Reviewing the coherence and effectiveness of implementation of multilateral biodiversity agreements in Estonia and Tanzania
Summary report

Piret Kuldna, Kaja Peterson, Jacqueline Senyagwa, Stacey Noel

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LIST OF ACRONYMS AND ABBREVIATIONS

AEWA	Agreement on the Conservation of African-Eurasian Migratory Waterbirds
ASCOBANS	Agreement on the Conservation of Small Cetaceans of the Baltic and North Seas
Cartagena Protocol	Cartagena Protocol on Biosafety to the Convention on Biological Diversity
CBD	Convention on Biological Diversity
CITES	Convention on International Trade of Endangered Species
CMS	Convention on Migratory Species of Wild Animals
EIA	Environmental Impact Assessment
EU	European Union
EUROBATS	Agreement on the Conservation of Populations of European Bats
MEA	Multilateral Environmental Agreement
Nagoya-Kuala Lumpur Supplementary Protocol	Protocol on Liability and Redress to the Cartagena Protocol on Biosafety
Nagoya Protocol	Nagoya Protocol on Access to Genetic Resources and the Fair and Equitable Sharing of Benefits Arising from their Utilization to the Convention on Biological Diversity
NCDP	Nature Conservation Development Plan
Ramsar Convention	Convention on Wetlands of International Importance especially as Waterfowl Habitat
SEA	Strategic Environmental Assessment

INTRODUCTION

This report summarises the experiences gained and observations made during the review of coherence and effectiveness of implementation of multilateral biodiversity agreements in Estonia and Tanzania. The focus is on the methodological aspects and main findings.

The review comprised the cluster of biodiversity-related multilateral environmental agreements (MEAs): **Convention on Biological Diversity** (CBD), **Convention on Wetlands of International Importance especially as Waterfowl Habitat** (Ramsar Convention), **Convention on International Trade in Endangered Species of Wild Fauna and Flora** (CITES or Washington Convention) and **Convention on Migratory Species of Wild Animals** (CMS or Bonn Convention).

The review methodology was developed by the Stockholm Environment Institute Tallinn Centre (SEI Tallinn) and commissioned by the United Nations Environment Programme (UNEP) Division of Environmental Law and Conventions in 2011. The testing of the methodology was funded by the Stockholm Environment Institute through its Programme Support fund provided by Swedish International Development Cooperation Agency (SIDA) in 2013–2014.

The aim of UNEP is to improve the evidence base for countries' performance in complying with the provisions of the MEAs in order to enhance knowledge on the links between global environmental degradation and national implementation of MEAs. The methodology is also aimed to facilitate understanding whether fulfilling the obligations under the different MEA regimes is sufficient for countries to address properly their particular environmental concerns, whether countries are doing enough to address them and what gaps may exist in terms of the national implementing capacities.

The review system for coherent and effective implementation of a cluster of MEAs is based on 15 categories, addressing two types of effectiveness: objective-led and implementation effectiveness (see Annex). Each category formulates a review question together with several criteria and benchmarks for scoring the implementation of the conventions. The overall assessment of the cluster of MEAs is based on the results of the 15 review categories and can result in high, moderate or low implementation effectiveness. The review methodology has the most features typical to a compliance and performance audit, and is less comparable to a financial audit.

The results of testing the review methodology in two different types of signatories of the biodiversity conventions – Estonia and Tanzania (which differ in size, population, bio-geographical region, institutions, etc.) are presented in SEI Project Reports, respectively in Peterson et al. (2014) and Senyagwa and Noel (2014). This summary report is a synthesis of the two country reports, which draws together the main findings and conclusions of the review process and recommendations for the operationalisation of the review for wider use by signatories of the biodiversity conventions.

1. SUMMARY OF COUNTRY PROFILES AND INFORMATION ON BIODIVERSITY-RELATED CONVENTIONS

General data:

	Republic of Estonia	**United Republic of Tanzania**
Territory	45 227 km²	947 303 km²
Population	1,286 million (2013)	44,929 million (2012)
Population density	28/km²	48/km²
Government	Parliamentary republic Member state of the European Union since 1 May 2004	Unitary presidential constitutional republic Member state of the African Union since 16 January 1964
Gross Domestic Product (GDP) (Purchasing Power Parity) per capita[1]	23 144 $ (2013)	1 715 $ (2013)
Human Development Index (HDI)[2]	0.846 (2012), very high	0.476 (2012), low
Corruption Perceptions Index[3]	Rank: 28/177; Score: 68/100	Rank: 111/177; Score: 33/100
Freedom of the press[4]	Free	Partly free
Land use[5]	Agricultural area (2011): 9450 km² (21% of Estonian territory) Forest area (2011): 22 100 km² (49%)	Agricultural area (2011): 373 000 km² (49% of Tanzanian territory) Forest area (2011): 330 246 km² (35%)
Major human pressures on nature	Air and water pollution and waste generation from fossil-fuel (oil-shale) based energy sector; water pollution from agriculture; decreasing forest land due to expansion of agriculture, housing and industry.[6]	Land conversion for crop production and grazing, pressure on biomass use, deforestation, hydropower development.[7]

