



United Nations Environment Programme

**Terminal Evaluation of the UNEP project *Supporting the
Implementation of the Pan-European Biological and Landscape
Diversity Strategy (PEBLDS)***

by

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November 2013

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Abbreviations

| | |
|---------|---|
| ABS | Access to Genetic Resources and Benefit Sharing |
| CEE | Central and Eastern Europe |
| CBD | Convention on Biological Diversity |
| CITES | The Convention on International Trade in Endangered Species of Wild Fauna and Flora |
| CMS | The Convention on the Conservation of Migratory Species of Wild Animals |
| COE | Council of Europe |
| COP | Conference of the Parties |
| EEA | European Environmental Agency |
| EBRI | The European Biodiversity Resourcing Initiative |
| ECNC | European Centre for Nature Conservation |
| EECCA | Eastern Europe, Caucasus and Central Asia |
| EfE | Environment for Europe |
| EU | European Union |
| IPBES | Intergovernmental Platform on Biodiversity and Ecosystem Services |
| ITPGRFA | International Treaty on Plant Genetic Resources for Food and Agriculture |
| IUCN | International Union for the Conservation of Nature |
| MPCFE | Ministerial Conference on the Protection of Forests in Europe |
| NGO | Non-Governmental Organisation |
| NBSAP | National Biodiversity Strategy and Action Plan |
| OECD | Organisation for Economic Cooperation and Development |
| PEBLDS | Pan-European Biological and Landscape Diversity Strategy |
| REC | The Regional Environmental Center for Central and Eastern Europe |
| UNCCD | United Nations Convention to Combat Desertification |
| UNCED | The United Nations Conference on Environment and Development |
| TEEB | The Economics of Ecosystems and Biodiversity |
| UNECE | United Nations Economic Commission for Europe |
| UNEP | United Nations Environment Programme |
| WSSD | World Summit on Sustainable Development |
| WWF | World Wildlife Fund |

Project summary

| | | | |
|---|--|----------------------------------|---|
| Project number | CP/5023-01-01 | IMIS number: | 3337 |
| Focal Area(s): | Environmental Governance | | |
| UNEP Strategic Priority/Objective: | The overall objective of the project is to support, facilitate and enhance the implementation of the Pan-European Biological and Landscape Diversity Strategy and thereby the Convention on Biological Diversity and other biodiversity related instruments in Europe. | | |
| Approval date: | UNEP 36 August 2001 | Planned duration: | 140 months (revised 13 times) |
| Geographical scope | Pan-European Region | Implementation: | Internal, UNEP/ROE in cooperation with the Council of Europe, the Secretariat of the CBD and other biodiversity-related MEAS and interested Governments and Organisations |
| Expected Commencement date: | 1 September 2001 | Expected completion date: | 30 April 2013 |
| UNEP Allocation: | US\$ 0 | Expected Co-financing: | US\$ 2,047,050 |
| Total Cost: (as per 31.Dec. 2012 | US\$ 2,202,203 | | |

Executive summary

A key question for this evaluation is the extent to which the project was able to enhance implementation of The Pan-European Biological and Landscape Diversity Strategy (PEBLDS) and the Convention on Biological Diversity (CBD) and other biodiversity related instruments.

PEBLDS was developed as a regional response to the degradation of biological and landscape diversity values in Europe and to support regional implementation of the Convention on Biological Diversity (CBD). PEBLDS was a timely and relevant initiative after the end of the Cold War in a new spirit of European solidarity and coherence and at a time with global political impetus to conservation and sustainable use of biodiversity through the newly entry into force of the CBD. PEBLDS was also relevant for the two host organisations UNEP and the Council of Europe (COE) both being organizational hosts of biodiversity related conventions, and to the CBD that has adopted many decision highlighting the value of regional implementation.

Consequently, the project subject to this evaluation was also relevant since its objective was to support, facilitate and enhance the implementation of PEBLDS and thereby the CBD and other biodiversity related instruments in Europe.

PEBLDS and the project to support its implementation completed UNEP plans and programmes well.

The project originally had duration of 18 months being described as a “transitional financial arrangement” in the anticipation of a system of stable and predictable funding. Such a system was never established, and the project was revised and extended 13 times up to April 2013 to allow the Joint Secretariat to undertake basic secretariat functions for PEBLDS. Both the original project and the revisions were financed from voluntary contributions.

The financial resources allocated under the project were tight and prevented the Secretariat from a more proactive, catalytic role towards PEBLDS implementation. Still, the Joint Secretariat (and later UNEP ROE managing the Secretariat by itself) was successful in delivering the project outputs in the form of basic Secretariat services and thereby also contributed to the overall objective of the project to support implementation of PEBLDS and CBD. However, in light of the magnitude and complexity of reversing the negative trend for biodiversity in a region as large and diverse as the pan-European, the contribution of the mainly process-oriented outputs of the project to the intended outcome could only be indirect and very limited. Thus, it is also relevant to assess activities in the wider PEBLDS context outside the scope of the project.

PEBLDS catalysed activities in a number of areas and in collaboration with a number of partners in the region. This includes the development of the Pan-European Ecological Network (PEEN), which has stimulated action in PEBLDS countries throughout the years and thereby contributed to ecological coherence of the region, and the Biodiversity Service for supporting development and implementation of National Biodiversity Strategies and Action Plans in the countries of Eastern Europe, Caucasus and Central Asia (EECCA), a project running from 2000 – 2003 initiated by UNEP and positively evaluated. The Streamlining of European 2010 Biodiversity indicators Project (SEBI2010), the mapping of High Nature Value Farmland in EECCA countries and the “Countdown 2010” awareness raising campaign (lead by IUCN) should also be highlighted as activities with concrete impact towards PEBLDS and CBD implementation.

In the view of EECCA countries, PEBLDS was successful in generating important capacity building for them through aligning PEBLDS closely to the CBD agenda and organizing the biennial Biodiversity in Europe Conferences as regional preparation of CBD COPs. Unlike Member States of the EU, EECCA countries do not have a preparation and coordination mechanism for the CBD. Overall, EECCA countries were happy with the opportunities PEBLDS provided for information exchange on CBD related matters and argue that PEBLDS has catalysed national actions for biodiversity in their countries.

PEBLDS was successful in enhancing NGO involvement. Pan-European NGOs have been invaluable partners in creating and developing PEBLDS and PEBLDS has been an invaluable platform for their work.

When PEBLDS was no longer viable, it was successful in adapting to the changing conditions. The PEBLDS community with invaluable support from UNEP ROE showed willingness and ability to conduct an exemplary and thorough reform process leading to a lighter and more practical platform for pan-European cooperation.

The catalytic activity referred to above only covered some parts of PEBLDS and its follow-up plans and programs. Large parts of the PEBLDS commitments remained unaddressed or addressed only in rather general terms indicating that the extent of PEBLDS implementation was rather limited. PEBLDS's outreach to other biodiversity related conventions than the CBD was also limited and thereby so was its ability to contribute to their implementation.

After it was decided to closely align PEBLDS activities to the CBD, attention shifted from the original PEBLDS to the Kyiv Declaration adopted in 2003 with a number of time bound targets and a comprehensive implementation plan. This turned out to be too ambitious and only followed up to a limited extent. The momentum got lost and PEBLDS went into change mode leading to its dissolution in 2011 and replacement by the Pan-European Biodiversity Platform in 2013 led by an informal Steering Committee.

Many interrelated factors caused the downward trend for PEBLDS. The sense of European solidarity and burden sharing that prevailed after the Cold War gradually disappeared and thereby support from donor countries to both the PEBLDS Secretariat and concrete PEBLDS activities.

UNEP did not provide direct financial support to the PEBLDS project, but provided human resources from 2004 to 2009 in the form of a staff member's post to carry out the functions of coordinator of the PEBLDS using the UN regular budget funds available in the Regional Office for Europe for providing assistance to Eastern European countries. This in-kind contribution is estimated to be of approximately 700,000USD. Additionally, until the present time, UNEP has contributed by providing some of the staff time of the UNEP ROE director, other UNEP ROE programme officers, administrative support, office space and supplies at no cost to PEBLDS. COE contributions, both monetary and in-kind staff support to the PEBLDS, gradually dropped to zero. However, COE did maintain other activities, such as those carried in support of the Pan European Ecological Network (PEEN), the Bern Convention and the European Landscape Convention, which indirectly helped achieve some of the objectives of the PEBLDS.

The Joint Secretariat proved to be an impractical construction with cumbersome working relations between the two host organizations and the economic crisis led to cuts in government's aid and travel budgets and sharp prioritization of international activities.

Another factor was that EU never came to play the central role for PEBLDS that was envisaged from the start in terms of both catalysing its own experience in biodiversity policies and legislation and more direct support to EECCA countries. PEBLDS added only limited value to the development of EU's own policies and legislation.

Maybe the factor that affected PEBLDS most was the EU enlargement leading to nearly half of PEBLDS countries being EU Member States. This implied a serious refocus of the new EU Member States from pan-European activities to EU and implementation of EU legislation.

Overall, the project and the PEBLDS process contributed to the implementation of PEBLDS, CBD and other biodiversity related instruments in non EU countries through the general information exchange PEBLDS provided, through enhanced awareness and preparation of CBD COPs and through undertaking a number of concrete projects and activities to facilitate implementation as referred to above. However, in the overall context of PEBLDS and CBD implementation, these contributions were limited.

A key lesson learned from the PEBLDS process is well-known - that policy on its own does not deliver action unless supported by allocation of resources. The lack of a financial mechanism with adequate, stable and predictable funding was a major obstacle to PEBLDS implementation. Another lesson is that full support from EU and its Member States was an important pre-condition for PEBLDS functioning that was lacking.

The decision to transform PEBLDS into a flexible Pan-European Biodiversity Platform was a recognition that PEBLDS in its current form did not add sufficient value, but also a recognition that the pan-European region was still in need of a mechanism to support implementation of the global Strategic Plan for Biodiversity 2011–2020 with the Aichi Targets. The response in the form of the Platform led by a Steering Committee is a simple pragmatic construction with the right focus on implementation of the full cluster of biodiversity related conventions and the right type of activities outlined, but it is also a very fragile construction. It still exists only on the foundation and without broad buy-in by all pan-European stakeholders - but first and foremost of governments from both EECCA countries and EU/Western Europe - the Platform will not be built.

It is recommended that the Platform be clearly project-oriented and focus on a limited, prioritized number of thematic areas. Moreover, it is recommended that UNEP provides and finances the secretariat services of the Platform, that EU and its Member States play a key role in its operation, that the Council of Europe joins the Platform as an important regional partner with shares in biodiversity and that the Platform gives special priority to sub-regional activities and cooperation.

1. Evaluation background

1. A Context

1. The Pan-European Biological and Landscape Diversity Strategy (PEBLDS)¹ was proposed by the European Conference “Conserving Europe’s Natural Heritage – towards a European Ecological Network” held in 1993 in Maastricht in a “Maastricht Declaration”². A drafting group was established to elaborate the Strategy lead by the ECNC - European Center for Nature Conservation, and PEBLDS was endorsed by the Ministers of Environment in the UNECE region³ at the 3rd Ministerial Conference of the Environment for Europe process held in Sofia, Bulgaria in 1995⁴. The Strategy aimed to strengthen the application of the Bern Convention⁵ in relation to the Convention on Biological Diversity, following the Monaco Declaration⁶.
2. PEBLDS was developed as a regional response to the degradation of biological and landscape diversity values in Europe and to support regional implementation of the Convention on Biological Diversity (CBD) which entered into force in 1993. It described itself as innovative, because it addressed all biological and landscape initiatives under one European approach and proactive, because it promoted the integration of biological and landscape diversity considerations into social and economic sectors.
3. PEBLDS was meant to be a coordinating and unifying framework for strengthening and building on existing initiatives. The intention was not to introduce new legislation, but to fill gaps where these initiatives were not implemented in their full potential or failed to achieve desired objectives. The legal basis for implementing action was found in existing and widely accepted international agreements and treaties such as the Convention on Biological Diversity, the Convention on Desertification, the Convention on Climate Change, the Bern Convention the Bonn and Ramsar Conventions, and the EU Habitats and Birds Directives. The Strategy's vision for the future was to achieve conservation and sustainable use of biological and landscape diversity for the whole continent of Europe and its territories within 20 years, and specifically to seek to ensure the following aims:
 - Threats to Europe's biological and landscape diversity are reduced substantially, and, where possible, removed.
 - Resilience of European biological and landscape diversity is increased.
 - Ecological coherence of Europe as a whole is strengthened.
 - Full public involvement in conservation of biological and landscape diversity is assured.
4. The Strategy set out to achieve the following objectives over this period:

¹ <http://www.pebls.org/index.php?ido=20514351&lang=eng>

² <http://www.planeco.org/staff/romano/web-cORSI/documents/Europe/EEconetDeclaration.pdf>

³ The UNECE region includes Europe, Central Asia and North America while the Pan-European Region covering PEBLDS does not include North America.

⁴ <http://www.unece.org/fileadmin/DAM/env/efe/history%20of%20Efe/Sofia.E.pdf>

⁵ The Convention on the Conservation of European Wildlife and Natural Habitats which entered into force in 1982 and is hosted by the Council of Europe. http://www.coe.int/t/dg4/cultureheritage/nature/bern/default_en.asp

⁶ The Declaration was the result of an Intergovernmental Symposium on the United Nations Conference on Environment and Development (UNCED), the Convention on Biological Diversity and the Bern Convention held in Monaco in 1994. Among other things it was recommended to establish appropriate coordination mechanisms between the Bern Convention and the CBD, so that both instruments may be applied and elaborated on together in matters relating to the conservation of biological diversity and the sustainable use of its components. <https://wcd.coe.int/ViewDoc.jsp?id=1561477&Site=COE>

- Conservation, enhancement and restoration of key ecosystems, habitats, species and features of the landscape through the creation and effective management of the Pan-European Ecological Network.
 - Sustainable management and use of the positive potential of Europe's biological and landscape diversity through making optimum use of the social and economic opportunities on a local, national and regional level.
 - Integration of biological and landscape diversity conservation and sustainable use objectives into all sectors managing or affecting such diversity.
 - Improved information on, and awareness of, biological and landscape diversity issues, and increased public participation in actions to conserve and enhance such diversity.
 - Improved understanding of the state of Europe's biological and landscape diversity and the processes that render them sustainable.
 - Assurance of adequate financial means to implement the Strategy.
5. Within its 20 year timeframe, PEBLDS was envisaged to strengthen biological and landscape diversity considerations in all social and economic sectors and PEBLDS included specifications to that effect on the following sectors: Agriculture, Defence, Energy and Industry, Forestry, Hunting and Fisheries and Structural and regional Policies.
6. PEBLDS was to be implemented through a series of five year action plans addressing the issues that were considered most pressing and important, and it included the first of those action plans covering actions under 11 themes. Lead bodies (COE, UNEP, Convention Secretariats NGO's and Governments) were identified and asked to coordinate and promote activities under each theme. A process was initiated to mobilize resources for the implementation of the Strategy and the Action Plan. A governance structure was established consisting of a PEBLDS Council, an Executive Bureau and a Secretariat jointly provided by UNEP's Regional Office for Europe UNEP/ROE and the Council of Europe (COE). The Council acted as the decision-making body and was composed of representatives of Government, and Intergovernmental and non-governmental organizations of 54 States. The Bureau consisted of representatives of member Governments with a number of non-governmental organizations as observers.
7. The fourth Ministerial Conference under the Environment for Europe process held in Aarhus, Denmark 1998 reaffirmed the importance of PEBLDS and acknowledged the progress made in its implementation.⁷ In 2000, the first of a series of Pan-European intergovernmental conferences under the title "Biodiversity in Europe" was held in Riga, Latvia⁸. Although this conference was arranged by UNEP alone and not under the auspices of PEBLDS, one of its objectives was "to improve and enhance regional cooperation for the implementation of the CBD in Europe, through existing international frameworks and instruments, namely the PEBLDS, the EC Biodiversity strategy and other relevant biodiversity related strategies." The other objective was to facilitate a European preparation of the

⁷ <http://www.unece.org/fileadmin/DA>

⁸ http://enrin.grida.no/biodiv/biodiv/riga/rep_en.pdf

upcoming COP 5 of the CBD. The Conference discussed six issues⁹ reflecting the main agenda items of CBD COP 5.

8. The Riga Conference clearly signalled to PEBLDS to become a regional implementing arm of CBD and found that there were significant benefits in promoting a common regional understanding for the CBD COPs¹⁰. The Conference highlighted the need to raise the political profile of conservation and sustainable use of biodiversity. PEBLDS was encouraged to develop the Strategy further towards a European biodiversity agenda reflecting the priorities of the CBD process for submission to the next Environment for Europe Ministerial Conference in 2003. PEBLDS was also asked to expand partnerships of relevant Pan-European biodiversity fora under its umbrella.

1. B The project

9. In 2001 it became apparent that the financial conditions for the administration of PEBLDS had changed. The agreement to establish PEBLDS stated that UNEP and COE jointly provided and, within the limits of their respective budgets, financed the Secretariat of the Council and its Bureau. The cost of the PEBLDS meetings - one meeting of the Council and one meeting of the Bureau per year, interpretation, translation of documents and travel expenses of participants from Central and Eastern Europe - were divided between UNEP and COE.
10. The Agreement worked well the first years. At that time COE did most of the work of the Joint Secretariat. UNEP and COE shared the cost and organization of the annual meetings. COE's budget allowed it to undertake quite a number of substantive activities, and there was at that time a higher degree of willingness from donor Governments to provide ad-hoc financial contributions to PEBLDS activities than later. However, the role of the COE in the area of nature conservation was put into question by its Committee of Ministers leading to budget reductions. UNEP's human capacity to handle PEBLDS was also reduced. At the same time governments called for a shift in PEBLDS activities towards a broader CBD-related approach leading to more PEBLDS activity and increased demands on the Secretariat that COE and UNEP were not able to accommodate under the existing arrangement.
11. At the 5th meeting in 2001 the PEBLDS Council took a number of strategic important decisions. It was agreed to follow-up the "Riga approach" and to clearly align PEBLDS with the global CBD agenda. Also, it was agreed to work towards PEBLDS becoming a self-sustaining process lead by Governments rather than by the host intergovernmental organizations, COE and UNEP. A revised structure of the Joint Secretariat was adopted which included the provision by UNEP of a Coordinator of the Secretariat for the following years. The Joint Secretariat was asked to prepare a budget for 2002 covering the next Biodiversity in Europe Conference to be held in Budapest Hungary and a two-year budget for 2003-04 to be submitted for adoption at the next Council meeting. Budgets should from then on comprise of three sections covered by respectively UNEP, COE and Governments. Contributions by Governments should be shared in accordance with an agreed contribution scale to be developed.

⁹ Agrobiodiversity, Sustainable use, including tourism, Identification, monitoring and assessment and indicators, Scientific and technical co-operation and the Clearing-House Mechanism, Financial resources and mechanisms and Regional implementation.

¹⁰ PEBLDS followed this message and organised the following 3 Biodiversity in Europe conferences as regional preparatory meetings for CBD COPs.

12. It was finally decided at the 5th Council meeting that the Joint Secretariat should prepare a project concerning the Budapest Conference including its funding. The project titled “Supporting the Implementation of the Pan-European Biological and Landscape Diversity Strategy, including the Organization of the Budapest “Biodiversity in Europe” Conference” with its revisions is the subject of this evaluation. The project had duration of 18 months and a cost of 342.380 US\$ covered by voluntary contributions by COE, the European Commission and 10 Governments¹¹. Since the PEBLDS Council was meant to consider adopting a budget and a system for stable and predictable funding from the year 2003 and beyond, it was described as a “transitional financial arrangement” for 2001-2002.
13. The overall objective of the project was “to support, facilitate and enhance the implementation of PEBLDS and thereby the CBD and other biodiversity related instruments in Europe”. This objective was to be accomplished by (i) organising the Budapest Conference “Biodiversity in Europe”, including the sixth meeting of the PEBLDS Council; (ii) strengthening and supporting the Joint Secretariat and its work and (iii) facilitating the preparation of the biodiversity agenda for the Kyiv Ministerial Conference “Environment for Europe” and implementation of the Rolling Work program for PEBLDS”.
14. The project document outlined the following “results” of the project:
 - a) Broadened and improved regional cooperation in the implementation of the CBD;
 - b) Strengthened Pan-European Biological and Landscape Diversity Strategy and its Secretariat;
 - c) Coordinated Pan-European input in negotiations and taking decisions at the CBD/COP-6, as far as possible and appropriate;
 - d) Better integration of global and European biodiversity policies and processes;
 - e) Enhanced exchange of information between European countries on the implementation of the CBD at national level;
 - f) Improved coordination of on-going and planned activities for the conservation and sustainable use of biological diversity in the Pan-European region;
 - g) Greater visibility of biodiversity issues on the agenda of the Kyiv Conference.
15. Project outputs were discussion papers, documentation for and reports of the PEBLDS meetings and the activities leading to these were the basic secretariat functions of preparing documents and organising meetings. Assumptions to achieve results were willingness and commitment from all PEBLDS participants to cooperate on CBD implementation and the provision of adequate and timely financial resources.
16. The Budapest Conference was held in 2002 prior to the CBD COP 6 in The Hague, Netherlands. The Conference focused on 6 themes relevant for COP 6¹² on which decisions for Pan-European follow-up was taken and a message to COP 6 was agreed. It was also agreed to harmonize the PEBLDS work program with the CBD. In the following years biodiversity rose on the international environmental agenda. The CBD COP 6 adopted a Strategic Plan with its target to achieve, by 2010, a significant reduction of the current rate of biodiversity loss which was endorsed by the 2002 Johannesburg World Summit on Sustainable Development (WSSD). The European Union agreed to a commitment to halt the

¹¹ Finland, Germany, the Netherlands, Switzerland, UK, Denmark, France, Norway, Belgium, Austria.

¹² Forest Biodiversity, Invasive Alien Species, Resourcing, Indicators, Plant Conservation

loss of biodiversity by 2010. This was followed up by Pan-European targets at the Fifth Ministerial Conference in the Environment for Europe Process held in Kyiv, Ukraine in 2003 with the overall goal to halt the loss of biodiversity in the pan European region by 2010.

