

WORKSHOP REPORT

Inter-linkages Initiative **Regional Workshop on Integrated Capacity Development for** **Multilateral Environmental Agreements in South Asia**

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Inter-linkages

Synergies and Coordination among Multilateral Environmental Agreements

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Abbreviations / Acronyms

APFED	Asia-Pacific Forum for Environment and Pacific Forum for Environment
ASEAN	Association of Southeast Asian Nations
CEPOMs	Committees on Environment Policy Management
CIEDP	Committee on integrating Environment and Development Policy
CITES	Convention on International Trade in Endangered Species of Wild Fauna and Flora
CoE	Center of Excellence
CPCB	Central Pollution Control Board
DANIDA	Danish International Development Agency
DoE	Department of Environment
ECO	Economic Cooperation Organization
EIA	Environmental Impact Assessment
ENVIS	Environmental Information System Centers
EPA	Environment Protection Act
EPC	Environment Protection Council
ESCAP	United Nations Economic and Social Commission for Asia and the Pacific
ETRC	Environment Treaty Reference Center
GEF	Global Environment Facility
GSP	NCSA Global Support Mechanism
HCE	High Council of Environment
IGES	Institute of Global Environment and Society
ILN	UNDP Capacity 2015's Information Learning Network
IPSU	Institution and Policy Support Unit
ISIS	Institute of Strategic and International Studies Malaysia
IT tools	Information Technology Tools
IUCN	World Conservation Union
LEAD	Leadership for Environment and Development
MCED	Ministerial Conference on Environment and Development
MEAs	Multilateral Environmental Agreements
MENR	Ministry of Environment and Natural Resources
MDG	Millennium Development Goal
MFA	Ministry of Foreign Affairs
MoEF	Ministry of Environment and Forests
MOSTE	Ministry of Science, Technology and Environment
MOUs	Memorandum of Understanding
NAP	National Action Plan
NAPA	National Adaptation Programme of Action
NBSAP	National Biodiversity Strategy Action Plan
NCS	Conservation Strategy
NCSA	National Capacity Self Assessment
NCSD	National Committee for Sustainable Development
NDC	National Development Council
NDP	National Development Plan
NEP	National Environment Policy
NGO	Non Governmental Organization
NPC	National Project Coordinator <i>alternatively</i> National Planning Commission
NSSD	National Strategies for Sustainable Development
NCSD	National Commission for Sustainable Development

PCNREP	Parliamentary Committee on Natural Resources and Environmental Protection
POPs	Persistent Organic Pollutants
PPP	Public Private Participation
PRSP	Poverty Reduction Strategy Paper
SAARC	South Asian Association for Regional Cooperation
SACEP	South Asia Cooperative Environment Program
SDAN	Sustainable Development Agenda for Nepal
SEMP	Sustainable Environment Management Programme
SPREP	Pacific Regional Environment Programme
TERI	The Energy and Resources Institute
TF	Task Force
TORs	Terms of Reference
TWG	Thematic Working Groups
UNCCD	United Nations Convention to Combat Desertification
UNCBD	United Nations Convention on Biodiversity
UNDP	United Nations Development Programme
UNEP	United Nations Environment Programme
UNFCCC	United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change
UNU	United Nations University

1. Introduction and Background

Recognizing the need for identifying opportunities and challenges for the synergistic implementation of Multilateral Environmental Agreements (MEAs), the UNU, together with regional partners (SACEP in South Asia, the South Pacific Regional Environment Programme, SPREP in the Pacific, the ASEAN Secretariat in the Southeast Asia), have conducted a series of country case studies on Inter-linkages. Since 2001, 16 country case studies have been completed with two other country studies in preparation in South Asia. The studies examined the use of linkages in strengthening national governance structures, identified gaps and obstacles in the use of synergies between MEAs and developed policy options for national governance structures while encouraging greater regional and international coordination.

In order to follow-up the results of case studies, the UNU and other partners launched in early 2003 an informal regional partnership on integrated capacity development in Asia and the Pacific, with the goal of deriving a concrete action plan of activities from 2003 onwards. The first two steps taken within the framework of this regional partnership were the conduct of regional workshops on integrated capacity development and the support for the GEF NCSA (National Capacity Self Assessment) programme.

1.1. Regional Workshops on Integrated Capacity Development

As the first concrete activity of the informal partnership, three regional workshops were organized by the UNU and its partners in 2003 and 2004. One for the South-east Asian region held in March 2003 in Kuala Lumpur, Malaysia and organized together with the ASEAN Secretariat, ISIS Malaysia, The Ministry of Science, Technology and Environment (MOSTE), Malaysia, MOE of Japan and IGES. The second workshop was held in Nadi, Fiji last March 2004 and organized together with SPREP, UNDP, IGES and MOE of Japan. A third workshop was held in the South Asian region in February 2005, organized by SACEP and other key organizations.

The primary objective of the regional workshops is to develop a concrete plan of action based on the identified opportunities for, and constraints in, strengthening cooperation and mutual supportiveness of environmental agreements across scales and issues in the three sub-regions. By building upon the results of the inter-linkages case studies and the experiences of a number of organization's cooperation on capacity development, the workshops aim at benefiting both governmental and non-governmental stakeholders at the national level while strengthening the position of regional organizations such as SACEP, SPREP, and ASEAN Secretariat in facilitating further cooperation among countries.

1.2. Building Upon the GEF National Capacity Self Assessments (NCSAs)

The NCSA is a programme that has been approved by the GEF Council, providing support to countries to carry out self-assessments of their capacity needs and priorities, to determine what capacities they have, what capacities they need, and where capacity is lacking within their countries. By identifying these opportunities and gaps in capacity, countries are then encouraged to develop a plan of action for overcoming the gaps.

