



The mission of the European Platform for Biodiversity Research Strategy (EPBRs) is to ensure that research contributes to halting the loss of biodiversity by 2010.

Recommendations of the meeting of the European Platform for Biodiversity Research Strategy

held under the Greek presidency of the EU

Lesvos, Greece, 23-26 May 2003

concerning

BIOTIC RESOURCES IN A CHANGING WORLD: SCIENCE FOR BETTER GOVERNANCE

“The Earth provides enough to satisfy every man’s needs, but not every man’s greed.”

Mahatma Gandhi

To gain the knowledge necessary to halt biodiversity loss by 2010, the participants of this meeting agreed that the following research action points have high priority:

1. improve understanding of our dependence on biodiversity:
 - investigate the impacts of biodiversity change on ecosystem functions and on the supply of ecosystem goods and services,
 - determine the costs of not halting biodiversity loss, including the social and environmental consequences,
2. initiate long-term biodiversity assessment by means of targeted research and comprehensive long-term monitoring programmes, that integrate historical data and pursue comparative temporal and spatial studies,
3. improve the knowledge on status and trends of biodiversity and biotic resources in the acceding and candidate countries to obtain comparable data for the assessment of biodiversity in the enlarged EU,
4. improve understanding of human attitudes towards biotic resources and the drivers of biodiversity change,
5. understand the distribution of economic, social and environmental costs and benefits of conservation and use of biodiversity and its implication on decision-making,
6. synthesise scientific knowledge on ecological changes and improve its application to halting biodiversity loss.

To develop high quality and policy relevant research on these priority areas, particular attention should be paid to:

- promoting the development of interdisciplinary research teams to analyse conflicts over sustainable use of biotic resources and the conservation of biodiversity and where possible propose methods for managing these conflicts;
- improving the science base in adaptive management;
- developing adaptive approaches to better integrate biodiversity concerns into other policy sectors:
 - by analysing implementation;
 - by investigating how biodiversity policy transposes through different levels of governance;
 - by studying the interaction between the relevant international agreements and regional policies;
- investigating methodologies to communicate the importance of biodiversity to the general public and to decision-makers;
- combining local and global knowledge and values with scientific knowledge, develop evidence-based decision-making structures and implement them at local level;
- applying best practices in biodiversity management and governance in the enlarged EU, taking into consideration the environmental and cultural characteristics of the countries and regions.

The above research priorities stemmed in particular from the following considerations:

- biotic resources comprise that fraction of biodiversity found in marine, terrestrial and freshwater ecosystems from which human societies derive raw materials and services for food, shelter, fuel, health and recreation;
- the demands of the increasing human population and the inequitable and unsustainable consumption of the world's biotic resources give rise to increasingly urgent and complex dilemmas;
- policy is constrained by limited scientific knowledge about the functional and compositional complexities of biodiversity and the sustainable use of biotic resources;
- understanding mechanisms leading to the loss of biodiversity and the consequent erosion of biotic resources requires close integration and collaboration between researchers working on the drivers of biodiversity loss;
- collaboration with local people can greatly advance scientific understanding of biodiversity,
- rapidly developing science and technology have the potential to mitigate some - but not all – of the problems related to the erosion of biotic resources;
- good governance of biotic resources, involving clear two-way dialogue between researchers and stakeholders, results in improved conditions for both humans and ecosystems;
- biodiversity conservation is a societal choice and an essential arena for action lies in human attitudes and behaviour;
- both intrinsic and utilitarian values give reason to conserve biodiversity and to take action to halt biodiversity loss.