Biodiversity-related information:

	Estonia	**Tanzania**
Biogeographic region	Boreal	Lies at the meeting point of six major bio-geographic zones (the dry Somali-Maasai, savannas, the acacia-commiphora woodlands, the Guinea-Congolian forest, the coastal forest mosaic and the scattered afro-montane/afro-alpine areas)[8]

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[1] World Economic Outlook Database, http://www.imf.org/external/pubs/ft/weo/2014/01/weodata/index.aspx [accessed 17 June 2014].
[2] The UNDP Human Development Reports, http://hdr.undp.org/en/data [accessed 17 June 2014].
[3] Transparency International, http://www.transparency.org [accessed 17 June 2014].
[4] Freedom House, http://www.freedomhouse.org [accessed 17 June 2014].
[5] The UNEP Environmental Data Explorer, http://geodata.grid.unep.ch/ [accessed 18 June 2014].
[6] Estonian Environmental Strategy 2030. Ministry of the Environment, 2007.
[7] Division of Environment, Vice President's Office, URT 2014.
[8] Republic of Tanzania et al. (no date).

Protected areas	1 548 124 ha (22% of total state area + territorial sea). 27% of territorial sea is under protection.[9]	31 720 700 ha (33% of total state area), forest reserves cover further 15% and marine protected area 0.2%. 6.5% of the territorial sea is under protection.[10]
Ramsar Sites[11]	17 sites 304 778 hectares (6.7% of total state area)	4 sites 4 868 424 ha (5.1% of total state area)
IUCN Red List of Threatened Species in categories critically endangered and endangered[12]	5	454
Specific to the country habitats that need special conservation attention	Semi-natural habitats, limestone specific habitats, bogs and other wetlands	Mangrove forests, tropical forests, wetlands, savannah woodlands, coral reefs, coastal forest habitat mosaic, Eastern Arc mountains

Convention-specific information (for agreements ratified by both parties so far):

Ratification/accession	Estonia	Tanzania
CBD	1994	1996
Cartagena Protocol	2004	2003
Ramsar Convention	1993	1999
CITES	1993	1979
CMS	2008	1999
AEWA	2008	1999

National focal point (institution)	Estonia	Tanzania
CBD	Ministry of the Environment, Nature Conservation Department	Vice President's Office, Division of Environment (also coordinator for all MEAs)
Cartagena Protocol		
Ramsar Convention		
CITES		Ministry of Natural Resources and Tourism, different departments
CMS		
AEWA		

[9] Estonian Nature Information System (EELIS), http://loodus.keskkonnainfo.ee/ [accessed 18 June 2014].
[10] Division of Environment, Vice President's Office, URT 2014.
[11] The Ramsar List of Wetlands of International Importance, http://www.ramsar.org/pdf/sitelist.pdf [accessed 18 June 2014].
[12] IUCN 2014. IUCN Red List of Threatened Species. Version 2014.1. http://www.iucnredlist.org. Downloaded on 18 June 2014.

National implementation plan for the biodiversity MEAs	Nature Conservation Development Plan until 2020 (2012)	National Biodiversity Strategy and Action Plan (2001)
Evaluating the performance of the biodiversity MEAs	National reports to the secretariats of MEAs	National reports to the secretariats of MEAs
Monitoring	Sub-programmes of the state environmental monitoring programme	Monitoring programmes for various biodiversity projects
Tools for consideration of objectives of MEAs in decision-making	Environmental Impact Assessment and Environmental Management System Act regulates the Environmental Assessment at project level (EIA) and strategic level (SEA)	Environmental Management Act stipulates environmental impact assessment (EIA) and strategic environmental assessment (SEA)
Main sources of financing	State budget, Environmental Investment Centre, EU and non-EU financing	Multilateral, bilateral and nature conservation organisations, state budget
National focal points	Mostly full-time positions, but convention-related work is part of their work	Usually full-time government employees, convention-related work is part of their work
Main supervision authority	Environmental Inspectorate	Vice President Office and Ministry of Natural Resources and Tourism
Coordination across the cluster of MEAs	Informal coordination mechanisms	Informal coordination mechanisms
Benefits for the environment	Difficult to distinguish the role of EU legislation from that of the MEAs. The direct recent benefit – total ban of lead shots since 2013 in waterfowl hunting (AEWA)	Improved national policies (e.g. inclusion of wetlands management in the revised wildlife policy) and attention to other species that were given less attention in the past (dugong, marine turtles)
Socio-economic benefits	Land management, nature tourism, nature education	Tourism, natural resource management and governance at the local level, forest management

Sources: Peterson et al. 2014; Senyagwa and Noel 2014.

