



## Capacity Building for Biodiversity and Impact Assessment (CBBIA)

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## 1 Overview

'Capacity Building for Biodiversity and Impact Assessment' (CBBIA) is administered by the International Association for Impact Assessment (IAIA) with grants from the Dutch Ministry of Foreign Affairs. CBBIA provides practical and demand-driven support to developing countries, by working with practitioners, policy makers and other stakeholders to share information and experiences, build expertise and promote good practice.

CBBIA aims to strengthen the integration of biodiversity with impact assessment (IA), and to promote IA as a tool for implementing the global biodiversity-related conventions, notably the Convention on Biological Diversity (CBD), the Ramsar Convention and the Convention on Migratory Species (CMS). CBBIA plays an important integrating role, reviewing available guidance and identifying common themes and requirements to ensure that any new guidance builds on existing advice, information and good practice.

CBD COP6 (April 2002) reinforced the need for further development of guidelines for incorporating biodiversity issues in IA. CBBIA provided case studies and experiences to support the development of the 'voluntary guidance on biodiversity-inclusive impact assessment' recently endorsed by COP 8 in Curitiba, Brazil and hosted consultation meetings to revise and develop the draft guidance in line with experiences. CBBIA is now developing ways to test the application of the guidance and adapt it at country level.

CBBIA benefits in its activities from the active involvement of representatives from the Convention on Biodiversity (CBD), the Ramsar Convention, the United Nations Environmental Program (UNEP/GEF), the World Conservation Union (IUCN), the Netherlands Commission for Environmental Impact Assessment (NCEIA), and the South African Institute of Environmental Assessment (SAIEA).

The project is now in its third year. It has provided support, expertise and guidance in 3 focal regions (Southern Africa, South/Central America, South/SE Asia) and in many other countries. It has supported more than 100 people to attend conferences, meetings or training sessions. Most importantly it has created a network of 'ambassadors' for biodiversity and impact assessment who continue to work for the benefit of biodiversity in their countries after their immediate involvement has finished.

## 2 Aim

The main aim is to strengthen integration of biodiversity with IA, so that IA is an effective instrument for addressing biodiversity considerations in policy- and decision-making, and in the execution of projects, programs, and plans in developing countries.



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## 3 Activities:

Capacity building in this program includes training/knowledge transfer, institution building, and networking to promote good practice in biodiversity and IA. It includes various enabling activities, designed to take place in participating regions and countries and at IAIA conferences, workshops and events.

Activities include:

1. **regional programmes**: capacity building activities based on situation assessments, working with suitable institutions, organisations and individuals to enhance the integration of biodiversity with IA laws, procedures and practices in selected 'focal regions'
2. **small grants** (10 000 us\$ or less) to support research and capacity building projects in any developing country, including those not included in focal regions
3. a **bursary scheme** to support individuals in need of training, allowing them to attend conferences or training workshops
4. **conference sessions and training workshops** to develop new approaches and share successes and failures
5. maintaining a **database of contacts** and providing opportunities for ongoing exchange of information and ideas, e.g. through email discussion groups
6. contributing to the further **development of guidelines** on the integration of biodiversity considerations in IA (EIA and SEA) within the framework of the CBD, the Ramsar Convention and the CMS including provision of case studies and practical experiences to test guidance

Activities are carried out with strong local involvement to improve relevance and 'ownership'. Where possible they are locally driven with support from IAIA as necessary.

## 4 Outputs

Important CBBIA outputs include:

- a growing international network of biodiversity and IA professionals (214 people subscribe to the listserv [cbbia@iaia.org](mailto:cbbia@iaia.org))
- a series of projects funded by small grants (less than 10 000 us\$) to support capacity building activities
- case study material in support of CBD guidance on biodiversity-inclusive impact assessment, recently endorsed by COP 8 in Curitiba, Brazil!

## 5 More about...

### ***e-networking***

CBBIA runs an electronic listserv [cbbia@iaia.org](mailto:cbbia@iaia.org) to enable CBBIA-participants and other interested people to share information and news.



