

**Strategy
for
the East and Southeast Asia Biodiversity Information Initiative (ESABII)**

The countries participating in ESABII (Brunei Darussalam, Cambodia, China, Indonesia, Japan, Lao People's Democratic Republic, Malaysia, Mongolia, Myanmar, Philippines, Republic of Korea, Singapore, Thailand and Viet Nam), in collaboration with the Secretariat of the CBD (*ex-officio*), the ASEAN Centre for Biodiversity (ACB), the Global Biodiversity Information Facility (GBIF), Natural Geography In Shore Areas (NaGISA), the Asia-Pacific Biodiversity Observation Network (AP-BON) and BioNET-INTERNATIONAL,

Recalling the objectives of the Convention on Biological Diversity (CBD), namely the conservation of biological diversity, the sustainable use of its components, and the fair and equitable sharing of the benefits arising out of the utilization of genetic resources,

Recalling also the target to significantly reduce the current rate of loss of biodiversity by 2010 adopted by the Conference of the Parties to the CBD at its sixth meeting in The Hague in 2002 and reiterated by the 154 heads of state and government attending the 2005 World Review Summit of the United Nations General Assembly,

Recognizing that accurate and timely monitoring of the status of biodiversity and accumulation of the data in a database form accessible to the world are necessary to evaluate the achievement of the target to significantly reduce the current rate of loss of biodiversity by 2010,

Aware that the lack of taxonomic capacity was recognized in decision II/8, paragraph 7, adopted by the Conference of the Parties at its second meeting, as an obstacle to the implementation of the CBD and that, at its fourth meeting, the Conference of the Parties recognized, in paragraph 4 of decision IV/1D, that the implementation of a Global Taxonomy Initiative (GTI) should occur on the basis of country-driven projects at the national, regional and subregional levels,

Recalling that the programme of work for the GTI was adopted at the sixth meeting of the Conference of the Parties (decision VI/8, annex),

Recalling further that output 2.5.2. of planned activity 5 for the outcome-oriented deliverables for the GTI adopted at the ninth meeting of the Conference of the Parties in decision IX/22, states, *inter alia*, that all Parties should develop national and regional action plans for taxonomic capacity building by 2012,

Recalling that the Kobe Call for Action for Biodiversity adopted by the G8 Environment Ministers in Kobe in May 2008 calls for the strengthening scientific capabilities for monitoring of biodiversity,

Recalling that the “Carta di Siracusa” on Biodiversity, adopted by the Environment Ministers of the G8 countries together with the Ministers of Australia, Brazil, China, the Czech Republic as Presidency of the European Union, Egypt, India, Indonesia, Mexico, the Republic of Korea, South Africa, Sweden and the international organizations at the Siracusa meeting in April 2009, calls for the improvement of the science-policy interface for biodiversity, achieving reliable biodiversity data and fostering research and capacity building on biodiversity and ecosystem services,

Recognizing that all ESABII participating countries have, between 1998 and 2004, further demonstrated their commitment to working regionally when building taxonomic capacity and mobilizing biodiversity data by endorsing the establishment of BioNET-ASEANET and BioNET-EASIANET as local partnerships for taxonomy affiliated to BioNET-INTERNATIONAL,

Recognizing that experts from East and South-East Asian countries and ASEAN Centre for Biodiversity drafted the ESABII strategy at the Expert Meeting for Developing an “East and South-East Asian Biodiversity Information Initiative” in Tokyo in January 2009 and were deeply concerned about the need for taxonomic capacity building for implementation of the CBD at the regional level,

Also recognizing that the series of taxonomic needs assessments at regional level conducted by BioNET-ASEANET in 2002, and by Japan in 2002 and 2003, followed by ASEAN+3 GTI Workshop held in Los Banos, Laguna, Philippines in May 2009 identified needs of biodiversity information and capacity building in taxonomy for the conservation and sustainable resource use of biodiversity,

agree on the Strategy for ESABII as proposed in the Annex.

14 December 2009

Strategy for the East and Southeast Asia Biodiversity Information Initiative (ESABII)

1. Goal of ESABII

The goal of ESABII is to contribute to the implementation of the Strategic Plan for the Convention on Biological Diversity. This will be achieved through the development of biodiversity information systems and taxonomic capacity building in East and Southeast Asia.

