

Thematic Concept Note:

INTERNATIONAL ISSUES AND BIODIVERSITY

(Note: Since this topic is going to be covered by each of the Working Groups (WG), as relevant to their own theme, it has not yet been decided whether this should be taken up by a separate Working Group, or as a commissioned theme paper. This needs to be discussed).

Activities related to biodiversity conservation within a country have international ramifications and implications. This could be in the form of sharing valuable knowledge with other countries or interacting with donor agencies, or in the issue of transboundary ecosystem and wildlife conservation. While most biodiversity activities may have to be carried out on the basis of national boundaries, these activities also affect the global community and state of the world's biodiversity. Thus, while this remains a significant cross-cutting theme for all NBSAP Working Groups to address, a separate thematic review on this could help to focus attention on the practical relationship between a national biodiversity action plan and international efforts at conserving biodiversity.

Some of the issues which could be addressed in this thematic review are:

1. Identifying transboundary and international issues of relevance to the Indian action plan process, including threats emanating from unequal trading mechanisms, multinational companies, international patenting regimes, and others;
2. Listing measures to tackle the above threats;
3. Delineating steps to develop collaborative biodiversity conservation strategies with neighbouring countries that share similar or cross-boundary ecoregions (in collaboration with the WGs on Wild Biodiversity, Terrestrial Ecosystems, and Aquatic Ecosystems);
4. Identifying ways and means of sharing knowledge and skills with neighbouring and other countries, including technical and scientific cooperation, exchange of indigenous knowledge keeping in mind ethical concerns, and training assistance. A special focus would be on how to avoid duplication of efforts and achieve optimisation of resources (especially at the regional level).
5. Assessing existing institutional mechanisms for international cooperation on biodiversity issues, gaps in these mechanisms, and steps to plug these gaps.
6. Assessing current national and international legislation that facilitates international biodiversity cooperation, identifying gaps and inadequacies, and suggesting steps to plug these gaps. This would include an analysis of the existing international treaties/laws wherein India is a signatory.
7. Defining an international funding/investment agenda and a strategy to help international agencies and donors understand what the priorities for funding are.
8. Exploring the establishment of cross-boundary emergency response mechanisms, where not already existing, to address emergency threats to biodiversity, such as forest fires or oil spills.
9. Exploring possibilities of offering financial and resource support to neighbouring countries for biodiversity goals of common interest (e.g. for management of shared ecosystems and technical development).
10. Analysing biodiversity related initiatives in other countries which India could learn from.

There will be a large amount of overlap between this thematic review, and the WGs working on Wild Biodiversity, Terrestrial Ecosystems, Aquatic Ecosystems, Policies, Laws, Institutions and Planning, and Access, Benefit-Sharing and Intellectual Property Rights. Interaction with these and other NBSAP WGs would be essential, to avoid duplication, and synergise the work.