Sida and the Convention on Biological Diversity

March 1998
Updated April 2000

Sida

SWEDISH INTERNATIONAL DEVELOPMENT
COOPERATION AGENCY

Department for Natural Resources
and the Environmnet

Foreword

Biological diversity is the very foundation of all human life and human welfare. Biological diversity makes it possible for the ecosystem – the environment of life – to supply free ecological services to mankind: direct services such as foods, medicines and building materials, and indirect services such as the pollination of crops by insects, a stable climate, the recycling of nutrients etc. Biological diversity is therefore of decisive importance for future development in both industrial countries and developing countries.

A convention on biological diversity was signed at the United Nations Conference on the Environment and Development in Rio de Janeiro in 1992. Today 170 countries have acceded to the Convention. Sweden is one of the countries which has signed and ratified the Convention, i.e. the Swedish Parliament has approved it. This means that Sweden undertakes to observe the Convention and this shall be reflected in all respects – from national legislation to Sweden's actions in programmes of international development cooperation.

Sida has provided support for the conservation and sustainable use of biological diversity for many years. Sida also participates in the international policy dialogue. The integration of the convention's objectives into Sida's operations has been taking place ever since the convention was signed. An action programme was produced at an early stage.

This paper "Sida and the Convention on Biological Diversity" constitutes a strategy for future work in this field, based on a review of experience gained hitherto. The strategy has been developed primarily in co-operation between Department for Natural Resources and the Environment, NATUR, and the Department for Research Cooperation, SAREC. The paper was first printed in March 1998. This version has been somewhat updated.

Jerker Thunberg
Head of the Department for
Natural Resources and the Environment

Table of Contents

Introduction

The objectives of the Convention on Biological Diversity, which entered into force in December 1993 are the conservation and sustainable use of the world's biological diversity, and the equitable sharing of the benefits arising from the utilisation of genetic resources. Hitherto the convention has been signed by almost 170 of the governments in the world. Ultimately the Convention concerns the very foundations of live and development on earth.

By signing and approving the Convention on Biological Diversity, Sweden has undertaken to support the work done by developing countries for the conservation and sustainable use of biological diversity. The Convention has general implications for Sweden's development cooperation since, in principle, all human activity in all sectors affects the conditions for biological diversity in one way or another. Sida has provided support to projects for the conservation and sustainable use of biological diversity for many years, and the work of integrating the Convention's objectives into Sida's work has been taking place since the Convention was signed.

This document presents the results of an ongoing process which has the objective that Sida's work shall correspond with Sida's undertakings in respect of the Convention. The report is in three parts:

1. *Background and conditions*. This gives a background to the threats to the world's biological diversity, describes the Convention on Biological Diversity and other international policy work in the field of biological diversity.
2. *Sida's support and experience hitherto*. This briefly describes Sida's work in the area.
3. *Sida's strategy for its work with the Convention on Biological Diversity*. This describes Sida's approach on how support for the implementation of the Convention should be integrated into Sida's work in the future, and proposes actions and interventions in Sida's programmes of multilateral, regional and bilateral development co-operation.

1. Biological diversity – a prerequisite for future life and development on earth

Background

The Convention on Biological Diversity entered into force in December 1993 and has hitherto been signed by almost 170 of the governments in the world. The governments which have signed the convention undertake to act nationally and internationally for the:

1) conservation,

2) sustainable use, and

3) fair and equitable sharing of the benefits arising from the utilisation of genetic resources.

Convention on Biological Diversity

- The Convention on Biological Diversity came into being through a decision made at the Rio Conference in 1992. The Convention entered into force in December 1993, the year Sweden ratified the Convention, i.e. the Government approved Sweden's signature of the Convention.
- The Convention obliges the parties that have signed the Convention to produce national strategies for the conservation and sustainable use of biological diversity and the fair and equitable sharing of the benefits arising from this use.
- The parties also have the responsibility to integrate the conservation and sustainable use of biological diversity into relevant sector and multi-sector plans.
- The Convention gives the parties national sovereignty over the genetic resources which have their origin in a country which is party to the Convention. Access to a country's genetic resources is only permitted if the country gives its approval in advance ("Prior Informed Consent" (PIC)), and on "Mutually Agreed Terms" (MAT).
- The Convention emphasises among other things the importance of access to and transfer of biotechnology, scientific and technical exchange and cooperation, and financial support for the implementation of the Convention by developing countries.
- The Convention's financial mechanism is the Global Environment Facility (GEF). Support is given via the GEF to the implementation of the Convention in developing countries in the form of supplementary support to projects and programmes which are judged to have global importance.
- Both bilateral and multilateral support to developing countries are extremely important to permit the implementation of the intentions of the Convention.

