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**THE EUROPEAN BIODIVERSITY MONITORING AND  
INDICATOR FRAMEWORK (EBMI-F)**

submitted by

The European Centre for Nature Conservation (ECNC)  
and the United Nations Environment Programme (UNEP)  
through the Ad Hoc Working Group of Senior Officials

BACKGROUND DOCUMENT



UNITED NATIONS  
ECONOMIC COMMISSION FOR EUROPE

# EBMI-F: The European Biodiversity Monitoring and Indicator Framework

*Document prepared by the European Centre for Nature Conservation*

## Introduction

At the 4<sup>th</sup> ‘Environment for Europe’ Ministerial Conference (EfE, held in Aarhus, Denmark, 1998) BirdLife/RSPB promoted the need to develop a Pan-European Biodiversity Monitoring Initiative. This proposal was in line with the Aarhus Declaration that recognises that ‘mechanisms for coordinated monitoring, data collection, processing and management in the European region are still inadequate’. Consequently, a call for closer cooperation in the field of biodiversity was included in the Aarhus Ministerial Declaration.

At the 1999 Council meeting of the Pan-European Biological and Landscape Diversity Strategy (PEBLDS, endorsed at the 3<sup>rd</sup> EfE conference in Sofia, 1995) it was agreed to entrust the European Centre for Nature Conservation (ECNC) and the European Environment Agency (EEA) with the task of coordinating the development of the Aarhus European Biodiversity Monitoring Initiative in the framework of PEBLDS. The Strategy Council meeting of May 2001 included the establishment of the Initiative in the revised Rolling Work Programme 2001-2005 for PEBLDS as Objective 2.5 (Technical and scientific cooperation is making a significant contribution to building capacity in the UN-ECE region) of Goal 2 (Participants in the PEBLDS process have improved financial, human, scientific, technical, and technological capacity to implement the PEBLDS and the CBD).

On 11 September 2001 a meeting with key players (ECNC, EEA, CONNECT network of biodiversity research institutes, BirdLife International, Wetlands International, UNEP-World Conservation Monitoring Centre, and Norwegian Institute for Nature Research NINA) developed ways forward to turn the concept into practice. On the basis of the discussions held a project proposal was circulated to the enlarged Bureau of the PEBLDS Council in October 2001 (STRA-CO (2001) 29)<sup>1</sup>, for the development of the European Biodiversity Monitoring and Indicator Framework (EBMI-F).

For the 2<sup>nd</sup> ‘Biodiversity in Europe’ intergovernmental conference (Budapest, February 2002), the European Commission had prepared a background paper together with EEA and ECNC on the status of indicators, monitoring and clearing-house mechanisms in Europe. Amongst others, this paper recommended the implementation of EBMI-F. This was then taken up in the chairman’s conclusions, which referred to EBMI-F as an example of a regional coordination effort.

Following an invitation by the European Commission DG Environment at the CBD 6<sup>th</sup> Conference of the Parties (The Hague, April 2002) a project proposal for implementing EBMI-F was submitted by UNEP-ROE for funding by the EC in August 2002.

Finally, the latest PEBLDS Council meeting (January 2003) supported the need for a stronger focus on a concrete implementation of EBMI-F, linked to specific targets. It has included EBMI-F as the framework to facilitate a coherent European programme on biodiversity monitoring and reporting in the draft resolution on biodiversity for the Kyiv conference and is requesting the ministerial conference to support this view.

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<sup>1</sup> PEBLDS Council (2001) *Proposal for a European Biodiversity Monitoring and Indicator Framework (EBMI-F)*. STRA-CO (2001) 29. ([http://www.strategyguide.org/docs/bureau/2001/STRA-CO%20\(2001\)%2029.pdf](http://www.strategyguide.org/docs/bureau/2001/STRA-CO%20(2001)%2029.pdf))

## Recent developments

Since the call for more coordination for biodiversity at Aarhus much has happened in the field of biodiversity indicators and monitoring. The EBMI-F process has been described above. In the following paragraphs some other initiatives are described.

At the level of the **CBD** and its Subsidiary Body for Scientific, Technical and Technological Advice (SBSTTA) progress has been centred around the work programme on indicators of biological diversity as approved by Decision IV/1a of the Conference of the Parties (COP). In the period between COP5 (Nairobi, 2000) and COP6 (The Hague, 2002) the CBD Executive Secretary and SBSTTA worked on defining a set of principles for designing national-level monitoring programmes and indicators, a key set of standard questions and a list of available and potential indicators. In this process, and in response to Decision VI/7b, an expert meeting on indicators of biological diversity was convened in February 2003. Also, at COP6 ECNC and EEA, together with BirdLife International, organised a side-event on indicators and monitoring, of which the outcome was published in an ECNC report (Delbaere, 2002)<sup>2</sup>.

