An Engagement Strategy for IUCN in National Biodiversity Strategies and Action Plans (NBSAPs)

Prepared by the Global Policy Unit
July, 2013

Introduction
With the momentum provided by the adoption of the Strategic Plan for Biodiversity 2011-2020 and its Aichi Targets, Parties to the Convention on Biological Diversity (CBD) are in the process of revising or updating their National Biodiversity Strategies and Action Plans (NBSAPs) to reflect the Aichi Targets and fulfil the three objectives of the CBD. Through Aichi Target 17, Parties have set 2015 as the deadline to have finished preparation and adoption, and commence implementation.

This paper presents the strategy of the IUCN Secretariat to engage more forcefully and in a coordinated way in the ongoing process of revision and updating of NBSAPs and further on in their implementation at the national level. It is based on the comments received on the concept note “Defining IUCN’s role in the process of revision of national biodiversity strategies and action plans (NBSAPs) in support of the implementation of Aichi Target 17” which was circulated at the end of March 2013 and which presented three interrelated but distinct Options to define IUCN’s engagement in this key national process.

1. IUCN’s niche and comparative advantage

IUCN’s key positioning – The IUCN Programme 2013-2016

Valuing, conserving and sustainably utilizing biodiversity for people and for nature is at the heart of IUCN’s work as shown in the three programme areas encompassed by the IUCN Programme 2013-2016.

The Programme has been built to show, monitor and report on where IUCN will contribute to achieving the twenty Aichi Targets of the Strategic Plan for Biodiversity 2011-2020. The 2nd programme area (Effective and Equitable Governance of Nature’s Use) addresses in particular Strategic Goal E of the Plan, on enhancing implementation through participatory planning. This goal has the elaboration and revision of NBSAPs as one of its components.

As a leading provider of biodiversity knowledge, tools and standards that help conservation planning, IUCN has a lot to offer to the NBSAPs process as the framework for achieving the Strategic Plan 2011-2020. Engagement in NBSAPs will also help IUCN...
achieve its own long term results. The Union is hence prepared to assist governments in revising and/or updating their NBSAPs in light of the Strategic Plan for Biodiversity 2011-2020. The existing knowledge products developed by IUCN (and those under development) will be of particular relevance to this undertaking, together with other tools and the wealth of experience vested in the Union.

2. **Types of activities in NBSAPs and possible entry points for IUCN**

The revision, update, and development of NBSAPs comprise a number of steps and activities. IUCN is well positioned to contribute and assist parties in all stages of the process, and conduct some of these activities as briefly described below.

a) **Biodiversity Assessment**

Many countries have seen the lack of country-specific information as a major obstacle in biodiversity planning. IUCN can contribute with a vast amount of data, tools, mechanisms and country-specific knowledge also through its Members. IUCN can support capacity development efforts at the national level which aim to reinforce country-specific expertise on biodiversity assessments. IUCN's Commissions are essential in this context.

b) **Identifying and Engaging Stakeholders**

NBSAP should be drafted and revised in an inclusive manner. By virtue of its institutional set up, its decentralized structure, its sui-generis membership comprised of State Members, State Agencies and NGOs, and strong presence in all regions of the world, IUCN is strategically positioned to support Parties to the CBD to identify, convene and engage relevant stakeholders all along the NBSAP process.

c) **Developing the Strategy**

Building on outcome of the biodiversity assessment, IUCN can help analyze and draw up the vision for the future and support priority-setting efforts on the most pressing issues at the national level. Further, IUCN and its “Aichi Target Champions” can support the development of national targets which are aligned to the global level Aichi Targets. IUCN can provide guidance on the actual development of the strategies and be involved in reviewing the NBSAP, provide comments by engaging in peer review processes and share lessons learnt with Members that face similar challenges.

d) **Developing the Action Plan**

IUCN can assist in developing an action plan that follows the national strategy; participate in capacity development efforts on specific issues included in the action plan (e.g. indicators) and share best practices through its vast network.

e) **Implementation**

Since NBSAPs are ultimately partnerships, the different “partners” should be granted autonomy to carry out activities in the way they feel best reflects their preferences and expertise. IUCN can act as a “mediator” and bridge between NGOs and State agencies in the implementation of the NBSAP and help share experiences and successes.

IUCN can also engage in promoting NBSAPs' implementation and sustained action in countries; e.g. through the revision and development of legal tools which provide a clear and transparent mandate for decision-making; provide reliability and certainty; transition of non-binding NBSAP guidance into legally binding obligations that are enforceable through the judiciary, etc.
f) Monitoring and Evaluation
IUCN can support the establishment of benchmarks and indicators at the national level and promote strategic review, monitoring and evaluation on a regular basis.

g) Reporting
Could help States prepare their reports to the CBD Secretariat through keeping detailed account of what projects were conducted and the progress made. A tracking sheet could be elaborated that is used in all regional offices to track progress made on NBSAP revision in the countries where IUCN is involved.²

3. Strategic engagement

There are many ways in which IUCN can get more forcefully and strategically engaged in the ongoing process of revision and update of the NBSAPs and contribute to fulfil Aichi Target 17. An ad-hoc, uncoordinated and opportunistic engagement is not ideal.

Our goal: IUCN engages in the NBSAP revision, update and implementation process in a forceful, meaningful, coordinated and synergistic way. The following six elements will be fundamental criteria in defining IUCN’s engagement:

- demand-driven;
- focused on IUCN core expertise;
- adding value through IUCN flagship Knowledge Products;
- prioritizing working in countries where we have a presence;
- engaging in strategic partnerships; and
- working at the sub-national level where opportune.