17. In spite of this increased regional attention to biodiversity and PEBLDS, the envisaged long-term system for stable and predictable funding for the PEBLDS Joint Secretariat, based on a contribution scale for voluntary contributions from Governments, was never established. Instead, the UNEP project was revised and extended 13 times; the last revision covering up to the 6th Biodiversity in Europe Conference in April 2013. The numerous consecutive project revisions based on consecutive funding pledges from donors amended the outputs and the activities and expanded the project duration to allow the Joint Secretariat to continue its function to prepare and organize new meetings. The revisions did not change the overall objective and the outcomes. However, following a Council decision, after 2009 the Secretariat was provided by UNEP/ROE alone.
18. In 2011, a new strategy was endorsed as the successor of PEBLDS, the Pan-European 2020 Strategy for Biodiversity. The 2020 Strategy is in-line with the Strategic Plan for Biodiversity 2011-2020 and its 20 global Aichi Biodiversity Targets, which were adopted at CBD COP10 in 2010. The Strategy attempts to refocus the efforts to prevent further loss of biodiversity in the Pan-European region. Also, the PEBLDS Council and Bureau ceased to exist and a project Steering Committee was founded in replacement. The 6th Biodiversity in Europe Conference held in April 2013 in Batumi, Georgia reaffirmed the new arrangement, identified areas on which the new Platform should focus its work and initiated a process for the development of a work plan to follow up the Pan-European 2020 Strategy.

1. C Evaluation, objectives, scope and methodology

19. The evaluation of the project has two main purposes: i) to provide evidence of results to meet accountability requirements, and ii) to promote learning, feedback, and knowledge sharing through results and lessons learned. The evaluation focuses on but does not limit itself to the following sets of key questions, based on the project's intended outcomes:
 1. To what extent did the project strengthen the implementation of the Pan-European Biological and Landscape Diversity Strategy?
 - i. Did the project succeed in building countries' capacity to reduce threats to Europe's biological and landscape diversity?
 - ii. Did the project succeed in building countries' capacity to increase the resilience of Europe's biological and landscape diversity?
 - iii. Did the project succeed in strengthening the ecological coherence of Europe?
 - iv. Did the project succeed in increasing public involvement in conservation of biological and landscape diversity?
 2. To what extent has the project enhanced the implementation of the Convention on Biological Diversity and other biodiversity related instruments in the pan-European region?
20. The evaluation is conducted with respect to four main categories of evaluation criteria identified by the UNEP Evaluation Office:

- Attainment of objectives and planned results;
- Sustainability and catalytic role;
- Processes affecting attainment of project results;
- Complementarity with the UNEP strategies and programmes.

21. The evaluation is followed by recommendations for the future pan-European biodiversity cooperation. The findings of the evaluation are based on:

- a) a desk review of project documents, PEBLDS documents and other relevant documentation for the PEBLDS process;
- b) Interviews with key individuals involved in the process either on site or through skype or telephone. The interviewees are listed in Annex II;
- c) Participation in the 6th Biodiversity in Europe Conference held in Batumi 15 – 18 April 2013.

22. The subject of the evaluation is the UNEP project “Supporting the Implementation of PEBLDS” and not PEBLDS as a whole. However, since this project’s overall objective was to enhance implementation of PEBLDS and the CBD, and it served to maintain basic functions of PEBLDS, the broader PEBLDS process and what affected this process will inevitably also be addressed. In the following, chapter 2 will primarily focus on the project as such assessing attainment of project objectives and planned results while chapter 3, 4 and 5 will address the project in its broader context of the whole PEBLDS process.

2. Project Performance and Impact

2. A. Attainment of Objectives and Planned Results

Relevance

Relevance of the Project

23. For many reasons discussed further below, PEBLDS was a very relevant initiative. Therefore, a project to support implementation by providing secretariat services of PEBLDS, which this project was basically about, was also relevant. This applies as well to the 13 project revisions which had no other purpose than to extend these secretariat services.

24. The project was a stop-gap at a time when financial resources for running the Joint Secretariat had become unstable and unpredictable. It responded to the absence of a self-sustaining, efficient financing system of the Joint Secretariat, a system that was envisaged but never came into effect mainly due to declining political and financial support to PEBLDS from donor Governments and lack of resource allocation from UNEP. Without the continued raising of ad-hoc funds by UNEP ROE from individual Governments on which this project and its extensions built, PEBLDS would not have been able to continue its functions.

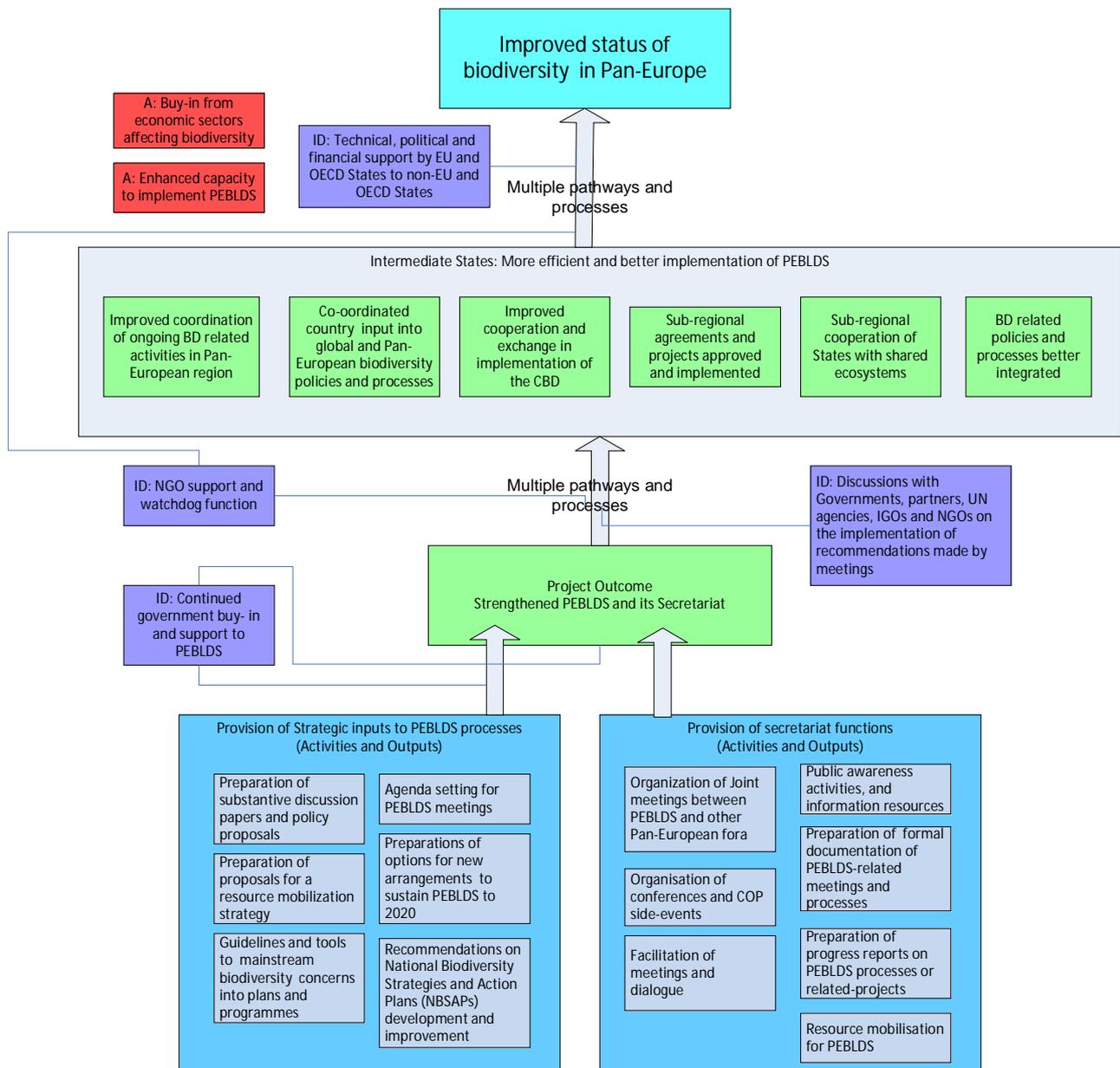
25. As discussed under Chapter 5, the project complemented UNEP strategies and programs well.

Relevance of PEBLDS as such

26. PEBLDS was created in 1995 on the wave of the most dramatic geo-political changes in Europe since World War II. The Berlin Wall fell, the Cold War ended and the collapse of the Soviet Union led to a number of new independent States in Central and Eastern Europe and Central Asia. A new sense of coherence and joint responsibility for the region emerged. Western Europe sensed loyalty towards countries in the East being in a weaker situation in many areas including economy, democracy and ecology and was keen to offer them assistance in their development in these areas. In the field of environment, the Environment for Europe process (EfE) under the auspices of the UN Economic Commission for Europe (UNECE) was a timely response to the new sense of coherence with its first Ministerial Conference taking place already in 1991. PEBLDS was created under the broad auspices of EfE.
27. This unification of Europe happened in parallel with new global political impetus to environment protection and sustainable development through the UN Conference on Environment and Development (UNCED) held in Rio de Janeiro in 1992 and attended by an unprecedented number of Heads of States. Among other important global decisions, UNCED led to the Convention on Biological Diversity (CBD).
28. For Eastern Europe, Caucasus and Central Asia countries (EECCA), with very scarce resources in the field of biodiversity, PEBLDS was a very welcome opportunity for capacity building in relation to both development of national biodiversity policies and performance in international biodiversity fora. Also for the two host intergovernmental organisations UNEP and COE, PEBLDS was a relevant and timely initiative. Besides being the UN body for global environment with regional offices throughout the world, UNEP was and still is the organizational host of CBD and a number of other global biodiversity related MEAs. For COE, nature and landscape conservation in the Pan-European region was an important area of its activity as host of the Bern Convention on the Conservation of European Wildlife and later the European Landscape Convention. In light of the above, PEBLDS had political momentum from the start and there were high expectations from stakeholders of what could be achieved.
29. Although PEBLDS was introduced as a European response to support implementation of the CBD, it never became a full regional reflection of the CBD and its agenda implying that in some areas PEBLDS did not make any contribution to CBD implementation. Most notably this applies to the third of the three objectives of the CBD “the fair and equitable sharing of the benefits arising out of the utilization of genetic resources”. Under this objective, CBD includes provisions on access to genetic resources and benefit sharing from the use these resources (ABS). This issue has always been very high on the CBD agenda culminating with the adoption of the Nagoya Protocol on Access to Genetic Resources and the Fair and Equitable Sharing of Benefits Arising from their Utilization at COP 10 in 2010. The reason why this issue was not addressed in the PEBLDS context was, probably, that a number of countries in West Europe were quite sceptical of the ABS issue, especially in the first years of the CBD, and that the countries to the East did not see any immediate benefit in pursuing the issue. On the thematic areas of the CBD agenda, marine biodiversity has been addressed only to a very limited extent by PEBLDS.

Effectiveness and Theory of Change Analysis

Figure 1. The project ToC diagram



30. As mentioned above, the overall objective of the original project was to support, facilitate and enhance the implementation of PEBLDS and thereby improving the state of biodiversity in Pan-Europe (Figure 1.). In the original project this was to be accomplished by organising the upcoming Budapest Conference/Sixth Meeting of the PEBLDS Council, strengthening and supporting the Joint Secretariat and its work, facilitating the preparation of the biodiversity agenda for the Kyiv Conference and implementation of the Rolling Work Programme of the PEBLDS. Outputs and activities in the

consecutive project extensions were of similar nature. Also outlined in the project document were a number of more general outcomes (“results” in the project document) related to broadened and improved regional cooperation, exchange of information on implementation, coordinated regional input in global negotiations and greater visibility of biodiversity in the Kyiv Conference.

31. The project seemed to operate on two different and quite distant levels: A higher level being the ambitious overall objective to support, facilitate and enhance the implementation of PEBLDS and a lower practical one reflecting what the project was actually able to achieve with the resources available: facilitate enhanced regional cooperation, information exchange and visibility of biodiversity through secretariat functions of the Joint Secretariat to prepare for and follow-up meetings of the PEBLDS bodies.
32. The project was successful in achieving its implicit lower level objective to facilitate regional cooperation and provide for basic secretariat functions of meeting preparation. The activities were carried out and the outputs were reached in the form of timely finalised documents and meetings held. Clearly, these results were also relevant for the higher objective: Enhanced regional cooperation through bringing governments and other stakeholders together to exchange views and best practices on implementation, and prepare countries in the region for global biodiversity negotiations, are indispensable steps on the road to implementation of international commitments. However, such steps are initial, and alone they are quite far from constituting a causal pathway to achieve the overall objective to support, facilitate and enhance the implementation of PEBLDS and CBD.
33. Impact on biodiversity (positive or negative) is affected mainly by actions conducted at local, national and sub-regional levels. PEBLDS is an ambitious strategy for implementation of the CBD in a large region consisting of both geographical Europe and big parts of Asia and with countries representing very different levels of economic development. In order for the project to move further towards its intended impact, it should have included a qualitative dimension that would have allowed it to move from mainly process-oriented outputs to qualitative policy change. This would have required a different type of project enabling UNEP/the Joint Secretariat to become a robust mechanism for coordinated implementation through outputs more directly targeted to support countries in their implementation. It would also have required stable and predictable funding over a longer time and in a very different order of magnitude than the 2.2 million US\$ provided for the project over its 12 years duration – a microscopic amount in the overall context of halting biodiversity loss in pan-Europe.
34. It should be noted that the activities outlined in the project were not the only activities carried out under PEBLDS. Both before and during the project period initiatives were taken targeted more directly to implementation on the ground with separate funding including development of the Pan-European Ecological Network (PEEN) the service for implementation of national biodiversity strategy and action plans, the development of Pan-European biodiversity indicators (further described in chapter 3.D) and identification of high nature value farmland. In the last years of the existence of PEBLDS with decreased momentum and financial support, such initiatives became less frequent.
35. The critical assumption of the project - that stakeholders were committed and supportive to the process and that adequate financial resources were ensured in time, proved to be relevant since

PEBLDS in the end was dissolved in its original form mainly due to declining political and financial support from governments during the project period.

36. In summary, the project was effective at the level of facilitating process and, for all the reasons mentioned, there was little observable effect at higher levels in the pathways that lead to the very broad and ambitious objective.

Efficiency

37. As mentioned above, the project was meant to cover a temporary arrangement that turned out to become 'permanent' implying unpredictability and scarcity of resources. This impeded the efficiency of the Joint Secretariat having to use considerable resources for raising funds. Also the arrangement of the Joint Secretariat shared between COE and UNEP turned out to hamper efficiency mainly due to the geographical dislocation, disagreement between the two on general policy lines and unsettled structures for decision making within the Joint Secretariat (The UNEP –COE relations are further covered in chapter 4.b).
38. Interviewees generally believe that within its limited resources and difficult working conditions UNEP ROE has undertaken its secretariat functions quite efficiently. Meetings were believed to be well prepared and documents were timely and of good quality. UNEP ROE was also, according to most interviewees, active and generally successful in reaching out to the different PEBLDS stakeholders and encouraged outsourcing of assignments on specific topics to lead governments and organisations. This kind of shared responsibility for carrying out PEBLDS activities was always an important part of PEBLDS operation, but became imperative as the political and financial support declined. Some interviewees believe that UNEP ROE could have done more to reach out to other biodiversity related institutions and processes in the region.
39. Many stress that during the last 4 – 5 years when Governments' commitments to the process seriously dropped and the very survival of pan-European biodiversity cooperation was at stake, UNEP ROE together with the PEBLDS Chair acted especially efficiently. Through a very dedicated and outreaching effort, they managed to keep the remaining pieces of the pan-European biodiversity process together to build the foundation for the future cooperation replacing PEBLDS.
40. In 2009, the PEBLDS Council decided that the Secretariat should be managed by UNEP ROE only, but according to interviewees COE had already for some years before 2009 downgraded its contribution to the Joint Secretariat leaving UNEP ROE to *de facto* run the Secretariat. Through most of the project duration, PEBLDS tasks were handled by one single UNEP ROE official sharing PEBLDS with other tasks for UNEP ROE. During the project duration the voluntary *ad hoc* contributions fluctuated considerably implying that UNEP ROE staff in some periods undertook PEBLDS secretariat functions without full corresponding funding.

2. B. Sustainability and catalytic role

Socio-political

41. Factors that affect sustainability of the project (i.e. provision of secretariat support services) were broadly beyond the control of the project. The sustainability of the project was tied to the level of political commitment afforded to the institutional structures it embodied. As discussed below, this has varied through the life of the project.
42. As discussed above, PEBLDS was a very relevant initiative with momentum and broad political support in its first years. In the end of the 90s disagreement arose in the PEBLDS community about the overall strategic direction of PEBLDS reflecting also different perceptions between UNEP and COE on which way to go. Some stakeholders believed that PEBLDS and its first action plan represented a traditional nature conservation approach in line with the Bern Convention with focus on threatened habitats and species rather than on biodiversity as a provider of basic needs for humans and thereby an important component of sustainable development which is very much the CBD approach. Besides, in its first years of existence, PEBLDS did not directly respond or contribute to activities of the CBD including COP 3 and 4 held in 1996 and 1998. This led to a political demand by a number of governments and NGO representatives to align PEBLDS more with CBD.
43. A Pan-European Biodiversity in Europe Conference was organised by UNEP ROE in 2000 responding to a wish from both UNEP and countries in the region to have a regional preparatory meeting for the upcoming CBD COP 5. According to interviewees COE did not agree on the need for this conference and opposed that it was held under the PEBLDS auspices.
44. Although being outside the PEBLDS framework, the Riga Conference was very important for the political orientation of PEBLDS. It delivered a clear message that PEBLDS should align its work fully with CBD and become a regional implementing arm. PEBLDS followed the message and under its auspices Biodiversity in Europe Conferences were held prior to the CBD COPs in 2002, 2004 and 2006.
45. The PEBLDS alignment with the global biodiversity agenda led to renewed political impetus for PEBLDS, and its political profile and support was at its highest around 2003. The EU Heads of State at the EU Summit in Gothenburg, Sweden, in June 2001 agreed to halt the loss of biodiversity in 2010. In 2002, CBD COP 6 was a milestone in global biodiversity cooperation mainly because of the adoption of a Strategic Plan with its target to achieve by 2010 a significant reduction of the current rate of biodiversity loss endorsed by the 2002 Johannesburg World Summit on Sustainable Development. In the pan-European context, the newfound attention to biodiversity issues implied prominent reflection of biodiversity at the Fifth Environment for Europe Ministerial Conference held in Kyiv, Ukraine in 2003. A Kyiv Declaration on Biodiversity was adopted with a regional target stronger than the global namely to halt biodiversity loss by 2010 and 9 time bound sub targets on various themes. This was followed up by a Pan-European 2010 Biodiversity Implementation Plan adopted by the PEBLDS Council in 2005 and which – although not explicitly stated – could be considered a substitute for PEBLDS.
46. This time was also a turning point starting a political downward trend for PEBLDS among other things symbolised by the interim UNEP project to support PEBLDS implementation and the permanent self-

sustaining arrangement for PEBLDS that never became a reality. The higher political profile and the ambitious political commitments made by pan-European Governments in Kyiv did not lead to corresponding means of implementation. A similar decrease of momentum and lack of means for implementation also happened in other parts of the world leading to the conclusion in 2010 by CBD COP 10 that the global 2010 target for biodiversity had not been met.

47. There were a number of interrelated reasons for the downward trend for PEBLDS:

- The “Kyiv-Targets” and the accompanying Action Plan were overly ambitious without sufficient political support beyond environment ministries and without indications on where the funding should come from;
- The political enthusiasm prevailing in Western Europe when the Berlin Wall went down, generally cooled and thereby the earlier willingness to support development in the EECCA countries;
- In 2004, 10 countries, Czech Republic, Estonia, Latvia, Lithuania, Hungary, Poland, Slovenia, Slovakia, Cyprus and Malta joined the European Union. Romania and Bulgaria followed in 2007 and Croatia in 2013. EU membership implied a serious redirection of these countries’ attention from a Pan-European focus to EU and implementation of its legislation in the field of nature conservation and biodiversity. These countries had been quite active in PEBLDS, and it is a general opinion among PEBLDS stakeholders that this shift of their focus significantly changed the dynamics of PEBLDS;
- Within EU, coordination on international biodiversity related matters as well development of internal EU policies and legislation gradually increased implying that biodiversity officials from EU Member States and the European Commission would give higher priority and use more time and resources on internal EU than Pan-European preparations;
- The proliferation of international biodiversity fora and meetings led to a general degree of meeting fatigue and thereby lower motivation of participants. Many countries also experienced cuts in travel budgets leading to strict prioritization of which fora to attend. Especially in a number of EU Member States, PEBLDS being a non-binding agreement, lost in this competition on which fora to give priority;
- In spite of the ambitious targets and actions adopted in Kyiv and its follow-up, financial resources for PEBLDS did not increase. Contributions from COE to the Joint Secretariat were reduced and UNEP through the Environment Fund never contributed. At the same time, the number of countries willing to provide voluntary ad-hoc contributions to the Secretariat dropped leaving it to very few donor countries (primarily Switzerland and Norway) to fill the financial gap. (Further discussed in chapter 3.B);
- As discussed in chapter 4.B, the arrangement of the Secretariat jointly hosted by two intergovernmental organisations was not particularly successful.

48. In 2005 it became apparent that there was a mismatch between the ambition of the Kyiv Declaration and its Implementation Plan and the actual political will and financial support for its implementation. At first discussion started on the relevance, role and structure of PEBLDS in a Europe with now 25 States as members of the European Union. The process was taken up and formalized in PEBLDS institutions

and continued up to 2011 when it was decided to dissolve PEBLDS and begin a new type of Pan European cooperation.

