

Barriers to the application of the ecosystem approach

Concerns expressed by Governments and institutions

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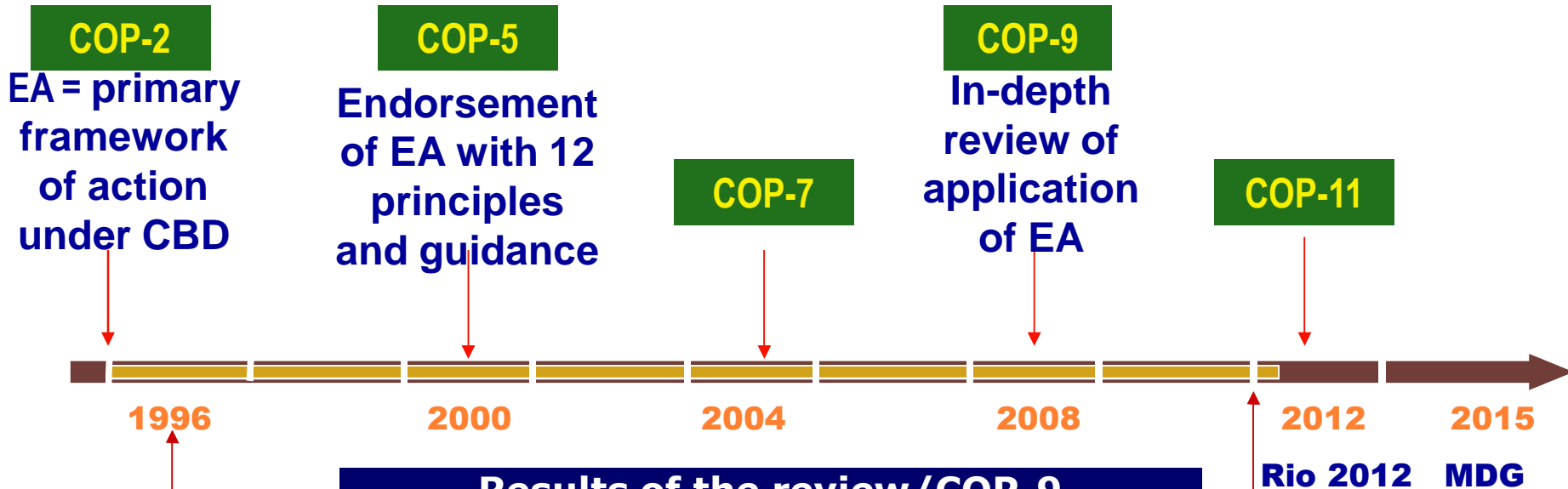


Ecosystem approach in the Strategic Plan for Biodiversity 2011-2020 and the Aichi Biodiversity Targets

- Only mention of **ecosystem based approaches** in Target 6
- Although references to ecosystem services in the Strategic Plan implying ecosystem approach context
- Coincidentally, more mention of landscape than ecosystem approach in COP-10 decisions!



Background on **ecosystem approach** in CBD



Sibthorp seminar of 1996

- Results of the review/COP-9**
- Many examples of successful application of EA
 - More at local level but need broad application and participation from relevant sectors
 - At the global level, EA not applied systematically
 - Full application of the EA is a difficult task, particularly at the larger scale (barriers).

Sibthorp seminar of 2011



Barriers to the application of the ecosystem approach

Major CBD documents on barriers

UNEP/CBD/SBSTTA/9/INF/4 , UNEP/CBD/SBSTTA/12/2 and
UNEP/CBD/SBSTTA/12/INF/xx

- Ineffective stakeholder participation in planning and management
- Limited understanding of what the approach seeks to achieve
- The lack of capacity for decentralized and integrated management
- Insufficient institutional cooperation and capacity
- The lack of dedicated organizations able to support delivery of the ecosystem approach
- The overriding influence of perverse incentives
- Conflicting political priorities, including those that arise when a more holistic approach to planning is adopted.

Major barriers to the application of the ecosystem approach

From my experience

- **The definition of ecosystem is more for scientists and not very suitable to decision-makers**
- **The EA principles raise some important political issues e.g.,**
 - **A decentralized decision-making system is not always suitable**
 - **When a holistic approach to planning is adopted, many of the priorities identified can be politically conflicting**
- **The added value of EA application is not clear, bearing in mind that EA-like approaches have been in use for many years**

The definition of ecosystem is more for scientists and not very suitable to decision-makers

CBD : 'Ecosystem' means a dynamic complex of plant, animal and micro-organism communities and their non-living environment interacting as a functional unit

- ✓ **No predefined boundaries, scale.**
- ✓ **People use ecosystem = habitat**
- ✓ **Preference: landscape, seascape, ecoregion**
- ✓ **More and more use of "ecosystem-based approach(es)"**



Socio-ecological production landscape: Satoyama

**The EA principles raise some important political issues:
A decentralized decision-making system is not always suitable**

- Needed democratic structures are absent in many biodiversity-rich countries
- Traditional governance types
- Different ministries are responsible for different parts of same ecosystem.
 - ✓ Some centralization of competencies is necessary
 - ✓ Inter-ministerial committees
- **Should some of the principles be revised now?**

The EA principles raise some important political issues:

When a holistic approach to planning is adopted, many of **the priorities identified can be politically conflicting**

Different stakeholders can have different priorities and timelines e.g.