The primary objective of NCSAs is to identify country level priorities and needs for capacity building to address global environmental issues, in particular the conventions for biological diversity, climate change, and land degradation, with the aim of catalyzing domestic and/ or externally assisted action to meet those needs in a coor-

minated and planned manner. While these three thematic areas are central to the exercise, it is fully recognized that NCSAs will need to explore the synergies among them, as well as cross-cutting linkages with wider concerns of environmental management and sustainable development.

Within the GEF Action Plan, new methods of accessing financing by countries have been developed for capacity building. Three of these are new methods to access GEF assistance while the fourth is a modified method by which capacity building components within regular GEF projects can be enhanced. One of the main goals of the new GEF Action Plan is to provide more opportunities for recipient countries to access greater GEF resources for capacity building. These four methods of gaining GEF resources are interlinked, yet there is no prescribed sequence to be followed, and countries may choose any one or more of the methods to access GEF resources.

1.3. Regional Partnership for Integrated Capacity Development in South Asia

Building upon these initiatives, further concrete partnerships have been launched in each of the sub-regions (Pacific, Southeast Asia, and now South Asia). The main purpose of these sub-regional partnerships is to coordinate capacity development activities to respond to the broader sustainable development challenges of the sub-region. Each partner would focus on a specific area of concern and coordination of activities is done wherever possible and beneficial.

For example, in the Pacific region, multiple sub-activities have been discussed and agreed upon within the framework of this partnership, such as the establishment of NCSA support mechanism, development of a framework of cooperation leveraging IT tools for capacity building in the region, and follow-up with various ongoing processes related to the region such as Asia-Pacific Forum for Environment and Pacific Forum for Environment (APFED).

It is anticipated that the South Asian region faces different challenges, and has specific experiences and approaches to similar environmental issues. Therefore, necessary approaches for capacity development interventions also have to be different for the region. The regional workshop aimed to leverage the ongoing NCSA process that countries are currently undergoing, together with various activities in the region including the Inter-linkages Initiative of the UNU.

1.4. Outcomes of Brainstorming Session on the Development of a Regional Partnership for Integrated Capacity Building for MEAs in South Asia

In preparation for the February 2005 South Asia Regional Workshop, the *Brainstorming Session on the Development of a Regional Partnership for Integrated Capacity Building for MEAs in South Asia* was held in Dambulla, Sri Lanka from 28 June to 1 July 2004. About 40 participants, including representatives from selected countries in South Asia, as well as key regional and international organizations participated in the meeting, and discussed issues related to the development of the regional partnership framework for integrated capacity development for the region. The workshop adopted recommendations, which include:

1. Utilization and enhancement of the GEF NCSA Process through framework building, assessment and review, and regional partnership building;
2. Undertaking stocktaking not included in the NCSA, through review of existing projects, mechanisms and tools which cover multiple MEAs, and identifying suitable approaches to better engage the private sector;
3. Promoting innovative projects which promote synergies among MEAs; and

4. Fostering regional partnerships through the establishment of regional frameworks and mechanisms, sharing of experiences, and promoting regional training and briefings related to MEA management.

In order to ensure the implementation of the above listed recommendations, a series of follow-up activities have been undertaken, such as signing of MbUs among key institutions, the utilization and enhancement of NCSA by UNDP/GEF and UNEP/GEF, stocktaking and demonstration training activities which have been conducted by UNU, University of Peradeniya and other organizations. The development of project proposals, such as the establishment of the Center of Excellence (CoE) on Synergies in Sri Lanka, has also been underway.

2. Regional Workshop on Integrated Capacity Development for MEAs in South Asia, February 2005

In order to build upon the results of the brainstorming session in June 2004 and its follow-up activities, a *Regional Workshop on Integrated Capacity Development for MEAs in South Asia, 2005* was organized in Colombo, Sri Lanka on 14-16 February, 2005. Representatives from SACEP and SAARC member countries, as well as regional and international organizations were invited for the event. The primary objective of the workshop was to develop a concrete plan of action based on the identified opportunities for, and constraints in, strengthening cooperation and mutual supportiveness of environmental agreements across scales and issues in South Asia. The workshop sought to benefit both governmental and non-governmental stakeholders at the national level and also strengthen the position of regional organizations such as SACEP, SAARC, and ESCAP in facilitating further cooperation among countries.

The workshop built upon the “UNDP and GEF Capacity Development Forum for MDG-7 in Asia and the Role of the NCSA and PPP”, held in Kuala Lumpur, Malaysia from 1 to 5 November 2004. This meeting recommended that in order to address capacity needs to achieve the MDG goals, it is important to first of all build upon existing mechanisms instead of inventing new ones. Key elements of further activities should include programmes to mainstream environmental issues into the broader frame of development policies, poverty reduction strategies and sustainable development, as well as improving transboundary linkages to improve inter-agency cooperation, information and knowledge sharing.

2.1. Purpose of the workshop:

Knowing the limited human resources available in the regions to deal with the ever increasing issues at the national, regional and global levels, the workshop discussed and identified activities that can lead to coordinated capacity development on cross-cutting issues. Issues related to capacity development that were discussed include ongoing global initiatives such as UNEP’s Intergovernmental Working Group on Capacity-Building and Technology Support, UN/ESCAP’s upcoming Ministerial Conference on Environment and Development (MCED), regional initiatives such as UNDP Capacity 2015’s Information Learning Network, and national initiatives such as the GEF NCSA programme. The meeting also discussed identified priority issues for the South Asian region on capacity development, including regional cooperation on MEA management, national/regional centers of excellence for MEA management and capacity building, and partnership building for integrated capacity building for MEAs in the region.

