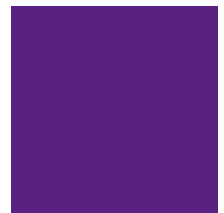




Guidelines

for drawing up and implementing
regional biodiversity strategies





In January, 2011, the IUCN French Committee (International Union for Conservation of Nature) published a study entitled: “Which regional biodiversity strategies for metropolitan France?”¹. This study assesses the current concerning the main approaches of drawing up, implementing, monitoring and assessing the regional biodiversity strategies that already exist or are emerging in metropolitan France (*in the complete study each of the strategies identified is analysed in a detailed report*). It also identifies the principal levers and obstacles encountered by local stakeholders when setting up their respective strategies, illustrated by concrete examples.

On the basis of this analysis, IUCN France strongly encourages all French regions to strengthen their activities in favour of biodiversity and to innovate by means of regional biodiversity strategies. These strategies provide the ideal practical framework for meeting the challenges of sustainable development at territorial level.

To provide support for those working at territorial level to implement these strategies, IUCN France proposes a certain number of recommendations aimed at improving the ways strategies are elaborated and implemented. This brochure summarises and completes the recently published study.

By means of the guidelines described, IUCN France is contributing to the local implementation of the French National Biodiversity Strategy 2011 – 2020, which was adopted by the French government on 19 May 2011.

These guidelines also contribute to the implementation of Decision X/22, which endorsed the Plan of Action on Sub-national Governments, Cities, and other Local Authorities for Biodiversity, which was adopted at the 10th Conference of Parties to the Convention on Biological Diversity (CBD) in October 2010, in Nagoya.

French Local and Regional Authorities

The local and regional authorities of the French Republic are as follows: Communes (36,682 as of 1st January 2010), Departments (96 in Metropolitan France and 5 Overseas), Regions (22 in Metropolitan France and 4 Overseas), together with specific-status authorities (e.g. Corsica or Ile-de-France) and overseas authorities (Saint-Pierre-et-Miquelon, Saint-Barthélemy, Saint-Martin, New Caledonia, Wallis et Futuna, French Polynesia and the French Southern and Antarctic Lands).

The Regions of France

The Regions (subnational governments) are administrative territorial subdivisions of the State.

The Regional Council is the deliberative assembly of the Region. The regional councillors elect the President of the Regional Council, who manages the budget, directs the personnel and conducts the Region's policies.

The Region's scope of competence mainly covers territorial planning, economic development, professional training, construction or maintenance of schools and passenger rail transport. With regard to biodiversity, the main competence of the Regional Council concerns the creation of regional natural parks, and the creation and management of regional natural reserves.

¹ | Available in French on the IUCN website at: <http://www.iucn.fr/-Outils-et-documents-.html>



Institutional framework and context

French National Biodiversity Strategy

In ratifying the Convention on Biological Diversity (1994), France undertook to draw up a National Biodiversity Strategy (NBS). The first French National Biodiversity Strategy was adopted in 2004. It was revised in 2010 to produce a second National Biodiversity Strategy (2011 - 2020), the French application of the international commitments undertaken at Nagoya (Tenth Conference of the Parties to the CDB) in 2010.

The National Biodiversity Strategy encourages the setting up of strategies at sub-national and local level that are consistent with the principles of the NBS.

The “Grenelle de l’Environnement”

Launched in 2007, the *Grenelle de l’Environnement* was a large-scale national consultation forum made up of 5 major colleges representing the stakeholders involved in sustainable development: the State, local authorities, environmental NGOs, and representatives of employers and employees.

The overall aim of this concertation process was to restructure national ecology policy and create favourable conditions for the emergence of a new national ambition with regard to the environment. The implementation of the commitments that came out of the *Grenelle de l’environnement* led most notably to the promulgation of two laws, referred to as *Grenelle 1* (3 August 2009) and *Grenelle 2* (12 July 2010).

The French National Biodiversity Strategy (NBS), which was adopted in 2004, specifies that its orientations “*beyond their cross-cutting nature, are meant to be developed operationally for each territorial or sectoral context, and to be translated into initiatives by public and private stakeholders*”. To achieve these goals, the NBS advocates for common strategies for biodiversity to be set up regionally². This will towards a territorial approach for biodiversity strategies is reiterated in the 2011 – 2020 NBS.

The strategy did not appear in French law until the promulgation of the Grenelle 1 Law in 2009, which stated: “*the State establishes the objective [...] of defining coherent regional and local strategies, on the mainland and in its overseas territories, respecting the competences of local authorities and in involving a full dialogue with all stakeholders involved*”³.

