An Activist Approach to **Biodiversity Planning**

Tejaswini Apte

A handbook of participatory tools used to prepare India's National Biodiversity Strategy and Action Plan

iied

International Institute of Environment and Development
London 2005

Published by the International Institute for Environment and Development

International Institute for Environment and Development (IIED)
3 Endsleigh Street
London
WC1H 0DD
United Kingdom
Tel: +44 (0) 20 73882117
Fax: + 44 (0) 20 73882826
Email: info@iied.org
Website: www.iied.org

ISBN 1 84369 548 0

Design: Tony Credland
Cover Photo: Ashish Kothari
All photographs courtesy of Ashish Kothari
Printed by: Calverts
Printed on: Cyclus offset - recycled paper

Please send feedback and comments to the author at: apte_rahm@hotmail.com

The publication of this book has been made possible through the generous support of the Netherlands Ministry of Foreign Affairs (DGIS) and the German Federal Ministry for Economic Cooperation (BMZ).

Acknowledgements

I would like to thank the International Institute of Environment and Development (IIED) for funding this project, and Dr. Sonja Vermeulen of IIED for her encouragement and guidance throughout the research and writing of this handbook.

This study was made possible due to the co-operation of all the interviewees who gave their time to answer my questions. Special mention must be made of Bansuri Taneja whose brainchild this project was, and of Ashish Kothari and Kanchi Kohli who answered endless queries with equanimity. Neema Pathak, Seema Bhatt and Bjoern Rahm provided valuable comments on a draft version of the handbook. Manju Menon helped with suggestions for the Sikkim field visit. Shri PD Rai of ECOSS went out of his way to organise a meeting with Shri DT Lepcha, Minister of Forests, Mines and Geology, Sikkim. Finally, this study would not have been possible without the able assistance of T. Uden Bhutia, Suneetha Eluri, Gracy Joseph, Nitin Kapse, K. Sanyasir Raju, DVSM Rao and Sunita Rao in organising the field visit logistics, interview schedules and translations.

Contents

Index of Tools

How to use this handbook

The aim of this handbook is to present in a user-friendly manner, the tools used to elicit participation in the planning process which led to the creation of the National Biodiversity Strategy and Action Plan (NBSAP) in India. The tools are described in a way that should make it possible for readers to apply/adapt the tools to their own settings, and to understand the strengths and weaknesses of the tools in terms of bringing out the voices of the targeted social sectors.

Each section can be read as a stand-alone piece, depending on the needs and interests of the reader. It is suggested that all readers should read the Introduction to understand the context of the NBSAP process.

The tools are presented in five sections. The first four sections are organised according to the four states examined, since without presenting the context in which the tools were used, the lessons learned from the experiences lose much of their meaning. Each state report contains a full description of key tools used in the state. Tools produced and used on a national level, and which were therefore common to all states, are discussed in the fifth section on the National Media Campaign. The aim is not simply to present separate 'case-studies'. Common lessons and parallels can be drawn across all four states and the media campaign, and these are discussed in the concluding section.

Of four states examined, only the 'flagship' tools of each state will be discussed, i.e. tools that made the process significantly different from other states' processes. Though only key tools are described in detail, the full cluster of tools used within each state process is outlined to give an indication of the context in which the tools worked, and the extent to which they complemented other tools used in the process.

Each tool is described in the following format (with some variation where relevant):

- Name of tool
- Objective
- Output
- Description of the development and application of the tool
- Strengths
- Weaknesses

In addition, each section includes most or all of the following elements:

- An analysis of the overall strengths and weaknesses of the processes in the state.
- Ongoing implementation of the states' plans formulated during the process.
- 'Boxes' within the text describing follow-up activities and off-shoots of the NBSAP process in the state. These boxes are an indication of how the NBSAP often generated independent local momentum that exceeded the original intentions or expectations of the process.

The Quick Reference guide gives brief summaries of each section, to help readers navigate the handbook efficiently. The Index of Tools has a similar purpose.

Quick reference:

Introduction

The institutional structure and methodology of the NBSAP process is explained, along with a brief outline of the context of participatory natural resource planning in India.

It is suggested that all readers should look at the Introduction to understand the context of the NBSAP process. Following which each of the subsequent sections may be read as a stand-alone piece.

Karnataka

Karnataka state and Uttar Kannada sub-state site:

The Karnataka state process, coordinated by the Centre for Ecological Sciences, is an excellent example of a process that utilised a complementary cluster of tools to reach across various social sectors, and to get inputs at a number of different levels in the process, from grassroots data collection, to reviewing the final Karnataka Biodiversity Strategy and Action Plan.

The process included diverse sectors such as school children, teachers, NGOs and the general public through innovative use of tools like radio programmes and School Biodiversity Registers. The Uttar Kannada sub-state process used a smaller range of tools and had a relatively limited reach.

The focus of this section will therefore be mainly on the Karnataka state process, with reference to the Uttar Kannada process with regard to the use of biodiversity festivals. The Uttar Kannada process, coordinated by AV Baliga College, was independent of the Karnataka state process.

Key tools described:
- School Biodiversity Registers
- All India Radio Programmes
- Biodiversity Festivals

Maharashtra

Maharashtra state

Maharashtra has a context of vigorous social activism, a strong presence of NGOs and people's movements, and ample research facilities. The coordinating agency for the state plan, YASHADA (Yashwant Rao Chavan Academy of Development Administration), conducts research and training programmes for a large number of officials and non-governmental individuals every year, and collaborates closely with the state government. It was hoped that during the NBSAP process, YASHADA would provide a valuable interface between government officials and the non-governmental sector since it has the capacity to reach out to both.

However the process did not match the expected potential. This section examines some of the possible reasons for this, with interesting lessons emerging with regard to monitoring and accountability, the selection of the coordinating agency, and follow-up communication. The Maharashtra state process was independent of the Nagpur sub-state site process.

Nagpur sub-state site

Nagpur is an interesting example because it was the only urban NBSAP site in the country. This section discusses the challenges of eliciting participation in an urban context. The experience in Nagpur also brings up issues of coordinating

agency capacity, information management, extractive methodologies, and the need to maximise existing local resources. The Nagpur sub-state site process was independent of the Maharashtra state process.

Key tools described:
• Written government questionnaire

Silkkim

Sikkim state and Rathong Chu Valley sub-state site

Sikkim had a highly participatory grassroots process, with village level public hearings at 39 locations around the state resulting in 39 community action plans.

The coordinating agency was the Forest Department (FD), but – unconventionally - a large bulk of the work was handed over to a small grassroots NGO, the Khangchendzonga Conservation Committee (KCC) based in the Rathong Chu Valley. The FD's collaboration with KCC was a vital element in shaping the process at grassroots level.

Other highlights of the Sikkim process were two vibrant biodiversity festivals that included innovations such as 3-D working models and dramatisations of local environmental problems. This section also includes lessons regarding information dissemination, and the need to maximise local resources and networks.

There were considerable overlaps between the Sikkim state process and the Rathong Chu Valley sub-state process since the FD was the sole coordinating agency in Sikkim. The findings from the state and sub-state site are therefore presented in a consolidated form.

Key tools described:
• Village level public hearings
• Biodiversity festival
• Written government questionnaire
• State level workshops

Andhra Pradesh

Andhra Pradesh state

The coordinating agency was the Environmental Protection Training and Research Institute (EPTRI), an institution set up by the state government.

Despite an initial enthusiasm from environmental NGOs and individuals, the process, which comprised of a few meetings, fizzled out leaving a sense of frustration among many of the initial participants. The process did not percolate down to a grassroots level, and did not secure the active participation of a wide range of actors. Key lessons emerge regarding: bureaucratic approaches; perceptions about the coordinating agency among stakeholders; build-up and follow-up information.

The Andhra Pradesh state process was independent of the Deccan sub-state site and the North Coastal Andhra sub-state site processes.

Deccan sub-state site

The Deccan plan was confined specifically to the Zaheerabad region in Medak district, and focused only on agricultural biodiversity. This was one of the most intensive participatory processes among the NBSAP sites, in terms of grassroots participation. It was co-ordinated by the NGO, Deccan Development Society (DDS), a grassroots organisation working mainly with Dalit women.

The highlight of the Deccan process was its mobile biodiversity festival, which travelled as a bullock cart procession through dozens of villages over 32 days. The Deccan sub-state plan is essentially based on intensive discussions that took place during the festival. It is estimated that the festival reached out to about 20,000 farmers.

Key tools described:
• Mobile biodiversity festival

North Coastal Andhra sub-state site

The North Coastal Andhra sub-state site focussed on the two districts of Srikakulam and

Vizianagram. This process is interesting firstly in terms of the impact it had on small NGOs in terms of capacity building. Tools and resources produced at a national level assumed great importance in a context of scarce information and facilitation, and were used more extensively than at other sites studied. Secondly, this site illustrates the results achieved by intensive personal follow-up and networking by the coordinating agency. Thirdly, the NBSAP produced some interesting 'off-shoot' activity, from small acts of personal inspiration (such as tree planting or recycling waste) to developments with wider implications such as opportunities for networking between far-flung stakeholders.

The North Coastal Andhra process was focussed on grassroots concerns, and the process reflected this, with its series of village meetings and interactions with tribal networks. The coordinating agency was Grameena Punarnirmana Kendra (GPK), a small grassroots NGO based in Kurupam village.

Key tools described:
- Village level consultations
- Tribal workshop and review workshop
- Micro-planning for two villages
- Sectoral meeting for healers

National media campaign

A national media campaign was developed to communicate the message of NBSAP nationally. The state and sub-state sites were encouraged to draw on the media aims, tools and strategies developed at a national level, but were free to develop independent media strategies.

The key way in which the National Media Campaign differed from media use at state and sub-state levels was that the former aimed to create a presence and momentum at a national level, while the latter's scope was limited to the area for which the local BSAP was being prepared.

This section deals only with the national media campaign, and the tools and strategies of communication developed for the national level.

Discussion of the national media campaign tools is divided into: Media campaign products (e.g. brochures, posters) Media outreach activities (e.g. print, website) and Media for communication with coordinating agencies (e.g. newsletters, guidelines)

Key tools described:
- Logo
- Call for Participation brochure
- Posters
- Wall calendar
- Website
- Television spots
- Radio spots
- Print articles
- Collaborative workshops
- Compendium of Guidelines and Concept Papers
- National and Regional workshops
- Newsletter

Conclusion and summary

Some lessons learned: Key lessons drawn out of the NBSAP experience are summarised in this section. Many of these lessons come up in preceding sections, and are presented here in a consolidated form. This section would therefore be useful for all readers, whether they have looked at all or only some of the previous sections.

Sections:
- Ownership
- Complementary cluster of tools
- Coordinating agency selection
- Urban challenges
- The challenge of information management
- Information dissemination
- Maximising locally available resources
- The media challenge
- Work ethics: who is using the tools?

- Capacity building
- Understanding NBSAP and empowerment
- Dissenting opinions
- Under-represented sectors
- Summary of strong and weak points of key tools
  - **a.** School biodiversity registers
  - **b.** Biodiversity festivals
  - **c.** Village level meetings
  - **d.** All India Radio series
  - **e.** Tools and strategies for involving government officials

Introduction

The National Biodiversity Strategy and Action Plan (NBSAP) of India was a project of the Ministry of Environment and Forests (MoEF) of the Government of India. It was funded by the Global Environment Facility, through the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP). All countries that are signatory to the Convention on Biological Diversity (CBD) are required to prepare National Biodiversity Strategy and Action Plans. The CBD was one of the key agreements adopted by world leaders at the 1992 Earth Summit in Rio de Janeiro. The main goals of the CBD are the conservation and sustainable use of biodiversity, and the equitable sharing of benefits arising from the use of genetic resources. It was the first global agreement on biodiversity conservation and sustainable use (www.biodiv.org). India signed the CBD in June 1992, and the Convention came into force in December 1993. 168 countries have signed the CBD (as of April 2004), though not all have ratified it. The CBD stresses that stakeholder participation in developing biodiversity policy is essential for the effective implementation of the policy. It also stresses that the process of policy development is as important as the final product (Anuradha et al 2001).

The NBSAP is meant to serve as the primary vehicle for implementing the CBD at a national level.

The initial intent of the MoEF was to entrust the task of writing the NBSAP for the entire country to a team of consultants with a budget of approximately Rs.4 crores (US$ 916,588). However, in an extraordinary move, the MoEF short-listed some non-governmental institutions and decided on entrusting the task of preparing the NBSAP to an NGO, Kalpavriksh Environmental Action Group. Kalpavriksh had offered to prepare the NBSAP for the same budget of Rs.4 crores, with the task spread across the country, and a far greater involvement and ownership by people across different social sectors. This move by the MoEF was made despite strong resistance from within, by people who wanted the process retained within the ministry. A great deal of credit therefore goes to the officials in charge, who had the larger initial vision to push the proposal through. This was the first step towards a decentralised planning process. Following this a unique process was developed which was unlike anything that had happened before in national environmental planning, in terms of scale, ambition, decentralisation and people's participation. The NBSAP process in India was launched in 2000 and the national plan is due to be finalised in 2004 –2005 (as of April 2004 a draft was already available).

The NBSAP was undertaken in a context where government environmental plans and policies are prepared predominantly in a centralised and consultant-centric manner. Contrary to this context, the vision of the NBSAP team was to create a decentralised planning process that would result in a plan that would carry within it the priorities and aspirations of the common people of India. The NBSAP approach was based on the premise that biodiversity has ecological, cultural, spiritual as well as economic value, and impinges on every citizen; and that planning for its conservation should therefore be owned and shaped by as many individuals as possible in an equitable process that allowed the most marginalized voices to be heard. A key element of the approach was also the premise that the wider the ownership of the process, the greater the chances of the plan being

accepted and implemented at a national, state and local level.

In a context of economic and political inequity, it is no great surprise that the people who are most dependent on the natural environment for their survival are usually marginalized from planning and decision-making regarding the natural environment. The NBSAP was unique in going a step further and recognising that a wide range of people (not necessarily only the poorest of the poor) is marginalized from biodiversity conservation planning – in a nutshell, almost everyone not directly connected to planning and policy-making, is marginalized from biodiversity conservation planning. The NBSAP thus tried to include as many interest groups and sectors as possible in the planning process, such as grassroots communities, women, NGOs, activists, field-level Forest Department officials, business representatives, the armed forces, disabled individuals, and students. In particular, emphasis was given to the participation of those whose livelihoods depend most on biodiversity, and who therefore have the greatest stake in its conservation.

The ultimate aims of the NBSAP were:
- Biodiversity conservation and ecological security
- Livelihoods security

An ambitious programme of participatory planning was launched in 2000, decentralised to state and sub-state levels, and eventually involving "tens of thousands of people" (Kothari et al 2002). It was the first time that such an exercise had been attempted in India. The tools and processes used to gain participation and manage the massive co-ordination effort, were often developed and tested during the on-going process. Many of the activities were experiments, and often yielded results that were surprising, inspiring and also disappointing: "One major problem that had faced the co-ordinating teams at the start of NBSAP was the lack of any previous nation-wide exercise of this scale and magnitude, in India or elsewhere, from which lessons could be learnt. A number of the design elements were therefore new and without precedence, and it was inevitable that some of them would come unstuck." (Kothari et al 2002)

Objectives of this Handbook

The main objective of this handbook is to describe and analyse some of the tools and 'design elements' that went into eliciting participation in the NBSAP process. The aim is to create a handbook of tools and experiences that can be used and adapted for future biodiversity planning exercises of a similar nature.

The focus of this handbook is on tools of direct communication, used for the purpose of communicating with, and eliciting participation from, marginalized groups as part of the NBSAP planning process. (For the working definition of 'marginalized' see the section on Definitions p22).

Broadly speaking, the communication tools used in the NBSAP can be classified into five types:

1. Tools to raise awareness about NBSAP and biodiversity conservation
2. Tools to evoke active responses and inputs into the plan
3. Tools for reviewing or sharing collected information
4. Tools for administrative coordination and communication (between the formal components of the NBSAP institutional structure)
5. Tools for technical planning and communication (between the formal components of the NBSAP institutional structure)

This handbook will be dealing with only the first three types of communication tools in the above list.

Some of the tools are celebratory, such as those within the biodiversity festivals that celebrated the local cultural and emotional aspects of biodiversity; some are national-level innovations to reach out to a diverse population, such as the Call for Participation brochure that was printed in 19 languages; others are tools targeted at specific groups like students, in an effort to widen the planning process beyond the exclusive realm of the experts.

Most importantly, there was a consistent emphasis that the *process* of putting the plan together was as important as the final *product*. In other words (apart from what might come out of the final plan), the process itself was to yield results in terms of increased awareness of biodiversity, empowerment through participation, local initiatives to begin implementation of local plans, and so on. In this sense, the NBSAP process was turned into a form of activism, as much as it was the putting together of a formal national plan.

Institutional Structure of NBSAP Process

Ministry of Environment and Forests: The NBSAP Project Directorate was based at the MoEF. The Joint Secretary of the MoEF acted as the National Project Director.

National Steering Committee: A National Steering Committee was created with representatives from eight ministries, the Planning Commission and the UNDP, in addition to four NGO representatives. This Committee provided overall guidance to the process.

Technical and Policy Core Group: The bulk of the work in terms of conceptualisation, implementation and day-to-day co-ordination was the responsibility of the Technical and Policy Core Group (TPCG) – this was a 15-member team of experts from various sectors including NGO representatives, researchers, activists and scientists. Heading the TPCG as technical coordinator was Ashish Kothari of the national NGO, Kalpavriksh.

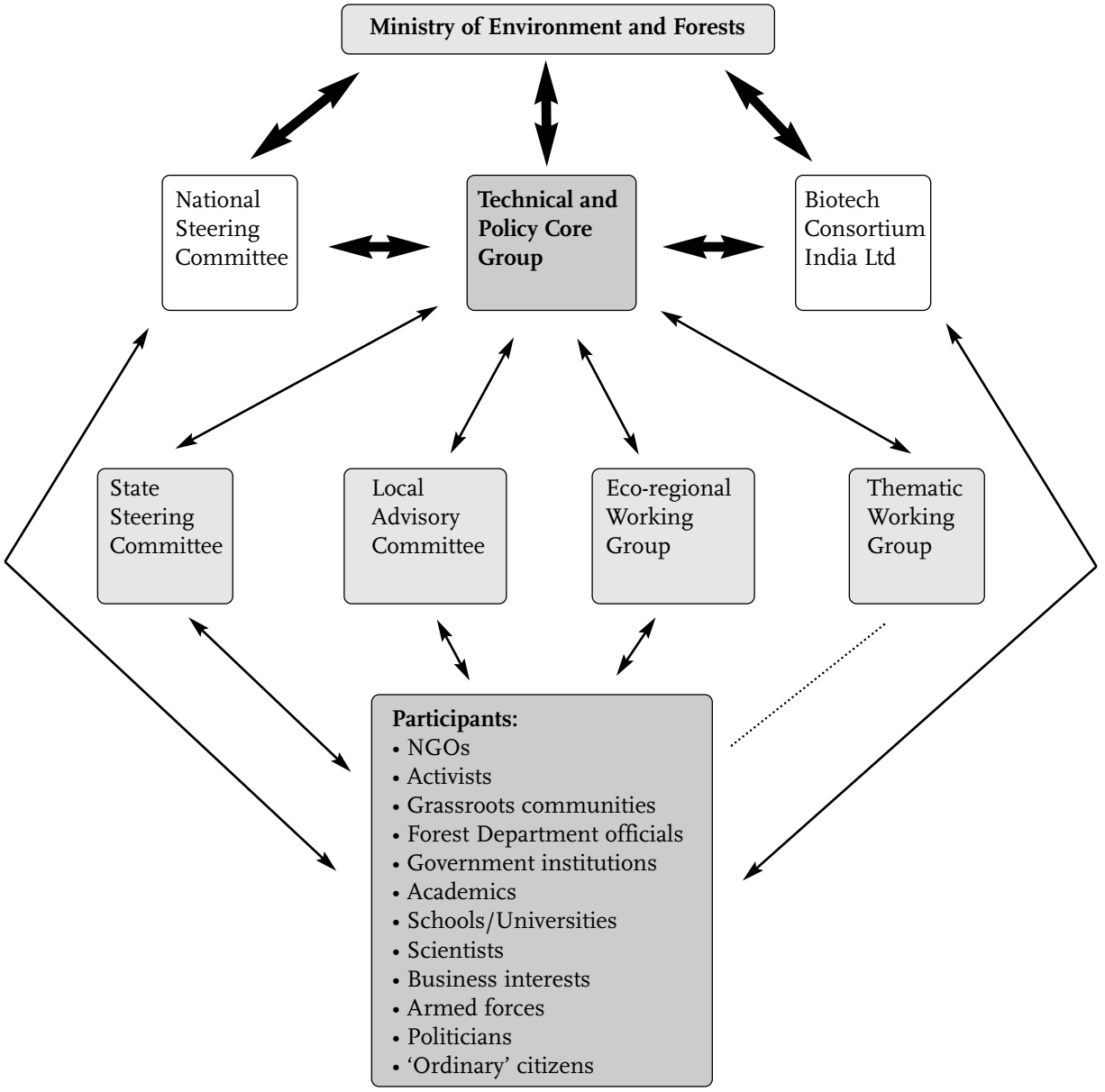
Administrative agency: Administration, logistics and financial coordination was assigned to Biotech Consortium India Ltd (BCIL), a "public limited company with the objective of providing the linkages amongst research institutions, industry, government and funding institutions, to facilitate accelerated commercialisation of biotechnology" (http://www.biotech.co.in/).