Biological diversity is the variation of life in all its forms. It includes the genetic variation in each species, the diversity of species and the diversity of ecosystems.

Biological diversity is a prerequisite for efficient ecosystems since, among other things, it enables adjustments to be made to disruptions and changes, both natural and those caused by human activity. It is thanks to biological diversity that agriculture production continues to function year after year all over the world and that the seas continue to produce food. Biological diversity is a prerequisite for global food security.

Biological diversity enables the ecosystems to supply ecosystem services, i.e. services which can benefit human society, services which we cannot manage without. The ecosystems supply indirect services such as stabilisation of the climate and water flows, the recycling of nutrients, control of "pests" and diseases and the decomposition of pollutants. An ecosystem service such as insect pollination is something we take for granted but its economic value is considerable. Research results show, for example, that 40 American crops worth SEK 240 billion per year are dependent on this ecosystem service. Examples of direct ecosystem services are the production of foods, medicines and raw materials

Biological diversity also represents cultural, spiritual, ethical and aesthetic values which provide stimulation and creativity for human life and human development.

Today biological diversity is diminishing at its different levels, from gene, population, species, function to ecosystem, at an increasingly rapid rate throughout the world. More than half of the species in the world are in danger of disappearing. The impoverishment of biological diversity affects the possibilities available to people to make a living in both the South and the North. Poor people living in rural areas in the South are directly dependent on natural resources for their survival. They use both wild and cultivated crops, animals for food, as building materials, for firewood etc.

Fact box

- The area covered by tropical forests is diminishing by about 1% per year or 10% per decade.
- Up to 75% of the genetic diversity in cultivated crops may have already disappeared during this century
- 5% of all domestic livestock breeds are estimated to disappear every year,
- 70% of the world's conventional marine fish species are utilised by humans are fully exploited, overexploited, or depleted due to overexploitation.

The loss of biological diversity is due of course to the continuous expansion of human activity which means that natural ecosystems are converted for forest and agriculture production, for fishing and infrastructure development, and that the ecosystem is changing, for example through pollution, the introduction of foreign species, climate change etc. Diversity is also continuously diminishing in human ecosystems through the transition to high yielding crops and livestock breeds with little genetic breadth, the simplification of cultivation systems, increasing use of insecticides and so on.

The present expansion of human activity in the world is, to a great extent, a consequence of the higher levels of consumption in industrial countries. Today it is estimated that the richest fifth of humanity use about four-fifths of the resources. However, the expansion is also a result of population growth and the ambition of people to improve their standard of living.

The loss of biological diversity is partly due to the fact that our modern economic, political and social systems undervalue the values and services of biological diversity. One reason for this is that hitherto we have taken these services for granted and assumed that, in one way or another, "nature" will always be intact around us – regardless of what we do with it. But this is no longer the case.

It is not just biological diversity in itself that is threatened. The extensive knowledge of the properties, values and uses of diversity which exists in local societies and indigenous populations around the world is disappearing at a rapid rate. It is important to note that both women and men possess this knowledge. Women, for example, often have considerable responsibility for the conservation and utilisation of plant-genetic resources in the form of seeds.

At the same time knowledge about the value of diversity has become hard currency, and access to genetic material has been one of our time's most difficult political issues internationally. The development of biotechnology and the development of intellectual property rights for different forms of life are taking place rapidly – at the same time as the Convention on Biological Diversity, for the very first time, gives individual countries ownership rights to their original genetic resources. The Convention also lays down that local knowledge shall be respected and conserved and that profits from the use from local knowledge shall be distributed fairly, so that compensation is given to farmers and societies who have been the sources and guardians of the knowledge and genetic resources which are being used commercially to an increasing extent.

