

**Implementation of the Convention and Strategic Plan for Biodiversity 2011-2020: a voluntary
review report for trial Phase of Open-ended Forum: The Ethiopian experience**

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I. Background

Objectives for preparing this review report, as stated by the Secretariat of the Convention on Biological Diversity (SCBD) to voluntary Parties (Ref. No. SCBD/IMS/JMF/NS/88541), are to assist efforts of the Secretariat aimed at undertaking a-country-by-country review of the implementation of the Convention of the Strategic Plan (SP) 2011-2020, increasing transparency regarding actions undertaken by Parties, facilitating peer learning among Parties and identify strategic actions to overcome obstacles in national implementation. Ethiopia is 54th Signatory to the Convention and, therefore, has volunteered to prepare this review report in an attempt to contribute to the stated objectives of the Secretariat.

II. Actions that have been taken to implement the convention and the SP for BD 2011-2020 in Ethiopia

The developments of National Biodiversity Strategy and Action Plans (NBSAPs) are provisions of Article VI of the Convention on Biological Diversity (CBD), and the need for its updating/revising was based on Decision X/2 of Conference of the Parties (COP) at Nagoya (Japan) in October 2010, an agreement referred to as Strategic Plan 2011-2020. The Strategic Plan calls for effective implementation of the Convention through a strategic approach comprising of a shared Vision, Mission and Goals, and Headline (Aichi Biodiversity) Targets, Thematic Areas as well as Cross-cutting issues.

In Ethiopia, implementation of the Convention and SP 2011-2020 started by updating its NBSAP 2011-2020, taking into account national and international experiences and provisions.

Analysis of the gap on the previous Ethiopian NBSAP indicated that while it was devised to serve as a roadmap to enhance the status of biodiversity and the environment of the country at

large, it had certain shortcomings. It was understood that while the entire actions planned to be implemented within the time frame were copious to be achieved, most of these actions were planned with the expectation that implementation funds would be secured from external sources. The document also lacked clarity on the mechanisms of coordination of the implementation, and it also lacked an agreed-upon binding instrument by which the lead implementers should be governed during the implementation period.

The updating process of the Et_NBSAP 2011-2020 took those lessons into account and priority issues identified by the stakeholders as critically important for conservation and sustainable use the country's biodiversity, national policies favoring the implementation and global provisions for the Strategic Plan period of 2011-2020.

Following the invitation by the Secretariat to update the NBSAP, series of cascaded events were organized by the National Focal Point (Ethiopian Biodiversity Institute) to realize the updating. These include nomination of the National Coordinator and building the capacity of the Coordinator in consecutive regional and international capacity building events, establishing an *ad hoc* Expert Group that developed Annual Work Plans for the updating, establishing Project Steering Committee that oversaw overall activities of the updating, establishing and training of Technical Team that took a stock on status and trends of the country's biodiversity and synthesized stocktaking report, drafted national targets and corresponding actions, including implementation arrangements, and presented these reports to wider national stakeholders for validation at consecutive national workshops until the updated NBSAP was endorsed by the government, and submitted to the SCBD in 2015.

As indicated above, the updated Ethiopian NBSAP 2015-2020 took into account the shared vision mission and goals of the Global Biodiversity Strategic Plan 2011-2020 as such. It also took into account the Thematic Areas and Cross-cutting issues of the Strategic Plan. However, Aichi Biodiversity Targets, as headline targets they were, have been modified to meet priority conservation, sustainable and development needs of the country taking into account not only the previous lessons but also the existing capacity, standing national development policies that

align with the implementation of the updated strategy. Therefore, each goal was made to incorporate two or more national (Ethiopian) targets while each national target had two to six actions. In the process of setting national targets, however, care was taken to map each national target to which Aichi Biodiversity Target its implementation would contribute.

The updated Ethiopian NBSAP 2015-2020 was comprised of 18 targets, 42 indicators and 58 actions. Each target had its specific rationale, implementation arrangements, milestones and indicators. Lead implementing and collaborating institutions or sectors, and implementation time-frame were assigned at the actions level.