A short explanation or contextualization is provided for each of these features:

a) Based on demand. The NBSAPs “field” is not an empty space and there are many interests in play. To make a difference IUCN has to start engaging where it actually adds value as opposed to wastefully competing with other actors who have already positioned themselves vis-à-vis certain countries. Since the adoption of the Strategic Plan for Biodiversity 2011-2020, IUCN, and mainly its Regional and Country Offices, has been receiving requests for support and guidance in the NBSAPs process from various countries around the world. Some countries have looked specifically at IUCN as their preferred partner for NBSAPs while others are simply considering IUCN as one possible actor among many others. The aim is not to be opportunistic just for the sake of it (for example, accepting to assist countries which no other agency is interested in) or simply for the sake of having a portfolio of NBSAPs projects which can be a source of revenue through overheads. We should respond to demands but in the context of an overall strategic vision and an objective assessment of the likelihood of a successful engagement with the particular country making the request.

b) Focused on IUCN’s core expertise. IUCN is well positioned and traditionally recognized for its knowledge, experience and expertise on areas such as biodiversity conservation, species assessments including invasive alien species, protected areas management and standards, and tools and mechanisms in these fields. IUCN should prioritize these areas of work and focus on profiling these areas as an “entry point”.

Support Modules and training materials on issues related to protected areas, species inventories, integrated water resource management, invasive alien species, access and benefit-sharing and others can be developed.

Backed up with updated information and contact details about “key experts” on these core areas, IUCN will be in a good position to provide support to requests which prioritize these areas of work and IUCN as a partner rapidly and easily.

The table below (only indicative and not exhaustive) provides an initial overview of the types of activities which IUCN is in a position to support - the “easiest entry points” or “low hanging fruits”.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>NBSAP-relevant expertise in IUCN and illustrative roster of experts</th>
<th>IUCN Level of Priority&lt;sup&gt;a&lt;/sup&gt;</th>
<th>IUCN Expertise “Hub”</th>
<th>IUCN Individual Experts&lt;sup&gt;b&lt;/sup&gt;</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Biodiversity Assessment and Stock Taking Review</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Rapid assessment of status and trends of biodiversity:</td>
<td></td>
<td>Biodiversity Conservation Group (in particular, Species, Protected Areas Programmes, Red List Unit, Key Biodiversity Areas) Global Ecosystems Management Programme</td>
<td>(To be identified)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>a) Species including Invasive Alien Species</td>
<td>HIGH</td>
<td>SSC</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>b) Protected Areas</td>
<td></td>
<td>CEM</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>c) Ecosystems status</td>
<td></td>
<td>WCPA</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Economic valuation of biodiversity (country/ biome specific)</td>
<td></td>
<td>Global Economics Programme</td>
<td>(To be identified)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Identification of biodiversity “hotspots”</td>
<td>HIGH</td>
<td>Biodiversity Conservation Group SSC Regions / National Committees</td>
<td>(To be identified)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Assessment of synergies with other MEAs</td>
<td>MEDIUM</td>
<td>Global Policy Unit ELC WCEL Regions / National Committees</td>
<td>(To be identified)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Assessment of modalities for implementation of CBD PoWs and Protocols</td>
<td>MEDIUM</td>
<td>Global Policy Unit ELC WCEL WCPA Regions / National Committees</td>
<td>(To be identified)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Evaluation of existing NBSAP (gaps and challenges for implementation)</td>
<td>MEDIUM</td>
<td>Global Policy Unit ELC WCEL CEESP Regions / National Committees</td>
<td>(To be identified)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Revised NBSAP</strong></td>
<td></td>
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<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Establishment of national targets based on stock-taking assessment; development of a strategy to meet each national target</td>
<td>HIGH</td>
<td>Biodiversity Conservation Group Global Policy Unit Commissions Regions / National Committees</td>
<td>(To be identified)</td>
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</tbody>
</table>
### Status of integration of all Aichi Targets into national targets and action plans and development of implementation plans

**Note:** IUCN could already identify where most of its expertise lies and focus on those Targets where there is "more traction" and possibilities of engaging, i.e. Targets 1, 2, 6, 9, 11, 12, 14, 15, 16, 17. IUCN Aichi Target Champions could “de facto” become experts for each target.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Activity</th>
<th>Level</th>
<th>Responsible Parties</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Status of national implementation of obligations to CBD, analysis of legal frameworks</td>
<td>HIGH</td>
<td>Global Policy Unit, ELC, Biodiversity Conservation Group, Regions / National Committees</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

### Development of Biodiversity Indicators

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Activity</th>
<th>Level</th>
<th>Responsible Parties</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Development of Biodiversity Indicators</td>
<td>HIGH</td>
<td>Biodiversity Conservation Group, Commissions, Regions / National Committees</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

### Development of strategy to capitalize on synergies with other MEAs

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Activity</th>
<th>Level</th>
<th>Responsible Parties</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Development of strategy to capitalize on synergies with other MEAs</td>
<td>MEDIUM</td>
<td>Global Policy Unit, ELC, WCEL, Regions / National Committees</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

### Development of a national resource mobilization strategy

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Activity</th>
<th>Level</th>
<th>Responsible Parties</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Development of a national resource mobilization strategy</td>
<td>MEDIUM LOW</td>
<td>Global Economics Programme, CEESP, Regions / National Committees</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

### National Action Plan

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Activity</th>
<th>Level</th>
<th>Responsible Parties</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Development of action plans for each target’s strategy</td>
<td>MEDIUM HIGH</td>
<td>Biodiversity Conservation Group, Global Policy Unit, Commissions, Regions / National Committees</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