The challenge

A rapidly growing world population makes inevitable demands for more efficient production systems which must also be sustainable in the long term. Therefore one of the most essential basic requirements which has to be met in the future is a high level of biological diversity, globally and

locally, both in the form of functioning ecosystems and in the form of genetic material for plant and animal breeding.

This diversity must also continue to be available for use and for breeding purposes and the gains from its use must be distributed in a fair way. Today agricultural research, plant and animal breeding, and trading in genetic resources are being increasingly privatised. The rapid developments in genetic technology, the rapidly growing trade with genetic material and the shift in power from public influence to private ownership where access to genetic resources is concerned will affect the lives of everyone. These issues are therefore just as much related to democracy, human rights and equality between women and men as to the conservation of biological diversity.

We know that the present losses in genes, in species and in ecosystems can be reduced considerably, even with the inevitable intensification of human activity. But then we must actively use all knowledge available in the best possible way and integrate it into our technologies, our value systems and decision-making processes. At the same time we must invest in increasing our knowledge of biological diversity and its values.

The international agenda and its international parties

The issues of sustainable use, availability and protection of property linked to plant genetic resources are the subjects of the international negotiations and discussions in the conference of the Parties of the Convention on Biological Diversity, within the framework of FAO's International Undertaking on Genetic Resources, in FAO's Genetic Resource Commission, in the Consultative Group for International Agricultural Research (CGIAR), in the EU, and in the World Trade Organisation's agreement on trade-related intellectual property rights (TRIPS). There is also a global action plan for the conservation and sustainable use of plant-genetic resources for food and agriculture under the FAO.

Issues concerning the conservation and sustainable use of biological diversity are also of central importance in other international conventions, for example the Convention on Wetlands of International Importance (the Ramsar Convention), the Convention on International Trade in Endangered Species of Fauna and Flora (CITES), and the Convention on the Conservation of Migratory Species of Wild Animals, (the Bonn Convention or CMS). In addition there are clear links to the UN's Framework Convention on Climate Change and the UN Convention to Combat Desertification as well as to the work done in the Intergovernmental Forum on Forests (IFF).

The coordination and harmonisation of international action under the various conventions and through the different parties has been initiated by the conference of signatories to the Convention on Biological Diversity.

The implementation and follow-up of the Convention on Biological Diversity in Sweden is the responsibility of the Ministry of the Environment, while the Ministry for Foreign Affairs has the overall responsibility for

development cooperation in this area. The Ministry of Agriculture also participates actively in the implementation of undertakings made under the Convention on Biological Diversity. The Ministry of Justice is responsible for issues relating to intellectual property rights (e.g. patents) and the Ministry of Industry, Employment and Communications for Swedish work in the International Forum on Forests (IFF).

2. Sida's experience

Focus and experience

Sida has provided support to projects for the conservation and sustainable use of biological diversity for many years, and the work of integrating the objectives of the Convention on Biological Diversity into Sida's work has been in progress since the convention was signed. At present (1999) Sida supports some 30 projects which are of direct importance for the conservation and sustainable use of biological diversity.

- Sida's action programmes for sustainable development, poverty, and gender equality are well in line with the intentions of the Convention on Biological Diversity. The conservation and sustainable use of biological diversity is specifically taken up in the action programme for sustainable development.
- Sida emphasises the sustainable use of natural resources in its country programmes. Production and environment issues are taken up in an integrated manner rather than separately, an approach which can also be clearly seen in the Convention on Biological Diversity.
- Sida has successfully supported research and capacity building for the conservation and sustainable use of biological diversity for a long time, in particular in southern and eastern Africa as well as in other regions. Support has been given for two years to a regional research and education programme in East Africa, leading to a M Sc degree, which focuses on the sustainable use of biological diversity in dryland areas. Capacity building in southern and eastern Africa has also taken place within the framework of extensive soil conservation and rural development programmes.
- Sida has considerable experience of research cooperation in biotechnology and has a special policy for providing support in the biotechnology field. Recently research cooperation on biosafety has been started with institutions in eastern Africa. Both these areas are given special attention in the Convention on Biological Diversity.
- Through the Department for Research Cooperation, SAREC, Sida has participated actively and provided support in the international policy dialogue on plant genetic resources and their availability since the 1980s. The support has resulted in considerable contributions being

given for the negotiations prior to the Convention on Biological Diversity and to the work of FAO and CGIAR (Consultative Group on International Agricultural Research) in the genetic policy area. Recently programmes of cooperation have been started with others, including the World Bank and the international food policy institute (IFPRI), for policy research with the objective of making contributions to the revision of TRIPS and to processes in the Convention on Biological Diversity, CGIAR and the FAO's genetic commission.

