

ACP MEAs Programme Newsletter

Edition 3, September - December 2016

*The following newsletter provides regular quarterly updates on the European Commission funded programme on **Capacity building related to multilateral environment agreements in African, Caribbean, and Pacific countries (the ACP MEAs Programme)**. With a focus on institutional and national capacity building as well as a synergistic implementation of the MEAs clusters, the programme aims to reduce the adverse effects of loss of biodiversity and contribute to the sound management of chemicals, including the adequate disposal of waste and obsolete pesticides. The programme has brought together the concerted efforts of regional hubs including the Caribbean Community Secretariat (CARICOM, Caribbean Hub), the Secretariat of the Pacific Regional Environment Programme (SPREP, Pacific Hub), and the African Union Commission (AUC, Africa Hub) as well as global partners such as the Food and Agricultural Organization of the United Nations (FAO), along with select NGOs and collaborating centers.*



COUNTRIES AGREE TO BOOST CAPACITY BUILDING EFFORTS TO ACHIEVE GLOBAL BIODIVERSITY GOALS

From 4-17 December 2016, the city of Cancun in Mexico hosted the thirteenth meeting of the Conference of the Parties (COP 13) to the CBD, the eighth meeting of the Conference of the Parties serving as the Meeting of the Parties to the Cartagena Protocol on Biosafety (COP-MOP 8) and the second meeting of the Conference of

the Parties serving as the Meeting of the Parties to the Nagoya Protocol on Access to Genetic Resources and the Fair and Equitable Sharing of Benefits Arising from their Utilization (COP-MOP 2). Widely known as the UN Biodiversity Conference, the historic meeting led to the adoption of 70 decisions, among them: mainstreaming and the integration of biodiversity within and across sectors, including agriculture, fisheries, tourism and forests; the implementation of the Strategic Plan for Biodiversity 2011-2020; addressing resource

mobilization and financial mechanism; addressing a global multilateral benefit-sharing mechanism; and [action plan on enhancing capacity building in achieving global biodiversity targets](#).

The [short-term Action Plan \(2017-2020\)](#) to enhance and support capacity building for the implementation of the Strategic Plan for Biodiversity 2011-2020 and its Aichi Biodiversity Targets is a significant step in recognizing the role that capacity building plays in strengthening nations endogenously in order to attain national and global biodiversity goals and targets. Moreover, the impetus for capacity building comes at a crucial time as the CBD Secretariat cautioned that two-thirds of the Aichi Biodiversity targets to address biodiversity goals are at risk of not being met by the fast-approaching 2020 deadline.

This action plan is a concrete follow up to the decision made in [COP 12 \(XII/2B\)](#), where countries had asked for an assessment of the effectiveness of existing capacity building activities and a more structured and coherent way forward. Pursuant to the decision, the Executive Secretary of CBD had conducted an online survey in December 2015, as well as reviewed existing partnerships arrangements, and undertaken a gap analysis to explore untapped opportunities.

Developed through a participatory process, the action plan has integrated feedback from national focal points as well as information provided by Parties in their fifth national reports, national biodiversity strategies and action plans (NBSAPs), and national capacity self-assessment reports (NCSAs).

Such introspection has led to some interesting findings. For example, the survey found that NBSAPs and traditional knowledge are two of the highest covered subject areas during capacity

building initiatives, according to survey conducted with inputs from national focal points attending such activities. In contrast, areas such as sustainable agriculture (Aichi Target 7), pollution reduction (Aichi Target 8), reforming incentive structures (Aichi Target 3), maintaining genetic diversity (Aichi Target 13) are some of the least supported targets by existing capacity-building activities and materials.

The Action Plan makes it clear that the primary target audience of the capacity building activities are developing country Parties, in particular the least developed countries and small island developing States (SIDS) among them, and Parties with economies in transition, as well as indigenous peoples and local communities. This is particularly significant for the ACP MEAs Programme which supports 79 developing countries, of which more than 30 countries are SIDS.

The Annex of the Action Plan provides detailed information on activities, expected outcomes, indicators, and resource distribution for cross-cutting and substantive capacity building activities related to the Convention, as well as Nagoya and Cartagena Protocols. Capacity needs are widespread and diverse in range and include the enhancement of awareness and education, the uptake of tools and technologies for the sustainable management of the environment as well as the development of enabling legal frameworks.