2.2. Intended outcomes of the workshop:

The outcomes of the workshop were expected to be :

1. Concrete action plans for specific activities related to MEA management in the region;
2. Framework for cooperation on integrated capacity development for MEAs; and
3. Increased partnership among the various stakeholders, including countries, regional and international organizations, to implement environmental policies

2.3. Structure of the workshop:

Segments 1 and 2, on day one, provided the workshops' participants with background information on programmatic activities for MEA management at the global, regional and national levels. Segment 3, on day two was conducted in working groups, where actions and practical steps to address the already identified capacity challenges for managing MEAs were discussed. On the morning of the third day, the recommendations of each of the thematic working groups were considered in the plenary with a view of identifying areas of synergy and coordination across thematic clusters and functional areas.

The workshop aimed exclusively at developing concrete and practical action and suggestions on how the region could promote effective implementation of MEAs based on the inter-linkages approach.

For the detailed workshop programme, see Annex 1

3. Summary of country presentations

During the first day of the workshop, country presentations were delivered by participating delegates on their experiences with the management of MEAs, in order to provide a regional outlook.

It is recognized that despite apparent differences among individual experiences and institutional frameworks, commonalities can be drawn based on the challenges identified by countries.

3.1. Common Challenges

- There is a continuous lack of human and technical capacity among all countries in South Asia.
- A lack of financial resources and delays in getting funds for the actual implementation of projects is always problematic, especially when countries are faced with other socio-economic problems such as poverty.
- There is a low level of awareness and sensitizing tools for MEAs thus limiting the potential for discussion, decision-making and ultimately, action.
- Cooperation and networking with regional organizations is often lacking resulting in weak guidance and support. Furthermore, there is a need to enhance insight from global to community levels through wider stakeholder involvement.
- Institutional mandates between agencies often overlap resulting in duplication of work and the ineffective deployment of individual responsibilities and resources.
- The skills required for reporting and participating in international negotiations is keenly sought after through establishing sufficient training programmes.
- The lack of information management and institutional memory hampers policy and decision-making during Convention processes.
- The weak synchronization of national policy, legal and regulatory frameworks leads to confusion among local, national and regional levels.
- The environment is not always prioritized during national sustainable development planning, leading to weak national commitments toward addressing environmental

issues.

3.2. Afghanistan

The mandate for environmental management was established by the new Department of Environment (DoE), which has taken the lead role in the integration of environmental recovery and rehabilitation into Afghanistan's reconstruction process. However, the capacity of the DoE and resources relevant to the management of MEAs and the status of the NCSA process are constrained.

Challenges

As a result of war and conflict, an absence of political will, lack of technical expertise, lack of resources and limited capacity, Afghanistan's compliance with its international MEA obligations has been very limited. However, increasingly, Afghan officials are participating in international meetings, workshops and training fora, and steps are now being taken to encourage domestic compliance and improve regional participation and cooperation

NCSA Process

The implementation of the NCSA commenced in September 2004. The key activities undertaken so far include:

- Recruitment of GEF National Project Coordinator (NPC).
- Review of NCSA project document.
- Collection of information and key documents related to NCSA.
- Participation of National Project Co-coordinator in NCSA orientation and training workshops held in Tanzania and Malaysia.
- Briefing on NAPA and NCSA for the DoE and UNEP staff.
- Translation of key project documents from English to Dari.
- Preparation of the work plans for NCSA project.
- Drafting of the TORs for NCSA project steering committee.

NCSA Lessons Learnt

- In post-conflict countries provision should be kept for more flexibility in terms of duration of enabling activities as organizational and institutional structure is generally in its formative stages.
- Integration of enabling activities is even more difficult in post-conflict countries.
- Collection of data and checking the reliability of data are the most difficult tasks in enabling activities.

(This summary is based on a paper submitted by Afghanistan prior to the workshop. Unfortunately, due to flight problems, Afghanistan delegates were unable to deliver their presentation in person)

3.3. Bangladesh

Since 1998, the Institution and Policy Support Unit (IPSU) of MoEF has implemented the Sustainable Environment Management Programme (SEMP) which undertakes activities in relation to policy and institutions, participatory eco-system management at the grass root-level, community based environmental sanitation, awareness and advocacy, and training and education in Bangladesh. In close liaison with IPSU, the programme will utilize previous experiences when implementing the NCSA.

Challenges

The problems identified have evolved around the lack of follow up once completed projects have no further funding available, MEA initiatives being overwhelmingly donor driven, and sensitization on effective environmental management at different levels is lacking. These challenges have been exacerbated by the capacity needs of the

country thus prompting full capacity utilization to avoid any unnecessary duplication of capacities in the long run.

NCSA Process

Bangladesh envisages identifying capacity constraints as part of the NCSA process by engaging all stakeholders and assessing their capacity needs at the individual, institutional and systemic levels. Collectively, these sectors and levels are subjected to a capacity assessment and existing and future needs will be identified through interviews, questionnaires, consultative meetings, stakeholder's consultation, expert evaluation, the Global Support Mechanism, regional workshops, developing an activity matrix and sharing experiences through a website discussion forum. Through the process, a close liaison with on-going environmental projects will be maintained so that the experiences of completed projects and individuals will be acquired to further strengthen the NCSA process.

3.4. Bhutan

Since Bhutan is a small country with capacity constraints, it limits ratification only to important MEAs to ensure adequate resources are allocated accordingly for the successful execution of implementation procedures. The cumbersome process of ratifying MEAs in Bhutan is based on analyzing existing capacities to cope with the responsibilities, obligations and costs of selected agreements and the political benefits gained by prioritizing the accession of some MEAs over others.

Challenges

Limited staff capacity creates highly experienced delegates, but this also entails the danger of capacity gaps once these knowledgeable people are moved to other posts. Furthermore, fulfilling reporting requirements for each convention takes approximately 2-3 years hence strong regulatory frameworks have to be established.

At present there is no long term analysis of the upcoming needs and challenges for Bhutan and their relation to already acceded MEAs. Therefore it is difficult to determine a strategic position on when and why Bhutan should join certain agreements and how that would affect existing policies and ongoing MEA implementation activities.