- CGIAR has received extensive support from Sida (SAREC) for a long time. A large part of CGIAR's work and Sida's support is directly linked to access to and sustainable use of genetic resources. CGIAR works for the continuation of guaranteed access to genetic resources to permit food security and sustainable development internationally.
- Sida has considerable experience of regional support in southern Africa for conservation and plant breeding, for example through support to SADC's centre for plant genetic resources (SPGRC) and to the national gene banks/genetic resource centres in the SADC region. This support is of a very long-term nature and it is of importance that Sida continues to make good use of the experience gained in the future. Valuable experience has also been gained in Sida's support for an international programme, Community Biodiversity Development and Conservation Programme (CBDC) which works to strengthen local plant breeding and to extend cooperation between plant breeders at the local, informal level and plant breeding at the national and international levels.
- In the marine/aquatic area Sida is financing a number of regional programmes which include the conservation and sustainable use of biological diversity. Sida is also providing support to the secretariat for the Wetlands Convention to enable developing countries to participate in the work of the convention and to contribute to the conservation and sustainable use of wetlands in developing countries.
- In the forestry field Sida is providing support, for example to the forest administration in Laos and Vietnam. In Laos support has been given to the conservation of forest areas with their biological diversity and in Vietnam plans have been made for investments in the conservation and sustainable use of biological diversity as a part of Sida's country support programme.
- Sida is also providing long-term support to projects of an innovative character for the conservation and sustainable use of biological diversity. One example is the Forest, Trees and People Programme (FTPP), which is working with the development of methods for the local and sustainable use and management of tree and forest resources. The programme has had a positive effect on the possibilities available to local populations to conserve and make sustainable use of biological diversity in Africa, Asia and Latin America. FTPP also constitutes an innovate model for networking and sharing of lessons learnt, which should be of great value in the work on the Convention on Biological Diversity.

- Sida is also supporting national initiatives for the dissemination of knowledge on the benefits of the biological diversity in society, for example INBio in Costa Rica.
- A considerable part of Sida's support in the field of biological diversity is given through non-governmental organisations. This support contributes to enabling the participation of civil society in international policy development, to increasing the awareness of the public and the decision-makers of the importance of biological diversity, and to establishing concrete action for the conservation and sustainable use of biological diversity at grassroots level. Organisations working with this which receive support from Sida are, for example, the Swedish Society for Nature Conservation, Genetic Resources Action International (GRAIN), Third World Network etc.

Conclusions

- Sida has policies and action programmes which are in line with the intentions of the Convention on Biological Diversity.
- Sida supports a large number of activities which are in line with the Convention on Biological Diversity.
- Sida has given priority to the conservation and sustainable use of biological diversity related to production.
- Many bilateral country programmes have aspects which relate to the conservation and sustainable use of biological diversity, but they lack a special strategy on how these issues shall be pursued.
- The positive or negative effects of individual projects on biological diversity are not always shown to a sufficient extent in the environmental impact assessments made by Sida.
- Sida's extensive experience in the area of research and methods development is not being fully utilised today in strategies and programmes.
- The possibility of coordination between Sida's departments on work with biological diversity is not yet fully utilised. However cooperation is taking place – primarily between the Department for Natural Resources and the Environment, NATUR, and the Department for Research Cooperation, SAREC.
- Sufficient consideration has not been given to the differences in the use of biological diversity by women and men as a consequence of the different roles they have in respect of responsibilities, needs and priorities. Nor has sufficient consideration been given to the ways in which this determines how resources are used and supervised and the consequences of this for different groups in society.

3. Sida's strategy

Points of departure

By signing and approving the Convention on Biological Diversity, Sweden has undertaken to conserve Swedish biological diversity and to support developing countries in their regional, national and local work for the conservation and sustainable use of biological diversity.