### Development of monitoring and evaluation plan

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Activity</th>
<th>Level</th>
<th>Responsible Parties</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Development of monitoring and evaluation plan</td>
<td>MEDIUM HIGH</td>
<td>Biodiversity Conservation Group, Monitoring and Evaluation Unit, Commissions, Regions / National Committees</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

### Development of national reporting framework

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Activity</th>
<th>Level</th>
<th>Responsible Parties</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Development of national reporting framework</td>
<td>MEDIUM HIGH</td>
<td>Biodiversity Conservation Group, Monitoring and Evaluation Unit, Commissions, Regions / National Committees</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

### 5th National Report

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Activity</th>
<th>Level</th>
<th>Responsible Parties</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Status of national implementation of obligations to CBD, analysis of legal frameworks</td>
<td>HIGH</td>
<td>Global Policy Unit, ELC, Biodiversity Conservation Group, Regions / National Committees</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

### Status and trends of biodiversity including implications to human well-being

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<tr>
<th>Activity</th>
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<th>Responsible Parties</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Status and trends of biodiversity including implications to human well-being</td>
<td>HIGH</td>
<td>Biodiversity Conservation Group (in particular, Species, Protected Areas Programmes, Red List Unit, Key Biodiversity Areas), Nature Based Solutions Group (in particular GEMP, GEP, Gender and Social Policy Advisors), Regions/ National Committees</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
c) **Adding value through IUCN flagship Knowledge Products.** IUCN’s knowledge, biodiversity information, standards and tools are widely recognized for being scientifically robust, pragmatic and built under a wide stakeholder consultation. The six so called IUCN flagship knowledge products are: 1) the IUCN Red List of Threatened Species; 2) Protected Planet powered by the World Database on Protected Areas, these two are fully operational at present; 3) the Key Biodiversity Area standard, which attempts to bring together existing international approaches for identifying areas of importance for biodiversity; 4) the IUCN Red List of Ecosystems; 5) the IUCN Natural Resource Governance Framework, aiming to assess effectiveness of legal and institutional arrangements impacting natural resources; and 6) the IUCN Human Dependency on Nature Framework, which aims to quantify the nature and scope of household and community reliance on nature, the last four are being developed at the moment. Knowledge is key for filling policy implementation gaps and some knowledge products, such as the Red List of Threatened Species and the World Database on Protected Areas have already had significant policy impact.

### IUCN Knowledge Products to support NBSAPs

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>IUCN Knowledge Products</th>
<th>Description</th>
<th>Contribution to NBSAPs</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>IUCN Red List of Threatened Species <a href="http://www.iucnredlist.org/">http://www.iucnredlist.org/</a></td>
<td>The IUCN Red List of Threatened Species™ is the world’s most comprehensive inventory of the global conservation status of plant and animal species. It uses a set of standardised criteria to evaluate the extinction risk of species and subspecies. These criteria are relevant to all species and all regions of the world and are used to develop the Global Red List but also National Red Lists.</td>
<td>Provide important data for the biodiversity assessment / stock taking report to inform the drafting/revision of the NBSAP. &lt;br&gt; Fundamental to identify and develop Biodiversity Action Plans on specific species and/or group of species. &lt;br&gt; Inform the setting up and monitoring of global and national targets. &lt;br&gt; Assist in the modelling of status and trends of biodiversity in the concerned country. &lt;br&gt; Contribute to the Strategy: Essential to develop biodiversity indicators</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Prioritizing working in countries where we have a presence. It is easier for IUCN to engage and mobilize its networks more effectively and in a timely manner when the Union has already an established “presence” in place. IUCN Regional and Country
Offices in particular as well as global thematic programmes which have programmes and projects active in specific regions and countries worldwide are able to reach out to national government representatives and actors, Members of IUCN on site, local experts involved with our Commissions, partners and various stakeholders, and establish working relations and lasting alliances. This IUCN unique feature is an asset the Union must capitalize on.

e) Engaging in strategic partnerships. IUCN is not the only player in the NBSAPs field. We should thus focalize on where we will make an impact and add value. As countries are going through the process of understanding the 20 Aichi Targets, translating them into national targets, integrating them in their revised NBSAP and using them in their National Reports, they are looking for support and guidance. This support is being provided by a number of actors, mainly the UN Environment Programme, the UN Development Programme and the Secretariat of the CBD with financial backup from the Global Environment Facility (GEF). It does make sense to liaise with these very relevant players and see where we can contribute and complement their efforts.

For instance, IUCN is discussing the modalities of becoming a “partner” in the NBSAP Forum (http://www.nbsapforum.net/). The Global Environment Facility (GEF) earmarked in 2011 more than USD 30 million to 146 eligible CBD Parties through the Biodiversity Enabling Activities modality. As of November 2012, more than 95% of the countries that applied for funding had accessed GEF resources, with UNDP and UNEP as the two primary agencies responsible for assisting countries. In order to go beyond this type of “baseline” support, UNDP, UNEP (through its World Conservation Monitoring Centre) and the SCBD joined forces in a partnership and launched at the last CBD COP in Hyderabad the NBSAP Forum, “a coordination mechanism that serves as a demand-driven platform of data, information and services for improving the quality of NBSAPs and for catalysing their transformative role as effective policy instruments for conserving biodiversity and fostering green growth”. The Forum will be officially functional in 2013.

UNDP, UNEP-WCMC and SCBD have all expressed their interest in having IUCN engaged in the NBSAP Forum and are in the process of finalizing their “Partnership Engagement Strategy”. IUCN is seeking to engage directly with the NBSAP Forum and discussions ongoing aim to come up with a clear framework of engagement among partners including the division of roles and responsibilities, allocation of funds and funding requirements, geographical and thematic coverage, etc.