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## ***CBD Guidance***

CBBIA provided case studies and experiences to support development of voluntary guidance on biodiversity-inclusive impact assessment, recently endorsed by the CBD at COP 8 in Curitiba, Brazil. These highlighted challenges and opportunities associated with IA at both project and strategic levels. **CBBIA now hopes to help road-test the guidance**

The CBD voluntary guidelines (and case study summaries) are available in 6 languages from:  
<http://www.biodiv.org/doc/meeting.asp?lg=0&mtg=cop-08>  
(document number 44).

## ***CBBIA Meetings and IAIA Conferences***

Proceedings from CBBIA meetings are available for:

- 24<sup>th</sup> Annual Conference of IAIA in Vancouver, BC, Canada (April 2004)
- Annual Conference of IAIA SA 2004 in Drakensburg, South Africa (September 2004)
- 25<sup>th</sup> Annual Conference of IAIA in Boston, USA (June 2005)
- IAIA Conference on SEA in Prague, Czech Republic (September 2005)

## ***Special Issues***

Together with the Biodiversity and Ecology Section of IAIA, CBBIA has helped to produce special issues on biodiversity in EIA and SEA:

Helen Byron and Jo Treweek (editors), 2005. Special Issue on Biodiversity and Impact Assessment. *Impact Assessment and Project Appraisal*, Volume 23 Number 1 March 2005.

Helen Byron and Jo Treweek (editors), 2005. Special Issue on Strategic Environmental Assessment and Biodiversity. *Journal of Environmental Assessment Planning and Management*.

## ***Guiding principles***

CBBIA helped to produce IAIA's Principles of Good Practice for Biodiversity-inclusive IA ([www.iaia.org](http://www.iaia.org))

CBBIA also contributed to guidance on 'Biodiversity and the Precautionary Principle' produced by Flora and Fauna International and IUCN ([www.pprinciple.net](http://www.pprinciple.net))

## ***Bursary Scheme***

CBBIA funds participation at meetings and training workshops for suitable qualified individuals. More than 50 people from over 20 countries have already benefited from opportunities to attend conferences and training.



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Countries represented include:

- Colombia, Costa Rica and Venezuela in Central/ South America;
- Fiji, Tonga and the Marshall Islands, in the Pacific
- Nepal, India, Sri Lanka, Vietnam and Pakistan in South/ South East Asia; Turkey, Yemen and Lebanon in the Middle East;
- Morocco and Tunisia in North Africa;
- Ghana, Nigeria, Senegal and Niger in West Africa;
- Kenya, Rwanda and Tanzania in East Africa;
- Mozambique, Namibia, South Africa and Zambia in Southern Africa.

## ***Training***

CBBIA provided training at IAIA 2004, IAIA 2005 and at IAIA's special meeting on SEA in Prague. CBBIA will be running training on biodiversity and impact assessment at IAIA 2006 in Norway and is organizing special training for Biodiversity and Impact Assessment in Small Island States in October 2006, in conjunction with a meeting of the UK Overseas Territories Conservation Forum, in Jersey. Training will also be provided in the project's focal regions, including training on SEA and biodiversity in the Mekong and in Central/South America (in conjunction with the World Bank). Training materials are available on request.

## ***Small Grants***

The CBBIA-IAIA Small Grants Program was launched in August 1, 2004. The program provides for grants of up to US\$10,000 to support the development of techniques and capacity for the promotion of biodiversity-inclusive IA. Projects have covered a wide range of themes including EIA and SEA, the role of the ecosystem approach and running training on biodiversity and impact assessment for journalists. A small selection of CBBIA's small grant-funded projects are summarized here.

### ***1. Biodiversity Conservation through Impact Assessment: The Role of Journalists in Nepal [Batu Uprety]***

A workshop was organised in Nepal in 2005 to generate awareness and enhance interest of journalists in biodiversity conservation and impact assessment. Eight working papers were presented and discussed extensively during two days of workshops and site visits. The working papers covered the current state of biodiversity and impact assessment, biodiversity aspects covered in EIA reports, results of environmental monitoring and follow up, and the role of journalists in enhancing levels of understanding.

