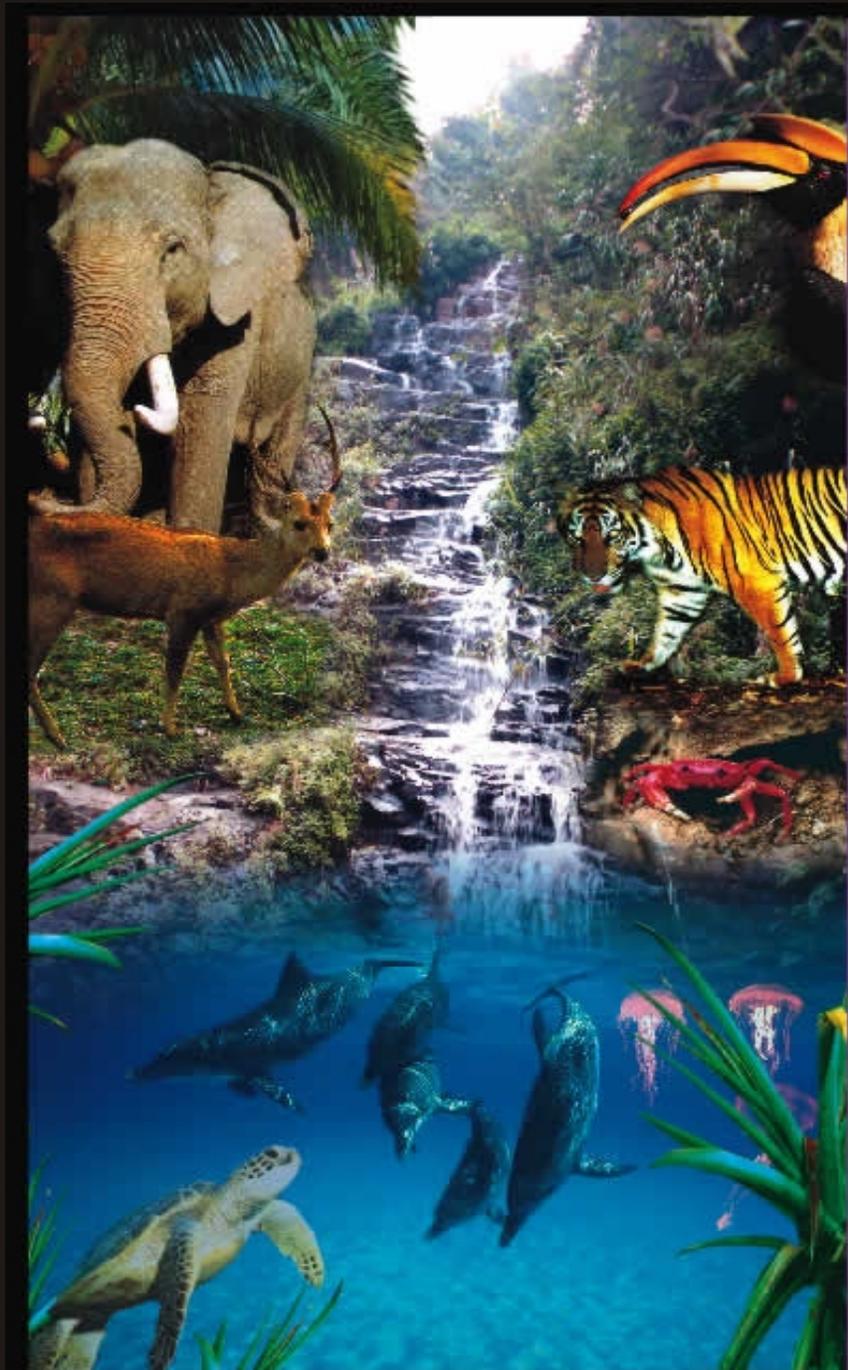


Regional Biodiversity Programme, Asia

Strategy Document 2002-2005



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Making the Difference

There has never been a civilisation in the history, which can say it had all needed resources nor used them to the fullest extent. This paved way for constant search and research for better use of resources and the way we conserve them and the way we live.

The environment we live in and the natural resources we possess form the basis of our survival. Sustainable development without these two critical components is hard to achieve.

"A good or bad environment or ecological system depends on the species that live within it. The human species has the unique ability to modify the environment," said Norman E. Borlaug. Of the total human population, close to one-fifth are considered 'marginalised people'. Such people are typically bypassed by development and side-lined socially, economically, culturally, legally and institutionally. The continued growth in this segment of society has contributed to increase in poverty. The increasing dependence of people on a decreasing amount of resources has led to mass movements of 'environmental refugees' into environments that are already fragile and has resulted in an unprecedented decline in natural resources and biodiversity.

Recently, political leaders have begun to focus on stopping this decline and made their commitment to create a better environment to save, use and share benefits of our biological resources which resulted in the Convention on Biological Diversity (CBD). The CBD has adopted the principle of an ecosystem approach to conservation and it focuses on resource-centered processes for development where humans play an inclusive and a decisive role.

One way to deal with global concerns at local level is to think globally and act locally. Another approach has been through conservation's paradigm of 'save, study and use.' However, neither can be achieved without the other. To achieve the goals of biodiversity conservation, we need adaptive management that can work in all areas: field actions, measurements for monitoring, checking against expectations and adjusting future actions. In addition, we also must follow several basic tenets: to maintain a healthy environment, to learn how natural ecosystems work, to maximize diversity, to use the precautionary principle and to enhance the diversity of humans' use of living natural resources so that livelihoods and human security is ensured. While environmental problems have increased in severity, the priority of environmental affairs among nations is in danger of slipping due to other economic and political concerns. Countries need to share resources and learn from each other. Creation of appropriate platforms, institutions are therefore necessary to facilitate this both at regional and global levels.

The Programme

Biological diversity or biodiversity refers to the variety of life forms on Earth. The large scale and rapid destruction of biodiversity prompted the international community to adopt the Convention on Biological Diversity (CBD) in 1992. The CBD is a comprehensive, inter-governmental agreement to promote conservation and sustainable use of biodiversity, as well as promotes the fair and equitable sharing of benefits that arise from the use of biodiversity.

