

International Workshop on Biodiversity Mainstreaming

17-19 November 2015 – Mexico

Concept Note

Background

The Convention on Biological Diversity calls for Parties to “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” (Article 6(b)). “Mainstreaming” is embedded in the Strategic Plan for Biodiversity 2011-2020. In particular, Goal A is about mainstreaming across government and society while B is largely about mainstreaming in sectors such as agriculture, forestry and fisheries.

The need to “mainstream” biodiversity into other sectors and across different actors has been widely recognized by Parties to the Convention on Biological Diversity (CBD), and other key entities that contribute to its implementation. Numerous efforts have focused on how to make such mainstreaming efforts more effective, including a report of the Scientific and Technical Advisory Panel to the Global Environment Facility, amongst others.

The Conference of the Parties (COP), in its interim review of progress towards the Strategic Plan for Biodiversity 2011-2020 and the achievement of the Aichi Biodiversity Targets recognized significant progress towards meeting some components of the majority of the Aichi Biodiversity Targets, but also noted that in most cases this progress would not be sufficient to achieve the targets set for 2020, and additional action was required.

The Conference of the Parties decided to address at its 13th meeting, *inter alia*: “Strategic actions to enhance national implementation, in particular through mainstreaming and the integration of biodiversity across relevant sectors, including agriculture, forests and fisheries”. The relevant pre-session document (UNEP/CBD/COP/12/26) describes mainstreaming as “integration of biodiversity across sectors and cross-sectoral policies” and suggests that “key actions might include, for example, the use of legislation, national accounting, spatial planning frameworks, communication, education and public awareness, and the more effective use of biodiversity-related information in support of decision making.”

COP 13 also decided to address “Implications of the post-2015 United Nations (UN) development agenda and the Sustainable Development Goals and of other relevant international processes for the future work of the Convention”.

Mexico, as host of COP 13, in consultation with the Bureau and the Secretariat, has decided to use the High-Level Segment of COP 13 (HLS) to highlight the importance of biodiversity mainstreaming for the achievement of the Aichi Biodiversity Targets and also to contribute to the achievement of the Sustainable Development Goals. To give political impetus to the COP itself, the High-Level Segment will be held 2-3 December 2016, with the results being presented at the opening session of COP 13. Recognizing the importance of other sectors, Mexico will invite a number of ministers of agriculture, forestry, fisheries and tourism in addition to the ministers directly responsible for the CBD. It is anticipated that ministers will consider and adopt a declaration to raise the profile of the importance of mainstreaming biodiversity in specific sectors and in cross sectoral policies, highlight success stories, and emphasize the need for a whole-of-government response to biodiversity issues.

The nineteenth and twentieth meetings of the Subsidiary Body on Scientific, Technical and Technological Advice (SBSTTA 19 and SBSTTA 20) and the first meeting of the Subsidiary Body on Implementation

(SBI 1) will be very important preparatory meetings to discuss these issues and to prepare for COP 13 deliberations on these and other issues.

The Workshop

The International Workshop on Biodiversity Mainstreaming will be held from 17 to 19 November, at the Ministry of Environment (SEMARNAT, Ejercito Nacional #223, Anahuac 1ra sección, Miguel Hidalgo. Zip: 11320) in Mexico City, Mexico. Further notice will be soon sent on the venue of the workshop.

Objectives of the workshop

The workshop will help to prepare for the HLS and associated events of the thirteenth meeting of the Conference of the Parties. The workshop will be an opportunity for informal discussion among participants, complementing the more formal meetings. The objectives of the workshop are to:

- Facilitate a common understanding of “biodiversity mainstreaming” in the context of the CBD;
- Highlight the importance of coherent policy frameworks, institutions, incentives and other tools;
- Identify good case examples of these, including institutional arrangements that have worked to help mainstream biodiversity at national and sub-national levels;
- Identify challenges and opportunities for biodiversity mainstreaming, within and across sectors bearing in mind the different production life cycles involved in specific sectors;
- Advance understanding on key technical and policy issues and possible opportunities related to biodiversity mainstreaming;
- Leverage the support of partner organizations; and
- Brainstorm on how COP 13 and its preparatory process can further contribute to the mainstreaming of biodiversity, secure the engagement of key actors in the CBD process and facilitate the presence in the HLS of ministers responsible for agriculture, forests, fisheries and tourism as well as key actors in planning and finance.

The report of the workshop will be made available to SBSTTA 19 and SBI 1 as an information document.

Structure of the workshop

The workshop is planned for three full days. It will be organized through a combination of plenary presentations, question and answer sessions, and discussions in plenary, smaller groups organized around tables in the plenary room, and break-out groups.

After opening remarks by the Mexican Minister of Environment, the Executive Secretary of CBD and others, and a session providing an introduction to the workshop, the first day will consider perspectives and experiences from various sectors (agriculture, forests, fisheries and tourism) through an in-depth view of selected country cases complemented by a broader survey of examples. Against this background, the first day of the workshop will discuss and identify challenges and opportunities for biodiversity mainstreaming in each sector, and a panel of experts will discuss experiences and key lessons emphasizing implications for cross-sectoral approaches for biodiversity mainstreaming. On the second day, the workshop will examine the enabling conditions and tools and cross-sectoral policies for biodiversity mainstreaming in more detail (e.g., legislation; planning; finance; incentives; monitoring and review); and discussions will focus on identifying challenges and opportunities for cross-sectoral approaches. Also, participants will discuss the role of domestic institutional arrangements. Given that the

workshop will take place just a few days after the United Nations General Assembly adopts the post-2015 development agenda, including the Sustainable Development Goals, on the third day the workshop will consider how biodiversity mainstreaming can benefit from the post-2015 framework and contribute to its implementation. In light of the insights gained during these three days, participants will discuss ideas on how COP 13 and its HLS can give momentum to biodiversity mainstreaming.

A detailed programme will be sent to participants closer to the meeting, along with background materials related to biodiversity mainstreaming. The workshop will draw upon the findings of the fourth edition of the Global Biodiversity Outlook and numerous existing studies as well as the documents and background papers prepared for SBSTTA 19, and, as feasible, SBI 1. A brief synthesis document will also be prepared, as well as other relevant documents.

Participants

About 60-70 experts will participate in the workshop including participants from about 35-40 countries, selected to ensure regional balance. Participants will include:

- (i) experts from countries that have demonstrated experience in the integration of biodiversity into agriculture, forests, fisheries and/or tourism, and/or into cross-sectoral policies. Experts may include focal points of the Convention and/or senior officials from relevant ministries;
 - (ii) experts from indigenous and local communities, civil society, the private sector and international organizations with expertise in the integration of biodiversity into agriculture, forests, fisheries and/or tourism, and/or into cross-sectoral policies.
-