Some of the main issues raised included:

- Nepal has outstanding biodiversity but loss is continuing.





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- Nepal has recognised this as a major environmental problem, and has adopted EIA as a tool. However, biodiversity has not received proper attention while conducting EIA or approving reports. Almost all of the EIA reports lack proper baseline information, impacts on biodiversity, mitigation measures and environmental monitoring parameters and cost.
- Biodiversity conservation can not be considered in isolation. People do not see it as an important objective: a strategy is required to linking conservation and livelihoods of the rural people and promoting fair and equitable sharing of benefits by re-orienting conservation efforts.
- Monitoring, and biodiversity conservation should be mainstreamed in all government programmes, and government should proactively solicit support and involvement of local communities, NGOs and international community.
- Journalists have an important role in publicising both biodiversity values and impacts on biodiversity.
- Environmental reporting requires updated information. Journalists should be clear what they need from experts and vice versa. The current state of extremism (too positive and too negative) on environmental reporting should be avoided.

The participants actively discussed on the role of journalists in communicating facts to the public and stakeholders about the environmental and biodiversity implications of projects. Realising the need for integrating biodiversity in IA and ensuring more effective biodiversity conservation, the participants recommended:

1. Regular interaction meetings to provide updates about the implications of development for biodiversity, and to impart information to journalists to raise public awareness;
2. Enhanced joint effort of journalists and EIA professionals to raise awareness;
3. Encouraging proponents and the approving authority to put EIA documents in the public domain, preferably in the website; and
4. Sending EIA reports to the library of the Nepal Forum for Environmental Journalists, and other important libraries.

Participants found that the workshop opened avenues for both working journalists and impact assessment professionals to get more actively involved in raising awareness about biodiversity, EIA and development matters.



## 2. EIA for community forestry in Cameroon: WHINCONET

The Cameroon Mountains are one of the hot spots for biodiversity in Africa and home to a large number of endemic species. These forests are under serious threat of destruction due to increasing human pressure and only few patches of forests remain. Under Cameroonian law, forests can be managed by local communities to preserve the forest while allowing some forms of income generation activities from biodiversity. These so called community forests now comprise the majority of all remaining montane forests in Cameroon. Using a CBBIA Small Grant, guidelines for biodiversity inclusive EIA were developed with 15 local NGOs and these NGOs were trained in the use of EIA. EIA proved to be a valuable tool in identifying effective measures for protection of the often unique biodiversity while minimizing the negative effects of income generating activities by the local communities. The guidelines are currently under discussion with the ministries of Environment and Forestry in Cameroon to be included in a manual of procedures on the use of EIA in community forestry. The guidelines including biodiversity indicators can be downloaded from [www.geocities.com/whinconet](http://www.geocities.com/whinconet).





### 3. Development of a Guideline Note: on 'The Ecosystem Approach for African Regional Development Planning': Isayvani Naicker.

The aim of this project was to produce guidance on the application of an 'ecosystem approach' as advocated by the biodiversity-related conventions. The goal is to 'ensure that political and scientific discourses, and development initiatives in Africa, complement, influence and support each other in the drive to create economic wealth, improve people's quality of life and well being, and protect Africa's unique environmental wealth and ecosystem functioning'.

The project proposed five points to guide application of the ecosystem approach:

1. Focus on the functional<sup>1</sup> relationships and processes of the ecological, social and economic components within ecosystems.
2. Enhance benefit-sharing
3. Use adaptive management practices
4. Carry out management actions at the scale appropriate for the issue being addressed, with decentralization to lowest level, as appropriate
5. Ensure intersectoral cooperation

The work concluded that:



- 'An ecological or ecosystem scale is the most appropriate scale to use when planning and evaluating economic and social development projects in Africa.
- The Regional Natural Resource Frameworks should be seen as a theoretical "blueprint", to be jointly negotiated by administrator and stakeholders, that can explicitly identify and combine multiple development goals, ecological objectives, and the necessary actions needed to manage the three facets of the system towards an agreed end-point.
- The vision of African Regional Development can be met by making use of existing structures and institutions, whilst using/creating new and innovative ways in which these organizations and individuals can interact effectively.