Four levels of planning: There were four levels at which separate Biodiversity Strategy and Action Plans (BSAPs) were made:

1 **State level plans** in 33 states and union territories. Coordinated by State Steering Committees (SSC). The SSC was headed by a coordinating agency.
2 **Sub-state plans** at 18 selected sites in some states to create more detailed, local level plans. Coordinated by Local Advisory Committees (LAC). The LAC was headed by a coordinating agency. Sub-state plans were completely independent of state plans.
3 **Inter-state eco-regional plans** in 10 eco-regions that cut across state boundaries, such as the Western Ghats or West Himalaya. Coordinated by Eco-regional Working Groups (EWG).
4 **Thematic plans** plans on 13 selected themes relating to biodiversity, such as 'Culture and Biodiversity' or 'Economics and Valuation of Biodiversity'. Coordinated by Thematic Working Groups (TWG). In addition there were sub-thematic reviews, which were smaller studies looking at specific aspects within selected themes.

A total of 71 plans (out of a proposed 74) were prepared across the four levels. Each plan was meant to be an independent, stand-alone document that would be directly referred to for implementation of strategies and actions in the concerned area. Key elements from all plans were finally integrated into a single National Biodiversity Strategy and Action Plan (NBSAP).

Communication flow between components of the NBSAP process



Methodology of NBSAP Process

This handbook will be referring only to state and sub-state site plans (Nos.1 and 2 p.17). Therefore the following explanation refers only to the preparation of these plans.

Timeframe

The national plan and all the subsidiary plans were to be completed within a period of two years, from 2000 to 2001. This timeframe was subsequently extended by a year.

Selection of coordinating agencies:

• Each state and sub-state site was assigned a coordinating agency, which was usually a government department, academic institution or NGO.
• The process for selecting coordinating agencies was as follows: The TPCG drew up a list of coordinating agencies based on their own experience, and extensive discussion amongst themselves and with key contacts. All state-level coordinating agencies had to be approved by the state government (but this was not required for sub-state level agencies). In most cases the agency suggested by the TPCG was approved, but in some cases the state government chose another agency.
• Once a state-level coordinating agency had been appointed it could not be changed, regardless of the quality of the process. (not for sub-state agencies.)

Arrangements within state and sub-state sites:

• Sub-state site processes were completely independent of the state processes, and produced independent plans. The sub-state sites have been included in state chapters in this handbook only as a means of organising the findings, and to establish the context of the state.
• The coordinating agency for a state plan headed a state steering committee (SSC).
• The coordinating agency for a sub-state plan headed a local advisory committee (LAC).
• Almost all coordinating agencies worked on the NBSAP as a part-time activity, in addition to their normal activities. (This was the case with all the coordinating agencies at the sites examined in this handbook).
• The SSC and LAC helped to guide the planning process, and would ideally be comprised of representatives from a cross-section of sectors, including NGOs, government officials, grassroots community leaders and academics. Decisions regarding the processes usually rested finally with the coordinating agency.
• The selection of SSC and LAC members was usually based on the experience and contacts of the coordinating agency, as well as recommendations by the TPCG.
• Coordinating agencies were given financial support for preparing the BSAPs. They were encouraged to raise funds from other sources if needed. A few coordinating agencies carried out the entire process without using any NBSAP funds.
• Coordinating agencies had independent decision-making powers about how to carry out the process in the state or sub-state site. Detailed guidelines for the process were provided by the TPCG, but these were only recommendations. Guidelines for writing the BSAPs were less flexible, as there were certain fixed requirements regarding format and the kind of information required.
• Each TPCG member was in charge of monitoring and providing facilitation to some state and sub-state sites. This included visiting the sites two or three times during the process.

Responsibility of coordinating agencies:

• The coordinating agency (with the help of the SSC or LAC) was to write the BSAP for the relevant area after eliciting people's participation in the planning process through a variety of means such as workshops, public meetings and biodiversity festivals.
• Certain participatory tools were recommended by the TPCG, but coordinating agencies were free to choose any kind of tool or process for their own region. The emphasis was on decentralisation and

flexibility of ideas; it was felt that creativity would bring dynamism to the process.

Finalising the BSAPs and writing the NBSAP:

• Most BSAPs went through one or two drafts before being finalised based on comments from the TPCG.

• The TPCG wrote the national plan, i.e. the NBSAP, by drawing on key elements and recommendations from all the BSAPs (including the eco-regional plans and thematic plans). The national plan was also based on existing documentation and literature, extensively researched by the TPCG.

Implementation:

• Implementation was not built into the NBSAP process. There was no official or other guarantee that any of the BSAPs or the NBSAP would be implemented; it was purely a planning exercise.

• However, the TPCG's emphasis on a participatory planning process was partly to create a momentum towards official or independent implementation in the future or during the process itself.

• Since the BSAPs were designed to be stand-alone documents they are available to be used by any agency for implementation in the concerned area.

NBSAP Emphasis on Participation of Different Sectors

"It is critical that in all these activities, there be maximum participation of all sectors (governmental agencies, local communities, independent experts, private sector, armed forces, politicians, etc.), especially through:
1. making the process of working fully transparent;
2. inviting public inputs at every step;
3. making all relevant information available to the public;
4. using local languages in all key documents and events;
5. respecting the output of 'lower' level (e.g. sub-state) BSAPs and information, and integrating them into 'higher' level (e.g. state and national) BSAPs; and
6. allowing for a diversity of opinions and approaches to be reflected in the process and in the final BSAPs."

("Methodological Notes" in NBSAP Guidelines and Concept Papers (MoEF 2000), distributed to all coordinating agencies as methodological guidance.)

Levels of Involvement in NBSAP Process

Level	Composition	Number of participants
1. Core team	Central coordinating teams (TPCG and National Project Directorate); National Steering Committee; Coordinators of each site/theme	110
2. Direct substantial or decision-making involvement	Members of SSCs, LACs, EWGs and TWGs and Sub-thematic paper writers	1300
3. Direct occasional or advisory involvement	Members of subsidiary working groups; respondents to Call for Participation or advertisements or other public outreach activities	1000 (approx.)
4. Indirect but influential involvement	Participants at public hearings, festivals, workshops and other public events	50,000 (approx.)
5. Passive involvement	Recipients of NBSAP outreach activities such as newspaper readers, radio listeners, TV watchers, visitors of biodiversity festivals, etc.	Tens of thousands if not lakhs?

(Table reproduced from Kothari et al 2002)

Methodology of this Study

How information was gathered

Information was collected through extensive interviews at national level and in four selected states, across a range of sectors, including NGO representatives, government officials, academics and village community members. Visits to each state lasted approximately 10-12 days. A total of 198 people were interviewed. Desk-based research of the extensive NBSAP documents was also carried out.

In selecting interviewees, the attempt was to gain a balance of perspectives by interviewing those directly involved in the NBSAP process, and those peripherally involved or 'outside' the process, who could nevertheless offer an informed opinion. Interviewing a wide range of people for 'counter-perspectives', tended to balance out inherent biases in perspective that may have arisen due to power dynamics or interpersonal politics. In many cases interviewees were assured of anonymity so that levels of frankness would be higher.

This is a subjective, qualitative study based on the experiences and perceptions of a wide range of interviewees. There was no attempt to research quantitative data.

Selection of states

Four states were selected for study along with a selection of sub-state sites in each state, i.e. a total of 9 sites:

- Andhra Pradesh (plus sub-state sites of North Coastal Andhra and the Deccan)
- Karnataka (plus sub-state site of Uttar Kannada)
- Maharashtra (plus sub-state site of Nagpur city)
- Sikkim (plus sub-state site of Rathong Chu Valley)

The aim was to arrive at a selection of states that used a variety of interesting tools, with diverse target groups and diverse results. Sites selected included a range of coordinating agency types: there were coordinating agencies which were governmental institutions; small budget NGOs; a well-established, well-funded NGO; academic institutions; and a state forest department.

Diverse contexts were also taken into account: Maharashtra and Andhra Pradesh were chosen because there were disappointing results at state level despite strong, established institutions as coordinating agencies, and a context of high levels of social and environmental activism in the state. Conversely the sub-state sites of these states developed interesting and often dynamic processes. Nagpur city was chosen over other sub-state processes in Maharashtra because it was the only urban NBSAP site. The North-East of India is an area traditionally considered on the periphery of the Indian mainstream and is also sometimes left out by researchers due to its remoteness and logistical difficulties of travel; it therefore seemed especially appropriate to study the relative success of the Sikkimese process. Karnataka was unique among the NBSAP states in focusing on tools such as radio and school programmes.

Criteria for measuring success of tools

For the purpose of this study, participatory tools that fitted one or all of the following criteria were considered as 'successful':

- Tools that elicited a good quantity and quality of participation
- Tools that created spaces for future policy inputs / engagement (e.g. creating environmental awareness; building political confidence; strengthening networks)
- Tools that created spaces for immediate action (e.g. spin-offs like the production of new resource materials or mobilising communities for local action).

Methodological limitations:

- Poor memory of interviewees sometimes proved to be a drawback in recalling events, especially in discussing the earlier phases of NBSAP.
- Process documentation by coordinating agencies was often not complete, while at other times it

was inaccessible to this researcher due to the local language.
- The time available for the fieldwork was especially short for communicating sufficiently with village-level community members. The responses to tools targeting grassroots communities need to be read keeping this limitation in mind.

What this study does not do:

- This study does not analyse the BSAPs themselves, or the strategies/actions recommended in them, either at the state level or the national level. It only analyses the *tools used to elicit participation* in the planning process.
- This study is an analysis, and not an evaluation. That is to say that this study does not presume to pass judgement on the success or failure of the NBSAP at the national or state levels. The NBSAP process was far too large for a study of the present scope, to evaluate as a whole. The aim of this study was to learn some lessons from a range of subjective perspectives on the NBSAP experience.

Definitions of Key Terms Used

Marginalized:

First, it is important to clarify that when this handbook refers to 'marginalization', it refers to *marginalization from official environmental planning*, and *not* to marginalization in general (i.e. someone who occupies the mainstream in civic life may nevertheless be marginalized from planning).

It is useful to recognise that there are differing degrees of marginalization and participation, as illustrated by the table below.

Differing Degrees of Marginalisation and Participation

1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8
Manipulation	Therapy	Informing	Consultation	Placation	Partnership	Delegated Power	Citizen Control
Non-Participation		Degrees of Tokenism			Degrees of Citizen Power		

Source: Arnstein 1969

This table is taken not as an 'absolute' scale of degrees of participation, but more as a useful tool to clarify the working definition of marginalization, and to help conceptualise the findings of this study. An explanation of the terms used in the table is as follows:

Non-Participation (manipulation + therapy): Describes "levels of non-participation that have been contrived by some [e.g. insincere planners] to substitute for genuine participation. Their real objective is not to enable people to participate in planning or conducting programmes, but to enable power holders to 'educate' or 'cure' [or persuade] the participants".

Degrees of Tokenism (informing + consultation + placation): Here, the outsiders are allowed "to hear and to have a voice... When [these activities] are proffered by power-holders as the total extent of participation, citizens may indeed hear and be heard. But under these conditions they lack the power to ensure that their views will be heeded... Placation is a higher level of tokenism because the ground-rules allow have-nots to advise, but retain for the power-holders the continued right to decide."

Degrees of Citizen Power (partnership + delegated power + citizen control): These are "levels of citizen power with increasing degrees of decision-making clout. Citizens can enter into a partnership that enables them to negotiate and engage in trade-offs with traditional power-holders... [In] delegated power and citizen control, have-not citizens obtain the majority of decision-making seats, or full managerial power." (Arnstein 1969)

Most public participation programmes stop at serial numbers 3, 4 or 5 of the above table.

For the purposes of this study, I have taken a working definition of *'marginalized from planning and policy making'* as *"those who are not normally consulted for policy and planning inputs"*. This would include almost everyone not directly related to planning and policy-making, given the context of centralised planning in India. However, the complexities in this definition need to be acknowledged. Some people among these would be more empowered to make their voices heard, than others. For example, there are many flourishing and influential NGOs in India today, which could not be termed as unambiguously 'marginalized', and which are now often consulted on policy matters - though this is neither a norm nor an obligation on the part of the government. Conversely at the other end of the scale are those NGOs who are completely out of the loop when it comes to policy inputs. While it is easier to pinpoint individuals/institutions at the extreme ends of the scale, there are many greys in between: taking a lead from the above table, the same institution or individual may occupy different 'boxes' at different points of time, and the overall experience of a single individual/institution with regard to policy inputs may range from non-participation and manipulation, to various degrees of tokenism and consultation. For example, in rare instances, such as with the NBSAP, an NGO like Kalpavriksh may be offered partnership, whereas in other instances it may occupy the other end of the scale with 'non-participation'.

Interestingly, within the NBSAP process itself, participation of people also ranged across the different 'boxes' above. In some cases it was evident that 'participation' did not go beyond providing information. In other instances there was consultation, but the existing power equations (or other circumstances) did not permit this to develop into partnership. Some instances even suggest a type of tokenism where people were consulted but their inputs not taken seriously (i.e. an 'illusion' of participation).

Process

General movement towards a broad aim (e.g. the process of awareness raising), encompassing a variety of tools.

Tools

Practical mechanisms used within processes. E.g. the process of awareness raising would include tools like newsletters and festivals; the process of monitoring would use tools like review meetings.

Biodiversity

This handbook uses the holistic definition of biodiversity as used by the NBSAP, which defined biodiversity as "encompassing all levels of biodiversity, ecological and evolutionary processes"(MoEF 2000). This definition of biodiversity includes:

- Natural ecosystems (e.g. forests, grasslands, deserts, coasts)
- Wild species and varieties (plants, animals and micro-organisms which exist in their natural state, including genetic variations within each species)
- Agricultural ecosystems (e.g. farmlands, aquaculture)
- Domesticated species and varieties (e.g. species of crops, livestock and poultry, pets) (MoEF 2000)

Context of Participation in Natural Resource Conservation and Planning in India: A Brief Outline

In general, policy-making and planning for the natural environment remains centralised and top-down. There are lobbies that pressure the government to take account of their concerns, and expert committees are sometimes appointed by the government to make suggestions. However, the government is under no legal obligation to consult stakeholders when framing laws and policies (Anuradha et al 2002).

Drafting of the Biodiversity Bill

As far as biodiversity laws and policies are concerned, there has recently been some evidence of a more inclusive approach. The NBSAP, of course, was an intensely participatory process. Prior to this, the drafting of the Biological Diversity Bill, begun in 1994, was also an unusually consultative process (the Biological Diversity Act was subsequently passed in 2002). A core group, consisting of NGOs and research institutes, was set up to review the legal framework and make recommendations towards developing a law that would support the objectives of the CBD. In 1997 and 1998 the Ministry of Environment and Forests invited a range of stakeholders to two national consultation seminars, to discuss the proposed biodiversity law and NBSAP. There was no direct involvement of local or rural communities and the consultations were criticised for being somewhat ad-hoc and not inclusive enough; but the process was nevertheless a departure from the norm: "While these consultations could not claim to be comprehensive, the process of drafting the Biodiversity Bill was a radical development because it entailed numerous consultations with a variety of stakeholders, on a scale unprecedented in the history of legal drafting in India. Prominent among these stakeholders was the non-governmental sector, including NGOs, research institutes, academics and industry" (Anuradha et al 2002).

Constitutional Amendment

In recent years there has also been radical legislation with regard to decentralised decision-making and community rights over natural resources. In 1992, the 73rd Amendment to the Constitution made it mandatory to have a more decentralised mode of governance by giving greater decision-making powers to a three-tiered structure of Panchayati Raj Institutions (PRIs) (i.e. local self-governing bodies). Among other things, it recommended the decentralisation of management of social forestry, fuel wood plantations and non-timber forest produce (NTFPs), to PRIs. This was extended to scheduled (i.e. tribal dominated) areas by the Panchayat (Extension to Scheduled Areas) Act, 1996 (PESA) (Sarin 2001). The Act states, "every Gram Sabha shall approve the plans, programmes and projects for social and economic development before such plans... are taken up for implementation by the Panchayat at the village level" (GoI 1996). Through Panchayats and Gram Sabhas, communities are to be consulted before any developmental projects are approved for the area.

However, the form that this legislation has taken on the ground has varied across states. The political will to implement it is weak. Most states have gone against its spirit by excluding community ownership over the most valuable NTFPs; nationalised forests and legally protected areas have also been excluded by most states. It is also weakened because it contradicts other policies and laws such as the Forest Conservation Act 1980, which makes it mandatory for states to seek permission from the Central Government to convert any forest land to non-forest use.

Trend towards participatory management of natural resources

There is a trend towards more participatory management of natural resources. Joint Forest Management (JFM) is a significant component in this trend. JFM is the management and conservation of a forest by local communities and forest department officials, through joint committees. It has been useful in regenerating and conserving forest areas with help from local communities in several parts of India. According to the Ministry of Environment and Forests, over 10 million hectares in 22 states was under this programme as of 2000. How much of this is being successfully and sustainably managed is unclear, and there are serious concerns about the lack of true sharing of decision-making powers with local communities; nevertheless, JFM is a step towards more participatory natural resource management (Apte & Kothari 2000).

In 2002 two new categories of protected areas, 'Community Reserves' and 'Conservation Reserves', were declared under the Wild Life (Protection) Amendment Act 2002. These categories are meant to facilitate participation of communities and private bodies in the conservation and management of natural habitats. Conservation Reserves apply particularly to land adjacent to protected areas, and land that links one protected area to another. Community Reserves may be declared in any community or private land where the community or individual volunteers to conserve the wildlife and its habitat. Activists, NGOs and local community members have expressed serious concerns regarding key aspects of the new provisions, but the new categories are also apparently indicative of the trend towards official acceptance of greater community participation in conservation.

Karnataka

Karnataka State and Uttar Kannada Sub-state site

The Karnataka state process is an excellent example of a process that utilised a complementary cluster of tools to reach across various social sectors, and to get inputs at a number of different levels in the process, from grassroots data collection, to reviewing the final Karnataka Biodiversity Strategy and Action Plan (KBSAP). The Uttar Kannada sub-state process included a more limited range of tools and had a more limited reach. The focus of this section will therefore be mainly on the Karnataka state process, with reference to the Uttar Kannada process with regard to the use of biodiversity festivals.

