

Research needs expressed in the Decisions of the Conference of the Parties to the Convention on Biological Diversity: Cross-Cutting Issue: Impact Assessment

Impact assessment is the process of identifying the future consequences of a current or proposed action (<http://www.cbd.int/impact/default.shtml>). It is used to ensure that projects, programmes and policies are economically viable, socially equitable and environmentally sustainable. Work under the Convention seeks to support efforts to adequately reflect biodiversity considerations in impact assessments. Guidance developed under the Convention helps to decide which aspects of biodiversity may need to be monitored and how to carry this out in a cost-effective way.

Cited Decisions that express research needs are V/18, VI/7 and VIII/28, also checked were Decisions VI/10 and VII/17.

Comment: Decision VIII/28 derives text directly from Decision VI/7. In order to avoid duplication only the more recent Decision VIII/28 is cited where the text is taken from Decision VI/7.

Direct research needs

Decision	Paragraph	Chapeau / Heading	Text	Source http://www.cbd.int/decisions/
VIII/28 (based on VI/7)	Annex I Para 8 Annex I Para 16)	Voluntary guidelines on biodiversity-inclusive environmental impact assessment.	Fundamental questions which need to be answered in an EIA study include: Would the intended activity affect the physical environment in such a manner or cause such biological losses that it influences the chance of extinction of cultivars, varieties, populations of species, or the chance of loss of habitats or ecosystems? Would the intended activity surpass the maximum sustainable yield, the carrying capacity of a habitat/ecosystem or the maximum allowable disturbance level of a resource, population, or ecosystem, taking into account the full spectrum of values of that resource, population or ecosystem? Would the intended activity result in changes to the access to and/or rights over biological resources?	cop-08.shtml?m=COP-08&id=11042
VI/7	Annex I Para 24	Guidelines for incorporating biodiversity related issues	There is a need to develop or compile biodiversity criteria for impact evaluation and to have measurable standards or objectives against which the significance of individual impacts can be evaluated.	cop-06.shtml?m=COP-06&id=7181

VI/7	Annex I Para 45	into environmental impact assessment.	Communication between practitioners of environmental impact assessment and scientists working in the biodiversity domain is in urgent need of improvement and should be enhanced through workshops and case-study assessments.	
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Indirect research needs

Decision	Paragraph	Chapeau / Heading	Text	Source http://www.cbd.int/decisions/
V/18	Para 1	The Conference of the Parties invites Parties, Governments and other relevant organizations	To ensure the involvement of interested and affected stakeholders in a participatory approach to all stages of the assessment process, including governmental bodies, the private sector, research and scientific institutions , indigenous and local communities and non-governmental organizations, including by using appropriate mechanisms, such as the establishment of committees, at the appropriate level; To organize expert meetings, workshops and seminars, as well as training, educational and public awareness programmes and exchange programmes, and carry out pilot environmental impact assessment projects , in order to promote the development of local expertise in methodologies, techniques and procedures	cop-05.shtml?m=COP-05&id=7160
VI/7	Annex I Para 21	Guidelines for incorporating biodiversity-related issues into environmental impact assessment.	The expected impacts of the proposed activity, including identified alternatives, should be compared with the selected reference situation and with the autonomous development (what will happen with biodiversity over time if the project is not implemented).	cop-06.shtml?m=COP-06&id=7181
VI/7	Annex I Para 32		Predicted impacts on biodiversity should be monitored , as should the effectiveness of mitigation measures proposed in the environmental impact assessment. Proper environmental management should ensure that anticipated impacts are maintained within predicted levels, and unanticipated impacts are managed before they become a problem and the expected benefits (or positive developments) are achieved as the project proceeds.	
VIII/28 (based on	Annex 1 Para 25 Annex I	Voluntary guidelines on biodiversity-inclusive	The following sequence of questions provides an example of the kind of information that should be requested in the terms of reference of an impact study if the project screening suggests that the proposed activity is likely to have adverse impacts on biodiversity. It should be noted that	cop-08.shtml?m=COP-08&id=11042

VI/7	Para 20)	environmental impact assessment.	<p>this list of steps represents an iterative process. Scoping and impact study are two formal rounds of iteration; during the study further iterative rounds may be needed, for example when alternatives to the proposed project design have to be defined and assessed.</p> <p>Describe the type of project, its nature, magnitude, location, timing, duration and frequency;</p> <p>Define possible alternatives, including “no net biodiversity loss” or “biodiversity restoration” alternatives (such alternatives may not be readily identifiable at the outset of impact study, and one would need to go through the impact study to determine such alternatives). Alternatives include location alternatives, scale alternatives, siting or layout alternatives, and/or technology alternatives;</p> <p>Describe expected biophysical changes (in soil, water, air, flora, fauna) resulting from proposed activities or induced by any socio-economic changes caused by the activity</p> <p>Determine the spatial and temporal scale of influence of each biophysical change identifying effects on connectivity between ecosystems, and potential cumulative effects;</p> <p>Describe ecosystems and land-use types lying within the range of influence of biophysical changes;</p> <p>Determine, for each of these ecosystems or land-use types, if biophysical changes are likely to have adverse impacts on biodiversity in terms of composition, structure (spatial and temporal), and key processes. Give indication of the level certainty of predictions, and take into account mitigation measures. Highlight any irreversible impacts and any irreplaceable loss;</p> <p>For the affected areas, collect available information on baseline conditions and any anticipated trends in biodiversity in the absence of the proposal;</p> <p>Identify, in consultation with stakeholders, the current and potential ecosystem services provided by the affected ecosystems or land-use types and determine the values these functions represent for society. Give an indication of the main beneficiaries and those adversely affected from an ecosystem services perspective, focusing on vulnerable stakeholders;</p>	
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VIII/28	Annex I Para 27		<p>Field surveys, quantitative data, meaningful analyses, and a broad, long-term perspective enabling cause-effect chains to be tracked in time and space are important elements when assessing biodiversity impacts. Potential indirect and cumulative impacts should be better assessed;</p>	
VIII/28 (based on VI/7	Annex I Para 34 Annex I Para 27)		<p>Biodiversity specialists should be called upon for the review and information on official standards and/or standards for good practice to be compiled and disseminated.</p>	
VIII/28	Annex I Appendix 1	The need for, or the level of environmental impact assessment is	<p>Activities resulting in emissions, effluents and/or other chemical, thermal, radiation or noise emissions in areas providing other relevant ecosystem services (areas to be defined);</p> <p>Activities leading to changes in ecosystem composition, ecosystem structure, or ecosystem functions responsible for the</p>	<p>cop-08.shtml?m=COP-08&id=11042</p>

		to be determined for:	maintenance of ecosystems and ecosystem services in areas providing other relevant ecosystem services (areas to be defined); Extractive activities, activities leading to a change of land-use or a change of use of inland water ecosystems or a change of use of marine and coastal ecosystems , and creation of linear infrastructure below the Category A threshold, in areas providing key and other relevant ecosystem services (areas to be defined).	
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