



**Convention on the
Conservation of Migratory
Species of Wild Animals**

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MILLENNIUM ECOSYSTEM ASSESSMENT

INFORMATION DOCUMENT FOR THE CONVENTION ON MIGRATORY SPECIES

September 2002

1. This note has been prepared by the Secretariat of the Millennium Ecosystem Assessment (MA) to provide the Scientific Council and the Seventh meeting of the Conference of Parties to the Convention on the Conservation of Migratory Species of Wild Animals (CMS) with background information on the MA and to report on progress to date.

Executive Summary

2. The Millennium Ecosystem Assessment, launched in June 2001, is an integrated assessment of the capacity of ecosystems to support human well-being and life on Earth. It was designed to address the needs of a broad array of users, including the Ramsar Convention on Wetlands, the Convention on Biological Diversity, the Convention to Combat Desertification, the United Nations Environment Programme, the Global Environment Facility, various other international organizations and stakeholders in the private sector, civil society, and indigenous organizations.

3. The technical design phase of the Millennium Assessment was initiated in April 2001, and concluded in January 2002 with its approval by the MA Board. Two technical design workshops (in the Netherlands and South Africa) and numerous consultations with the users of the Assessment mentioned above have been undertaken as part of the design phase. An Assessment Panel, composed of world-renowned experts in natural and social sciences, leads the scientific work of hundreds of scientists organized in four working groups: a) Conditions and Trends, b) Scenarios, c) Responses and d) Sub-global assessments, each of which will produce an assessment report (see paragraph 10). The substantive outlines that guide the work of the MA can be found in Annex IV (available from the document centre). The Assessment phase has now begun and the first product (the conceptual framework that underlies the assessment) will be released early in 2003. The final documents and summaries for policymakers will be finalized by late 2004.

4. The Assessment is governed by a Board that includes representation of diverse stakeholders, including five UN agencies (UNEP, UNDP, UNESCO, FAO and WHO), the World Bank, the Global Environment Facility, and the United Nations Foundation, the three international conventions mentioned above, national governmental departments, the scientific community, the private sector, indigenous organizations, and non-governmental organizations. A Secretariat distributed in governmental and non-governmental institutions around the world (with the Director's office located at ICLARM in Penang, Malaysia) supports the whole initiative.

5. The MA has developed a series of mechanisms to facilitate the interaction of interested stakeholders throughout the world with the assessment process; the Secretariat of the MA encourages their active use.

6. Elements of the MA will likely prove useful to Parties of the CMS and the CMS Agreements, in implementing the effective conservation of migratory species and their habitats. For further details see page five. It is with this in mind that the MA is presented to the Scientific Council and CMS CoP7 in Bonn, September 2002.

I. MA OVERVIEW AND STATUS REPORT

7. The Millennium Ecosystem Assessment, launched in June 2001, is an integrated assessment of the capacity of ecosystems to support human well-being and life on Earth. It was designed to address the needs of a broad array of users, including the Ramsar Convention on Wetlands, the Convention on Biological Diversity, the Convention to Combat Desertification, the United Nations Environment Program, the Global Environment Facility, various other international organizations and the private sector, civil society, and indigenous peoples.

8. The goal of the MA is to create a mechanism to increase the amount, quality, and credibility of policy-relevant scientific research findings concerning ecosystems and human well-being used by decision-makers, particularly those involved in the ecosystem-related conventions. If the MA process is successful it is anticipated that the process would be repeated at regular intervals (of possibly 5 or 10 years).

9. The Assessment is governed by a Board that includes representation of diverse stakeholders, and an Assessment Panel, composed of world-renowned experts in natural and social sciences, leads the scientific work of hundreds of scientists organized in four working groups: a) Conditions and Trends, b) Scenarios, c) Responses and d) Sub-global assessments.

10. The Millennium Ecosystem Assessment is being undertaken at multiple scales. It consists of a global assessment as well as several linked regional and national assessments. The Assessment is being carried out through four expert working groups. Each working group is intended to produce a report by late 2004 focused on the following topics:

a) The Sub-Global Working Group will present a generic methodology for conducting multi-scale assessments, and summarise the findings from each of the sub-global assessments associated with the MA. The sub-global components of the MA will directly meet the needs of decision-makers at those scales. In addition, the sub-global components of the MA will strengthen the global findings with on-the-ground reality and inform the local findings with global perspectives, data, and models. Approved assessments that have become components of the MA include: Southern Africa Multiscale Assessment; Norway National Assessment; Integrated Ecosystem Assessment for Western China; Local Assessments in the Mala Village Cluster in India; Local Assessments in Sweden; Alternatives to Slash and Burn sites and Small Islands of Papua New Guinea. In addition, several "candidate" assessments have been proposed: a multiscale assessment in Southeast Asia, tropical coastal region of Australasia, the Altai-Sayan ecoregion in Central Europe/Russia, a multiscale assessment in Central America, the Colombian Andes coffee-growing region, the Sinai peninsula/Egypt, Saudi Arabia, the Vilcanota sub-region of Peru, Vancouver Island in Canada, the Atacama Desert in Chile, and Indigenous Assessments. Discussions are underway regarding additional proposals. Any proposed sub-global assessments meeting basic criteria developed by the MA (available on the MA website) can become a full component of the MA process. Additional sub-global assessments will be initiated during the course of the MA, and although some may not be initiated in time to contribute to the official findings, their primary purpose is to meet the needs of decision-makers at the scale at which they are conducted. Currently, the MA is able to provide only seed funding for the sub-global assessments, with the bulk of funds raised individually by each sub-global assessment.