IUCN's Regional Biodiversity Programme, Asia (RBP) was established in 1996 to assist with the implementation of the CBD in South and Southeast Asia. Drawing on the strengths of IUCN members, Commissions and partners, the programme has evolved rapidly since its inception to work in all of Asia, and now supports activities in 14 countries: Bangladesh, Cambodia, China, India, Indonesia, Lao PDR, Malaysia, Maldives, Nepal, Pakistan, Philippines, Sri Lanka, Thailand, and Vietnam.

The Regional Biodiversity Programme has taken a multi-prong approach to achieving its mission. Three fundamental principles underlie the Programme's work:

- **A commitment to working in partnership.**
- **A commitment to capacity building.**
- **A commitment to a long-term presence in Asia.**

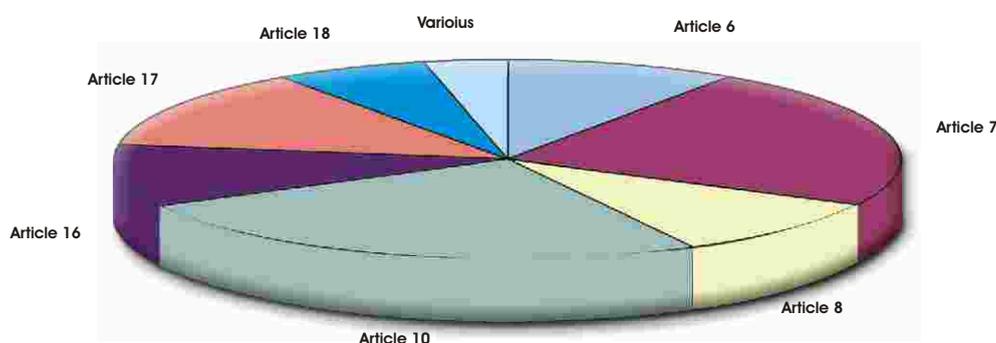
The RBP has been deliberately structured as a regional programme in order to meet the demands of effectively implementing the CBD. There are two underlying advantages to the regional nature of IUCN's programme on biodiversity. The first advantage is that it allows the development of a set of national level activities that can maximise economies of scale, mutual learning and sharing of experiences. The second benefit entails the facilitation of shared problem solving and cooperative action among different countries, e.g., through the development of regional agreements, policies and management frameworks.

Our experience to date suggests that one of the impediments to sustainable development in South and Southeast Asia is the lack of effective regional environmental bodies and institutions. This makes it difficult for governments to rise above immediate national interests and to take a broader view of environment and development issues which extends beyond national borders. As a result, there is relatively little sharing of lessons and experience and a tendency to 're-invent' the wheel. The Regional Biodiversity Programme seeks to respond to the need for regional environmental institutions in Asia by providing a forum and a mechanism through which national experiences can be integrated at a higher level where sharing and learning among countries can be maximised.

Where We Work

The RBP has been designed as a regional programme which will build upon the knowledge, experience and lessons generated at the national level. Although many activities are carried out at the country level, each major component of the Programme will also incorporate a regional element to ensure that information is shared more broadly (e.g., through regional workshops, exchange visits, case studies and the production of best practice guidelines).

Activities Contributing to CBD Articles being Implemented by RBP



The first phase of RBP (1996-2000) was experimental. Activities and partnerships were spread across geographical areas and themes with the aim to learn lessons and gain experience. This led to a broad project portfolio for RBP including activities in fourteen countries in Asia. The second phase of the Programme (2001-2004) focuses on consolidation, cooperation, and commitment to achieve the broader goals of the Programme. In addition, RBP is currently strengthening its linkages with China and Northeast Asia.

Our Objectives

While the RBP has the singular goal of assisting the implementation of the CBD, the Convention itself along with the task of protecting biodiversity is quite broad. Therefore, to ensure that the RBP remains effective, the Programme's objectives currently have been focused within five main themes.

National Biodiversity Strategies and Action Plans

RBP accords the highest priority to the development and implementation of National Biodiversity Strategies and Action Plans (NBSAPs) in all countries. Countries began putting together NBSAPs to give people a guiding framework on the 'How' and 'When' issues after realising that the current available indicators of environment quality do not provide relevant information for the economy. RBP sees NBSAPs as central to the implementation of the CBD and as valuable tools to conserve biodiversity. Being 'living documents,' NBSAPs need to be defined and redefined regularly keeping in mind the changing needs of countries. Integrating principles of sustainable development into NBSAPs, cross-sectoral linkages for development of local level plans, addressing synergies with other Action plans and strategies are some of the areas RBP focuses its attention on.

Species Conservation and Management

With IUCN's dual pillars of expertise in species conservation and ecosystem management, the Union is well-positioned to contribute to Article 7 of the CBD by identifying and monitoring "important components of biodiversity," such as endemic or threatened species. The RBP has been supporting the development of national Red Lists of Threatened Species and helping countries develop ways to effectively use the Lists to conserve biodiversity. In addition, the RBP is working on issues of alien invasive species and agrobiodiversity.

Environmental Governance

Informed decision making constitutes one of the basic principles to achieve sound environmental governance. Participatory approaches dealing with issues of gender, equity, ethics and enhancing rural livelihoods contribute to achieving better environmental governance. RBP's theme dealing with environmental governance focuses on strengthening the 'voice' of the Asia region in intergovernmental negotiation processes so that countries in the region debate and decide what they want to achieve and identify the means to do so. In addition, activities aimed at raising awareness, educating stakeholders about biodiversity, and training people in effective communication form the focus of RBP.

Legal and Regulatory Mechanisms

The RBP seeks to assist with the complex and often controversial issues surrounding Article 15, "Access to Genetic Resources and Benefit Sharing", by building increased awareness, promoting objective analyses and supporting the development of access and benefit sharing frameworks. Such access and equity are key to earning the support of local communities and the majority of the populace. Working on Article 8 (j) of the CBD the RBP seeks to promote effective use and protection of traditional knowledge.

