

IAIA Biodiversity and Ecology Section

Position Paper CBD Voluntary Guidelines on Biodiversity-inclusive Impact Assessment

CBD Guidelines

The Executive Secretary of the Convention on Biological Diversity (CBD) has published voluntary guidelines on biodiversity-inclusive environmental impact assessment and draft guidance on biodiversity-inclusive strategic environmental assessment (together “the Guidelines”) as one of the documents for consideration at the 8th meeting of the Conference of the Parties to the Convention (COP8) in Brazil, 20-31 March and has invited the COP to adopt a decision on the Guidelines - see <http://www.biodiv.org/doc/meetings/cop/cop-08/official/cop-08-27-add2-en.pdf>

The CBD publication consists of:

- Context setting of the Guidelines in light of the CBD’s work to date on impact assessment. In particular, the draft guidelines adopted at COP6 (Decision VI/7 A) and their subsequent further development.
- A possible form of decision for adoption by the COP which:
 - notes that the Guidelines should be used in conjunction with the CBD Akwe: Kon voluntary guidelines for Cultural, Environmental and social impact assessment;
 - welcomes the CBD database of case studies on biodiversity and impact assessment and encourages its use and further development;
 - endorses the voluntary guidelines on biodiversity-inclusive environmental impact assessment, emphasises that these are intended to serve as guidance for Parties and other bodies to develop and implement their own impact-assessment instruments and procedures, urges parties and other organisations to apply the guidelines and share their experience, encourages the Ramsar and Migratory Species Conventions to review and if appropriate endorse the guidelines, and requests the Executive Secretary to continue collaborating with relevant organisations, in particular through IAIA to develop capacity to apply the guidelines, and to compile information on experiences in applying the guidelines;
 - takes note of the draft guidance on biodiversity-inclusive strategic environmental assessment, encourages parties and other organisations to take the guidelines into account and share experiences, invites other multi-lateral environmental agreements to review the draft guidance and consider its application within their remits, and requests the Executive Secretary to continue collaborating with relevant organisations to translate the draft guidance into practical national or sectoral approaches and guidelines, including on the impacts of trade and biodiversity, compile information on experiences in applying the guidelines, and prepare proposals on complementing this guidance with examples of its practical application.
- Annex 1 setting out the voluntary guidelines on biodiversity-inclusive environmental impact assessment (EIA), including stages in the EIA process, biodiversity issues at different stages of EIA, an indicative set of screening criteria and an indicative list of ecosystem services.
- Annex 2 setting out the draft guidance on biodiversity-inclusive strategic environmental assessment (SEA), describing SEA steps and tools, indicating relevant biodiversity issues in SEA, proposing a framework for assessing biodiversity and biodiversity triggers for identifying.

IAIA Biodiversity and Ecology Section

The International Association for Impact Assessment (IAIA) is the leading global authority on best practice in the use of impact assessment for informed decision making regarding policies, programs, plans and projects. It involves people from many disciplines and professions and IAIA members now number more than 2,500 and represent more than 100 countries.

The IAIA Biodiversity and Ecology Section¹ promotes the development of good practice for ‘biodiversity-inclusive’ impact assessment and provides a focus for information exchange and collaboration of practitioners working in the public, private, and academic sectors around the world. Its key objectives are to:

- Organize a Biodiversity and Ecology Stream at IAIA annual conferences
- Run the Biodiversity and Ecology list serv
- Collaborate with the biodiversity-related Conventions
- Progress the Action Programme for Biodiversity and Impact Assessment initially adopted July 2001 and updated July 2004
- Provide input to the IAIA project on Capacity Building for Biodiversity in Impact Assessment (CBBIA), a targeted capacity building programme promoting good practice in biodiversity and impact assessment.

¹ See www.iaia.org/Members/Sections/biodiversity.htm for more information

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Aim of this IAIA Biodiversity and Ecology Section Position Paper

This paper aims to assist members of the IAIA Biodiversity and Ecology Section and CBBIA participants to:

- make contact with their national CBD focal points to express support for the Guidelines as one important aspect of ensuring more biodiversity inclusive impact assessment and encourage their CBD country representatives to adopt the proposed decision on the Guidelines at COP8;
- promote the Guidelines as one important aspect of ensuring more biodiversity inclusive impact assessment;
- encourage their national governments and other organisations to apply the voluntary guidelines on biodiversity-inclusive EIA and to take the draft guidance on biodiversity-inclusive SEA into account and to share their experiences;
- encourage and participate in capacity building activities to apply and translate the Guidelines into practical approaches/guidelines, particularly via the IAIA CBBIA project;
- share experiences in applying the guidelines.

IAIA Biodiversity and Ecology Section Position on the CBD Guidelines

1. The Guidelines offer extremely useful advice for all stakeholders concerned with biodiversity and impact assessment, and the IAIA Biodiversity and Ecology Section encourages their adoption in the COP8.
2. The IAIA Biodiversity and Ecology Section encourages all members and partners to propose to their regulatory and professional associations to use the Guidelines to include biodiversity in existing EIA and SEA systems and procedures, or ensure it is included in newly developing systems and regulation.
3. The IAIA Biodiversity and Ecology Section encourages all members and their organisations to apply the Guidelines in their own context and to share their experiences of applying the Guidelines.
4. The IAIA Biodiversity and Ecology Section encourages all members to stimulate and participate in capacity building activities to apply and translate the Guidelines into practical approaches/guidelines, including via the IAIA CBBIA project.
5. The Guidelines promote the use and further development of the CBD database of case studies on biodiversity inclusive impact assessment and sharing of experiences of application of the Guidelines. IAIA Biodiversity and Ecology Section members are encouraged to contribute actively to provide and use the data from the clearing house mechanism (See <http://www.biodiv.org/chm/default.aspx>). The CBD parties are encouraged to increase awareness raising and dissemination of this database mechanism.
6. The Guidelines should be promoted together with supporting documents such as the IAIA "Principles of EIA Best Practice" and "Biodiversity in Impact Assessment"².
7. The IAIA Biodiversity and Ecology Section would support inclusion of the 'no net loss' concept in the Guidelines, since EIA and SEA can both play a key role in ensuring that further loss of biodiversity is prevented.
8. The IAIA Biodiversity and Ecology Section welcomes the acknowledgement in the draft decision that the Guidelines should be used in conjunction with the CBD Akwe: Kon voluntary guidelines and encourages the COP to ensure that any decision adopted includes this important principle. IAIA Biodiversity and Ecology Section members are encouraged to ensure that local and indigenous knowledge is adequately acknowledged and included in impact assessment systems and procedures which implement/apply the Guidelines.
9. The IAIA Biodiversity and Ecology Section calls for collection of further information about threatened, fragile and poorly understood ecosystems and species by Parties to the CBD and other governments and organisations, as this information is needed to facilitate biodiversity-inclusive EIA and SEA.

Feedback

Comments on the Guidelines can be directed to:

- Your national CBD focal point – see <http://www.biodiv.org/world/map.aspx>
- The CBD Secretariat - see <http://www.biodiv.org/secretariat/> or secretariat@biodiv.org
- The Chair of the IAIA Biodiversity and Ecology Section – currently Helen Byron email: helen.byron@rspb.org.uk

² Available from http://www.iaia.org/Non_Members/Pubs_Ref_Material/pubs_ref_material_index.htm