The Karnataka process was co-ordinated by the Centre for Ecological Sciences (CES) in Bangalore, a premier research institute. The capacity of the CES in terms of human resources and finances, as well as its sterling reputation within the state, greatly contributed to the success of the KBSAP process.

Process Summary

A summary of the state process is as follows:

1. Selection of 6 themes as a focus for the KBSAP: The focus was narrowed to six themes in view of the resources available: Protected Areas; Medicinal plants; Freshwater fishes; Wetlands; Cultural traditions of conservation; Land races of cultivated plants.

2. Commissioning of papers by technical experts: One paper per theme was commissioned. This was an academic exercise; each paper took an overview approach to problems and existing conservation activities, and suggested strategies for additional actions.

3. Case Studies: Four case studies (covering three themes) were conducted by two NGOs. Some were done with substantial fresh fieldwork and participation by local communities. These were detailed studies, taking over five months to study the problem and involve local user groups in discussion regarding conservation, livelihoods and possible strategies.

The case studies were intended to complement the papers by technical experts, by bringing out grassroots perspectives. The case studies proved to be a useful exercise in terms of getting inputs from local communities and NGOs as well as bringing new facts to light.

4. School Biodiversity Registers (SBR): Field research activities by 43 schools with participation from students, teachers and local community members went towards preparing local biodiversity registers.

5. Newspaper articles on the 6 themes: Six general articles in English and Kannada were written by the coordinating agency, outlining key issues relevant to the six themes, explaining the purpose of the NBSAP planning exercise, and inviting feedback from the general public. About 80 letters were received in response. The Kannada articles elicited the greater response.

6. Radio programme series: A 14-episode radio series was prepared with participation of local communities at field sites. The radio programmes solicited inputs from listeners among the general public.

7. Thematic Workshops: The coordinating agency conducted six workshops at locations around the state, each addressing one of the selected themes. The objective was to review and refine the report that had already been prepared on the basis of the above activities. Representatives from different sectors were invited. A key organisation in each location was requested to contact and invite local NGOs and user group representatives. Wherever SBR schools were in the vicinity, some teachers and students were invited to the meeting. An open invitation to the meeting was put in local papers in advance. In addition individuals or organisations in the vicinity who had already contributed to the KBSAP were invited.

The meetings were held away from Bangalore, the state capital, in order to ensure wider representation of people. The locations were chosen according to the theme of the meetings: The freshwater fishes meeting was in Shishila in Belthangaddy taluka, which has a sacred stretch in a river where fish are protected. Several fishermen were invited to this meeting. The medicinal plants meeting was held in Tumkur since a nearby hill, Siddar Betta, is known for its medicinal plants. The crop diversity meeting was in the agricultural university in Raichur, an area with a rich variety of crops. The meeting on traditional conservation practices was held in Ponnampet in Kodagu district which has many sacred groves. The wetlands meeting was held in Davinagere which has about 45 sq km of wetland, and where many people are working on wetland conservation. This distribution of meetings across the state ensured greater local participation, with between 60 and 150 participants per meeting.

8. Final Workshop: This was to review and discuss the final KBSAP report among a cross-section of stakeholders.

9. Follow-Up activities: There have been various follow-up activities to expand on KBSAP initiatives at a local level, and also to work towards implementation of some of the KBSAP recommendations.

These tools complemented each other in the sense that together they targeted a range of sectors: experts wrote the commissioned papers; NGOs prepared the case studies and participated in the thematic meetings; students and teachers were involved in preparing SBRs; general public opinion was solicited through the radio programmes and newspaper articles; and direct local community input was solicited through the SBRs and the case studies. The thematic meetings invited various sectors, including government officials, for discussion.

In analysing the KBSAP process it is most relevant to take note of the *strategic complementarity* within the cluster of tools, rather than examining each tool individually. In terms of analysing specific tools, the most interesting initiatives are the radio programmes and the SBRs.

Tool 01 School Biodiversity Registers (SBR)

Objective:

- To compile local biodiversity information as an input into the KBSAP.
- To be an educational and awareness building exercise for students and teachers.

The exercise was based on the belief that a great deal of valuable, undocumented knowledge on biodiversity is with members of local communities. The SBR initiative was a narrower version of the ongoing People's Biodiversity Register (PBR) initiative by the CES (see Gadgil 2002 for details). Whereas a PBR includes a wider range of people within a locality, the SBRs were prepared mainly by students and teachers.

Output:

The outcome was 118 SBRs prepared specifically for the KBSAP. These were analysed by the coordinating agency, and the suggestions that emerged from the SBRs were taken into account while formulating the KBSAP.

Description of the Process:

Overall Set Up:

- 49 schools from 14 districts were involved, covering various eco-regions such as the coastal, Western ghats and Deccan plateau regions.
- In each school the SBR group consisted of 1 teacher, 1 volunteer and 15 students. Teachers were encouraged to involve members of the local panchayat or other local representation such as a healer or farmer, as volunteers.
- Each study was conducted over approximately three months.
- SBRs were written in Kannada by the school groups. Some of the better reports were subsequently translated into English by the coordinating agency.

Teacher Training:

The teachers in each school were provided with some training and a set of guidelines for carrying out the SBR exercise. A set of 10 questions was provided to teachers, to use as a basis for collecting information for the SBRs. There were 3 stages of training, for which each teacher brought along 2 children:

Stage 1: The exercise and its objectives were explained during a meeting of all teachers. In order to collect the best information, it was important to understand the concepts behind the set of 10 questions, rather than go through them mechanically. It cannot be assumed that villagers would readily answer questions simply because local students and teachers were asking: "The questions should be posed very naturally. Ultimately we want answers to all 10 questions, but it has to be done in an intelligent manner. Villagers do not like you going with a questionnaire. There are so many processes set up by the government to document livestock, etc. that they would think this was something similar, and would not take it seriously. So the questions have to be posed in a particular manner. Most of the teachers got good results in this." The training session also included people from other sectors such as NGOs, officials and academics, in recognition of the fact that teachers would need help and inputs from all these different sectors. Thus the session also worked as an opportunity for the teachers to network and identify people/institutions for tapping information during the SBR exercise.

Stage 2: Teachers were taken to the field to do a sample study as a practical, hands-on experience. This was regarded as a crucial part of the training, especially because it emerged as a surprise that some teachers were unfamiliar with some basic skills: "Some teachers were unable to identify the directions of north, south, east and west, or how to recognise different landscape elements."

Stage 3: A review meeting during the process was held for teachers to check that the exercise was being conducted as per the guidelines.

During the training a working manual with guidelines for preparing an SBR was devised, based on consultation with the teachers. This manual was then distributed among the teachers as a guide.

Preparing the SBRs:

Each school group went through the following stages to prepare

their respective SBRs:

Stage 1: The objective was to get acquainted with a 1 sq km area around the school. Students prepared two types of maps: a habitation map and a vegetation map. The habitation map showed the various settlements, school buildings and other man-made structures. The vegetation map showed natural forests, grasslands, open areas, barren ground, etc. These maps were to give a broad picture of the area around the school.

Stage 2: Each school group selected one of the six KBSAP themes and studied the theme within the 1 sq km area. (Some schools decided to study all 6 themes.) In the process the students documented all the plant and animal species that they could identify, including the uses of each species (e.g. the part of a plant used for medicine, food, construction).

Stage 3: The objective was to identify the user groups of the plants or animals. For example, traditional healers were identified as the user group for medicinal plants; contractors as harvesters of various species; priests as users of sacred groves; fishermen as users of aquatic species. Individuals in each user group were interviewed by students, based on the set of questions provided by CES (e.g. what is the distribution of medicinal plants? What changes have there been in the population of a plant in the past 10 years? Why have these changes taken place? How should the plant species be conserved?). The set of questions was meant to elicit a qualitative documentation, and not a comprehensive, quantitative one. Each school group interviewed a varied number of people, varying from 5 to 15 (there were usually about 5-6 user groups in the area around most schools). Even the children's family members, such as grandparents, could be interviewed. Each SBR was compiled based on the information gathered during the above steps, and each covered 10 issues: (1) Current status; (2) Ecological history; (3) Forces driving ecological change; (4) Knowledge and beliefs; (5) Gainers and losers; (6) Values; (7) Scenarios; (8) Aspirations; (9) Strategies; (10) Action plans.

Prizes:

Prizes were distributed for the best SBRs within each theme as well as for the best SBRs overall. There was an attempt to distribute prizes equitably so that too many prizes did not go to just a few schools.

Monitoring the SBR Process:

Since the SBR process was spread across 43 schools around the state, monitoring the standards of each school's SBR process proved to be a challenge. Visits were carried out to various schools by resource persons (a team of 10, mainly from an NGO, Bharatiya Gyan Vigyan Sanstha), to check whether any difficulties had arisen in mapping, data collection, etc. Resource persons sometimes went to the field with students as well. Some amount of long distance support was provided. If, for example, a fish could not be identified, the teacher could photograph it and send the photograph to Bangalore to the coordinating agency for identification.

However, inadequate monitoring meant that not all SBRs were up to standard, and a loss of momentum and enthusiasm was seen in some schools.

Strengths:

Some of the strong points of the SBR experience included the following:

Education: SBRs were a very successful way to educate students who found it far more interesting to learn in a practical environment rather than within a classroom. A key aspect was that students were not forced to take on the project, but encouraged to come forward voluntarily. Teachers found it easier to teach children about topics like ecosystems and food chains, by taking them outdoors: "The children had no idea of the rich diversity that surrounded them, and were not able to read elements of the landscape. So when they were taken to explore ponds, etc., it was a fascinating experience for them. Because there was no awareness at all about their own environment." Students who were involved in the SBRs usually performed well in their examinations. Particularly popular with students were butterfly and bird watching, and learning how to grow and use medicinal plants.

Capacity building of teachers: There was a strong sense that the SBR exercise contributed greatly to the experience and knowledge of teachers, particularly due to the exposure to fieldwork and the interactions with local people. Most teachers were initially apprehensive about the SBR exercise and felt that they would not be able to handle it. They felt that the students would not be serious about it, and would not complete the work properly. However, in most cases it seems that the teachers were in for a surprise. Not only did they gain confidence by the end of the process (some even strengthened their own reports having seen other schools' reports), they also realised that their perceptions

about their students were not true.

The students proved to be enthusiastic and keen to document their surroundings – for instance, they were keen to report the many things they observed on their way to school. Due to the enthusiasm it generated, the SBR exercise often created a special bond between teachers and students: "The SBR teacher was always the most popular teacher. The exercise brought students and teachers closer, because it was an informal and attractive activity." (One drawback was that this sometimes created a feeling of jealousy among teachers in the school who were not involved with the SBR exercise.)

Capacity building of an NGO: Bharatiya Gyan Vigyan Sanstha (BGVS) is a modest NGO of 5-6 full-time staff, with a wide network of 500 volunteers, which works to promote a mass people's science movement. It was recruited to provide resource persons for the SBR exercise. BGVS representatives felt that the capacity of the organisation had greatly expanded due to being involved in the SBR exercise: "KBSAP has helped us in transforming our learning to field-based learning. We were exposed to experts, [resource] materials and local people. Our understanding was enriched. The education commissioner subsequently offered that we should do similar exercises in 1000 schools, but we have taken up only 90."

Village Involvement and Ownership: Villagers often felt pleased with the SBR activity because the students were busy doing something productive even after school hours, instead of playing or watching TV. Like the teachers, other villagers' perceptions about what students were interested in, or what they could do, changed: "The children were very involved in the exercise. All the time they would discuss it with their parents, saying that we need to conserve this, or know more about that. The villagers would say that now our children have grown up, because they feel they have to conserve so many things."

Some students were able to interact with local panchayat leaders and able to highlight some of the environmental problems in their area. The exercise often created general interest within the village: "When students and teachers go to collect information in a village, a lot of people flock together, and get enlightened in the process. So it can turn into a village level activity."

Data collection: In a context of scarce human resources for research activity, the information gathered through SBRs was seen as a valuable contribution to data collection, even though they were not comprehensive surveys: "SBRs were a very good method of collecting information – because there are hardly any field biologists who go around all these 14 districts and collect data there, whether it is for medicinal plants or fish or wetland conditions.

Since the school teams conducted the field work in the proposed manner, in the methodology we specified, they got very good, efficient, qualitative data." The case for such data collection becomes stronger in light of the fact that even local officials may often be unable to provide accurate information: "Sometimes students took fish species for identification to local fisheries officials – who were not able to identify local species!" In addition the data was analysed by technical experts appointed by the coordinating agency, to 'decode' the information and discount any information suspected of being inaccurate.

Some villages suggested that such a register should be updated every three years, so that the status of the environment could be known and monitored over time, rather than leaving the SBR exercise as a one-time effort.

Weak aspects:

Limitations of data collected: The SBR exercise was not spread through the year, so the data collected missed out some seasons. There are also obvious limitations in a data-collection exercise conducted as a school project, as opposed to one conducted by professionals or scientists. For example, eliciting information through limited interviews, such as on reasons why a particular fish species may have declined, is constrained by the perception of the interviewee and his/her ability to make a wider cause-and-effect linkage. Thus it is important to be clear that the SBR exercise as a method of data collection needs to be used as a complement to other methods of data collection. Indeed, the KBSAP coordinating agency was clear about the fact that the SBR data was not the result of a comprehensive survey or analysis, and was rather used as a valuable complement to existing scientific data and analysis.

Time constraints of teachers: Teachers have many demands on their time especially since they are often required for duties other than teaching, such as manning polling booths, conducting censuses or participating in polio campaigns. Therefore only those teachers who are very motivated find the time to volunteer for extra-curricular activities like the SBR. Many of the teachers involved worked on this activity on Sundays and holidays. Eight teachers dropped out of the programme due to the demands on

their time. More extensive SBR studies could have been prepared if teachers had been officially deputed for the exercise, or if the exercise had been incorporated into the curriculum, with the attendant back-up of more teachers and resources available.

Lack of official support: Lack of official support (e.g. from the Education Department) was an issue raised by various teachers. This had mainly to do with set notions of what school education should entail: "They do not consider this activity as important. They saw it as something that is distracting the students and spoiling them by taking them to the field. They think only in terms of marks and the syllabus. They are killing life sciences education because it is taught so badly. They did not try to stop us officially, but indirectly. Sometimes they prevented us from going to the field in the Physical Education period; or did not permit us to use computers even if computers were available. Even school principles and colleagues were not very encouraging because they thought this is an extraneous activity." However, the prize distribution proved to be of help in countering some of the scepticism within schools. The authorities in the school that received the first prize were very appreciative, and the award was displayed on an endangered tree species outside the school. Laminated photographs of the tree were given to the students and some prominent people from the village.

Insufficient training: Several teachers felt that insufficient guidance was a serious weakness, particularly with regard to species identification to counter the confusion often caused by generic local names. They wanted more extensive support material as well as practical, field-level training. It was also felt that in the future, SBRs should not be compartmentalised into themes, but should address a holistic picture of biodiversity.

School Biodiversity Registers: Follow-Up and Off-Shoots

Essay competition: Post-KBSAP, the SBR exercise was followed up with an essay competition organised by CES. The SBR teachers were given information from the KBSAP, and requested to conduct essay competitions in their schools based on the material. The two best essays from each school were sent to CES. Of a total of 100 essays, a steering group in Bangalore selected the 10 best essays for prize distribution. A school level elocution competition was also organised, where students could talk about what they felt was interesting in the KBSAP.

Wider SBR exercise: CES initiated a larger SBR exercise in 17 panchayats, where the study was designed to take place in an entire panchayat rather than just 1 sq km around the school. The idea was to get feedback from the people of an entire panchayat area, and then to suggest strategies for implementation to the panchayat.

SBR manual revised: The SBR guidelines manual was revised. The revisions were based on the weaknesses perceived in the SBR exercises carried out for the KBSAP, and on feedback obtained through subsequent meetings with teachers. In particular the revised version tries to address gaps in guidance regarding species identification and interview techniques.

Computer database: CES is working on a computer database to organise the information generated by SBRs (and PBRs). One of the challenges is to manage the database in Indian languages.

SBRs as an input to People's Biodiversity Registers (PBRs): As a follow-up to the Biological Diversity Act (2002), all local bodies like municipalities, panchayats and corporations are supposed to prepare local biodiversity documentation. The draft rules call for the preparation of PBRs. The Ministry of Environment and Forests has asked CES to develop a methodology for preparing PBRs (CES has been working on PBRs since 1996). SBRs have been visualised as a major input into PBRs, and a group of teachers is actively working with CES to refine a practical methodology for use at school level.

Tool 02 All India Radio Series: "Dhareya Siri"

All India Radio Series: "Dhareya Siri" ("Richness of the Earth")
Fourteen weekly interactive episodes in Kannada were broadcast on Karnataka state radio over 14 weeks, covering all six themes selected for the KBSAP.

Objective:

- To raise awareness of biodiversity and create an understanding of the importance of documenting and saving it.
- To solicit information from the general public, to incorporate into the KBSAP.
- To achieve the above through entertaining, interactive programmes.

Description:

The programmes were based on a serial dramatisation, i.e. an ongoing 'radio play' of two characters, a male and female named Ravi and Bhuvana, travelling through the state of Karnataka. In the play the characters encounter various people and situations that teach them about biodiversity and become a motive for discussing various issues related to biodiversity. Prior to the studio recording of the dramatisation, the producers of the show travelled to various parts of the state to conduct recorded interviews with people at the grassroots, regarding biodiversity in their immediate surroundings and their daily lives.

The voices of the people interviewed were subsequently incorporated into the dramatisation, which was later recorded in a studio using professional actors to play the two characters. The series was designed for interaction with listeners, with requests at the end of each episode to send in information through letters. Each dramatised episode focussed on a theme, and was followed by an interview episode with experts talking about the theme of the previous episode.

The first episode introduced the KBSAP and its objectives. The final episode was a live phone-in programme with a panel of experts present to answer questions from listeners.

Producing the Series:

Details of the process of producing the programmes are as follows:

Interview Locations: Field interview locations were identified with the help of the coordinating agency. There was a focus on places that had some interesting ongoing activity, as well as places that were in remote areas. For the episode on crop varieties, for instance, the producers travelled to an area where the documentation of minor millets was taking place; the dramatisation depicted the 2 characters travelling there while the harvesting is on, and interacting with various local people.

Locations were also chosen based on letters received in the course of the 14 weeks, since listeners had been requested to send in location ideas for the programme to travel to. Many listeners wrote in, inviting the producers to visit their area. Thus a major strength of the production was its flexibility. Though the 14 episodes were broadly planned in advance, the interview locations were unplanned, with the producers having the freedom to pick up new leads and travel to different locations based on interviews and letters.

Conducting the Interviews: In some cases written intimation of the arrival of the recording team meant that 30-40 people had gathered in one spot for interviews. In other cases the recording team had to wait all day to find people willing to be interviewed. Though several interviews were recorded, the selection back at the studio retained only those interviews that had clarity in terms of voice and ideas. One of the challenges was going through the hours of interviews at the editing stage to find the appropriate information – a five-minute recording required the producers to go through 3-4 hours of tapes. When the exercise was repeated for a subsequent wildlife awareness radio series (see section below), the producers minimised this challenge by speaking to potential interviewees beforehand, to ascertain whether their voices should be recorded or not, rather than recording every interview.

Local language or dialects of interviewees were retained in the final episodes to maintain authenticity, with the voice being partially superimposed with Kannada.