The RBP is also implementing an Asia level initiative to build the capacity of national governments and regional bodies so that they can implement the Cartagena Biosafety Protocol and other national level regulations on biosafety. Issues of linkages between conservation, sustainable use and benefit sharing and Trade, IPRs, TRIPs are also being addressed through some components of the programme.

Climate Change

Climate change issues are often the most pervasive issues national governments should deal with in an anticipatory manner. RBP is currently working on developing a project portfolio for the region to build capacities of diverse stakeholders to deal with Climate Change issues including linkages between biodiversity and Climate Change, impact assessments. Technology transfer and development of National Adaptation Programme of Actions (NAPAs).

National Biodiversity Strategies and Action Plan

Result Areas: Development and Implementation of Biodiversity Policies; Strategies and Plans; Capacity Building of National Biodiversity Units; Mainstreaming of Biodiversity and Economics of Biodiversity.

National Biodiversity Strategies and Action Plans (NBSAPs) provide an invaluable opportunity for collating information on biodiversity, increasing awareness among many different groups of stakeholders, and for identifying conservation needs and priorities. Many countries in the region have created National Biodiversity Units (NBUs) to oversee and coordinate the implementation of their National Biodiversity Strategies and Action Plans (NBSAPs). However, these Units are often under-funded and under-staffed and will require significant capacity enhancement to fulfill their roles effectively. Although the 'mainstreaming' of biodiversity considerations into sectoral policies, programmes and plans will be fundamental to successful implementation of National Biodiversity Strategies and Action Plans, relatively little progress has been made in fulfilling this aspect of the CBD.

Mainstreaming thus remains a special challenge for all the countries in the region. To help countries deal with issues of developing and implementing of NBSAPs, build capacities of NBUs and to assist with the mainstreaming process, RBP undertook several activities in the region.

Achievements & Highlights

- Assisted Sri Lanka, Vietnam, Nepal and Pakistan with the development of their Action Plans.
- Prepared the wetlands chapter of the Nepal BSAP.
- Prepared the Cambodia Country Study.
- Provided technical assistance to Indonesia, Malaysia, Singapore and China for the BSAP preparation process.
- Provided support and technical assistance to the development of BSAP related activities in Lao PDR, Sri Lanka, Bangladesh and Vietnam.
- Assisted Nepal, Philippines, Sri Lanka, and Vietnam in building the capacity of their respective national biodiversity units.
- Supported the development of an economics of biodiversity programme in IUCN - Nepal.
- Compiled a study on 'Financing NBSAPs'.

Ongoing Activities

Realising the need for continued support dealing with the issue of NBSAPs, RBP is currently undertaking the following activities; The RBP is currently executing the Asia component of the UNDP/UNEP/GEF Biodiversity Planning Support Programme. This is a global programme aimed at strengthening the effectiveness of NBSAPs, primarily through information exchange and sharing of experiences. The principal activities carried out in Asia include: the

production of a 'resource kit' for NBSAP Coordinators; the organisation of two sub-regional workshops on NBSAP experiences to date; the publication of volumes of case studies and 'lessons learned'; and the translation of key references into national languages. RBP is currently taking a global lead in IUCN to develop guidelines for preparation of sub-national BAPS for effective conservation and sustainable use. Working with regions like East-Africa, South America and Asia, RBP is now assisting several countries on development of sub-national BAPs, including China, Vietnam and Lao PDR.

Future Priorities

The Regional Biodiversity Programme will continue to offer assistance with NBSAP development and implementation to interested countries in the region. Particular emphasis will be accorded to working with two groups of countries: those that are just beginning their NBSAP processes; and those that have completed the first cycle of NBSAP implementation and are now starting to prepare "second generation" strategies; development of local level BSAPs. Increasing attention will also be paid to promoting and assisting with mainstreaming biodiversity into sectors (Article 6b of CBD). In addition, emphasis will be placed on promoting activities related to: integrating economic considerations into National Biodiversity Strategies and Action Plans; innovative mechanisms for generating conservation funding; and enhancing understanding about the roles of incentives/perverse incentives in biodiversity conservation and loss; addressing issues of synergies with other Strategies and Action Plans.

Species Conservation and Management

Result Areas: Identification and Monitoring of Biodiversity; Threatened Species Listing; National Language Field Guides; *In Situ* Conservation; Alien Invasive Species; Agrobiodiversity.

BP's activities dealing with species conservation and management fall under three broad categories: threatened species issues; issues of invasive alien species; conservation, management and sustainable use of agrobiodiversity.

Threatened Species

Article 7 of the CBD calls upon the Parties to identify and monitor important components of biodiversity, including threatened species. Red Lists are important tools for identifying threatened species. Species lists are now widely used by conservationists and development practitioners alike. In addition to their value for raising awareness the Lists have wide applicability as conservation tools. They can, for example, be used to assess the adequacy of protected area systems and to monitor the impact of development projects. They can also be readily converted into policy and legal instruments applicable at the national, regional and global levels.

Many countries in Asia have prepared (or are currently developing) national lists of threatened species. Although IUCN and SSC actively support these initiatives, there are a number of problems and difficulties associated with this trend.

Alien Invasive Species

Article 8 of the Convention calls upon the Parties to 'prevent the introduction of, control or eradicate those alien species which threaten ecosystems, habitats or species.' Although the problem remains largely unquantified and poorly documented, it is increasingly being recognised that Invasive Alien Species (IAS) are having a profound impact on Asia's biodiversity. Awareness of the problem among non-specialists, however, remains limited. The capacity within the region to address IAS issues also remains low. RBP aims to assist countries in the region to develop 'Black Lists' of IAS, provide management tools, training and build capacity to deal with IAS issues.

Agrobiodiversity

Asia is endowed with enormous agrobiodiversity as well as rich traditional wisdom concerning its conservation and use. This heritage is being lost at an alarming rate. Although a number of institutions are maintaining extensive ex-situ collections of traditional plant and crop varieties for many years now, much needs to be done to encourage on-farm and in-situ conservation.