49. The process revealed that the region was divided in terms of political prioritization of PEBLDS. For EECCA countries PEBLDS was seen as generating important capacity building through its alignment with the CBD agenda and the joint preparation of CBD meetings. On the other side, EU and its Member States had gradually lost political interest in PEBLDS and even raised procedural discussions on the extent to which PEBLDS could present joint statements at CBD COPs. It was decided to hold the 5th Biodiversity in Europe Conference after instead of before CBD COP 9 in 2009 to shift the focus from COP preparation to implementation. However, this did not lead to renewed political momentum.
50. The last PEBLDS Council meeting under its original form took place in 2011. In the meantime another important milestone had been achieved in international biodiversity cooperation: CBD COP 10 had adopted a new Strategic Plan for Biodiversity 2011 – 2020 including 20 global time-bound targets (Aichi Targets)¹³. Although only 16 countries (and only 3 from the EU besides the European Commission) participated, this last PEBLDS Council meeting, more than previous meetings articulated views and interests of different groups of countries within PEBLDS. Views differed on the continuation of PEBLDS, but everyone seemed to agree on the need for some kind of a Pan-European platform and also that a reform of PEBLDS was needed to respond to changing circumstances.
51. EECCA countries were very clear about the value they attached to PEBLDS stressing that they did not enjoy the benefits of a coordination mechanism like the EU. *A platform like the PEBLDS is easy to break, difficult to build*” as one of the EECCA countries expressed.¹⁴ Norway and Switzerland, OECD countries outside EU and main donors of PEBLDS, also expressed strong support for continued Pan-European cooperation. EU countries expressed doubt about the added value of PEBLDS, but also acknowledged the need to establish ties between EU and non-EU countries in the region. It was clearly expressed that funding for PEBLDS from their side was limited and was likely to remain so in light of the financial crisis.
52. The PEBLDS Council approved a new Pan European 2020 Strategy for Biodiversity as a substitute for PEBLDS. The Strategy puts a strong emphasis on implementation of not only the CBD and its “Aichi Targets” but of all biodiversity related Multilateral Environmental Agreements (MEAS) in a coordinated and synergistic manner¹⁵. It was further decided at the Council meeting to transform the PEBLDS Bureau into a Steering Committee aiming to create an informal and focused pan-European Biodiversity Platform.
53. The 6th intergovernmental Biodiversity in Europe Conference was held in Batumi, Georgia in April 2013. The Conference reaffirmed the value of pan-European cooperation and coordination implementing biodiversity commitments and the transformation of PEBLDS into an informal Pan-European Biodiversity Platform led by a Steering Committee to implement the Pan-European 2020 Strategy for Biodiversity. The Conference highlighted the role of the Platform as facilitator and catalyst for action especially in the following areas:

¹³ UNEP/CBD/COP/DEC/X/2

¹⁵ <http://capacity4dev.ec.europa.eu/unep/document/pan-european-2020-strategy-biodiversity>

- Revision and implementation of the National Biodiversity Strategies and Action Plans (NBSAPs);
- Ecosystem valuation on the basis of The Economics of Ecosystems and Biodiversity (TEEB) study;
- Exploitation of the potential of the Intergovernmental Science-Policy Platform on Biodiversity and Ecosystem Services (IPBES);
- Bilateral cooperation between countries in the region not least between EU and EECCA countries and through full use of existing bilateral instruments;
- Resource mobilization;
- Enhancing synergies between biodiversity related conventions;
- Mainstreaming biodiversity across sectors;
- Setting targets and indicators;
- Involvement of non-governmental actors.

54. The Batumi Conference, and the work of the last years leading up to it, marks a sizable transformation of an intergovernmental institution with a UN inspired institutional structure into a rather loose and informal platform aimed to serve mainly as a clearing-house for concrete project activities. The changes primarily express the will of EU and EU Member States whose political and financial support to PEBLDS gradually declined over the years and who persistently argued for stronger focus on implementation. As mentioned in many places in this report, non EU countries, and especially EECCA countries, saw a great value in PEBLDS providing them with an opportunity of regional cooperation and coordination of CBD meetings which the new platform will not provide. Those countries would probably have preferred a mechanism closer to the old PEBLDS. However, also among EECCA countries it is acknowledged that PEBLDS in its old form with declining political support from donor countries was no longer viable, and that the new Platform may offer new opportunities for support to implementation.

55. At the Batumi Conference there was an atmosphere of renewed political momentum and revitalization of pan-European cooperation among all participants which is promising for the development of the new Platform. However, even with this lighter and more flexible mechanism, the socio-political sustainability cannot be taken for granted. This will now depend on a number of factors including if and which countries will join the new Steering Committee and the resources – financially and in kind – they will be willing to provide. The extent to which the EU will provide political and financial support and make use of existing cooperation programs with neighbouring and other countries in the region is particularly important. On the less promising side, it should be mentioned that from the side of EU only 8 Member States (including the new Member State Croatia) and the European Commission were present in Batumi, and that none of them arrived with clear commitments to join the Steering Committee and provide financial contribution to the Platform.

56. An important factor will also be the work program that the Steering Committee is assigned to develop and the extent to which it will be focused and prioritized. The basis for this work will be the Pan-European 2020 Strategy for Biodiversity, and with its 5 objectives, 7 actions and 10 “thematic actions” thereunder covering a very broad range of topics, it can be argued that the Strategy suffer from the same weakness as older PEBLDS strategic documents covering too many topics with too little focus.

Financial resources and management

57. Provision of adequate financial resources to run PEBLDS was a constant struggle throughout PEBLDS's history. Lack of resources was both cause and effect of PEBLDS gradual loss of government support and eventual dissolution. Funding of the Secretariat and concrete PEBLDS activities was less of a problem in the first years than it later became. The fact that the PEBLDS Council and Bureau was formally set up as committees under the Statute of the Council of Europe allowed COE to provide funds for the Secretariat and for concrete activities. At the same time Governments were open to provide funding on an *ad-hoc* basis, and there was a willingness from both Governments and NGOs to act as lead on the different topics. This being said, also in the first years of PEBLDS there appeared to have been a certain gap between what was aimed and what was achievable in terms of resources. A Strategy Trust Fund was envisaged to finance participation of EECCA countries in meetings under the PEBLDS umbrella, but the Fund was never established.
58. As mentioned above, the UNEP project "Supporting the Implementation of the Pan-European Biological Diversity Strategy including the organization of the Budapest "Biodiversity in Europe Conference" was partly the result of a tightened economic situation for PEBLDS. Both COE and UNEP were restricted in their provision of resources for the Joint Secretariat at a time when the political attention to biodiversity increased and governments in the region demanded PEBLDS to be more aligned with the CBD. The project with its voluntary contributions, although limited, enabled the basic functions of PEBLDS in the project duration in the form of secretariat functions, arranging meetings, translation and financing participation from countries eligible for travel financing.
59. As also discussed above, it would have been clearly preferable for the functioning of PEBLDS if there had been political will among donor countries for a system of stable and predictable funding and thereby releasing UNEP ROE from an on-going fundraising exercise over 12 years. Both the Joint Secretariat and UNEP ROE as such expressed a clear wish to PEBLDS States of such a system. For the original UNEP support project, 10 PEBLDS countries and the European Commission provided voluntary funds. For the subsequent 13 project revisions between 1-5 countries contributed for each revision, Norway and Switzerland being by far the largest contributors with minor contributions provided by the private sector.
60. UNEP itself did not allocate direct funds for the project, and there is a general expression of dissatisfaction and lack of understanding by PEBLDS stakeholders on this fact - not least by the major PEBLDS donor countries happening to be also major contributors to the UNEP Environment Fund. As reflected in Chapter 5, PEBLDS was very much in line with UNEP strategies and programmes. A number of interviewees believe that the reason for the limited of UNEP support could be that UNEP generally gives less priority to the Pan-European than other UN regions, and ponder that the reason for this again may be that Pan-Europe by UNEP is considered as geographical and "rich" Europe rather than the vast and in terms of economic development extremely diverse region including the whole of Russia, Central Asia and a number of developing countries.
61. However, it should be noted that UNEP provided human resources from 2004 to 2009 in the form of a staff member's post to carry out the functions of coordinator of PEBLDS using the UN regular budget funds available in the Regional Office for Europe for providing assistance to Eastern European

countries. This in-kind contribution is estimated to be of approximately 700,000USD. Additionally, until the present time, UNEP has contributed by providing some of the staff time of the UNEP ROE director, other UNEP ROE programme officers, administrative support, office space and supplies at no cost to PEBLDS. As mentioned above, the UNEP implementation support project did not include concrete projects and activities for PEBLDS implementation but, as also referred to in other places of the report, a number of concrete activities were financed and carried out outside the scope of the project. However, for a large number of activities initiated by PEBLDS it is obvious that there were insufficient financial support provided, and that this seriously impeded implementation. This was particularly evident in relation to the PEBLDS “flagship” the Pan European 2010 Biodiversity Implementation Plan following up the Kyiv Declaration with its 9 biodiversity targets and with a budget of \$ US 7 million but with no funding secured in advance. An overall process to monitor progress in the Implementation Plan was never carried out, but it appears that only very little voluntary support was provided both in financial terms and in terms of offering lead country responsibility for the Implementation Plan.

62. To a large extent, it was the gap between this ambitious Implementation Plan and the lack of means to implement it that triggered the discussion on the relevance and need to transform PEBLDS. When this discussion really gained momentum in 2006 - 2007, the Kyiv Targets and the 2010 Implementation Plan seemed to lose interest and were left behind.
63. Sustainability of the new Pan-European Platform will require a higher degree of financial stability and predictability than was the case under PEBLDS. This applies both for funds to running an effective and efficient secretariat and to supporting the concrete projects that will become the essence of the Platform. There are rightly high expectations to the EU in this respect having support mechanisms in place such as the EU Neighbouring Policy applicable to a number of non EU PEBLDS countries. However, a number of EECCA countries further to the east are not part of the development programs of either EU or many of its Member States. The will that was present among donor countries in the years after the fall of Berlin Wall to support the newly independent countries gradually dropped, and aid programs are generally directed more to other regions of the world than to the pan-European region. The viability of the Platform will require that donor countries again consider the region as highly diverse in terms of economic development and shows renewed political will for solidarity and burden sharing across the region. This applies in particular to EU and its Member States countries mindful that the non EU donor countries Switzerland and Norway have lifted a disproportionate financial burden of the PEBLDS operation and that Norway as the first post PEBLDS donor already has provided funds for a capacity building project in EECCA countries.
64. There may also be a need to rethink the donor/recipient country relationship in the region. A number of interviewees are of the view that Russia should now be in a position to no longer be a recipient country and even be able to provide support for less developed countries in its vicinity. It is also noted that some EECCA countries like Azerbaijan and Kazakhstan are currently undergoing rapid economic development through exploitation of oil and gas. Thus, for those countries considerations for biodiversity in national policies may more be a question of internal prioritization than of amount of resources.

65. EECCA countries are eligible to funding by the Global Environmental Facility (GEF) for biodiversity projects, and close correlation between the work of the Platform and GEF is also an important element of sustainable financing.
66. At the Biodiversity in Europe Conference in Batumi the provision of UNEP support for the platform was an important issue. As part of the outcome of the conference, UNEP was encouraged to provide the secretariat services for the Platform. The Steering Committee was requested to decide on the desired way to encourage formalized support for the Secretariat. This could be through a submission to the next United Nations Environment Assembly (UNEA) of UNEP in 2014, direct request to UNEP, or through other means. Financial support from UNEP would not only be relevant because the Platform fits well with UNEP policies and programs, but also because it is likely to positively influence decisions of potential donor countries on whether to provide financial support for the Platform.
67. Lastly, it should be noted that lack of financial and other resources for conservation and sustainable use of biodiversity is not only a problem for this region but a global problem. In fact, it has been identified as the biggest obstacle for CBD implementation and the reason why this issue was on top of the CBD COP 11 agenda in Hyderabad, India in 2012. There, it was clearly recognized that resources must come from all sources and that development aid for biodiversity – even if it was substantially increased – would be far from able to fill the resource gap. It will be necessary to identify a very wide range of mechanisms including through mainstreaming of biodiversity considerations across sectors, creation of economic incentives and removal of perverse incentives, fiscal instruments, payment for ecosystem services, creation of markets for biodiversity related products and, cutting across all these topics, closer involvement of the private sector.
68. Although PEBLDS might not have been able to mobilize a large amount of resources for biodiversity, PEBLDS was a front runner in terms of conceptualizing and making mobilization of resources for biodiversity an issue including through identification of “innovative” financial mechanisms and involvement of the private sector. Thereby PEBLDS served as a catalyst for the work on resource mobilization at global level. It is clearly relevant for the new Platform to continue this work as envisaged to develop a regional resource mobilization strategy.

Institutional framework

69. PEBLDS was endorsed by the 3rd Environment for Europe Ministerial Conference in 1995 and was thereby considered institutionally to be under the broad auspices of the EfE-process. The Council, which was scheduled to meet annually, was the decision making body of PEBLDS and was served by a Bureau meeting twice a year and by the Joint Secretariat.
70. The Biodiversity in Europe Conferences which were held biannually during most of PEBLDS’ lifetime were not institutionalised. Nonetheless, they were an invaluable mechanism for PEBLDS visibility and were able to attract a very wide range of stakeholders. As discussed above, the concept of the Biodiversity in Europe conferences was established to create closer links and align PEBLDS work with CBD, and the conferences were also important for the CBD as an example of regional cooperation to showcase for the rest of the world.

71. The PEBLDS institutional structure may seem heavy today, but it seemed pertinent at the time PEBLDS was established with very high expectations and high commitment to Pan-European collaboration on biodiversity and other issues. When the PEBLDS momentum seriously faded and a large number of countries withdrew both financial support and participation from PEBLDS, the institutional structure was *de facto* suspended and the primary discussion took place in informal settings.
72. The relationship between the overlying political structure, the EfE process and PEBLDS was very cooperative in the initial years. The UN Economic Commission for Europe (UNECE) Secretariat which has an environmental portfolio¹⁶ provides the secretariat for the EfE process. It had been agreed by the Environment Ministers that the PEBLDS would provide the coverage on biodiversity issues for the EfE but UNECE covers not only Pan-Europe but also North America including USA being one of three countries in the world that is not a party to the CBD. Since 2006, during the preparations for the 6th EfE Conference, mainly because of resistance from USA as a member of the Committee on Environmental Policy, it became more difficult for PEBLDS and biodiversity to have a place on the agenda of the EfE Ministerial Conferences. In Belgrade in 2007, biodiversity ended up having a rather marginal placing, and at the latest 7th EfE Ministerial Conference in 2011 in Astana, Kazakhstan, biodiversity was totally absent from the agenda.
73. The exception from this pattern was the 5th Ministerial conference in Kyiv in 2003 described above which coincided with a period of high political attention to biodiversity on the wave of the 2010 biodiversity target adopted at CBD COP 6 in 2002 and endorsed by Heads of State at the Johannesburg World Summit for Sustainable Development same year. The prominent placing of PEBLDS in Kyiv was not welcomed by USA and some interviewees believe that it lashed back and was one of the reasons why PEBLDS was first marginalized and then completely ignored in the two subsequent Environment for Europe Ministerial Conferences. The fact, that the overall political structure of PEBLDS itself did not give priority to biodiversity issues was clearly not helpful in obtaining the much needed political support for implementing the extensive and ambitious PEBLDS commitments.
74. While the PEBLDS institutional structure was heavy, the institutional structure of the new Platform is ultra-light, and the crucial question is whether it is too light to carry the burden of the renewed Pan-European cooperation which it has been agreed to establish. The governing body of the Platform is a Steering Committee which has not been constituted and to which governments and other stakeholders are now free to sign up. As discussed above, the Platform stands and falls with governments' willingness to join this Steering Committee and support the Platform and its activities also with financial resources. What speaks in favour of government support for the Steering Committee is the supportive and pioneering spirit that prevailed at the 6th Biodiversity in Europe Conference in Batumi Georgia in

¹⁶ UNECE services the following regional conventions:

- Convention on Long-range Transboundary Air Pollution
- Convention on Environmental Impact Assessment in a Transboundary Context
- Convention on the Protection and Use of Transboundary Watercourses and International Lakes
- Convention on the Transboundary Effects of Industrial Accidents
- Convention on Access to Information, Public Participation in Decision-making and Access to Justice in Environmental Matters

April 2013. What speaks against is the relatively low number of donor countries present in Batumi, the relatively low rank of their representatives with probably limited charge over financial resources in combination with the on-going financial crisis and comprehensive austerity measures introduced in a number of the potential donor countries.

Catalytic role and replication

75. Reaching out and involving the broad range of economic sectors, industry, NGO's sub-national authorities etc. whose activities affect biodiversity lies in the heart of the Convention of Biological Diversity, and the role as a catalyst was essential also for PEBLDS. At the global level it is generally acknowledged that cross-sectoral mainstreaming of biodiversity has so far been limited, and that this is one of the main reasons why biodiversity continues to decline. Pan-Europe is no different in this regard and on that basis it could be argued that PEBLDS has not been a success as a catalyst. However, in spite of limited and gradually declining resources, PEBLDS has managed to generate catalytic action on a number of issues directly or indirectly. The Joint Secretariat played a central role in these initiatives with either COE or UNEP in the lead. Below are examples of a number of activities initiated by PEBLDS itself or in association with PEBLDS reflected in action plans to implement the Kyiv Implementation Plan and typically financed through voluntary contributions:
76. a) The Pan-European Ecological Network (PEEN) was introduced as the operational framework within which many of the strategic and priority actions would be taken and steps were taken towards its realisation. It was envisaged as both a physical network through which ecosystems, habitats, species, landscapes and other natural features of European importance are conserved, and a coordinating mechanism through which the partners in the Strategy can develop and implement cooperative actions. It was supposed to build on a variety of existing initiatives, including EU's Natura 2000 network¹⁷, the European network of Biogenetic Reserves¹⁸, the EECONET concept¹⁹, the Bern Convention, the Convention on Migratory Species²⁰, and the many national and regional ecological networks already under development. The initiative was led by the COE in collaboration with the European Center for Nature Conservation (ECNC) and has stimulated actions in a number of Pan-European countries and thereby contributed to the ecological coherence of pan-Europe. PEEN has catalysed projects up until today, but in recent years actions in this field have been increasingly labelled under the term "green infrastructure". Like the ecological network approach, green infrastructure is based on the idea of core areas, ecological corridors, buffer zones and restoration areas, but it extends to include socio-economic aspects and ecosystem services.
77. b) The Biodiversity Service was a project established directly targeted to facilitate countries implementation and with UNEP in the lead. A consortium of four organisations, UNEP, IUCN, ECNC and the Regional Environmental Center for Central and Eastern Europe (REC) established a service for implementation of national biodiversity strategies and action plans in the countries of Central and Eastern Europe, the Caucasus and Central Asia. The project ran from 2000 to 2003 and was very

¹⁷ <http://ec.europa.eu/environment/nature/natura2000/>

¹⁸ <https://wcd.coe.int/com.instranet.InstraServlet?command=com.instranet.CmdBlobGet&InstranetImage=592183&SecMode=1&Doid=653614&Usage=2>

¹⁹ <http://www.eeconet.org/eeconet/>

²⁰ <http://www.cms.int/>

positively evaluated in 2003²¹. It was meant to be continued, but lack of resources prevented it. A follow-up to this project in terms of updating and revisions of NBSAPs which was called for by Aichi Target 17 is included in the Pan-European 2020 Strategy for Biodiversity.

78. c) The Streamlining European 2010 Biodiversity Indicators Project (SEBI2010) was a coordinated programme initiated in collaboration between the European Environment Agency (EEA) under the European Commission and the PEBLDS Joint Secretariat assisted by ECNC and UNEP World Conservation Monitoring Center (WCMC). Its objective was mainly to facilitate the development of a streamlined set of indicators in the context of the Pan-European Kyiv Target for 2010, to help ensure adequate funding, to improve coordination and exchange of information and to consider the wider user of the indicators and their applicability within other relevant indicator frameworks and assessment processes. A set of 26 pan-European indicators were presented in 2007.
79. d) Identifying and Supporting High Nature Value Farmland in the region was an activity carried out in a joint effort by UNEP, the European Environment Agency and the EC Joint Research Center.
80. e) A forest and biodiversity cooperation framework with joint meetings between the high level process for pan-European forest dialogue “the Ministerial Conference on the Protection of Forests in Europe” (MCPFE) and PEBLDS was established. Issues addressed included sustainable forest management and the Ecosystem Approach, illegal logging and related trade and afforestation and reforestation guidelines.
81. f) “Countdown 2010” launched in 2004 was a communication and awareness raising instrument with a goal that all European governments at every level had taken the necessary actions to halt the loss of biodiversity by 2010. It was a strategic alliance between more than 100 national, regional and local governmental and non-governmental partners committed to specific efforts to tackle the causes of biodiversity loss. The Countdown 2010 Secretariat was hosted by the IUCN Regional Office for pan-Europe.
82. g) A strategy on Invasive Species was adopted in 2003 under the Bern Convention and was rather unusually for Bern Convention outputs taken on board by PEBLDS. COE was in the lead.
83. h) The European Biodiversity Resourcing Initiative (EBRI) was initiated in 2002 to make financial resources available for biodiversity in the region including through private sector investments. Its phase 1 established an operational framework to bring the needs for biodiversity resourcing in Europe together with the interests of the banking community and international financial institutions. Phase 2 made information expertise and project-related experience available for potential entrepreneurs in the EECCA countries. A European Task Force on Banking, Business and Biodiversity and a Biodiversity Finance Technical Facility were established. EBRI was not formally closed and evaluated, but it appears as if it has had limited tangible effects in the form of partnerships between EECCA and the private sector to support biodiversity conservation. However, EBRI to a certain extent was a forerunner for the concepts developed at global level in the CBD framework under labels as business and biodiversity and innovative financial mechanisms.

²¹ Project EB/CP/5023-00-05. Service for implementation of national biodiversity strategies and action plans (Biodiversity service) Evaluation report by Valts Vilnitis for UNEP Evaluation and Oversight Unit, 2003.

