

Keywords:

Mainstreaming, National Biodiversity Strategy and Action Plans, Convention on Biological Diversity (CBD)



OVERVIEW

IIED Natural Resources Group

Project name:

NBSAPs 2.0: Mainstreaming biodiversity in development

Project leader:

Dilys Roe

Time frame:

April 2012 – March 2015

Objective:

The NBSAPs 2.0 project is intended to develop the capacity of African countries to revise their national biodiversity strategies so that they reflect development priorities and act as effective vehicles for mainstreaming.

PROJECT SUMMARY

Parties to the Convention on Biological Diversity (CBD) are in the process of revising their national biodiversity strategies by 2015 in line with the Strategic Plan for Biodiversity agreed in 2010. One of the mandates of the revised strategies is to assist in mainstreaming biodiversity concerns into development planning. In the NBSAPs 2.0 project, coordinated by IIED and the UN Environment Programme World Conservation Monitoring Centre (UNEP-WCMC), environment ministries from Botswana, Namibia, the Seychelles and Uganda are learning together how to integrate development concerns into biodiversity plans and convince development sectors to pay heed to conservation. One of the first outputs of the project – a diagnostic tool for assessing the current state of biodiversity mainstreaming at a national level has been taken up internationally by other countries undergoing the same process.

CHANGE IN ACTION

The four partner countries, together with a small panel of independent experts, form an “African Leadership Group” for biodiversity mainstreaming. They have met to share their experiences and review each others’ efforts to make a convincing case for biodiversity being incorporated

Making a stronger case for biodiversity

Four African countries share what they have learnt as they revise their national biodiversity strategies

The NBSAPs 2.0 project seizes a triple window of opportunity. In the next two years, the 193 countries that are party to the Convention on Biological Diversity (CBD) will be revising their National Biodiversity Strategies and Action Plans (NBSAPs) to reflect the Strategic Plan for Biodiversity agreed in 2010. The CBD has called on countries to integrate biodiversity issues into the mainstream of national development planning and economic accounting. This push reinforces many countries’ green economy ambitions, which are fuelling a search for ways to put a value on biodiversity assets. There is also an emerging opportunity for global leadership in Africa, which had six of the ten fastest-growing economies in 2000–2010.

In NBSAPs 2.0, IIED is working with four African environment ministries, from Botswana, Namibia, the Seychelles and Uganda. At two capacity-building workshops over the last 18 months, officials have learnt to make the case for biodiversity using terms and evidence that speak to key development sectors. And the project’s influence is spreading, with international institutions recognising IIED’s approach and using the tools we’ve developed.

IIED plays a coordinating role, together with the UN Environment Programme World Conservation Monitoring Centre. But the project is designed to foster African leadership through a series of workshops – hosted by the partner

countries – that facilitate South-South learning and peer review. We gathered a group of seven independent experts on biodiversity and development in Africa as a resource for the discussions, and the four country partners plus these independent advisors are known as the African Leadership Group.

Reciprocal mainstreaming

The mainstreaming approach adopted by the project focuses on reciprocity – ensuring that the revised NBSAPs reflect development concerns and at the same time that biodiversity is integrated into development strategies. IIED has been able to share insights from our long experience in mainstreaming environmental issues and connections with groups doing related work, such as the UN’s Poverty and Environment Initiative (PEI) and the UN Development Programme (UNDP).

At workshops in Maun, Botswana, in October 2012 and Entebbe, Uganda, in July 2013, the African Leadership Group heard presentations on environmental mainstreaming from IIED, UNDP and PEI. And they exchanged perspectives and feedback with officials in finance, planning, energy, agriculture and water – development sectors with major biodiversity impacts and often sceptical attitudes toward environmental policies.

In Entebbe, the Ugandan team from the Africa Leadership Group presented the business case for biodiversity to be integrated into national development

into development plans. At the latest workshop in July 2013, IIED invited development ministry representatives to critique the biodiversity agenda and hear feedback on their national development plans from their environment ministry counterparts. The value of the exchange was clear in the increased attention paid by project partners to the kind of information that development colleagues want when making the case for mainstreaming. Namibia's draft biodiversity strategy, the first out from the group, sets a strong example of framing biodiversity as a development asset. Meanwhile, the CBD Secretariat has adopted tools from the project to support capacity-building exercises for all parties to the convention, and the Global Environment Facility has made contact as it reassesses its approach to biodiversity mainstreaming.

