

Third National Report of Belgium to the Convention on Biological Diversity

B. PRIORITY SETTING, TARGETS AND OBSTACLES

Ecosystem Approach

The ecosystem approach is a strategy for the integrated management of land, water and living resources that promotes conservation and sustainable use in an equitable way. Application of the ecosystem approach will help to reach a balance of the three objectives of the Convention. At its second meeting, the Conference of the Parties has affirmed that the ecosystem approach is the primary framework for action under the Convention (decision 11/8). The Conference of the Parties, at its fifth meeting, endorsed the description of the ecosystem approach and operational guidance and recommended the application of the principles and other guidance on the ecosystem approach. The seventh meeting of the Conference of the Parties agreed that the priority at this time should be facilitating implementation of the ecosystem approach. Please provide relevant information by responding to the following questions.

3. <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> ¹ Is your country applying the ecosystem approach, taking into account the principles and guidance contained in the annex to decision V/6? (decision V/6)	
a) No	
b) No, but application is under consideration	
c) Yes, some aspects are being applied	X
d) Yes, substantially implemented	X

4. <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Is your country developing practical expressions of the ecosystem approach for national policies and legislation and for implementation activities, with adaptation to local, national, and regional conditions? (decision V/6)	
a) No	
b) No, but development is under consideration	
c) Yes, practical expressions have been developed for applying some principles of the ecosystem approach	X
d) Yes, practical expressions have been developed for applying most principles of the ecosystem approach	

5. Is your country strengthening capacities for the application of the ecosystem approach, and providing technical and financial support for capacity-building to apply the ecosystem approach? (decision V/6)	
a) No	
b) Yes, within the country	X
c) Yes, including providing support to other Parties	

6. <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Has your country promoted regional cooperation in applying the ecosystem approach across national borders? (decision V/6)	
a) No	

¹ Please note that all the questions marked with have been previously covered in the second national reports and some thematic reports.

b) Yes, informal cooperation (please provide details below)	
c) Yes, formal cooperation (please provide details below)	X
Further comments on regional cooperation in applying the ecosystem approach across national borders.	
<p>The Regions have developed formal interregional as well as formal bilateral cooperations with neighbouring countries on the integrated management of transboundary ecosystems, such as river ecosystems and protected areas.</p> <p>The 'Plan de Base Ecologique et Paysager Transfrontalier' (PBEPT) Walloon Region-Luxembourg and the 'Grensoverschrijdend Ecologisch Basisplan' (GEB) Flemish Region-The Netherlands will allow to address more significant areas and to develop joint transboundary actions.</p> <p>The 'Three Countries Parc - Open space without borders' (Belgium-The Netherlands-Germany) aims to improve transboundary cooperation to maintain and strengthen the functioning of rural zones as well as to conserve open space in an urbanised environment.</p>	

7. Is your country facilitating the exchange of experiences, capacity building, technology transfer and awareness raising to assist with the implementation of the ecosystem approach? (decisions VI/12 and VII/11)	
a) No	
b) No, some programmes are under development	
c) Yes, some programmes are being implemented (please provide details below)	X
d) Yes, comprehensive programmes are being implemented (please provide details below)	
Further comments on facilitating the exchange of experiences, capacity building, technology transfer and awareness raising to assist with the implementation of the ecosystem approach.	
Flemish Region: financial and technical support in international cooperation programmes, such as the Flemish Fund for Tropical Forests and the Sahelo-Saharan Antelopes programme (under CMS).	

8. Is your country creating an enabling environment for the implementation of the ecosystem approach, including through development of appropriate institutional frameworks? (decision VII/11)	
a) No	
b) No, but relevant policies and programmes are under development	
c) Yes, some policies and programmes are in place (please provide details below)	X
d) Yes, comprehensive policies and programmes are in place (please provide details below)	
Further comments on the creation of an enabling environment for the implementation of the ecosystem approach.	
Legislation for nature conservation and water policies include frameworks for the implementation of the ecosystem approach for site-specific management plans or actions.	