In particular, for the Nagoya Protocol, the Action Plan recognizes that there is a need to support the building of legal frameworks around the Protocol at the national level. For example, the capacity building activities for the Nagoya Protocol include continuing to support the online Global Network on Biodiversity Law where participants undergoing training on establishing

legal frameworks to implement the Nagoya Protocol can access updated resources, latest news and continue peer-to-peer learning (Activity 91). Additionally, the Action Plan further supports ongoing activities on legal preparedness, including training workshops organized jointly with International Development Law Organization (IDLO) (Activity 90).

Since 2009, the ACP MEAs Programme has been committed to strengthening such legal frameworks through greater implementation of multilateral environment agreements with a regional focus on Africa, Caribbean, and the Pacific.

For example, in March 2016, the Programme held an experience sharing workshop (insert link) bringing together a range of countries from the global South, where the participants discussed legal preparedness for biodiversity integration in their respective countries.

There was increased ownership of the national focal points after the workshop, as the participants provided contributions and analysis with their country case studies in hopes of sharing knowledge and lessons learnt widely. Overall, the workshop culminated in two NBSAPs-specific publications, with the national focal points providing contributions and analysis in *Enhancing Synergies across Global Biodiversity Conventions - Experiences from the Global South* and a publication on the role of existing legal frameworks in countries in developing and implementing the NBSAPs.

In addition, the ACP MEAs programme provided capacity building support to the joint regional preparatory meetings (pre-COPs) in preparation for the Conference of Parties for CITES and CBD in late 2016. In particular, the Pacific pre-COP held in Apia, Samoa in mid-August provided crucial negotiator's training

and supported the Pacific states to come together with a united regional strategy and approach for the then upcoming conferences.

In the coming year, the ACP MEAs Programme is planning a number of capacity building activities related to biodiversity and traditional knowledge, NBSAPs, Nagoya Protocol, Cartagena Protocol, and ratifying Minamata Convention, mainstreaming SDGs and strengthening national processes.

Text by Anjana Varma with inputs from biodiversity expert, Dr. Balakrishna Pisupati.

AFRICA HUB

Building Tools and Guidelines for Integration of Biodiversity into national planning process

In the last few months, the Africa Hub has been involved in developing tools and guidelines for integration of biodiversity into development documents such as national policies and planning processes. An expert in the field was brought in to review the overall status of biodiversity policy and integration in the national, regional and continental development strategies, plans and decision making processes.

The tools and guidelines support countries to integrate biodiversity into sectorial strategies and national plans and assess their effectiveness in Africa. It also provides a repertoire of lessons learnt and best practices in the integration of biodiversity into decision making processes, keeping in mind the African context. This is an important step in building capacity in dealing with biodiversity issues among the 49 African Union member states, which are the beneficiaries of the ACP MEAs programme.

The tools and guidelines seeks to be a source for institutions and policy-makers, particularly in Africa, to guide them in building innovative strategies, policy options, and priority measures for the integration of biodiversity issues into national development and planning. *(The tools and guidelines will be shared in the next newsletter.)*

Support to African delegation ahead of the joint regional preparatory meeting for the CITES conference

The Africa Hub assisted Parties to the Conventions from the region in preparing for the respective meetings for Conference of Parties for CITES held in September in Johannesburg as well as the recently-concluded UN Biodiversity Conference (CBD COP 13) held in Cancun, Mexico in early December.



During the joint preparatory meeting, some of the main agendas on the item for African delegates included resource mobilization and financial mechanism, enhancement of capacity building, specifically technical and scientific cooperation.

A number of key outcomes were decided as a result of the preparatory meeting, including:

- (i) the agreement on submitting the financial reporting framework in time for CBD COP 13 and, in the longer term, using it as a basis for domestic resource mobilization;
- (ii) facilitation and scaling up of integration of biodiversity into cross-cutting issues, such as climate change adaptation, disaster risk reduction and impact assessments;
- (iii) tasking a number of countries in the UNDP Biodiversity Finance Initiative (BIOFIN) to be expanded in order to help develop the capacity to mobilize resources.



Plenary session during CITES COP 17 in South Africa



Karen Gaynor, Chair, Committee I; John Scanlon, Secretary-General, CITES; CoP Chair Maite Nkoana-Mashabane, Minister of International Relations and Cooperation, South Africa; Edna

Molewa, Minister of Environmental Affairs, South Africa; and Jonathan Barzdo, Chair, Committee II, join hands to celebrate the closure of CITES CoP17

Especially relevant to the Programme, many delegates vocalized the need to scale up capacity-building support for the implementation of CBD national biodiversity strategies and action plans (NBSAPs) as well as attaining other Aichi targets and ABS negotiations at the national level.



