

Project Objective:

to facilitate the coherent implementation of the biodiversity commitments, taken under different international and regional biodiversity agreements, by all actors.

Results: *The proof of concept phase of the project produced four issue-based modules on Inland Waters, Invasive Alien Species, Sustainable Use and Climate Change. These are available on a supporting website, accessible through www.svs-unepibmdb.net and on CD ROM.*



Partners

The four modules were developed with the UNEP World Conservation Monitoring Centre (UNEP-WCMC) and the World Conservation Union (IUCN), in close cooperation with a Steering Committee where Secretariats of the five biodiversity Conventions (CMS, CBD, Ramsar, WHC and CITES) as well as eight Pilot Countries are represented.

The eight Pilot Countries, representing two regions (Africa & Europe), that accepted to join the project are Morocco, Senegal, Seychelles, Uganda, Belgium, Hungary (only peer review), Norway and Russia. Since national measures are key to improving coherent implementation of different conventions, the Pilot Countries will be closely involved in both the development and implementation of these modules.

To enable full participation of the Pilot Countries, all the drafts as well as the final version of the four modules will be available on the website in English, French and Russian. Translations into the three other UN languages (Arabic, Chinese and Spanish) will be added on after finalization of the modules.

Background

In 2002, at the World Summit on Sustainable Development, the world community adopted the 2010 target of significantly reducing the rate of biodiversity loss. With a range of multilateral environmental agreements (MEAs) being in place at the regional and global levels, tools exist to address the challenge that the 2010 target constitutes.

However, for a variety of reasons, in particular limited financial and technical resources, the national implementation of biodiversity-related MEAs remains a major challenge. In order to improve that implementation, it

is necessary to make more efficient use of available resources and to coordinate efforts. This makes the efforts on synergy and harmonization among biodiversity-related agreements important and urgent.

Decision 23/1 of the 23rd UNEP Governing Council requests the Executive Director of UNEP to support implementation by parties to MEAs of their obligations under such agreements. In this respect UNEP, with the assistance of the Belgian Development Cooperation, and in cooperation with UNEP-WCMC and IUCN, developed Issue-Based Modules for the coherent implementation of biodiversity related conventions.

The project is based on the hypothesis that the implementation of different MEAs often relates to issues of common concern and that a more coherent implementation would be enhanced if all actors involved in implementation of different MEAs, received more structured information on such issues. The first phase of the project focused on the development on issue-based modules on four issues of common concern to the five biodiversity MEAs, namely Biodiversity and Climate Change, Inland Water, Invasive Alien Species and Sustainable Use.

Characteristics of the Module

Each module is a document providing a structured overview of how a certain topic is treated across sever-

al agreements by identifying and grouping implementation requirements under different agreements through. The final modules will combine relevant requirements from both global and regional agreements on the issue in order to also improve coherence across the different levels of governance, while fully respecting the separate and distinct nature of each agreement.

The modules have been developed on the basis of an analysis of existing articles, decisions, resolution and recommendations relevant to the specific issues under various agreements. They identify the relationship between these articles, decisions, resolutions and recommendations to highlight overlaps and synergies, potential conflicts and possible gaps.

By clustering obligations of different agreements under certain activities, the modules will facilitate the communication at national level and improve implementation of obligations regarding issues of common concern. They should also reinforce cross-sectoral understanding and cooperation on implementation, emphasizing the relevance of biodiversity to other sectors.

The modules aim to provide a voluntary and evolutionary tool, and will be updated regularly with new decisions taken by the governing bodies of the conventions.

To provide easy access to a large amount of information and to facilitate the distribution and use of the modules, a website was developed. This website contains the four modules as well as the text of the articles, decisions, recommendations and resolutions that are referred to in the modules. It will also provide users with some background information on the reviewed agreements to increase mutual understanding among experts of the different agreements.

To allow use of the tool off-line, the website will be available as a CD ROM as well.

Use of the Issue-Based Modules as a tool to improve coherent implementation

From the start, there has been large support from Parties, organizations and MEA Secretariats for the issue-based modules. Parties, Secretariats and individual experts have now started to use the modules for different purposes and some examples of such use include:

- to revise the national legislation on Invasive Alien Species
- to provide a reference platform for the national coordination unit dealing with international environmental policy
- to develop a comprehensive national management plan for Inland Water

- to intervene during MEA meetings to improve coherence with previous decisions
- as a holistic training tool for new professionals on a specific issue, instead of per convention
- to improve understanding on how regional and international commitments interact
- as an overview for the Secretariat on the role of that convention towards the other MEAs

Further process

To maximize the usefulness of the modules for national experts and other stakeholders when implementing the biodiversity commitments, it is very important to ensure involvement of the end-users. The modules will therefore be introduced to a wider audience of biodiversity experts in Regional Workshops to discuss their content, approach and further development. The workshops will evaluate the potential uses and limitations of the modules and formulate implementation guidance to reach a more coherent implementation of the biodiversity commitments by all relevant actors. The need for a regional mechanism to support the use of the modules will also be discussed.

For further information, please contact:

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