NCSA Process

The implementation of NCSA commenced in May 2004 with a clearly defined process of involving stakeholders from all sectors, NCSA introductory workshops, identifying a Task Force and Thematic Working Groups (TWG), Inception workshops, TWG meetings, recruiting local consultants, stocktaking by TWG members and assessments of local consultants. An inception workshop was convened to sensitize all stakeholders on the NCSA process.

NCSA Lessons learnt

- Difficulties in forming members for the project due to ad hoc projects
- Difficulties in fixing dates for workshops or meetings due to conflicting schedules of TWG members
- Late responses from organizations with regard to the nomination/endorsement of participants and members
- Work plan and budget should be planned properly for effective implementation of the NCSA.

The way forward for Bhutan

With regard to the NCSA, Bhutan is currently targeting four regional workshops with dates tentatively fixed, followed by two national workshops to discuss the outcomes of the regional workshop and the assessment reports of CBD, FCCC, CCD and synergies, that will be discussed at the final workshop.

3.5. India

The mandate for implementing MEAs is embedded in the Indian Constitution under Article 253, which administers the implementation of all international agreements.

Symbiotically, an effective umbrella mechanism has been established. The Environment Protection Act (EPA) 1986 assigns power to the central government to legislate on all issues related to environmental protection, therefore reducing any procedural delays that may arise in the legislative process.

The management of MEAs is dealt with at the central level, through the Ministry of Environment and Forests (MoEF); which is the focal ministry for all matters related to MEAs, and the Central Pollution Control Board (CPCB). At the state level, the State Environment Department and State CPCBs, Inter-Ministerial Consultative Committees and Working Groups, and Centers of Excellence and Environmental Information System Centers (ENVIS), all contribute to effective environmental management. India's strong consultative process in MEA management and its focus on building upon existing institutions in order to reduce capacity gaps has enabled it to become mutually supportive of the inter-linkages approach.

Challenges

Faced with difficulties in replicating successful projects based on tried and tested components, ensuring the easy transfer of environmentally sound technologies, a lack of definitions to avoid policy ambiguity and reaching a consensus due to different approaches among states, has prompted the need for a harmonized national mechanism to deal with the challenges in implementing MEAs smoothly.

Response and strategies

India is in the process of finalizing a comprehensive National Environment Policy (NEP), to form a national commitment to a clean environment as mandated in article 48-A, 51-A of the constitution and provide a positive contribution to international efforts that pertain to environmental protection. The policy has encompassed comments and feedback from all stakeholder groups related to MEAs.

3.6. Iran

Iran is burdened with the socio-economic challenges of providing an adequate life-style for the young and growing population, which entails managing the rapid urbanization process and ensuring there are sufficient employment opportunities for the young. These socio-economic problems are intrinsically linked to environmental concerns of controlling land degradation, reducing air and water pollution and the loss of biodiversity.

The agencies embodying Iran's institutional framework for implementing MEAs include the High Council of Environment (HCE), which is the highest policy making body for environmental issues. The HCE instituted the National Committee for Sustainable Development (NCSD) in 1994, which includes 18 members from governmental agencies and NGOs, and 11 sub-committees. Furthermore, the Department of Environment (DoE), established in 1974, is responsible for formulating and proposing environmental policy and legislation and ensuring compliance, and the Ministry of Foreign Affairs (MFA) actively plays a role in the implementation of international agreements.

With regard to the administrative authority of the above agencies, the President of Iran chairs the HCE and the Vice-president heads the DOE and the NCSD.

Challenges

Implementation efforts are hampered by the lack of inter and intra agency coordination across agencies and donors, resulting in inadequate environmental monitoring in key sectors. Low capacities in information management and the inability to transfer knowledge effectively, contribute to difficulties in managing participatory processes. Iran has established a national Biosafety Clearing House Mechanism to facilitate the exchange of information; however, environmental issues still lack wider public involvement and awareness.

Responses and strategies

With the completion of the third National Development Plan (NDP) in 2003, the fourth NDP is scheduled to cover a 5 year period from 2005-2009. An entire chapter devoted to environmental policies would be incorporated into the plan with the overarching goal of knowledge based development of sustainable economic growth strongly linked to global economy.

Various legislative responses have been enacted by the DoE. These regulations require an Environmental Impact Assessment (EIA) to be completed, hence identifying this to be a key tool for environmental management in Iran.

NCSA Process

The NCSA draft project will be reviewed and is in process of recruiting a project coordinator. It is hopeful that NCSA will be implemented by March 2005.

3.7. Maldives

Maldives is mainly grappling with the problems caused by climate change and rising sea levels, especially as the highest recorded height above sea level is 3 meters. This has resulted in a large proportion of efforts dedicated to UNFCCC and fulfilling its obligations through the establishment of Climate Change Teams across government agencies. It is hoped that these teams could be used for implementing multiple conventions and further deal with problems that focus on freshwater resources, due to ineffective waste and sewage disposal systems and coastal zone management, areas that are important for all small developing islands.

Challenges

The threat to environmental management is posed by human and institutional capacity gaps resulting in scarce resources, particularly at the community level. Human capacity constraints are exacerbated by the lack of international negotiation skills, project management skills, and the exchange of know-how among specialized personnel on implementing MEAs.

Legal frameworks and capacity need to be strengthened to withstand all the demands of MEA implementation. Hence monitoring should be strictly adhered to, to ensure not only the sharing of tasks among government agencies but also the responsibilities attached to them. The increased exposure of officers working in ministries to sub-regional, regional and global programmes could effectively facilitate the process of adapting the lessons and experiences learnt into national programmes of action.

Responses and strategies

To bridge gaps in capacity, a Coastal Zone Management training course is provided for island representatives to recognize and report on environmental issues affecting the Maldives.

To ensure wider public involvement, particularly among youth, environmental awareness programmes have been embedded into school curriculums so that environmental education is started at an early age.