RBP's interest in this area lies in the fact that linking agrobiodiversity conservation with food, nutritional and health securities offer potential scope for Asia region to further the 'WEHAB' mandate discussed in WSSD.

Achievements and Highlights

- Supported the preparation of national lists of threatened species in Bangladesh, Pakistan and Sri Lanka.
- Supported the publication of an updated version of the Lao Wildlife Status Report and its translation into Laotian.
- Organised a regional workshop on using the Red List criteria at the national level.
- Provided inputs to the development of IUCN's Global Initiative on Invasive Species.
- Coordinated the development of proposals to address IAS in Vietnam, Pakistan and Sri Lanka.
- Established linkages with the Commonwealth Agricultural Bureau International (CABI) and the Invasive Species Specialist Group (ISSG) of IUCN.
- Helped organise a special workshop on IAS with CABI and ISSG at the regional session of the Global Biodiversity Forum.
- Prepared the IUCN policy and recommendation papers on Agrobiodiversity for SBSTTA and CoP meetings of CBD.
- Prepared an agrobiodiversity primer "Agriculture and Biodiversity".

Future Priorities

During the next phase, the RBP will aim to strengthen its Species Programme in the region by:

- Providing support for the preparation, publication and dissemination of national lists of threatened flora and fauna in selected countries;
- Translating the criteria into national languages;
- Providing advice on the ways in which Red Lists can be used as tools to stimulate conservation action.
- Production of targeted awareness materials for key stakeholders, including policy makers;
- Preparation of National IAS Action Plans, which summarise current status and trend, identifying priority themes, species and locations to be managed.
- Development of Early Warning Systems and related response protocols.
- Organisation of training programmes for selected government agencies (Customs, Ports Authorities) aimed at enhancing capacity to detect and prevent entry of new IAS.

The RBP will seek to collaborate with governments and other stakeholders in the region to strengthen their capacity to address the IAS issue. An integrated package of activities is envisaged, combining policy, action and management.

Further 'scoping' will be required before the RBP can define its niche in the area of agrobiodiversity conservation. However, likely strategic directions will include:

- Developing user friendly, '*lessons learned*' manuals on biodiversity friendly agricultural practices;
- Collating and publishing information on the ways in which traditional crops and knowledge support the livelihoods of local communities;
- Developing case studies on the role of agrobiodiversity and the need for conservation to facilitate sustainable development;

Special emphasis will also be given to address issue of linkages between water and agriculture; agriculture and global trade regimes PRSs and impacts on rural livelihoods.

Legal and Regulatory Mechanisms

Focal Areas: Legal and Regulatory Mechanisms; Access to Genetic Resources and Benefit Sharing and Biosafety

Effective implementation will require revision and strengthening of existing legislations and/or regulations, or in some instances, promulgation of new laws or regulations. This is an area in which IUCN is particularly well suited to assist. IUCN has achieved global recognition for the development of environmental legislations, through the work of the Environmental Law Centre (ELC) and the Commission on Environmental Law (CEL). At the regional level, RBP has collaborated with both the Asia-Pacific Centre for Environmental Law and the UNITAR Biodiversity Law Training Programme to address these issues.

One of the important policy and regulatory issues widely discussed in the region deals with Article 15 of the Convention on access and benefit sharing (ABS) and has proven to be one of the most complex and controversial provisions of the CBD. The situation has recently become even more complex as concerns have been raised about possible conflicts between Article 15 on one hand, and the provisions of the World Trade Organisation and TRIPs on the other. Although several countries in Asia have responded rapidly to the challenge of Article 15 (e.g., through the development of new legislation in the Philippines and India), the region as a whole has taken relatively little action despite the wealth of its genetic resources and well developed systems of traditional knowledge. Countries are keen to develop national regulatory measures on ABS.

Recent adoption of the Cartagena Protocol on Biosafety in response to Article 19 (as well as 8g) deals with issues relating to biotechnology biosafety, the safe handling of biotechnology. Increasing globalisation and availability of genetically modified organisms (GMOs) coupled with changing trade policies means that Asian countries are increasingly being asked to make rapid decisions about the adoption and use of GMOs. At the same time, there is a great deal of research on biotechnology taking place in the region itself.

In response to these trends, many countries in Asia are now seeking to prepare national biosafety regulations to counter the risks associated with development and use of biotechnology. However, there is a great deal of controversy and apprehension surrounding the issue of biotechnology and an acute need for objective analyses and unbiased information. RBP is currently assisting countries in Asia develop their capacities on biosafety issues.

Achievements and Highlights

- Provided technical assistance to Lao PDR with the drafting of conservation regulations under the Forestry Act. These regulations will address a wide range of protected area management issues, including nomenclature, wildlife conservation and protected species. Organised in collaboration with the M.S. Swaminathan Foundation and the IUCN Environmental Law Centre, the South and Southeast Asia Regional Workshop on Access to Genetic Resources and Traditional Knowledge in 1998. The workshop brought together senior government personnel from 14 countries in the region, and used a case study format to look at the issues involved. Participants highlighted the importance of

developing appropriate mechanisms for addressing Article 15 at an early date, as well as the rich array of responses possible.

- Provided support to Sri Lanka, Nepal and Vietnam to draft ABS guidelines.
- Organised two regional workshops in Asia on capacity building for biosafety and issues of risk assessment and management.
- Prepared a 'Biosafety Resource Kit' for planners and practitioners of biosafety.

Ongoing Activities

RBP is carrying out the Biosafety Capacity Building Initiative for Asia. Under this project, RBP has started a list server and a dedicated website in order to establish a Clearing House Mechanism for the Asia region on biosafety. RBP is collaborating with UNEP-GEF on a range of biosafety activities in the region. Several regional as well as national workshops were organised including a regional workshop on risk assessment and risk management. The proceedings of these workshops are documented reflecting the status and stand of each country in the region.

RBP is developing a user-friendly manual on ABS incorporating latest information and experiences on ABS.