Sida will also give the issues of biological diversity and genetic resources great attention in the future. Sida's action programmes for sustainable development, poverty, and gender equality are well in line with the intentions of the Convention on Biological Diversity.

From Sida's viewpoint, the conservation and sustainable use of biological diversity are two sides of the same coin. Without active projects for conservation, a large part of the diversity will disappear in the next century. And without sustainable use it will not be possible to conserve diversity in a world of increasingly scarce resources.

Sida's point of departure is, in the first place, to integrate its work on biological diversity into ongoing programmes of bilateral and regional development cooperation.

Special projects for biological diversity will be implemented in certain areas (see below under priorities).

A number of Sida's financial instruments should be used in the work on the Convention on Biological Diversity and the issues of biological diversity: 1) Country programmes, 2) Regional contributions, 3) Special environmental contributions – bilateral development co-operation, 4) Special environmental contributions – multilateral development co-operation, 5) Support to non-governmental organisations.

Priorities

Sida shall give priority to:

- work to respect, maintain and develop knowledge on the conservation and sustainable use of biological diversity in local communities and indigenous populations including support for strengthened local control, by both women and men, over the use of biological resources and the fair and equitable sharing of the benefits of biological resources and of the use of local knowledge.
- conservation and sustainable use of biological diversity in areas which are cultivated by human beings including agriculture, forestry and fisheries. The focus should lie on mechanisms which make it possible to continue to maintain the sustainable use of biological diversity at higher levels of production and on mechanisms which permit the fair and equitable sharing of the benefits of such use of biological diversity.

- policy research and policy development in respect of access to and the fair and equitable sharing of genetic resources and knowledge of biological diversity. This shall include support for the work of developing mechanisms to ensure that compensation is given to farmers and societies that have developed and managed knowledge and genetic resources which are today utilised commercially, the so-called farmers' rights, in a way which is realistic and practicable. Support should also be given for capacity building in respect of biosafety and for the management of biotechnology.

Implementation

Follow-up of the Convention

Sida will monitor and exert an influence on the work on the implementation of the Convention on Biological Diversity, for example through participation in preparatory meetings. Sida will also participate in the Swedish assessment of proposed projects through the Convention's financial mechanism, GEF.

Integration in all Sida's work

The consequences for biological diversity shall be analysed and given attention in all programmes and projects in all sectors whenever relevant. This is very important – a shift in emphasis towards ecologically sustainable development in Swedish development cooperation as a whole is probably just as important for biological diversity as specific biological diversity programmes. Biological diversity shall be taken up and integrated with other environmental issues in a holistic perspective. The positive or negative effects of individual projects on biological diversity and the consequences of these effects on different groups in the population shall be presented in environmental impact assessments (EIA) which shall be made for all Sida's projects.

The integration of the conservation and sustainable use of biological diversity into Sida's programmes shall take place initially in the natural resources sector. Resources shall be allocated for the extra support which is needed in the form of studies, training, special assignments to institutions in partner countries etc.

Internal training

To permit meaningful assessments to be made of the positive or negative effects of programmes of development cooperation on biological diversity, it is necessary that Sida's staff have adequate knowledge of the subject area. A section on biological diversity, which also takes up genetic policy issues, shall therefore be included in Sida's environmental course. This section shall also take up a gender-related perspective of the conservation and use of biological diversity.

As a part of the internal education and training programme, special seminars shall also be held with the objective of informing and updating administrators and programme officers concerned on the status of and developments in Sida's priority areas in the field of biological diversity.

Knowledge development

Sida's support for the conservation and sustainable use of biological diversity shall focus on knowledge and methods development as well as capacity building in the partner countries.

Policy development and participation by the South in international fora

Sida will continue to support and participate in the work on international policy development related to access to and the equitable sharing of genetic resources at, for example, FAO, CGIAR, IFPRI, World Bank, WTO and EU.

Support shall also be given to enable groups on the social and political periphery to participate in the policy work by making it possible for specific, local knowledge to be introduced at the policy level.

Sida shall provide support to increase the participation of governments, non-governmental organisations and other parties in the South in the international policy work related to, among other things, genetic resources and intellectual property rights during the next few years. Sida shall also contribute to strengthening the capacity of developing countries for international policy work.