The establishment of national centers of excellence, namely the Marine Research Center and Environment Research Center has enabled collaborative work with ministries to raise awareness among the community and other stakeholders. The regional SAARC Coastal Zone Management Center in the Maldives is in the process of establishment but will aim to provide further guidance on coastal problems.

NCSA Process

Capacity gaps at the individual, institutional and systemic levels have prompted the need for an integrated approach to the NCSA process.

The main problem is recruiting skilled personnel to engage in NCSA activities, particularly project management related staff. Although Maldives is trying to use the Climate Change team as a Thematic Working Group, it has struggled to identify skilled personnel as they often move to other agencies without transferring their knowledge.

3.8. Nepal

In Nepal, there are a multitude of institutions within the government that provide an innovative approach to environmental management.

The establishment of the Ministry of Population and Environment (MoPE) as the main focal point for MEAs is an important step towards strengthening capacities in MEA management in Nepal; however, it is a relatively new ministry and has not been able to effectively streamline its capacity. The Ministry of Forests and Soil Conservation is the most established ministry with environmental mandate and is the focal point for CBD.

Other high level coordinating mechanisms include, the Parliamentary Committee on Natural Resources and Environmental Protection (PCNREP); National Development Council (NDC); National Planning Commission (NPC); Environment Protection Council (EPC); National Commission for Sustainable Development (NCSA) and the Ministry of Finance.

Challenges

Nepal is familiar with experiencing the challenges faced by other countries in implementing MEAs, including common capacity constraints. The impact of poverty, the low level of modern development outcomes, social unrest, and political instability remains to be addressed. As a result, Nepal has adopted the Poverty Reduction Strategy Paper (PRSP) as a main strategy to overcome these problems. Furthermore, a Sustainable Development Agenda for Nepal (SDAN) has been adopted to complement and guide all sectoral and periodic plans of the government to meet its Millennium Development Goal commitments.

NCSA Process

Despite the existence of exhaustive documents on policy, strategies, programmes and plans to improve environmental management, Nepal has identified that the NCSA document should not be viewed as one of them but to create an opportunity to learn through the NCSA process amidst the complexities of implementation. In light of the objectives of the NCSA project, a document containing National Execution Modality is under consideration, to be implemented through UNDP-GEF.

NCSA Lesson Learnt

- The involvement of multiple environmental institutions has resulted in slow and cumbersome decision making in relation to the implementation stages of NCSA. NCSA should have been half completed but it is still under the negotiation stage.
- As a result of the meetings organized to meet NCSA requirements, the project formulation exercise established, to a certain extent, a level of synergy among various institutions, which would otherwise remain undetected.

- It is important to closely monitor the dynamics between interests at the institutional and individual levels
- A fair level of common understanding on the implementation modalities of the project has been reached. The next immediate step is to sign a document to organize a Local Project Appraisal Committee Meeting in UNDP Nepal.

3.9. Pakistan

Pakistan faces poverty challenges and believes that those countries not affected by this are better equipped to address and prioritize environmental issues in the long term.

Its approach to implementing MEAs is inherently linked to a strong consultative process among all stakeholders so that knowledge is consolidated in all areas. This wider stakeholder involvement has enabled it to implement the CBD, CCD and FCCC through established mechanisms. These mechanisms include the Biodiversity Secretariat within the Ministry of Environment (MoE), which has recently been approved after much opposition; and the National Coordination Committee on Desertification and a Task Force for creating a national desertification fund with support from different donors. Furthermore, Pakistan was nominated for membership of the expert group of technology transfer during COP 7 of UNFCCC.

Challenges

Similar regional concerns have been identified. Some of the main problems assigned to capacity deficits at the individual, institutional and systemic levels, include the lack of in depth training of technical staff, insufficient and limited career incentives resulting in officers looking elsewhere for career progression, and the inadequate exposure to environmental issues at all working levels.

Long term environmental projects require both commitment and preparation skills in achieving positive outcomes, however these are lacking at the project level.

Responses and strategies

In recognition of the capacity constraints in implementing CCD, National Action Programmes (NAP) have proposed action to strengthen relevant institutions, universities and government agencies engaged in the management and development of dry land areas. This includes training of professional staff in line agencies, NGOs, and women organizations to enhance knowledge, skills and awareness on the effects of desertification in Pakistan.

NCSA Process

With the challenges envisaged in building capacity the question arises on where to begin establishing adequate approaches? Although the NCSA process would identify priorities and needs for capacity development, there is a lack of baseline indicators to comprehensively bridge capacity gaps. It is hoped that strategies such as the National Conservation Strategy (NCS) adopted in 1992, will help to create a sustainable institution system for the continuous improvement of national capacities for sustainable environmental management.

3.10. Sri Lanka

Sri Lanka has many mechanisms in place to improve the management of MEAs. These include environmental policies, strategies and plans; established National Coordinating Committees for the implementation of MEAs; National Expert Committees as well as GEF Steering Committees; and legislative measures.

The main focal point for MEAs is the Ministry of Environment and Natural Resources (MENR). The Institutional measures adopted to improve environmental management

includes the establishment of a separate unit of the Global Affairs Division attached to MENR, eight Committees on Environment Policy Management (CEPOMs), and a Committee on integrating Environment and Development Policy (CIEDP).

Challenges

Sri Lanka does not have an accepted ratification procedure and often domestic legislation has not been passed to accommodate the implementation of MEAs. Moreover there is a lack of access to documents and reference materials needed to raise awareness among institutions and the community. Although this has been addressed through the establishment of the Environment Treaty Reference Center (ETRC), further efforts need to be made to strengthen this center.

Suggestions

Projects on enhanced partnerships, community and stakeholder participation and best practices for technology transfer through established centres and implemented projects have been successfully executed. However, here is a further need to address capacity problems through developing domestic legislations to implement MEAs and enshrine sustainable development policies into sectoral legislation.