Future Priorities

The RBP will work with ELC, CEL, the Asia-Pacific Centre for Environmental Law, and IUCN's emerging Regional Law Programme to identify a clear niche for its activities in this field. Particular emphasis will be placed on promoting the integration of legal and policy considerations into the development of National Biodiversity Strategies and Action Plans. It will also be important to ensure that adequate legal and policy foundations are provided for the RBP's work on threatened species, alien invasive species, biosafety, access and benefit sharing, and protected area systems plans. Finally, the Programme will explore opportunities to build on IUCN's earlier collaboration with the UNITAR Biodiversity Law Training Programme and others.

Environmental Governance

Focal Areas: CBD Processes; Education and Awareness; Raising Profile of National Biodiversity Strategies and Action Plans; Translation of Biodiversity References in National Languages; and Regional Biodiversity Programme Communication Strategy

There is a need to increase people's sensitivity to, and involvement in, finding solutions to conservation, sustainable use and benefit sharing actions. Education, awareness, and communication form the important pillars to bring about this sensitivity and involvement. Education gives people the ethical awareness, values and attitudes, skills and behavior needed while awareness and communication deal with simplifying thoughts and actions in a way that issues are understood and appreciated.

RBP's main focus recently has been in the area of helping governments and civil society to make informed decisions as well as participate effectively in national as well as international debates and negotiations. For example, RBP helped countries prepare to participate in CBD negotiations by organising national level preparatory workshops where broad stakeholder participation is ensured. Similarly a pre CoP consultative meeting was organized in Bangladesh just before the CoP of the UNFCCC. This provides a platform for participatory decision-making process on identifying and influencing country priorities in intergovernmental negotiations.

Communicating conservation action is crucial for implementing agencies in order to seek the support of local stakeholders. But how to communicate, what to communicate, and when to communicate are the critical questions for policy makers. With wide ranging experience through activities of the IUCN Commission on Education and Communication (CEC), the RBP is working on training not only conservation agencies but also other stakeholders on communication tools and methods so that people's participation can be effective.

Achievements and Highlights

- Organised briefing workshops to support several national delegations attending CBD, CITES, and UNFCCC negotiations.
- Supported regional participation at the Global Biodiversity Forum as a way of encouraging wide -ranging debate and discussion on important biodiversity issues.
- Organised the first South and Southeast Asia Regional Session of the Global Biodiversity Forum.
- Supported the translation of a number of biodiversity- related publications, including:
 - The Guide to the Convention on Biological Diversity translated into Nepali and Vietnamese
 - The Lao Wildlife Status Report into Laotian
 - Fact sheets on the CBD into Bahasa Malay
 - The Biodiversity Conservation Action Plan for Sri Lanka into Sinhala and Tamil
 - MEAs translated into Laotian
 - UNDP-BAP preparation guidelines translated into Bangla and Laotian.
- Publishes '*Biolog*' - the Programmes newsletter on thematic issues.
- Maintain CHM on NBSAP and Biosafety issues for Asia.
- Prepares briefing papers on key biodiversity issues on a regular basis.

Ongoing Activities

The use of communications tools to promote NBSAPs would be a new area of activity for the RBP, although there is considerable communications expertise within the IUCN system. IUCN Pakistan, for example, is noted for the communications programme it has established to support the National Conservation Strategy. IUCN's Commission on Education and Communication (CEC) and IUCN's Global Communications and Education Programme have developed a range of training materials to explain the ways in which communications tools can be used to build support for policies and strategies. Similarly, many IUCN members such as the Centre for Environmental Education in India and various environmental journalists' fora have related experience.

RBP organized several Regional Training Workshop on Communication and Education has started a listserver on biodiversity planning and created a website for Asia region for information sharing for biosafety issues.

Future Priorities

To enable delegations from Asia to participate more actively in CBD, UNFCCC, CITES, RAMSAR and other country MEA negotiations, the Regional Biodiversity Programme will continue to organise national preparatory workshops in selected countries; the desirability of organising sub-regional workshops (e.g. for Lao, Cambodia and Vietnam) will also be explored. The workshops will be structured SBSTA agenda items, and will make particular use of the policy briefs prepared by IUCN. Participants will include the official government delegations, IUCN members, Commission specialists and other interested stakeholders. In this way, the workshops will also provide an opportunity for civil society to provide inputs to and influence national dialogue on biodiversity issues. Similar consultative meeting will also be held after major MEA events, to look at ways of implementing key CoP and SBSTA decisions and recommendations

The RBP will continue to encourage regional participation in the Global Biodiversity Forum, and will seek to ensure that at least one additional regional session of the Forum is organised in Asia in 2003.

Finally, the RBP will seek to encourage greater synergy between the CBD and the other major environmental conventions, such as CITES, RAMSAR, CMS, UNFCCC, and World Heritage through such consultations

The RBP will continue to publish '*Biolog*' on a regular basis. The contents of the newsletter will respond to feedback from the region, but are likely to include information about priority biodiversity issues.

The RBP will also begin to explore other communications mechanisms to supplement '*Biolog*' such as the establishment of a thematic listserver and a website. One such dedicated website on Biosafety is currently in operation. It is aimed to further develop this into a regional clearing house on Biosafety.

Future Areas of Focus

In addition to the core themes presented in this Strategy, RBP is keen to be more involved in issues dealing with people, participation, poverty eradication, policy development and human development through innovative programmes and partnerships. The following highlights some of the current thinking in the Programme:

Sustainable Food, Nutritional and Health Securities: An Agenda for Action

Despite the high level political reaffirmation of the need to achieve "Food for All" over a billion people suffer from hunger and malnutrition now. Hidden hunger, arising from deficiency of micronutrients is widespread. Access to quality food and medicine is scarce. Food insecurity more due to inadequate purchasing power rather than availability of food as well as factors such as environmental hygiene, sanitation and lack of safe drinking water are becoming major contributors for food as well as nutritional and health insecurities at the level of individuals and communities. Realising the need for positive interventions aimed at achieving an overall success, RBP aims to develop action-oriented programmes integrating integrated pest and disease management, integrated nutrition management and integrated gene management.