84. Follow-up of the above initiatives were important elements of the Pan-European 2010 Biodiversity Implementation Plan from 2005. They were discussed at the Biodiversity in Europe Conference in 2006 in Croatia and reflected in the EFe Ministerial Declaration from Belgrade in 2007, but after that and corresponding with the increasing PEBLDS discouragement and discussions on its restructuring, these initiatives were never evaluated by the PEBLDS Council. Although to a varying degree they had a life of their own outside PEBLDS, and some initiatives continued this was an indication that the catalytic effect they may have had did not last long. Some of the issues covered by the initiatives like support for preparing and implementing NBSAPs, indicators and resource mobilization are included as activities under the new Pan-European Biodiversity Platform.
85. Various capacity building initiatives have been taken in the PEBLDS context after the decision to restructure PEBLDS. These include: implementation of the CBD Strategic Plan 2011-2020, development of indicators, NBSAP preparation, ecosystem restoration, preservation of wetlands synergies among conventions and the ratification of the Nagoya Protocol on ABS.
86. With the exception of the collaboration with the Ministerial Conference on the Protection of Forests in Europe (MCPFE) PEBLDS has had limited success in reaching out to other biodiversity related institutions, platforms etc. and this also applies to UNEP hosted sub-regional conventions such as the Bucharest Convention on the Protection of the Black Sea Against Pollution, The Framework Convention on the Protection and Sustainable Development of the Carpathians (Carpathian Convention) and the Framework Convention for the Protection of the Marine Environment of the Caspian Sea (the Tehran Convention). On the two marine conventions this can be explained by the fact that PEBLDS rather early excluded marine biodiversity from its activities.
87. As referred to earlier, the UN Economic Commission for Europe (UNECE) has an environmental portfolio which besides hosting the Environment for Europe Process also administers a number of regional environment conventions and protocols. Ties were not created to these instruments or to the Environmental Strategy for EECCA countries adopted in 2004 also under the UNECE umbrella.
88. The Bern Convention is a legally binding Pan-European instrument in the field of nature conservation and biodiversity. Its aims are to conserve wild flora and fauna and their natural habitats and to promote European co-operation in that field with a particular importance on the need to protect endangered natural habitats and endangered vulnerable species, including migratory species. It is administered by the PEBLDS co-host, the Council of Europe and a Memorandum of Understanding has been signed between the Bern Convention and the CBD. One of the main objectives of PEBLDS was to strengthen the application of this Convention in relation to the CBD. Against this background an outsider would think that the Convention was likely to play a strong role in PEBLDS implementation, but that has not been the case. Some Bern Convention initiatives such as the Strategy on Invasive Species were taken on board by PEBLDS, but on the whole the two instruments did not have much interaction. CBD which came into force in 1993 was representing a new paradigm for nature conservation with a holistic anthropocentric perspective on nature's goods and services for human well-being and sustainable development rather than on threatened species and habitats. This shift of paradigm was considered essential to get support from developing countries to the CBD. In this respect, the Bern Convention was generally seen as belonging to the old paradigm. COE had the leading role in the first period of PEBLDS and quite soon after its establishment criticism was raised in the PEBLDS community that PEBLDS too

much took the traditional nature conservation approach of the Bern Convention, and that closer alignment with the CBD approach and agenda was needed. As described above, this became a reality for PEBLDS leading to a more limited and separate role for the Bern Convention in the PEBLDS context. While the Bern Convention may not fully reflect the objectives and scope of the CBD, it is an important instrument for biodiversity in pan-Europe that has achieved tangible results. Thus, it could have an important role to play in the future pan-European Platform.

89. Coherent implementation and strengthening the synergies amongst the 6 global biodiversity related conventions²² is a fundamental starting point of the 2020 Pan-European Biodiversity Platform thereby reflecting that the Strategic Plan for Biodiversity 2011 – 2020 and its 20 Aichi Targets apply to all 6 conventions and not just the CBD. PEBLDS has had a replicative effect on regional biodiversity cooperation in other parts of the world. The CBD together with other global environmental fora have increasingly called for strengthened regional cooperation and PEBLDS was often highlighted by the CBD Executive Secretaries as a good example. Other regions have not been able to organize regional conferences as preparation and follow up of COPs like PEBLDS, but regional workshops on thematic areas on the CBD agenda have increasingly taken place.
90. The relationship between PEBLDS and the EU is discussed below under 4.D.

3. Processes affecting attainment of project results

3. A. Preparation and readiness

91. As discussed under chapter 2 the UNEP project with its short duration extensions was not an ideal project construction, but a necessity to ensure the PEBLDS secretariat was maintained in the absence of a mechanism to provide adequate, stable and predictable resources. The process oriented outcomes and outputs and the financial resources provided were inadequate to lead to substantial change towards the overall objective and intended impact. The project was barely adequate to maintain UNEP secretariat functions, but it did and thereby made at least an indirect contribution to the implementation of the CBD and PEBLDS. Since CBD and PEBLDS implementation would have required so much more than what the project was able to deliver, it is necessary again to turn the attention to the broader PEBLDS context.
92. It should first be noted that according to surveys both at global and European level, biodiversity has continued to decline on both levels after CBD and PEBLDS were established. Thus, already from this fact it could be argued that PEBLDS was not sufficiently prepared to achieve its overall objective. However, it might also be argued that the situation for biodiversity would have been worse without PEBLDS. So, to assess PEBLDS readiness on the basis of the state of biodiversity is virtually impossible

²² Besides the Convention on Biological Diversity it is the Convention on International Trade in Endangered Species of Wild Fauna and Flora (CITES), Convention on the Conservation of Migratory Species of Wild Animals (CMS) (all administered by UNEP), The International Treaty on Plant Genetic Resources for Food and Agriculture (ITPGRFA), Convention on Wetlands (the Ramsar Convention) and World Heritage Convention (WHC).

93. As already mentioned, PEBLDS was established in an optimistic spirit of bringing Europe together again after the Cold War, and in its first years there was clearly more political momentum and commitment to implementation than later. At that time a relatively large number of countries volunteered as lead countries and providers of voluntary funding for PEBLDS activities. In spite of the good intentions from the start, PEBLDS and its first 5 years action plan with 75 actions were not realistic to enable effective and efficient implementation. On a number of these activities it appears as if no activities were carried out in the PEBLDS framework.
94. PEBLDS mentioned a range of different actors to be mobilized in implementation, but didn't specify their roles. Among those actors, it didn't fully acknowledge that governments have a specific role, and that the government role may vary among PEBLDS countries dependant on their status of development. With the exception of the Biodiversity Service project, PEBLDS paid limited attention to the fact that the region was and is highly diverse reflecting to some extent the global North-South divide. EU and other Western European OECD countries are advanced both in terms of economic development and environmental policies and legislation compared to EECCA countries of which some have developing country status. Thereby PEBLDS failed to recognise that in a region as diverse as the Pan-European, a fundamental prerequisite for implementation would always be the provision of support – technical and financial - from EU and non EU OECD countries to EECCA countries. With such recognition from the start there might have been a better match between level of ambition and means of implementation.
95. The original PEBLDS Strategy and Action Plans were to some extent neglected by the alignment of PEBLDS activities with the CBD agenda. Instead, the work of PEBLDS started to become more selective and focussed on a limited number of activities of which some are described above as delivering useful outputs. The enthusiastic and optimistic spirit from the start of PEBLDS was shortly revived in 2002 and the following years with the adoption of the 2012 global biodiversity target and the Pan-European follow-up in the form of the Kyiv Declaration and its 2010 Implementation Plan. Again, however, a strategy and an action plan were adopted that turned out to be unrealistic and with limited tangible outcomes followed by declining support for PEBLDS in the following years and its eventual dissolution.

3. B. Implementation approach and management

96. The Secretariat hosted jointly by COE and UNEP was an unusual construction. There was no single person with managerial responsibility of the Secretariat and the staff of the Joint Secretariat remained located in the premises of their organisations in Strasbourg and Geneva. The COE was the driving force of the Secretariat in the first years, which was established under COE rules. As described above, the disagreement on the extent to which PEBLDS should be aligned with the CBD also reflected disagreement within the Joint Secretariat. UNEP arranged the first in the row of CBD oriented Biodiversity in Europe conferences in 2002 outside PEBLDS auspices. This marked a shift from COE to UNEP in the Secretariat driving seat underlined also by the UNEP project to support PEBLDS implementation in which UNEP is designated as the "Coordinator" of the Joint Secretariat. In the background section of the project document it is stated that *"implementation of PEBLDS was based on the traditional nature conservation approach without taking due account of global biodiversity policies, priorities trends. As a result, a Pan-European perspective was lacking within the global CBD-process"*.

The UNEP organised Riga Conference was highlighted as a *“catalyzer for revitalizing this regional process”*.

97. It should be noted here that a shift from a “traditional nature conservation approach” to the broader sustainable development and ecosystem oriented CBD approach also put an additional challenge on PEBLDS to deliver tangible and measurable improvements for biodiversity on the ground. The “traditional approach” with focus on threatened species and habitats is practiced in a very concrete and tangible manner under the Bern Convention with an effective monitoring system including reports and a case-file system in cases of non-compliance. The more holistic CBD approach covering biodiversity at ecosystem, species and gene level, including wild as well as domesticated biodiversity and with mainstreaming across sectors as an essential instrument is much more complex both to implement and to monitor.
98. Different cultures and traditions in terms of managing intergovernmental processes and institutions may also have been an issue between the two host organisations. COE seems to have a tradition of higher degree of host organisation steering and financing of fora under its auspices than UNEP with more government steering of fora and a more withdrawn position of the secretariat. It was apparent for all PEBLDS participants that working relations between COE and UNEP ROE were not good. Even at PEBLDS meetings this could be clearly observed. Together with the impracticalities of dislocation and lack of formal Secretariat leadership, this bad working relationship is believed to have hampered effectiveness and efficiency of the Secretariat. Many interviewees see the break between the two organizations and UNEP's complete takeover of the Secretariat in 2009 as a logical consequence of the strained working relations.
99. The break seems to have had the unfortunate consequence that COE completely left PEBLDS and the PEBLDS follow-up process. According to a central COE representative, COE doesn't see the need for the new Platform and believes that the Bern Convention under COE auspices already provides an adequate platform for Pan-European biodiversity cooperation. It would be an obstacle for the development of the new Platform if COE is not part of the wider regional cooperation on biodiversity due to COE's important role primarily as institutional host of the Bern Convention.
100. Compared to international, intergovernmental processes in general, PEBLDS proved to be capable of adapting to changing conditions. Examples are the above mentioned shift from the “traditional nature conservation approach” to a CBD approach, the take-over by UNEP ROE of the role as Secretariat Coordinator, the complete take-over by UNEP ROE of the Secretariat, and - most notably - the transformation of PEBLDS from an intergovernmental institution into an informal platform.

3. C. Stakeholder participation and public awareness

101. One of PEBLDS' biggest successes is its history of strong involvement of non-governmental organisations. Pan-European NGO's have been invaluable partners in the foundation and development of PEBLDS, and PEBLDS has been an invaluable platform for their work. Within PEBLDS, Governments and NGOs have been working in partnership and not in opposition to each other. The first Chair of PEBLDS was a NGO representative and the same is the first Chair of the new Pan-European Biodiversity Platform.

102. The Netherlands based ECNC-European Centre for Nature Conservation, established in 1993, has played a particular role as the actual author of PEBLDS and as key partner in many of the PEBLDS activities not least the Pan-European Ecological Network (PEEN). Also, CEEweb for Biodiversity, a network of biodiversity NGOs in Central and Eastern Europe has been a strong supporter of and very active in PEBLDS. CEEweb in 2009 issued the publication “Clear View: Regional Synthesis Report on the Biodiversity Challenges in Pan-Europe which includes an assessment of the state of biodiversity in the region, progress in implementing the Kyiv targets and the involvement of civil society in nature conservation.”²³
103. The Regional Office of IUCN has been an important partner not least through its leading role in the communication initiative “Countdown 2010” which helped to raise awareness on biodiversity issues in the region. WWF has also played an active role. Representatives of the private sector were involved in certain activities including on biodiversity financing, but far from the level of NGO involvement. Individual government representatives in PEBLDS should also be mentioned in this context. Although, they participated on behalf of their governments and not as individuals, a number of them individually played an important role often as the sole representatives in PEBLDS of their countries. They undertook tasks for PEBLDS either in a lead country role or in a less official way and maybe not always with the full blessing of their governments. Because of the limited Secretariat resources such “acts of friendship” were quite valuable.
104. On communication to the wider public, PEBLDS itself did little maybe illustrated best by the PEBLDS website which was not very developed and not very well maintained. Public awareness of PEBLDS as such remained generally low. As mentioned above “Countdown 2010” was an important regional communication and public awareness tool on the importance of biodiversity.

3. D. Country ownership and driveness

105. Countries’ commitment and expectations to PEBLDS varied considerably. Below is an assessment of the different groups of countries perception of PEBLDS.
106. EECCA countries. PEBLDS was generally much appreciated among EECCA countries even without a financial mechanism. Besides from interviews conducted, this can be seen in the survey conducted for the discussion on the future of PEBLDS at the 4th Biodiversity in Europe Conference in 2009²⁴. First and foremost, EECCA countries were pleased with the capacity-building PEBLDS provided through regional preparation of CBD COPs at the biannual Biodiversity in Europe Conferences. CBD COPs are big and hard to grasp for countries with small delegations with large amount of meeting documents and parallel negotiating groups. EECCA countries don’t have a preparation and coordinated mechanism like the EU which puts a lot of resources into this preparation and coordination. EECCA countries also report that PEBLDS has been a useful platform exchange of experience and that PEBLDS activities in some cases have generated catalytic action at national mainly in terms of protected areas and ecological networks. The Global Environment Facility (GEF) has supported a number of biodiversity projects in EECCA countries. The impact of PEBLDS as a catalyst for these projects is difficult to assess.

²³ http://www.ceeweb.org/wp-content/uploads/2011/12/clearview_pdf.pdf

²⁴ STRACO (2009) Inf. 2.

107. In spite of EECCA countries support to and obvious benefits from PEBLDS, they were not particularly active or vocal in PEBLDS fora and not even when the political and financial support from Western Europe dropped. Understaffing, high staff turnover, language barriers and inexperience in performing in international fora have been mentioned as reasons. According to Western European/donor countries representatives, this lack of expressed demand by countries supposed to be the least advantaged in the region and thereby with most to gain from PEBLDS, hampered attempts in donor countries to raise political attention and provision of resources to PEBLDS. It should be noted that at the last PEBLDS Council meeting in 2011 and at the 6th Biodiversity in Europe in Conference in 2013, EECCA countries were very active and clearly expressed their wish for continued Pan-European biodiversity cooperation.
108. EU and its Member States. 27 and thereby nearly half of PEBLDS countries are part of the EU. The Habitats and Bird Directives are cornerstones of the EU biodiversity policy requiring Member States to designate and manage core areas for the conservation of around 200 rare and threatened species and habitat types. These sites make up the Natura 2000 Network. Concerns for biodiversity and ecosystems are integrated into EU agricultural and fisheries policies and in 2011, EU adopted the EU Biodiversity Strategy to 2020 to halt biodiversity loss and improve the state of Europe's species, habitats and ecosystems and the services they provide over the next decade, while stepping up the EU contributions to averting global biodiversity loss. Because of the advanced stage of EU's internal biodiversity policy with legally binding requirements in place before PEBLDS was established, PEBLDS has not added particular value to policy development within the EU.
109. The PEBLDS – EU relationship has not been easy, and EU never became a fully committed PEBLDS partner with the notable exception of the initiative to develop Pan-European biodiversity indicators (EBRI) under which a fruitful cooperation was established between PEBLDS and the European Environmental Agency. From the start EU was anticipated to be a key PEBLDS actor both in terms of catalysing its own experience in biodiversity policies and legislation and in terms of more direct support to non EU member States. Many PEBLDS documents called for EU involvement, but EU mostly took a rather defensive approach cautious that PEBLDS decisions should not influence EU internal legislation and policies and that PEBLDS should not seek to harmonize positions at international meetings and thereby competing with EU's own coordination and harmonization mandate. Conversely, some non EU Member States may have had concerns about EU becoming too strong in PEBLDS and attempting to impose EU policies outside EU.
110. Individual EU Member States took part in the PEBLDS in the first years and some were particularly committed through voluntary contributions both in kind and financially like the Netherlands, Finland, UK, Spain and Denmark. The European Commission provided funds for the original UNEP project to support PEBLDS implementation. However, as described above, the engagement of most EU States gradually dropped and most of them did not just stop to make contributions but also to participate in PEBLDS meetings. Only 3 Member States (Finland, Germany and the Netherlands) and the European Commission participated in the last PEBLDS Council meeting in 2011. In recent years, EU has shown a more positive approach towards pan-European biodiversity cooperation seeing it as also a benefit for EU e.g. in expanding ecological networks beyond EU borders. A Joint Council of Europe / European Union Programme has been established to bring together the

Emerald Network of Areas of Special Conservation Interest initiated under the Bern Convention and the Natura 2000 Network under the EU Habitat and Bird Directives.

111. New EU Member States. The EU was expanded in 2004, 2007 and 2013 and as already discussed the inclusion of a large number of countries mostly from Eastern and Central Europe in the EU seriously changed the PEBLDS dynamics. Since some of the countries had been very active in PEBLDS, they left a big loss. Representatives from the new generation of EU Member States state that although they downgraded PEBLDS due to lack of resources, they are still very supportive of regional cooperation beyond EU borders. They note that they are adjacent to non EU countries with whom they need to cooperate with to protect transboundary ecosystems.
112. Norway and Switzerland. The non-EU OECD countries Norway and Switzerland have consistently been strong supporter of PEBLDS and as the largest donors to both the UNEP Implementation project and other PEBLDS activities they have been very important countries to PEBLDS. Both countries have held the PEBLDS chairmanship for longer periods, and they were also active in the process of reconstructing PEBLDS.

3. E. UNEP supervision and backstopping

113. Here it is necessary to distinguish between UNEP's Regional Office for Europe (ROE) and UNEP as such. As referred to under 2.D, PEBLDS stakeholders generally find that UNEP ROE managed the project and its secretariat functions well especially in view of the limited resources they had available and the gradually declining financial and political support from governments. At the time of the preparation of the original project, UNEP ROE expressed strong concern about the declining financial support for PEBLDS and the consequent need for a more robust financial mechanism, but did not meet responsiveness from potential donor countries. The last years' process of transforming PEBLDS would not have been realised without high dedication and proactivity of UNEP ROE.
114. UNEP ROE is financially controlled by UNEP headquarters in Nairobi and as referred to under C.B many PEBLDS stakeholders criticise UNEP for not having provided direct financial support to the PEBLDS Secretariat thereby leaving its function entirely in the hands of voluntary donors.

3. F. Monitoring and evaluation

115. *Monitoring and evaluation design*. According to the UNEP implementation support project, a desk evaluation would be undertaken to measure the degree to which the objectives of the project have been achieved after completion of the project. Also the Director of UNEP/ROE shall submit half year progress reports on the project. Project revisions up to 2010 did not change anything in terms of monitoring, evaluation and reporting, but the project revision design was changed from 2010 to include a logical framework table with outcomes, outputs, indicators and means of verification.
116. The rather limited M&E design of the project up until 2010 might have been an obstacle for other types of projects, but since this project was so predominantly process oriented with outputs and activities related to secretariat services, there was hardly a need for a more detailed design to monitor

progress. Accordingly, the change of the project revision design in 2010 did not make any serious difference for this type of project.

117. As regards to PEBLDS itself, monitoring and evaluation was meant to be undertaken of the envisaged 5 years action plans. The first Action Plan 1996 – 2000 was replaced by a Rolling Work Programme in 2001 amended in 2003 and replaced again by the Strategy for Implementation of the Kyiv Biodiversity resolution 2004 – 2010 with a number of actions plans. The latter includes an action plan for a system for monitoring of the Kyiv Resolution including the development of indicators. Such an action plan with indicators was clearly relevant after 7 years without any tools for monitoring and evaluation of PEBLDS and its follow-up programmes and plans.
118. *Monitoring and evaluation implementation.* A desk evaluation of the project according to the original project document has not been made, but this evaluation seems to take its place. The half year progress reports have been submitted in accordance with the project document in the form of a pre-printed template for check marks. The reports reveal no significant problems in deliverance of outputs. The logical framework tables filled out in the last project revision documents again are mainly oriented towards deliverance of secretariat services.
119. Turning to PEBLDS as such, monitoring and evaluation did not take place in a systematic way through most of PEBLDS' lifetime. Pan-European indicators were developed in cooperation with EEA, ECNC and other partners as part of the SEBI 2010 initiative (see 3.D above) and as a follow up to the action plan to monitor the Kyiv Resolution. These indicators coordinated with EU indicators have had good catalytic effect. However, from 2007 – 2008 attention to PEBLDS strategies and action plans and monitoring of their implementation disappeared, and the remaining attention was devoted fully to considerations on the future of PEBLDS.
120. It should be mentioned that in the CEEweb regional synthesis report on the biodiversity challenges in pan-Europe "Clear View" from 2009²⁵ an assessment of implementation of the Kyiv Resolution is presented based on data collected in 46 pan-European countries. According to the assessment the overall implementation of the sub-targets is 37% and none of the sub-targets were achieved by the agreed deadlines. The highest rate of implementation was reported from Western Europe.
121. While systematic monitoring and evaluation of PEBLDS against its overall objectives was largely absent, the informal discussion that started around 2006 on the relevance and future and PEBLDS, and which later became a formal process, did also include discussions on PEBLDS' previous performance.

4. Complementarities with UNEP strategies and programmes

122. When the project was designed, it was placed under the UNEP "sub-programme "Regional Cooperation and Representation". In 2010, UNEP adopted a new Medium Term Strategy for 2010-2013

²⁵ http://www.ceeweb.org/wp-content/uploads/2011/12/clearview_pdf.pdf

distributing the work under 6 thematic priority areas/Sub-programmes; Environmental Governance, Ecosystem Management, Disasters & Conflicts, Harmful Substances and Hazardous Waste, Climate Change, and Resource Efficiency. The biennial UNEP Programmes of Work are structured on the basis of these 6 themes.

123. When the PEBLDS implementation project was extended and carried on after the UNEP reform, the project was placed under the Environmental Governance Sub-programme. During the Programme of Work 2010-2011, the project was meant to contribute towards the Expected Accomplishment A " *the United Nations system, respecting the mandate of other entities, progressively realizes synergies and demonstrates increasing coherence in international decision-making processes related to the environment, including those under multilateral environmental agreements*" and to the Programme of Work output " *Effective policy exchange and development and priority setting by countries are supported through regional ministerial and other environmental forums*". During the Programme of Work 2012-2013 the Programme of Work output had slightly changed, reading as " *Effective policy exchange on environment and development issues is supported through regional ministerial and other intergovernmental forums and consultations*".