2. APPLICATION OF THE REVIEW METHODOLOGY IN ESTONIA AND TANZANIA

2.1. OVERVIEW OF THE REVIEW PROCESS

Estonia

The testing was carried out in January–December 2013. Methodologically it can be divided into two parts.

I January–September 2013: Review of the publicly-available documents (national reports, monitoring reports, statistics, etc.); communication with the national focal points and other stakeholders for additional information, and compilation of a draft report.

II October–December 2013: Joint meeting with the national focal points and other stakeholders on 30 October 2013 to verify the data and findings, but also to receive feedback on the review methodology. Finalisation and publishing of the report.

Tanzania

The testing was carried out in January 2013–June 2014. Two main methods of data collection were used: literature review of publicly-available documents (e.g., national reports submitted by Tanzania to the Conference of the Parties; policies; project documents; national strategies and plans) and face-to-face meetings through a stakeholder workshop on 4 March 2014 with the national focal points, NGOs and public authorities, which was organised to verify the data and findings as well as to receive feedback on the study usability and ways for improvement of the review methodology.

2.2. MAIN FINDINGS

Estonia

The review of implementation of the four global biodiversity agreements concluded that the strongest implementation in Estonia is in the category '*Cross-border cooperation*' (Table 1). Although the rest of the categories were scored as moderate, there are several categories which are close to strong implementation, for instance '*Adequate legal and policy framework*', '*Achieving the objectives*' and '*Benefits for the environment*'. The category '*Coordination across the cluster of MEAs*' is relatively effective within the environmental sector, but should become more effective across sectors and institutions. It was difficult to score the category '*Adequate financing*', since nature conservation budget is not specifying the budget for implementation of the MEAs.

The overall implementation effectiveness was evaluated to be relatively high as none of the categories resulted in weak scores.

Tanzania

The review of implementation of the four global biodiversity agreements concluded that Tanzania scored strong implementation in category '*Adequate legal and policy framework*' (Table 1). Ten categories were scored as moderate and four as weak.

In some of the categories the scoring changed as a result of the stakeholder workshop. One of them was '*Cross-border cooperation*', as Tanzania has many of these agreements in place but for different ecosystems and the challenge is their implementation, which changed the score from strong to moderate. Another dilemma rose from scoring the category '*Strong competencies and capacity*': this was initially ranked as weak, but after the workshop discussion moved to moderate with the argument that the competencies and capacities exist, though they are misallocated.

The overall implementation effectiveness was ranked as moderate as 10 categories out of 15 scored moderate implementation.

Table 1. Overall assessment of implementation of biodiversity conventions in Estonia (EE) and Tanzania (TZ)

Review categories	Strong		Moderate		Weak	
	EE	TZ	EE	TZ	EE	TZ
1. Adequate legal and policy framework		X	X			
2. Coordinated institutional and administrative framework			X	X		
3. Development of an integrated national implementation/action plan(s)			X			X
4. Effective implementation and review of the plan(s)			X	X		
5. Effective monitoring of implementation of the MEAs in question			X			X
6. Consideration of objectives of the MEAs in question in decision making			X	X		
7. Adequate financing of the implementation			X			X
8. Strong competencies and capacity			X	X		
9. Stakeholder engagement			X	X		
10. Effective enforcement system			X	X		
11. Cross border cooperation	X			X		
12. Achieving the objectives			X	X		
13. Coordination across the cluster of MEAs			X	X		
14. Benefits for the environment			X			X
15. Socio economic benefits			X	X		

Sources: Peterson et al. 2014; Senyagwa and Noel 2014.

The conclusions of the **Estonian** review report (Peterson et al. 2014) were (numbers refer to the categories in Table 1):

1. Estonia has ratified all four conventions, the Cartagena Protocol and the AEWA and EUROBATS agreements. The national legislation and policy for enforcing these MEAs is in place. However, Estonia has not yet ratified the ASCOBANS under CMS, the Nagoya Protocol under CBD and the Nagoya-Kuala Lumpur Supplementary Protocol.

2. Estonia has developed a unified nature conservation administrative system (from policy to management and enforcement) under the Ministry of the Environment. Responsibilities between the management, scientific and enforcement authorities of the MEAs have been designated. The Ministry of the Environment has the exclusive responsibility to ensure effective implementation of the MEAs in question. Public authorities in other sectors share some of the specific responsibilities within their authority and capacity.

3. The Estonian Government has adopted a single policy document on nature conservation: the national Nature Conservation Development Plan (NCDP) 2020. The NCDP aims at covering all nature conservation targets and responsibilities arising from national laws, EU directives and international agreements, such as the four conventions in question. Due to the general character of the NCDP, the specifics of the conventions are not addressed in it.

4. The review of implementation of the biodiversity conventions is periodically conducted via mandatory national reporting to secretariats of the conventions by the Ministry of the Environment, but at different points in time and scope. There is no synergies report available that addresses the issues of implementation of the four conventions. Thus, it is largely impossible to evaluate the implementation effectiveness of the biodiversity conventions only, but the NCDP 2020 will provide a good opportunity to evaluate the overall effectiveness of implementation of the nature conservation policy once the first review of the implementation of the NCDP is completed in 2014.