b) The Condition Working Group will describe each major ecosystem service. The condition and geographical distribution and trends of the supply and demand for each service will be considered and the capacity of ecosystems to supply these services, and the impacts of the changes in

ecosystems on their provision will be described. A description of the current extent, condition and trends of ecosystems, presented in commonly referenced ecosystem and biome units (e.g., forests, freshwater, coastal, mountain, etc.), and options for trade-offs between the provision of the various services will be laid out. Chapters will also address issues such as species use of multiple ecosystem types (such as migratory species); areas with multiple examples of rapid change; land conversions, and Protected Areas. The final section of the product will aim to assess the impacts of ecosystem change on human well being, covering indicators of health, environmental security, cultural security, economic security and equity;

c) The Scenarios Working Group will assess the findings of previous global scenario analyses concerning goods and services and develop a set of scenarios providing quantitative estimates of the consequences of various plausible changes in primary driving forces on proximate forces, ecosystem goods and services (including biodiversity), and the human well-being. It will illustrate the connection of global changes in ecosystem services at every large scale (global to local) and the connection of ecosystem services to human well-being;

d) The Responses Working Group will begin with an introduction to the conceptual framework and the typology of response options within categories of disciplinary tradition, social control, drivers and scale. Then there will be an assessment of past and current response options, which will provide the basis for practical recommendations, tools and guidelines for the various users through an evaluation of existing literature and the MA sub-global assessments. Finally, there will be a synthesis of the “ingredients for successful responses”, based on an evaluation of available policies and scenarios.

11. A more detailed outline of the Working Group Assessment Reports and the Conceptual Framework for the MA can be seen in Annex IV (available from the document centre). In addition to the full assessment reports from the Condition, Scenarios, Responses and sub-global working groups, the MA will release a Conceptual Framework describing the MA approach to its subject matter (ecosystems and human well-being), and summaries for policy makers will be produced specifically tailored for the private sector, the Convention on Biological Diversity, the Convention to Combat Desertification and the Ramsar Convention on Wetlands.

12. The MA will not report information for individual nations. The information and findings that the MA will produce will be summarized by region or ecosystem type – not by nation – for the global synthesis. Disaggregated data will be available for use by others in national assessment processes.

13. The MA will use a wide range of data and information, relying heavily on peer reviewed findings in the published literature and global datasets. The process will also incorporate indigenous and traditional knowledge, national data available from a wide range of ministries, private sector information and so forth. In particular, the MA will seek to incorporate information from National Strategies and Actions and will seek to develop products and build capacity that can be directly helpful in updating National Strategies and Action Plans.

14. The MA interacts with other environmental and sectoral assessment processes including IPCC, the Global International Waters Assessment (GIWA), the Global Environment Outlook (GEO), the Forest Resources Assessment (FRA), the Land Degradation Assessment (LADA), etc. to ensure that it adds value to activities already underway.

15. Major sponsors of the MA include GEF, UN Foundation, David and Lucile Packard Foundation, and the World Bank with additional financial and in kind support provided by the Governments of Norway, Japan, Germany, Sweden, China, India, and the Netherlands, CGIAR, UNEP, FAO, UNDP, UNESCO, WHO Rockefeller Foundation, U.S. National Aeronautics and Space Administration and the US Geological Survey and others. (See Annex III for a full list – available from the document centre)

16. The MA Board is multisectoral and representative of different communities of ecosystem users, including representatives of three Conventions (CCD, CBD and Ramsar) and several key international institutions such as UNEP, UNDP, FAO, UNESCO, WHO, The World Bank, CGIAR, ICSU, IUCN, GEF,

UN Foundation, and the UNFCCC. Representatives of the scientific community, the private sector, indigenous organizations and non-governmental organizations are also included in the Board. The United Nations Environment Programme (UNEP, Nairobi), World Resources Institute (WRI, United States) and World Fish Center (ICLARM, Malaysia) administer funds for the assessment. UNEP coordinates the distributed Secretariat: the MA Director is based at ICLARM; technical support units for the working groups are based at the Scientific Committee on Problems of the Environment (France), UNEP-WCMC (United Kingdom), Institute for Economic Growth (India), and the World Fish Center. In addition, support is being provided at this level by staff at RIVM in The Netherlands, University of Wisconsin in the US and CIMMYT in Mexico and FAO in Rome. Engagement and outreach activities are supported through World Resources Institute and Meridian Institute (US). Annex II contains detailed information on the composition of these structures, and is available from the document centre.

