

**NATIONAL REPORT ON THE MAINSTREAMING BIODIVERSITY IN
DEVELOPMENT POLICY AND PLANNING INITIATIVE PROJECT IN GHANA**

SEPTEMBER 2015 TO MARCH 2016

INTRODUCTION

The National Biosafety Authority, under the Ministry of Environment, Science, Technology and Innovation (MESTI), in collaboration with the National Development Policy Commission (NDPC) with sponsorship from IIED, sought to undertake the Mainstreaming of Biodiversity issues into Development Policy and Planning in the country. The aim of this project was to improve the way development processes handle the opportunities and constraints associated with biodiversity.

Development at the expense of natural resources will eventually lead to the destruction of the environment, particularly biological diversity and also have negative impact on health. It is therefore imperative that development goes side by side with the conservation, management and sustainable use of biodiversity.

METHODOLOGY

A two day national workshop was held on 9th and 10th November, 2015 with key stakeholders to identify sectors and issues which could be entry points for biodiversity mainstreaming in the country. Discussions were led by a team of facilitators with the lead facilitator coming from the National Development Planning Commission. The Chairman of the National Biodiversity Committee provided an overview of the project after which the lead facilitator took the group through a series of questions and answers. By encouraging contributions and discussions, participants were able to arrive at a consensus on the sectors with a high potential for biodiversity mainstreaming. The diagnostic tool provided by UNEP-WCMC was used as the guiding tool. Accordingly the exercise was divided into two sections. The first section was to identify the key entry points and the second section was to prioritize the entry points. After the identification of the entry key entry points, they were prioritized using the lickert-scale style scoring matrix.

PARTICIPANTS

Participants were drawn from various sectors in order to acquire a multi-sectoral approach, since biodiversity cuts across a great divide. The sectors included civil

societies, academia, and policy makers among others. (Find attached list of participants as Appendix 1).

DIAGNOSTIC TOOL RESULTS

Using the diagnostic tool provided by UNEP-WCMC, stakeholders identified the following sectors as having potential for biodiversity mainstreaming:

- Agricultural sector
- Fisheries
- Wildlife
- Health
- Transport
- Culture

This is because, in the quest for economic emancipation and national development, these sectors largely contribute to the destruction of existing biodiversity. Except for cultural practices that serve a dual role, whereas there are some festivals that promote the preservation of the forests and wildlife, there are also others that diligently destroy the existing biodiversity by removing species from their habitat.

The following prioritization criteria was used to determine the three most relevant sectors to biodiversity and the economy of Ghana:

- High profile
- Future-relevant
- Major development and biodiversity outcomes
- Tractable
- Urgency
- Learning
- Critical path

The use of the diagnostic tool led to the identification of the following sectors being prioritized as the entry points for biodiversity mainstreaming:

- Agriculture
- Fisheries
- Forestry

Ghana's economy is a largely agrarian with well over 70% being employed directly or indirectly in the agricultural sector. Since Ghana also has a large coast line, there are a lot of people employed in the fishing industry. The discovery of oil both offshore and onshore has triggered eutrophication in the

marine and inland waters bodies along the coast, thus affecting the quality of fish life in the water bodies. Farming activities have also had a toll on the forest in Ghana. Notable among them is slash and burn and the causing of deliberate bush fires. These have led to massive destruction of forest cover. Again, hunting of animals, using destructive means has also led to significant depletion of forest fauna.

MAINSTREAMING TARGET

The target of the project was to create the necessary sensitization and promote effective mainstreaming of biodiversity into the next phase of the National Development Agenda with emphasis on agriculture, fisheries and forestry which will then be scaled-up subsequently to other sectors.

A greater section of the country's economic gains is acquired from these sectors. Since Ghana is largely an agrarian economy, a relatively large proportion of the populace rely on these sectors for their economic livelihood.

The current National Agenda ends in 2017. The National Development Planning Commission is currently preparing a 40-year development plan as a successor to the current framework. The focus is to sensitize all the relevant stakeholders involved in the development of the National Development Plan, backed with credible data, on the strategic importance of biodiversity to sustainable development. By so doing, biodiversity issues will be well articulated in the National Development Framework and then translated into sector and district development plans.

OUTPUTS & OUTCOMES

The main output of the project was the identification of entry points for biodiversity mainstreaming into national development plans. The use of the diagnostic tool indicated that Agriculture, Fisheries and Forestry sector are the key entry points.

The workshop also promoted collaboration, cooperation and networking among key stakeholders. The consensus on the identified entry points binds the stakeholders in ensuring that biodiversity is mainstreamed. Therefore, one of the outputs of this project is the improved harmonization of sectors that rely heavily on biodiversity for their economic livelihood to allow for eventual mainstreaming of biodiversity into National Plans.

The expected outcome of this project is a well sensitized group of experts within the National Development Planning Commission, key sectors of agriculture,

forestry and fisheries who will lead the biodiversity agenda in their development of sector policies as well as the next phase of the National Development Plan.

MAINSTREAMING PLAN

The project team together with environmental specialists within the National Development Planning Commission will sensitize key stakeholders in the fields of agriculture, forestry and fisheries on the need to mainstream biodiversity into their various sector policies which will eventually feed into the National Development Agenda. Development Officers within the NDPC itself will be sensitized to encourage stakeholders in these aforementioned fields to include biodiversity in their sector plans.

PLANS FOR THE FUTURE

The following plan is outlined to ensure mainstreaming of biodiversity issues into development plans in Ghana.

No.	ACTIVITIES	2016			2017	
		QTR 2	QTR 3	QTR 4	QTR 1	QTR 2
1	Conduct stakeholder consultations to sensitize key stakeholders in the selected districts on the entry points for biodiversity mainstreaming.					
2	Assess the capacity needs of the key stakeholders in the 3 selected districts with respect to mainstreaming biodiversity into development activities					
3	Organize workshops to guide stakeholders in the selected districts to mainstream biodiversity into their district plans					
4	Guide the mainstreaming exercises in the selected Districts					
5	Prepare and submit reports					

CONCLUSION

The project was beneficial in the sense that the diagnostic tool made the identification of the entry points for mainstreaming biodiversity easy. The project also brought together the key stakeholders from various disciplines, thus enhancing harmonization and cooperation among them. It is expected that this would lead to a concerted effort in getting biodiversity mainstreamed into the national development plan.

The Ministry of Environment, Science, Technology and Innovation (MESTI) and the National Biosafety Authority (NBA) of Ghana are grateful to UNEP-WCMC for the support provided to us to undertake this project.



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