

Background

IAIA's action programme for Biodiversity in Impact Assessment was endorsed by the board and by the Annual General Meeting in Cartagena, 2001. Because of progress made since then, the Biodiversity & Ecology (B&E) section has updated its action programme. This is firmly based on the five objectives of the original action programme, but defines further activities to be taken forward between 2004 and 2006.

Results obtained

For each of the objectives of the action programme the following results have been obtained:

1. **Production of a framework to integrate biological diversity in IA.** An integration framework for biodiversity in impact assessment which focuses on screening and scoping was discussed and endorsed in meetings in Hong Kong (2000) and Cartagena (2001). The document has been submitted to the secretariat of the Convention on Biological Diversity (CBD).
2. **Linking with relevant global conventions.** The secretariat of the CBD in collaboration with members of IAIA's B&E section has redrafted IAIA's integration framework into guidelines for integration of biodiversity in IA. These guidelines have been endorsed by the CBD, as well as the Ramsar Wetlands Convention and the Convention on Migratory Species.
3. **Collection of case material.** IAIA has maintained a continuous flow of information among its members, most visibly in its yearly conference streams, and in a number of submissions to the CBD.
4. **Communication and capacity development.** At the end of 2003 the Capacity Building for Biodiversity in Impact Assessment (CBBIA) programme was launched. At IAIA 2004, representatives from 18 countries participated in a workshop to further develop in-country and regional activities. The programme will continue for at least 3 years. Other donors have shown interest to join the initiative.
5. **Development of in-country mechanisms to address biodiversity issues in IA.** The CBBIA programme is the most important mechanism for this. However, the impact of the CBD guidelines is noticeable around the world as countries start reviewing their IA systems in light of these guidelines. Demand for further sectoral guidance and guidance on SEA is repeatedly expressed.

Planned activities until 2006

Following discussions at the B&E Section Meeting at IAIA 2004, the 5 objectives of the action programme were translated into further actions that need to be addressed in the coming three years.

1. Further methodological development and production of generic guidelines

- a. Producing and regular updating of 'Best Practice Principles' for biodiversity-inclusive impact assessment as part of IAIA's series. A first version agreed by the Section will be available in Summer/Autumn 2004 and will then go through the IAIA Series procedure to be approved for publication. Update scheduled for 2006.
- b. Finalising the CBD guidelines for all stages of (project-level) EIA. Although screening and scoping as addressed by the CBD guidelines are considered critical steps to highlight biodiversity interests, further guidance will be provided on the other steps of project level impact assessment.
- c. Developing detailed guidelines on how to incorporate biodiversity issues in Strategic Environment Assessment. SEA is rapidly spreading around the world as the most sensible answer to most of the shortcomings of traditional project level EIA. Biodiversity considerations are underrepresented in present-day SEA; there is an outspoken need for further guidance on this, underlined by recommendations by the CBD and Ramsar conventions.

- d. Addressing the methodological challenges on how to address biodiversity issues in trade impact assessment (or sustainability impact assessment). Trade impact assessment can be seen as a special case of strategic environmental assessment; due to its international nature and high level of abstraction it poses some methodological challenges that need to be addressed before generic guidelines can be produced. A first exploratory workshop with the Trade Section of IAIA provided a good starting point for further action.

2. Linking with relevant conventions

- a. Provide follow up to recommendations made by the Conference of the Parties (COPs) of CBD, Ramsar and CMS. These are addressed by this action programme.
- b. Evaluate the impact of the adopted CBD / Ramsar / CMS guidelines. Learn from experiences in translating / implementing the guidelines in order to improve future guidelines.
- c. Explore possible linkages with other relevant conventions (where relevant within the context of wider IAIA collaborative initiatives), notably the Espoo convention on EIA in a transboundary context. Following the Kiev protocol on SEA under the Espoo convention (May 2003), a large number of countries (mainly located in former USSR and Central Asia) have decided to introduce SEA in their countries. Opportunities to link with activity 1c to integrate biodiversity into SEA.

3. Collection of case material

- a. The CBBIA project will become an important source of case material. CBD and Ramsar are represented on the project steering committee and this assists greatly in maintaining the flow of information between IAIA and the Conventions.
- b. Active stimulation of people to submit cases to annual conferences. Continuation of the successful biodiversity streams during conferences.
- c. Active submission of case material to the CBD and dissemination through the Clearing House Mechanism.

4. Communication and capacity development

The CBBIA project is a driving force for communication and capacity development. The yearly activity plan of the programme contains a detailed overview of all activities. In addition the section plans to:

- a. Publish a special issue of IAPA magazine on biodiversity (spring 2005).
- b. Publish a special issue of JEAPM (Journal of Environmental Assessment Policy & Management) on biodiversity and SEA (summer 2005)
- c. Search for possibilities to organise cross-cutting meetings such as the combined workshops with the SEA section, indigenous people's sections and the trade section. Links with the sections on Public Participation and Social Impact Assessment will be further explored.
- d. Continue its policy to provide ample room for discussion and exchange of views during conferences, and to organise workshops where work is actually being done.

5. In-country mechanism

The CBBIA project will support a number of in-country and regional projects aimed at further developing mechanisms to enhance the incorporation of biodiversity issues in impact assessment. This project is initially concentrating on a number of regions (Central America, Southern Africa, Small Island States and South/South East Asia are the regions that have been provisionally selected) and countries within these regions. However, as and when additional funding is secured

for the project the intention is to explore the possibility of working in other regions/countries.
The section contributes by:

- a. Helping to identify suitable contacts for involvement in the CBBIA project;
- b. Helping identify organisations that can act as nodes for the in-country component of the CBBIA project. For example, the potential for the South Africa Institute for Environmental Assessment (SAIEA) to act as an in-country node for the CBBIA project is currently being explored.
- c. Providing examples of good practice to relevant countries.
- d. Providing a platform for exchange of knowledge, experience and contacts with peers around the world through list serv, individual contacts and meetings.

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