At pan-European level coordination and facilitation on biodiversity indicators and monitoring is foreseen by EBMI-F in the framework of **PEBLDS**.

A draft overview by ECNC for the EEA's European Topic Centre on Nature Protection and Biodiversity (ETC/NPB) has revealed that at pan-European and EEA level a wide range of organisations runs over 30 international monitoring programmes for a multitude of purposes (ETC/NPB, 2003)<sup>3</sup>. A similar overview showed that at international level over 700 indicators are used or proposed for biodiversity (ETC/NPB, 2002)<sup>4</sup>. This demonstrates the urgent need for coordination and harmonisation by a platform such as EBMI-F. The draft overviews will be further developed in 2003 for the web as part of the European Community Clearing-House for Biodiversity (EC CHM)<sup>5</sup>.

At **EEA** level a complementary coordination process has started with the establishment of the International Working Group on Biodiversity Indicators and Monitoring (IWG Bio-MIN). This working group assembles those international bodies that are involved in international monitoring programmes, with the aim to support the EEA's process in developing biodiversity indicators as well as the development of a NatureNet for coordination of information on biodiversity related monitoring. It met for the first time in September 2002. National input into the discussion on indicators and monitoring at EEA level is ensured via the EIONET (Environmental Information and Observation Network) National Reference Centres for nature and biodiversity. Information on indicators and on Bio-MIN will be available via the EC CHM.

In parallel to the work of EEA the **European Commission** has called for the development of indicators for the implementation of the EC Biodiversity Action Plans, which is coordinated by EEA. Also, the EC is developing headline indicators to report on the main trends at the annual Spring Council meetings of the EC. Further cooperation in the field of research in support of

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<sup>2</sup> Delbaere, B. (2002) *Biodiversity Indicators and Monitoring: Moving towards implementation*. – Tilburg, European Centre for Nature Conservation.

<sup>3</sup> ETC/NPB (2003) *An inventory of European site-based biodiversity monitoring networks*. Draft report, prepared by B. Delbaere, European Centre for Nature Conservation – Copenhagen, European Environment Agency. (in press)

<sup>4</sup> ETC/NPB (2002) *An inventory of biodiversity indicators in Europe*. Draft report, prepared by B. Delbaere, European Centre for Nature Conservation – Copenhagen, European Environment Agency. (<http://nature.eionet.eu.int/activities/products/indicators/>)

<sup>5</sup> <http://biodiversity-chm.eea.eu.int>

biodiversity monitoring is supported by the European Platform for Biodiversity Research Strategy (EPBRS), which held an electronic conference and a workshop on science based monitoring of biodiversity in Silkeborg, Denmark, in October 2002.

More details on the state of affairs in implementing biodiversity indicators and monitoring are available from the report that resulted from the CBD/COP6 side event on the topic (Delbaere, 2002) and the background paper for the Budapest conference (STRA-CO (2002) 44)<sup>6</sup>. Finally, a guiding principle of relevance to biodiversity monitoring has been reinforced in 2002 at the Johannesburg Summit on Environment and Development. The implementation plan of the Johannesburg Summit includes the following biodiversity related commitments:

- significant reduction in current loss of biological diversity by 2010, among others by promoting sustainable use of biological diversity, including sustainable tourism;
- reverse the current trend in natural resource degradation;
- promote conservation of ecosystems, World Heritage sites, endangered species, hot spot areas and other essential areas, development of national and regional ecological networks and corridors;
- control invasive alien species.

### **What is EBMI-F?**

The European Biodiversity Monitoring and Indicator Framework (EBMI-F) is a PEBLDS-initiated concept for promoting and facilitating collaboration in monitoring and indicators towards reporting on Europe's biodiversity, using the objectives of the CBD as guidance. EBMI-F aims to enhance the possibilities for creating more synergy among present and future biodiversity monitoring and indicator efforts at the European level in order to reach higher efficiency and effectiveness in communicating the state of, and trends in, Europe's biodiversity to the policymakers concerned. Essentially EBMI-F should thus be a coordinating effort, rather than an executive undertaking or reporting body.