By allocating greater power to civil society, the private sector and NGOs in environmental management, projects will be less donor driven and will essentially embody the principles of local ownership.

4. Workshop Recommendations

The workshop recommended the following:

4.1. General Recommendations

1. The workshop participants expressed appreciation of all the presentations made during the meeting.

4.2. Recommendations for International Organizations

2. On the ongoing DANIDA-Malaysia MEA project, international organizations expressed interest in using the developed curricula in regional training in the Pacific and South Asia, while countries expressed interest in using the same curricula after modifications for local context. The participants also encouraged exchange of information between UNEP pilot synergies project in Africa and the DANIDA-Malaysia MEA project
3. The participants recognized the value of the UNEP draft manual to the guidelines on compliance and enforcement of MEAs. The participants, also noting the Bali strategic plan for capacity building and technology support, encouraged UNEP to work more closely with South Asian countries and institutions on integrated capacity development for implementation of MEAs, including the possible development of University level MEA programmes, and UNEP's further involvement in the proposed "SA CoE Regional Network"
4. Encourage UN and other international and regional agencies to coordinate better on capacity building

4.3. Recommendations for Regional Organizations

5. The workshop participants recommended that member governments, international and other agencies strive to build SACEP's capacity, (both institutionally and financially)
6. The participating NGOs recommended SACEP to provide the facilitative framework so as to provide a platform for deliberations and supportive action on MEAs, including developing and maintaining a database with linkages to the NGO network furnished on the website of SACEP; hosting regular forums for interaction/s, and partnering in their capacity building activities
7. The participants also encouraged SACEP to further develop global and regional partnerships with relevant organizations

4.4. Development of Regional Networks

8. The participants recommended the development of "Regional Network of Centers of Excellence for Inter-linked MEA Capacity Building in South Asia" that will link existing designated national and regional centers on technical issues pertaining to MEAs. The project aims to:
 - Develop tools, manuals, guidelines for synergetic implementation (regional, national)
 - Analysis of policy and operational implications of inter convention requirement (regional, national)
 - Repository of convention literature (regional, national)
 - Establish a stronger link between research and policy (national)
 - Independent policy analysis (regional, national)
 - Design and implement training activities (regional, national)
 - Institutional and expert networking (regional, national)

At present, several countries in the region have already designated or created such national centers (e.g. nine official CoE's related to MEAs in India), or are in the process of creating ones (Pakistan's proposed Center for Ecological Management and Restoration). SAARC has also designated several regional centers with relevance to MEA management.

At the national level, the project intends to link national centers together with nationally located regional centers. A single leading national center will be selected among these CoEs to represent the country in regional coordination. The leading national centers will be guided by an official national multi-stakeholder MEA consultative working group. The network concept is shown in figure 1.

At the regional level, one of the leading national centers will be selected to become the regional CoE, with the mandate not only to coordinate work at the regional level, but to also coordinate work beyond the region. Aside from the SAARC regional centers which have already been designated, the selection of national CoEs will be open to any organization (including civil society organizations), and will be based on an open bidding process.

Similarly the selection of the leading national center and the overall regional center will be made using the same open bid process. The terms of reference of these CoE will be designed in such a way that minimum requirements for a CoE will be defined, with the intention of building the capacity of the selected CoE during the process of the project. The CoEs will initially focus on important MEAs for the region including UNCBD, UNFCCC, UNCCD, Ramsar, Basel, POPs, and CITES. The overarching

theme of the work of the network will be the Inter-linkages among these MEAs. Each national CoE can select their own set of activities and focus based on national priorities, which may include awareness building, promotion of better stakeholder partnerships, information sharing and clearing house mechanisms, knowledge management, among others.

9. The participating NGOs recommended the creation of a formal network of NGOs dealing with Environment and/or MEAs in South Asia in order to share information, activities, best practices, success stories, experiences, relating to the management and implementation of MEAs. This proposed network, which the NGO partners proposes to host and maintain, will facilitate and develop partnerships for training/capacity building, establishing a database, undertake research on baseline, case studies/best practices, and organize forums for dissemination and consensus building. The primary objective is to support the work of the proposed "South Asia - CoE Network". The proposed network would work in close cooperation with SACEP/CoEs, focal point (Ministries). As a first step towards this proposal, the participating NGOs requested the UNU to provide a list of NGOs in South Asia working on MEA issues. TERI and LEAD proposes to work with UNU to explore resources for the proposed NGO network.

4.5. Recommendations Relating to the NCSA

10. The participants recommended the further linking of the NCSA with other related ongoing processes such as GEF enabling activity projects (NAPA, NBSAP, and NAP), and mainstreaming of NCSAs into other ongoing sustainable development activities such as PRSPs, NSSDs. The participants further recommended that the international community (led possibly by UNDP), identify interlinkages between the pro-