Until then, regional biodiversity strategies were the result of the individual commitment and will of French Regions to translate the National Strategy into practice. Their actions spoke of their strong commitment towards biodiversity conservation in their respective territories.

Due to the lack of mobilization by other potential leaders, Regional Councils have been initiating and piloting strategies, even though this goes beyond the regulatory competence of Regional Councils. This stance from French Regions falls within the framework of their competence on territorial planning and development, and also within an overall process aimed at mobilizing Regions in the promotion of environmental policies and sustainable development. Due to the lack of specification regarding coordination, methodology, shape, content and governance, regional strategies took on different forms in each territory.

2 | Natural Heritage action plan in NBS 2005 – 2008, then 2008 – 2010 (sub-action 2.2.1).

3 | Article 23 in law n°2009-967 (passed on 3 August 2009): calendar for implementing the Grenelle Environmental Project.





General principles

➤ Ensure strong political backing from key decision-makers

- Raise the awareness of decision makers on biodiversity issues and on the various goods and services provided by ecosystems.
- Make biodiversity conservation and enhancement a key objective for local stakeholders in order to mobilize the necessary resources.
- Mobilize political responsibility at different levels within the organizations involved along the whole duration of the process.
- Highlight and communicate the added value of regional biodiversity strategies, as a means for achieving the sustainable development goals of a territory.



➤ Ensure the consistency of territorial public policies

- Institutionalize regional biodiversity strategies as the regional reference framework for integrating biodiversity issues into other territorial policies.
- Ensure that regional biodiversity strategies and other territorial planning documents are coordinated and consistent, and that the same is true for all actions taken at the various territorial levels to promote biodiversity.
- Prevent antagonism or contradiction between territorial policies and the objectives under the regional biodiversity strategies.

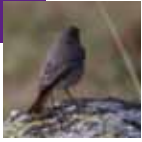
➤ Develop a common language concerning biodiversity, what it represents, and how it is related to the activities of a territory

- Work with specialists on public consultation and dialogue in the implementation of this process in order to develop a shared vision of regional biodiversity issues.
- Explain all aspects of biodiversity, including ordinary biodiversity, the services it provides, its values and uses in order to trigger the appetite to change behaviours.

➤ Integrate an “inter-territorial” dimension into the processes for drawing up and implementing strategies

- Capture the issues and stakes related to biodiversity conservation and link them with surrounding geographical areas, by taking into consideration the overall biogeographical context in which the area is situated.
- Develop cooperation activities with other territories.





Content of strategies

- **Base regional biodiversity strategies on an ambitious target of conservation and valuation of biodiversity**
- **Take into account the biodiversity targets defined at national, european, and international levels:**
 - 20 targets under the French National Biodiversity Strategy 2011-2020;
 - objectives of the “EU biodiversity strategy in the horizon of 2020”;
 - objectives of the Strategic Plan for Biodiversity 2011-2020, including the Aichi Biodiversity Targets, as adopted by the Parties to the Convention on Biological Diversity (CBD) in October 2010.
- **Articulate regional biodiversity strategies around 3 main components:**
 - 1 | a shared strategic assessment of regional biodiversity;
 - 2 | a common framework for action consisting of territorial strategic orientations for biodiversity conservation at regional level;
 - 3 | the commitment of various stakeholders willing to implement the common framework for action within the scope of their respective competences and action plans.
- **Perform a shared strategic diagnosis of regional biodiversity before defining the common framework for strategic action**
 - The essential foundation for subsequently defining strategic orientations and operational activities is the identification of the biodiversity issues of a territory, by means of a joint and agreed process.
 - Carry out the strategic regional biodiversity diagnosis using the best scientific knowledge available.
- **Structure the strategies so that they can be made operational by any volunteer partner willing to get involved, on the basis of their respective competences, as well as the main biodiversity issues of the territory**
 - Structure the strategies so as to clearly differentiate between the common orientations for action and the commitments of each of volunteer partner willing to take part (distinct documents).
 - Define a reasonable number of concrete actions for implementing the strategies, indicating target figures and resources to be mobilized in order to succeed.
 - In order to plan the operational implementation, prioritize and establish a hierarchy of actions proposed within each orientation, according to the biodiversity issues and the regional context.
- **In order to reinforce stakeholder action, integrate new actions into the strategies, capitalizing on already existing initiatives**
 - Integrate actions that help improve the knowledge and conservation of all biodiversity components (e.g., ordinary and remarkable - species, habitats, ecological corridors, ecosystem services).
 - Integrate actions that help improve how biodiversity is taken into account in all sectorial policies and sectors of activity in the territory.
 - Integrate actions concerning emerging issues related to biodiversity issues (e.g., adaptation to climate change or economic assessment of the services provided by biodiversity).
 - Integrate innovative actions, mechanisms or tools for regional biodiversity conservation (e.g., new partnerships, “bio-conditionality” of financial assistance, tax incentives to promote biodiversity).