5. A national environmental monitoring scheme is in place and comprises elements that are largely relevant and adequate for meeting the monitoring obligations

in the cluster of biodiversity conventions. However, special monitoring obligations under the Ramsar Convention need to be included in the national scheme more distinctively.

6. Impacts on species and habitats are typically addressed in Environmental Assessment procedure, either at the project (EIA) or strategic level (SEA) and also in the transboundary context. Studies on the Appropriate Assessment that is required by the EU Habitats Directive have revealed the poor quality of the assessment, which needs to be improved.

7. Various sources for financing the implementation of the biodiversity-related conventions are available in Estonia, both nationally and internationally. The state budget does not specify the use of public funds per convention. Thus, it is almost impossible to evaluate the sufficiency of the funds for the effective implementation of biodiversity conventions. Only approximate estimates can be provided, mostly by qualitative evaluations of the institutions involved.

8. The competence of focal points and nature conservation officials at the Ministry of the Environment and its agencies is high. The capacity to implement the four MEAs in question is adequate. However, in terms of supervision, there are no separate nature protection inspectors, as the inspectors also have to deal with other environmental areas. The competence in nature conservation issues needs to be expanded to other sector ministries and respective institutions to ensure sufficient consideration of biodiversity protection in decision-making.

9. Stakeholders are involved in some stages of the implementation of the conventions. So far there have been no formal procedures in place to engage stakeholders in all stages (e.g. to discuss the draft or final results of the national reports of biodiversity conventions with the stakeholders).

10. The enforcement system is in place. The overall number of environmental violations has been decreasing since 2003. The greatest number of violations in the last years has been in the category of fish protection.

11. Estonia is actively involved in bilateral, regional and multilateral cooperation on biodiversity conservation.

12. It can be evaluated that in general the objectives of the biodiversity conventions are met, but in terms of specific objectives there is still room for improvement.

13. Coordination across the cluster of biodiversity MEAs is done informally and there is no formal procedure or strategic approach established for this issue. Coordination is relatively effective within the environmental sector, but less effective across sectors. Thus, it is suggested that setting up a permanent working group for biodiversity conventions could be considered, involving representatives of all the responsible governmental authorities, local governments, experts and NGOs. Such a working group can periodically review the implementation of the conventions, discuss the challenges and communicate the results to a wider audience. Review reports of the conventions could become part of the regular review of the NCDP which provides general nature conservation targets and measures. Establishment of a joint working group could also enhance the competence and capacity of other sectors to implement the biodiversity conventions.

14. The benefits for the environment are mostly arising from the designation of protected areas (18% of the territory of Estonia), such as national designations (over 900 sites), Natura 2000 network (608 sites) and Ramsar sites (17 sites), and management of the habitats. However, 35% of species and 48% of habitats protected under the EU Habitats Directive were in unfavourable status, most of them in inadequate status – in 2013.

15. Socio-economic benefits are poorly studied and understood as of yet; however, the first attempts to evaluate the ecosystem services of raised bogs, protected forests and a national park have been made. To the authors' knowledge, the effects of the natural environment in good conservation status on human safety and health have not yet been studied. Management of semi-natural habitats and nature tourism have provided jobs in rural areas, but the actual value of this has not been estimated.

The **Tanzanian** review report (Senyagwa and Noel 2014) had the following conclusions (numbers refer to the categories in Table 1):

1. Tanzania has ratified all four conventions and related agreements under CMS that are relevant to the country's context. The legal and regulatory frameworks are supportive of the biodiversity MEAs; however, the review of laws is not done on a regular basis.

2. There is a coordinated institutional framework for each of the MEAs. There are challenges in publicity, awareness raising, resources for data collection and analysis on reporting for the MEAs. There is no monitoring and evaluation system for implementation of MEAs and there is weak enforcement of the laws.

3. There are a number of plans in place that contribute to addressing the objectives of a respective MEA, with allocation of human and technical resources, but not necessarily financial resources. These individual plans often address a particular issue and or single species, except for a few, such as the National Biodiversity Strategy and Action Plan.

4. CBD, CMS and Ramsar Convention reports are available publicly through the internet, but not for CITES. In national reports, some objectives and obligations have been met, but the situation is not ideal. Reports submitted clearly show the status of implementation of a particular MEAs. There is no evidence of review of plans.

5. There is no system in place for either environmental or MEAs monitoring. Environmental components are monitored on an ad hoc basis and when specific information about certain topics is needed.

6. Some policy reviews are a result of MEAs implementation, e.g. the review of wildlife policy to include wetlands management in the policy. There is no evidence that the objectives, plans and programmes of the biodiversity MEAs were taken through the EIA process.

