



## **IUCN Commission on Education and Communication (CEC) Observations and Recommendations on Indicators for Target 1 of the CBD Strategic Plan (2011-2020) to the Ad Hoc Technical Expert Group**

### **Target 1: Awareness of biodiversity values**

By 2020, at the latest, people are aware of the values of biodiversity and the steps they can take to conserve and use it sustainably.

### **About the IUCN CEC**

The IUCN Commission on Education and Communication helps IUCN and the wider conservation community to unlock the power of networks, connect conservation to human values, and integrate know-how into daily practice. CEC adds value to conservation action through the use of strategic communication, learning and knowledge management:

*Conservation is all about people. When we decide it's good for us—for our homes, families and businesses—nature wins. We win, too. People are happier and healthier because conservation makes the world a better place to live. Our job is to mobilize people all over the planet to support action for conservation.*

The IUCN Commission on Education and Communication has a long history of working with the Secretariat of the Convention on Biological Diversity in the field of Communication, Education and Public Awareness (CEPA). The global network of the Commission has developed a CEPA toolkit for the Secretariat and has contributed over the years to the strengthening of CEPA capacities of CBD focal points and others responsible for conservation nationally, regionally and globally.

### **About this document**

Our focus on communication and education depends on a foundation of awareness. Therefore the IUCN Commission on Education and Communication applauds the wisdom of the Parties to the Convention on Biological Diversity to include a target on awareness of the value of biodiversity in the CBD strategic Plan, decision X/2 of COP 10 in Nagoya.

After consulting its global expert network on Communication, Education and Public Awareness, the IUCN Commission on Education and Communication has formulated a number of observations and recommendations, we think are relevant for the work of the Ad Hoc Technical Expert Group on Indicators to assess progress on the strategic plan and to the work of the Executive Secretary to the Convention in taking next steps to implement the CBD Strategic Plan.

## Observations

The IUCN Commission on Education and Communication wants to bring to the attention of the Ad Hoc Technical Experts Group the following issues with regard to indicators to assess awareness on biodiversity values:

1. Formulating indicators for this target pertains to the domain of social science and is therefore very different from formulating indicators for most of the other targets, especially those in strategic goals B, C and D. Absolute adequacy of indicators does not exist in social science. There will be differences due to regional, cultural and social contexts.
2. To help address the strategic goal of underlying causes of biodiversity loss, awareness in itself has limited impact. Modern behavioural psychology and behavioural economics studies indicate that increased awareness does not necessarily lead to changes in attitude or behaviour. For example, people still smoke despite a very high awareness of the personal consequences.
3. However awareness remains an important issue to take into account in the strategic plan, especially awareness of solutions to biodiversity loss (as opposed to the threats or the science). **Awareness of solutions** reflects the degree of understanding and support in societies for measures proposed to conserve biodiversity as described in the CBD strategic plan. And support in society is key to the successful realization of biodiversity conservation and sustainable development objectives. Surveying the level of awareness of solutions could lead to improved approaches for conservation.
4. Useful measurements of a change in awareness require a baseline to measure from. At present there is neither a global baseline study to assess awareness on biodiversity values nor an overview of steps that people can take to conserve biodiversity or use biodiversity sustainably. The greatest attempt at achieving this has been taken by the European Commission. There have been also isolated attempts in different countries to survey public opinion with regard to environment, biodiversity and sustainable development.<sup>1</sup>
5. Target 1 is extremely broad, which makes it more difficult to measure accurately. In order to inform the measurement process, it would be advisable to develop a series of key performance indicators that are clearly defined, specific and measurable.
6. The methodologies and questions used to assess awareness are as likely to influence the results of measurement as actual levels of understanding. It is essential that these methodologies are developed strategically and by individuals or organizations with expertise on communication and social research.

## Recommendations

The IUCN Commission on Education and Communication wants to bring to the attention of the Ad Hoc Technical Experts Group the following suggestions of how to most effectively deal with target 1.:

---

<sup>1</sup> For example: the NSW Government, Australia regularly conducts a survey “Who Cares about the environment?” which includes the ranking of biodiversity amongst environmental issues (climate change and water issues are higher) and asks about knowledge and actions.

<http://www.environment.nsw.gov.au/community/Whocares2009.htm>

1. Recommend to the Executive Secretary of the Convention on Biological Diversity that we establish Key Performance Indicators for Target 1, which are specific and measurable.
2. Recommend to the Executive Secretary of the Convention on Biological Diversity to conduct a scoping study on how to scale up the approach of the European Commission to survey biodiversity awareness on a global scale, taking into account the limitations in resources at the national and regional level in many parts of the world.
3. Recommend to the Executive Secretary of the Convention on Biological Diversity to conduct a base-line survey as a first step, in a number of countries that are representative of global biological diversity. On the basis of this first survey decisions can be taken on how to upscale the exercise and in which timeframes.
4. Recommend to the Executive Secretary to nominate an informal advisory body, such as the CEPA Informal Advisory Committee to advise the Executive Secretary on the work with regards to target 1.
5. Recommend to the Executive Secretary to use the IUCN Commission on Education and Communication as a global network to support and provide input for activities to implement target 1.

Keith Wheeler

Chair

IUCN Commission on Education and Communication (CEC)

[Cec-chair@iucn.org](mailto:Cec-chair@iucn.org) / [cec@iucn.org](mailto:cec@iucn.org)

[www.iucn.org/cec](http://www.iucn.org/cec)