**Both societal and ecological concerns are of integral importance**

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<sup>1</sup> These functional relationships and processes are interpreted as those including the social, economic and biophysical aspects of the system. The structure and agency of the system.



Societal	Ecological
	
<p><i>management</i> objectives are a matter of societal choice;</p>	<p>ecosystems are <i>managed</i> within the limits of their functioning;</p>
<p><u>therefore</u> management should be decentralised to the lowest appropriate level.</p>	<p><u>therefore</u> the ecosystem approach should be undertaken at the appropriate scale.</p>

#### 4. Indicators of wetland acidification and their relevance to Impact Assessment: Elijah Ohimain

Being the most extensive and complex low land forest/aquatic ecosystem in West Africa, the biodiversity of the Niger Delta wetland ecosystem is of both regional and international importance. The region is rich in aquatic resources such as shellfish and finfish as well as freshwater and mangrove swamps, which make the Niger Delta one of the most fragile, productive and vulnerable ecosystems of the tropical African coastlines. The delta also contains abundant oil and gas resources, which account for more than 90% of Nigeria's earnings.





Yellowish to reddish ochre and leachates trapped at the mangrove backswamp indicates water acidification (notice background mangrove in early stage of stress)

In the Niger Delta, impact assessment studies have not adequately addressed biodiversity issues relating to developments in coastal wetland areas particularly for sensitive ecosystems like mangroves. Development activity, including dredging, has resulted in acidification and heavy metal pollution from dredged spoil heaps, causing biodiversity loss and general habitat damage. Under the Capacity Building for Biodiversity and Impact Assessment (CBBIA) Small Grants Program, Dr Elijah Ohimain carried out a study to identify suitable indicators of wetland acidification that could be used in impact assessment.

### *The Protected Areas Project*

As part of its small grants program in 2005, CBBIA developed a specific project on the use of Impact Assessment as a tool for the regulating activities in and around protected areas, to provide information and case studies in support of Decision VII/28 of the Convention on Biological Diversity.

The project involved 5 activities articulating around the theme: "IA as a tool for regulating activities in and around protected areas." Projects were supported in Nepal, Lao PDR, Cameroon, Costa Rica, and Ghana. A short-term Project Officer coordinated the projects, summarized the results, and will produce a report to the CBD explaining the main implications of the study.

	Organization and country	Project Leader	Project Title
1	IUCN Nepal	Sugam Shrestha	Preparation of Environmental Guidelines for Development Activities in Protected Areas in Nepal
2	IUCN Lao PDR	Latsamay Sylavong	Monitoring of Infrastructure on Biodiversity: Nam Ha National Protected Area Lao PDR
3	COMINSUD - Bamenda Cameroon	Fon Nsoh	Developing biodiversity indicators as a tool for regulating development activities in and around protected areas and wetland regions in the North west Province of Cameroon
4	EPA Ghana	Jonathan Allotey	Development of Environmental Assessment (EA) guidelines for identified sensitive areas in Ghana's EA Legislative Instrument (LI 1652), 1999.
5	Independent Costa-Rica	Mauricio Castro	A procedure to evaluate impacts produced by the development of infrastructure in and around Protected Areas in Costa Rica

Objectives for preparation of guidelines for development activities in Protected Areas included ensuring:

1. That any activities in and around the Protected Areas are socio-culturally acceptable, economically feasible and environmentally benign;





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2. That development activities respect people's participation in determining impacts and propose mitigation measures;
3. Park-people conflicts are considered while addressing codes of conduct of development activities;
4. That Buffer Zone delineation encompasses access for local people and equitable benefit sharing with the people of surrounding areas;
5. Tourism activities do not jeopardize conservation issues; and
6. Commercialization of Protected Areas does not supersede biodiversity conservation aspects.