The producers were a husband and wife team, making it easier

for them to travel together. The presence of a female producer helped in getting women to talk: "It is very difficult to make people talk, especially adivasi people. My being a lady was of significance, especially to talk to the women there. They would be inside their huts, and would never come out. I would go inside and talk to them. I would tell them that I am also a woman, but I have come here at night to talk to you, why can't you talk to me? I would challenge them, saying I thought tribal people are more courageous, but you are sitting inside your huts and not even coming out. Then they would talk."

Dramatisation: The dramatisations were based on the interviews recorded around the state by the producers. In a studio setting, the interviews were woven into a narrative, with actors providing their voices for the characters of Ravi and Bhuvana. Information about a theme was provided through the two characters. For example, in an episode on medicinal plants the dramatisation depicted Ravi and Bhuvana travelling through the Western Ghats. Bhuvana hurts herself, and Ravi uses a medicinal plant to heal the wound. In the process, he tells her about the properties of the plant and which part of the plant he used to cure her.

On their travels the two characters would meet different people. The characters would introduce the persons and ask them various questions. The answers would be the voices of local people, which had been pre-recorded during field visits by the producers. The narrative was maintained throughout, and direct interviews that were 'outside' the storyline were never included.

The experiences of the producers during their field visits often provided inspiration for the dramatisation: "We developed [dramatic] situations where the interviews could be integrated into the story. For example, to record the crop variety programme we had gone to a village where harvesting was going on. We had our dinner there and spent the night there. So the same thing was introduced into the [drama] script – where the characters have their dinner and sample different varieties of food, which shows the crop variety available in the area."

Interactive episodes: At the end of the episode a request was made for listeners to send in any information they may have had. For example, in the medicinal plants episode described above, listeners were told, "in your area you may also be using some plants like this, or maybe your grandparents know of such plants. Please send us a list of plants and the parts of the plants that are used, and tell us which language you are using for the names of the plants." Prizes were distributed for the 10 best letters per episode (though sometimes more than 10 letters were chosen for prizes since they were very good). The prize-winning letters were chosen on the basis of the most original or interesting information.

Differences of opinion recorded during field visits were included in the dramatisation, and used as a way of generating discussion and responses from listeners: "We would take negative as well as positive views. For example regarding the rehabilitation of people living in forest areas – some forest dwellers said that they should leave the forest for their well-being. Others would say, 'we have been here for generations, why should we leave the forest, we have not spoilt it'. So we would put both versions in the programme and ask listeners what they felt. We had mixed answers – some people asked what would forest dwellers do if they left the forest? Others felt they should be provided with a city life."

Final Phone-In: The 14th episode was a half-hour live programme. A panel of three experts was present to answer questions from listeners. The phones were ringing long after the panellists had left, and the conclusion was that at least a one-hour phone-in was required for the culmination of such a series. The shortage of time also meant that the panellists could provide very brief answers to each question.

By the end, CES had registered 3674 people as participants in the series (CES 2002).

Publicity:

The episodes were publicised on radio 15 days before going on air, in a manner that would create curiosity in the listeners, with the two characters, Ravi and Bhuvana, introducing themselves and saying that they were going on a tour of Karnataka.

Listener Response:

The series was very popular and greatly added value to the KBSAP effort, since radio reaches even remote areas that have no electricity, and breaks the barrier of literacy. As per All India Radio (AIR) statistics, the series was heard by 9.4 million (93.8 lakh) listeners in total (Letter to CES from AIR Deputy Director, Annexure H, KBSAP).

A total of 800 letters was received by AIR, some with photographs. Letters were also received from remote areas of the state. The letters were handed over to CES for the purpose of inclusion in the KBSAP. Some letters had specific complaints against government departments (e.g. complaints that the FD is

engaged in cutting too many trees). Such controversial aspects were not included in the episodes, but the complaints were passed on to the concerned department independently by AIR (this is normal procedure which happens with letters received for other programmes as well).

The Cost:

The radio series cost the CES Rs.1,70,000 (US$ 3896). Such a radio series was possible only because CES had the resources to sponsor it, since the total budgetary allocation from the NBSAP would not have been sufficient to do the radio series as well as the other KBSAP activities. Since the payment was for a 'state hook-up' it meant that the producers could record interviews all over the state, and the programme could go on air all over the state as well (without a state hook-up arrangement, the production and broadcasting of the programme would have been restricted to just one AIR zone of the state of Karnataka).

Strengths:

Timing of broadcasts: The series was broadcast at 7pm, a time when people are usually home and are free.

Keeping it simple and attractive: Local folk music and songs that explained the rich diversity of the area were recorded during field interviews and included in the dramatisations. Humour and emotion were created within the dramatic situations, to make the story more attractive. Scientific jargon was avoided - the word 'biodiversity' was not introduced immediately into the programme, particularly because in Kannada it translates into a complicated word. This could have put off people, making them feel that it was a technical science programme. Thus the concept of biodiversity was introduced 'gently', within the story: "When the characters first enter the Western Ghats area an ant bites Bhuvana. She sits under a tree and drinks some water. Then she looks up and sees the number of twining plants on the tree, and the insects moving around. When she lifts a stone she sees termites underneath. She says to Ravi, in such a small area there are so many living organisms. Thus she introduces the concept by saying that when there are a number of organisms in an area it is called biodiversity, and that biodiversity is a speciality of the Western Ghats." At the end of each episode there was a recap of important points.

Interactive episodes: The interactivity of the series and offer of prizes helped to keep listeners interested.

Flexibility: The series was not planned rigidly; the flexibility of the producers in following new leads as and when letters came in, maximised new and interesting opportunities.

Retaining authenticity: Incorporating the recorded voices of grassroots interviewees, and retaining local accents and dialects in the episodes gave authenticity to the series.

Inclusion of women's voices: The presence of a woman on the team of field interviewers helped to include women's voices in the interviews, as the interviewer could approach women directly in their homes.

State-wide coverage to remote areas: Radio breaks the barrier of literacy, and is heard even in remote areas where there is little or no electricity. The ability to broadcast the series across the state of Karnataka was linked to the ability of the coordinating agency to pay for this service.

Weaknesses:

Information Management: The radio series was designed to solicit large numbers of responses, as inputs into the KBSAP. A crucial element of such participatory initiatives is to have in place a system of information management to manage and organise the responses. The CES received almost 800 letters, some with photographs, in response to the radio programmes. It took 6 weeks simply to read and analyse all the letters, and try to segregate them thematically. Being a large institution with the back-up of additional manpower and resources, CES managed to absorb the load effectively, but this was nevertheless very difficult: "There were several hundred letters in response to the radio broadcasts. To read through and digest them is not easy, unless you have a well worked out mechanism to do so. Maybe we did not digest all the information in the letters as effectively as we could have, because of the volume of letters." The process adopted was extracting information while reading through the letters, and making entries against an informal checklist or thematic classification. Given the large volume of letters, a lesson learned was that it would have been better to conduct the exercise of reading the letters periodically, as and when they arrived. Since all the letters were collected and then read only at the end, this created a large, concentrated workload.

Short time for phone-in: The interest generated by the series meant that the final phone-in episode was too short. The panel of experts was obliged to provide very brief answers, and many callers could not be included in the episode.

All India Radio Series: Off-Shoots

Requests for similar programmes: While the series was ongoing, AIR (Bangalore) received a number of proposals from other institutions asking for a similar series for their own purposes. One proposal was from an NGO that wanted to create wildlife awareness in the state. This proposal was taken up soon after the end of the KBSAP series, done in a similar dramatised format with 2 characters visiting national parks around the state, over 13 episodes: "We used different characters and voices. It was also more romantic than the KBSAP series. Some of it was recorded at night, with the sounds of the jungle. It included recordings of adivasis, forest officials, rehabilitated people, those who are waiting to be rehabilitated, those who are not interested in rehabilitation, etc." A research institution requested a series on medicinal plants in the state, but with a dramatisation of Indian epics that include the use of medicinal plants.

Potential of science series: The series created awareness within AIR regarding the potential of science series: "We are delighted by these [listener] statistics as a theme like biodiversity has interested so many millions of listeners. Generally for science programmes the clientele expected is small, as illiterates do not evince much interest in science programmes. Nevertheless this has truly been an unique experience for us, as well as all age and category of listeners [who] have enjoyed listening to the series." (Letter to CES from AIR Deputy Director, Annexure H, KBSAP). AIR also realised that its science programmes can be successfully marketed: "We usually get sponsorships from government agencies like the Women's Welfare Department. KBSAP was the first time we got a sponsorship where the money was not coming directly from the government. After that the wildlife awareness series was the first time we got a sponsorship from an NGO." The KBSAP series was also the first time that AIR Bangalore had utilised a radio programme as a way of collecting information and utilising it, particularly from remote areas, as opposed to being only a means of awareness and education.

Series repeated for educational purposes: Due to the popularity of the KBSAP series, AIR repeated all the episodes in an Education Branch programme, to generate more awareness on biodiversity (though the questions to listeners were deleted). This was done as a public service, without any further sponsorship from CES. (The series could also be profitably used if tapes of the programme were marketed as educational tools for schools and private use. Unfortunately there is no process within AIR to do so.)

Appreciation: The producer of the radio series, Ms Sumangala Mummigatti, was named "Woman Who Made the City Proud" by The Hindu, a national newspaper, for helping develop environmental awareness. She was one of eight women selected for International Women's Day in 2002.

Tool 03 Biodiversity Festival

Two biodiversity festivals were held for the Uttar Kannada sub-state site process, which was completely independent of the Karnataka state process. To set out a context for these festivals, a brief summary of the Uttar Kannada process is as follows:

The Uttar Kannada coordinator was Dr Subhash Chandran of AV Baliga College, Kumta. The Uttar Kannada BSAP (UKBSAP) focused mainly on the themes of forests, marine diversity and agriculture.

The process included:

- Two biodiversity festivals held in Sirsi and Kumta
- Thematic public meetings with a cross-section of stakeholders
- An agricultural survey based on the distribution of 300 questionnaires to farmers in 11 talukas for sample factual data collection (though there was no scope in this for eliciting farmers' opinions as inputs into the BSAP)
- Two case studies on the Aghanashini river
- A literature survey by the coordinating agency to gather existing data

The experiences and lessons learned from the Kumta and Sirsi festivals have been consolidated here. Differences between the two festivals have been highlighted only where relevant.

Objectives:

- To create awareness about local biodiversity and NBSAP among the public.
- To know how much agricultural biodiversity there is in the district, by inviting people to bring local products to display at the festival.

The festivals did not aim to get direct inputs for the BSAP at the venue.

Description (of the Kumta festival, except where specified)**:**

Lectures and slideshows by local resource persons (e.g. academics, NGOs): Topics included: a background to the NBSAP; biodiversity of the district; People's Biodiversity Registers and the importance of people's participation; mango varieties and the importance of conserving these. There was a discussion after each lecture, though the objective of this was awareness-raising, rather than generating inputs for the UKBSAP. A poster exhibition explaining the interdependence of different species was popular with children, who could ask questions to volunteers manning the exhibition.

Stalls for exhibition and sale:

- Each stall was set up by a Village Forest Committee (VFC), which brought its own products. Approximately 20 VFCs were involved, with about 35 people in total manning the stalls.
- There were stalls on horticulture; pickle-making using forest products; chips; fish products; seed exchange and home garden stall; aquarium and information stall set up by the Fisheries Department; varieties of mango and jackfruit brought by two plant breeders. The Sirsi festival also had about 400 varieties of rice on display, and a recipe stall for tasting traditional dishes.
- The stalls were arranged around a small courtyard adjoining a hall where the slideshows and lecture sessions could be attended by everybody.

Grafting techniques: The 35 stallholders were shown grafting techniques by a local farmer and by scientists from the Indian Institute of Horticultural Research.

Strengths:

Bringing to light the commercial potential of local products: The exhibit of agricultural products, ethnic foods and commercial plant products was appealing: "There is tremendous scope if we want to promote something like ethnic foods of Uttar Kannada for different occasions, nutritional needs, illnesses. Ethnic food festivals can be a pull even for tourists. It is a way of attracting more people to biodiversity".

Developing pride in local produce and enthusing people to conserve the local diversity: People who displayed their varieties of mango, jackfruit, etc. were proud to get recognition through it, and were happy to explain and give information about it to visitors at the festival.

Raising awareness by creating a memorable occasion: One interviewee compared the festival with attending a marriage celebration – it is something that people are likely to remember

for a long time.

Neutral location: It was felt that the neutral locations of the festivals was crucial. A location identified with any religion or political party discourages a section of the community from attending. Inauguration of the festivals by a political figure was avoided.

Showcasing success stories: A great crowd-puller was a group of women from the Deccan Development Society (DDS) in Andhra Pradesh (see Andhra Pradesh section), which has done a great deal of work in conserving traditional seed varieties. A festival facilitator noted, "Looking back now, I feel that success stories should be incorporated as part of the festival. That would give people a sense of belonging, more than pamphlets and stalls. Stalls only encourage people to appreciate the importance of something. But if you want the feeling of 'it is mine', then you need to show success stories like DDS. These women talked about their seed bank and had pictorial posters. They had associates to translate from Telugu to Kannada." The DDS women also sang songs, making it an "active and dynamic" stall.

Making linkages: Showcasing a range of local biodiversity in one place (normally seen only in scattered, day-to-day form) helps create linkages between resources, sources and consumption: "It generated thoughts on how to conserve resources which people think of as never-ending."

Weaknesses:

Lost opportunity for discussion and input to UKBSAP: Getting the general visitors to give any inputs into UKBSAP may have been far too ambitious an aim, since members of the general public were mainly interested in looking at the stalls and buying things. However, a more viable aim would have been to involve the stallholders in a discussion about NBSAP and about biodiversity conservation in general, since they were all stakeholders in the environment. Their inputs could have been used in formulating the UKBSAP. The opportunity created by the festival, in terms of bringing the different rural stallholders together, was lost in Sirsi. This was largely due to organisational inexperience, as this was the first time such a festival had been attempted. A discussion was then attempted at the Kumta festival where a talk on NBSAP was organised. However, a lack of confidence among the villagers and townspeople in discussing such issues limited the discussion. A general discussion without organising a strategy for build-up of context or capacity of participants may thus be very limited.

Insufficient advertising and poor turnout: The Sirsi festival drew only 2000-3000 people. The turnout at the Kumta festival was even poorer, with only 500-600 visitors. It is important to identify the best local network of information and plug into it. There are several local newspapers in Uttar Kannada, and requesting write-ups in them would have ensured greater penetration of information into rural areas. The local media was used only sparsely, and some posters were put up. A poor publicity campaign meant that a limited number of people knew about the festivals. This was particularly a problem in Sirsi where hamlets are widely spread out and the population is not as dense as in other areas. In Kumta visitors to the festival were primarily groups known to the organisers. With hindsight it was felt that to maximise attendance, the Sirsi festival should have been linked to Padamutsava, a local annual (non-religious) festival, which draws about 30,000 people.

Inappropriate advertising: It was felt by one festival organiser (Kumta festival) that it should not have been advertised as a 'biodiversity' festival but as a consumer exhibition. The word 'biodiversity' may have put people off.

Inaccessible location and clashing dates: This was a problem in Kumta where the location was far away from the bus stand. This was aggravated by the fact that an entertainment programme was on at a place near the bus-stand. It was assumed that many people preferred to attend the entertainment programme, which was also at a convenient location.

Small town politics: A hurdle in most small towns would be dealing with infighting and local politics. To some extent this limited the positive press publicity that the festivals could have received. Ensuring neutrality in organisation and location, and simply being aware of the potential for politicking is one way of minimising this problem, but perhaps this can never be entirely avoided.

Capacity of the organisers: This may seem an obvious point, but a word of caution is needed regarding choosing the festival organisers. Festival organisers need to have the capacity (or guidance) to organise a festival. An organisation may be experienced and established in its normal work/projects, and be sincere and hardworking. However this does not necessarily translate into the capacity to organise a festival with the attendant requirements of publicity, press liaison, choosing a suitable location, etc. On the other hand, in the absence of guidance,

learning from experience is probably the best way to build capacity for the future.

Written medium for awareness about NBSAP: It is not clear how successful the festival was in terms of raising awareness about NBSAP (as opposed to raising awareness about biodiversity, for which it was more clearly a success). One of the possible reasons suggested was that though there was an NBSAP stall, with pamphlets giving information about NBSAP, people would normally not like to read things in the context of a festival. They would prefer to look at things and buy things. It would seem that the main impact in a festive environment is achieved primarily through the audio and visual media.

Lack of follow-up: There was no planned follow up to the festivals. Follow up is crucial in terms of maximising the initial impact of an event, and 'cashing in' on its value in terms of awareness raising. It seems evident that attracting people to a festival is only the first step in awareness-raising, and that this would only partially retain its value if not followed up by a strategy of further awareness-raising activity.

Mango variety display in Uttar Kannada Festival

Off-Shoots of UKBSAP

Seed Festival: The biodiversity festival in Sirsi inspired a Seed Festival as part of a grassroots seed network (Malenadu Home Garden and Seed Exchange Collective), involving 60 women from 5 villages around Yellapur. The Seed Festival was a way of making sure that the seed network was worth pursuing further, and the success of the festival has provided the impetus to continue the network: "It was a thumping success, with 100 women from 7 villages, though we expected only 50 women. They all set up their seeds and forest produce as exhibits, and we had a competition to see which village had the most diverse, the most nutritious and the most aesthetically pleasing exhibit. Then there was a talk on nutrition, family health and community health. There was also an amazing seed exchange. A variety in one village is often not there in another, and people think it has disappeared. The seed exchange allowed them to discover that all these varieties still exist, and that they have to continue growing them, and that they have the power to control seeds. This was a direct off-shoot of the NBSAP. If anything is participatory, it is a process like this. It may not be cutting edge science, or a huge network with huge results. But it is a small thing which has started to make a difference in people's lives."

Capacity Building: Sneh Kunja, one of the key NGOs involved in the UKBSAP, felt that the process provided valuable capacity building of the organisation: "We definitely benefited as an organisation. Before, we had isolated, scattered thoughts on biodiversity issues. Now we have the whole picture, and there is a vision. Through this process, links with people have become closer and stronger. Therefore chances to work with other people on issues of forestry, etc., have opened up."

KBSAP and UKBSAP: Implementation

As in many other states, the context in Karnataka is not very conducive to participation in government environmental planning. As such the KBSAP process was a unique attempt in inviting such a wide scale of participation. In terms of implementation of the KBSAP, there was a great deal of cynicism among interviewees regarding the state government's willingness to take account of the KBSAP recommendations: "The whole concern is very low in the government's priorities. They are very happy with the way they are doing things. Once a senior bureaucrat of the Government of Karnataka gave me a half an hour talk on how, if there were no NGOs and no judiciary, life would be heavenly – and that it is these who bother bureaucrats and do not allow them to run the government the way they wish. To him these were very undesirable elements in society. That is not unusual. His articulating it was unusual, but that is more or less the approach of most of the bureaucrats and many politicians too."

Nevertheless, the following initiatives have emerged with a view to advocating the implementation of KBSAP recommendations:

• Most of the KBSAP recommendations were included in the biodiversity section of the Karnataka State of the Environment Report, which is a separate report to the state government (as opposed to the KBSAP which is a report to the central government). This was possible since the CES was in charge of preparing this biodiversity section. A synergy was also achieved between the UKBSAP and the Karnataka State of the Environment Report, thus reinforcing the chances of UKBSAP recommendations being implemented by the state government. A key facilitator felt that the UKBSAP process had a positive impact on the subsequent State of the Environment Report discussions because "people were already awakened through UKBSAP, and they came forward with more concrete and studied recommendations." Conversely, the UKBSAP took advantage of the opportunity by strengthening and finalising its recommendations only after several consultative meetings had been held specifically for the State of the Environment Report.

• The state government has agreed to allow the State Steering Committee (comprised mainly of various department representatives and headed by the Chief Secretary) to remain in place even though the KBSAP process is officially complete.

