

# Indicators

## What was expected from the ETC/BD?

The terms of reference of the ETC/BD request support for the EEA in developing indicators within the DPSIR assessment framework, to support specific policy processes including high-level processes such as the EU Sustainable Development Strategy. Specifically the ETC should:

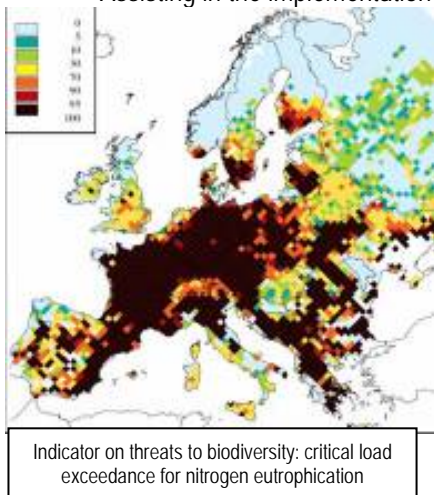
- Contribute to the maintenance and further develop a set of about 30 indicators
- Produce updates for these indicators regularly, including an analysis of the trends. Quality assessment of the data is part of this task
- Elaborate policy relevant texts describing the environmental and policy context of the indicators as well as their analysis
- Develop new indicators in cooperation with EEA member countries, other organisations or research projects. Specifically the ETC should analyse the state of knowledge and existing capacities as a basis for developing indicators and information on key ecosystem functions.

## What is the wider context of this work?

- Indicators provide a useful tool to communicate complex scientific results in a simple way to decision-makers. EEA reporting on environment in Europe is largely based on indicators
- In order to prioritise reporting by EEA member countries on various environmental issues the EEA Management Board has agreed on a Core Set of 30 environmental indicators ([CSI](#)) including three biodiversity indicators
- Various policy processes, such as the EU Sustainable Development Strategy, the EU Common Agricultural Policy, and the Marine Thematic Strategy are assessed against a set of specific indicators including a few biodiversity indicators
- At the level of the Convention on Biological Diversity the development of biodiversity indicators started in the mid-nineties, involving scientists and national and international policy- and decision-makers. This process speeded up with the global adoption of the target to significantly reduce biodiversity loss by 2010. This led to the adoption of a set of 22 international headline biodiversity indicators
- For Europe, the Gothenburg and Kyiv targets to halt biodiversity loss by 2010 provided the same impetus and led to the endorsement of the EU set of 16 headline biodiversity indicators. The [SEBI2010](#) process – Streamlining European 2010 Biodiversity Indicators – was developed to document and implement these indicators, which the European Commission needs to report on its achievement against the 2010 target.

## What has the ETC/BD achieved?

- Development, production and updating of the three biodiversity indicators, as part of the EEA Core set of environmental Indicators, respectively on species diversity, threatened species and protected areas. This includes ensuring regular provision of data from countries and international non-governmental organisations.
- Assisting in the implementation of the SEBI2010 process:



- supporting the coordination team of SEBI2010 through developing the SEBI2010 work plan
- chairing and/or coordinating expert groups on 'Species', 'Nitrogen deposition', and 'Genetic diversity'
- participating as expert in the 'Species', the 'Habitat', the 'Invasive species' and 'Sustainable Management' expert groups and in the development of a Marine trophic index'
- contributing to the selection of a first set of SEBI2010 biodiversity indicators (26 indicators)
- identifying needs for data flows from countries and other data holders;
- communicating on developments in SEBI2010 in various international and national fora

- Contributing biodiversity components to the indicators on agri-environmental issues as developed in the IRENA project (Indicator Reporting on the Integration of Environmental Concerns into Agriculture Policy)
- Contribution to the development of biodiversity indicators under the EU Marine Thematic strategy
- Contribution to the development of sustainability indicators under the UNESCO-Man and Biosphere programme
- Reviewing initiatives in developing a biodiversity index and exploring the feasibility of an indicator on species specialisation.

## Which are the main challenges ahead?

In the biodiversity indicator process the EEA and the ETC/BD are faced with the following challenges:

- An urgent need to move from developing indicators to implementing and communicating them
- Ensuring a continuous, enhanced and harmonised data flow from Member States and other data holders in order to allow regular updating of indicators and streamlined reporting
- In the case of the SEBI2010 process, ensuring progressive expansions to a pan-European coverage of all the different indicators
- Linking up with other indicator processes in order to eliminate duplication and reduce the data delivery burden from data owners
- Assessment of the effectiveness of the indicators in terms of their usefulness for decision-making purposes.

## What have we learned from our experience?

- In comparison to other environmental areas, such as water or air quality, there has been a long-term lack of policy framework for the development of biodiversity indicators. This was largely due to the difficulty to encompass the multiple dimensions of biodiversity and to set up quantitative baselines and targets. The 2010 target now provides such a framework at global, Pan-European and EU levels, and allows priorities to be set in indicator development
- The Topic Centre and its Consortium partners cover a wide range of expertise to underpin the SEBI2010 indicators. The Topic Centre has established good working relationships with Member States and other data custodians which allows for rapid data collection and consultation. This broad network is necessary to consolidate data delivery and indicator implementation. Working with related initiatives allows the Topic Centre to focus on its core task for the EEA indicators in an efficient way