The following picture shows local capacity building activities in Cameroon as part of the project 'Developing biodiversity indicators as a tool for regulating development activities in and around protected areas and wetland regions in the North west Province of Cameroon' (Fon Nsoh/ [cominsud\\_ngo@yahoo.com](mailto:cominsud_ngo@yahoo.com))





### ***Regional Work Plans***

- ***Southern Africa***

The Southern African Institute for Environmental Assessment (SAIEA) has institutional responsibility for the delivery of Southern Africa regional work program. A Situation Assessment has been completed and the next phase of producing guidance and training materials to support decision-makers in the region is now underway.

- ***South and South East Asia***

IUCN Asia is managing this programme, in partnership with the Wildlife Institute of India and others. A Situation Assessment has been completed and two workshops held in the region to build consensus on needs for guidance and training.

- ***Central and South America***

A Regional Project Officer has been appointed to develop training in SEA and biodiversity, seen as the key need within the region. Two workshops are planned in partnership with the World Bank and IUCN.

- ***Small Island States***

A workshop for representatives from small island states is planned for October 2006 in Jersey, to be run in association with the UK Overseas Territories Conservation Forum.

### ***CBBIA Project - Southern African Update***

The Southern African Institute for Environmental Assessment (SAIEA) was contracted in mid-2005 to co-ordinate the southern African component of IAIA's Capacity Building in Biodiversity in Impact Assessment project (CBBIA). SAIEA decided to focus the project on building capacity within decision-making authorities on biodiversity issues.

The project aims to provide a regional guidance document for decision-makers, training materials and a pilot training course. The first output from the study, a draft Situation Assessment, was completed at the end of November 2005. A concerted effort was made to obtain input from the 14 countries that make up the SADC region and to this end a system of questionnaires, follow-ups and workshops ensured that input was obtained from 11 countries. A key component of the Situation Assessment is the inclusion of 24 case studies which demonstrate both good and bad decisions about biodiversity and the lessons learnt.

The conclusion of the Situation Assessment is that there are many problem areas with regard to the way in which biodiversity is addressed in the impact assessment process: firstly there are serious problems in the way that biodiversity information is supplied to the authorities (in the EIA); and secondly there does not appear to be a consistent approach in





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the way decision-makers make judgements about, and make decisions on, biodiversity issues. The concepts of ecosystem services and the value of these for society as a whole are not usually taken into consideration at all. Given that a large proportion of the population of the

region is fully or partially dependent on natural resources for their livelihoods, subsistence and survival, and that nature-based tourism is one of the fastest growing sectors and comprises a major part of the economy in many countries, the findings of this study are extremely worrying. The need for meaningful guidance for decision-makers on biodiversity issues is thus urgent and SAIEA will be working on this for the remainder of 2006.

A 'first prize' outcome would be the incorporation of consideration of 'environmental governance' that addresses biodiversity, ecosystem services and impact assessment, as part of the African Peer Review Mechanism. The development of a SADC protocol for environmental assessment, with explicit objectives, processes and standards, could make a major contribution to improving both impact assessment and decision making on biodiversity in the SADC region.



### ***CBBIA Project: S/SE Asia Update***

In Asia, IUCN Asia is the focal organization responsible for implementing the CBBIA regional programme. In South Asia, IUCN is implementing the project through its member Wildlife Institute of India (WII) and the focus is on the following five South Asian countries:- Bangladesh, India, Nepal, Pakistan and Sri Lanka. In South East Asia the project will be done through Mekong Wetlands Biodiversity Project (MWBP).

A Needs Assessment Survey (NAS) was undertaken to identify key players and issues and the needs assessment of the key players identified in biodiversity and Impact Assessment, in five selected countries of the region, namely Bangladesh, India, Nepal, Pakistan and Sri Lanka. This also served to provide information on the capacity and institutional strength of the relevant institutes, to fulfill their mandate and to assist in meeting its objectives of the project. The Needs Assessment Survey was designed to assist in identifying three specific needs and priorities within the target countries:

1. Understanding of biodiversity and its role in Impact Assessment among the decision makers in the identified sectors.
2. Understanding of decision makers on EIA and SEA and the tool to focus on in the project.