2. Operational objectives

(1) Overall design for the operation

Deliverable 1-1: Organization and administrative structure of ESABII

Planned activity:

- Agree on the proposed organizational and administrative structure of ESABII as described in section 3 at the first Member Conference

Deliverable 1-2: Work Plan for the implementation and promotion of the Strategy and progress evaluation

Planned activities:

- Develop the Work Plan with information on suggested actors and deadlines at the Member Conference
- Evaluate and review implementation of the Strategy and the Work Plan at the Member Conference

Deliverable 1-3: Financially ensured projects

Planned activities:

- Develop project proposals and identify appropriate donors with support

- from the Steering Committee
- Coordinate project proponents and donors through the Steering Committee and the Secretariat
 - Help ESABII members with project planning and proposal development

Deliverable 1-4: Dissemination of ESABII information through a variety of media in order to raise awareness of the benefits of biodiversity information and taxonomy in particular, in implementing the CBD, other environmental agreements and national policies

Planned activity:

- Develop webpages, videos, brochures and other information materials for targeting policy makers, scientists, the private sector and the general public

(2) Development of biodiversity information

Deliverable 2-1: Regional biodiversity information needs assessment report with priorities for the conservation of biodiversity and its sustainable use in fulfillment of the CBD and other environmental agreements

Planned activities:

- Prepare a report on regional needs assessments utilizing reports from the ASEAN+3 GTI Workshop held in 2009 and other sources for the implementation of policies and programmes for the conservation of biodiversity and its sustainable use
- Prioritize biodiversity information development needs

Deliverable 2-2: ESABII website to promote the utilization of biodiversity information in conservation and sustainable use of biodiversity at the global, regional and national levels

Planned activities:

- Develop the ESABII website to provide biodiversity information for relevant organizations and the public
- Provide technical support from members of the Expert Group of ESABII to relevant organizations on how to properly and effectively use the information

Deliverable 2-3: Web-based, user friendly and on-demand interface of biodiversity information such as images, maps and graphs, information on genetics, species, and ecology

Planned activities:

- Identify available data resources, research institutes and organizations for cooperative work in exploring and sharing information
- Establish the modality of operation including data sharing, ownership, and credit attribution
- Develop, in accordance with the priorities identified by needs assessments, biodiversity information based on available data sets

(3) Taxonomic Capacity Building

Deliverable 3-1: Regional taxonomic needs assessment report with priorities for the implementation of the CBD and other policies in conservation and sustainable use of biodiversity

Planned activities:

- Prepare a report on regional taxonomic needs utilizing reports from the ASEAN+3 GTI Workshop held in 2009 and other sources
- Prioritize taxonomic capacity building needs

Deliverable 3-2: Regional action plan on taxonomic capacity building, to be considered as the GTI regional action plan on taxonomic capacity building for East and Southeast Asia

Planned activity:

- Develop a regional action plan based on user and capacity needs identified through workshops and meetings

Deliverable 3-3: Taxonomic capacity building programmes in accordance with the regional action plan above and the priorities identified by the needs assessment described in Deliverable 3-1

Planned activities:

- Plan and design training programmes for taxonomic capacity building with the assistance of members of the Expert Group
- Hold training courses for taxonomic capacity building with the assistance of members of the Expert Group

Deliverable 3-4: Taxonomic capacity building products

Planned activities:

- Develop a regional database of human resources for taxonomy
- Develop and disseminate products for taxonomic capacity building such as guides for species identification

3. Operational Structure and Procedure

3-1. Membership

3-1-1. Member

Membership of ESABII is by voluntary participation, and is classified in three groups, i.e., countries, organizations and networks.

(1) Countries

The current member countries of the ESABII are the following member states of the United Nations in East Asia and Southeast Asia:

Brunei Darussalam, Cambodia, China, Indonesia, Japan, Lao People's

Democratic Republic, Malaysia, Mongolia, Myanmar, Philippines, Republic of Korea, Singapore, Thailand, Viet Nam

Other countries in the region are also eligible for membership if they fulfill the membership requirements.

(2) Organization

The current member organizations of ESABII are:

- The Secretariat of the CBD (*ex-officio*)
- Global Biodiversity Information Facility (GBIF)
- ASEAN Centre for Biodiversity (ACB)

Other international, regional and/or national organizations that are involved in biodiversity information and/or taxonomy are also eligible for membership, if they fulfill the membership requirements.

(3) Network

The current network members of ESABII are:

- Natural Geography In Shore Areas (NaGISA)
- Asia-Pacific Biodiversity Observation Network (AP-BON)
- BioNET-INTERNATIONAL (Secretariat, BioNET-ASEANET, BioNET-EASIANET)

Other international, regional and/or national networks or frameworks for biodiversity information and/or taxonomy are eligible for membership, if they fulfill the membership requirements.

3-1-2. Membership Requirements

The requirements for application and continued membership are:

(1) Support for the ESABII Strategy:

- The members that formulated and endorsed the Strategy for ESABII fulfill this requirement.
- New members should submit an application letter supporting the Strategy to the Secretariat, or make a statement of their support for the Strategy at the Member Conference. The Secretariat shall notify existing members when new members are accepted. In both cases, there shall be no need to revise the Strategy.

(2) Focal point:

- Each member should appoint one focal point as the contact person regarding all the ESABII matters.
- The focal point is recommended to be involved in the CBD and/or the GTI process, and capable of bridging the working relationship with relevant Ministries and Agencies. If not the CBD focal point, the ESABII focal point should report back to the CBD focal point.