KEY LESSONS LEARNT & INNOVATIONS

- After mutual feedback and learning between environment ministries and development planning officials, environment ministries were able to make more targeted and compelling arguments for mainstreaming biodiversity.
- IIED took a rare opportunity for work in a few countries to spread globally. The CBD is asking 193 signatory countries to plan for biodiversity mainstreaming, and needs to equip them with tools such as those we have developed.

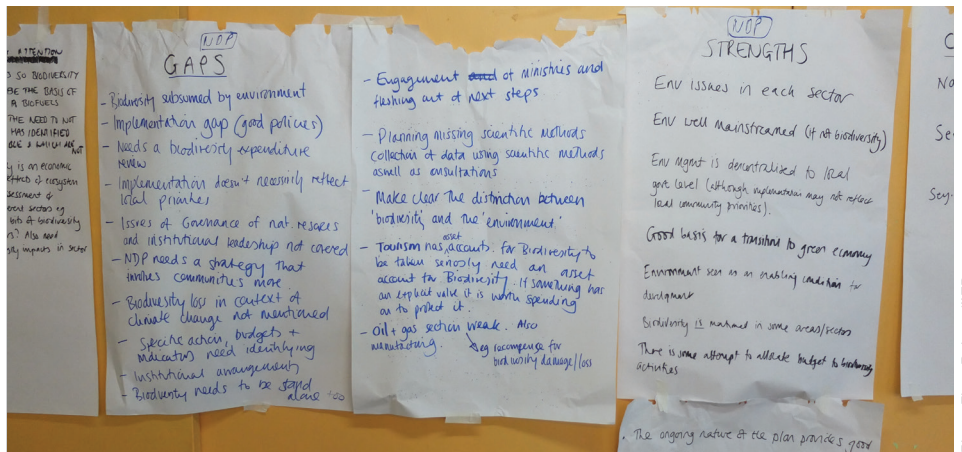
PARTNERS' VIEW

I feel we can learn a lot from this project – the peer reviews and the different colleagues in the other countries. Hearing what they are doing changes your perceptions, improves your thinking about how to resolve [mainstreaming] issues, and helps with understanding what makes for success.

Dineo Gaborekwe,
Ministry of Environment, Wildlife and Tourism,
Botswana



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Mutual feedback and learning has helped to strengthen arguments for mainstreaming biodiversity.

Photo: Fiona Roberts/IIED

plans. A government ministries' panel responded. They stressed that it would take clearer evidence, especially economic valuations and scenario-building, to convince them that biodiversity is a key national asset.

Uganda's Ministry of Planning then presented the national development plan and talked through the ways in which it addresses biodiversity conservation. The plan was critiqued by the African Leadership Group and members of the Uganda Poverty and Conservation Learning Group, an IIED-backed network invited to the meeting. Both workshops featured role-playing exercises on 'selling' biodiversity to a tough audience of investors and planners. After environment officials heard the advice from other sectors, these practice pitches became much more focused on hard evidence and the business case for conservation. A new guide to developing a biodiversity business case reflects the outcomes of this activity.

This change was also clear in Namibia's draft revised NBSAP, which was ready in time for peer review at the Entebbe meeting. Compared with the first generation strategy, the revised version was much clearer on the contribution of biodiversity to Namibia's development priorities, pointing to specific key result areas within the country's Vision 2030, its national development plan and its Millennium Development Goal achievement plans. The Namibia team also sought to mainstream biodiversity through the process which they adopted to revise the NBSAP. They looked for buy in from high level policymakers in different development sectors early on in the process and also embarked on a sustained stakeholder engagement process and awareness raising campaign.

Global uptake

Partner countries are now working to complete their NBSAPs by late 2014, but products from the project have already gone global. In November 2013 the CBD Secretariat held a capacity-building workshop for all parties to support their NBSAP revision efforts and used the diagnostic tool that the African partners piloted at the start of the project plus a ten-step guide to mainstreaming biodiversity agreed by the African Leadership Group at the Maun workshop. Both were well received. In October 2013 IIED was also invited to participate in an expert workshop for the Global Environmental Facility, who wanted to hear our approach to connecting biodiversity with development sectors.

With reciprocal mainstreaming, we can find common goals and synergies, harness the political power of development sectors, and finally start to slow the loss of biodiversity. The CBD system is looking for successful models to promote worldwide, as seen in their uptake of our tools. If NBSAPs 2.0 leads to closer cooperation across sectors in the four partner countries, others around the globe may take lessons from these African leaders.



Knowledge Products

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