CARIBBEAN HUB

Supporting Caribbean negotiators for the Conference of the Parties of the Convention on Biological Diversity and Meetings of the Parties of the associated Protocols

Since the start of the ACP-MEAs Programme, this is the third time that the CARICOM Secretariat has been able to support and assist countries in preparations for the CBD COP. Each time the level and scope of support the Secretariat has been able to provide has increased. The key objectives were to:

- (i) familiarise participants with the COP-13, MOP-2 and MOP-8

agendas and the issues to be discussed and negotiated;

- (ii) enable participants to identify and analyze those COP-13, MOP-2 and MOP-8 issues most relevant to their national and/or regional interests;
- (iii) enable exchanges of views among participants about key COP-13, MOP-2 and MOP-8 issues, desired outcomes, and potential negotiating strategies;
- (iv) support the determination of national and/or regional positions and talking points on key COP-13, MOP-2 and MOP-8 issues.

As part of the preparation, the Caribbean Hub organized a regional preparatory workshop two months ahead of the CBD COP 13 in Georgetown, Guyana from 11 – 13 October 2016 and was attended by 8 representatives from 7 project countries and 1 regional organisation.

At this meeting, country representatives were briefed on the agendas of the upcoming COP and MOPs and reviewed key draft decisions of interest to the region, with special attention to any text in brackets. Participants at the workshop discussed and agreed upon shared perspectives and positions on agenda items of priority concern, including synthetic biology, resource mobilization, capacity building and invasive alien species.



Negotiators from (L-R) Antigua and Barbuda, St. Kitts and Nevis, Saint Lucia, and Jamaica at CBD COP 13 in Cancun, Mexico in December 2016

Participants also received interactive refresher training in MEAs negotiations. They were briefed on the proposed organization of work for the COP/MOPS, especially the arrangements for holding of concurrent meetings, and outlined a strategy to cover key issues as a region, despite the small size of individual national delegations.

In evaluating the workshop, participants deemed the workshop appropriate, well organized, engaging and dynamic. They indicated that not only was the workshop timely, informative, very well facilitated and insightful, but it was also useful in strategizing for CARICOM countries' effective participation at COP13.

Following the workshop, the CARICOM Secretariat prepared and circulated a negotiator's brief to all member states prior to the COP, along with a report of the full proceedings of the workshop.



Project Coordinator for the Caribbean Hub, Dr. Therese Yarde presenting at a session



Participants at the workshop, representing seven countries in the Caribbean and one regional organization.

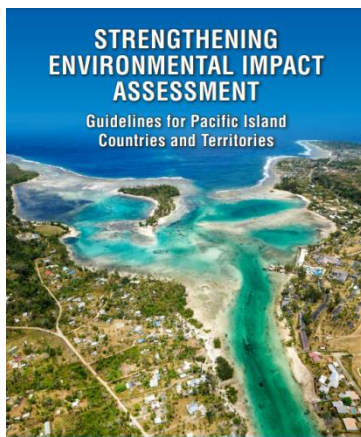
For the first time under the ACP MEAs Programme, the Caribbean Hub Coordinator was able to attend the COP to provide on-site support and assistance to countries, including assisting with the drafting of statements and coordinating collaborations with other regional groupings, including the Pacific SIDS. The Coordinator also participated in several side events with regional and international partners.

It should be noted that in 2012, the Caribbean Hub Coordinator had the opportunity to attend a regional CBD pre-COP workshop held by the Pacific Hub. The observations made and lessons learned from this experience have been

invaluable in informing the approach to COP preparations in the Caribbean: a clear example of South-South sharing of good practice.

PACIFIC HUB

New guidelines for environmental impact assessment (EIA) in action



In the wake of increasing development in sectors such as tourism, land mining, energy and transport, and with novel forms of development on the horizon, like deep sea mining, Pacific island countries had expressed a need for stronger EIA systems and further EIA capacity-building. Thus, in response, the Environmental Monitoring and Governance (EMG) Division of the Secretariat of the Pacific Regional Environment Programme (SPREP) launched new guidelines for environmental impact assessment (EIA) for all 14 countries of the Pacific in September 2016.

The newly-launched publication, titled [Strengthening environmental impact assessment: guidelines for Pacific island countries and territories](#) explains that EIA is a tool for identifying and managing the impacts of development on the environment, to help ensure negative impacts are minimized and positive impacts are maximized. The guidelines also emphasize that EIA can be used to make

developments more resilient in the face of climate change.

SPREP member countries have supported the guidelines by providing feedback on early drafts and sharing local challenges and insights during EIA training workshops held in-country. The new guidelines were possible with the financial and technical support under the European Union funded ACP MEAs Programme, as well as UN Environment, and the Australian and New Zealand governments.