Development of an 'Integrated Food and Nutritional Management Tool-Kit' for Asia is being aimed. The components of this programme include:

- Conservation and Equitable Use of Traditional Knowledge
- Strengthening household food, nutritional and health securities through range of actions spanning from use of traditional diets to providing modern communication tools for decision making at local level
- Conservation of agrobiodiversity and promotion of eco-agriculture
- Anticipatory research and development
- Capacity building and awareness raising
- Promotion of Good Environmental Governance dealing with policy making on food security

Sustainable Human Securities through Anticipatory Approaches

In majority of instances, sustainable development is blocked by the lack of stakeholder access to decision making, policy design and participation. People, Planning, Participation and Policy mark the four pillars of achieving sustainability on issues of ensuring human security. Issues of impacts of demographic changes and environmental changes affect local communities than anyone else. It is vital to develop programmes and activities through an anticipatory approach to deal with such changes.

RBP aims to address the issue of human security through two avenues preparedness for mitigating adverse impacts of climate change through appropriate understanding of issues (vulnerability and adaptation); preparedness for mitigating impacts of adverse policy changes.

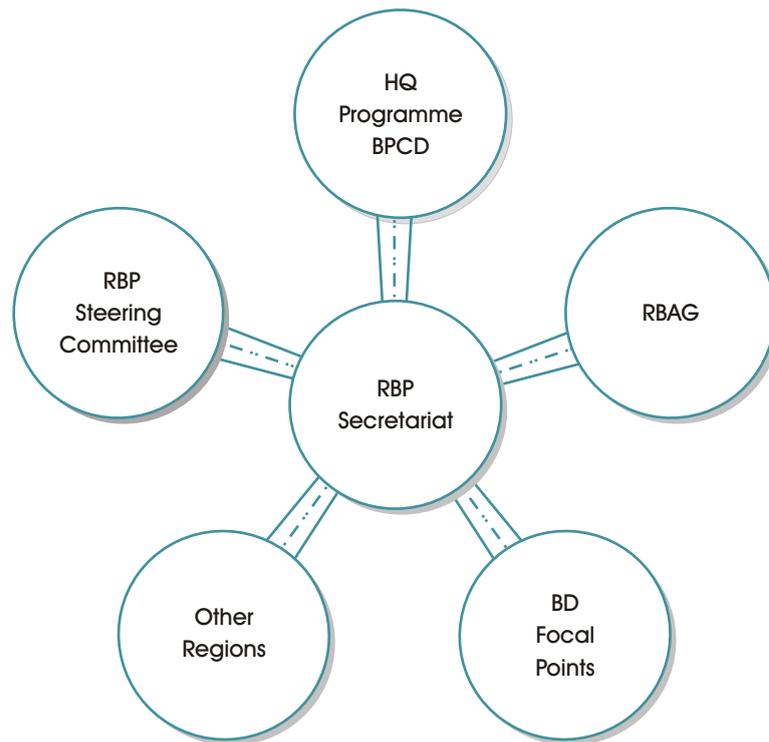
Dealing with the first component of climate change, RBP aims to help countries build capacities to deal with charting out their own criteria and categories of vulnerability and develop action plans to mitigate adverse impacts. However, emphasis will be given for role natural resources can play in mitigating such adverse impacts. Apart from this, RBP aims to develop an Asia Regional Network on Anticipatory Research to promote sharing of information and learn from experiences. The Network can be linked to activities at local, country, regional and global levels. The Programme will also aim to identify and promote synergies between UNFCCC and other MEAs.

On the second component of dealing with impacts of policy changes, it is important to note that the twin goals of environmental improvement and poverty eradication can only be achieved by providing greater proactive management of interface between economic and environmental policies.

Policy integration based on internalisation of environmental concerns within core economic development is a must.

RBP aims to use the principles of policy integration to achieve sustainable human securities by capacity building and harnessing capacities, reducing abatement costs, supporting result-oriented leadership and developing an information-oriented approach towards strengthening participatory and public support systems. It is our hope that such integration can pave way for a sustainable human development coupled with conserving resources and environment.

RBP Structure



The RBP will continue to be managed by a small Secretariat team operating from Colombo. This decentralised, matrix approach to the development and operation of a regional programme is consistent with the strategy being used by other IUCN regional thematic programmes in Asia. In addition to the Secretariat, each of the IUCN Country Offices in Asia provides one biodiversity focal point to assist RBP with its country activities. In countries without an IUCN Secretariat presence, RBP works with the government focal points directly (eg. Philippines, India, China, and Indonesia) and with local members and partners.

RBP Steering Committee

The RBP has been guided by a Steering Committee, chaired by the Regional Director and is composed of senior IUCN staff including the Chief Scientist and senior members of the secretariat. The Steering Committee has provided important managerial and technical advice to the RBP; established a direct link with the Biodiversity Division at IUCN Headquarters and monitored the Programme's overall performance. Through the participation of other regional staff, the Steering Committee has also proven to be an important mechanism for promoting integration among the different regional thematic programmes.

Regional Biodiversity Advisory Group (RBAG)

The Regional Biodiversity Advisory Group was established in 1998, to provide strategic advice and support for the development of the RBP. The Group is composed of the Regional Vice-chairs of IUCN's Commissions, the Regional Councillors, and the members of the RBP Steering Committee. In addition to providing high level, strategic guidance to the RBP, the Group has an important function to play in helping to integrate the biodiversity related work of the Secretariat and the Commissions in the region.

IUCN in Asia

IUCN - The World Conservation Union works with governments, civil society and local communities in 23 countries in Asia to protect the environment and promote sustainable development. Activities range from community field projects to developing national conservation strategies in collaboration with governments. The Asia region stretches from Pakistan in the West to Japan in East, from Mongolia in the North to Indonesia in the South. The IUCN secretariat presence in Asia consists of 7 country offices, 9 regional thematic programmes, an Asia Regional Office, and over 500 full-time staff members. In addition, more than 130 NGOs and governmental agencies in Asia have joined the union as members and aid in the governance of IUCN. These organizations are joined by the 1300 plus volunteer scientists in Asia who lend their expertise to the six IUCN commissions in order to protect and conserve nature and ecosystems of Asia.