7. Financing for implementation of MEAs has largely come from multilateral and bilateral donors, institutions interested in biodiversity and international NGOs, as well as a small percent from the government, especially for special operations. There is still limited funding on implementation

of MEAs in order to reach an ideal situation. This has been clearly stated in national reports.

8. Tanzania is a developing country with limited competent human resources in many sectors. Though competencies are known and gaps addressed through capacity building, efforts are neither systematic nor sufficient.

9. Stakeholder engagement is often limited to the national and regional levels, though the structure of engagement is present at the lowest levels of the community. There have been limited resources to involve stakeholders at all levels in MEAs planning, monitoring etc. Public awareness has been very limited due to poor infrastructure and the size of the country.

10. The enforcement system and clear authority is in place; however, policies need review on sanctions to make them relevant to offenses committed. Corruption has been the major barrier to effective enforcement of the established legal system.

11. Tanzania has been actively collaborating with regional and international initiatives to conserve resources, with some initiatives on the management of a single resource, such as lakes Tanganyika and Victoria, some on single species that share an ecosystem, and others broader, e.g. on wildlife generally. There are many international conventions protecting the environment and improving the social economic welfare of the nation.

12. CITES has been one of the most challenging MEAs for Tanzania in terms of achieving its objectives. There have been reports in media and international sources on serious poaching occurring in the country with the involvement of government officials. Other MEAs, like CBD, have done well despite large scopes and technical challenges. The national action plans for CMS and Ramsar Convention have been enforced by the Government of Tanzania.

13. There is no approach in place for coordination, but national reports have indicated coordination in technical committees, stakeholder consultation meetings, etc.

14. Biodiversity conservation has always benefited the environment. Tanzania has long been on the forefront in conservation and has a long history in conservation. Moreover,

the signing of the biodiversity MEAs has enhanced conservation and addressed gaps. However, in spite of all the efforts made, there are still critical challenges that the country faces with regard to some flagship species, e.g. elephant poaching and large cats; also some ecosystems have been highly degraded.

15. Various laws and policies in the country are pro-poor, since poor people are more dependent on natural resources. Both implementation of MEAs and existing policies have not been able to effectively address the need for socio-economic benefits to the communities, but on the national level benefits are realised through tourism.

2.3. APPLICABILITY OF THE METHODOLOGY

The following conclusions were made by the review teams on the applicability of the review methodology (see Annex).

• The 15 review categories and questions appeared appropriate to be applied in such evaluations. The criteria and benchmarks for '*ideal implementation*' were taken as **overall guidance** and therefore it was not attempted to evaluate the implementation of each given benchmark separately.

• The categories were built up around themes; therefore some aspects under review may belong to more than one category. For example, awareness raising is relevant for the categories of '*Coordinated institutional and administrative framework*' and '*Stakeholder engagement*', while monitoring is relevant for the categories of '*Effective monitoring of the MEA in question*' and '*Effective implementation and review of the plan*'. This thematic structure of categories worked in the case of Estonia, but the overlapping categories were suggested to be avoided for the purpose of clarity by the Tanzanian reviewers.

• The review was carried out **on the basis of existing reports and studies** as well as on information and opinions received from the focal points and other stakeholders during electronic communication and face-to-face meetings. Conducting new studies and focus group interviews, which is proposed in the methodology as one option to collect evidence, would give additional information, but would also take more time and resources.

• The review focused on **objective-led** and **implementation effectiveness**. It was not planned to evaluate the cost-effectiveness on whether the outcomes of the implementation of the MEAs are in good correspondence with the budget spent, therefore respective studies were not conducted.

• It is not always possible to distinguish the **implementation of the biodiversity conventions** from the **overall nature conservation activities**. In this case, the implementation of the latter was evaluated, for example in the categories '*Consideration of objectives of the MEAs in decision making' and 'Adequate financing*'. Likewise, some categories were handled more widely than providing convention-specific information only, since the wider nature conservation activities also contribute to the implementation of the conventions, for example in the categories '*Stakeholder engagement*', '*Cross-border cooperation*', '*Benefits for the environment*',' *Socio-economic benefits*'.

• While the **process** of implementation is usually documented more thoroughly and thus can be easily evaluated, the **outcomes** of implementation are less traceable by influencing factors, such as in the categories: '*Achieving the objectives*', '*Benefits for the environment*',' *Socio-economic benefits*'. Outcomes can be best evaluated with close cooperation with stakeholders, for example via focus group meetings.

• **Qualitative assessment** was used in all review categories. **Quantitative assessment** had a bigger role in the categories '*Effective enforcement system*' and '*Benefits for the environment*'.

• It may be challenging to evaluate the scores for the cluster of MEAs if some of the MEAs are implemented effectively and others are not. In this case, it is suggested to add explanatory comments to the score and review results.