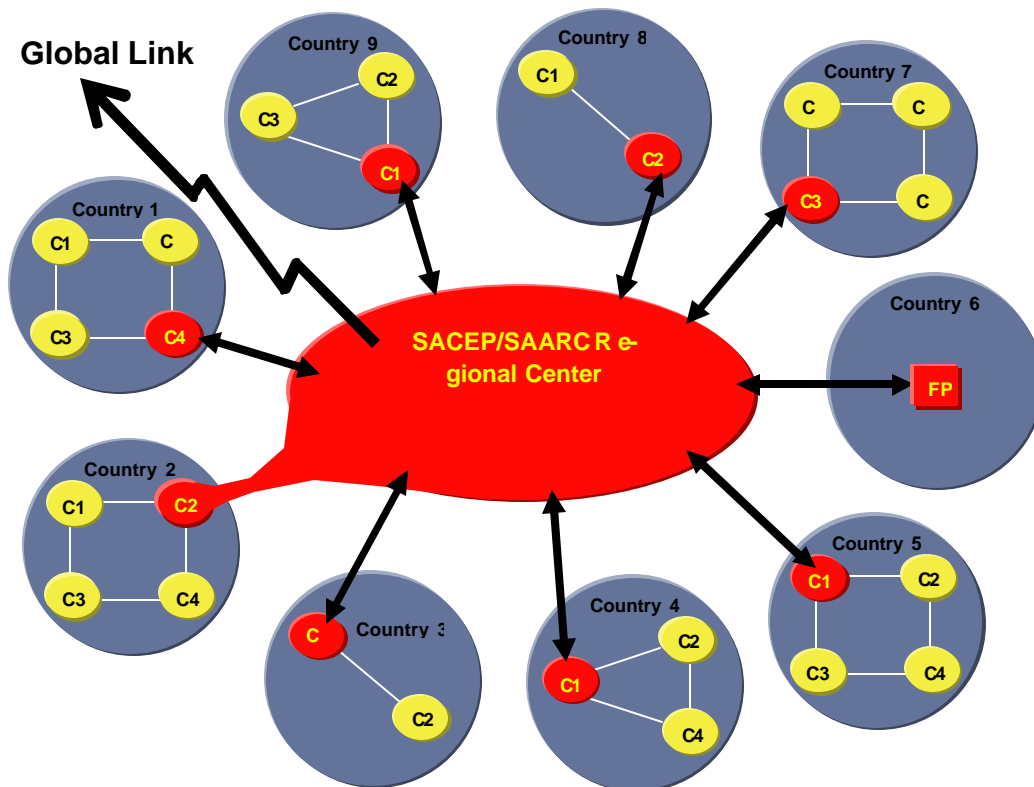


Figure 1. of the proposed Regional Network of Centers of Excellence for Inter-linked MEA Capacity Building in South Asia”

gramme of work among NCSA and other activities such as MDGs. The participants further highlighted the need to focus capacity enhancement activities that are common to NCSA and other development activities, and the importance of ensuring high level support for activities that are cross cutting, in the context of the NCSA.

11. The participants also noted that related to methodologies and tools for cross cutting thematic assessments, countries need more guidance on identifying common and cross cutting issues and their assessments, (and urged both UNDP and UNEP to) identify a common set of tools which countries can tailor to their needs. The participants also highlighted the need to capture capacity gaps common to the region, (and urged UNDP, UNEP and other relevant organizations) to standardize methodologies for cross cutting assessments at the regional level. Finally the workshop participants recommended (that respective NCSA implementing agencies such as UNDP or UNEP or other relevant international and regional organizations) disseminate “lessons learnt” and “best practice guidelines” on the NCSAs.
12. On regional support and cooperation, the participants recommended that regional organizations such as SACEP, IUCN, ECO, and others should be encouraged to provide technical support in implementing NCSAs. The participants further suggested that one regional organization take the lead in preparing a synthesis report on common regional capacity needs after the NCSAs are finished in South Asia. The participants also recommended that GEF Implementing Agencies share experiences of NCSA implementation to countries across regions. The participants also recommended that relevant agencies prioritize (MEA implementation) issues and develop a matrix for implementing cross cutting assessments with the support from regional and local institutions
13. Finally, the participants recommended that the NCSA Global Support Programme should take into consideration these recommendations during its implementation

5. Follow-up Action Plan

To respond to these recommendations the partners have agreed to the following action plan:

1. On the proposed development of “Regional Network of Centers of Excellence for Inter-linked MEA Capacity Building in South Asia”, a medium sized regional GEF project is proposed that will cover all 9 South Asian countries. The first step of this process is the development of a PDF -A proposal to secure funds to further develop the project concept. The activities being proposed that will be undertaken within the PDF -A are as follows:
 - Establish regional consultation group (SACEP consultative committee), Month 1
 - Institutional mapping, Month 2
 - Workshops, Month 2-4
 - Country visits (meeting with centers of excellence) Month 2-5
 - Seeking additional resources & detailed budget, Month 2-5
 - Planning, Month 5
 - TORs and detailed implementation arrangements, Month 5-6

It was proposed that the UNU undertake the initial project development to launch the activity in partnership with SACEP.

2. On the follow-up to the NCSA recommendations made above, the following activities have been planned in the coming months:

- Activating Email discussion forum
- Regional Training Workshops covering issues of stock taking, baseline assessments, etc. to be held preferably back to back with other regional events
- The frequency of these workshops to be every 6 months to share lessons learnt.
- Share progress report (every 3 months)
- A regional workshop before finalizing the action plan for NCSA