- ✓ local communities' needs may require immediate benefits;
- ✓ balance between conservation and use may mean different things (values of ecosystem services vary; short and long term needs)
- ✓ Balance between cost and benefit sharing



The added-value of EA application is not clear, bearing in mind that EA-like approaches have been in use for many years

- EA is consistent with sustainable forest management, "ecosystem based management", "integrated river-basin management", "integrated marine and coastal area management", and "responsible fisheries approaches"
- The EA is a general framework that encompasses or complements many similar approaches
- These approaches support EA implementation in various other sectors or biomes
- **Any substantial socioeconomic gains?**

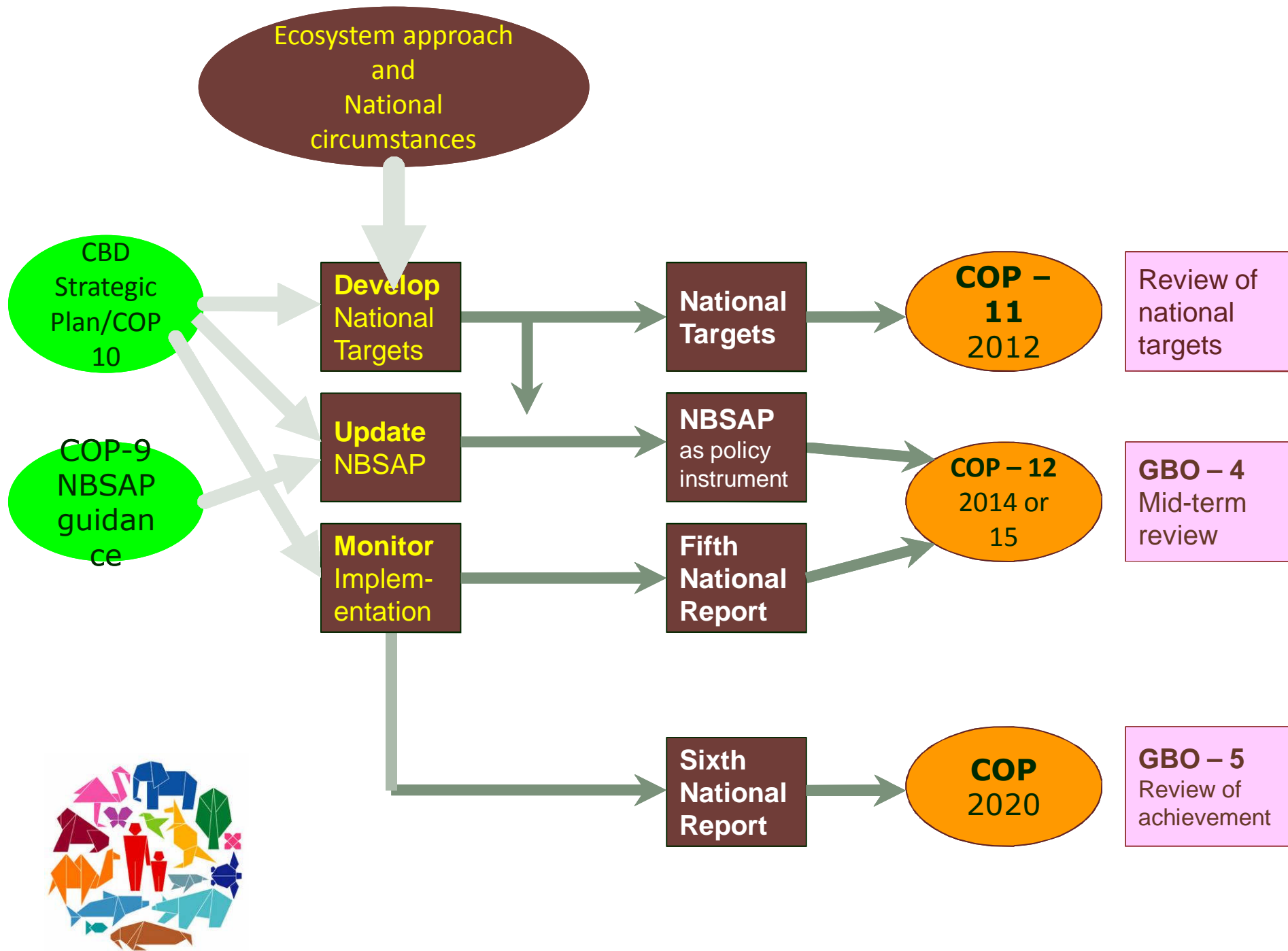


Way forward to address barriers

COP Decision IX/7 Ecosystem approach:

- Develop guidelines for the application of the ecosystem approach for specific biogeographical regions and circumstances
- Promote the use of EA in all sectors, inter-sectoral cooperation, and establishment of pilot projects
- UNESCO and Ramsar Convention to further activities in relation to the EA
- Facilitate, the full and effective participation of indigenous and local communities (financial and technical support)
- Capacity-building initiatives to applying the ecosystem approach (regional workshops, tools from Source Book)
- Global Environment Facility and other funding institutions and development agencies to provide financial support for the implementation of the ecosystem approach
- Use EA as tool for formulation and implementation of strategies, plans and policies





Way forward to address barriers

- Develop (e-)learning modules
- Integrate in school and university curricula
- Train trainers in relevant sectors and communities, including for NBSAPs, pilot projects, implementing the Strategic Plan, and linking UNFCCC and CBD implementation on-the-ground