2.4. OPERATIONALISING THE EVALUATION

Based on the experience of reviews of two countries, it can be suggested that a single country review could take perhaps two months work of two fulltime dedicated experts over a six-month period. The work would entail to a large extent a desk study of national reports submitted to secretariats of MEAs, though not solely that activity. The current study demonstrated that some data was either missing or had become outdated; thus updates were needed. Meetings with focal points of MEAs and other sources of data and information appeared very useful in these situations. Validation of data and scores of review could best work in close cooperation with a wide spectrum of stakeholders. Focus group meetings also appeared useful for that purpose in the current cases. In countries where information may not be available via the internet, interviews with different stakeholders form a bigger part, as more data is found in the ministries and implementing agencies than online.

The expert work could be shared by an environmental policy analyst and an environmental law expert. Depending on the time constraints, involving a third expert could be practical to share the workload, especially during the desk study phase, when usually large volumes of documents must be reviewed and evaluated. A good working relationship with MEA focal points and other governmental officials engaged in the implementation of MEAs is essential. Aiming at providing impartial evaluation, an option to mandate the state auditors or employ international experts could be considered.

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ANNEX. CHECKLIST FOR REVIEWING THE NATIONAL IMPLEMENTATION OF A CLUSTER OF MEAs

Review category	Review question	Criteria and benchmarks for ideal implementation	Method of response
1. Adequate legal and policy framework	1.1 Is there an adequate legislation and policy in place for enforcing the MEAs in question?	IDEAL: • The MEAs in question are ratified. National policy and legislation are fully compatible with the MEAs. • Laws and regulations have been brought into compliance with provisions of the MEAs in question according to a legal gap analysis. • There is no evidence that legal framework hinders the enforcement of the MEAs in question. • Legislation imposes concrete responsibilities on the regulated communities (state bodies, private sector, the public, etc.) • Laws and regulations are regularly reviewed in the context of the relevant international obligations and the national situations.	• Review of legal acts or review of documents to provide evidence that the legal analysis has been done • Review of court cases and complaints regarding the implementation of the MEAs in question • Interviews with stakeholders (MEA implementing agencies, representatives of non-governmental sectors)
2. Coordinated institutional and administrative framework	2.1 Have the responsibilities been effectively designated among different levels of government as well as horizontally?	IDEAL: • The national focal points for the MEAs in question have been determined. • Agencies for implementing the MEAs in question are in place. Their responsibilities are: - enforcement of laws and regulations related to the MEAs in question, - development and review of the implementation plan of the MEAs in question, - monitoring and evaluation of implementation of the MEAs in question, - collection, reporting and analysing of data, awareness raising and publicity. • Principal responsibility for carrying out the commitments under the MEAs in question, as well as the roles and responsibilities of each agency, have been clearly defined and enforced. There are no gaps and overlapping roles and responsibilities. • Implementation of the MEAs in question is sufficiently coordinated among different levels of government as well as horizontally. • Responsible agencies exchange information and cooperate closely with each other and with other sectors. • The number of positions is sufficient for the implementation of the MEAs in question.	• Review of documents (job descriptions, reports) • Review of the implementation plan and reports to the MEA secretariat • Interviews with agencies for their self-assessment and with other stakeholders • Review of guidelines or rules of procedure for coordination and cooperation if these exist

Review category	Review question	Criteria and benchmarks for ideal implementation	Method of response
3. Development of an integrated national implementation/action plan (either as a separate document or as a part of a wider plan)	3.1. Is there an elaborated implementation/action plan for meeting the obligations of the MEAs in question?	IDEAL: • The state has an enforced national implementation/action plan for the MEAs in question. • The plan and its objectives are in accordance with all objectives of the MEAs in question. • The plan includes: - a prioritised list of measures with due dates to implement the MEAs in question at the national and sub-national levels; - monitoring and evaluation objects, measures and measurable indicators; - responsible agencies for implementation, monitoring and reporting; and - allocation of resources (human, financial, technical). • The plan has an integrated approach to the MEA issues: it identifies policies, programmes and plans in related sectors through which specific measures need to be taken in order to effectively implement the MEAs in question. • The plan has been developed through a consultative and participatory multi-stakeholder process.	• Review of the plan and reports to the MEA secretariat • Interviews with stakeholders (MEA implementing agencies, representatives of non-governmental sectors)
4. Effective implementation and review of the plan	4.1. Is the implementation of the plan effective?	IDEAL: • Measures are taken and objectives met according to the plan. • The plan is reviewed and updated regularly according to the monitoring and evaluation results in order to meet the set targets. • Sufficient, correct and timely reports are submitted to secretariats of the MEAs in question. Reporting requirements of the MEA are fulfilled. • The reports provide a complete and understandable picture of the state´s implementation of the MEAs in question. • The reports assess compliance with the MEAs in question, identify compliance problems and indicate solutions which are included in the national implementation/action plan. • The reports evaluate effectiveness of the policy measures implemented so far on issues covered by the MEAs in question. • The reports identify barriers to effective implementation and mechanisms to facilitate implementation of the MEAs in question. • The reports are made public via Internet and other publication channels.	• Review of the plan and reports to the MEA secretariat to analyse the accomplishment of the designed actions and use of budgets • Focus group interviews with stakeholders (MEA implementing agencies, representatives of non-governmental sectors) to evaluate the implementation effectiveness of the plan