• A meeting of 30-35 NGOs was called by CES after the completion of the KBSAP. The objective was to create awareness among NGOs about KBSAP, to discuss its recommendations, and to get them to follow up implementation in their own areas. Most of these NGOs had not previously been involved in KBSAP.

• CES initiated a more detailed dialogue with various government departments, since the inclusion of officials within the KBSAP process was relatively low.

• In 10 districts (out of 29), CES held district level meetings in two phases, to discuss possible outcomes of the KBSAP, and to get feedback. A summary of the main issues addressed by KBSAP was distributed to district-level NGOs, officials and other interested individuals. In some districts a more formal district-level response to the KBSAP was prepared, regarding district-level action that needs to be taken.

• Based on the KBSAP, CES brought out a series of 40-50 page booklets on a variety of themes. These were distributed to a number of schools and NGOs in Karnataka.

• One of the four case studies (on Amanikere tank) helped to create awareness and an impetus for local action among residents of the town of Tumkur, which is the location of the Tumkur Amanikere tank. A representative of the Wildlife Aware Nature Club, which conducted the case study, noted, "The tank is full of sewage and water hyacinth. After the case study we conducted a de-weeding programme with thousands of members of the public involved. KBSAP helped because we got to know the exact status of the tank due to the case study. We also brought out a booklet on the tank and distributed it to the public. This brought about a major change in the minds of the public in Tumkur."

Maharashtra

Maharashtra state

Maharashtra state has a context of vigorous social activism, with large numbers of NGOs, people's movements and other institutions engaged in environmental and social activity. As one of the more prosperous states of India, its private and state sectors have ample research facilities, scientific and technical knowledge and widespread use of information technology.

The coordinating agency chosen for the state plan, YASHADA (Yashwant Rao Chavan Academy of Development Administration), reflected the significant resources available in the state. It is located in Pune, an important centre of academic and NGO activity. A state-run academy, YASHADA's Centre for Environment and Development focuses on "training and research programmes for officials and non-officials, and enables environmental audit and assessment for district and municipal self-governments. The Centre... collaborates closely with various departments of the Government of Maharashtra towards recommendations on development administration concerning environmental issues" (YASHADA 2001). From 1996 to 2001 the Centre conducted over 75 training programmes and workshops, attended by almost 1500 state government officials.

Given this context, there were high expectations of the Maharashtra state process. In particular it was felt that within the BSAP process, YASHADA could provide a valuable interface between government officials and the non-governmental sector since it has the capacity to reach out to both; and that it could work towards internalising the BSAP strategies within the administration, which would be crucial to implementation. Indeed, the enthusiasm generated by the idea of the BSAP process was reflected in the first meeting called by YASHADA in Pune, which attracted about 50 participants with representation from NGOs (including those working at rural grassroots level), academics, government officials and students.

It was therefore unexpected that the process turned out to be one of the most disappointing among the NBSAP sites, in terms of participation and output. Several interviewees expressed surprise that it had not turned out differently with such a capable organisation in charge. There is not a great deal to say about specific 'tools of participation' in the case of Maharashtra; since the different activities that did occur were fragmented and sporadic, it is difficult to analyse them as part of a strategic process or to draw out useful transferable tools.

However one of the main reasons for choosing to include the state-level process in this handbook was to examine why a process so full of potential turned out to be disappointing. An examination of the process indicates interesting lessons with regard to monitoring and accountability, the selection of the coordinating agency, and follow-up communication.

Process Outline

1. Meetings: Two large meetings were held in Pune, attended by about 50 NGOs, academics and officials; seven smaller meetings were held for people who contributed more directly to the output.
2. Thematic groups: Sixteen thematic groups were created from among a cross-section of the people who attended the meetings. Coordinators for each group were to write a report on each theme with

inputs from group members.

3. Workshops: Two workshops were conducted on Fodder Security (in collaboration with Anthra, a national NGO) and on Plant Diversity. The fodder workshop was attended by about 60 people, including officials, NGOs and farmers, and four working groups were formulated to give suggestions for the BSAP. The plant diversity workshop was attended by about 25 people and primarily dealt with taxonomy. There was a lack of follow up with participants after both workshops.

4. Village-level data collection: A workshop was held in Velha tehsil, Pune district, on village-level environmental planning. It was attended by 22 representatives from 6-7 villages, who were trained to conduct a survey on biodiversity parameters and the perspectives and wishes of stakeholders. Sixteen student volunteers from CYDA (Centre for Youth Development and Activities) also received training to conduct village-level surveys for documentation of indigenous knowledge on biodiversity. 120 villages around the state were covered. The information sought in the questionnaire format was mainly factual, though volunteers were instructed to also ask villagers for suggestions on inputs to the BSAP. Some of the problems encountered during this activity were: the study was limited by spending only 2-3 days in each village which is too short a time for villagers to give information to newcomers; many of the student volunteers did not have a science background and so had difficulty in understanding the concept of biodiversity information collection; it may have helped to include anthropology or social science students because they would have known how to conduct surveys and interviews.

The survey information does not appear in the collection of thematic papers that was put forward as the Maharashtra BSAP. However, YASHADA used the survey information to prepare a 'Citizens' Charter' (an administrative manual), for village level development. The Charter is produced as a Government of Maharashtra document. Based on this Charter and internal discussions over two years, YASHADA produced a panchayat almanac or guidelines ("Mahasik Margdarshika") for environmental decision-making by panchayats. The almanac is part of the syllabus of Panchayat Raj Training Institutes that are coordinated by YASHADA. There are about 18 training institutes in Maharashtra attended by panchayat members and village level development workers. The coordinating agency describes this as a direct output of the NBSAP, since NBSAP resources were utilised to create "a wider ripple effect".

5. Newsletters: A series of newsletters was produced to brief people on the Maharashtra process, in Marathi and English.

6. Website: A website was set up by the coordinating agency especially for the Maharashtra process.

7. State Steering Committee: A State Steering Committee of almost 100 people was set up, in an attempt to give representation to everyone and all major government departments. This was irrelevant, and possibly an impediment, to the process since there was no clear-cut formulation of what responsibilities the individuals in this committee had.

Weaknesses

Lack of acceptance of the process requirements by the coordinating agency: There was clearly a disparity in terms of what the NBSAP process required of the coordinating agency, and what the coordinating agency felt was necessary to do. Firstly, the principle of launching a wide-ranging participatory process for creating a state plan was not really accepted by the coordinating agency. It was felt that since the thematic reports and recommendations were to be written by experts who already had years of experience in the subject based on participatory work, there was no need to have more participatory processes for the sake of it: "[It is no use] to keep calling meetings on the same issues. We know that the end recommendation is

going to be, for example, that fodder diversity should be encouraged." Each thematic report written by an expert in the subject, was thus treated as a thematic plan for the state. Secondly, it was felt that the time and resources provided for the NBSAP did not match what was required from the process. Since the NBSAP funds were seen as insufficient for the process requirements, the coordinating agency used the opportunity to internalise biodiversity concerns into its ongoing research and training programmes. Thus the focus was on a form of implementation of biodiversity concerns rather than on writing a plan.

Given this basic clash of perspectives in terms of how to go about the planning process, the choice of coordinating agency was obviously not appropriate. It is not clear whether part of the problem may have been insufficient communication regarding what was expected of the process, prior to YASHADA accepting the role of coordinating agency.

Sporadic activities: Activities were fragmented and sporadic. Several proposed activities did not take place, such as a biodiversity festival in Latur, capacity building courses, Pune-based meetings on urban biodiversity and environmental management, and a series of 12 meetings around the state. A year after the national process began, only two meetings had taken place for the Maharashtra state process. By this time many other states had moved forward substantially, and some had even started framing the first drafts of their action plans.

Poor follow-up and communication: Poor follow-up and communication with participants (and the TPCG) after the first one or two meetings created confusion, disinterest and eventually a loss of momentum. Poor communication meant that most initial participants were unfamiliar with the status of the process (also making it difficult to get feedback on most activities for the purpose of this study). For example, none of the interviewees (including the TPCG) were aware of the initiatives regarding the Citizens Charter or panchayat almanac. Most were also not aware of the village-level data collection. Indeed, most people would have difficulty identifying these particular activities as part of the NBSAP process, since the results did not in any way reflect in the Maharashtra BSAP itself. Those participants who tried to follow up with the coordinating agency for information were usually unsuccessful. Others felt too external to the process to feel any interest or responsibility for following up. However, there were hints that people who had taken up responsibilities did not go about the task more proactively, and waited for the coordinating agency to take the lead, thus creating delays. It also seems apparent, however, that the coordinating agency did not take sufficient initiative in mobilising and holding the interest of participants through regular communication and updates.

Unclear funding and institutional support: The thematic reports were supposed to be based on workshop consultations, but a lack of clarity regarding funding and institutional support from the coordinating agency created uncertainty and frustration: "Meetings were to be called in YASHADA for each theme...but there was no chance to hold any such meeting because there was no formal agreement to do so. How can a thematic coordinator go around inviting people? ...They [the coordinating agency] should have told the thematic coordinators that these are the funds at your disposal, go ahead and co-ordinate the meeting and use the NBSAP letterhead."

Monitoring and accountability – too little, too late: Eventually, a few months before the final deadline for the BSAP, a core group of people was formed to prepare a series of thematic papers which was then put forward as the Maharashtra BSAP. These papers were not based on participation or consultation, but were academic exercises based on the expertise of the writers. The impetus for doing so was an internal NBSAP evaluation mission by the Ministry of Environment and Forests, headed

by an official from New Delhi who called a meeting in YASHADA in April 2002, and suggested the above recourse given the short time period left till the deadline. Most interviewees felt that this evaluation was useful, but came far too late for the Maharashtra process:

- "We were not looking for papers. We were looking for meetings, strategies, discussion, engagement."
- In addition one interviewee felt that "the evaluation was of no use in particular because it had no right to take any action" and could only make recommendations.
- However, it was widely felt that only such officially sanctioned monitoring could carry any weight when monitoring a government institution.
- Some interviewees felt that one or two earlier such missions from the Ministry of Environment and Forests should have been undertaken. This would have created a monitoring system that ran parallel to that of the TPCG, with the added weight of being officially sanctioned visits.

Lack of accountability of the coordinating agency: The selection of YASHADA as the coordinating agency was promising for various reasons, as detailed above. However, it is a government organisation and in the course of the NBSAP process, showed several characteristics that often make government organisations frustrating to deal with, such as unresponsiveness, the lack of a personal touch to communication, and a centralised mode of functioning.

- **The type of agency affects the possibilities of accountability:** The Maharashtra experience illustrates the need to refine the process of coordinating agency selection keeping in mind that the type of agency will affect the possibilities of accountability. When a government institution is disinterested in a process, there is very little that can be done by outsiders due to the frequent lack of accountability within government institutions, or simply due to the slow workings of the bureaucracy if accountability is to be made possible through official channels.
- **Funding is not always a lever:** The TPCG had very little leverage to ensure the satisfactory completion of the process. NBSAP funding was negligible in the context of a large government institution, so action such as holding back funding till certain activities were completed would have made little difference. (Changing the coordinating agency was not an option, as already explained).
- **Arrangements within the coordinating agency are important:** Some people were simply of the opinion that a government agency in general is the wrong agency to handle such a process since government institutions usually have their own agenda, are too bureaucratic and find it difficult to be self-critical. It is often difficult for a government agency to understand or mobilise participation. However, much depends on the capacity and interest of the individuals in charge. When the individuals in charge are interested in a process, a government agency can show high levels of achievement because of the immense human resources and institutional back-up that it commands (as demonstrated by the participatory BSAP process conducted by the Forest Department in Sikkim). But even when the individuals in charge are interested, they must be empowered to give their time and energy to a project (e.g. by being freed from other responsibilities). A person working full-time on a project would also be more obliged to produce results. In the case of the Maharashtra coordinating agency, there was only one very busy person in charge of NBSAP with many demands on his time.

Nagpur city sub-state site

Nagpur is an interesting example because it was the only urban NBSAP site in the country. The main objective for this study was to see whether any specific tools or processes relevant to an urban context, had been developed or used there.

Nagpur is among the largest cities in India, with a population of 2.2 million. It has a distinctly cosmopolitan character due to its location on the cusp of the Marathi-speaking region and the Hindi-speaking belt, and the large number of migrants it attracts. Surprisingly for a large city, Nagpur retains large green spaces, while its cultural heritage in the form of temples, ghats and crematoriums is interlinked with the variety of wetlands – tanks, rivers and lakes - in and around the city. Surrounding the city are significant areas of agricultural and forest land. This natural capital and increasing degradation of the wetlands have been an impetus to environmental groups in Nagpur to push for the concept of an Eco-City, i.e. a city that would capitalise on its natural resources and promote the city as a centre for the service industry (conference centres, trade and tourism) rather than a centre of traditional heavy industry. Nagpur has a range of active NGOs, many of which work on environmental issues such as environment education, tree planting, heritage conservation, tank protection and research.

The 74th Amendment to the Constitution provides for the participation of citizens at various levels in the urban planning process, mainly through People's Committees. However the amendment has not been applied to Nagpur, despite protests by social activists. Currently the Nagpur Municipal Corporation (NMC) and the Nagpur Improvement Trust (NIT) are the bodies that deal with town planning, though there were opportunities through the 1990s for some NGOs to participate in conservation committees established by the city administration. The first real joint venture between an NGO (Vidarbha Nature and Human Science Centre) and the NMC, the Eco-city concept, fizzled out. Overall, interviewees for this study were cynical about the willingness of the city authorities to address conservation concerns or work with citizens for this.

Process Outline

The coordinating agency was the NGO, Vidarbha Nature and Human Science Centre (VNHS), made up of professionals (e.g. architects, scientists) who work part-time for VNHS. The organisation works on heritage conservation and scientific environmental research including data collection. The LAC, i.e. the core, working group, mainly included volunteers from different professions who were already linked with the coordinating agency. A key limitation of the Nagpur process was that the site was selected one year later than other sites. Thus the time constraint faced by almost all sites was exacerbated in the case of Nagpur, limiting possibilities within the process. The coordinating agency also did not get the benefit of the orientation given by the TPCG to coordinating agencies at the beginning of the process.

Prior to the Nagpur process there was no comprehensive scientific checklist of the city's biodiversity. Therefore the process focussed on desk-based research for compiling scientific data and baseline information to underlie a general city strategy. The strategy included a recommendation to create more specific plans in the proposed next phase of planning, with wider stakeholder consultation.

The participatory methods used were:

1. Meetings:

- Two formal seminars, with attendance from NGOs, academics and the general public.
- 5-6 informal meetings of a smaller core group of NGOs.
- A working group for scientific inputs met once a week.
- A women's group of about five members had a

discussion regarding their contributions and attitudes to biodiversity conservation.
- A group of 10-12 fishermen were invited for a meeting organised by the coordinating agency. In addition individual interviews were carried out by the coordinating agency, with about 80 fishermen. Both activities were primarily for gathering factual information such as species availability.

2. Questionnaire:
A questionnaire prepared by the coordinating agency was circulated to various government departments to get written inputs.

3. School Projects and Competitions:
As far as involvement of teachers and students is concerned, the state of Karnataka has taken the lead in the national NBSAP process and its experience offers many lessons to draw on (see Tool 1 in Karnataka section for details). The initiative in Nagpur was comparatively modest, involving three schools and about 100 students:
- The aim was to raise biodiversity awareness and also to include the students' suggestions in the BSAP. Eventually it was felt that the students' reports were not good enough to be included in the final document, but the awareness-raising component seems to have been more successful.
- Teachers received information at a meeting regarding the NBSAP and guidelines about what was required of the student exercise.
- Students were invited to study a nearby water-body (e.g. tank) and write reports about how it could be conserved, and how children could be involved in the conservation.
- Prizes were distributed for the best reports.
- Other awareness-raising activities with children, conducted by a local NGO, included a heritage walk, greeting card-making session and a rakhi-making session using natural materials.

Key points made by interviewees regarding students' and teachers' involvement, were almost identical to those made by teachers in Karnataka, mainly that teachers have very little spare time, so environmental activities need to be included within official extra-curricular activities, and that it is a myth that students are only interested in watching television. It was felt that on the contrary students tend to be very enthusiastic about such projects, while it is teachers who show a lack of initiative in planning activities for their pupils. As in Karnataka, a weak point was insufficient guidance to teachers before the exercise.

4. Individual Interviews:
- Individual interviews were carried out with some milkmen in villages on the fringes of the city, and also with fishermen.
- Morning walkers, especially elderly people, were approached by some LAC members for informal chats regarding their memories of Nagpur's environment in years gone by.

An interesting proposal, which was not really carried through, was interaction with people in rural and semi-rural areas around Nagpur to examine how these areas have a bearing on the environmental context of the city (and vice-versa).

For the purposes of this handbook, the main relevance of Nagpur is in drawing out lessons specific to the urban context, and some broad (not necessarily tool-specific) lessons on coordinating agency capacity, the use of local resources, and the use of extractive research methods. The questionnaire to government departments is also examined. None of the other tools are of special significance in the context of the NBSAP; similar tools have been used more effectively in other states, and will therefore more profitably be examined in the context of those states.

Tool 01 Questionnaires

Written Questionnaire for Government Departments

Objective:

To get inputs for the Nagpur BSAP from government departments, in writing.

Method:

A questionnaire was prepared by the coordinating agency. The questionnaire was sent to various government departments along with information on the NBSAP. The departments were requested to send their written replies to the coordinating agency.

Output:

The experience of trying to elicit government participation through written questionnaires was similar to Sikkim, in that it brought forth almost no responses (see Tool 3 in Sikkim section for details). In Nagpur, government input in the BSAP remained absent due to poor response to the questionnaire. (Officials did not seem to have a sufficient presence at the two large meetings organised either). There was also the additional complication of not particularly smooth relations between environmental NGOs and the municipal authorities.

At least two NGO representatives felt that the absence of government participation was a major lacuna in the process, because the government would be the main implementer of the plan. The municipal commissioner felt the same way: "Unless the administration is involved, the plan will never be implemented. So there needs to be a collaboration between government and NGOs."

It seems clear that a written questionnaire is not the right format to use for official departmental inputs unless it is backed by official orders. If at all a questionnaire must be used, it needs to stick to requesting factual information.

Weaknesses:

Lack of official orders to respond: Officials often do not respond if they have not received orders to do so. Some interviewees felt that a directive from the Ministry of Environment and Forests to various departments would be the only way to get full co-operation and inputs from government departments. Such a directive was never sent in any of the states.

Hesitance at putting information in writing: If requested for information, officials often prefer not to put it in writing. In Nagpur some officials were willing to part with factual information as long as it was informal and off the record.

Format of the questionnaire: While officials hesitate at putting information in writing, even fewer officials, if any, would be willing to put their opinions into writing. One of the major weaknesses of the questionnaire circulated to officials in Nagpur was that it asked far too many broad, open-ended questions which would require a great deal of time to answer, and would also involve the personal opinion of the respondent:

> **E.g.** "How serious are the Planning and Development authorities regarding nature conservation issues? What is the level of their commitment?"

Some of the questions were even slightly provocative, which does not help to get officials to respond (the following question is doubly unhelpful since it only invites a yes/no response):

> **E.g.** "Is there sufficient transparency in the working of the authorities?"

Nagpur Process: Lessons Learned

Challenges of Eliciting Participation in an Urban Context

The use of urban-specific tools was absent. Also absent was the expected inclusion of sectors specific to an urban context, such as slum dwellers, trade unions or residents' associations spread across different social/ecological areas of the city (e.g. the concerns of residents in the old city or near a heritage water-body, are different from those in newly developed areas.)

Indeed, the urban context seemed to restrict the scope for general public participation, with some amount of cynicism about this especially since past attempts at mobilising the public over specific issues have not been wholly successful.