Governance of strategies

➤ **Identify the most appropriate co-ordination strategy, favouring a system of joint co-ordination between the Region and the State, which may also include other key regional stakeholders**

- Specify from the beginning the ground rules framing this joint co-ordination, as well as and the role of each of the organizations involved so as to better coordinate their actions.

➤ **Define a collegial (i.e. where members are peers who seat on equal terms), participative and, permanent system of governance for drawing up, implementing, and monitoring regional biodiversity strategies**

- Specify the ground rules from the start of the process.
- Set up a joint governance body mandated by all stakeholders involved to help draw up the strategies, and to validate them, as much as to facilitate and monitor their implementation (this body could be based on pre-existing bodies, such as the green and blue ecological corridors - "*Trame Verte et Bleue*").
- Make sure that the process involves all territorial stakeholders who define or implement policies influencing biodiversity.
- Try to ensure that the body is composed of representatives who can be involved long-term in order to make the process more permanent.



➤ **Mobilize and involve all territorial stakeholders in the dialogue process**

- Clearly explain the objectives of the process to the territorial stakeholders involved, together with the importance of their involvement.
- Make use of local environmental associations, and enhance the participation of civil society representatives.
- Involve all the sectorial directorates representing the State in the Region, as well as all relevant regional authorities.
- Plan for periodical "delocalization" of the governance body throughout the regional territory.





Implementation of strategies



- **Clearly define and formalize the commitments of volunteer stakeholders towards the implementation of strategies**
- **Favour implementation tools that help create and formalize new partnerships and solidarity dynamics between the various territorial local stakeholders**
 - Reinforce the use of contractual arrangements as one of the main frameworks for implementing strategies.
- **Integrate the Regional Schemes for Ecological Coherence within the regional biodiversity strategies as the priority tool for implementing the “ecological corridor” component**
- **Communicate and capitalize on ongoing actions on the basis of identified good practices**
 - Develop internal communication to inform the organizations involved in implementing the strategies.
 - Keep territorial stakeholders regularly informed of the state of implementation of the strategies (progress, main achievements and results, lessons learnt and feedback).
 - Communicate to the population of the territory the actions carried out in the framework of the strategies (achievements, results, partnerships established, etc.) in order to encourage “local ownership” of their implementation.
- **Provide for and set up a system for monitoring and assessing the regional biodiversity strategies**
 - Identify the collegial governance body mandated to monitor the implementation of the strategies.
 - Define a reasonable number of relevant and measurable regional indicators, specifying data collection and monitoring methods, in order to be able to assess the level of achievement the objectives under the strategies.
 - Use this process to continuously adapt and improve the strategies (progress-oriented approach).
 - Plan the main assessment milestones of the strategies.





IUCN French Committee

International Union for Conservation of Nature

Created in 1992, the IUCN French Committee is the network of organizations and experts belonging to the International Union for Conservation of Nature in France. It is a highly specific partnership, bringing together 2 ministries, 13 public organizations, 40 non-governmental organizations and more than 250 volunteer scientists and experts, meeting in specialized commissions and working groups. It has set itself two main missions: to respond to biodiversity issues in France and to promote French expertise at the international level.

Due to its mixed composition, the IUCN French Committee provides a unique platform for dialogue and expertise on biodiversity issues, also involving local and regional authorities and private companies. Since 2007, a “Local and Regional Authorities & Biodiversity” working group has been set up to enhance the involvement of local and regional authorities in the conservation of biodiversity.

In view of the increasing responsibilities of local and sub-national governments towards biodiversity, for several years now the IUCN French Committee has endeavoured to strengthen their commitment in this field and encourage their participation in the network. Together with its members and the local and regional authorities, IUCN is developing actions at both national and international level.

This document has benefitted from the contributions of the members of the “Local and Regional Authorities & Biodiversity” working group of the IUCN French Committee (IUCN members, local and regional authorities and associated local associations).

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IUCN French Committee
26, rue Geoffroy Saint-Hilaire
75005 Paris - France
Tel: +33 (0)1 47 07 78 58
Fax: +33 (0)1 47 07 71 78

uicn@uicn.fr - www.uicn.fr