A total of 10 lead implementing federal institutions were assigned to implement and coordinate the specific actions to which they were assigned and had agreed to do so from the federal to the lowest district levels along their respective chains of command, and report back the level of implementation at quarterly basis to the Implementation Coordination Office so that the Office could compile the implementation levels and present the findings at the biannual meetings of the National Biodiversity Technical Committee/NBTC (a committee comprised of Directors of Planning Directorates as well as Focal Persons of the lead implementing institutions, and local NGOs to further evaluate the level of implementation and come up with the way forward that will be discussed further at a biannual meeting of National Biodiversity Council/NBC (a council comprised of the President of House of the People's Representatives, Ministers/State Ministers/Commissioners of lead implementing agencies, Ministry of Finance, Plan and Development Commission, Ministry of Science and Technology and heads of two local NGOs), a meeting that was always conducted immediately after the meetings of the NBTC. The later meeting was expected to provide strategic directions that were required for further actions, the findings of which were to be presented to wider stakeholders, including representatives of local communities at workshops planned to be conducted at an annual basis.

III. Outcomes of the actions and the progress

Three major outcomes expected of the Strategic Plan for Biodiversity Strategic Plan 2011-2020 were timely submission of the updated Et_NBSAP 2015-2020 document within the required period (in 2015) as indicated in Aichi Biodiversity Target 17, which was submitted in 2015; and developing the Fifth and Sixth National Reports to the CBD (both submitted to the CBD in 2014 and 2018, respectively) and commencement of implementation of the Strategy and Action Plan.

The levels of implementations of the Et-NBSAP 2015-2020 translated into the Aichi Biodiversity Targets 2011-2020 (based on the pre-agreed map of the relevance/contribution of each national target to one or more Aichi Biodiversity Targets of 2011-2020), has been reported as the Sixth National Report to the CBD in April 2018 (<https://chm.cbd.int/search/reporting-map?filter=AICHI-TARGET-01>). This Report was developed by the National Report Drafting Task Force established by NBTC, from its members. Data and information used for the development of the Report emanated from quarterly implementation reports of lead implementing institutions that were submitted to the National Implementation Coordination Office and evaluated by the NBTC at its biannual meetings as well as by additional data gathered by the Task Force. Before the final endorsement at its second meeting by NBTC, the Draft Sixth National Report was evaluated at two consecutive meetings of the NBTC and at its First meeting by the National Biodiversity Council.

As indicated in the Report, the success in the level of implementation was variable from targets to targets. While the implementation levels of those actions of the given targets that were planned to be implemented by one or more distinct Directorates/Departments of the given lead implementing institution were more successful, the implementation levels of those actions that were planned to be implemented by inter-Directorate/Department coordination were weak or not up-to the level of expectations. This was because while the actions assigned to the former were financially ear-marked, and thus were incorporated into their national annual plans, to which their annual performance will be evaluated at quarterly, biannually, annually and five years basis at different levels, namely: Institutional, Ministry of Finance and Parliament

levels. Those actions planned to be implemented by inter-Directorate/Department coordination were, however, meant to be implemented by financial resources that will either be secured from external sources (by assuming Aichi Biodiversity Target 20 to be realized) or by pooling the resources from concerned Directorates/Departments. As indicated above, therefore; despite the request to the SCBD and GEF, since no finance has been secured for the NBSAP 2015-2020 implementation and there was no enough financial resource of the internal financial resource to be pooled, the implementation levels of those actions were either very poor or unsatisfactory.

IV. Technical and financial resources provided from multiple sources for the implementation

4.1. Technical support

Most of the actions outlined within the given targets of the Et_NBSAP 2015-2020 were, *inter alia*, developed taking into account existing national capacities. Therefore, implementations of such actions were conducted without any external technical requirement. There were, however, some actions (such actions those associated with *in situ* conservation and protected areas (PAs), Ethiopian targets 7 and 9) that involve gathering, manipulation and interpretation of spatial data that required collaborative intra-Directorate/Department or external technical collaboration and support such as of GIS. These activities required expertise in mapping and identifying and rectifying gaps and overlaps between and within PAs, computing protection level and threat status of the ecosystems.

Despite these requirements, no such external supports that were aimed at assisting the implementation of the updated Ethiopian NBSAP were obtained until late 2018. After 2018, the commencement of the First Phase of Mapping Biodiversity Priorities Project that was implemented by UNEP-WCMC and was financed by the Japan Biodiversity Fund, however, provided a tremendous support. The outcomes of this Project are still at the draft phase. If the outcomes of this Project were refined and finalized, not only will they resolve the above

challenges but also they will serve as the important spatial data source inputs for the development of the Post 2020 Biodiversity Framework of Ethiopia.