17. Because the MA is a 'needs driven' assessment process a number of steps were taken to involve intended users in the MA design through both formal and informal dialogues:

- a. Information needs from the MA were discussed with the scientific and technical bodies of the Conventions on Biological Diversity, Desertification and Ramsar.
- b. The MA sub-global assessment activities being developed in Southern Africa, China, India, Norway, Sweden, Peru, Brasil, Southeast Asia and other parts of the world include extensive involvement of the users in their planning phase;
- c. There is an ongoing dialogue with the private sector including a session that was held in early October 2001 jointly with the World Business Council on Sustainable Development (WBCSD) involving individuals from the private sector to explore how the MA could contribute to sustainable development planning within business;
- d. A series of meetings and consultations are being planned to explore user needs within civil society and indigenous peoples' organizations.
- e. The MA has produced a "user needs outline" based on these and other consultations. This document is being updated on an ongoing basis and the working groups are charged with responding to the defined user needs to the greatest extent possible in their work.

18. In addition, the MA has developed a series of mechanisms to facilitate the participation of stakeholders in the assessment process. More information on these can be found in the MA's website (www.millenniumassessment.org):

- i. User Forums. The MA is establishing opportunities for dialogue at the regional, national and local levels with the multiple stakeholders identified as beneficiaries of the assessment.
- ii. Affiliated Scientific Organizations and Academies of Sciences. The MA has developed a mechanism to interact more broadly with the scientific community, in particular with organizations responsible for fostering scientific, technical or technological research, monitoring, or assessment or linking scientific research or assessment to the needs of decision-makers.
- iii. Sub-global Assessments. The MA is a 'multiscale' initiative involving assessments at the global, regional, basin, national and local scales. Applications to become MA-affiliated assessments will be reviewed throughout 2002 and exceptionally during 2003.
- iv. Access to information. The MA is an open, transparent process. As it develops, the MA will provide broad access to the information it generates and mobilizes. A Data and Information Support System to organize and facilitate access to this information is under construction.
- v. Newsletter. To subscribe to our quarterly electronic newsletter, please visit the MA website and follow the newsletter links on the homepage <http://www.millenniumassessment.org/> (the MA will not divulge or share contact information with any third party).

II. THE MA AND CMS

19. Whilst the MA has been designed to contribute at the global level to the Conventions on Wetlands (Ramsar), Desertification (CCD) and Biodiversity (CBD), there is much in this design that may be of interest to Parties to the Convention on Migratory Species, both in implementing effective conservation of Appendix I species, and the various CMS Agreements.

20. In particular, the assessment of ecosystem conditions will contribute to a better understanding of the way in which ecosystems are managed to provide a range of services, including those services supporting populations of migratory species. The methodologies developed for such an assessment will contribute to our understanding of the way in which ecosystems can be monitored for effective integrated management, including against targets such as the conservation of migratory species.

21. There is considerable geographical overlap between many of the MA sub-global assessments and the CMS Agreements. For example in Europe, the Norwegian national assessment and the Swedish local assessment both overlap with ASCOBANS and AEWAs regions. The sub-global assessment in Southern Africa, and the proposed assessment in the Sinai Peninsular also both cover areas of crucial importance for AEWAs. Assessments in South East Asia, and a proposed assessment for the Caribbean both include coastal and marine areas of great importance for migratory populations of marine turtles.

22. The Ramsar Convention is a key user audience of the MA, and much of the MA workplan has been designed around requirements for improved information on wetland ecosystems. Such elements of the MA are likely to be of direct relevance to Parties of AEWAs. For example, the MA will provide greater insight into the valuation of services provided by wetland systems, and aims to further our understanding of the importance of wetlands, particularly in dryland areas. The MA findings will contribute to a better understanding of the important trade-offs and win-win situations inherent in the management of wetlands, including as habitat for migratory waterbirds. The MA will also contribute to a better understanding of effective indicators of the condition of wetland ecosystems.

23. Both at the global scale, and in various sub-global assessments, the MA will include marine and coastal systems. The MA will establish information on the condition, and trends in condition, of these systems, and will develop methodologies for integrated marine and coastal assessment. Such information and tools will be of value to Parties implementing the conservation of marine turtles and cetaceans.

24. The MA has been working closely with Indigenous peoples groups, whom have contributed to MA design, and are contributing to the working group assessment reports. The MA will cover issues of sustainable use of resources at all scales, including that by indigenous peoples.

25. The MA will also address cultural services derived from ecosystems. Many such services are associated with species covered within CMS Appendices, such as the cultural appeal of cetaceans or that of the Siberian Crane to many indigenous peoples.

26. The Responses working group of the MA will evaluate effective responses to enhance ecosystem management. This is likely to be particularly useful for Parties to the CMS looking to implement effective management for the conservation of Appendix I species, and the various Agreements concerned with Appendix II species.

27. Although the MA design phase was primarily conducted during 2001, and the assessment is currently underway, the process is highly responsive to user needs. As such, key additional requirements that the CMS identifies as being pertinent to the work programme of the MA could be incorporated into the work of the MA working groups to add value to the currently anticipated products. Such guidance is sought from the Scientific Council and CoP 7.