Public apathy: The Nagpur BSAP states, "the large proportion of migrant and resettled populations naturally has lesser attachment to the city, leading to apathy regarding local development and management issues. The task of changing the mindset of the people and orienting / committing them towards conservation is that much more challenging" (VNHS 2002).

The report also notes: "Interaction with... unorganised citizens reveals a negative picture as far as biodiversity conservation is concerned. The common citizens and their groups, except of course the committed NGOs, show very little concern for such issues."

Analysing the cost-benefit ratio: An apparently high cost-benefit ratio was a central reason in not attempting to involve the general public in the Nagpur process. It seemed that to get a successful response a very large effort would have to be made, for which there was neither the time nor the resources.

Preparing the ground for participation: In addition, it was felt that in the context of an apparently un-sensitised public, organising a public meeting would create hype without substance: "It is important for us to first understand the context – study and research are important aspects. It does not help to just go to the public. It is not enough to just organise marches and leaflets. You need an environmental and legal study to back it up. Because the administration is thick-skinned about things like marches."

Stakeholder consultation has therefore been proposed in the BSAP as a next step. Though this does not quite fit into the NBSAP stipulation regarding wide participation across sectors, it is arguably a very practical view that refrains from launching into general public participation for the sake of it, when the context, time and resources mean that the effort is not likely to yield sufficient results.

In some contexts, this restrained approach may have its own value – it may be preferable to diving into a participatory process regardless of the context and resources available for achieving a desired result. In some senses, adequate preparation for participation is as important as participatory activity itself.

Finding Opportunities Within Constraints: On the other hand, there were perhaps some lost opportunities in terms of reaching out to some sectors – even if sectors such as industries or consumer associations or slum dwellers may not be particularly interested in issues of biodiversity conservation, consultation with such sectors could have at least recorded their perceptions regarding biodiversity conservation, which could then have been a basis for a component on awareness raising in the strategy and action plan.

This was done to some extent by initiating a discussion on biodiversity conservation among a women's association, which concluded that biodiversity conservation needed to be on the agenda of the association. The discussion was, however, limited to only about five women.

Inexperience of coordinating agency regarding participatory processes

Observations about the Nagpur process must be seen in light of the fact that the Nagpur BSAP process was approached primarily as a report-making exercise which focussed on data compilation, rather than an activist approach that aimed at wide consultation and people's mobilisation. This was a reflection of the capacity of the coordinating agency, which did not have previous experience in participatory processes.

For example, about 20 NGOs were consulted to differing degrees but only 5-6 were actively involved in the process. For most NGOs participation did not go beyond attending the two large meetings that were held. A wider consultation was not achieved beyond these meetings, and therefore ownership of the process among a wider base was not really created. During interviews some felt that NGO participation had been sufficient, while others felt that it was greatly lacking.

There were no non-environmental groups involved, which was also a gap in terms of reaching out beyond the environmental sector to other urban sectors like slum dwellers or labour unions.

Capacity to deal with responses

A question linked to the issue of 'preparing the ground for participation', is whether the capacity of the coordinating agency is sufficient for managing the level of participation that is solicited. Interestingly, the coordinating agency issued a newspaper appeal inviting people in Nagpur to come forward and contribute to the plan. Many queries were received, but then the coordinating agency realised that it did not have the capacity to deal with the responses that had been solicited, and therefore the queries could not be followed up.

Soliciting participation is one thing, and being able to strategically organise the respondents, is another. Coordinating agencies need to be clear about their capacity to handle respondents and queries; the objectives and outreach of a call for participation need to be strategized accordingly.

An extractive methodology restricts ownership over a process

Consultation with fishermen, milkmen and with the general public (through the informal 'chat' mode) was predominantly extractive, in terms of eliciting (mainly factual) information without giving very much back in terms of information about the NBSAP or follow-up after the writing of the plan. Clearly this restricts the scope of any identification with, or ownership of, the final plan – or even the process, for that matter. For example, the fisher representative who was interviewed was happy that fisher-folk had for the first time been consulted about their knowledge on fish species etc, but he had no idea about the NBSAP, and was surprised to learn about it during the interview.

There was a clear sense of an opportunity lost: "At the meeting they only told us that they want information. But I did not know what it was for. They did not ask us to plan solutions for our problems. They mainly wanted to know about the fish species, etc. There was no detailed discussion about our problems. It would have been good if they had told us that the meeting is for making a plan. This would have given us a vision, and we would have put forward our own plan, according to our own capabilities. But they stressed that they only want to collect information from us." It is possible that information about NBSAP was given, but not clearly enough. There was no follow-up with the fisher-folk after the meeting, and the interviewee felt that the meeting had not benefited the fisher-folk at all.

Interestingly, the coordinating agency felt that there was no real need to extensively consult the fishermen at this stage because some members of the working group had worked in fisheries for many years and already knew the fisherfolks' problems. This was precisely the sort of top-down planning that the NBSAP was trying to avoid – a

greater orientation to the coordinating agency may have helped. On the other hand it must be kept in mind that Nagpur joined the process a year later than other agencies and therefore lost out on the intensive orientation given to all coordinating agencies in Delhi.

Need to Identify and Use Local Resources

It is vital to survey and make use of locally available human resources and networks in order to maximise opportunities and almost certainly discover surprising possibilities:

- An extractive approach can lead to lost opportunities. Whereas the fisher-folk meeting comprised of 10-12 people, the fisher representative who was interviewed felt that had he been asked to mobilise people, he would have brought 500 people to the meeting.
- Though the coordinating agency did not have the capacity to handle a meeting of 500 people due to lack of experience in conducting such meetings, this could have been achieved by requesting another NGO with grassroots experience to conduct the meeting.
- Similarly, though the coordinating agency did not have the capacity to directly reach out to slum dwellers, it was possible to do so through other NGOs that already work among, and have a network of, slum dwellers (e.g. Yuva Rural Nagpur works in 105 slum areas in the city). Possibilities of involving other urban sectors through existing bodies like trade unions, corporate body associations or public sector institutions (many of which are involved in 'city beautification' activities), were also not explored.

This is indicative of a wider observation across the various states studied; coordinating agencies often do not survey and make use of existing local human resources and networks to achieve their aims.

Off-Shoots of Nagpur Process

- Though the coordinating agency limited itself to involvement with three schools, the awareness raising extended to 20 schools and 600 students as an off-shoot of the original effort. This was because a group of teachers took it up as an independent initiative, where the students were not told explicitly about the BSAP, but were given exercises in planning for local conservation, similar to the exercises done for the Nagpur BSAP.
- One of the teachers involved in the NBSAP activities, Mr Kurzadkar, received a Rashtriya Puraskar for Best Teacher (a national award) because of his work in environmental activities. The NBSAP activities played a major role in this. He felt that this was an inspiration for other teachers and would encourage them to work on environmental activities as well.
- Indeed, Mr Kurzadkar noted that he was already getting enquiries from other schools about environmental activities: "Others have become interested in what we have done, and they want to do the same. So our benefit is still ongoing. Our teachers [i.e. those who were involved in NBSAP and other environmental activities] are invited for lectures or guidance – so they have become resource persons."
- Nisarg Vidya Mandal, a teacher-based environmental NGO, included NBSAP as a topic in their teachers' workshops to discuss their suggestions for the Nagpur BSAP. About 20 teachers were involved in this.

Sikkim

Sikkim sate and Rathong Chu Valley Sub-state site

The coordinating agency for Sikkim was the Forest Department (FD), but – unconventionally - a large bulk of the work was handed over to a small grassroots NGO, the Khangchendzonga Conservation Committee (KCC) based in Yuksam, in the Rathong Chu Valley, West Sikkim. The village of Yuksam is the starting point for treks into the Khangchendzonga National Park, and tourism is central to the village economy. KCC is made up of members from the local village community and local stakeholders in tourism, and works to counter the negative impacts of tourism on the community's natural and cultural heritage through activities such as awareness raising, monitoring of natural resources, advocacy and local skill development programmes. The FD envisioned the Sikkim process as primarily grassroots-centric. Its collaboration with KCC was a vital element in shaping the process at grassroots level.

Unlike most other states, which had separate coordinating agencies for the different sites within a state, the FD was the sole coordinating agency in Sikkim for the state and sub-state site. Consequently, there were considerable overlaps between the Sikkim state process and the Rathong Chu Valley sub-state process. The methodology was the same all over Sikkim; the Rathong Chu Valley sub-state BSAP was completed first, and only then, based on learning from the experience, was the process launched all over the state thus helping to refine the methods used. The only additional element in the Sikkim state-level process was the involvement of institutions and government departments based in Gangtok, the state capital. The findings from the state and sub-state site are therefore presented in a consolidated form here.

These findings relate only to the process in South and West Sikkim, unless specifically mentioned otherwise. The process differed to some extent in North and East Sikkim, though it was also grassroots-centric there.

Process Summary

1 Meetings:

- Two state level meetings in Gangtok with participation of various non-governmental and governmental sectors, including the Army.
- Thirty-nine public hearings in rural areas to create 39 Community Strategy and Action Plans (CSAP). To bring out gender-based interests in the environment, one plan based on men's suggestions, and a separate one based on women's suggestions was prepared at each public hearing. The two plans would then make up a single CSAP. The inputs into the 39 CSAPs were then tabulated and prioritised to produce a single CSAP for the state.

2 Biodiversity Festivals:

- Two biodiversity festivals in Yuksam (West Sikkim) and Chungthang (North Sikkim)

3 Questionnaire:

- Questionnaire circulated by the FD to various government departments to elicit written, factual information regarding existing government schemes. This was supplemented by personal interviews with key persons.

4 Media Strategy:

- A state-level media campaign, to raise awareness of the process and solicit inputs, included calls for participation through radio talks in six languages, newspaper advertisements, cable television advertisements and announcements on the news on television.

In terms of the participatory methodology followed at grassroots level, the Sikkim process was one of the most successful in the country. It was somewhat less successful in garnering support and participation from non-rural sectors. (Women's participation was poor even in rural areas, which was the case almost all over India.) Given the NBSAP's aim of including sectors which are most marginalized from policy planning, the rural emphasis was laudable. However, ownership and collaboration across different non-rural sectors was not achieved. To a large extent this was due to a relative neglect of the process at the level of the state capital, Gangtok, where some key players had only a marginal involvement in the process. In addition, a poor response was elicited from government departments. This was unfortunate, since an innovative process had been envisioned by the FD, of clubbing the community vision with governmental inputs to produce the state plan. The process was expressed succinctly as a 2-step 'formula' in the Sikkim BSAP:

1 FSAP + MSAP = CSAP

[i.e. Female SAP + Male SAP = Community Strategy and Action Plan]

2 CSAP + GSAP = SBSAP

[i.e. Community SAP + Government SAP = Sikkim Biodiversity Strategy and Action Plan]

The idea was to club the aspirations of the people with existing government schemes to achieve a synergy between the two.

Though the Sikkim BSAP was produced by adhering to this formula, it was the CSAP (and within that the Male SAP) which was the more successful component in terms of participation, for reasons discussed below. The most significant exclusions in the above formula are business interests (namely the tourism industry) and urban-based NGOs. This is also discussed below.

Tool 01 Village Level Public Hearings

Objectives:

To elicit grassroots-level inputs to draw up the CSAP. Village level public hearings were the main method of gaining inputs from the grassroots.

Description and output:

- A total of 39 village level public hearings were conducted around the state, spread across all 4 eco-regions (sub-tropical, temperate, alpine and trans-Himalayas) of the state.
- 39 CSAPs were produced (one at each public hearing). These were used by the coordinating agency to prepare one consolidated CSAP for Sikkim.
- Six to seven villages were represented at each public hearing, covering one or two administrative units known as gram panchayats. The average number of people per hearing was 60-70, including about 15-20 women.

In most cases it was the first time that the villagers had done such a participatory planning exercise. The fact that the FD wanted to involve the villagers in the SBSAP aroused some curiosity: "Normally the FD does not ask our views for any scheme. We were all curious about why the FD was asking us." It was also the first time that public hearings had been conducted in such remote locations of the state. Overall these hearings elicited very active participation.

Villagers from Yuksam, Khecheopalri Lake and Bikmat were interviewed for this study. All the villagers who had attended a public hearing felt that everyone had a good opportunity to speak at the meetings.

Method:

Selection of Sites for Public Hearings:

- In Rathong Chu Valley sub-state site all the villages were covered, since the sub-state plan was meant to be more detailed than the state level plan.
- In other regions in the state, a representative sample of villages was selected by the coordinating agency, based on criteria such as representation of ethnic diversity.

The Coordinating Team:

The team that coordinated and facilitated the public hearings was made up of representatives from different institutions, some from the neighbouring state of West Bengal. The team included members from the FD, KCC, Ashoka Trust for Research in Ecology and Environment (Bagdogra, West Bengal), School for Vocational Studies and Languages (Kalimpong, West Bengal), Society for Environment Education and Development (SEED) (Kurseong, West Bengal) and World Wide Fund for Nature (Sikkim unit). This group often trekked to remote villages to conduct public hearings.

Invitations to the Public Hearings:

- In most villages the coordinating team went from house to house to invite people.
- Support was also sought from panchayats to inform people about the meeting.
- However, the very first meeting in West Sikkim had to be repeated due to a poor turnout. The coordinating team had set up posters and charts in the village market area to publicise the meeting, but this did not work. Local advisors later proved valuable, as the team was advised by some local people to inform the villagers at the dairy, where they gathered regularly to collect milk. It was also suggested that the dairy was the best place to invite women to the meeting since it is primarily women who collect milk.
- Vehicles were arranged by the FD to ensure that women from far-off villages could attend the meetings.
- In Karji village the team requested the help of the village school teachers to inform the community through the students.

Agenda and Proceedings at Public Hearings:

- Charts and posters relating to biodiversity in Sikkim were used at meetings by putting them up in advance. As people came in for the meeting the team would ensure that everyone saw and received an explanation about the charts before sitting down. The charts were used to generate discussion.
- A typical agenda was as follows, with variations as needed:

1. Welcome speech, with an introduction on biodiversity
2. An explanation of the aims and process of NBSAP.
3. A discussion on the threats to biodiversity.
4. Resource mapping and micro-planning using APPA and 4D tools (explained below).
5. Nature games (explained below) would be played at points when participants were bored or when some sort of 'group energising' mechanism was needed.
6. At the end of the hearing a summary of the CSAP was printed out and handed over to the community.

- Language: Hearings were conducted in the relevant local language (Nepali in the South and West, and Bhutia in the North).
- Length of public hearing: One or two days.

Facilitators:

- Meetings in South and West Sikkim were conducted by KCC, who had the advantage of having had a presence in much of the area for 6-7 years and who had built up a capacity to conduct participatory techniques such as APPA. The FD coordinating officer and staff were present primarily to organise logistics. This was beneficial as people usually felt more at ease with villagers from Yuksam conducting the meeting, rather than FD officials.
- As far as possible a local person was engaged to help conduct the meeting so that people felt free to speak their minds, particularly in areas where KCC was not known: "In APPA you teach some of the village people about the process, and then they go and collect the information for you, instead of an outsider going there. That way you get the right information, but you require 3 to 7 days to do this. We had only 2 days. It is almost impossible to cover all the issues in one meeting. If you depend just on the community to bring up the issues, they may forget something on that day. So it is good to have someone from that village itself to help conduct the public hearing and to help review the output as well. So as far as possible we got a local person to help conduct the meeting." A problem was that there was no time to do an orientation of local persons a few days in advance, so that a local person could take full charge of conducting the meeting: "We were all mostly from outside. It would have been better for local people to have done the meetings, for much better social acceptance."

Using the APPA Technique to Conduct Public Hearings

APPA (Appreciative Participatory Planning and Action) is a technique developed by The Mountain Institute (Nepal). It was the central tool used in the public hearings held in Sikkim, to create the CSAPs. For a guide to APPA see the Resource Kit for Community-Based Tourism for Conservation and Development produced by The Mountain Institute, Nepal (2000), also available at http://www.mountain.org.

Briefly, APPA focuses on discovering the strengths of a community, and building on those to empower communities to plan and manage conservation and development. It is a positive approach as opposed to one that focuses on identifying problems and their solutions. For example, a problem and solution can conventionally be stated as: "She is an abandoned wife. She needs education, loans and a profession". In APPA this can be stated more positively as: "This is Maya. She is a great cook and learns quickly. She can teach cooking to lodge operators. She will benefit from training on how to teach" (The Mountain Institute 2000).

There are four steps in the APPA methodology, known as the 4Ds: Discovery, Dream, Design and Delivery. These steps fitted neatly into the CSAP planning process:

- Discovery: In the Discovery stage community members explored the natural and man-made resources they possessed. A list of resources was written down by a meeting facilitator. The community members were then asked to use this list and collectively draw a Discovery Resource Map that located the various resources in respect to their relative positions.
- Dream: In the Dream stage community members discussed what dreams they had for their village, and what development or conservation activities could be taken up. Again, all comments were noted down by a facilitator. Based on this, participants made a Dream Map, i.e. a vision of how their village should be in the future.
- Design: In the Design stage there was micro-planning and drawing up of strategies and actions to realise the Dream. Villagers also drew up a comparative map, based on the previous map, to show locations of future activities like footpath construction or afforestation.
- Delivery: The 4th stage, Delivery, depends to a large extent on the future implementation of the Sikkim BSAP though some activities could be carried out self-sufficiently by the community.

The maps were drawn on large chart paper, brown paper or newspaper. The Discovery and Dream Maps of each village were included in the individual village CSAPs.

Nature Games

Nature games were used as energizers at meetings, whenever participants became a little lethargic. These were fairly successful at biodiversity awareness raising and sensitising as well, and were especially popular with children. KCC was already skilled at using these games, many of which have been developed by the Centre for Environment Education (CEE), Ahmedabad, an MoEF-supported institution with a mandate to promote environmental awareness across the country (www.ceeindia.org). Some nature game examples:

Web of Life: This game is played in a circle. Each player receives a role card naming an element in the ecosystem (e.g. sun, tree, monkey, seed). Players pass a ball of string to each other, based on the relationships between the different elements, creating a 'web' of string. The relationships between the different elements are discussed. If one element is killed or polluted, all the persons holding role cards of elements that are affected, drop their strings, thus demonstrating how the entire ecosystem or 'web of life' can be destroyed. (Bhutia et al 2002). The game needs very basic material, but is also available as a boxed set from CEE.

Who Am I? : This game is most suitable for children. A picture of a plant or animal is pinned on the back of a player. S/he then has to find out what that plant or animal is, by asking questions to the rest of the group, such as 'Does it have a tail?' or 'Is it found in the wild?' The group can answer only 'yes', 'no' or 'maybe', till the player correctly identifies the plant or animal (Bhutia et al 2002). An Internet version of this game can be played at www.kidsrgreen.com.

Gaining Women's Participation:

Gaining women's participation was a learning process for the FD officers, KCC and other team members, as initially no special steps were taken to involve women. It was observed that even when they attended meetings they hardly spoke. Thus efforts were begun to involve them:

- Informing them through posters, etc. specifically at places where women congregate – like the dairy co-operatives.
- At meetings the team ensured that the best location was reserved for women to sit together. E.g. if chairs were available, these were reserved for women. If there was a carpet, one portion would be reserved for women.
- When women sat collectively there was a 'good feeling' and they had more confidence to speak up. They could talk amongst themselves, and even if there was only one old lady who spoke, the others would tell her their points and she would speak out.
- Old or middle aged women were the ones who usually spoke up. The younger ones tended to only speak amongst themselves. So there was a special effort made to involve older women and tell them that their presence was needed.
- With these measures, women's participation did improve and become more vocal. In some meetings women did not speak much despite these measures. It turned out that a better way of gaining their participation would be to have separate women's meetings: "In Hee Patal most of the harm to biodiversity was being caused by men. But when there is a local bully doing these things, nobody likes to speak up. After the meeting the women were having snacks in a separate room and we started a discussion with them. At that stage they told us the real issues, like excessive grazing in the forest – and they had far more courageous and practical suggestions than the men." While the men had given options like fencing the forest to reduce grazing, the women suggested eviction of graziers from the forest: "In meetings people hardly ever say that you should implement the Forest Act or the Wild Life Protection Act. They try to find a middle way like fencing. But the women suggested enforcement of law."
- If women's participation is seriously sought, events like separate women's meetings need to be included in the time-frame or schedule, right from the beginning. The experience in Hee Patal showed that a separate women's discussion can bring forth valuable results. A discussion with women during the field visit to Yuksam also made it clear that the women would have been more interested in attending the meeting if there had been a separate one for them – because in a general meeting, it is the tradition that only the male head of the family will attend. One participant in this discussion said, "Whenever there is a meeting they always tell me to tell my husband to come to the meeting. But no-one tells me to come!"

