opportunities for collaboration on capacity-development activities and develop harmonized and possible common approaches.

6. Funding and resource efficiency

OPTIONS:

- 6.1 Convention secretariats should collaborate on new initiatives for obtaining additional financial resources.
- 6.2 The biodiversity-related conventions should pursue a coordinated approach to securing funding from GEF and the Green Climate Fund.
- 6.3 Encourage donors, particularly those concerned with development assistance, to help expand opportunities and provide further incentives for coordination and synergies.
- 6.4 Share information on work to support parties in resource mobilization, including in relation to innovative financial mechanisms that promote cooperation among the biodiversity-related conventions.
- 6.5 Review and share past and current experiences relating to synergies between the multilateral environmental agreements and wider mainstreaming efforts, to identify means of boosting the cost-effectiveness of synergistic action on biodiversity.

7. Institutional collaboration

OPTIONS:

- 7.1 Focus and enhance the work of UNEP in supporting the implementation of the biodiversity-related conventions at national, regional and global levels, including, where appropriate, by promoting and facilitating collaboration and cooperation in their implementation, in those areas that fall within its mandate, through its various programmes, initiatives and policies.
- 7.2 Strengthen the Liaison Group of Biodiversity-related Conventions (Biodiversity Liaison Group) as a mechanism for promoting collaboration and cooperation among the biodiversity-related conventions within its mandate.
- 7.3 Encourage mutually supportive decisions and possible common decisions across the governing bodies of biodiversity-related conventions for achieving coherence at all levels, including further developing and strengthening joint work programmes and memorandums of understanding.

- 7.4 Develop mechanisms to share expertise across the biodiversity-related conventions in order to seek and identify common issues to address, and actions to undertake, at a programmatic and political level, to implement the Strategic Plan for Biodiversity 2011–2020 in a coordinated manner.

Recognizing that enhancing synergies across conventions requires a party-driven process, the present paper may be used by parties to the relevant conventions to promote collaboration and cooperation. The paper will also provide draft elements for the UNEP Executive Director's report on synergies between the multilateral environmental agreements, to be delivered to the United Nations Environment Assembly at its second session in May 2016. Moreover, it will support the party-led process established through decision XII/6 of the Convention on Biological Diversity, on enhancing synergies and improving efficiency in the implementation of the biodiversity-related conventions.



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