The role for IUCN in the Forum can range from general and overarching activities like contributing to the development of information and analyses on the most critical implementation gaps based on the review of the achievement of the current generation of NBSAPs, and the design and development of indicators to monitor progress in implementation of national targets to more specific activities like providing guidance on the implementation of Aichi Target 2 (mainstreaming biodiversity values in national planning processes) or providing information regarding Aichi Target 12 implementation acting as the “focal point” in the Forum for the recently established partnership “Friends of Target 12” (http://www.iucn.org/about/work/programmes/species/our_work/species_and_policy/friends_of_target_12/). Friends of Target 12 is a pragmatic alliance of key organizations who have volunteered to come together and join forces to better explain and implement Aichi Target 12 and is thus a good source of expertise, information and support for Parties. Similar “partnerships” could be envisaged for other targets.

IUCN should also seek to establish alliances and partnerships with its Members who are active in this field. Examples of organizations that have already expressed interest in
working with IUCN on the NBSAPs front include Conservation International and Birdlife International. IUCN should focus with these Members on supporting countries on core issues of expertise and where we collectively have more impact (e.g. identification of “hotspots”, modelling of biodiversity trends, development of national targets and indicators, development of national legislation on access and benefit-sharing, among others).

f) Working at the sub-national and provincial level. In some regions, in particular, Asia, countries are looking to develop biodiversity strategies and action plans (BSAPs) at the provincial and local level. These levels are perhaps not that “crowded” and local actors have less support and guidance as efforts are concentrated in supplying the demands the national governmental level. IUCN is well placed to support these local actors effectively due to its geographical spread. For instance, IUCN is helping the Government of Lao to carry out its NBSAP revision by organising thematic working groups and drafting national targets in light of the new Strategic Plan for Biodiversity 2011-2020 but it is also assisting with the development of provincial BSAPs. National Committees should be called upon to assist IUCN Regional and Country Offices in these BSAPs.

All these elements should not be understood as the only possible entry points, they are simply indicative, plus they are presented as non-exclusive “criteria”, which means not all of them have to be fulfilled at once in order for IUCN to move forward and engage in a given NBSAP-related task.

4. Next steps

a) Ensuring coordination and communication: An IUCN coordination and communication mechanism should be put in place. IUCN has much to gain from this process if we organize ourselves appropriately and act in a coordinated manner. Coordinating and communicating functions could be “decentralized and distributed” among different Programmes and parties, but they should be clearly allocated and attributed.

The central focal point for all NBSAPs-related engagement in IUCN will be the Global Policy Unit in HQ. GPU can ensure that relevant Programmes and experts are informed of opportunities for engagement if properly (and timely) informed by colleagues in different programmes in the Secretariat worldwide and as much as possible in the Commissions and National Committees when these opportunities become available.

Communications with the regions and Commissions can be ensured through the already established group of CBD Focal Points. Focal points from the Thematic Programmes can be added to this list and thus ensure that there is regular flow of information concerning CBD issues in general but also NBSAPs in particular.

b) Identifying “pilot” regions/countries: IUCN should seek to focus its initial engagement on the NBSAPs revision, update and implementation in regions where most requests have been placed on IUCN and unroll its NBSAPs engagement strategy more forcefully there. The region where IUCN has been most active is Asia. We could thus seek to start identifying some countries where IUCN has projects running in ARO’s jurisdiction and work with governments to promote IUCN’s engagement.

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3 This group was set up and facilitated by the Global Policy Unit mainly to have a mechanism to liaise with and coordinate inputs into the CBD processes from the Regional Offices and Commissions. These people are all included in a mailing list and are called upon when appropriate to provide inputs to position papers and CBD notifications.
c) **Investment needed and funding requirements:** It is clear that any involvement of IUCN in this process requires some sort of investment in human and financial resources. IUCN should continue to look for funding opportunities to carry out NBSAPs-related work in a coordinated and effective way. If we already offer our support on specific areas of expertise of IUCN and through a list of identified experts on each of those areas, we can rapidly prepare proposals and respond to requests and quickly provide an estimate of the IUCN staff time and investment required in any particular case.

It is advisable that as much as possible project proposals which are somehow linked to NBSAPs-related activities (mentioned under Section 2) - or that could contribute to them make explicit these linkages and provide for funding requirements to deliver them effectively.

In any case, a pre-condition for IUCN's engagement in NBSAPs-related activities must be that we get **full compensation** for the staff time spent in delivering the products and services associated with them.
National Biodiversity Strategies and Action Plans:

Overview of processes and tools in support of the implementation of Aichi Target 17 and highlights of IUCN involvement in the first generation of NBSAPs

Prepared by IUCN’s Global Policy Unit
First circulated March, 2013
Revised June, 2013

Summary

With the momentum provided by the adoption of the Strategic Plan for Biodiversity 2011-2020 and its Aichi Targets, Parties to the CBD are in the process of revising or updating their National Biodiversity Strategies and Action Plans to reflect the Aichi Targets. Parties have set 2015 as the deadline to have finished preparation and adoption, and commence implementation.

This paper presents an overview of the processes and tools in support of the revision of the NBSAPs so far, highlights IUCN’s experience and involvement in the first generation of NBSAPs and presents the rationale and options for an involvement in the new generation pursuant to Aichi Target 17, based on the current context and the value added that IUCN could contribute.

1. Introduction

National Biodiversity Strategies and Action Plans (NBSAPs) are the principal instruments for implementing the Convention on Biological Diversity (CBD) at the national level as stated in Article 6 of the Convention. They lay down how a given country intends to fulfil the objectives of the Convention in light of its specific national circumstances.