4.2. Financial support

Out of the estimated total cost of implementation of the updated Et_NBSAP 2015-2020 from 2015 through 2020, 55% of the expense was assumed to be covered by the government budget while the remaining was assumed to be covered by funds secured from the external sources.

Fortunately, the implementation plan period of the updated Ethiopian NBSAP 2015-2020 was coinciding with the implementation period of the Second Growth and Transformation Plan (GTP II) of the country, to which the lead implementing agencies of the Ethiopian updated NBSAP were major implementers of the GTP II. As the result, the implementation cost of most of the actions outlined in the updated NBSAP were assigned to specific Directorates/Departments of lead implementing institutions to be covered by the government budget allocated for the implementation of the GTP II, and hence their implementation levels were moderate to very good. However, the cost of the implementation of the other remaining actions was planned to be covered by inter-Directorial/Departmental coordination by pooling their resources or through funds to be secured from the external sources. Although Ethiopia did submit financial requests to the GEF and the SCBD indicating the financial gaps on targets by targets and year by year basis, the National Focal Point Institute that submitted the request, however, had not been furnished with the requested financial assistance. As indicated in the Ethiopian Sixth Report to the CBD, therefore, implementation levels of these actions remained poor or unsatisfactory (implementation level of one in the target was indicated in red and those of seven targets in yellow).

V. Needs for current adjustment of the NBSAP

For Ethiopia, the needs required to adjust current NBSAP to plan effectively for the forthcoming Post 2020 Global Biodiversity Framework obtained are both internal and external in nature.

While the internal needs so required are several, these include increasing awareness-raising efforts to policymakers and general public on values of biodiversity and ecosystem services as well as on the importance of devising effective Post 2020 Biodiversity Framework and its implementation arrangements, establishing functional NBSAP coordination structure, putting in place mechanisms that better enforce the agreed up-on updating/implementation arrangements by lead implementing institutions; and locating, lobbying and securing additional internal sources of fund (possibly from non-governmental sources such as private sectors and NGOs) for better implementation of, especially to those actions assigned to inter-Directorial/Departmental implementation. Moreover, concerted efforts and serious attention are required to better refine and fine-tune alignments of national targets with corresponding global targets during national targets development and consequent targets mapping phases.

The need to change, refine add and/or replace targets and/or corresponding actions outlined in the Et_2015-2020 NBSAP for Post 2020 Biodiversity Framework plan period will depend on the global Post 2020 provisions, outcomes of evaluation of current status and trend of the national biodiversity, priority areas of the forthcoming National Perspective Growth and Transformation Plan, and emerging national priority issues related to national biodiversity as well as trends in international funding landscape. This will be expected to be conducted during consequent phases of planning of the Post 2020 Biodiversity Framework planning of the country.

Similarly, such needs required at the international level for the adjustment of current NBSAP and devising the effective Post 2020 Biodiversity Framework are several. Out of these, the most important ones include setting well understandable globally shared and other provisions, thematic areas and cross-cutting issues; provision of sufficient capacity building training and bringing parties on equal footings regarding the set provisions. One of the major means to ensure the latter might be achieved by encouraging parties to participate in the capacity building events and discouraging them to keep changing their delegates who participate in the consecutive capacity building events. Moreover, avoiding delay in commencement by Parties to pursue their respective planning by facilitating early communication and timely release of the

allocated funds by the Secretariat and associated entities are equally important requirements.

Other requirements include:

- Strengthening monitoring and evaluation systems for updating and implementation of the NBSAPs,
- Creating mechanisms for the increased transparency and accountability by Parties in respect to updating and implementation of the NBSAPs,
- Strengthening peer-learning activities by Parties, and
- Developing effective technical and financial support mechanism for the implementation.

VI. Unresolved challenges for implementation

In the Ethiopian case, the most significant unresolved challenges that require further attention for effective implementation of the Convention and the associated Strategic Plan have been stated in various sections above. Summary of these include:

- Increasing awareness-raising efforts to policymakers and the general public on values of biodiversity and ecosystem services,
- Setting effective and legally binding mechanism for implementation,
- Establishing functioning coordination arrangement both at national and critically lead implementing agencies levels, and
- Increasing efforts to raise technical and financial supports required for the implementation from various internal and external sources.