124. In the Environmental Governance Programme Framework 2010 - 2011, PEBLDS has been placed under the project umbrella "project 4-A-P-3: " *Support to regional and subregional ministerial forums for policy exchange and priority setting on key environmental issues*". Under "Europe" the PEBLDS process is mentioned together with the Environment for Europe process. PEBLDS is described as bringing " *together the countries from the pan-European region to exchange views and expertise on the conservation of and sustainable use of biodiversity and provides a platform for the region to develop policy targets and a key opportunity to discuss implementation decisions of the Conferences to the Parties of the CBD.*" UNEP's engagement in the region will focus on the EfE and PEBLDS processes with the following objectives:

- Proving support to the development of policies and strategies for sustainable development across the pan-European region.
- Ensuring that ideas and actions of global relevance are reflected upon in the Environment for Europe process.
- In the context of the 2010 International Year of Biodiversity and assessment of biodiversity targets supporting the identification of the priorities for the pan-European region and ensuring their input into the global post-2010 discussion for consideration.
- Addressing the special needs of the countries from the South Eastern European, Eastern European, Caucasus and Central Asia region, and their participation in the current global environmental negotiations (particularly with regard to the biodiversity targets, IPBES negotiations and climate change) as well as in the discussions on the future of PEBLDS the transformation of PEBLDS

125. The description above seems to have "old" PEBLDS as the basis with an emphasis on PEBLDS as a regional governance structure for bringing pan-European perspectives into global environmental negotiations. After the transformation of PEBLDS into an informal and flexible Pan European Biodiversity Platform with primary focus on implementation and capacity building, the Platform may be

better placed under the sub-programme “Ecosystem Management”. Among other things this programme aims to enhance capacity of countries and regions to integrate an ecosystems management approach into developing planning processes and to realign their environmental programmes to address degradation of selected priority ecosystem services. Among planned outputs are the promotion of regional cooperation mechanisms to strengthen or develop regional policies and laws for the management of transboundary ecosystems, and the provision of technical support on various aspects.

126. The project, PEBLDS as such and its follow-up are also well-aligned with the 2005 UNEP Bali Strategic Plan for Technology Support and Capacity Building. The Plan is targeted to developing countries and countries with economies in transition comprising EECCA countries. Although PEBLDS was not very explicit about the capacity building needs of EECCA countries, PEBLDS had a capacity building effect in these countries, and the PEBLDS follow-up has a rather clear focus on capacity building. The Bali Strategic Plan states e.g. that *“a significant role should be given to institutional arrangements at the regional level and regional institutions in implementing and reviewing the plan”* (para. 6), and that *“regional UNEP offices should be strengthened to facilitate effective support for the implementation of the plan at its national, sub-regional and regional levels”* (para. 9.) The plan *“accords special attention to strengthening the support given to regional ministerial environmental forums to enable them to play a role in the implementation and review of the plan an identification of emerging needs”*. (Para. 14). As regards financing the plan *“should be implemented through a combination of voluntary financial mechanisms and options that would provide additional resources. The financial mechanisms should be transparent, accountable and consistent with the financial rules of the Environment Fund”* (Para 33.) and the UNEP Governing Council should use the Environment Fund for technology support and capacity-building activities *“taking into account the evolving nature of funding requirements, including at the regional level”*. (Para 34).

127. The UNEP Governing Council decision UNEP/GC/27/2 from 2013 on implementation of para 88 of the outcome document of the UN Conference on Sustainable Development (Rio+20) in 2012 also provides backing for UNEP involvement in regional cooperation,²⁶ and UNEP/GCSS.XII/3 is in support of the strong focus the new Pan-European Biodiversity Platform puts on enhancing synergies between biodiversity related MEAs.²⁷

128. With many CBD COP decisions highlighting the importance of regional cooperation to enhance of implementation of the Convention, PEBLDS was clearly relevant also to the CBD.

²⁶ Para.14 *“Decides to strengthen UNEP’s regional presence in order to assist countries in the implementation of their national environmental programmes, policies and plans and in this regard request the Executive Director to increase UNEP’s participation in UN Country Teams”*. Para 15 *“Stresses the importance of the regional ministerial environment forums for which the United Nations Environment Programme serve as the secretariats, and invites these forums to contribute, as appropriate, to the work of the governing body of the United Nations Environment Programme”*.

²⁷ According to para. 1, the Governing Council *“recognizes the importance of enhancing synergies, including at the national and regional levels, among the biodiversity-related conventions, without prejudice to their specific objectives and recognizing their respective mandates, and encourages the conferences of the parties to those conventions to strengthen effort further in that regard, taking into account relevant experiences. Para 2 states that the Governing Council “invites the Executive Director to undertake, as appropriate, further activities to improve the effectiveness of and cooperation among multilateral environmental agreements, taking into account the autonomous decision-making authority of the conferences of the parties, and to enhance cooperation with the international Strategy for Disaster Reduction”*,

5. Conclusions and recommendations

5. A. Conclusions

129. PEBLDS was a very timely and relevant initiative after the end of the Cold War in a new spirit of European solidarity and coherence and at a time with global political impetus to conservation and sustainable use of biodiversity through the entry into force of the UN Convention on Biological Diversity (CBD) in 1993. PEBLDS was also relevant for the two host organisations UNEP and the Council of Europe (COE) both with mandates related to biodiversity, and to the CBD that has adopted many decision highlighting the value of regional implementation.
130. Consequently, the project subject to this evaluation was also relevant since its objective was to support, facilitate and enhance the implementation of PEBLDS and thereby the CBD and other biodiversity related instruments in Europe. The project originally had 18 months duration described as a “transitional financial arrangement” in the anticipation of a system of stable and predictable funding. Such a system was never established, and the project was revised and extended 13 times up to 2012 to allow the Joint Secretariat to undertake basic secretariat functions for PEBLDS. Both the original project and the revisions were financed from voluntary contributions.
131. The financial resources allocated under the project were tight, and prevented the Secretariat from a more proactive, catalytic role towards PEBLDS implementation. Still, the Joint Secretariat (and later UNEP ROE managing the Secretariat by itself) delivered the project outputs in the form of basic secretariat services and thereby also contributed to the overall objective of the project to support implementation of PEBLDS and CBD. However, in light of the magnitude and complexity of reversing the negative trend for biodiversity in a region as large and diverse as the pan-European, the contribution of the project’s mainly process oriented outputs to the intended outcome could only be indirect and very limited. Thus, it is also relevant to assess activities in the wider PEBLDS context outside the scope of the project.
132. PEBLDS catalysed activities in a number of areas and in collaboration with a number of partners in the region. This includes the development of the Pan-European Ecological Network (PEEN), which has stimulated action in PEBLDS countries throughout the years and thereby contributed to ecological coherence of the region, and the Biodiversity Service for supporting development and implementation of National Biodiversity Strategies and Action Plans in the countries of Eastern Europe, Caucasus and Central Asia (EECCA). This was a project running from 2000 – 2003 initiated by UNEP and positively evaluated. The Streamlining of European 2010 Biodiversity indicators Project (SEBI2010), the mapping of High Nature Value Farmland in EECCA countries and the “Countdown 2010” awareness raising campaign (lead by IUCN) should also be highlighted as activities with concrete effect towards PEBLDS and CBD implementation.
133. According to EECCA countries, PEBLDS was generating importing capacity building for them through aligning PEBLDS closely to the CBD agenda and organising the biennial Biodiversity in Europe Conferences as regional preparation of CBD COPs. Unlike, Member States of the EU, EECCA countries don’t have a preparation and coordination mechanism for the CBD. Overall, EECCA countries were

happy with the opportunities PEBLDS provided for information exchange on CBD related matters and argue that PEBLDS have catalysed national actions for biodiversity in their countries.

134. PEBLDS has a history of strong NGO involvement, and pan-European NGOs have been invaluable partners in creating and developing PEBLDS and PEBLDS has been an invaluable platform for their work.
135. The catalytic activity referred to above only covered some parts of PEBLDS and its follow-up plans and programs. Large parts of the commitments remained unaddressed or addressed only in rather general terms indicating that the extent of PEBLDS implementation was limited. PEBLDS's outreach to other biodiversity related conventions than the CBD was also limited.
136. After it was decided to closely align PEBLDS activities to the CBD, attention shifted from the original PEBLDS to the Kyiv Declaration adopted in 2003 with a number of time bound targets and a comprehensive implementation plan. This turned out to be too ambitious and only followed up to a limited extent. The momentum got lost and PEBLDS went into change mode leading to its dissolution in 2011 and replacement by the Pan-European Biodiversity Platform in 2013 to be led by an informal Steering Committee.
137. Many interrelated factors caused the downward trend for PEBLDS. The sense of European solidarity and burden sharing that prevailed after the Cold War gradually disappeared and thereby support from donor countries to both the PEBLDS Secretariat and concrete PEBLDS activities. UNEP never provided financial support to PEBLDS operation, and COE contributions gradually dropped to zero. The Joint Secretariat proved to be an impractical construction with cumbersome working relations between the two host organisations and the economic crisis led to cuts in government's aid and travel budgets and sharp prioritisation of international activities. Another factor was that EU never came to play the central role for PEBLDS that was envisaged from the start in terms of both catalysing its own experience in biodiversity policies and legislation and more direct support to EECCA countries. PEBLDS added only limited value to the development of EU policies and legislation.
138. Maybe the factor that affected PEBLDS most was the EU enlargement leading to nearly half of PEBLDS countries being EU Member States. This implied a serious refocus of the new EU Member States from pan-European activities to EU and implementation of EU legislation. When PEBLDS was no longer viable, the PEBLDS community with invaluable support from UNEP ROE showed willingness and ability to conduct an exemplary and thorough reform process leading to a lighter and more practical platform for pan-European cooperation.
139. Overall, the project and the PEBLDS process contributed to the implementation of PEBLDS, CBD and other biodiversity related instruments in non EU countries through the general information exchange PEBLDS provided, through enhanced awareness and preparation of CBD COPs and through undertaking a number of concrete projects and activities to facilitate implementation as referred to above. However, in the overall context of PEBLDS and CBD implementation, these contributions were limited.

Evaluation ratings

140. The evaluation criteria are rated on a six-point scale as follows: Highly Satisfactory (HS); Satisfactory (S); Moderately Satisfactory (MS); Moderately Unsatisfactory (MU); Unsatisfactory (U); Highly Unsatisfactory (HU). Sustainability is rated from Highly Likely (HL) down to Highly Unlikely (HU).

| Criterion | Evaluator's Rating | Evaluator's Comment | Evaluation Office's Rating |
|---|--------------------|---|----------------------------|
| A. Attainment of project objectives and results | MS | The project assumed the same stated goals as PEBLDS. The provision of support services is linked very indirectly to the larger objectives of PEBLDS which itself had very ambitious goals. | MS |
| 1. Effectiveness | MS | Effectiveness of the project in delivery of its major task (secretariat support services) was at least 'Moderately Satisfactory'. Effectiveness with respect to the broader PEBLDS objectives was less than moderately satisfactory. | MS |
| 2. Relevance | S | The project was relevant because PEBLDS as such was relevant. Ideally, the project should have furthered the aims of PEBLDS beyond secretariat support services. However, this was not a possibility given the resources available. | S |
| 3. Efficiency | MS | In spite of limited resources and difficult working conditions, the secretariat functions have been conducted efficiently. This applies in particular to the last difficult years of declining support to PEBLDS. The unpredictability and scarcity of resources and the unpractical arrangement of the Joint Secretariat impeded efficiency. | MS |
| B. Sustainability of project outcomes | MU | The sustainability of support services to PEBLDS was tied very much to the sustainability of the broader PEBLDS. Factors that affected sustainability of the project (i.e. provision of secretariat support services) were broadly beyond the control of the project, and rested first and foremost with donors and UNEP senior management. | MU |
| 1. Financial | U | The fact that the "transitional financial arrangement" was never replaced by a system of stable and predictable funding combined with scarce voluntary contribution from donor countries and no contributions from UNEP, made PEBLDS financially unsustainable. | U |
| 2. Socio-political | MU | In most countries PEBLDS was not owned at the higher political level implying that only limited resources were allocated and that PEBLDS implementation was not mainstreamed with the sectors that seriously | MU |

| Criterion | Evaluator's Rating | Evaluator's Comment | Evaluation Office's Rating |
|--|--------------------|--|----------------------------|
| | | affect biodiversity. The extensive enlargement of the EU reinforced declining political support. | |
| 3. Institutional framework | MS | The PEBLDS institutional framework reflected well the original level of ambition and support, but was too heavy when the political support declined. PEBLDS generally received an inferior treatment by its overlying institutional structure, the Environment for Europe process. | MS |
| 4. Environmental | n/a | For this type of project, the environmental sustainability criterion is not applicable. | n/a |
| C. Catalytic role | MS | PEBLDS catalysed activities in a number of areas and in collaboration with a number of partners. Some activities, however, had a short life and large parts of the PEBLDS commitments were not or were only moderately addressed. | MS |
| D. Stakeholders involvement | S | PEBLDS has been highly influenced by environmental NGO's and served as an important platform for those NGO's. Other non-governmental stakeholders played a more limited role in PEBLDS. | S |
| E. Country ownership / drivenness | MS | In terms of the project activities, countries generally supported and appreciated UNEP running the secretariat. In terms of PEBLDS as a whole, country ownerships/drivenness varied. | MS |
| F. Achievement of outputs and activities | S | UNEP generally achieved the outputs and undertook the activities outlined in the project description. | S |
| G. Preparation and readiness | MU | The project was designed as a secretariat service within the limits of resources, and did what it could with the available resources. The many project extensions could have been used to improve the project design, but the limited financial resources was an obstacle to expand its scope beyond secretariat services. PEBLDS as a whole did not adequately consider differences among countries at the design stage, and thus to some extent failed to deliver necessary support. | MU |
| H. Implementation approach | MS | Adaptive management was apparent. The Secretariat was capable of adapting to change, nevertheless it had opportunities to improve the project design that were not taken e.g. on monitoring and evaluation. | MS |
| I. Financial planning and management | MS | The project used scarce resources well. Financial planning was constrained by the scarcity and unpredictability in terms of resources. | MS |
| J. Monitoring and Evaluation | MU | The monitoring and evaluation design of the project was quite limited but so was the scope of the project. | MU |

| Criterion | Evaluator's Rating | Evaluator's Comment | Evaluation Office's Rating |
|---|--------------------|---|----------------------------|
| | | As regards PEBLDS as a whole, systematic monitoring and evaluation against its overall objectives and in accordance with provisions of PEBLDS and subsequent plans and programs did not take place. | |
| 1. M&E Design | MU | | MU |
| 2. M&E Plan Implementation | MU | | MU |
| 3. Budgeting and funding for M&E activities | MU | | MU |
| K. UNEP Supervision and backstopping | S | Supervision and backstopping from RoE was satisfactory. However, broader 'backing' from UNEP was lacking. | S |
| Overall Rating | MU | | MS ²⁸ |

5. B. Lessons learned

141. Below are outlined the main lessons learned from PEBLDS:
142. Lesson 1. Policy on its own does not deliver action unless supported by allocation of resources

The lack of a financial mechanism with adequate, stable and predictable funding was a major obstacle to PEBLDS implementation. Especially with regard to the Kyiv Declaration in 2004 PEBLDS countries committed themselves to far more than they had resources for. This led to general disillusion and that PEBLDS was eventually dissolved. PEBLDS countries are very different in terms of both economic and social development and level of environmental protection, but still it was not laid down as a fundamental premise for PEBLDS implementation that support was provided from the more developed to the less developed part of the region. EECCA countries did not insist on that and most donor countries did not have the political will to provide such support. This again is an indication that PEBLDS was not owned at a sufficient high level of the governments – the level that can take decisions with financial implications. Adding to the unsustainable financial situation for PEBLDS was the fact that UNEP did not provide support for PEBLDS operation. Policy development can and should not depend on guarantee for full funding, but there should be a higher degree of likelihood that the means may be provided than was the case for means to implement PEBLDS policies.

²⁸ The ratings for (A) Attainment of objectives and results, and (B) Sustainability are considered most critical in determining the overall project rating. In this particular case, sustainability of the project was largely tied to the overall sustainability of the "broader PEBLDS" and therefore, not entirely under the control of the project. The Evaluation Office perceives that evidence provided in the report support an overall rating of Moderately Satisfactory.

143. Lesson 2. Pan-European cooperation relies on EU as a full partner

With nearly half of the countries in the region inside the EU and with EU representing the economically and socially most developed part of the region, strong EU involvement is essential to any kind of cooperation in the region. Thus, a contributing factor to the limited degree of PEBLDS implementation could well be the fact that support both from EU as such and from Member States was generally low and gradually declined over the years. Thus, it is crucial for the sustainability of the new Platform that EU and its Member States are strongly represented.

144. Lesson 3. Co-hosting of intergovernmental institutions is cumbersome without co-location of secretariat staff and clear agreements between the hosts on strategy and divisions of tasks.

The Joint Secretariat arrangement between COE and UNEP ROE was not cost-effective and efficient due to the physical dislocation of the staff, uncertainty about divisions of tasks and poor working relations between COE and UNEP. This affected the overall operation of PEBLDS, and a similar secretariat arrangement should not be repeated.

145. Lesson 4. PEBLDS was able to adapt to changing conditions

Intergovernmental processes and institutions are often portrayed as super tankers with difficulties in changing course even when such change is needed. PEBLDS managed to change the course quite extensively when it was no longer viable in its original form. This happened after a thorough and constructive process involving a wide range of PEBLDS stakeholders. Other international institutions could learn from such a thorough evaluation of an institution's *raison d'etre*.

146. Lesson 5. PEBLDS built capacity in EECCA countries with regard to preparation of and participation in meetings of global intergovernmental fora.

This was not fully acknowledged by the EU and its Member States that have their own preparation and coordination mechanism and thus did not see an added value in Biodiversity in Europe Conferences serving as preparation for CBD COPs. When CBD seriously changed focus from policy development to implementation, it was a logical consequence for PEBLDS to also change course. Building capacity in EECCA countries for implementation of CBD and other biodiversity related conventions should be a primary focus of the new Platform.

5. C. Recommendations

147. The decision to transform PEBLDS into a flexible platform was a recognition that PEBLDS in its current form did not add sufficient value, but also a recognition that the pan-European region was still in need of a mechanism to support implementation of the global Strategic Plan for Biodiversity 2011 – 2020 with the Aichi Targets applying not only to the CBD but also to the other biodiversity related multilateral environmental agreements. Not in the form of a bureaucratic meeting forum like PEBLDS, but a mechanism to execute concrete project activities and deliver tangible results. The response in the form of the Platform led by a Steering Committee is a simple pragmatic construction with the right focus on implementation of the full cluster of biodiversity related conventions and the right type of activities outlined, but it is also a very fragile construction. It still exists only on the foundation and

without broad buy-in from all pan-European stakeholders - but first and foremost of governments from both EECCA countries and EU/Western Europe - the Platform will not be built. Thus, the signing-up by 30 governments to the establishment of the Platform at the 6th Biodiversity in Europe Conference in April 2013 in Batumi, Georgia should be followed up by a representative number of governments in the region joining the Platform's Steering Committee. Given the expected limited capacity and amount of resources available for the Platform, its Work Programme - as also stated in the Batumi Outcome – should be built to the extent possible on on-going activities, be project oriented and focused on a limited, prioritized number of thematic areas.

148. Among the themes mentioned in the Batumi Outcome and the Pan-European 2020 Strategy for Biodiversity it is recommended that the Pan-European Biodiversity Platform give special priority to the following:

- Revision and implementation of National Biodiversity Strategies and Action Plans (NBSAPs) including the establishment of a pan-European NBSAP network to promote exchange of experience;
- Facilitation of resource mobilization;
- Building capacity for valuation of biodiversity and ecosystem services based on the Economics of Ecosystems and Biodiversity (TEEB) Initiative;
- Building capacity for participation in the Intergovernmental Science-Policy Platform on Biodiversity and Ecosystem Services (IPBES) including establishment of a regional biodiversity knowledge hub and preparation of a sub-global assessment for parts of the region with a focus on areas where the available systematic knowledge on biodiversity and ecosystem services is limited;
- Building capacity for implementation of The Nagoya Protocol on Access to Genetic Resources and the Fair and Equitable Sharing of Benefits Arising from their Utilization to the Convention on Biological Diversity.

149. Furthermore, the following is recommended to fulfil the objectives of the Platform:

150. Recommendation 1. UNEP should provide and finance the Secretariat services for the Pan-European Biodiversity Platform.

The secretariat services would be very important for the Platform. UNEP ROE was responsible for the Secretariat during the transformation process and was a driving force in this respect. The Batumi Conference encouraged UNEP to continue its function which would be in full harmony with and support of a number of UNEP plans, programmes and decisions. These also justify that UNEP decides to finance the secretariat functions from its Environment Fund, which would be important for the provision of adequate resources for the Platform. As there will be a strong demand on donor countries to provide funds for concrete project activities under the Platform, it is doubtful whether donor countries will also be willing to finance the Platform Secretariat.

151. Recommendation 2. EU and its Member States should play a key role in the operation of the Platform

As stated above, EU has a key role in any type of intergovernmental cooperation in the region. EU support to the Platform would be crucial to its success, and EU has tools that are particularly useful. These are among others the EU Neighbourhood Policy, the EU Central Asia Strategy and the EU Russia-Environmental Dialogue and corresponding funding instruments such as the Development Cooperation Instrument (DCI) including programmes for Central Asia, the European Neighbourhood Instrument (ENI) and the Instrument for Pre-Accession Assistance (IPA II). Member States should allow their development assistance funds to be used for biodiversity purposes in the region like many did in the early days of PEBLDS and some still do. This could be in the form of twinning projects between individual EU Member States and EECCA countries. To fully reap the benefits of these instruments for biodiversity, EU and its Member States should be well represented in the Steering Committee of the Platform.

152. Recommendation 3. The Council of Europe should join the Platform

The PEBLDS Joint Secretariat between UNEP and COE should not be repeated, but this does not exclude a role for COE in the Platform even if biodiversity and nature conservation has been downscaled in COE activities. The COE role is important particularly through its operation of the Bern Convention on the Conservation of European Wildlife and Natural Habitats; a pan-European biodiversity related legally binding agreement that has been a key instrument for biodiversity conservation in non-EU countries. The newly established cooperation between EU and the Bern Convention to enhance coherence between the Bern Convention's Emerald Network and the EU Natura 2000 adds to the relevance of COE in the Platform. It is thus recommended that the Chair of Pan-European Biodiversity Platform offers COE a special invitation to join the Steering Committee.

153. Recommendation 4. The Platform should have a clear focus on sub-regional activities and cooperation

While the region as such is very large and diverse, sub-regions such as Eastern Europe, Caucasus, Western Balkan and Central Asia share ecosystem and distinct conservation needs which requires close collaboration and sharing of experience between governments in the sub-regions. The project activities of the Platform should seek to facilitate such sub-regional collaboration.