Box 1

Article 6
General Measures for Conservation and Sustainable Use

Each Contracting Party shall, in accordance with its particular conditions and capabilities:

(a) Develop national strategies, plans or programmes for the conservation and sustainable use of biological diversity or adapt for this purpose existing strategies, plans or programmes which shall reflect, inter alia, the measures set out in this Convention relevant to the Contracting Party concerned; and
(b) Integrate, as far as possible and as appropriate, the conservation and sustainable use of biological diversity into relevant sectoral or cross-sectoral plans, programmes and policies.

In the process of elaborating their NBSAPs, contracting Parties have to think about how best to address the threats to their biodiversity. NBSAPs are a living instrument that evolves and should be revised on a constant basis once new knowledge on conservation, sustainable use and on the status of national biodiversity is gained.
NBSAPs consist of two tools: a Strategy and an Action Plan. The Strategy contains the vision, principles, priorities and targets concerning biodiversity conservation, sustainable use of biodiversity and the fair and equitable sharing of the benefits arising out of the utilization of genetic resources in the specific country. The Action Plan outlines the required steps, the policies to be adopted, programming, resources necessary, implementation, follow-up mechanisms, and monitoring and evaluation to achieve the objectives of the strategy.

With the adoption of the Strategic Plan for Biodiversity 2011-2020 and its 20 Aichi Targets, the Parties to the CBD underlined the importance of meaningful NBSAPs and set themselves 2015 as the deadline to “develop, adopt as a policy instrument, and commence implementing an effective, participatory and updated National Biodiversity Strategy and Action Plan” (Aichi Target 17). Updated NBSAPs are fundamental in achieving the Aichi Targets and hence have to be revised by 2015 according to Target 17.

An important element brought forward by Target 17 is the fact that Parties have not only to revise and update their NBSAP but also adopt them as policy instruments, meaning that they have to be incorporated and integrated into national government planning instruments so that they are implemented alongside other national policies and priorities. In this regard, Target 17 is intended to “mainstream” biodiversity into all national sectors, including the economic planning sector.

As of 7 January 2013, 177 Parties (92%) have developed NBSAPs in line with Art. 6. According to the CBD Secretariat (SCBD), 54 Parties had revised and 13 Parties were in the process of revising their NBSAPs. Some of those revisions date back many years and it is not clear whether they are still up-to-date in light of the Strategic Plan.

COP10 in Decision X/2 urged Parties to review and update their NBSAPs in light of the new Strategic Plan and to develop national and regional targets. Decision X/2 also calls upon international organizations to help Parties in this process. After COP 11, most countries should now enter into a phase where they advance in the update and revision of their NBSAPs to reach Target 17 in 2015.

Box 2

Aichi Target 17

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.

COP11 Decision XI/2 stresses this message and further urges Parties to update and revise NBSAPs and to report on their progress by COP12. It further invites Parties to submit their NBSAPs to a voluntary peer review. The need to conduct this revision with the inclusion of all relevant stakeholders is underlined. Paragraph 9 of the decision reiterates an earlier request to the Executive Secretary, together with partner organizations, to facilitate the exchange of best practices and lessons learned.

2. Processes, mechanisms and tools in support of the revision of NBSAPs


Regional and sub-regional capacity-building workshops were organized during 2008 and 2009, in response to COP 8 Decision VIII/8 from Curitiba. The purpose of these workshops was to strengthen national capacity for the development, implementation, review and update of NBSAPs and the integration of biodiversity concerns into relevant sectors and cross-sectoral strategies, such as poverty eradication strategies. The workshops promoted the exchange of experience in these areas and training in the use of relevant tools and
mechanisms and provided an opportunity for countries to identify ways and means of overcoming challenges in the implementation of NBSAPs.

The general assessment at the time was that NBSAPs had provided a useful framework for the implementation of the Convention as they promoted the development of additional laws and programmes linked to biodiversity conservation and catalyzed action in many areas including invasive alien species, sustainable use, incentive measures, traditional knowledge protection, access and benefit-sharing (ABS), biosafety, agriculture and protected areas. NBSAPs were beginning to turn into more strategic planning tools and were aiming at reflecting national development and environment objectives more widely.

Nevertheless, a number of challenges to their development were still present and included: a) limited integration of biodiversity into national economic sectors; b) limited integration of biodiversity planning into development policies and strategies (e.g. poverty reduction strategies and plans); and c) limited stakeholder participation into the development or update of NBSAPs which resulted in weak or lack of political buy-in at all levels of society.

b. *Strategic Plan for Biodiversity 2011-2020: the period 2011-2012*

i. **Capacity-building activities**

Through Decision X/2 the COP adopted the Strategic Plan for Biodiversity 2011-2020 and its twenty Aichi Biodiversity Targets. In the same decision, the COP urged Parties and other Governments to develop national and regional targets, using the Strategic Plan as a flexible framework, and to review, update and revise, as appropriate, their national biodiversity strategies and action plans in line with the Strategic Plan and the guidance adopted in Decision IX/8 and VIII/8. The COP also urged Parties and other Governments to support the updating of NBSAPs as effective instruments to promote the implementation of the Strategic Plan and to use them as effective instruments for the integration of biodiversity targets into national development and poverty reduction policies and strategies, national accounting, economic sectors and spatial planning processes.

In the same decision, the COP also emphasized the need for capacity-building activities and the effective sharing of knowledge to support all countries in the implementation of the Strategic Plan. The CBD Secretariat thus organized a series of regional or sub-regional workshops on updating NBSAPs that took place during 2011 and 2012.