Review category	Review question	Criteria and benchmarks for ideal implementation	Method of response
5. Effective monitoring of the MEA in question	5.1. Is there an effective monitoring system in place?	IDEAL: • Compliance and impacts of the implementation of the MEAs in question are regularly monitored and evaluated according to the national implementation/action plan. • A monitoring system for environmental components covered by the MEAs in question is in place. • Monitoring is based on updated and reliable environmental data. • Monitoring is carried out by independent professionals. • Environmental performance is improving in issues covered by the MEAs in question.	• Review of the monitoring plan and reports to the MEA secretariat to analyse the accomplishment of the designed actions and use of budgets • Focus group interviews with stakeholders (MEA implementing agencies, representatives of non-governmental sectors) to evaluate the effectiveness of monitoring
6. Consideration of objectives of the MEAs in decision making	6.1. Are objectives of the MEAs in question taken into account in Impact Assessment of projects, plans, policies and programmes?	IDEAL: • The objectives of the MEAs in question are taken into account through an Impact Assessment (IA) process of projects (permitting process), spatial planning, policies, and programmes. • The Impact Assessment of projects, plans, policies and programmes is conducted systematically to ensure that the MEA objectives are mainstreamed into the planning activities and policy measures of all sectors and levels. • There are no conflicts between objectives, actions and targets in other areas and the MEAs in question. • Clear instructions are given to relevant agencies of all the sectors whose activities can have an impact on the issues covered by the MEAs in question.	• To provide evidence via analysis of the IA process; the source of evidence could be legal documents, but also IA guidelines • Review of relevant policy documents • Interviews with stakeholders (MEA implementing agencies, representatives of non-governmental sectors)
7. Adequate financing of the implementation	7.1. Is an adequate level of funding secured for the implementation of the MEAs in question?	IDEAL: • The implementation, monitoring and enforcement of the MEAs in question are financed continuously from the national budget, which contains a specific budget line for it. • There are other public and private funding sources and international funding sources (e.g. EU, WB, GEF, ADB etc.) available and used for the implementation of the plan. • All the measures in the implementation plan are covered by sufficient funding. • The funding allocations match the roles and responsibilities of implementing agencies and staff.	• Analysis of trends in budgets and tasks for implementation of the MEAs in question • Analysis of the share of national budget and other sources in total funding • Qualitative assessment by stakeholders (MEA implementing agencies, representatives of non-governmental sectors)

Review category	Review question	Criteria and benchmarks for ideal implementation	Method of response
8. Strong competencies and capacity	8.1. Are the competencies and capacity of officials of the responsible authorities and of the experts providing input to the implementation of the MEAs in question sufficient?	IDEAL: • The kinds of competencies that are required from the officials to implement and enforce the MEAs in question are clearly defined, available and sufficient. • The competencies that are required from the experts for the implementation of the plan (providing data, monitoring, research, etc.) are clearly defined, available and sufficient. • Capacity building is taking place through systematic training programmes. All positions are staffed with well-trained specialists.	• Review of relevant documents and focus group interviews to analyse education, working experience and possible training needs of officials and experts.
9. Stakeholder engagement	9.1. Is the stakeholder engagement system in place and comprehensive?	IDEAL: • A stakeholder participation system is in place. Stakeholders are involved in the whole cycle of the MEAs in question, including: - preparation for ratification of the MEAs in question, - developing national implementation/action plan, - implementing the plan, - monitoring of compliance and impacts, and - national reporting. • Stakeholders include anyone who is affected by or is otherwise interested in the MEAs or its implementation in either the governmental or non-governmental sectors, incl. businesses, national umbrella-organisations and issue-oriented national groups (environmental NGOs), and civil society groups. • The government secures a high level of stakeholder participation in the implementation of the MEAs in question by allowing free access to the process, providing timely information, allocating financial resources and securing sufficient time for participation. • Stakeholders are engaged early in the process when options are still open. Feedback/input from stakeholders is registered and it improves the implementation of the MEAs in question. • Regular (yearly or more often) stakeholder meetings presenting progress and under-achievements of implementation of the MEAs in question take place. • National delegations to the Conference of the Parties of the MEAs in question include NGO representative(s). • Public awareness and outreach activities are systematically implemented (concerning obligations deriving from the MEAs in question, the benefits of being party to the MEAs, new developments at international level, etc.). • Stakeholders and public have right of access to administrative and judicial proceedings in issues of the MEAs in question.	• Review of documents (minutes of stakeholder meetings, implementation plan, monitoring reports, SEA reports, budgets) • Focus group interviews (MEA implementing agencies, representatives of non-governmental sectors) to analyse satisfaction of stakeholders with the implementation of the MEAs in question • Percentage of environmental NGOs from all stakeholders • Review of composition of national delegations at COPs