Support for non-governmental organisations

Sida will continue to support non-governmental organisations which work with the conservation and sustainable use of biological diversity. Examples of such organisations are IUCN, the Swedish Society for the Conservation of Nature (whose North/South programmes of cooperation include support to a number of environmental organisations in the South which are active in the field of biological diversity), Third World Network, WWF, GRAIN and Birdlife International.

4. Roles and responsibilities at Sida

The consequences for biological diversity shall be analysed and given attention as an integral part of project assessment. In this respect the environmental policy division shall function as a catalyst and advisor. Whenever necessary external expertise shall be engaged to assist in the review of environmental impact assessments (EIAs) and the attention given in EIAs to consequences for biological diversity.

At the Department for Natural Resources and the Environment, NATUR, there is a coordinator for biological diversity who's task is to facilitate the coordination and follow up of Sida's work in the area. NATUR is responsible for many of projects which concern biological diversity and the work on integration is also most extensive in this department.

The Department for Research Cooperation, SAREC, has the main responsibility for Sida's work in the areas of genetic policy and biotechnology.

Appendix 1

Sida's contributions in 1999 in respect of programmes relating to the Convention on Biological Diversity

In 1999 Sida supported a large number of programmes relating to the conservation and sustainable use of biological diversity, including plant genetic resources, as well as to the fair and equitable sharing of its benefits. Some examples of these programmes are given below:

- The Global Taxonomy Initiative related to the Convention on Biological Diversity.
- Support to the Ramsar Convention for the protection and sustainable use of wetlands.
- Marine environment and coastal development programmes, for example support to the International Centre for Living Aquatic Resources (ICLARM)
- Forestry programmes, for example Forest, Trees and Peoples Programme (FTPP).
- The work of NGOs with the sustainable use of biological diversity and their work for the fair and equitable sharing of the benefits of biological diversity through, for example, support to the Swedish Society for the Conservation of Nature and Genetic Resources Action International (GRAIN).
- The work of international organisations in this area, for example support to the World Conservation Union (IUCN) and the World Resources Institute (WRI).
- Seed programmes, for example in Zambia, Mozambique and Ethiopia.
- Gene banks, for example the regional gene bank for the SADC area and national gene banks in the same region.
- The conservation and sustainable use of plant genetic resources in the field, for example through the Community Biodiversity Development and Conservation Programme (CBDC).
- Support for international research in the agricultural sector through the Consultative Group for International Agricultural Research (CGIAR).
- Bio policy development (biotechnological research cooperation, policy development etc) in East Africa.
- FAO, to enable participants from the South to attend meetings regarding international work on genetic resources for agriculture and food supply, for example in respect of the International Undertaking on Plant Genetic Resources and the Global Plan of Action for Plant Genetic Resources.

- Support for, and active participation in, Crucible II which takes up and works with both scientific knowledge and policy development in respect of plant genetic resources. Crucible II works with developing alternatives for developing countries prior to the revision on the WTO's agreement on trade-related intellectual property rights (TRIPS) in respect of biological inventions, traditional knowledge and access to genetic resources.
- Support for active participation in a study on the harmonisation of national policies for the management of plant genetic resources in the light of the negotiations on a multilateral agreement on plant genetic resources for agriculture and food and CGIAR's research agenda.

In 1999 a special project has been undertaken by the Department for Natural Resources and the Environment (NATUR), "Mainstreaming of Biodiversity, Phase I". It investigates how an analysis of the consequences on biological diversity can be made in the project identification process, the planning process and the follow-up of all programmes and projects receiving support from NATUR, as a part of the environmental impact assessment, to minimise negative effects and to demonstrate positive effects on biological diversity. Three case studies have been made of ongoing programmes to establish how issues of biological diversity can be better integrated into programmes of development cooperation. Reports from the case studies are available at the Department for Natural Resources and the Environment. A report on the project "Mainstreaming of Biodiversity, Phase I" will be presented in the spring of the year 2000.

The cost of programmes directly related to the Convention amounted to SEK 50 million in 1999.

SWEDISH INTERNATIONAL DEVELOPMENT COOPERATION AGENCY
S-105 25 Stockholm, Sweden
Tel: +46 (0)8-698 50 00. Fax: +46 (0)8-20 88 64
Homepage: http://www.sida.se

ISBN: 91-586-8986-9