Annex I. Evaluation Terms of Reference

Terminal Evaluation of the UNEP Project on “Supporting the Implementation of the Pan-European Biological and Landscape Diversity Strategy (PEBLDS)”

PROJECT BACKGROUND AND OVERVIEW

Project General Information²⁹

Table 1. Project summary

| | | | |
|---|--|----------------------------------|---|
| Project number | CP/5023-01-01 | IMIS number: | 3337 |
| Focal Area(s): | Environmental Governance | | |
| UNEP Strategic Priority/Objective: | The overall objective of the project is to support, facilitate and enhance the implementation of the Pan-European Biological and Landscape Diversity Strategy and thereby the Convention on Biological Diversity and other biodiversity related instruments in Europe. | | |
| Approval date: | UNEP 36 August 2001 | Planned duration: | 140 months (revised 13 times) |
| Geographical scope | Europe | Implementation: | Internal, UNEP/ROE in cooperation with the Council of Europe, the Secretariat of the CBD and other biodiversity-related MEAS and interested Governments and Organisations |
| Expected Commencement date: | 1 September 2001 | Expected completion date: | 30 April 2013 |
| UNEP Allocation: | US\$ 0 | Expected Co-financing: | US\$ 2,047,050 |
| Total Cost: (as per 31.Dec. 2012) | US\$ 2,202,203 | | |

²⁹ Source: UNEP Programme Information and Management System

A. Project Background

1. The Pan-European Biological and Landscape Diversity Strategy, hereafter called the “PEBLDS”, was developed in 1995 as a response to the degradation of biological and landscape diversity values in Europe. The Strategy was a European response to support the implementation of the Convention on Biological Diversity (CBD), adopted in 1992 at the Rio Earth Summit. The aim of the PEBLDS was to bring together the countries of the pan-European region to meet the aims of the CBD, to increase coherence among the existing biodiversity related initiatives, to strengthen the integration of ecological considerations into all socio-economic sectors, and to increase public participation in, and awareness of, conservation interests. Whereas EU countries have their own coordination mechanisms for the implementation of the CBD, the non-EU countries rely on the PEBLDS.
2. In order to support, facilitate and to enhance the implementation of the Strategy, the PEBLDS Council requested, in 2001, UNEP to prepare a project proposal to cover PEBLDS related work and to administer and implement it. The Project “Supporting the Implementation of the Pan-European Biological and Landscape Diversity Strategy” was developed as a regional initiative between the Regional Office for Europe of the United Nations Environment Programme (UNEP/ROE) and the Council of Europe in collaboration with interested Governments and Non-Governmental Organisations to meet the request. From 2001, UNEP also became the Coordinator of the Joint Secretariat to PEBLDS, the focal point for Governments and the assistant to the PEBLDS Council Chair. Initially, the project was to run from 1.9.2001 to 31 December 2002, but through several revisions the project was extended until 30 April 2013 to respond to the biodiversity related needs within the pan-European region.
3. In 2011, a new strategy was endorsed as the successor of the PEBLDS, namely the Pan-European 2020 Strategy for Biodiversity. The 2020 Strategy is in line with the Strategic Plan for Biodiversity 2011-2020 and its global Aichi biodiversity targets, which were adopted at the tenth meeting of the Conference of the Parties of the CBD in 2010. The 2020 Strategy attempts to refocus the efforts to prevent further loss of biodiversity in the Pan-European region. To carry on the results of the soon ending UNEP Supporting the Implementation of the PEBLDS-project and to continue the support to implement the Pan-European 2020 Strategy for Biodiversity, a new project is being planned by the UNEP Regional Office for Europe.

1. Project objectives, expected outcomes and activities

4. The main project objectives and outcomes have remained similar throughout the several project revisions, but outputs and activities have naturally evolved as new extensions and funding has been granted. The project design had not been formulated into a logical framework until 2010. The project, as per the original project document from 2001, was expected to result in *more efficient and better coordinated implementation of the Pan-European Biological and Landscape Diversity Strategy and thereby enhanced implementation of the Convention on Biological Diversity and other biodiversity related instruments in the Pan-European region.*
5. The original project document from 2001 states the project’s specific “expected results” as:
 - a) Broadened and improved regional cooperation in the implementation of the CBD;
 - b) Strengthened Pan-European Biological and Landscape Diversity Strategy and its Secretariat;
 - c) Coordinated Pan-European input in negotiations and taking decisions at the CBD/COP-6, as far as possible and appropriate;
 - d) Better integration of global and European biodiversity policies and processes;
 - e) Enhanced exchange of information between European countries on the implementation of the CBD at national level;

- f) Improved coordination of ongoing and planned activities for the conservation and sustainable use of biological diversity in the Pan-European region;
 - g) Greater visibility of biodiversity issues on the agenda of the Kyiv Conference.
6. In the UNEP Programme of Works (PoW) for 2010-2011 and 2012-2013, the project is vested under the Environmental Governance Sub-programme. The project contributes to the EA (a) *The United Nations system, respecting the mandates of other entities, progressively achieves synergies and demonstrates increasing coherence in international decision-making processes related to the environment, including those under multilateral environmental agreements*, and the Programme of Work Output (#4A6), which is also the project outcome, *Effective policy exchange and development and priority setting by countries are supported through regional ministerial and other environmental forums*.
7. Within the UNEP PoWs 2010-2011 and 2012-2013 the project outputs are focused on four main areas:
- a) Collaboration with CBD to organize meetings in the Pan-Europe region;
 - b) Preparation of formal documents of the PEBLDS Council, its Bureau and Friends of the Chair;
 - c) Organize meetings of the Bureau of the PEBLDS and Friends of the Chair and assist in fund-raising activities;
 - d) Provide secretariat support to the Chair in conducting PEBLDS meetings.
8. In addition, one separate project was designed under the Supporting the implementation of the PEBLDS project, namely the “Service for Implementation of National Biodiversity Strategies and Action Plans, which was evaluated in 2003. Both the “Forest-Europe: Ministerial Conference on the Protection of Forests in Europe (MCPFE)”, and the “Streamlining European Biodiversity Indicators (SEBI)”, worked closely with, and relied on, the PEBLDS project to provide UN and pan-European perspectives in their activities. All three of these projects had their own objectives, outcomes, outputs and activities.

2. Executing Arrangements

9. UNEP Regional Office for Europe and the Council of Europe served as Secretariat for the PEBLDS and were responsible for implementing the project and undertaking the day-to-day coordination and management of activities until 2009. The project was implemented in close collaboration with the Secretariat of the CBD, other biodiversity-related MEAs and other interested Governments and Organisations. The PEBLDS Council and its Bureau were created in 1996, were responsible for guiding and reviewing the project implementation. The Council acted as the decision-making body of the PEBLDS and was composed of representatives of Government, and Intergovernmental and non-governmental organisations of 54 States. The Bureau consisted of representatives of member Governments with a number of non-governmental organisations as observers.
10. Following a Council decision, after 2009 the Secretariat was provided by UNEP/ROE alone, but UNEP continued working in partnership with the Council of Europe, IUCN, ECNC, CEEweb and the EcoForum, as well as in close cooperation with the CBD Secretariat. Also, the PEBLDS Council and Bureau ceased to exist after the September 2009 meeting, and the decision was endorsed in April 2011. A project Steering Committee, consisting of Government and UNEP representatives was founded in replacement.
11. Within UNEP Programmes of Work for 2010-2011 and 2012-2013 the project is vested under the Environmental Governance Sub-programme, with the Division of Environmental Law and Conventions (DELC) being the Lead

Division and the Division of Regional Cooperation (DRC) the Managing Division. The project cooperates with the Division of Environmental Policy Implementation (DEPI).

12. The project supports pan-European Governments and civil society, as well as local communities to which achieving the biodiversity targets have a direct impact. Project partners include IUCN, ECNC, CEEweb for Biodiversity, as well as numerous local NGOs in the participating countries.

3. Project Cost and Financing

13. The table below provides an accumulative summary of expected financing sources as per 31st December 2012.

| | US\$ |
|--|-----------|
| Cost to Environment Fund | 0 |
| Counterpart Contribution (various countries) | 2,047,050 |
| Total Direct Cost of the project | 2,132,766 |
| Total costs including 13% programme support cost | 2,202,203 |

4. Project Implementation and Contribution to Sub-programmes

14. The duration of the project was anticipated to be 16 months starting from September 2001 and ending in December 2002. However, the project underwent several revisions to introduce new counterpart contributions and to amend the project duration, outputs, activities and the general work plan. The last revision was proposed to extend the project until April 2013 to allow for planning for the Biodiversity in Europe Conference to be held in Georgia in mid-April 2013. After this, the project will be closed to allow implementation of a new project under the UNEP Ecosystem Management sub-programme, continuing the implementation of the Pan-European 2020 Strategy for Biodiversity.
15. The broader Sub-programme Objectives/Expected Accomplishments to which the project has contributed under the UNEP Programme of Works are as follows:

PoW 2000-2001: Sub-programme 5.2 - Objective 1: *Influence environmental policy setting and implementation in the regions in line with UNEP's global mandate, role and responsibilities and to take into account regional specific needs and priorities.* PoW 2002-2003: Sub-programme 5 - Objective 2: *To strengthen regional and sub-regional cooperation as well as national capacities for joint implementation of programmes to address global environmental issues and respond to emergencies.*

PoW 2004-2005: Sub-programme 5 – Objective 3: *To halt the loss of biodiversity – at all geographical levels – by 2010.*

PoW 2006-2007: Sub-programme 5 – Overall Objective that the project contributes to: *To ensure coherent delivery of UNEP programmes in the regions and to catalyse and strengthen regional cooperation with all partners in response to challenges and priorities identified by national governments and regional and subregional bodies, including mainstreaming environment into national development plans.* PoW 2008-2009: Sub-programme 5 – Overall Objective that the project contributes to: *To strengthen regional cooperation and capacity of countries and institutions in the regions to address environmental issues of crucial regional and global importance.*

PoWs 2010-2011 and 2012-2013: Sub-programme 4 - Environmental Governance – Overall Objective that the project contributes to: *To ensure that environmental governance at the country, regional and global levels is strengthened to address agreed environmental priorities.* The Expected Accomplishment that the project contributes to (a): *The United Nations system, respecting the mandates of other entities, progressively achieves synergies and demonstrates increasing coherence in international decision-making processes related to the environment, including those under multilateral environmental agreements.*

TERMS OF REFERENCE FOR THE EVALUATION

A. Objective and Scope of the Evaluation

16. In line with the UNEP Evaluation Policy³⁰ and the UNEP Evaluation Manual³¹, the evaluation of the Project “Supporting the Implementation of the Pan-European Biological and Landscape Diversity Strategy (PEBLDS)” should be undertaken to assess project performance (in terms of relevance, effectiveness and efficiency), and determine outcomes and impacts (actual and potential) stemming from the project, including their sustainability. The evaluation will also look at the three projects implemented under the ‘Supporting the Implementation of the PEBLDS’ project umbrella and their contribution to the higher level objectives. The evaluation has two primary purposes: (i) to provide evidence of results to meet accountability requirements, and (ii) to promote learning, feedback, and knowledge sharing through results and lessons learned. Therefore, the evaluation will identify lessons of operational relevance for future project formulation and implementation. It will focus on the following sets of key questions, based on the project’s intended outcomes, which may be expanded by the consultants as deemed appropriate:
- a. To what extent did the project strengthen the implementation of the pan-European Biological and Landscape Diversity Strategy?
 - o Did the project succeed in building countries’ capacity to reduce threats to Europe’s biological and landscape diversity?
 - o Did the project succeed in building countries’ capacity to increase the resilience of Europe’s biological and landscape diversity?
 - o Did the project succeed in strengthening the ecological coherence of Europe?
 - o Did the project succeed in increasing public involvement in conservation of biological and landscape diversity?
 - b. To what extent has the project enhanced the implementation of the Convention on Biological Diversity and other biodiversity related instruments in the pan-European region?

B. Overall Approach and Methods

17. The terminal evaluation of the Project “Supporting the Implementation of the Pan-European Biological and Landscape Diversity Strategy (PEBLDS)” will be conducted by independent consultant under the overall responsibility and management of the UNEP Evaluation Office (Nairobi), in consultation with UNEP ROE, the PEBLDS Secretariat, the former Council and Bureau, the Council of Europe, and the Secretariat of CBD.
18. It will be an in-depth evaluation using a participatory approach whereby key stakeholders are kept informed and consulted throughout the evaluation process. Both quantitative and qualitative evaluation methods will be used to determine project achievements against the expected outputs, outcomes and impacts.
19. The findings of the evaluation will be based on the following:
- a. A desk review of project documents³² including, but not limited to:

³⁰ <http://www.unep.org/eou/StandardsPolicyandPractices/UNEPEvaluationPolicy/tabid/3050/language/en-US/Default.aspx>

³¹ <http://www.unep.org/eou/StandardsPolicyandPractices/UNEPEvaluationManual/tabid/2314/language/en-US/Default.aspx>

³² Documents to be provided by the UNEP are listed in Annex 5.

- Relevant background documentation, inter alia UNEP, Council of Europe and CBD as well as other relevant MEA policies, strategies, programmes and decisions, the pan-European biological and landscape diversity strategy, the pan-European 2020 Strategy for Biodiversity, and other relevant documentation on biodiversity conservation on the pan-European region;
 - Project design documents and their revisions; annual work plans and budgets or equivalent, revisions to the logical framework and project financing, as well as draft project document for the planned project implementing the pan-European 2020 Strategy for Biodiversity;
 - Project reports such as progress and financial reports from participating countries, from UNEP, and partners, PEBLDS Secretariat, Council and Bureau meeting minutes as well as Project Steering Committee meeting minutes, annual reviews and relevant correspondence;
 - Documentation related to project outputs and relevant materials published on the project web-site.
- b. Interviews³³ with, but not limited to:
- UNEP project management (Brussels) and Fund Management Officer (Geneva), members of the former PEBLDS Council and Bureau as well as the Steering Committee, Council of Europe, and CBD Secretariat;
 - Other relevant UNEP Divisions;
 - Representatives of other multilateral agencies, networks and other relevant organisations, such as the European Centre for Nature Conservation (ECNC), Birdlife International, the International Union for Conservation of Nature (IUCN), the Intergovernmental pan-European expert committee, and CEEweb for Biodiversity.

C. Key Evaluation principles

20. Evaluation findings and judgements should be based on sound evidence and analysis, clearly documented in the evaluation report. Information will be triangulated (i.e. verified from different sources) to the extent possible, and when verification is not possible, the single source will be mentioned³⁴. Analysis leading to evaluative judgements should always be clearly spelled out.
21. The evaluation will assess the project with respect to a minimum set of evaluation criteria grouped in four categories: (1) Attainment of objectives and planned results, which comprises the assessment of outputs achieved, relevance, effectiveness and efficiency and the review of outcomes towards impacts; (2) Sustainability and catalytic role, which focuses on financial, socio-political, institutional and ecological factors conditioning sustainability of project outcomes, and also assesses efforts and achievements in terms of replication and up-scaling of project lessons and good practices; (3) Processes affecting attainment of project results, which covers project preparation and readiness, implementation approach and management, stakeholder participation and public awareness, country ownership/driven-ness, project finance, UNEP supervision and backstopping, and project monitoring and evaluation systems; and (4) Complementarity with the UNEP strategies and programmes. The consultant can propose other evaluation criteria as deemed appropriate.
22. **Ratings.** All evaluation criteria will be rated on a six-point scale. However, complementarity of the project with the UNEP, Council of Europe, and other relevant partners' strategies and programmes is not rated. Annex 2 provides detailed guidance on how the different criteria should be rated and how ratings should be aggregated for the different evaluation criterion categories.
23. In attempting to attribute any outcomes and impacts to the project, the evaluators should consider the difference between what has happened with and what would have happened without the project. This implies that there should be consideration of the baseline conditions and trends in relation to the intended project

³³

Face-to-face or through any other appropriate means of communication

³⁴

Individuals should not be mentioned by name if anonymity needs to be preserved.

outcomes and impacts. This also means that there should be plausible evidence to attribute such outcomes and impacts to the actions of the project. Sometimes, adequate information on baseline conditions and trends is lacking. In such cases this should be clearly highlighted by the evaluators, along with any simplifying assumptions that were taken to enable the evaluator to make informed judgements about project performance.

24. As this is a terminal evaluation, particular attention should be given to learning from the experience. Therefore, the “why?” question should be at front of the consultants’ minds all through the evaluation exercise. This means that the consultants needs to go beyond the assessment of “what” the project performance was, and make a serious effort to provide a deeper understanding of “why” the performance turned out the way it did, i.e. of processes affecting attainment of project results (criteria under category 3). This should provide the basis for the lessons that can be drawn from the project. In fact, the usefulness of the evaluation will be determined to a large extent by the capacity of the consultant to explain “why things happened” as they happened and are likely to evolve in this or that direction, which goes well beyond the mere assessment of “where things stand” today. Considering that a new project is being planned to continue the results achieved by the project under evaluation and to seek to implement the Pan-European 2020 Biodiversity Strategy, the consultant should provide recommendations for the way forward.

D. Evaluation criteria

Attainment of Objectives and Planned Results

25. The evaluation should assess the relevance of the project’s objectives and the extent to which these were effectively and efficiently achieved or are expected to be achieved.
 - a. *Achievement of Outputs and Activities:* Assess, for each component, the project’s success in producing the programmed outputs both in quantity and quality, as well as their usefulness and timeliness. Briefly explain the degree of success of the project in achieving its different outputs, cross-referencing as needed to more detailed explanations provided under Section 3 (which covers the processes affecting attainment of project objectives).
 - b. *Relevance:* Assess, in retrospect, whether the project’s objectives and implementation strategies were consistent with the UNEP, Council of Europe and other partners mandates and policies at the time of design and implementation; strategic priorities and the relevant operational program(s).
 - c. *Effectiveness:* Examine to what extent the project has achieved its main objective to enhance implementation of the Convention on Biological Diversity and other biodiversity related instruments in the pan-European region. Briefly explain what factors affected the project’s success in achieving its objectives, cross-referencing as needed to more detailed explanations provided under Section 3.
 - d. *Efficiency:* Assess the cost-effectiveness and timeliness of project execution. Describe any cost- or time-saving measures put in place in attempting to bring the project to a successful conclusion within its programmed (and revised) budget and (extended) time. Wherever possible, compare the cost and time over results ratios of the project with that of other similar projects. Give special attention to efforts by the project teams to make use of / build upon pre-existing institutions, agreements and partnerships, data sources, synergies and complementarities with other initiatives, programmes and projects etc. to increase project efficiency.
 - e. *Review of Outcomes to Impacts (ROtI):* Reconstruct the logical pathways from project outputs over achieved objectives towards impacts, taking into account performance and impact drivers, assumptions and the roles and capacities of key actors and stakeholders, using the methodology presented in the GEF Evaluation

Office's ROTl Practitioner's Handbook³⁵ (summarized in Annex 6 of the TORs). Appreciate to what extent the project has to date contributed, and is likely in the future to further contribute to changes in stakeholder behaviour as regards to promoting the attainment of project objectives and making progress towards impacts.

Sustainability and catalytic role

26. **Sustainability** is understood as the probability of continued long-term project-derived results and impacts after the external project funding and assistance ends. The evaluation will identify and assess the key conditions or factors that are likely to undermine or contribute to the persistence of benefits. Some of these factors might be direct results of the project while others will include contextual circumstances or developments that are not under control of the project but that may condition sustainability of benefits. The evaluation should ascertain to what extent follow-up work has been initiated and how project results will be sustained and enhanced over time. Application of the ROTl method will assist in the evaluation of sustainability.
27. Four aspects of sustainability will be addressed:
- a. *Socio-political sustainability.* Are there any social or political factors that may influence positively or negatively the sustenance of project results and progress towards impacts? Is the level of ownership by the main national and regional stakeholders sufficient to allow for the project results to be sustained? Are there sufficient government and stakeholder awareness, interests, commitment and incentives to execute, enforce and pursue the programmes, plans, agreements, monitoring systems etc. prepared and agreed upon under the project?
 - b. *Financial resources.* To what extent are the continuation of project results and the eventual impact of the project dependent on continued financial support? What is the likelihood that adequate financial resources³⁶ will be or will become available to implement the programmes, plans, agreements, monitoring systems etc. prepared and agreed upon under the project? Are there any financial risks that may jeopardize sustenance of project results and onward progress towards impact? How financially sustainable are the regional activity centres?
 - c. *Institutional framework.* To what extent is the sustenance of the results and onward progress towards impact dependent on issues relating to institutional frameworks and governance? How robust are the institutional achievements such as governance structures and processes, policies, sub-regional agreements, legal and accountability frameworks etc. required to sustaining project results and to lead those to impact on human behaviour and environmental resources?
 - d. *Environmental sustainability.* Are there any environmental factors, positive or negative, that can influence the future flow of project benefits? Are there any project outputs or higher level results that are likely to affect the environment, which, in turn, might affect sustainability of project benefits?
28. **Catalytic Role and Replication.** The *catalytic role* of UNEP is embodied in its approach of supporting the creation of an enabling environment and of investing in activities which are innovative and showing how new approaches and market changes can work. UNEP and other partners also aim to support activities that upscale new approaches to a national, regional or global level, with a view to achieve sustainable global environmental benefits. The evaluation will assess the catalytic role played by this project, namely to what extent the project has:

³⁵ http://www.thegef.org/gef/sites/thegef.org/files/documents/Impact_Eval-Review_of_Outcomes_to_Impacts-Rotl_handbook.pdf

³⁶ Those resources can be from multiple sources, such as the public and private sectors, income generating activities, other development projects etc.

- a. *catalyzed behavioural changes* in terms of use and application by the relevant stakeholders of: i) technologies and approaches show-cased by the demonstration projects; ii) strategic programmes and plans developed; and iii) assessment, monitoring and management systems established at a national and sub-regional level;
 - b. provided *incentives* (social, economic, market based, competencies etc.) to contribute to catalyzing changes in stakeholder behaviour;
 - c. contributed to *institutional changes*. To what extent have the project activities contributed to changing institutional behaviour;
 - d. contributed to *policy changes* (on paper and in implementation of policy);
 - e. contributed to sustained follow-on financing (*catalytic financing*) from Governments or other donors;
 - f. created opportunities for particular individuals or institutions ("*champions*") to catalyze change (without which the project would not have achieved all of its results).
29. *Replication*, in the context of UNEP projects, is defined as lessons and experiences coming out of the project that are replicated (experiences are repeated and lessons applied in different geographic areas) or scaled up (experiences are repeated and lessons applied in the same geographic area but on a much larger scale and funded by other sources). What are the factors that may influence replication and scaling up of project experiences and lessons? In this particular case, the evaluation will assess how the project has made sure that plans, programmes, institutions, agreements and management systems developed are going to be put to good use in the subsequent project(s).