Annex 1. Workshop Programme

February 14 (Mon)	Day 1	
	Plenary	
09:00-09:30	Registration	
09:30-09:45	Inauguration and Opening	
09:45-10:45	<p>Welcome Addresses:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - <i>Mr. Mahboob Elahi, Director General, SACEP</i> - <i>Prof. Hans van Ginkel, Rector, UNU (video message)</i> - <i>Mr. Hirohiko Nishikubo, Ministry of Environment, Japan</i> <p>Opening Speech:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - <i>Honorable A.H.M. Fowzie, Minister of Environment and Natural Resources, Government of Sri Lanka (30 min.)</i> 	
10:45-11:15	Tea Break (Press Conference)	
11:15-12:30	<p>Chair: <i>Country Representative</i></p> <p>Presentations on Regional Initiatives:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Background of Workshop, <i>Dr. Jerry Velasquez, UNU (15 min.)</i> - Regional Partnership in South Asia, <i>SACEP Representative (tentative) (15 min.)</i> - UNDP Capacity Development Initiatives, <i>UNDP Representative (15 min.)</i> - UNEP NEPA D Project, <i>Mr. Abdul Majeid Haddad, UNEP/GEF (15 min.)</i> - Synergies for Sustainable Development, <i>Mr. Bhujang Dharmaji, IUCN (15 min.)</i> <p>Q & A, Discussion</p>	
12:30-13:30 13:30-14:15	<p>Lunch</p> <p>Chair: <i>Country Representative</i></p> <p>Presentations on Regional Initiatives:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Center for Excellence for Sri Lanka, <i>IUCN Sri Lanka or University of Peradeniya (15 min.)</i> - Role of Private Sector and Civil Society in Capacity Development in Pakistan, <i>Mr. Ali Tauqeer Sheikh, LEAD Pakistan (15 min.)</i> - DANIDA - Malaysia Project on MEAs: Capacity Building and Implementation, <i>Mr. Axel Kristiansen, Malaysia (15 min.)</i> <p>Q & A, Discussion</p>	
14:15-14:30	Tea Break	
14:30-17:30	<p>Chair: <i>Country Representative</i></p> <p>Country Presentations (15 min. each):</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Afghanistan - Bangladesh - Bhutan - India - Iran - Maldives - Nepal - Pakistan - Sri Lanka <p>Q & A, Discussion</p>	
19:00-21:30	Reception	
February 15 (Tue)	Day 2	
9:30-10:30	<p>Presentations:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Inter-linkages Case Studies in South Asia, <i>Dr. Jerry Velasquez, UNU (15 min.)</i> - Inter-linkages Regional Overview, <i>Ms. Selera Malhan, UNU (15 min.)</i> - Results of Stocktaking Activities in South Asia, <i>Prof. C.M. Madduma Bandara, University of Peradeniya, Ms. Makiko Yashiro, UNU (15 min.)</i> <p>Q&A, Discussion</p>	
	Working Group 1 Regional Initiatives on Inter-linkages among MEAs	Working Group 2 NCSA

10:30-11:00	<p>Presentations:</p> <p><u>Regional Capacity Development Initiatives 1</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Center for Excellence in Sri Lanka, <i>IUCN Sri Lanka or University of Peradeniya</i> (15 min.) - National Ecological Engineering and Ecosystem Restoration Institute, Pakistan, <i>Representative of MoE, Pakistan</i> (15 min.) <p>Q&A, Discussion</p>	<p>NCSA Inception</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Sharing experience related to inception. Lessons learnt - How to approach Inception/applying principles
11:00-11:15	Tea break	
11:15-12:30	<p>Presentations:</p> <p><u>Regional Capacity Development Initiatives 2</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Integrative Capacity Development Initiative for South Asia, <i>Ms. Nupur Chowdhury, TERI</i> (15 min.) <u>Experiences from Other Regions</u> - Training on Environmental Law, Negotiations and MEA Management and Implementation for Malaysia, <i>Md. Fouzi Abdullah, Ministry of Natural Resources and Environment, Malaysia</i> 15 min.) - Sustainable Development Initiatives in the Arab Region, <i>Dr. Karim Makdisi, American University of Beirut</i> (15 min.) <p>Q&A, Discussion</p>	NCSA inception continued
12:30-13:30	Lunch	
13:30-15:30	<p><u>UNEP Capacity Development Initiatives</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - UNEP Capacity Development Activities on Compliance with and Enforcement of MEAs, <i>Carl Bruch, UNEP/DEPI</i> (15 min.) <p>Discussion: Identification of Opportunities and Action Plans for Regional Partnership for Capacity Development</p>	<p>Stocktaking and thematic assessment</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Sharing preliminary results/methods from assessment. - Discussion: how to integrate thematic assessment into cross-cutting assessment
15:30-15:45	Tea break	
15:45-17:30	Discussion continued	<p>Regional NCSA implementation support</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Discussion on further NCSA support needs at regional level - How to integrate NCSA activities into regional partnership action plan
18:30-20:30	Optional: NCSA Clinic, <i>UNDP/GEF</i>	
February 16 (Wed)	Day 3	
	Plenary	
9:30-11:00	<p>Working Group Presentations:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Working Group 1 (15 min.) - Working Group 2 (15 min.) <p>Round Table Discussion: Regional Cooperation on Capacity Building for the Environment Chair: Country Representative Facilitators: <i>Dr. Jerry Velasquez, UNU and SACEP Representative (?)</i> Discussants: <i>UNDP, UNEP, US State Dept, Country Reps, SACEP, Others</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Development of regional partnership and strategic plan 	
11:00-11:15	Tea Break	
11:15-13:00	Discussion, Wrap-up	
13:00-	Lunch Departure of participants	

Terms of Reference for the Working Groups

WG1 – Regional Initiatives on Inter-linkages among MEAs

WG1 aims to provide participants with information on existing capacity development initiatives in South Asia, in order to identify opportunities and develop action plans for the regional partnership for capacity development for the region. During the session, presentations will be made on various on-going capacity development initiatives in the region, such as the establishment of Centers of Excellence in Sri Lanka and Pakistan, and other initiatives conducted by key training and research institutions in the region. In order to facilitate the inter-regional exchange of information and experiences, a case from Malaysia on environmental negotiators' training, as well as some cases from West Asia will also be introduced during the session. A series of other capacity development initiatives conducted by UNEP and UNDP will also be presented.

Chair: Country representative

Facilitator: Jerry Velasquez, UNU

Rapporteur: Makiko Yashiro, UNU and C. D. Daskon, UNU

WG2 – NCSA

WG2 aims to provide opportunities for the NCSA focal point from each country to share information and experiences regarding the NCSA process with other countries in the region. By identifying gaps and opportunities faced in the NCSA process in each country, the working group aims to provide information/skills related to implementation of NCSA in each country. It will also identify needs for support at regional level for NCSA implementation, as well as how to integrate NCSA activities, into overall regional partnership activities on capacity development (in relation to WG1).

Chair: Country representative

Facilitator: Yumiko Yasuda, UNDP/GEF

Co-Facilitator: Abdul Majeid Haddad, UNEP/GEF

Rapporteur: Selena Malhan, UNU and Izumi Ono, UNU

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Annex 3. Presentations