Regional Thematic Programmes

- Biodiversity Conservation
- Environmental Economics
- Environmental Law
- Forest Conservation
- Marine and Coastal Resources
- Protected Areas
- Sustainable Use
- Wetlands and Water Resources
- Constituency Development

Country Programmes

- Bangladesh
- Lao PDR
- Nepal
- Pakistan
- Sri Lanka
- Thailand
- Vietnam

Partnerships

The RBP will continue to work closely with IUCN Country Offices, as well as with IUCN members, Commissions and partners. All activities will be carried out through or in collaboration with government departments, NGOs, inter-governmental organisations, research institutions or other interested parties.

Now that the RBP has increased its technical capacity, it is envisioned that the Programme will operate more as a proactive developer and co-implementer of activities. The Programme will aim to maintain and strengthen its existing ties with IUCN's Global Policy Programme while also seeking to develop new linkages with other headquarters programmes, particularly the Species Programme, the Protected Areas Programme and the Communications and Education Programme.

At the regional and national levels, integration and synergies will be sought with IUCN's other regional thematic programmes and country programmes.

Greater attention will also be accorded to developing linkages and partnerships with regional bodies and institutions such as ICIMOD, CIFOR, APCEL, SAARC, ASEAN SACEP, CGIAR centers, UN bodies, and donors. In particular, high priority will be given to developing joint activities with the recently established, ASEAN Regional Centre for Biodiversity Conservation (ARCBC).

Although until now RBP's work has been relatively modest in countries without secretariat presence, RBP is keen to expand linkages in such countries. Priorities are being accorded for increasing collaborative activities in China, India, Indonesia, Malaysia, and Philippines.

Through the ongoing activities RBP maintains very close linkages with CBD and NBSAP focal points in all countries of the region. This enables defining and implementing activities and programmes in a responsive way.

Funding

Funding Strategies

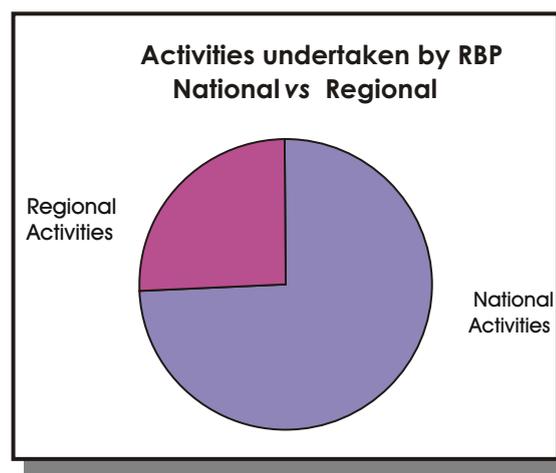
Core funding for the development of the Regional Biodiversity Programme has been provided by the German Federal Ministry for Economic Cooperation and Development (BMZ) and the Swiss Agency for Development and Cooperation (SDC). In addition, the RBP has received significant support on a project basis from a number of other sources, including:

- The World Bank/Netherlands Partnership Programme
- The United Nations Development Programme (UNDP)
- The Global Environment Facility (GEF)
- The International Development Research Centre (IDRC)
- National Governments

Keeping in mind the need to be effective and efficient in using donor funds, RBP is strategic in reducing overhead costs and establishing a close-knit operational programme.

The RBP will continue to be reliant on bilateral and multilateral agencies for the foreseeable future. Funding strategies for the future will include:

- Development of framework Agreements
- Long term project funding through projects like 'Biodiversity and Livelihood Securities'
- Funding through bilateral and multilateral donors
- Development and delivery of periodical and structured 'Paid' Training programmes on issues of conservation, management and policy development



Business Plan & Strategic Vision

Considering this strategy document not as an end on its own but as the beginning of a dynamic process of shaping RBP's programme and activities, this business plan aims to provide the basis for an adaptive management system. The plan therefore deals with the 'How' issue focusing on external environment, ongoing and new 'Business' funding opportunities, fund raising options, financial management, partnerships, delivery and network, communication strategy, and some management issues.

- External Environment*
- Political instability
 - Increasing sub-regional tensions
 - Fewer funding sources and more seekers
 - Lack of "regional" focus for many donors
 - Diversification of activities

