

Article 12 Research and training

173. What is the relative priority afforded to implementation of this Article and the associated decisions by your country?						
a) High		b) Medium	X	c) Low		
174. To what extent are the resources available adequate for meeting the obligations and recommendations made?						
a) Good		b) Adequate	Fl.	c) Limiting	Fed. / Wa.	d) Severely limiting
Further comments on relative priority and on availability of resources						
In the framework of the current Multi-annual Scientific Plan for a Sustainable Development (SPSD-II: 2000-2004) of the OSTC, about 7.44 Mio Euro (on 57 Mio Euro) are devoted to research on biodiversity issues, compared to 3.1 Mio Euro in the previous Plan (SPSD-I: 1996-2000).						
175. Has your country established programmes for scientific and technical education and training in measures for the identification, conservation and sustainable use of biological diversity and its components (12a)?						
a) no						
b) early stages of development					Br.	
c) advanced stages of development					Wa.	
d) programmes in place					Fed. / Fl.	
176. Has your country provided support to other Parties for education and training in measures for the identification, conservation and sustainable use of biological diversity and its components (12a)?						
a) no						
b) yes					X	
177. Does your country promote and encourage research which contributes to the conservation and sustainable use of biological diversity (12b)?						
a) no						
b) yes - limited extent						
c) yes - significant extent					X	
178. Does your country promote and co-operate in the use of scientific advances in biological diversity research in developing methods for conservation and sustainable use of biological resources (12c)?						
a) no						
b) yes - limited extent					X	
c) yes - significant extent					Fl.	
<i>If a developed country Party -</i>						
179. Does your country's implementation of the above activities take into account the special needs of developing countries?						
a) no						
b) yes, where relevant					X	

Further comments on implementation of this Article

(175) International Course on Nematology (Biology Dept., Ghent University), Biodiversity Training Course on behalf of the United Nations University (Ghent University), weekly seminars on biodiversity (Catholic University of Louvain-La-Neuve), etc. Most Belgian universities have 3rd cycle environmental management courses (equivalent of a Master's degree), including courses on the management of (inter-)tropical areas.

(176) The Directorate-General for International Co-operation of the federal Belgian Government supports the African Biodiversity Information Centre (ABIC) at the Royal Museum for Central Africa. ABIC organises training internships with a focus on taxonomy and biodiversity for students from developing countries.

The Royal Museum for Central Africa organised in 2000 on the RFI Comoros a capacity-building training workshop about inventorying terrestrial biodiversity and its eco-tourism potential.

(177) At the federal level, the OSTC encourages research which contributes to the conservation and sustainable management of terrestrial ecosystems (temperate regions), of marine ecosystems (in particular the North sea) and of Antarctic ecosystems.

The main objectives are:

- to better understand the links between biological diversity, the structure and the functioning of ecosystems and the impacts of human and environmental threats (climate change in particular) on biodiversity;
- to develop decision/management support tools for the monitoring and assessment of biodiversity and methods for conservation, restoration and sustainable use of biodiversity.

In support of Article 12 (b) and (c), the Belgian federal government launched a Biodiversity Platform aiming at improving the information exchange and communication between the scientific community, the research funding bodies, the policy-makers in the field of environment and the land-managers, notably via the Belgian Biodiversity Forum website, thematic workgroups and the organisation of biodiversity-related meetings. This Platform promotes biodiversity research and an increased use of its results for applied environment management.

(177) Wallonia - As far as scientific support is concerned, the Nature, Forests and Wood Research Centre, which depends from the Nature and Forestry Division, conducts or co-ordinates various studies. At the biological diversity level, the main lines of research are:

- the inventory and the monitoring of biological diversity (Observatory of Fauna, Flora and Habitats - OFFH);
 - the monitoring of aquatic organisms (Hydrobiology section);
 - the monitoring of the management of protected areas (Biological research centre);
 - the permanent inventory of forests that recently included parameters relating to biological diversity;
 - the genetic improvement of the main forest species grown in the Walloon Region (study of origins, selection of seeding plantation areas, individual selection, locating and protecting plantation areas to be conserved, etc.).
- The Gembloux Scientific Centre hosts the Walloon Biodiversity server (mrw.wallonie.be/dgrne/sibw).

The different universities also play an important role in research on biological diversity conservation, either independently (dissertations, theses, etc.) or through research agreements with the Walloon Region.

For specific missions, the Region finances research activities of universities, institutes and naturalists' organisations.

(177) Flanders - The Flemish Institute of Nature Conservation (www.instnat.be) is responsible for reporting on the state of nature in Flanders, including applied ecological and hydrogeological research with a view to nature conservation. It is also in charge of a number of inventories, the compilation of species Red Lists and the establishment of the Biological Evaluation Map. The Institute for Forestry and Game Management (www.ibw.vlaanderen.be) has a similar function for forests. It is also responsible for scientific research on fish stock and their management. The Flemish Impulse Programme Nature Development (VLINA) was started in 1996 as a means to stimulate research on nature conservation in Flanders. Biological diversity indicators are one of the five themes treated within the scope of the programme, with indicators of forest biological diversity being the first ascribed research assignment. The Flemish Environmental Agency (www.vmm.be) is a para-governmental institution complementary to the environmental administration. One of the tasks of the VMM is to establish and run the monitoring programme on surface water quality.

(178 b) General research in Flanders.

(178 c) Policy relevant research in Flanders.