

GEF-6 REPLENISHMENT – BIODIVERSITY FOCAL AREA STRATEGY

United Kingdom

Identifying UK priorities

1. The draft GEF-6 Programming Directions prepared by the GEF Secretariat outlines 4 objectives underpinned by 11 programmes in the new draft Biodiversity Focal Area Strategy.
2. The UK-India high-level panel on the resource requirement to meet the strategic plan 2011 to 2020 noted the inter-linkages and co-dependencies between many targets and that there are clear differences in the relative scale of investment required to deliver the various Targets. It identified that some targets require relatively little investment but are crucial in enabling and facilitating the cost effective delivery of other targets, i.e. Target 1 on awareness raising, Targets 2-4 relating to macroeconomic conditions, and Targets 16-20 relating to enabling actions. Taking a similar approach, the GEF-6 biodiversity strategy prioritises investments that meaningfully contribute to directly achieving 15 of the 20 Aichi Targets and that have the greatest potential for a “knock-on” effect to other Aichi Target achievements (consequently targets 1 and 17-20 are not directly addressed in the strategy). **Objective iv on mainstreaming biodiversity should be given priority within the GEF as it can deliver greater returns on investment.**
3. The GEF-6 strategy and the CBD Strategic Plan recognise that accounting for the full economic value of ecosystems and biodiversity, through systemic biodiversity mainstreaming approaches that have high potential for far-reaching and sustained impact, is critical to addressing a key underlying cause of biodiversity loss. On this basis, **Aichi Target 2 (GEF programme 10) should be treated as a high priority within objective iv given its criticality in address the causes of biodiversity loss.**
4. Paragraph 7(d) of COP decision COP11 (XI/4) seeks to mobilise the resource needed for Parties to prepare national financial plans for biodiversity by 2015 and to assess the values of biological diversity and its components. Paragraph 8 seeks to mobilise resources to enable the operationalisation of Target 3 on incentives at CBD COP12. Through Programme 10 the GEF can build the capacity necessary to deliver these objectives and assist countries in planning their NBSAPs with effective mainstreaming and financial planning that considers the drivers of biodiversity loss and how these can be influenced through changing incentives and accounting better for values. **In order to effectively contribute to meeting Aichi Targets 2 and 3 early action will be required, emphasising the case for prioritising mainstreaming activities.**
5. Mainstreaming is broader than a biodiversity-only issue. Nature-based solutions can also support climate adaptation and mitigation and desertification, and biodiversity values need to be taken into account in decisions about how to act in relation to chemical pollution and other pressures. **It is therefore important that mainstreaming of biodiversity is delivered as a cross-cutting theme across all the GEF programmes and supporting multiple GEF objectives, not just as a part of the biodiversity strategy. In this context Aichi target 4 (on sustainable consumption and production) should be addressed across the GEF as a whole.**
6. Developing a suitable political and economic framework to protect biodiversity through mainstreaming (programme 10 of the draft GEF strategy) is likely to take a considerable length of time and could well not deliver the benefits expected within the

2020 timeframe. A safeguard against this is to also focus some attention elsewhere. Given the high local costs of addressing biodiversity loss and that threatened species are more prevalent in developing (poorer) countries there is a strong case to focus some attention on Aichi Target 12, particularly given the broader global benefits such action would bring.

7. At CITES COP16 a number of developing countries highlighted that access to GEF was important to enable them to implement CITES. Parties supported enhancement of the GEF's biodiversity strategy in GEF-6 by strengthening the species-based component. We support this. COP16 also made significant steps to addressing the increasing threat to elephants and rhinos. Programme 4 on Reducing widespread elephant and rhino poaching draws a strong link to CITES' objectives. A focus within the GEF on illegal wildlife trafficking is a positive step to address the growing concerns in this area and reflect the political priority currently being given to the issue. It has the potential to contribute to improvements in law enforcement and governance of wildlife trade and tackling livelihoods issues. A focus on this issue by the GEF would be a positive step in mobilising resources to address this important and pressing issue. At the same time it should be recognised that elephants and rhinos are not the most threatened of species and the focus only on illegal trafficking of these two species offers limited scope in delivering Aichi Target 12 on endangered species and limits the degree to which developing countries can make full use of the GEF in implementing CITES and in contributing to Target 12. It would therefore seem appropriate if this were part of a broader strategy capable of addressing other species and pressures, thus better reflecting the underlying rationale for Target 12 that species are being lost globally at a higher level than ever before, across all species groups, not just higher mammals. There is likely therefore to be **value in thinking about the scope of programme 4 to enable Aichi Target 12 to be better addressed.**
8. Programme 5 (island ecosystems) can also make a positive contribution to Aichi target 12 and is of particular relevance to UK overseas territories. **Reviewing the scope of programme 4 to enable consideration of other species and pressures might also allow consideration of bringing Programme 5 within scope, helping to cover the pressures arising from invasive alien species and also contributing to Target 9.**
9. We support the suggested work on **Program 8** (pg 19): *Securing Agriculture's Future: **Sustainable Use of Plant and Animal Genetic Resources** (A joint Program with the Land Degradation Focal Area)* –it focuses well on in-situ and on-farm conservation of plant genetic resources (PGR), which chimes with a recommendation from last week's Commission on Genetic Resources for Food and Agriculture (FAO), the CBD recognises agricultural biodiversity as a valuable component of biodiversity in of itself, but crop wild relatives –and their in-situ conservation is arguably the nexus of biodiversity and agriculture. Frequently these genetic resources are neither considered important by both the environment community (“crops? Not our concern”) nor the agriculture community (“there's nothing interesting in this undeveloped weedy wild/variety”), yet as the document details many interesting traits are available in the wild and (depending on who you talk to) small-scale farmers' fields, but pressure on land and monoculture is losing this variety. There has been some progress in ex-situ conservation (genebanks) –and the Global Crop Diversity Trust does much good work in this area, but this in-situ element, that allows a dynamic development of varieties (important for climate change adaptation) remains an identified priority.
10. The program mentioned, but is not clear how it will address, farm animal genetic resources in this document. Supporting FAO's Funding Strategy for Farm Animal Genetic resources would contribute to the aims described in sub paras b) d and e): http://www.fao.org/ag/againfo/programmes/en/genetics/Funding_strategy.html

11. On **Program 9: Implement the Nagoya Protocol on Access and Benefit Sharing** paras 74-77 all make sense. ABS is the third aim of the CBD and not only is its fulfilment (through implementation of the Nagoya Protocol) intended to support the first two aims of the Convention (conservation and sustainable use of biodiversity), it was both an important part of both the original deal in agreeing the CBD and more recently the adoption of the Protocol was part of the bargain made in agreeing the Strategic Plan to address biodiversity loss in 2010. If we do not support the implementation of the Nagoya Protocol there is a political risk that developing countries will roll back on their commitments to the Strategic Plan and we could be accused of not honouring agreements to recognise countries sovereignty over their genetic resources.
12. On para 78 –this needs a little tidying as not sure it makes sense, suggest removing “providers” from the end of one sentence and putting it into the beginning of the second:

“Projects funded through the NPIF will support the development and implementation of ABS agreements between providers and users of genetic resources that include the three core key elements of the Nagoya Protocol on ABS: PIC, MAT, and Benefit Sharing ~~Providers~~. ~~It would~~ Providers include Parties to the CBD as well as those stakeholders providing access to resources on the ground, including Indigenous and local communities. Users can include Parties of the CBD as well as those interested in the resources including, for example, sectors like the pharmaceutical industry, biotechnology, ornamental horticulture, and natural personal care and cosmetics.”