

Assessment of post-2010 National Biodiversity Strategies and Action Plans



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Publication: Assessment of post-2010 National Biodiversity Strategies and Action Plans

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Acknowledgement: This assessment was developed by the United Nations Environment Programme (UN Environment) in cooperation with the Fridtjof Nansen Institute. Final review and project management was undertaken by Andreas Obrecht (UN Environment) and Tomkeen Mobegi (UN Environment).

Citation: UNEP (2018). Assessment of post-2010 National Biodiversity Strategies and Action Plans, Nairobi, Kenya

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Layout: Eugene Papa, UNON, Publishing Services Section

Printing: UNON, Publishing Services Section, Nairobi, ISO 14001:2004 certified

Produced by:

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Table of Contents

I.	Introduction.....	4
II.	NBSAP preparation and adoption as a policy instrument.....	6
III.	Biodiversity mainstreaming in NBSAPs.....	9
	“Horizontal” mainstreaming.....	9
	“Vertical” mainstreaming.....	12
IV.	The use of national targets in NBSAPs.....	13
V.	NBSAPs as a tool for implementation of other biodiversity-related conventions	15
VI.	Developing and developed country NBSAPs	17
VII.	Legal preparedness.....	18
	Legal preparedness for biodiversity mainstreaming.....	20
VIII.	Financial preparedness.....	23
IX.	Conclusion and discussion	24



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 Pispapati, 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/File/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

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

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