Review category	Review question	Criteria and benchmarks for ideal implementation	Method of response
10. Effective enforcement system	10.1 Is the enforcement system in place with effective enforcement tools at the disposal of relevant authorities?	IDEAL: • An enforcement system has been established. • The enforcement agency has clear authority and a sufficient mandate (up to stopping illegal activity and issuing penalties) related to the issues of the MEAs in question. • Non-compliance and violations are registered by the national enforcement agency and made public via Internet and media. • Corrective measures to curb the growth of violation numbers and severity are undertaken by designated authority, incl. amendments to the legislation and practices. Enforcement tools include effective economic instruments and penalties for violations are established at level where number and severity of violations are clearly decreasing.	• Review of legislation • Review of documents and registries: - non-compliance reports and trends; - complaints on implementing the MEAs in question; - appellation court cases won by penalty issuer • Interviews with stakeholders (MEA implementing agencies, representatives of non-governmental sectors)
11. Cross-border cooperation	11.1. Is there bilateral and multilateral cooperation at the regional and international levels in the context of the MEAs in question?	IDEAL: • Bilateral and multilateral cooperation mechanisms, incl. those with neighbouring countries, are in place (agreements/Memoranda of Understanding, coordination bodies). • Joint projects to meet the targets of the MEAs in question are implemented. • Exchange of information and experience, and joint projects are considered useful by the parties of the MEAs in question. • The state is participating in the Conferences of the Parties / Meetings of the Parties and progress reports are made available for public. • The state is participating in the work of the MEAs in question as a member of a Task Force, an expert group or a technical group, etc. • Results of joint activities improve the implementation of the MEAs in question.	• Review of relevant documents and reports • Interviews with stakeholders (MEA implementing agencies, representatives of non-governmental sectors)

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12. Achieving the objectives	12.1. Are the objectives achieved under the MEAs in question?	IDEAL: • There is a political will for achieving the objectives and meeting the obligations of the MEAs in question. • The objectives of the MEAs in question are achieved and obligations met. • The overall effectiveness of the MEAs in question in meeting its objectives is regularly reviewed and improvement measures undertaken. • The national implementation/action plan is enforced by the national government. • The reports on compliance, non-compliance and impacts of the MEAs in question are reviewed by Minister of the Environment/the national government/parliament and discussed in public.	• Focus group interviews with stakeholders (MEA implementing agencies, representatives of non-governmental sectors) to assess priority of the MEAs in question for the national government on a scale of 1-10. • The review of documents (e.g., reports to the MEA secretariat, national implementation/action plan, media monitoring reports, minutes of stakeholder meetings)
13. Coordination across the cluster of MEAs	13.1 Are the MEAs in question effectively implemented as a cluster?	IDEAL: • The implementation of the MEAs in a cluster is effectively coordinated. • The national implementation/action plan of the MEAs in question identifies cross-cutting themes and synergies between the MEAs in the cluster. • Responsible agencies for the implementation of the MEAs in the cluster share data and tools. • Reporting is coordinated within the cluster of MEAs. • National legislation supports the implementation of the cluster of thematically related MEAs.	• Review of relevant legal acts or review of documents to provide evidence that the legal analysis has been done • Interviews with stakeholders (MEA implementing agencies, representatives of non-governmental sectors)
14. Benefits for the environment	14.1. Has the implementation of the MEAs in question created benefits for the environment?	IDEAL: • The cluster-specific and wider environmental benefits have been assessed in the national implementation/action plan, for example, as to whether and how: - the implementation of the MEAs in question has improved the status of species and habitats; - the implementation of the MEAs in question has increased or maintained the ecosystem services; - the implementation of the MEAs in question has resulted in reduced emissions to the environment; and - the implementation of the MEAs in question has resulted in more efficient land use, mineral use and biomass use.	• Review of national implementation/action plan • Interviews with stakeholders (MEA implementing agencies, representatives of non-governmental sectors)

Review category	Review question	Criteria and benchmarks for ideal implementation	Method of response
15. Socio-eco-nomic benefits	15.1. Has the im-plementation of the MEAs in question created socio-eco-nomic benefits?	IDEAL: • The cluster-specific and wider socio-economic benefits have been assessed in the national implementation/action plan, for example, as to whether and how: - the implementation of the MEAs in question has created more jobs, incl. green jobs; - the implementation of the MEAs in question has increased safety benefits; - the implementation of the MEAs in question has created health benefits; - the implementation of the MEAs in question has promoted the introduction of green technol-ogies; - the implementation of the MEAs in question has created better governance; - the implementation of the MEAs in question has provided incentives for local communities; and - the costs of implementation of the MEAs in question are smaller than benefits gained.	• Review of the national imple-mentation/action plan • Cost-benefit analysis • Effectiveness analysis • Interviews with stakeholders (MEA implementing agencies, representatives of non-govern-mental sectors)

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