These 17 workshops were aimed at facilitating the implementation of the Strategic Plan by assisting Parties to develop their national biodiversity targets, revising and updating their NBSAPs so as to mainstream biodiversity into national policies, promoting the exchange of experiences and lessons learned in the development of previous NBSAPs, raising awareness about the newly adopted protocols to the Convention – the Nagoya Protocol on ABS and the Nagoya-Kuala Lumpur Supplementary Protocol on Liability and Redress, and disseminating information about particular issues and subjects to be considered within the NBSAPs like the integration of the findings of the study on *The Economics of Ecosystems and Biodiversity (TEEB)* and valuation of biodiversity, invasive alien species, incentive measures, and others. Over 700 individuals and 160 Parties participated in these workshops (UNEP/CBD/COP/11/13). A series of follow-up sessions were held and electronic mailing lists and NBSAPs help desks were set up after the initial workshops.

Most of these capacity building activities have been supported by the Japan Biodiversity Fund. This Fund, established by the Government of Japan as the COP10 Presidency, aims to build the capacity of developing countries to implement the Strategic Plan for Biodiversity 2011–2020 and the Aichi Biodiversity Targets with resources of 1 billion yen per year for up
to five years. The Fund’s objective is to help developing countries implement the Aichi-Nagoya Biodiversity Compact by providing support to the Secretariat to assist Parties to: (i) implement the Strategic Plan for Biodiversity 2011–2020 and the associated Aichi Biodiversity Targets; (ii) revise their national biodiversity strategies and action plans (NBSAPs) to include national targets, in accordance with the Strategic Plan; and (iii) strengthen their overall capacity to implement the Convention. Other donors, including the European Union, Germany, Norway, Spain, Sweden and the United Kingdom, have also been supporting these activities.

The CBD Secretariat has further prepared toolkits and capacity building materials to provide Parties with practical guidance. Building on the foundation of COP Decision IX/8, the CBD Secretariat updated a set of existing training modules (which had been prepared in 2007) in light of the Nagoya outcomes. These aim to provide CBD National Focal Points, biodiversity managers and other national stakeholders with practical guides to the process of preparing NBSAPs and to making best use of the NBSAP once it has been prepared. In updating the initial modules, the SCBD included information received through the 4th National Reports and examples of good practice and lessons learned from the 2008-2009 workshops mentioned above.

### Box 3
#### SCBD Training Modules

1. An Introduction to NBSAPs
2. How to prepare and update an NBSAP
3. Mainstreaming biodiversity into sectoral and cross-sectoral strategies, plans and programmes
4. Setting national biodiversity targets & using the CBD’s framework for the post 2010 targets
5. Ensuring inclusive societal engagement in the development, implementation and updating of NBSAPs
6. Getting political support for the NBSAP and financing its implementation
7. Communication strategy for NBSAPs
8. Biodiversity planning for States, provinces, cities and other local authorities: How to develop a Sub-national biodiversity strategy and action plan
9. Mainstreaming gender considerations in the development and implementation of NBSAPs

In addition to the NBSAP specific modules mentioned above, the Secretariat recently developed a toolkit on the Aichi Targets ([The Aichi Targets Quick Guides](http://www.nbsapforum.net/)) which aims to contribute to the understanding of the Aichi Targets and their transformation into national biodiversity targets.

### ii. Other support – The NBSAP Forum

Also in response to COP guidance, the Global Environment Facility (GEF) earmarked in 2011 more than USD 30 million to 146 eligible CBD Parties through the Biodiversity Enabling Activities modality. As of November 2012, more than 95% of the countries that applied for funding had accessed GEF resources, with the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP) and the United Nations Environment Programme (UNEP) as the two primary agencies responsible for assisting countries. In order to go beyond this type of “baseline” support, UNDP, UNEP (through its World Conservation Monitoring Centre) and the SCBD joined forces in a partnership and launched at the last CBD COP in Hyderabad the NBSAP Forum ([http://www.nbsapforum.net/](http://www.nbsapforum.net/)). According to UNDP, the NBSAP Forum is “a coordination mechanism that serves as a demand-driven platform of data, information and services for improving the quality of NBSAPs and for catalysing their transformative role as effective policy instruments for conserving biodiversity and fostering green growth”. The Forum should be functional in mid 2013.
3. Opportunities for IUCN to engage in the NBSAPs process

With this context in mind, several opportunities are available for IUCN to engage in the NBSAP process more effectively and strategically. Below is a brief account of IUCN’s engagement so far in the NBSAP and national biodiversity planning process, on which to build in designing possible options for the further engagement in the context of the implementation of Aichi Target 17. IUCN’s past engagement has ranged from developing guidelines, tools and mechanisms, to providing data and information, training and direct involvement in the actual development of national measures for biodiversity conservation.

a. IUCN’s past engagement in the development of NBSAPs (before 2010)

i. Guidelines

- Conservation Strategies

As a follow up to the publication of the World Conservation Strategy (1980), IUCN was involved in supporting up to 75 countries in the preparation of so called national conservation strategies (predecessors of NBSAPs), offering technical assistance and expert know-how.

In 1992, when the Convention on Biological Diversity was being negotiated, IUCN, the World Resources Institute (WRI), the United Nations Environment Programme (UNEP) in consultation with the Food and Agriculture Organization (FAO) and the United Nations Education, Scientific and Cultural Organization (UNESCO) prepared the Global Biodiversity Strategy: Guidelines for Action to Save, Study and Use Earth’s Biotic Wealth Sustainably and Equitably. An approach was presented with five strategic objectives, one of which emphasized that conservation action must be catalyzed through both international cooperation and national planning. National and regional planning processes were recognized as key mechanisms for channelling, triggering and focusing policy reform to ensure sustainable resource use and support biodiversity conservation overall. It is during planning that biodiversity concerns can be injected into mainstream economic development policy provided that planning mechanisms are broadly cross-sectoral and participatory.