### 3. Training needs of the decision makers in the first two components.

The survey also helped in identifying focus (EIA or SEA) of the South Asian component. While the findings of the survey held in four of the identified countries were shared in the inception workshop in Colombo, Sri Lanka, the survey in Nepal was completed soon after and the results were shared in the contacts consultative workshop held in Islamabad, Pakistan, in February. The Needs Assessment Report was put together after a careful analysis of the NAS reports submitted by all of the five participating countries and the conclusions drawn from each.

### *Comparing needs for capacity building in Southern Africa and South/ South East Asia (Thanks to Susie Brownlie for this analysis)*

There are some common threads running through both the S/SE Asian and southern African reports, namely:

- Most decision makers and key biodiversity stakeholders had a good understanding of the term 'biodiversity', namely that it embraces structure, composition and function, and covers from genetic to ecosystem levels. This represents a marked improvement on previous studies.
- Lack of consideration of cumulative effects in impact assessment was a major source of concern to authorities and key stakeholders.
- Most decision makers and key biodiversity stakeholders believed that external or independent review of EIAs would improve decision making and attention to biodiversity.
- The lack of baseline data to predict impacts reliably, the lack of interpretation of information for determining significance of impacts on biodiversity and/or the use of questionable criteria in arriving at significance ratings, and the lack of consideration of irreversible impacts, featured prominently in the key shortcomings of current impact assessments.
- The need to address ecosystem goods and services in impact assessment and decision making, and to incorporate economic valuation of these goods and services was identified by the S/SE Asia Report; the southern Africa Report similarly highlighted the poor consideration of, and need to address, impacts on ecosystem services and to mainstream biodiversity into economic analysis.
- The SE Asia programme felt strongly that SEA is a more effective tool in mainstreaming biodiversity into planning, and for conserving biodiversity, than EIA. The southern Africa programme touched on SEA superficially, but similarly identified the need for greater use of, and focus on, strategic level assessment of



biodiversity and ecosystem services to allow a more effective and proactive approach to be taken.

- Inconsistencies in considering biodiversity in decision making, with no explicit decision criteria or criteria for making trade-offs in decision making.
- Inadequate consultation and cooperation between authorities in decision making.
- Lack of clarity on the meaning of the 'precautionary principle' and how to apply it in decision making.
- Poor checking of implementation and enforcement of conditions of authorization (Capacity is an issue).

### *Languages*

Publication of guidance and training materials in local languages is seen as a key capacity building need. The CBBIA currently publishes outputs in French and Spanish. Volunteers to widen this coverage are sought.

### *Funding*

CBBIA is actively seeking matching funds to extend and increase the scope of its activities.

## **6 Project Administration**

Members of the IAIA Biodiversity and Ecology Section are actively involved in the work of the project and form the core of a growing worldwide network of individuals with an interest in biodiversity and impact assessment. The organizational chart of the program is presented below. The IAIA Board has overall oversight over the administration of the CBBIA project. The Board reviews program technical and financial reports prior to their release. The Program Administrator (PA) ensures effective communication with the donors, and provides support for and works closely with the Technical Project Manager (TPM). Bridget John, the PA, is based at the IAIA Headquarters in Fargo, USA. The PA works in close collaboration with the IAIA CEO, Rita Hamm.

The TPM executes the technical components of the project, with oversight from the project Steering Committee (SC). The TPM is responsible for technical matters, including advice on program design, delivery and monitoring. The TPM reports to the Steering Committee. For operational matters the TPM reports to the IAIA Headquarters. Dr. Jo Treweek, the TPM, is resident in the UK.

The SC has an influential and knowledgeable membership and is very effective in providing guidance and timely input. The present SC members are drawn from the IAIA Board of Directors, Ramsar, the CBD, and University and Research Institutions.



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## Appendix 1 Structure of Programme