Mr Kosi Latu, Director General of SPREP and Ms Isabelle Louis, Regional Director a.i., Regional Office for Asia and the Pacific, UN Environment

To see the EIA guidelines in action, SPREP organized the National Environment Management Strategy and State of the Environment Reporting workshops back to back with the EIA training to complement each other and to provide a team capacity building approach that has worked well in the Pacific. Through these workshops which were organized in mid-October in the Republic of Marshall Islands, the key aim was to present the findings of the State of Environment (SOE) Report to key stakeholders, demonstrate report uses in national planning and MEA reporting and discuss next steps; provide an update on the development of the National Environmental Management Strategy (NEMS) and review the NEMS

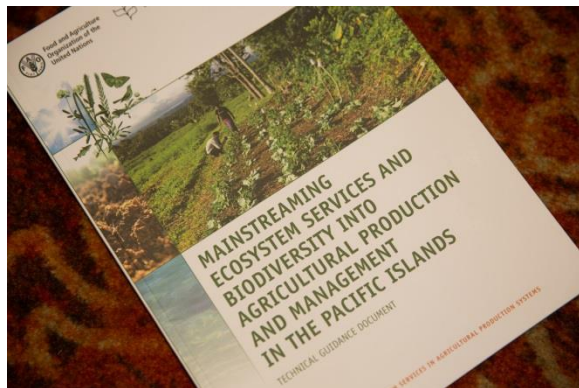
thematic areas with stakeholders. And finally, by introducing the EIA guidelines, the aim was to develop participants' understanding of the environmental impact assessment (EIA) process and strengthen participants' EIA skills through practical exercises and discussion.

FOOD AND AGRICULTURE ORGANIZATION OF THE UNITED NATIONS (FAO)

FAO is involved in a number of diverse activities for the Programme. In the interest of brevity, only two are highlighted below:

Mainstreaming ecosystem services and biodiversity into agricultural production and management in the Pacific Islands

FAO in collaboration with CBD and the Pacific regional partner organizations SPREP and Secretariat for the Pacific Community (SPC), released a [Technical Guidance Document](#) that provides guidance on mainstreaming ecosystem services and biodiversity into agricultural production and management in the Pacific Islands.



The document introduces best practices for integrating biodiversity and ecosystem services into agriculture for the Pacific region, including: diversification and integration of farming systems (cropping, agroforestry and agro-silvi-pastoral systems); strengthening resilience of

production systems and landscapes to the adverse effects of climate change or pest outbreaks; soil biodiversity to enhance soil health, nutrient transformation, soil decontamination, climate regulation; and ecological management to minimise chemical use. It also links ecotourism and agricultural zones to support environmental protection and agrobiodiversity preservation.

The [launch](#) at took place at the CBD COP 13 in Cancun, Mexico - as a joint FAO-CBD-SPREP-SPC publication.

National training workshop on ecosystem-based agriculture in Apia, Samoa, 22-23 November 2016

Approximately forty people – policymakers from the Ministries of Natural Resources and Environment (MNRE), Agriculture and Fisheries (MAF) and local farmers' association and stakeholders group – attended a national training workshop organized by FAO in collaboration with MNRE, MAF, SPC and SPREP.

The two-day training workshop was the first step in developing a roadmap to facilitate a transformational shift towards ecosystem-based agriculture and reduce reliance on agro-chemical use in Samoa. The meeting facilitated the stocktaking of existing national policies and cross-sectoral coordination mechanisms, considered relevant to the task of creating an enabling environment that can support farmers uptake of ecosystem-based agriculture.



Participants at the national training workshop in Samoa



Field visit during the national training workshop in Samoa

The participants were presented with case studies, as well as policy measures that support the uptake of ecosystem-based agricultural practices from around the Pacific islands and across the world. Building on existing policies and national coordination mechanisms, MNRE and MAF will now draft a Samoa implementation roadmap to support and promote the uptake of ecosystem-based practices in agriculture. The roadmap will strengthen Samoa's institutional capacity in achieving important international goals, such as the Sustainable Development Goals and Aichi Biodiversity Targets.

Ms. Tauti Fuatino M-Leota, Assistant CEO at MNRE and participant to the national training, presented the policy framework that in Samoa is supporting mainstreaming of biodiversity conservation at a side event on ecological intensification held on 8 December 2016 at COP13 in Cancun, Mexico.

To find out more on the project, please visit:

[ACP MEAs website](#)

[Capacity4dev programme website supported by the European Commission](#)

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