- NBSAP specific guidelines

Back in 1995, IUCN together with UNEP and WRI participated in an effort to prepare practical guidelines for Parties to the Convention in following up to Article 6 of the Convention. IUCN contributed with its considerable experience with national conservation strategy work in developing countries and its extensive capability in biodiversity-related work. The resulting guide entitled National Biodiversity Planning: Guidelines based on early experiences around the world (1995) offered a method that “biodiversity planners” could use to initiate a national biodiversity planning process build upon country studies and other planning efforts. Eighteen countries participated in the study which presented a seven-step biodiversity planning process.

- Getting organized - nominating a focal point in the government, having adequate high-level mandate, establishing partnerships among stakeholders, obtaining funds...
- Assessment (Country study) – gather all relevant information about biodiversity, its status, management and institutions, select preliminary goals and objectives, review options, estimate costs...
- Developing a strategy – goals and operational objectives, identify roles for stakeholder groups...
- Developing a plan of action – determine who will implement the activities in the strategy, using what means, in which location, using which resources, by when...
• Implementation – moving forward to seek results
• Monitoring and evaluation – measuring impact, noting changes
• Reporting – providing feedback through various means (including national reports to the Convention)

Amid the findings of this study was the realisation in the participating countries that among the most potent factors for facilitating biodiversity planning and action are solid political will and commitment at the highest levels of government along with an open participatory process.

• The use of Economic Measures in National Biodiversity Strategies and Action Plans (2001)¹

This was another publication developed by IUCN. Through a review of experiences and lessons learned IUCN provides therein guidance on the ways forward in the use of economic measures. While more and more States were drafting their NBSAP, the need of extra financing in order to implement them was quickly acknowledged. IUCN responded to this realization about the gap in funding with the development of a toolkit on Financing NBSAPs: Options and Opportunities (2002)². Its aim was to provide biodiversity planners and decisions makers in Asia with a series of clear and practical methods, options and steps for developing financing strategies for their NBSAPs. It further outlined some opportunities for raising and allocating more innovative sources of finance for NBSAP implementation.

• A communication, education and public awareness toolkit for NBSAP coordinators

This toolkit was developed in 2004 by the IUCN’s Commission on Education and Communication (CEC) to serve both as a resource for regional training workshops for NBSAP coordinators as well as a resource base for them when they were back in their workplace and were dealing with CEPA (Communication, Education and Public Awareness) issues as part of their daily responsibilities. The toolkit provided guidance on where, when and how to use a wide range of education and communication interventions and was well received.

• Guidelines for Mainstreaming Gender into NBSAPs³.

These guidelines were developed by the IUCN Gender Office in 2010 and published by the CBD Secretariat as part of CBD’s Technical Series publications. In simple terms the guidelines establish the linkage between biodiversity and gender equality and explain processes for mainstreaming gender into the various phases of the development of NBSAPs. They also give guidance on how to monitor and evaluate this mainstreaming.

ii. Regional support

IUCN-SUR has been actively involved in the preparation and implementation of NBSAPs in the South American region, including their monitoring. Examples for IUCN-SUR’s engagement are for example two publications in 1999 and 2004 produced by IUCN-SUR on NBSAPs for the South American Region, highlighting their perspectives for implementation.

² Financing NBSAPs: Options and Opportunities, IUCN, Regional Biodiversity Programme Asia – Colombo, LK, 2002.
In addition, IUCN-Sur and its membership (including members and commissions) have been giving technical support to the Parties and also to the SCBD on this matter; for instance, through the support of the 2010 Target during 2007-2009.

### iii. Country specific support

Besides the wide range of publications and guidelines prepared by IUCN to assist Parties of the CBD to fulfil their Article 6 obligations, IUCN supported about 50 governments through direct training and NBSAP coordination in the 1990s and early 2000s. This was done across different regions in places such as Argentina, Ecuador, Bangladesh, Lao PDR, the Seychelles, Zambia, Yemen, Qatar, Jordan, Saudi Arabia, Sudan, Eritrea and Djibouti. The level of IUCN involvement varied to some extent in these countries. While in a number of countries IUCN was selected by the Ministry of the Environment (MOE) as the lead agency for coordinating the drafting of their NBSAP, IUCN acted in other countries more on an ad-hoc and consultative basis and provided guidance on particular components or sections of the NBSAPs.

In this support effort, workshops were organized, often in collaboration with other organizations such as UNDP, UNITAR, and the Secretariat of the CBD, to create more capacity and technical knowledge on the whole NBSAP process.

On several occasions, IUCN was consulted after the NBSAPs were drafted for their expert view on its content and feasibility. Such an expert review was not only done for the strategies and plans, but also concerning the biodiversity assessments that served as their foundation.

In most cases of support for governments, it was predominantly the IUCN country and regional offices which led the training and capacity building activities delivered. Staff was thus familiar with the country specificities which contributed greatly to the quality of NBSAPs. Because of IUCN’s global nature, they were also familiar with the experience of other countries and could draw from much experience and many lessons learned with respect to the drafting of NBSAPs.

Below are some examples of IUCN’s engagement in the NBSAPs process based on individual and specific country-driven demands. In addition to what is stated above and the examples below, IUCN provided various other forms of technical assistance to countries upon demand throughout the different stages of the NBSAP drafting and implementation process.