Strengths:

Almost all village-level interviewees were satisfied with the way the meetings had been conducted.

Generating knowledge: "Each of us had knowledge of conservation, but we had never collected it all together. The

NBSAP gave us the opportunity to generate collective information".

The motivation of a dream: "In the meeting villagers gave information individually, and a map was made of our Dream Village. This was a big motivation, and we would like to continue being associated with the NBSAP. The 4D model was very easy and successful. Through this tool we could understand the feelings of the villagers."

The involvement of KCC: "Apart from the tool, the person using the tool also makes a big difference. KCC already had a good rapport with the villagers, so the villagers were free and frank. So the first strength was that KCC was at the forefront, and the FD was there only to help out with logistics and some technical points like forest laws."

Building on strengths instead of identifying weaknesses

Neutral locations: The location of the meeting was decided in consultation with panchayats, and it was usually held in a school or forest rest house. Personal residences were avoided as that would have brought up local politics.

Use of local advisors: This proved useful for advice on how or where to invite people.

Ice-breaking techniques: A helpful technique used in some of the meetings was the Snowball Technique. A ball was passed around and a person who was handed the ball was obliged to speak.

Team composition: One of the factors that made the meetings successful was the reaction of villagers to the composition of the team that conducted the meetings: "Villagers participated because scientists and officials from the DFO level (Divisional Forest Officer) came – that created an effect. Because usually they only see a ranger or a forest guard, so they were overwhelmed by the presence of high level people." In Yuksam a men's discussion group said that they were very curious to know what the FD officials wanted to ask them. On the other hand, the presence of high level officials can also work against a successful meeting, if it is not controlled to reasonable numbers. One team member described the experience in Yuksam saying that "too many big officials were there – this limited the time for discussion".

Clubbing meetings with other projects: At several locations the NBSAP public hearing was clubbed with other FD projects (e.g. the Integrated Wasteland Development Project for the Ministry of Rural Development) that also required a public hearing. This saved time as well as funds.

Weaknesses:

Ownership over output: The most important gap in the Sikkim process is the fact that in the vast majority of cases, villagers do not possess copies of their own CSAPs - which of course impinges on the 'ownership' of the process, as well as possible local-level initiatives for implementation. This is particularly significant given that many of the problems listed in the CSAPs do not need a project or funding, but mainly require intervention by the community or the government for law enforcement. A significant part of the problem is that the villagers are not likely to feel associated with the SBSAP, firstly because it is in English (only the executive summary is in the Nepali, Lepcha and Bhutia languages) and secondly because it does not include the individual CSAPs but only presents a consolidated version of all CSAPs (only the Rathong Chu sub-state plan includes the CSAPs of all the 7 individual villages since it covers a smaller area). Villagers are more likely to feel ownership not with regard to the SBSAP, but to their own CSAPs – which are not available to them. At the end of each public hearing, the villagers were given a summarised print-out of their CSAP, but this was in English since Nepali software was not available.

Understanding NBSAP: This point was more of a challenge, rather than a weakness of the public hearings. Though in most cases efforts were made to tell villagers that it was a purely planning exercise, this was often difficult for them to comprehend. Interestingly it was difficult to explain to villagers that they had a 'blank canvas' for planning, because people automatically wanted to know what the 'scheme' was, and what was possible within the 'scheme', since they are used to planning within particular government schemes. Having explained that they had a blank canvas, it was then difficult to explain that it was only for planning, and not necessarily for immediate implementation. Both these things were, understandably, alien concepts - to plan for whatever one wishes, but then also to know that it is not for implementation: "The CSAPs raised a lot of expectations. Though we tried to explain to the villagers that this is just a planning exercise that will maybe be implemented in the future, and that their aspirations will be documented for the first time – we still failed to convince them that it is only a planning exercise. They always felt that whatever they put in the CSAP would eventually happen."

Empowerment linked to implementation and follow-up: Any sense of empowerment, arising from participatory planning, is

likely to be short-lived if not followed by some form of implementation, either locally initiated or state-sponsored. It can lead to disillusionment with the process; for example, this interviewer was reproached by some villagers in Yuksam for coming after two years to ask questions about the meeting! Everyone wanted to know about implementation, which in most cases is still a question mark since the implementation phase was not built into the NBSAP process. The only leverage envisaged for implementation was follow-up by the coordinating agency, or public pressure. Sure enough, one panchayat member from the Khecheopalri Lake community did the rounds of various government departments in Gangtok, armed with his CSAP and demanding for it to be implemented - but no one was interested. In fact, there has been some implementation of the SBSAP in other locations – but most villagers and other interviewees were not aware of this. This is part of an overall weakness of information dissemination in the Sikkim process, as there does not seem to be any specific mechanism in place to ensure that people are made aware of developments in implementation or other follow-up.

Lack of institutional support or capacity building after public hearings: This is linked to the above point of lack of follow up. The FD coordinating officer in charge of the SBSAP is all too aware of this shortcoming: "[In the SBSAP process] there was no component of institution building or any support to villagers. It would have been good to have some seed money for giving villagers some training to convert the action plan into project proposal formats, because they are the ones who will eventually implement the action plans. A two-day public hearing is not enough – even if we had given them their CSAPs in the local language. We need some kind of continuous interaction with them for at least 6 months to create project proposals. Without this, it is difficult to get the CSAP funded. So we have stopped at the stage where we have documented all the information." Only NGOs like KCC, which have the capacity to take the CSAPs to the next step in implementation, have produced tangible results in terms of implementation.

Length of meeting and length of stay in village: One day was often considered too short for planning. Though the village level interaction was very good with an informal atmosphere, with the team eating and sleeping in the village, a greater household level interaction would have complemented the effort. While the APPA brings out a group statement, an informal interaction and cross-checking of points would have brought out any hidden issues or voices of those who do not speak much at public hearings.

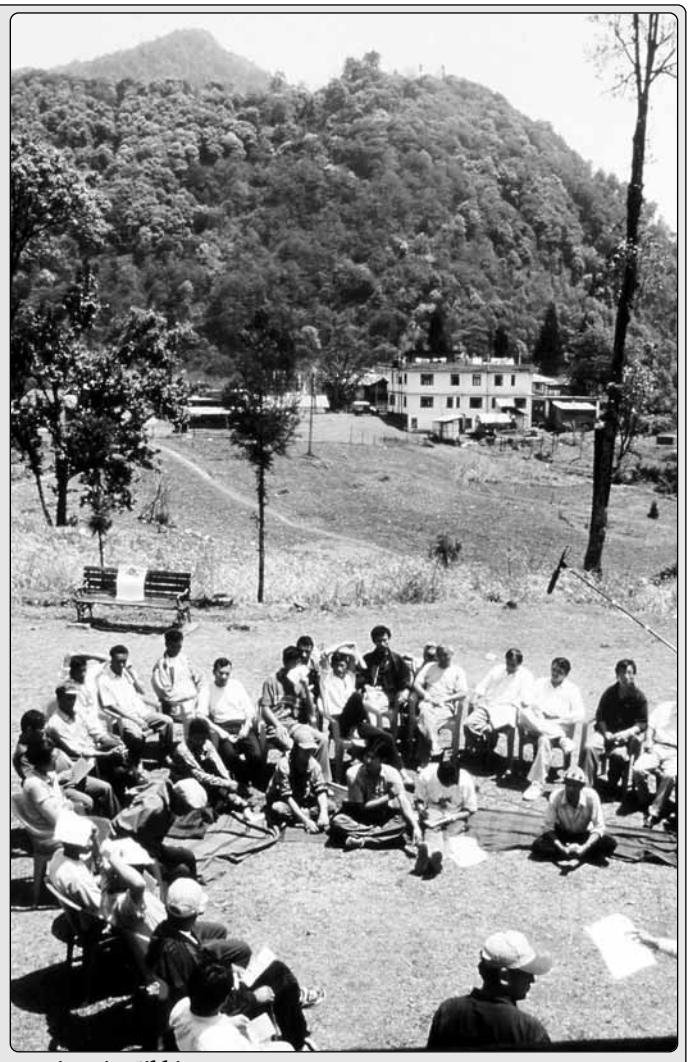
Poor timing: The timing of the meetings sometimes excluded participation of some people. In Yuksam teachers and students were left out of the meeting because it was held on a weekday. Also, the meetings were held in the monsoon when the roads are bad and it is difficult for people to attend meetings. It would have been better to hold the meetings in November-December when people have more leisure as the cardamom harvest is over.

Insufficient prior information: A common complaint was that not enough information about the meeting was given, prior to the meeting, so that people could prepare themselves and know what the meeting was about before it began. This point came up in two separate group discussions with villagers: "The FD and KCC did not give us enough information beforehand – they just came on the day and conducted the meeting"; and "It would have been good to get advance information so that we could have mentally prepared ourselves for the meetings. Before the meeting people should understand what is NBSAP - if more people know about it in advance, more will come." Prior information would also be likely to initiate informal discussion among people before the meeting, perhaps leading to more crystallised thoughts or questions at the meeting itself.

Insufficient advance notice / advertising: Often people were informed about the meeting only a day in advance. This was especially so in remote villages. While most of the villagers in Yuksam had no complaints about this (since the meeting was held in Yuksam itself), the members of the Khecheopalri Holy Lake Welfare Committee (KHLWC), which had been requested to gather people for the meeting in Khecheopalri, felt that it prevented them from gathering more participants: "We should have gotten written information; they should tell us in advance for what purpose we are having the meeting, so that we could have [explained to people] and collected more participants that way. To improve participation of villages we have to speak to them beforehand, give information 10 days before and convince them to come. The location of the meeting was convenient for all the villages around. Recently we organised a health camp on medicinal herbs. We had received the information one month in advance, so we managed to get 2000 people together." The only way KHLWC could invite people on short notice of a day was to send various people to surrounding villages to invite the villagers. In the event, about 50 people came from 2-3 surrounding villages

(Khecheopalri village, Tsocho village and Tingling village.). It was also felt that the KHLWC should have received some posters and banners to make it easier to gather people. In Yuksam, several interviewees felt that there were too few villagers at the Yuksam meeting, about 80-100, and that more could have been gathered had there been advance notice given on this through some form of advertising.

In some places where sufficient advance notice was given, this proved valuable in persuading people to attend the meetings. For example, in the villages in South Sikkim, where SPSS (Sikkim Paryavaran Samrakshan Sangh), a small, grassroots NGO, helped to conduct meetings, people were initially not interested in attending since it was the first time such a planning exercise was being done, and so they did not know what to expect. SPSS members countered this by: personally inviting people in villages where it already had a good reputation; distributing letters saying that the overall development of the village was going to be decided, and that therefore it was important for people to attend; giving information to villagers in the form of a street play and songs on conservation. This experience also supports the view of the KHLWC who felt that advance notice would have given more time to persuade people to come, and would have ensured better participation.



Meeting in Sikkim

Tool 02 Biodiversity Festival

Objective:

- To be a day-long celebration of local natural resources.
- To raise awareness about the need to conserve cultural and natural heritage.

Description and Method:

One festival was held in Yuksam, and another in Chungthang in the north of Sikkim. The following description refers to the Yuksam festival, with some references to the Chungthang festival where appropriate. 200-250 villagers from 7 villages, and some tourists, attended the Yuksam festival.

Invitations:

- There was a verbal announcement about the festival at the Sunday market in Yuksam where people from other villages converge as well.
- However, no other special efforts were made to invite people, since word gets around very quickly once preparation, such as putting up the stage and practicing for cultural performances, begins.
- People from neighbouring villages came to know of the festival through their children who were participating in the dance practices.

The following elements made up the day-long festival.

Biodiversity Exhibition

The objectives were:

- Enabling people to visualise the ecosystem by looking at examples of the biodiversity around them.
- Disseminating some of the strategies and actions developed for the Rathong Chu Valley BSAP in a visual manner.
- Reflecting the cultural heritage and values by displaying traditional equipment, handicrafts and skills, particularly for young people who had never been exposed to some of these things.

The exhibition had the following displays:

NTFP display: 28 local NTFP varieties and their uses were on display. The uses were diverse, including medicine, food, horticulture and making paper. KCC members and FD staff collected some of the NTFPs for display from the forest. Villagers also contributed to the display.

Seed display: A KCC member brought several local seed varieties for display, including peas, turnip and onion. Other villagers also contributed seeds.

Models: Models were made from locally available material like mud, pebbles, plastic and cotton. All, except one model, measured about 1x1 foot. The models were made using the model-building experience of resource persons from SEED, and the local knowledge of KCC members. SEED members did the work voluntarily, with only basic expenses, food and lodging provided by the coordinating agency:

- *Model of Khangchendzonga Biosphere Reserve:* This was the largest model at the exhibition, measuring 3x1 feet. It showed the sacred landscape of the area with the trekking trail from Yuksam to Dzongri. The landscape included important landmarks such as huts and resting places, as well as small models of flora and fauna.
- *Model of Khecheopalri Lake to demonstrate its degradation:* Two models were displayed, one showing the present status of the lake, and another showing what would happen after 10 years if the status did not improve. In the model with few trees and a lot of garbage, the water was polluted. In the model with more trees and less garbage, visitors could see clear water. The School for Vocational Studies and Languages (Kalimpong) contributed to this model.
- *Model showing the pollution of drinking water:* This showed how upstream pollution affected the water quality downstream. It was a working model of a mountain with a plastic pipe running through it to show that changes at the top, such as disturbance in the soil or plastic pollution, results in dirty water flowing to the bottom through the pipe.
- *Model showing the links between deforestation and landslides:* Two tilted trays were displayed, one containing only soil and another containing soil with grass planted in it. Water was poured into

each tray to demonstrate that bare soil slips away while the planted soil is secure due to the grass.

- *Model of an energy-efficient, smokeless stove (chullah):* This showed how the stove uses firewood more efficiently, and how an outlet (chimney) for gases improves the availability of oxygen.

Charts on plastics, garbage disposal and food webs: The emphasis was on pollution caused by plastics, and urged a strategy of 'Reduce, Replace and Reuse'. The food web chart was sourced from the International Snow Leopard Trust. There were many simple charts prepared by SEED and KCC, using chart paper and felt-tip markers. The charts were complemented by demonstrations by SEED members:

- A demonstration showing how to use plastic bags to stuff pillows.
- A demonstration on composting biodegradable waste, and digging pits for non-biodegradable waste. (This was done as an accompaniment to a garbage disposal chart that focused on segregating garbage into biodegradable and non-biodegradable waste.)

Handicrafts and Handlooms: Over 20 kinds of traditional bamboo handicrafts were displayed, along with handlooms such as the Sikkimese Dragon Carpet and sheep wool blankets, contributed by local villagers. This was to discourage the use of synthetics and plastics. Traditional musical instruments were also displayed. Villagers were mobilised by KCC to contribute artefacts.

Commitment Tree: A large sheet was displayed with the picture of a tree on it, prepared by KCC members. Small pieces of paper and pens were provided. After going through all the stalls visitors were asked to think of a wish, or make a personal pledge to the environment, write it on a paper and stick it on the tree. The District Collector was also invited to make a pledge, and the team felt pleased to get a specific commitment from him (reduction of unsustainable yak grazing). When initially contacted for supporting the festival, the Collector had not shown much interest, though he did attend on the day. Thus it would seem that an interactive display such as the Commitment Tree and popular pressure could encourage an official or decision-maker to enter into the spirit of the event and make a specific public commitment, which can then be followed up later by locals.

CSAP Presentations

The objective was to advertise the achievements and results of the CSAPs. The planning for the Rathong Chu Valley CSAPs had been completed by the time of the festival, and representatives from each CSAP village were asked to come and present their CSAP to the audience. The original chart papers that had been used for drawing maps were used for the presentations. In cases where a representative could not come, the CSAP was presented on his behalf by someone from the coordinating team. In this way all seven CSAPs of the Rathong Chu Valley sub-state site were presented. In between each CSAP presentation there was a cultural presentation (dance, skit, etc.) to keep the audience's interest alive. People gave more importance to the CSAPs because of the festival, which proved to be a good way of advertising the achievements of the process in each village to a large number of people who were not aware of the process before. As a member of the coordinating team said, "Villagers from adjoining villages could know about the action plans of their neighbours – so there was a circulation of ideas." There was a sense of pride among the villagers who presented their CSAPs: "Four people went from our village. I went to present our CSAP. I felt proud to present it there. I would have been more proud if there had been more people from our village."

Cultural Shows

Volunteers from the village set up a stage, using bamboo, plastic sheets and water pipes. Two schoolteachers took on the responsibility of organising the cultural shows and also helped with scripting the plays. Rehearsals for the play and dances went on till late at night. Adults from the village were persuaded by KCC to act in the skits.

- *Folksongs and Dances:* The songs and dances were not exclusively traditional, nor were they necessarily related to biodiversity. The music for dances included a contemporary Nepali song and a Hindi film song, which were very popular at the time. This ensured that the entertainment value of the presentation was enhanced by not being rigid about sticking to old, traditional songs. The songs and dances were performed by village children.
- *'Puppet' Show:* This was performed by young children, who themselves acted as puppets. Faces were painted on the stomachs of the children. The upper bodies of the children were covered by a screen. Only the painted stomach and legs of each child were visible; the effect was of looking at a small man. The 'small men' acted out a short, comic skit. Like the songs and dances, this was done purely for entertainment.

- *Skit on a local pollution problem:* The Tourism Department has built a toilet over a stream at Dzongri, for the benefit of the Himalayan Mountaineering Institute (HMI), a training institute in Darjeeling, West Bengal. The people who drink that water downstream obviously have health problems. The skit showed a HMI porter falling ill after drinking that water, and how a tourist tries to help him. This was a comical skit that evoked a lot of laughter, and people could identify with it at once because despite protests to the Tourism Department, the toilet still exists. The skit once again advocated that the toilet be destroyed and a complaint made to the FD and the police. It was felt that plays are an effective method of advocacy and disseminating information to people in the form of entertainment. The skit was devised impromptu by an ATREE volunteer.
- *Play on the Search for Shangrila, the Hidden Paradise:* Religion plays an important role in Sikkim. Rathong Chu Valley was chosen as a sub-state site because of its importance as a sacred landscape, and the value of this landscape was emphasised through a play. Prior to the play there was an introduction regarding the NBSAP and the Rathong Chu Valley plan. The play depicted a true story about the search for Shangrila. It revolved around religion and conservation, and was in three parts, resuming at intervals through the day. Like the skit on the polluted stream, this play also had much local resonance as it enacted an event in the 1960s, within living memory of several villagers: "People still talk of the place where life is immortal and where one grain of rice can feed the whole population of [Shangrila]" (Bhutia et al 2002). Many Yuksam residents, including one coordinating team member's father, and another team member's grandfather, had been on the expedition to hunt for the entrance to Shangrila led by a monk from Ladakh. After trekking into the area and spending several months there, the monk did not succeed in opening the gateway to Shangrila. As the attempts to open the gateway continued, an avalanche killed the monk and some of his followers; it was said that a major cause of the failure was the lack of respect shown to the environment by the followers, who polluted the place and killed animals. The moral of the story was that people need to conserve their cultural heritage and natural heritage, which are closely interlinked.