EBMI-F can only take up this function if it considers monitoring and indicator efforts in the light of policy-relevant assessments and is based on clear sets of indicators that aim at strengthening integration with societal sectors. It is also clear that EBMI-F shall avoid duplicating efforts that are taken by others. Rather it should facilitate and coordinate the implementation of these efforts.

EBMI-F should:

- be policy-oriented
- facilitate use of the European information obtained at national level and via conventions and directives, and non-governmental bodies
- be active towards major research programmes (such as EU)
- have a pan-European scope

The primary group EBMI-F aims at on the policy level is the PEBLDS Council and its members (including CBD Secretariat, EC, UNECE member states and the Working Group on Environmental Monitoring, Council of Europe, UNEP).

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<sup>6</sup> PEBLDS Council (2002) *Indicators, monitoring and clearing-house mechanisms: tools for policymaking and awareness raising*. Background paper prepared by the European Commission with the European Environment Agency and the European Centre for Nature Conservation for the 2<sup>nd</sup> intergovernmental conference 'Biodiversity in Europe', Budapest, February 2002. STRA-CO (2002) 44. ([http://www.strategyguide.org/docs/budapest/STRA-CO\(2002\)44.doc](http://www.strategyguide.org/docs/budapest/STRA-CO(2002)44.doc))

The second group aimed at for the purpose of enhanced coordination is those organisations that influence European policymaking directly or indirectly (for example via data collection, lobbying, awareness raising, public participation). EBMI-F should serve to promote agreements among such activities that will enable convergence of efforts.

## **EBMI-F activities**

### *Overview of policy requirements*

The direction of actions necessary in reporting to decision makers depends on the policy issues. What are the questions decision makers need answers to? An overview of the main questions that need responses should be established as a consultative frame. It should be based on the CBD and the main international conventions and programmes.

### *Overview of state of the art in biodiversity indicators and monitoring*

In order to promote coordination and collaboration and identify gaps an inventory of ongoing biodiversity indicators and monitoring activities on the national and European level is a necessary background. For this purpose the existing inventories for the EEA should be expanded to cover the entire pan-European region.

### *Coordination and gap analysis*

Based on the overview of the previous steps an analysis should be performed showing where there is already good correlation, where there is a major basis for better coordination and where there are gaps both on the policy and research level that need to be filled for satisfying policy requirements. Very close coordination on the development of indicators in the framework of CBD is necessary throughout the process both for national and international organisations.

### *Recommendations*

The consolidated report will form the basis for formulating recommendations on what steps to take to produce what is needed, the time frame and the resources necessary. The recommendations must include measurable objectives that are so clearly defined as to allow assessment of their effectiveness.

### *Stakeholder participation*

Throughout the entire process of implementing EBMI-F stakeholder participation and consultation will be endeavoured in various ways (workshops, personal contacts, and interviews).

### *Products resulting from EBMI-F*

Products envisaged include:

- e-mail distribution list on EBMI-F and biodiversity monitoring;
- project leaflet introducing EBMI-F to interested parties and target groups;
- participation in IWG Bio-MIN as a continuous platform for exchange of information (set up by EEA);

- association with the Biodiversity Expert Group of the Commission DG Environment (participation of Member States and stakeholders);
- EBMI-F review on ongoing monitoring activities in Europe (extend EEA report and web site);
- EBMI-F report on indicators used (extend EEA report and web site);
- background paper by EC, UK, EEA and ECNC on biodiversity monitoring as basis for 'Biodiversity in Europe' intergovernmental conference and COP6 side event;
- report on policy requirements;
- web page on EBMI-F on the Strategy Guide;
- recommendations on EBMI-F and on monitoring needs.

### *Tangible benefits of EBMI-F*

Envisaged EBMI-F benefits for stakeholders are:

- increased information exchange;
- closer fit of monitoring efforts to policy requirements;
- joint advancement of goals and objectives;
- better use of collected and processed information;
- stronger – because joint – policy influence;
- saving duplication and money;
- visibility of biodiversity monitoring (PR);
- access to others' information;
- gap analysis;
- harmonization, development of common methods and practices.