- **Leading on NBSAPs – IUCN in Pakistan**

The NBSAP process of Pakistan in 1996 portrays one of deep IUCN involvement. IUCN was included from the outset in the Project Management Team together with the Ministry of Environment and WWF which convened once a month during the first few months of the project. IUCN was soon mandated by the Pakistani government, together with WWF, to be the lead agency responsible for the NBSAP process. IUCN Pakistan therefore provided a Biodiversity Action Plan Coordinator from its Biodiversity Unit in Islamabad.

- **Facilitating national efforts – IUCN in Bangladesh**

In other instances IUCN acted more as a support unit, facilitating discussions and providing technical assistance. This approach was taken for example in the case of Bangladesh. The process in Bangladesh was started with an inception workshop organized by IUCN in 2002. All stakeholders, ministries, research institutes and non governmental agencies, participated in the workshop. This support project was funded by the GEF through UNDP, but was
implemented by IUCN. IUCN contributed to the workshop by providing information on different possible approaches, methodologies and the expected outcomes of NBSAPs and through sharing the experience of other countries in their elaboration and implementation process. This led to an increase of capacity of the participants and promoted the adoption of a roadmap for the Bangladeshi NBSAP.

In follow up to the inception meeting, six workshops were organized in different regions of Bangladesh. In this part of the process IUCN was again a strong partner; facilitating the workshops, moderating the discussions and acting as rapporteur for the different technical sessions.

- **Support and technical advice – IUCN in the Seychelles**

In some countries IUCN supported the process through supplying a Program Coordinator to run the development of the NBSAP. This was the case in the Seychelles where a national was hired to conduct the project in a given time period. IUCN continued to support the project by seconding technical experts to participate in the national workshops and by playing a leading role in drafting the biodiversity assessment and reviewing the final NBSAP.

- **National gender strategies in 12 countries and regional bodies**

The IUCN Gender Office has collaborated with 12 national governments and regional governing bodies to produce gender frameworks that are focused on climate change and often incorporate specific analysis and actions on biodiversity. These national platforms are well-positioned as a springboard for extending support to countries on mainstreaming gender in NBSAPs, building on the gender guidelines produced by the Gender Office and published by the CBD.

b. **IUCN’s engagement in the NBSAPs revision process since the adoption of the Strategic Plan for Biodiversity 2011-2020**

Since the adoption of the Strategic Plan 2011-2020, IUCN engaged with CBD Parties to support the revision of their NBSAPs whenever an opportunity materialized. As in the past, in some cases this was done through direct interactions with governments but also by running or participating in training workshops in partnership with other organizations and the Secretariat of the CBD.

The Secretariat of the CBD for example invited the IUCN Commission on Education and Communication (CEC) to contribute to its workshop series on updating and revising NBSAPs worldwide. CEC prepared notes to guide facilitation and content to help CEC members participating in the NBSAP workshops to provide a consistent message, adapted to each region. The advisor to the CEC Chair organized a helpdesk to support the CEC facilitators, enhance quality of performance and promote the same CEC messages. Almost all of the CEC facilitators made use of this helpdesk.

The IUCN South America Regional Office (IUCN-SUR) also supported the Secretariat of the CBD in the NBSAPs Workshop for the South American Region which was held in Quito in July 2011. The support was in particular on information related to economic tools for conservation of biodiversity. In addition, IUCN-SUR prepared a workshop on the use of Economic Tools for Biodiversity in South America (La Paz, August, 2012) as contribution to Aichi Target 20.

The Office of the Global Senior Gender Advisor has engaged with the gender focal point of the CBD to support efforts in order to develop a gender-biodiversity indicator framework
After the Nagoya COP 10 meeting, IUCN Regional and Country Offices in particular have also received requests from government authorities in several parts of the world for IUCN to provide support for the process of revision and updating of their NBSAPs in accordance with Target 17. Box 4 below summarizes some recent examples of IUCN’s involvement in this process in some countries in Asia. Other examples are contained in the Appendix to this Annex.

Box 4

**IUCN’s NBSAPs support in Asia**

**Bangladesh:** At the request of the Government of Bangladesh, IUCN took the lead in sourcing the funding, engaging with stakeholders and developing the first NBSAP. IUCN-Bangladesh also helped in developing the recent proposal for NBSAP revision in light of the Aichi Targets.

**Pakistan:** IUCN secured the GEF funding, organised the national consultative workshops and wrote the first NBSAP on behalf of the Government of Pakistan. The Government of Pakistan recently applied for GEF funding to revise the NBSAP. IUCN Pakistan is well-placed to play an active role in this revision.

**Nepal:** IUCN was involved in the development of the first NBSAP. Since 2012, IUCN is contributing as one of the members of the steering committee. Discussions are underway with the Government of Nepal on ways in which IUCN could support the Government in carrying out its NBSAP revision and implementation.

**Lao:** IUCN is helping the Government of Lao to carry out its NBSAP revision by organising thematic working groups and drafting national targets in light of the new Strategic Plan for Biodiversity 2012-2020. IUCN-Lao is also assisting with the development of Provincial BSAPs.

**Sri Lanka:** IUCN played the lead role in developing the first NBSAP for Sri Lanka and is currently in discussion with the Government about playing a role in the revision process.

**Vietnam:** Several years ago, IUCN provided technical support to the Government of Vietnam in reviewing the implementation of the first NBSAP. Recently, IUCN has helped the Government to secure GEF funding for its NBSAP revision. IUCN-Vietnam and the Regional Biodiversity Conservation Programme are now playing the lead technical role in developing the new NBSAP, including the design of stakeholder consultations, the development of new targets, and the identification of indicators.