Processes affecting attainment of project results

30. **Preparation and Readiness.** Were the project's objectives and components clear, practicable and feasible within its timeframe? Were the capacities of executing agencies properly considered when the project was designed? Was the project document clear and realistic to enable effective and efficient implementation? Were the partnership arrangements properly identified and the roles and responsibilities negotiated prior to project implementation? Were counterpart resources (funding, staff, and facilities) and enabling legislation assured? Were adequate project management arrangements in place? Were lessons from other relevant projects properly incorporated in the project design? Were lessons learned and recommendations from Steering Committee meetings or its equivalent adequately integrated in the project approach? What factors influenced the quality-at-entry of the project design, choice of partners, allocation of financial resources etc.?
31. **Implementation Approach and Management.** This includes an analysis of approaches used by the project, its management framework, the project's adaptation to changing conditions (adaptive management), the performance of the implementation arrangements and partnerships, relevance of changes in project design, and overall performance of project management. The evaluation will:
- a. Ascertain to what extent the project implementation mechanisms outlined in the project document have been followed and were effective in delivering project outputs and outcomes. Were pertinent adaptations made to the approaches originally proposed?
 - b. Assess the role and performance of the units and committees established and the project execution arrangements at all levels.

- c. Evaluate the effectiveness and efficiency of project management by UNEP DRC/ROE and other relevant UNEP Divisions, the Council of Europe, and other partners; and how well the management was able to adapt to changes during the life of the project. How well did the relationship between UNEP, the Council of Europe, the Secretariat of CBD and other partners work?
 - d. Assess the extent to which project management responded to direction and guidance provided by the Steering Committee or its equivalent and UNEP supervision recommendations.
 - e. Identify administrative, operational and/or technical problems and constraints that influenced the effective implementation of the project, and how the project partners tried to overcome these problems.
32. **Stakeholder³⁷ Participation and Public Awareness.** The term stakeholder should be considered in the broadest sense, encompassing project partners, government institutions, private interest groups, local communities etc. The assessment will look at three related and often overlapping processes: (1) information dissemination between stakeholders, (2) consultation between stakeholders, and (3) active engagement of stakeholders in project decision making and activities. The evaluation will specifically assess:
- a. the approach(es) used to identify and engage stakeholders in project design and implementation. What were the strengths and weaknesses of these approaches with respect to the project's objectives and the stakeholders' motivations and capacities? What was the achieved degree and effectiveness of collaboration and interactions between the various project partners and stakeholders during the course of implementation of the project?
 - b. the degree and effectiveness of any public awareness activities that were undertaken during the course of implementation of the project; or that are built into the assessment methods so that public awareness can be raised at the time the assessments will be conducted;
 - c. how the results of the project (secretariat support, documents, meetings, cooperative frameworks, etc.) engage project users' communities and their institutions in protection of biological and landscape diversity through effective action at local, regional, hemispheric and global scales.
33. The ROTI analysis should assist the consultants in identifying the key stakeholders and their respective roles, capabilities and motivations in each step of the causal pathway from activities to achievement of outputs and objectives to impact.
34. **Country Ownership and Driven-ness.** This is the relevance of the project to national development and environmental agendas, recipient country commitment, and regional and international agreements. The evaluation will:
- a. Assess the level of country ownership. Specifically, the evaluator should assess whether the project was effective in providing and communicating information on the biological and landscape diversity that catalysed action to improve decisions relating to their conservation and sustainable management in the Pan-European countries.
 - b. Assess the level of commitment within the Pan-European countries to the implementation of the Pan-European Biological and Landscape Diversity Strategy and thereby the Convention on Biological Diversity and other biodiversity related international treaties.

³⁷ Stakeholders are the individuals, groups, institutions, or other bodies that have an interest or stake in the outcome of the project. The term also applies to those potentially adversely affected by the project.

35. **Financial Planning and Management.** Evaluation of financial planning requires assessment of the quality and effectiveness of financial planning and control of financial resources throughout the project's lifetime. The assessment will look at actual project costs by activities compared to budget (variances), financial management (including disbursement issues), and co-financing. The evaluation will:
- a. Verify the application of proper standards (clarity, transparency, audit etc.) and timeliness of financial planning, management and reporting to ensure that sufficient and timely financial resources were available to the project and its partners;
 - b. Appreciate other administrative processes such as recruitment of staff, procurement of goods and services (including consultants), preparation and negotiation of cooperation agreements etc. to the extent that these might have influenced project performance;
 - c. Present to what extent co-financing has materialized as expected at project approval. Report co-financing to the project overall, and to support project activities at the national level in particular. The evaluation will provide a breakdown of final actual costs and co-financing for the different project components (see Annex 3).
 - d. Describe the resources the project has leveraged since inception and indicate how these resources are **contributing to the project's ultimate objective**. Leveraged resources are additional resources—beyond those committed to the project itself at the time of approval—that are mobilized later as a direct result of the project. Leveraged resources can be financial or in-kind and they may be from other donors, NGO's, foundations, governments, communities or the private sector.
36. **UNEP Supervision and Backstopping.** The purpose of supervision is to verify the quality and timeliness of project execution in terms of finances, administration and achievement of outputs, in order to identify and recommend ways to deal with problems which arise during project execution. Such problems may be related to project management but may also involve technical/institutional substantive issues in which UNEP has a major contribution to make. The evaluator should assess the effectiveness of supervision and administrative and financial support provided by UNEP including:
- a. The adequacy of project supervision plans, inputs and processes;
 - b. The emphasis given to outcome monitoring (results-based project management);
 - c. The realism and candour of project reporting and ratings;
 - d. The quality of documentation of project supervision activities; and
 - e. Financial, administrative and other fiduciary aspects of project implementation supervision.
37. **Monitoring and Evaluation.** The evaluation will include an assessment of the quality, application and effectiveness of project monitoring and evaluation plans and tools, including an assessment of risk management based on the assumptions and risks identified in the project document. The evaluation will assess how information generated by the M&E system during project implementation was used to adapt and improve project execution, achievement of outcomes and ensuring sustainability. M&E is assessed on three levels:
- a. *M&E Design.* Projects should have sound M&E plans to monitor results and track progress towards achieving project objectives. An M&E plan should include a baseline (including data, methodology, etc.). SMART indicators and data analysis systems, and evaluation studies at specific times to assess results. The time frame for various M&E activities and standards for outputs should have been specified. The evaluators should use the following questions to help assess the M&E design aspects:

- Quality of the project logframe as a planning and monitoring instrument; analyse/compare logframe in Project Document, revised logframe and logframe used in Project Implementation Review reports to report progress towards achieving project objectives;
 - SMART-ness of indicators: Are there specific indicators in the logframe for each of the project objectives? Are the indicators measurable, attainable (realistic) and relevant to the objectives? Are the indicators time-bound?
 - Adequacy of baseline information: To what extent has baseline information on performance indicators been collected and presented in a clear manner? Was the methodology for the baseline data collection explicit and reliable?
 - Arrangements for monitoring: Have the responsibilities for M&E activities been clearly defined? Were the data sources and data collection instruments appropriate? Was the frequency of various monitoring activities specified and adequate? In how far were project users involved in monitoring?
 - Arrangements for evaluation: Have specific targets been specified for project outputs? Has the desired level of achievement been specified for all indicators of objectives and outcomes? Were there adequate provisions in the legal instruments binding project partners to fully collaborate in evaluations?
 - Budgeting and funding for M&E activities: Determine whether support for M&E was budgeted adequately and was funded in a timely fashion during implementation.
- b. *M&E Plan Implementation*. The evaluation will verify that:
- the M&E system was operational and facilitated timely tracking of results and progress towards projects objectives throughout the project implementation period;
 - annual project reports and Progress Implementation Review (PIR) reports were complete, accurate and with well justified ratings;
 - the information provided by the M&E system was used during the project to improve project performance and to adapt to changing needs;
 - projects had an M&E system in place with proper training, instruments and resources for parties responsible for M&E.
- c. *Budgeting and funding for M&E activities*. The evaluation should determine whether support for M&E was budgeted adequately and was funded in a timely fashion during implementation.

Complementarities with the UNEP strategies and programmes

38. UNEP aims to undertake funded projects that are aligned with its own strategies. The evaluation should present a brief narrative on the following issues:
- a. *Linkage to UNEP's Expected Accomplishments and POW 2010-2011*. The UNEP MTS specifies desired results in six thematic focal areas. The desired results are termed Expected Accomplishments. Using the completed ROtI analysis, the evaluation should comment on whether the project makes a tangible contribution to any of the Expected Accomplishments specified in the UNEP MTS. The magnitude and extent of any contributions and the causal linkages should be fully described. Whilst it is recognised that UNEP projects designed prior to the production of the UNEP Medium Term Strategy (MTS)³⁸/ Programme of Work (POW) 2010/11 would not necessarily be aligned with the Expected Accomplishments articulated in those documents, complementarities may still exist.
 - b. *Alignment with the Bali Strategic Plan (BSP)*³⁹. The outcomes and achievements of the project should be briefly discussed in relation to the objectives of the UNEP BSP.

³⁸ <http://www.unep.org/PDF/FinalMTSGCSS-X-8.pdf>

³⁹ <http://www.unep.org/GC/GC23/documents/GC23-6-add-1.pdf>

- c. *Gender*. Ascertain to what extent project design, implementation and monitoring have taken into consideration: (i) possible gender inequalities in access to and the control over natural resources; (ii) specific vulnerabilities of women and children to environmental degradation or disasters; and (iii) the role of women in mitigating or adapting to environmental changes and engaging in environmental protection and rehabilitation. Appreciate whether the intervention is likely to have any lasting differential impacts on gender equality and the relationship between women and the environment. To what extent do unresolved gender inequalities affect sustainability of project benefits?
- d. *South-South Cooperation*. This is regarded as the exchange of resources, technology, and knowledge between developing countries. Briefly describe any aspects of the project that could be considered as examples of South-South Cooperation.

E. The Consultants' Team

- 39. Candidates to undertake this evaluation should have proven experience in the evaluation of projects and programmes, and experience in project management related to environmental governance and biodiversity conservation and sustainable use. They should also have experience in working in/with pan-European countries in the area of environmental management and biological and landscape diversity conservation and sustainable use. Candidates should have in-depth knowledge of the Convention on Biological Diversity and experience with the implementation of the Convention on Biological Diversity or other biodiversity-related MEAs at national, regional and international level is an advantage – particularly within the pan-European Region
- 40. Advanced university degree in science, environment, or relevant discipline is required and the candidates should have at least fifteen years of work experience and practical knowledge in the environmental field, preferably in biodiversity. Good interpersonal and communication skills are required to be able to convey complicated messages in a concise and understandable way. Candidates should also have an analytical mind, be organized and structured and have excellent oral and written communications skills. Fluency in oral and written English is required.
- 41. By undersigning the service contract with UNEP/UNON, the consultant certifies that (s)he has not been associated with the design and implementation of the project in any way which may jeopardize his/her independence and impartiality towards project achievements and project partner performance. In addition, they will not have any future interests (within six months after completion of their contract) with the project's executing or implementing units.

F. Evaluation Deliverables and Review Procedures

- 42. The Consultant will, after an initial telephone briefing with the UNEP Evaluation Office and the UNEP Project Manager, conduct initial desk review work and prepare and submit an inception report to the UNEP Evaluation Office. The inception report should be approved by the UNEP Evaluation Office before starting fieldwork or desk based phone/email interviews.
- 43. The inception report lays the foundations for the main evaluation. Its purpose is to develop an evaluation framework that includes:
 - a. A review of the quality of project design to help identify how project design impacts on project implementation and performance;
 - b. An analysis of the project's theory of change, creating a baseline which can be used to assess the actual project outcomes and impacts (expected and unexpected) during field visits and interviews;

- c. A detailed plan for the evaluation process.
44. The main components of the inception report are:
- Review of the Quality of Project Design: The review of project design is done on the basis of the project document and log frame. The Consultant should also familiarize her/himself with the history and wider context of the project (details available on UNEP and the project website, documentation from past projects etc). The analysis should be used to complete the 'Template for assessment of the quality of project design' (in the Annex 7 of the TORs). The rating system follows the Evaluation ratings used for the main evaluation (also described in the annex of the TORs).
 - Theory of Change Analysis: Annex 6 of the TORs on Introduction to Theory of Change/Impact pathways, the ROTI Method and the ROTI results score sheet describes in details the Theory of Change approach. The Theory of Change analysis should be captured in a Theory of Change diagram, found in the annex. The diagram can be shared with project stakeholders in the course of the evaluation, as tool to aid discussion. Please note that the ratings requested in the annex are not needed in the inception report's Theory of Change analysis. The consultant should complete the ratings after the field visits/interviews. The ToC diagram and ratings should be incorporated in final evaluation report.
 - Evaluation Process Plan: The evaluation process plan is based on a review of the project design, theory of change analysis and also of all the project documentation (listed in TORs). The evaluation plan should include: summary of evaluation questions/areas to be explored/questions raised through document review; description of evaluation methodologies to be used.; list of data sources, indicators; list of individuals to be consulted; detailed distribution of roles and responsibilities among evaluation consultants (for larger evaluation teams); revised logistics (selection of sites to be visited)/dates of evaluation activities.
45. The main evaluation report should be brief (no longer than 35 pages – excluding the executive summary and annexes), to the point and written in plain English. The report will follow the annotated Table of Contents outlined in Annex 1. It must explain the purpose of the evaluation, exactly what was evaluated and the methods used (with their limitations). The report will present evidence-based and balanced findings, consequent conclusions, lessons and recommendations, which will be cross-referenced to each other. The report should be presented in a way that makes the information accessible and comprehensible. Any dissident views in response to evaluation findings will be appended in footnote or annex as appropriate.
46. **Review of the draft evaluation report.** The consultant will submit the zero draft report on 22 May 2013 to the UNEP Evaluation Office and revise the draft following the comments and suggestions made by the Evaluation Office. The Evaluation Office will then share the first draft report with the UNEP/ROE and other relevant UNEP Divisions for review and comments. The UNEP/ROE will forward the first draft report to the other project stakeholders. Stakeholders may provide feedback on any errors of fact and may highlight the significance of such errors in any conclusions. Comments would be expected within two weeks after the draft report has been shared. Any comments or responses to the draft report will be sent to the UNEP Evaluation Office for collation. The Evaluation Office will provide the comments to the consultant in preparing the final draft report. The consultant will submit the final draft report no later than 2 weeks after reception of stakeholder comments. The consultant will prepare a response to all comments that contradict the findings of the evaluation and could therefore not be accommodated in the final report. This response will be shared by the Evaluation Office with the interested stakeholders to ensure full transparency.
47. Consultations will be held between the consultant, Evaluation Office staff, the UNEP/ROE and key members of the project execution team. These consultations will seek feedback on the proposed recommendations and lessons.

48. **Submission of the final evaluation report:** The final report shall be submitted by email to:

Mr. Segbedzi Norgbey, Head
UNEP Evaluation Office
P.O. Box 30552-00100
Nairobi, Kenya
Tel.: (+254-20) 762 3387
Email: segbedzi.norgbey@unep.org

49. The Head of Evaluation will share the report with the following persons:

Ms. Tomoko Nishimoto
Director
Division of Regional Cooperation (DRC)
United Nations Environment Programme
P.O. Box 30552
Nairobi
Tel: 254-20-7623519 / 4153
Email: tomoko.nishimoto@unep.org

Mr. Bakary Kante
Director
Division of Environmental Law and Conventions
United Nations Environment Programme
P.O. Box 30552
Nairobi
Tel: 254-20-7624011
Email: Bakary.Kante@unep.org

Mr. Jan Dusik
Deputy Director and Officer-in-Charge
Regional Office for Europe (ROE)
United Nations Environment Programme
11-13, chemin des Anemones
CH-1219 Chatelaine, Geneva

Mr. Thierry Lucas
Project Manager
Liaison Office to the European Union
United Nations Environment Programme
Rue Montoyer 14
1000 Brussels
Tel: 32-2-213-30-56
Email: thierry.lucas@unep.org

50. The final evaluation report will be published on the UNEP Evaluation Office web-site www.unep.org/eou and may be printed in hard copy.

51. As per usual practice, the UNEP Evaluation Office will prepare a quality assessment of the zero draft and final draft report, which is a tool for providing structured feedback to the evaluation consultants. The quality of the report will be assessed and rated against UNEP criteria as presented in Annex 4.
52. The UNEP Evaluation Office will also prepare a commentary on the final evaluation report, which presents the Evaluation Office ratings of the project based on a careful review of the evidence collated by the evaluation team and the internal consistency of the report.

Resources and Schedule of the Evaluation

53. This final evaluation will be undertaken by an international evaluator contracted by the Evaluation Office, UNEP. The contract for the evaluator will begin 12 March 2013 and end on 20 May 2013 (7 weeks spread over 10 weeks) desk review, inception report, field visits to selected countries and report writing). The evaluator will submit a draft report on 22 May 2013 to UNEP Evaluation Office and the Chief of the Evaluation Office will share the draft report as described under the “review of the draft evaluation report” – section above. Any comments or responses to the draft report will be sent to UNEP Evaluation Office within two weeks for collation and the consultant will be advised of any necessary revisions. Comments to the final draft report will be sent to the consultant by 6 May 2013 after which, the consultant will submit the final report no later than 22 May 2013.
54. The consultant will travel to Brussels, Geneva, Zagreb and Tbilisi to meet with the UNEP Liaison Office for the European Union, UNEP Regional Office for Europe, representatives of the European Commission and other relevant stakeholders. The consultant will attend the Biodiversity in Europe Conference in Georgia on 15-19 April 2013 to meet with project stakeholders and present preliminary findings of the evaluation.

Schedule of Payment

55. One of the following two contract options will be used:
56. Lump-Sum Option:
 - The evaluator will receive an initial payment covering the travel costs upon signature of the contract. A further 40% will be paid upon acceptance of the draft report. A final payment of 60% will be made upon satisfactory completion of work. The fee is payable under the individual Special Service Agreement (SSA) of the evaluator and is **inclusive** of all expenses such as travel, accommodation and incidental expenses.
57. Fee-only Option
 - The evaluator will receive an initial payment of 40% of the total amount due upon acceptance of the draft report. Final payment of 60% will be made upon acceptance and satisfactory completion of work. The fee is payable under the individual SSAs of the evaluator and is **NOT** inclusive of all expenses such as travel, accommodation and incidental expenses. Ticket and DSA will be paid separately.
58. In case, the evaluator cannot provide the products in accordance with the TORs, the timeframe agreed, or his products are substandard, the payment to the evaluator could be withheld, until such a time the products are modified to meet UNEP's standard. In case the evaluator fails to submit a satisfactory final product to UNEP, the product prepared by the evaluator may not constitute the evaluation report.

Annex II. List of individuals interviewed for the evaluation

Mr. Thierry Lucas, PEBLDS Secretariat, UNEP, ROE, Brussels Office

Mr. Robert Lamb, Senior Programme Officer UNEP, Environment Management Group, former chairman of PEBLDS Council

Ms. Ivonne Higuero, Programme Coordinator, UNEP ROE

Mr. Fritz Schlingemann, former Head of UNEP ROE

Mr. Carlos Martin-Novella, Senior Adviser MEAs, UNEP

Mr. Eladio Fernandez Galiano, Head of Division, Council of Europe

Mr. Tobias Salathe, Programme Officer, Secretariat of the Ramsar Convention

Mr. Francois Wakenhut, Head of Unit, European Commission

Mr. Leo Maier, Policy Officer, European Commission

Ms. Anne Teller, Policy Officer, European Commission

Ms. Milena Novakova, Policy Officer, Bern Convention focal point, EU Commission

Mr. Andreas Obrecht, Senior Policy Adviser, PEBLDS focal point, Ministry of Environment, Switzerland

Ms. Tone Solhaug, Ministry of Environment, Norway

Ms. Ana Kobašić, Head of Service, Ministry of Environmental and Nature Protection Nature Protection Directorate, Croatia

Ms. Marina von Weissenberg, Ministerial Adviser, Ministry of the Environment, Finland

Mr. Horst Korn, Head of Unit, Agency for Nature Conservation, Germany

Mr. Peter W. Bos, Senior Executive Officer, Directorate for Nature, Ministry of Economic Affairs, Agriculture and Innovation, Netherlands

Ms. Shirin Karryeva, Technical Adviser, Ministry of Nature Protection, Turkmenistan

Ms. Victoria Elias, Chair of the Pan-European Biodiversity Platform, Ministry of Natural Resources and Environment, Russia, WWF Russia

Mr. Hans Friedrich former Head of IUCN Regional office for Europe

Mr. Andras Krolopp, former Senior Policy Adviser, CEEweb

Ms. Veronika Kiss, Project Coordinator, CEEweb

Mr. Rob Wolters, Director, ECNC

Interviews took place during visits to Brussels, Belgium and Geneva and Gland, Switzerland in March 2013, during the 6th Biodiversity in Europe Conference in Batumi, Georgia in April 2013 and via telephone and skype.

Annex III. Brief CV of the evaluator

Christian Prip is of Danish nationality and from June 2013 he has been appointed Senior Policy Analyst at the Fridtjof Nansen Institute in Oslo, Norway with specific focus on environmental policy and law. Before that he was a self-employed consultant with assignments for UNEP and the German Society for International Cooperation (GIZ). Christian Prip has a long career as Senior International Adviser in the Danish Ministry of Environment with special responsibility for international cooperation in the field of biodiversity and natural resources. During 2012 he was lead negotiator and coordinator for the EU in international negotiations on biodiversity including at the 11th Conference of the Parties to the Convention on Biological Diversity (CBD COP 11). From 2005-7 he held the position as chairman of the CBD Subsidiary Body on Scientific, Technical and Technological Advice (SBSTTA). Christian Prip has also served as a Research Fellow and Project Manager for the United Nations University – Institute of Advanced Studies where he conducted a comprehensive assessment of the preparation, content, adequacy, and effectiveness of existing National Biodiversity Strategies and Action Plans (NBSAPs). The project was presented at the CBD COP 10 in 2010. Christian Prip has chaired and facilitated workshops and seminars, written and edited reports, provided policy advice and drafted speeches and articles for several Danish Ministers for the Environment. Christian Prip has a master degree in law. Until 2009 he was an Associate Professor at the University of Copenhagen and ran a course for international students in international environmental law.