### **Progress to date**

The following activities have been undertaken to date in the framework of EBMI-F:

- Meeting with key EBMI-F partners hosted by the CONNECT Secretariat in Brussels (11 September 2001);
- Proposal with objectives, linkages, target groups, envisaged activities and products, partners and financial requirements submitted to PEBLDS Bureau meeting (STRA-CO (2001) 29, October 2001);
- One-page information leaflet distributed at CBD/SBSTTA meeting (Montreal, 12-16 November 2001);
- Presentation at EC Biodiversity Expert Group (BEG) (Brussels, 5 Feb 2002).
- Background paper on indicators, monitoring and Clearing-House Mechanisms for 2<sup>nd</sup> intergovernmental conference 'Biodiversity in Europe' (February 2002, Budapest, STRA-CO (2002) 44, EC in cooperation with EEA and ECNC);
- Overview of European biodiversity indicator initiatives (2002, ECNC for ETC/NPB and EEA);
- Presentation at side-event 'Moving towards implementing biodiversity indicators and monitoring: case studies from Europe' (organised by ECNC and EEA with BirdLife International at CBD-COP6, The Hague, April 2002);
- Meeting of ECNC, EEA and BirdLife International to draft project proposal for submission (May 2002, Copenhagen);
- Publication of proceedings of COP6 side-event, including chapter on EBMI-F (September 2002);

- Project proposal submitted by UNEP/ROE to the European Commission DG Environment with request for funding (August 2002). Reminder sent to EC in December 2002.;
- Presentation and consultation at 1<sup>st</sup> meeting of IWG Bio-MIN (International Working Group on Biodiversity Monitoring and Indicators, established by EEA) and support from the group to EBMI-F (11 September 2002, Copenhagen);
- Reference made during presentations at 2<sup>nd</sup> meeting of EIONET-NRCs for nature and biodiversity (Nice, 25 October 2002) and 2<sup>nd</sup> GMES Forum (Global Monitoring for Environment and Security) (Noordwijk, 15 January 2003);
- Start of production of glossy leaflet on importance of biodiversity monitoring and EBMI-F for presentation and distribution at Kyiv conference and other target groups, with initial funding by Swedish Environmental Protection Agency;
- E-mail distribution list of partners and mailing list for information announcements established;
- Web page maintained as part of the Strategy Guide (<http://www.strategyguide.org/ebmf.html>);
- Liaison with other platforms and groups (e.g. EC Biodiversity Expert Group, Informal Working Group on Biodiversity Monitoring and Indicators (IWG-BioMIN, EEA), UNECE-WGEM, Pan-European CHM partnership, EIONET National Reference Centres, OECD, UNEP, IUCN, GMES);
- Overview of biodiversity monitoring networks in Europe (ECNC for ETC/NPB and EEA);
- Progress reports to PEBLDS Bureau and Council meetings, the most recent one (STRA-CO (2003) Inf.2 mentioning possible indicator issues to start with at pan-European level.

### **Next steps**

- Upon funding start implementation of the activities proposed;
- Possible input into the process for SBSSTA8 and SBSTTA9 and COP7;
- Provide input into the IWG Bio-MIN meeting (June 2003);
- Report on progress and results to the 3<sup>rd</sup> Biodiversity in Europe intergovernmental conference (2004);
- Pending funding organise an EBMI-F meeting on pan-European indicators in autumn 2003 to initiate pan-European collaboration;

The key target that has been formulated in the draft Kyiv resolution on biodiversity forms an important component in the implementation of next steps:

**Biodiversity Monitoring and Indicators:**

8. By 2008, a coherent European programme on biodiversity monitoring and reporting, facilitated by the European Biodiversity Monitoring and Indicator Framework, will be operational in the pan European region, in support of nature and biodiversity policies, including by 2006 an agreed core set of biodiversity indicators developed with the active participation of the relevant stakeholders.

**Request to the Ministerial conference**

In line with the recommendations on biodiversity indicators and monitoring, as formulated in the Budapest background paper STRA-CO (2002) 44, the EPBRS Silkeborg workshop, the COP6 side event on indicators and monitoring, and the ETC/NPB inventory reports, the 5<sup>th</sup> UNECE Environment for Europe ministerial conference is requested to:

- endorse the Kyiv resolution on biodiversity, including the key target on biodiversity indicators and monitoring so as to start the process in time for reaching the targets in 2006 and 2008;
- actively support international coordination activities on monitoring and indicators in order to advance more efficient and effective reporting on the state of Europe's biodiversity and biodiversity policies so as to be able to assess the objective of significant reduction of current loss of biodiversity by 2010, as advocated by the Johannesburg Summit 2002;
- ensure possibilities and capacity at national and international level for the continuation of long-term biodiversity monitoring programmes, building on and widening existing initiatives.