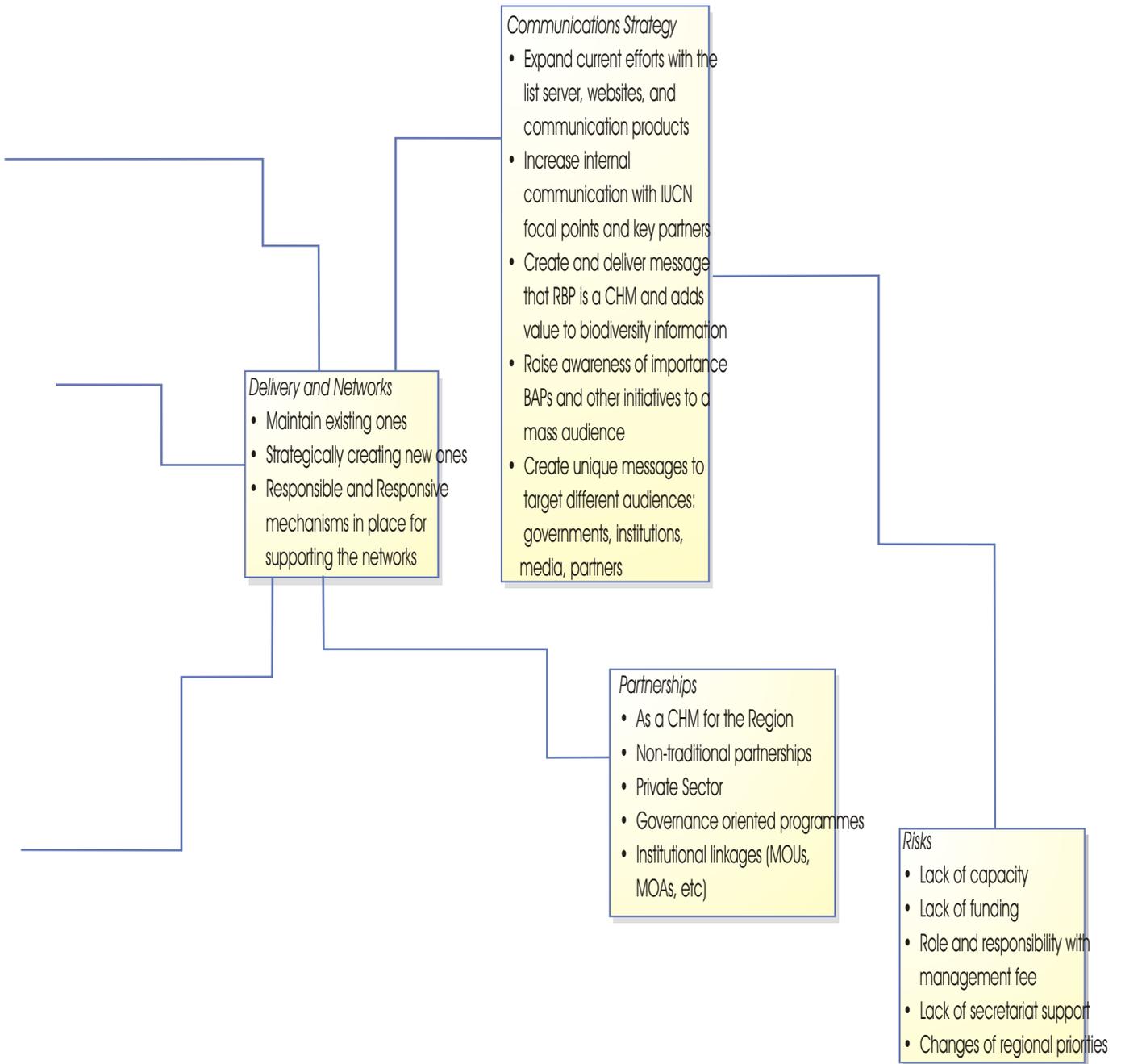
- New Business*
- Biodiversity and human health
 - Biodiversity and poverty alleviation
 - Biodiversity and climate change
 - Biodiversity and alternate livelihoods
 - Responses to outputs of WSSD
 - Focus on environmental governance and conflict resolution
 - Integrated implementation of MEAs.

- Ongoing Business*
- National Biodiversity Strategies and Action Plans
 - Species Conservation and Management
 - Legislative and Regulatory Mechanisms
 - Environmental Governance

- Financial Management*
- Reducing overhead expenses
 - Adopting efficient management tools
 - Short-term (yearly) and long-term (2-5 years) planning

- Funding opportunities*
- Framework agreements
 - Sub-regional arrangements
 - Involvement of private sector
 - Targeting strategic partnerships (non-traditional) like CGIAR, Development Banks, ASEAN, SAARC, SACEP
 - Donor focus shift towards regional activities

- Funding Strategies/Fundraising options*
- Training Programmes and Capacity building activities
 - Donor Discussion and dialogue
 - Source from other "arms" of IUCN
 - Identifying linkages between RBP and other IUCN programmes for programme development and delivery (e.g. Forest Policy, CBD linkages with Forest Programme of IUCN)
 - Long-term project commitments (like from CIDA, SDC, SIDA).



Some Key Publications

Balakrishna P, 2001. Agriculture and Biodiversity. pp: 68.

Balakrishna P, Surangika K.B.N.U. and Wijayanandana N, (Compilers) 2001. Resource Kit for Biodiversity Planners. pp:301.

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Jinie Dela, (Editor) 2000. Report of the South and Southeast Asian Regional Session of the Global Biodiversity Forum 1999, Colombo, Sri Lanka. pp: 76.

Channa N.B. Bambaradeniya, Vidhisha N. Samarasekara, (Editors) 2001. An Overview of the Threatened Herpetofauna of South Asia. pp: 118.

Balakrishna P, (Editor) 2001. Alien Invasive Species. Report of workshop on Alien Invasive Species, GBF - SSEA. Colombo, Sri Lanka. pp: 121.

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Balakrishna P, (Editor) 2001. Using the IUCN Red List Criteria at the National Level: A Regional Consultative Workshop for South and Southeast Asia. pp: 155.

Lyle Glowka, Balakrishna Pisupati, Sanjiv de Silva, (Editors) 2001. Access to Genetic Resources and Traditional Knowledge: Lessons from South and Southeast Asia. Proceedings of the South and Southeast Asia Regional Workshop on Access to Genetic Resources and Traditional Knowledge. pp: 203.

Balakrishna P, Surangika K.B.N.U. and Wijayanandana N, (Compilers) 2001. Guide to Biodiversity Services in South and Southeast Asia.

Occasional Papers

Balakrishna P, Setijati Sastrapradja 2001. "The development and management of genetic diversity in agro ecosystems." CABI Bioscience Publication (in Press).

Balakrishna P, 2002. 'Porteresia coarctata: Scope and limitations of its utilisation in rice improvement.' in "A monograph on genus Oryzae" J.S. Nanda and S.D. Sharma, (Editors) Science Publishers USA. (in Press).

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Balakrishna P, Jeffrey A McNeely, 2001. Agriculture and Biodiversity. IUCN Policy paper for SBSTTA-7.

Agenda Briefs for SBSTTA 6 and SBSTTA 7. (2001)

CD ROMS:

- Biosafety Resource Kit
- Resource Kit for Biodiversity Planners
- Guide to Biodiversity Services in South and Southeast Asia
- Communications Challenges for NBSAP Coordinators in Asia: Training tool Kit
- National Systems Planning for Protected Areas: Training tool kit
- Mountain Biodiversity and Development
- Climate Change Resource Kit