Annex IV. Chair's Conclusions and Outcome of the 6th Biodiversity in Europe Conference, 15 – 18 April, 2013, Batumi, Georgia

Executive Summary

Batumi, Georgia, 15-18 April 2013

The Sixth Biodiversity in Europe Conference brought together over 120 participants, including representatives from 30 countries, the European Commission, NGO's, the private sector, and scientists from the pan-European region to exchange views and expertise and to provide input about the future of pan-European biodiversity cooperation towards the implementation of the global Strategic Plan for Biodiversity 2011-2020 and the Pan-European 2020 Strategy for Biodiversity.

The Conference was marked by good spirit and an eagerness to reconfirm the necessity of a pan-European platform to facilitate cooperation and to encourage technical exchange and transfer of expertise as stated in the outcome of the Sixth Biodiversity in Europe Conference. The conference was organised in the framework of the Pan-European Biological and Landscape Diversity Strategy (PEBLDS).

This Conference was a turning point as countries took advantage of the momentum provided by the active support of Georgia in organising and hosting the conference as well as the increasing involvement of countries from South-Eastern Europe, Eastern Europe, Caucasus, and Central Asia to engage in the new process and to commit to those changes.

Countries from the region agreed to strengthen pan-European cooperation and capacity to implement the Pan-European 2020 Strategy for Biodiversity and the Strategic Plan for Biodiversity 2011-2020 by:

- Encouraging and facilitating the technical exchange and transfer of expertise at a pan-European level for the recognition and mainstreaming of biodiversity values into decision-making, at various levels of governance. The TEEB Scoping Study in Georgia is an inspiration for countries within the region to begin their own TEEB processes.
- Building capacity to implement NBSAPs and monitor progress towards the Aichi Targets, including through a forum to provide best practices and share technical capacity on the development and use of indicators and monitoring
- Recognizing the full potential of IPBES and by affirming its commitment to provide an inclusive and broad participation from the whole pan-European region and proposes a sub-global assessment in part of pan-European region
- Strengthening the synergies amongst the six biodiversity-related Conventions (CBD, RAMSAR, CITES, CMS, ITPGR, WHC), towards the implementation of the Strategic Plan at national, regional and global level, with the view to support and enhance coordination of national focal points in the four following thematic areas: (i) activities related with IPBES notably on scientific assessments (ii) harmonizing policy and relevant indicators, (iii) national reporting, and (iv) resource mobilization
- Recognizing the valuable contribution of stakeholders especially NGOs, business and academia towards the successful implementation of the Pan-European 2020 Strategy for Biodiversity and further encouraging continued pan-European biodiversity cooperation in order to facilitate the mainstreaming of biodiversity across sectors
- Strengthening the voice of pan-Europe in global biodiversity processes, including the CBD, the Intergovernmental Science-Policy Platform on Biodiversity and Ecosystem Services (IPBES), the NBSAP Forum, the BIP, and InforMEA
- Reviewing the progress made in achieving the implementation of the Pan-European 2020 Strategy for Biodiversity and the Strategic Plan for Biodiversity 2011-2020

The Chair of the PEBLDS would like to warmly thank the Government and the people of Georgia, and in particular Her Excellency Khatuna Gogaladze Minister of Environment Protection of Georgia, for the excellent organisation and

hosting of this Conference. The Chair would like to also thank the governments of Switzerland and Norway, the Convention on Biological Diversity (CBD) Japan Trust Fund and the German International Cooperation (GIZ) for their financial support and to express my gratitude to the United Nations Environment Programme (UNEP) for the support and close collaboration in organising this conference.

Annex

CHAIR'S CONCLUSIONS 6TH INTERGOVERNMENTAL CONFERENCE BIODIVERSITY IN EUROPE Batumi, Georgia, 15-18 April 2013

This document is the Chair's summary of the results of the 6th Intergovernmental Biodiversity in Europe Conference that took place from 15 to 18 April 2013 in Batumi, Georgia

Introduction

The Sixth Biodiversity in Europe Conference brought together over 120 participants, including representatives from 30 countries, the European Commission, NGO's, the private sector, and scientists from the pan-European region to exchange views and expertise and provide input to the future of pan-European biodiversity cooperation towards the implementation of the global Strategic Plan for Biodiversity 2011-2020 and the Pan-European 2020 Strategy for Biodiversity.

This Conference was a turning point as countries took advantage of the momentum provided by the active support of Georgia in organising and hosting the conference as well as the increasing involvement of countries from South-Eastern Europe, Eastern Europe, Caucasus, and Central Asia to engage in the new process and to commit to those changes.

The Conference proposed that the PEBLDS should evolve in the Pan-European Biodiversity Platform serviced by a Secretariat and under the leadership of a Steering Committee. This Committee will have the task of prioritising key areas of focus for regional cooperation and for endorsing actions and activities that fall within these areas.

The Conference concluded and recommended the following:

Pan-European Cooperation – the future of biodiversity in pan-Europe

The Conference highlighted:

1. The potential of the pan-European Biodiversity Platform to contribute to the implementation of the global Strategic Plan for Biodiversity 2011-2020 and recognise the important role of countries who have supported the pan-European Biodiversity Platform and ensured its continuation over time.
2. The common nature of threats facing biodiversity within the region, especially those linked to economic development. Business and Biodiversity and TEEB-related initiatives that highlight the value of natural capital can help pan-European countries to contribute to a more sustainable future.
3. The importance of bilateral instruments through individual countries and through the European Union (EU), in particular the EU Neighbourhood policy with Eastern Partnership, the EU–Central Asia Strategy, and the EU-Russia Environmental Dialogue and other relevant committees addressing biodiversity issues, as a way to foster cooperation between the EU and South-Eastern Europe (SEE), Eastern Europe, Caucasus, Central Asia (EECCA) countries.
4. The importance of multi-stakeholder and cross-sectoral involvement to implement the Strategic Plan for Biodiversity 2011-2020 and to achieve sustainable development goals through sectoral integration, keeping up the momentum from Rio+20 to ensure that the environmental dimension of sustainable development is fully reflected in these goals. The potential of existing processes such as IPBES, the NBSAP Forum, InforMEA, the BIP, and other initiatives for pan-Europe. The region can not only contribute to these processes, it can also benefit from the expertise available through these processes.
5. Taking advantage of the UNEP Governing Council Decision UNEP/GC/27/2 that calls for the implementation of paragraph 88 of the outcome document of Rio+20 by strengthening UNEP's regional presence in order to assist countries in the implementation of their national environmental programmes, policies and plans and increasing UNEP's participation in UN Country Teams

The Conference recommended that:

6. The pan-European Biodiversity Platform, after consultation with the Steering Committee, serve as a platform to exchange on the actions to be taken as a follow-up to the biodiversity-related MEA COP decisions and agree on pan-European and sub-regional priorities to be voiced at global level.
7. The pan-European Biodiversity Platform, after consultation with the Steering Committee, serve as a platform for **strengthening synergies amongst MEA's and for streamlining reporting to the biodiversity-related MEA's**.
8. A clear set of indicators needs to be agreed on and coordinated amongst countries, consistent with global processes, in order to evaluate progress.

TEEB in pan-Europe

TEEB Country Studies are in-depth examinations to identify ways to 'work with nature' to meet specific policy priorities and thematic concerns of the country. Recommendations may cover a large spectrum, including recommendations for land management to improve water quality, restoring natural infrastructure for storm protection, subsidy reform in the agricultural sector to improve food security and natural capital accounting to inform investment and tax policies.

The Conference highlighted:

9. The Government of Georgia proposed to become a pilot country for a study to be carried out during the implementation phase of TEEB. The Scoping Study, the first to be initiated in the EECCA region, is a first step towards a full TEEB for Georgia study and was developed with the input of several ministries, NGOs and other stakeholders, including academia.
10. **The UK National Ecosystem Assessment was the first analysis of the UK's natural environment in terms of the benefits it provides to society and continuing economic prosperity.** The UK is successfully using this study as the basis for policy, as seen by the publication of a White Paper on *"The Natural Choice: Securing the Value of Nature"*. A Natural Capital Committee has furthermore been established to provide independent expert advice on the state of English natural capital.
11. The inception of several TEEB processes in the EU, including the publication of a TEEB-Nordic Study, which has allowed the region to explore possible areas for Nordic cooperation.
12. Efforts underway in the business community towards the uptake of natural capital accounting, as seen by the launch of the TEEB for Business Coalition.

The Conference recommended:

13. To encourage and facilitate the technical exchange and transfer of expertise at a pan-European level for the recognition and mainstreaming of biodiversity values into decision-making, at various levels of governance. The TEEB Scoping Study in Georgia is an inspiration for countries within the region to begin their own TEEB processes. At EU level, the Mapping and Assessment of Ecosystems and their Services in Europe (MAES) is one of the key actions of the EU Biodiversity Strategy to 2020 to inform policy decisions and policy implementation in policy areas dependent on ecosystems and their services, such as nature and biodiversity, territorial cohesion, agriculture, forestry and fisheries, and it can be an inspiration for the pan-European level.
14. To ensure strong synergies between TEEB, NBSAP revision and other relevant processes. The NBSAP revision process can, in particular, help identify key policy issues which will help refine the objectives of a TEEB country study.
15. To promote natural capital accounting at country and corporate levels, including by taking into consideration the 50:50 Initiative of the Wealth Accounting and the Valuation of Ecosystem Services (WAVES) global partnership as well as the Natural Capital Declaration.

16. To communicate pan-European TEEB processes and other assessment activities, including Sub Global Assessments, and exchange experience and results at relevant platforms and fora.

Financing biodiversity

Resource mobilisation is a vitally important issue for governments when planning their NBSAPs to facilitate their implementation. The conference recognised the need to ensure that key ministries within the different levels of government understand the value of nature and are committed to integrating NBSAPs into their policies and decision making, and providing the resources needed to implement them. It was also noted that, although government funding is required, it will not suffice to reach the Aichi Targets. Other sources, such as funding schemes and the private sector, are vital to any resource mobilisation strategy.

The conference recommended that countries:

17. Develop a resource mobilisation strategy or plan to support the implementation of their NBSAPs. This can be achieved by:

- Estimating the value of current biodiversity and associated ecosystem services;
- Estimating existing levels of expenditure on maintaining and restoring biodiversity and associated ecosystem services;
- Estimating current rate of loss/degradation of biodiversity and associated ecosystem services;
- Estimating the costs of reversing any negative trends reported;
- Calculating of the “gap” between the loss of biodiversity and the costs of reversing this loss to determine funding needs;
- Exploring the potential to expand existing funding sources and introduce innovative and emerging financial mechanisms to bridge the gap.

Take full benefit of the upcoming EU Multiannual Financial Framework to prioritise biodiversity and sustainable ecosystem management into national action plans through:

- Development Cooperation Instrument (DCI)
- Geographic programmes incl. Central Asia
- Thematic programme Global Public Goods
- European Neighbourhood Instrument (ENI)
- Instrument for Pre-Accession Assistance (IPA II)

18. Implement policies that phase out harmful subsidies, create positive incentives, and call for the investment of revenues from taxes and other mechanisms into additional biodiversity actions.

19. Develop long-term financing through sub-regional or regional funds as a key mechanism to improve the environmentally sustainable land use in ecological corridors. For example, the Caucasus Ecological Corridor Fund, building on the success of the Caucasus Nature Fund, will involve key stakeholders and will be implemented over an extended period of time (10 to 15 years).

20. Engage with the private sector, and their suppliers, in order to reduce natural capital risk. The private sector has the capacity and need to mobilise a great deal of resources and to reduce their impact on the environment. Natural capital impacts leading to higher agriculture product, mineral and energy prices are having an impact on private sector profits. There is, therefore, a large incentive to manage these impacts. Furthermore, governments have the opportunity to maximise long-run economic output by:

- Identifying the distribution of natural capital risk across the economy;
- Understanding how business’ competitive position may change; and
- Developing policies that efficiently and effectively internalise these impacts before they are realised in an abrupt and costly manner.

NBSAP Revision and implementation

All Parties represented expect to finalise their NBSAPs in time for submission before CBD COP12 in late 2014 after adoption at the level of Cabinet of Ministers. To date, some good progress has been made by countries in pan-Europe who have established Steering Committees or equivalent to coordinate the revision process after their stakeholder identification processes. Furthermore, most Parties have begun a stocktaking process including a review of implementation of prior NBSAPs, status of biodiversity, and identification of negative drivers.

Although some Parties have already set targets for their NBSAPs, all recognised that setting SMART targets and mapping these to the global Aichi Biodiversity Targets remains a significant challenge. These targets are important to ensuring that implementation of revised NBSAPs can be monitored (and reported) quantitatively.

The Conference recommended:

21. The establishment of a pan-European NBSAP network to promote the useful exchange of experience in order to share experience and build capacity. This could perhaps be done through the emerging NBSAP Forum jointly coordinated by SCBD, UNDP, UNEP, and UNEP-WCMC.

IPBES

The Conference mandated the chair to submit input to the IPBES work-programme according to this guidance

22. The Pan-European region represents a high diversity both in biodiversity, and in readiness for providing input to the IPBES assessments.

23. The meeting sees a strong interest in improving the knowledge on biodiversity and ecosystem services in the various geographical and political parts of the pan-European area.

24. The meeting proposes that the IPBES includes a sub-global assessment for parts of this region, with a focus on areas where the available systematic knowledge on biodiversity and ecosystem services is limited.

Guidance on the geographical scope of the sub-global assessment should be given by the IPBES-MEP.

The Conference recognized the need:

25. To list ecosystem services at local and national level

26. To raise awareness on ecosystem services, especially among businesses, policy makers and citizen

27. To provide policy advice, including options, at national level

28. The Conference recalled the role of IPBES in:

- Identification and prioritization of capacity needs
- Indicating the states of biodiversity and ecosystem services and states in social structures' the link between society and nature
- Establishment of long term human welfare

Biodiversity Targets and Indicators

The setting of targets and indicators is a key step in the development and monitoring of progress towards NBSAPs, and ultimately in achieving the Aichi Biodiversity Targets. While countries within the region are at different stages in the updating or development of their NBSAPs and related indicators, there was unanimity on priorities.

The Conference recommended:

29. To conduct sub-regional and regional capacity building and technical support to address the main challenges identified for the development of indicators in the region:

- a. Funding to contribute to the development of indicators and, more importantly, to data mobilisation
- b. Working with an institution/organization that can take responsibility and support the government in the development and coordination of indicators
- c. Monitoring and data mobilisation.

30. For the pan-European Biodiversity Platform to provide a forum to exchange best practices and share technical capacity on indicators and monitoring in cooperation with the Biodiversity Indicator Partnership (BIP).

31. The development of a unified regional or sub-regional monitoring system for indicators in order to ensure consistent reporting at pan-European level.

32. To provide a set of simple common indicators, either at regional or sub-regional level that can be used and adopted nationally. These indicators should be developed based on a bottom-up approach to ensure that they respond to the national priorities reflected in updated NBSAPs and National Targets, in line with the BIP.

Strengthening Synergies

The Conference recommended:

33. Assisting countries in streamlining and /or harmonizing reporting obligations for the biodiversity related Conventions notably with the support of information data base and information systems such as InforMEA supported by UNEP.

34. Assisting countries to promote needs assessment and to mobilize financial resources through increasing coordination among national focal points to access GEF funding and other financial resources towards the implementation of the strategic plan and the six biodiversity-related conventions.

35. Promoting capacity building and participation of civil society at pan-European level in the areas described above.

Mainstreaming

- Start a discussion at Pan-European level on resource use and biodiversity, land use and biodiversity

Communication

36. Communicate the values of biodiversity outside of the biodiversity silo to broader stakeholders: through

- Collaboration with ministries of economy and education
- Stakeholder involvement in key processes such as IPBES, NBSAP revision or development, TEEB studies, etc.
- Bottom-up approaches to ensure a sense of ownership, and therefore responsibility for implementation
- The use of economic valuation to give incentive to other sectors and agencies.

Annex V. UNEP Evaluation Report Quality Assessment

Evaluation Report Title:

Supporting the Implementation of the Pan-European Biological and Landscape Diversity Strategy (PEBLDS)

All UNEP evaluation reports are subject to a quality assessment by the Evaluation Office. The quality assessment is used as a tool for providing structured feedback to the evaluation consultants. The quality of both the draft and final evaluation report is assessed and rated against the following criteria:

| Substantive report quality criteria | UNEP EO Comments | Draft Report Rating | Final Report Rating |
|---|--|---------------------|---------------------|
| A. Strategic relevance: Does the report present a well-reasoned, complete and evidence-based assessment of strategic relevance of the intervention? | Draft report: Assessment of relevance is well reasoned and evidence-based. Assessment of relevance in regards to specific country needs in the Pan-European region could be stronger. Final report: As above. | 5 | 5 |
| B. Achievement of outputs: Does the report present a well-reasoned, complete and evidence-based assessment of outputs delivered by the intervention (including their quality)? | Draft report: The assessment of achievement of outputs is moderately satisfactory and could be improved by a more detailed and qualitative assessment. Final report: As above. | 4 | 4 |
| C. Presentation Theory of Change: Is the Theory of Change of the intervention clearly presented? Are causal pathways logical and complete (including drivers, assumptions and key actors)? | Draft report: The ToC diagram does not adequately illustrate the logic of change but the narrative clarifies this to some extent. Final report: The ToC diagram is improved. | 3 | 4 |
| D. Effectiveness - Attainment of project objectives and results: Does the report present a well-reasoned, complete and evidence-based assessment of the achievement of the relevant outcomes and project objectives? | Draft report: The assessment of attainment of objectives and results is mostly complete, but could be strengthened in regards to achievement of certain outcomes. Final report: As above. | 4 | 4 |
| E. Sustainability and replication: Does the report present a well-reasoned and evidence-based assessment of sustainability of outcomes and replication / catalytic effects? | Draft report: Assessment of sustainability and replication is adequate but could be strengthened by providing a clearer separation between the project and broader PEBLDS. Final report: As above. | 5 | 5 |
| F. Efficiency: Does the report present a well-reasoned, complete and evidence-based assessment of efficiency? | Draft report: Assessment of efficiency is adequate but could be strengthened by better considering efforts the project made to make use of existing institutions, programmes etc. Final report: As above. | 5 | 5 |
| G. Factors affecting project performance: Does the report present a well-reasoned, complete and evidence-based assessment of all factors affecting project performance? In particular, does the report include the actual project costs (total and per activity) and actual co-financing | Draft report: Assessment of factors affecting performance is adequate, but should be strengthened with a more detailed assessment of financial planning and management. Final report: As above. | 4 | 4 |

| | | | |
|---|---|------|------|
| used; and an assessment of the quality of the project M&E system and its use for project management? | | | |
| H. Quality and utility of the recommendations: Are recommendations based on explicit evaluation findings? Do recommendations specify the actions necessary to correct existing conditions or improve operations ('who?' 'what?' 'where?' 'when?'). Can they be implemented? | Draft report: Recommendations are based on findings, but should be more specific in terms of who should do what. Final report: As above. | 4 | 4 |
| I. Quality and utility of the lessons: Are lessons based on explicit evaluation findings? Do they suggest prescriptive action? Do they specify in which contexts they are applicable? | Draft report: Lessons are based on findings, but should be clearer regarding precise prescriptive action. Final report: As above. | 4 | 4 |
| Other report quality criteria | | | |
| J. Structure and clarity of the report: Does the report structure follow EO guidelines? Are all requested Annexes included? | Draft report: The report follows EO guidelines quite well and is well structured, albeit some sections have not been adequately addressed. Final report: As above. | 4 | 4 |
| K. Evaluation methods and information sources: Are evaluation methods and information sources clearly described? Are data collection methods, the triangulation / verification approach, details of stakeholder consultations provided? Are the limitations of evaluation methods and information sources described? | Draft report: Methods and information sources have been described moderately satisfactorily. Final report: As above. | 4 | 4 |
| L. Quality of writing: Was the report well written? (clear English language and grammar) | Draft report: Report was well written. Final report: As above. | 5 | 5 |
| M. Report formatting: Does the report follow EO guidelines using headings, numbered paragraphs etc. | Draft report: Report formatting followed EO guidelines. Final report: As above. | 6 | 6 |
| OVERALL REPORT QUALITY RATING | | 4.75 | 4.75 |
| | | | |

Rating system for quality of evaluation reports

A number rating 1-6 is used for each criterion: Highly Satisfactory = 6, Satisfactory = 5, Moderately Satisfactory = 4, Moderately Unsatisfactory = 3, Unsatisfactory = 2, Highly Unsatisfactory = 1

The overall quality of the evaluation report is calculated by taking the mean score of all rated quality criteria.

2. Checklist of compliance with UNEP EO's normal operating procedures for the evaluation process

| Compliance issue | Yes | No |
|--|-----|----|
| 1. Were the TORs shared with the implementing and executing agencies for comment prior to finalization? | x | |
| 2. Was the budget for the evaluation agreed and approved by the UNEP Evaluation Office? | x | |
| 3. Was the final selection of the preferred evaluator or evaluators made by the UNEP Evaluation Office? | x | |
| 4. Were possible conflicts of interest of the selected evaluator(s) appraised? (Evaluators should not have participated substantively during project preparation and/or implementation and should have no conflict of interest with any proposed follow-up phases) | x | |
| 5. Was an inception report delivered before commencing any travel in connection with the evaluation? | x | |
| 6. Were formal written comments on the inception report prepared by the UNEP Evaluation Office and shared with the consultant? | x | |
| 7. If a terminal evaluation; was it initiated within the period six months before or after project completion? If a mid-term evaluation; was the mid-term evaluation initiated within a six month period prior to the project/programmes's mid-point? | x | |
| 8. Was the draft evaluation report sent directly to EO by the evaluator? | x | |
| 9. Did UNEP Evaluation Office check the quality of the draft report, including EO peer review, prior to dissemination to stakeholders for comment? | x | |
| 10. Did UNEP Evaluation Office disseminate (or authorize dissemination) of the draft report to key stakeholders to solicit formal comments? | x | |
| 11. Did UNEP Evaluation Office complete an assessment of the quality of the draft evaluation report? | x | |
| 12. Were formal written stakeholder comments sent directly to the UNEP Evaluation Office? | x | |
| 13. Were all collated stakeholder comments and the UNEP Evaluation Office guidance to the evaluator shared with all evaluation stakeholders? | x | |
| 14. Did UNEP Evaluation Office complete an assessment of the quality of the final report? | x | |
| 15. Was an implementation plan for the evaluation recommendations prepared? | x | |