(3) Participation in the Member Conference:

- Members should attend the Member Conferences. Apologies for absence sent to the Secretariat may be considered as an indication of participation.

3-2. Administrative Framework

The following administrative mechanisms will be established in order to support ESABII's management and operation:

3-1-3. Member Conference

- The Member Conference is the general meeting for members, and is the

supreme decision-making body in management and operation of ESABII.

- The Member Conference shall be held at least every two years. The first Conference was held in December 2009 in Tokyo, Japan.
- The Member Conference shall evaluate the implementation of the ESABII Strategy and Work Plan.
- The Member Conference may adopt amendment(s) of the ESABII Strategy, Work Plan and other necessary documents.
- Decisions of the Member Conference shall be adopted by consensus.
- The host country of the ESABII Secretariat shall nominate the plenary chair from among the members.
- Guests may be invited as observers at the plenary sessions. Attendance is at the discretion of the plenary chair and the Secretariat.
- Meeting materials (e.g., provisional agenda, draft decision documents) shall be made available to the members at least 30 days prior to the meeting. The summary record of the meeting shall be made available to the members within two months of the meeting. The Secretariat shall consider and incorporate comments made by the members in its documents, as appropriate.

3-1-4. Steering Committee

- The Steering Committee will consist of seven (7) members comprising three (3) countries, secretariat host country (1), one (1) organization and one (1) network. The GTI Programme Officer of the Secretariat of the CBD will be the seventh member (*ex-officio*). Given the regional balance, the member countries of the Steering Committee shall consist of at least one from East Asia and one from Southeast Asia.
- The term of the Steering Committee membership shall be two years. Members and chair of the Committee shall be elected at the Member Conference. Reappointment of the Committee members shall not be

prohibited.

- The Steering Committee meeting will be held in conjunction with the Member Conference or whenever a majority of the Committee members are attending other relevant meetings, as necessary. An electronic mailing list shall be used as the means of communication among Committee members.
- On the endorsement of the Member Conference, the responsibilities of the Steering Committee include, but are not limited to, the following:
 - (i) Provide advice to the Secretariat on management and operation of ESABII
 - (ii) Receive and endorse the biannual report on the implementation of the ESABII strategy and the Work Plan prepared by the Secretariat to the Member Conference for approval
 - (iii) Reach decisions on matters and issues including the annual budget raised by the members through the Secretariat in between Member Conferences
 - (iv) Evaluate and endorse project proposals in the name of ESABII and assist with their presentation to potential donors for funding, when appropriate
 - (v) Appoint ad-hoc financial committees to assist the development of budget proposals

3-1-5. Expert Group

- The Expert Group is appointed by each of the members to support ESABII activities thorough provision of technical assistance to the implementation of the Work Plan. Additional scientists or experts may be invited by the Steering Committee through consultation to be members of the Expert Group on an ad-hoc basis.
- Each member of the Expert Group shall provide technical assistance for the development and implementation of programmes upon request from

members, the Steering Committee, and/or the Secretariat.

- Each of the member countries, organizations and networks shall appoint one or two expert(s) ideally specialized in biodiversity information and/or taxonomy to the Expert Group. The GTI Programme Officer of the Secretariat of the CBD will be an Expert Group member.

3-1-6. Secretariat

- The Secretariat shall be served by a member country elected at the Member Conference.
- The interim Secretariat will be hosted by Ministry of the Environment of Japan and served by the Biodiversity Center of Japan until the second Member Conference.
- The interim Secretariat will develop a proposal for the establishment of the permanent Secretariat.
- At the second Member Conference, a decision will be made on the establishment of the permanent Secretariat.
- The responsibilities of the Secretariat include, but are not limited to, the following:
 - (i) Organize the Member Conference and Steering Committee meetings
 - (ii) Prepare and circulate provisional agendas and other meeting materials before the meetings, and the summary reports after the meetings
 - (iii) Report on the implementation of the ESABII Strategy and Work Plan at the Member Conference
 - (iv) Ensure continuity of the Secretariat functions and maintenance of the institutional records
 - (v) Support ESABII members with developing project proposals for the implementation of the ESABII Strategy in cooperation with the

Steering Committee and the Expert Group

- (vi) Support mobilization of funds for proposed projects developed under the ESABII Strategy and Work Plan
- (vii) Disseminate information on the goals and activities of ESABII, including through maintenance of the website and distribution of promotional materials
- (viii) Appoint appropriate representative(s) of ESABII to participate in relevant international conventions and meetings, and report the outcomes to the Member Conference
- (ix) Support the development and implementation of a partnership strategy and the promotion of relations with institutions and organizations internationally

3-3. Budget and Funding

The Secretariat shall prepare an annual budget to implement the Work Plan including the convening of the Members Conference, other meetings and operations of the Secretariat.

The Secretariat shall encourage members to provide funds to assist organizing relevant meetings including the Member Conference, and/or to secure the attendance of members to these meetings.