

UNEP-IUCN Partnership presents:

TEMATEA

Issue-Based Modules for coherent implementation of biodiversity-related Agreements
www.tematea.org

Several hundreds of international agreements both at global and regional level provide legal frameworks for different environmental issues. Some examples are CBD (biodiversity), UNFCCC (climate change), PIC/POP (chemicals), OSPAR (regional seas), Lusaka agreement (trade in endangered species), etc... However, the implementation at national level of this multitude of obligations remains a huge challenge, mainly because of limited financial and human resources and it requires significant effort to cascade international initiatives down to national levels where there is need for improved coherence both in implementation as in policy setting.

The 2010 target of significantly reducing the current rate of biodiversity loss, as adopted by the Convention on Biological Diversity (CBD) and endorsed by the WSSD, makes the efforts on synergy and harmonization in particular among the biodiversity related agreements even more important and urgent. Countries have therefore repeatedly expressed the need for tools to support and streamline this and asked UNEP to help with this.

Since the implementation of different MEAs often relates to issues of common concern, a more coherent implementation would be enhanced if all actors involved, received more structured information on such issues. Based on this approach, UNEP developed TEMATEA, which provides countries with a logical issue-based framework to facilitate coherent implementation of conventions such as CBD, UNFCCC, CCD, Ramsar, etc.

This framework is available online and contains web-based tools in the form of issue-based modules, on specific topics that are of high interest for biodiversity. Although other topics are being evaluated for development, currently the website already contains 5 modules namely on priority issues for biodiversity, namely Inland Waters, Sustainable Use, Climate Change & Biodiversity, Invasive Alien Species and Protected Areas. On each of these topics, all relevant decisions of several conventions, both global and regional, were grouped together which facilitates the formulation and implementation of coherent policies on biodiversity at national level. This further supports the integration of biodiversity considerations in sectoral policies such as development and agriculture which is particularly relevant with regard to the 2010 Biodiversity target.

TEMATEA furthermore supports the implementation of the Bali Strategic Plan as it provides hands-on national and regional capacity building to facilitate improved implementation of biodiversity commitments at national level on issues identified as national priorities based on the use of the modules. Currently, capacity building workshops already took place in Seychelles and Norway and more are planned in pilot countries in Africa, Europe and Latin America over the next months. The national workshops in Norway and Seychelles have provided good indications on how the modules will support revision and development of national policies on biodiversity in a coherent way. That information will be added to the website shortly.

Involvement of end-users is crucial to ensure that TEMATEA is fully demand driven and geared towards implementation at the national level. The project is therefore supported by a Steering Committee through which pilot countries and MEA secretariats provide direct guidance for both

development and implementation as well as ensure feedback to UNEP with regards to the reality of country needs.

The issue-based modules have been highly appreciated by Governments, MEA Secretariats and both governmental as non-governmental organizations. The importance of the service provided by TEMATEA in particular for developing countries was stressed by the African Ministers for the Environment during the 11th meeting of AMCEN in May 2006 as well as through frequent references to the project by Parties at international meetings. For example, at the CBD SBSTTA meeting last week in Paris, biodiversity experts stressed the usefulness of the UNEP issue-based module on biodiversity and climate change in order to integrate biodiversity related concerns into national biodiversity plans and strategies.

As a result, UNEP has been requested to ensure that this service is maintained and strengthened in a reliable way by further developing the project as demanded by the users and to involve other relevant partners. UNEP and IUCN have therefore joined forces to carry this forward together to ensure the sustainability and quality of both new as well as existing modules in order to provide national experts with a broad set of tools for and direct support regarding the national commitments under different biodiversity related MEAs.

The issue-based modules are on the TEMATEA website www.tematea.org and all comments on or experiences with the website are welcome on iverleye@yahoo.com.