The KCC member whose father had been on this trip, documented the information from his father. Three members from KCC, ATREE and the FD prepared the script, which was then practiced in advance. Actors included children and villagers, as well as KCC and ATREE members.

Presentation on Traditional Medicine by a Healer:
A healer spoke about the dependence of traditional medicine on the rich plant diversity, and pointed out that there was reference to this richness in various religious mantras (verses).

Conservation Message by a Monk
A monk spoke on biodiversity and how its loss was linked with natural calamities. This was accompanied by a skit showing a travelling monk, and the environmental problems he encounters on his travels.

Video Filming the Festival
This film was later shown on local cable TV, and has also proved to be extremely valuable process documentation. For the purposes of this research it proved useful in evoking the 'feel' of the festival, which is not really possible to understand in interviews (especially since interviews were held through an interpreter). A press release was also issued to local papers after the event.

In the north, in Chungthang, the biodiversity festival was clubbed with an annual festival to reduce costs and take advantage of the large numbers of people who would anyway be there. The festival was greatly appreciated, and many people said it should have been repeated again the following year.

Strengths:
Comments about the festival were overwhelmingly positive, with people saying they had learned a lot, especially from the exhibition displays and the CSAP presentations, and had enjoyed the day. Following are some of the factors that made the festival a success:

Creating pride in local products: Regarding the Chungthang festival in North Sikkim, a facilitator commented, "The festival broadened their outlook from the daily humdrum because they saw that you can display everyday things and get recognised for it. An important emphasis was getting across to the people that domestic biodiversity is as important as wild biodiversity. I think it did not strike people before that the everyday things in their

gardens were also important. For the locals their small festival really got highlighted with officials present and video filming, etc. It should happen more frequently."

Personal explanations: Each stall had a person present to explain what the display was.

Team work and village ownership: All the stalls and performances were organised by the Yuksam villagers in a spirit of team-work. There was minimal outside help, and not much money was needed to organise the festival. Villagers brought personal contributions for the displays, with some help from the FD for collecting NTFP specimens from the forest.

Provision of transport for visitors: Transport was provided by the FD for villagers coming from far-off areas so that they could bring their display materials easily.

Visual impact and creation of nostalgia: The display of traditional items was especially appreciated since many of the things are slowly disappearing from everyday life. This message seemed to have reached young people very effectively, and also the crowd in general, as mentioned by an interviewee who runs a local shop in the central bazaar area of the village: "After the programme people came from all the villages to my shop, and were discussing and commenting on the festival. They were all saying how important it is to preserve our traditions."

Personal efforts by 'outsider' organisers to integrate into local culture: Though the festival was organised by KCC members and other villagers, there were some outsiders involved, most prominently the FD official in charge of the Sikkim BSAP. Though he is not Sikkimese, he made an effort to integrate by giving his presentation in the local language. This was much appreciated, even though his language was not perfect: "I felt interested that the DFO (Divisional Forest Officer) tried to speak Nepali, mixed with Hindi and English. We felt good that he tried to speak our language."

Entertainment value: The cultural entertainment was designed to attract visitors and hold their interest. Elements of the NBSAP (e.g. CSAP presentations) were included in between the various dances and skits, in an effort to hold the audience's interest.

Weaknesses:

Lack of time for organisation: The festival was organised on very short notice of three days, which limited the time for preparation and invitations to representatives to present the CSAPs. On the other hand a team spirit was created: "Even the models were made in 3 days. Some people were making models, some were practicing skits, some were practicing dances. We got help from schoolteachers to write the play script. The teamwork was very good. It was not a problem getting volunteers for the dances, but for the skits we really had to convince them."

Insufficient advance notice: More advance notice would have allowed a wider base of participation in preparing for the festival. For example the KHLWC felt that they could have been consulted in preparing the Khecheopalri Lake model, to add local knowledge to the effort.

Poor media coverage: A press release prior to the event may have helped increase numbers and media coverage by inviting journalists to cover it. This could not have been done on three days' notice, however. In terms of participation from local and neighbouring villages, though, facilitators felt that no invitations were necessary: "When you have a cultural programme, the word just gets around when you start constructing a stage. There is no need to work hard for inviting people!" Thus if the aim is to invite only people from neighbouring areas, it would seem that neither invitations nor a longer notice period are required.

Timing: The timing of the festival could have been different to enhance the value of the individual village CSAPs, since the consolidated CSAP for Rathong Chu Valley sub-state site had not yet been prepared. A coordinating team member noted, "The CSAPs existed in rough format on chart papers. It would have been good to have the festival at a time when the draft document [i.e. the consolidated CSAP for Rathong Chu] had been prepared so that people could have discussed it, and received copies of it." Also, timing the Yuksam festival with an existing annual festival, as was done in Chungthang, would have ensured greater turn-out of people. The KHLWC noted that there is an annual festival in March in their area (not far from Yuksam), and the biodiversity festival could have been linked to that.

Poor follow-up to festival: A point made during a men's group discussion in Yuksam was that the demonstrations on composting etc. were very useful, but for it to have a more lasting impact, follow-up training sessions would be required. However, one interviewee mentioned that he had begun composting after hearing about it at the festival. Follow-up to any activity enhances its value, as was also clear from the complaints that there was no meaningful follow-up to the public hearings (e.g. even the CSAP

presentations at the festival were mainly for the benefit of visitors to the festival, rather than the community who made the CSAP).
Congestion: The festival space was congested and there were no benches to sit, so people had to sit on the ground.
Bad weather! : The visitor turnout was low due to heavy rains. About 400-450 people were expected, but only 200-250 came.

A Biodiversity Festival in Sikkim

Tool 03 Questionnaires

Questionnaires to Government Departments

Objective:

To elicit information about existing government schemes. The aim was to club together the needs of the CSAP with the possibilities within existing government schemes, as a practical step towards possible implementation of the CSAPs: "Since we would not be getting specific funds for implementing the SBSAP, we needed to link it with some government programme. So we thought it would be better to identify some existing programmes which would meet the needs of the people so that we would not need additional funds for SBSAP implementation. [Through the questionnaires] we found out what are the existing government schemes and priority areas. If the government is putting a lot of funds into a particular sector, that means it is a government priority. The priorities of the people came out in the CSAPs. So by cross-referring we could find out which schemes match the priority of the people. So it was basically linking government schemes with the aspirations of people."

Method:

Questionnaires were circulated to most of the state government departments in the state capital, Gangtok, and also to officials in many of the districts. The questionnaire was factual in scope – it did not ask for suggestions regarding what should go into the Sikkim strategy and action plan, but simply asked for factual information regarding existing government schemes in the department. It focused on asking:

1 What government schemes are currently being implemented by the department?
2 What are the approximate financial targets?
3 What needs are addressed by the schemes?
4 What are the gaps within the schemes?

The information gathered from the questionnaires was clubbed together and called the GSAP (Government Strategy and Action Plan) - which was perhaps a misnomer, since the GSAP was not an action plan for the future, but a compilation of possibilities that already existed within government schemes.

Response:

The response to the questionnaire was extremely poor, and, as explained in the next section (Tool 4), a state-level workshop was utilised to get officials to fill in the questionnaires on the spot.

Weaknesses:

The main weakness of this method was that it assumed that officials would have the time and interest to voluntarily fill out a written questionnaire. Some of the lessons that emerged from the experience were:

- The government is lethargic, so involving its departments requires special skills.
- Official orders are needed to get a good response from officials. If the Ministry of Environment and Forests had requested all other ministries to send directions to the concerned departments in the state government, then the departments would have been more co-operative.
- A coordinating officer in charge of NBSAP should have been allocated within each department, because senior officers do not have the time to get involved in such a process. Correspondence could have been done directly with the coordinating officer who could forward information from his department.
- The experience suggests that personal contact may be the best way to engage with a government department: eventually the questionnaires were completed by asking officials to fill them out at a state-level workshop.

Tool 04 State Level Workshops

Objective:

- To achieve a synthesis of the GSAP and the CSAP.
- To provide a platform for village-level representatives to interact with officials.

Method:

- Two state level workshops were held in the state capital, Gangtok, to which various government departments, urban NGOs and other institutions were invited. There were also some representatives from the rural communities that had prepared CSAPs.
- **1st workshop:** Most of the first workshop was utilised for getting the questionnaires (discussed as Tool 3 above) filled up by the government representatives, since most officials had not returned the questionnaires earlier. The coordinating agency subsequently used this information to write a GSAP. The consolidated CSAP for Sikkim was also presented at this workshop.
- **2nd workshop:** At the second workshop the results of combining the CSAP and GSAP were presented. Feedback was sought on the presentation, and the information was later used to write a draft SBSAP.

Weaknesses:

Formal and intimidating setting: Unfortunately the workshops in Gangtok did not serve the purpose of villagers interacting with government officers. The workshops were formal affairs with the presence of the forest minister and high-level officials, so villagers could not participate in any meaningful way. This is a problem that persistently comes up in workshops of such a nature; though the intentions may be good, villagers who have often travelled for hours to attend a workshop end up being victims of tokenism. The setting of a formal conference hall and the presence of officials are usually too intimidating and unfamiliar for villagers to participate confidently. The language used excludes them since proceedings are often at least partially conducted in English, and translation facilities are not provided. Despite the best of intentions this familiar story seems to have been repeated at least to some extent at the two state level workshops in Gangtok.

Insufficient prior information and follow-up information: A common complaint about the state-level workshops was the lack of sufficient information prior to the meeting, and a lack of follow-up afterwards. Representatives from urban NGOs in Gangtok made the points that without sufficient prior information:

- **Commitment levels will remain low:** "We need to know more about [NBSAP's] implications – we need to be briefed about it, what benefit it is going to have. Unless such communication and clarification happens, the level of dedication and commitment will be absent. This was very evident in the NBSAP process. They should have had some sort of introduction to say that a big thing is happening, so please come and join in. This would create more enthusiasm and spread of awareness. We knew they were soliciting a lot of participation from everybody – but participation in what? What exactly am I supposed to do? This was not clear."
- **Directly impinges on the quality of inputs at the meeting:** "The meeting was called without really distributing an agenda – so at best you can come out with knee-jerk reactions. Nobody can come there really prepared."
- **Reduces the scope for wider participation and unexpected, interesting outcomes:** "If we had prior information we could have sub-invited other stakeholders and said, look, this is an opportunity for you to really speak your mind."

Some General Lessons from the Sikkim process

Some overall gaps (not necessarily tool-specific) in the Sikkim process were as follows:

Insufficient use of local resources and networks

A significant gap in the Sikkim process was the low participation of urban NGOs and the tourism sector. This meant that the resources and networks of these sectors were lost to the Sikkim process.

Urban NGOs: Among the urban NGOs there was a general lack of enthusiasm about the NBSAP, to a large extent because there was no 'buzz' created around it – for most, involvement in the NBSAP process was limited to participation in one or both of the workshops held in Gangtok, with no follow-up after the meetings. Not surprisingly, there was no sense of ownership and not much commitment towards the Sikkim plan. For example, one NGO that was on the State Steering Committee had involvement limited to the state workshops and knew very little about the status of the process.

Sikkim has relatively few NGOs, and its NGO movement is fairly new. Very few NGOs are registered and many operate as informal clubs or associations in rural areas. In Gangtok there are just a small number of NGOs who have the capacity to lend their support or voice to an endeavour like the NBSAP. Though based in Gangtok, at least 3 NGOs with some institutional capacity carry out work in rural areas; it would have been relevant to take these on board.

Firstly, the reach of NBSAP in rural areas could have been maximised by mobilising existing rural networks of NGOs. An NGO representative felt, "[Urban] NGOs should have been involved in more than giving their comments, having snacks and going home. A lot of the work could have been done through NGOs in their own areas. You need to decentralise, with the government only as a transparent facilitator." For example the Voluntary Health Association of Sikkim (VHAS) regularly works with its own network of district level NGOs, and though it focuses on health, this also includes environmental education.

Secondly, urban NGOs have the potential to form a consolidated voice at the level of the state capital, as opposed to most rural NGOs which are scattered all over the state and work mainly at a local level. Such a consolidated voice could have emerged if an ownership of the process had developed among these groups. Urban NGOs would also be able to contribute to a bird's eye perspective on the state as a whole, offering perspectives on linkages and parallels across the state, as opposed to small, local, rural groups.

However, every FD interviewee felt that the inclusion of urban NGOs was irrelevant to the process, since it was most relevant to have a process at the rural grassroots level. Thus in a sense the Sikkim process, though very successful at a grassroots level, was perhaps needlessly narrow and did not really attempt to create a collaboration or ownership across some important sectors.

At the time of the field visit for this study, CDs of the Sikkim BSAP were being circulated to various NGOs in Gangtok, with the request to review the document and send in comments within 15 days. Being invited to one or two meetings, and then being given a draft report for comments after approximately 2 years does constitute a participation of sorts, but it is not the kind of participation that is very meaningful, or that will generate any ownership or strong support of the plan. This in turn could impinge on its implementation.

Tour Operators: Tourism is central to the Sikkimese economy. Sikkim gets more than 200,000 tourists (including 12,000 foreign tourists) per year, and the numbers are growing (Government of Sikkim 2001). Tour operators are stakeholders in the natural environment, and

constitute a major pressure on it as they increasingly take tourists to more and more pristine areas of natural beauty. In general, environmental consciousness is high and the tourism sector is cautious not to destroy the natural environment that is the source of its income. The centrality of tourism in Sikkim is reflected in the fact that at least two key NGOs focus on mitigating the adverse impacts of tourism on the environment: KCC and ECOSS (Ecotourism and Conservation Society of Sikkim). The TAAS (Travel Agents' Association of Sikkim), with 34 member organisations, is committed to a 'Code of Conduct for Eco-tourism in Sikkim', which is published for the benefit of tourists as well as tour operators. In this context it was unfortunate that the TAAS or other representatives of the tourism industry, were hardly involved in the NBSAP process. The main input to the SBSAP regarding the tourist industry was given by the Tourism Department.

Information Dissemination

Distribution and packaging of information: Existing information needs to be distributed strategically for it to have sufficient value. NGOs receive and sift through a great deal of information in their ongoing work – in such a context information needs to be in a consolidated, user-friendly package to have the desired effect. An urban NGO representative noted, "When we got news of NBSAP it was a bit vague. It did not come as a proper package. It was a poster here, a leaflet there. The literature was too fragmented to understand properly. The information was coming in bits and pieces."

Need for information dissemination strategy: In general, information dissemination seems to have been a weakness in the Sikkim process, whether it was information prior to a meeting or follow-up to a meeting, or information about the implementation status of the process.

Often people did not feel that they were kept informed. Prior intimation and follow-up information needs to be strategised and taken into account when developing time-lines and allocating human and financial resources for a participatory process.

Need for a personal touch/face-to-face contact: An important lesson that emerged is that there is no substitute for face-to-face contact, or the personal touch, as a tool for communication. Information sent on email or through letters has very little value when it is not supplemented by regular meetings or briefings: "Who is going to read huge reports on email? It is very important to meet, and show facts and figures and visuals to see what is happening."

Implementation of the Sikkim BSAP and Rathong Chu Valley BSAP

Eviction of NGO: Eviction of the Humana International People to People NGO is an action point in the Rathong Chu BSAP, and was achieved through community action. In 2001 the Humana International People to People NGO acquired about 13 acres of land including 32 buildings from the Rathong Chu Hydro-Electric Power Colony in Yuksam, arousing suspicions among the local villagers because the sale was at a very low price. There was also aggravation due to the fact that it had originally been the ancestral land of the villagers. There was a lack of transparency in the workings of Humana; its objectives were unknown or ambiguous, and there was little response when villagers tried to find out information. There were some benefits in terms of local employment when Humana started a local school, but it also generated too much pressure on the environment without enough gains by the local community. KCC members lobbied with the area MLA (Member of Legislative Assembly) and other authorities; the issue

snowballed and appeared in the press; villagers stopped cooperating with Humana. Eventually the NGO was pressured into leaving.

Yak grazing: The reduction of yak grazing and phased eviction of yak graziers is a high priority in the Rathong Chu BSAP. This is being implemented (as of April 2004) through the Khangchendzonga Biosphere Reserve (KBR) Programme, a joint project of the FD and The Mountain Institute, with KCC as a field partner. Yak grazing is being done in the Khangchendzonga National Park on a commercial level, putting enormous pressure on the environment. There are 40 graziers who own 2,500 yaks, with approximately 90% of the yaks being owned by around 10% of the graziers. The KBR Programme has so far held six consultations and three training programmes with the graziers to provide skills for alternative livelihoods, build an inventory of yak numbers, record the views of the graziers, and find a solution to phase out yak grazing. This will be a long-term initiative as it is not an easy issue to resolve.

Forestry: A member of the Rathong Chu LAC, Ms Tshering Uden Bhutia, was elected uncontested as a Panchayat member and executive member of the Yuksam JFM Committee. This has helped in institutionalising the role of the LAC members in the decision-making process at village level. Following this, a micro-plan for Yuksam was prepared under the South Territiorial Forest Development Agency (FDA) through which some of the forestry objectives of the Rathong Chu BSAP are currently being implemented (as of April 2004). The FDA is an afforestation and forest development programme of the FD and is implemented by JFM Committees, which directly receive funds for this.

Garbage management: Garbage management within Khangchendzonga National Park is an action point in the Rathong Chu BSAP. Implementation of this is underway by KCC, through a UNDP project (as of April 2004). Tourism generates a great deal of garbage in and around the national park. A Visitor Information Centre is planned in Yuksam to facilitate cleaner surroundings. It is envisaged that the Information Centre will generate revenue from tourists, part of which can be used for annual garbage clean-up camps. Construction of the Information Centre has begun, on land purchased for this purpose. The Information Centre will provide information to tourists on the cultural and environmental values of the local community, and disseminate a Code of Conduct. There will be informative slide shows in the evenings.

Medicinal plants: The Sikkim BSAP recommendations on medicinal plants were incorporated into a Plan for Medicinal Plants Conservation and Sustainable Utilization, under a consultative planning project for FRLHT (Foundation for Revitalisation of Local Health Traditions). The micro-planning for the FRLHT project was done by the Rathong Chu LAC. Implementation of this plan is due to begin in 2005, funded by UNDP.

Collaboration with the army: Efforts have begun to have joint monitoring between the FD and the army to combat the stray dog problem near army camps. Dogs congregate near the army mess for the food and soon become semi-wild, attacking some animals and even humans.

Dissemination: Most of the Rathong Chu BSAP was printed by KCC in a booklet titled "Khangchendzonga, The Sacred Mountain: A Biodiversity Handbook". This is being distributed to various NGOs and government departments for awareness-raising, and was also distributed at the World Parks Congress in South Africa, in 2003.

Implementation possibilities through panchayats: A development that offers possibilities for communities and panchayats to independently take up their CSAPs for implementation, is that panchayats will directly receive Rs. 60-70 lakhs (US$ 137,488 – 160,403) per year from the government, from 2004 onwards. (In 2003

panchayats received an initial Rs. 10 lakhs (US$ 22,915) on an experimental basis). Some of this money could be used for CSAP implementation if the community and panchayat wish. For example, the Khecheopalri panchayat president declared that he would try to get the Khecheopalri CSAP implemented through the panchayat funds.

Off-Shoots of the Sikkim BSAP Process

Capacity building of KCC:

• Capacity building of KCC through the SBSAP experience helped it to get an eco-tourism micro-planning exercise for The Mountain Institute in Ladakh, which was completed in the summer of 2003. KCC was also involved in conducting micro-planning for 16 Eco-Development Committees for the South and West Wildlife FDA. Currently KCC is a partner with the FD in conducting micro-planning for the West Territorial FDA in 36 villages.

Capacity building of FD staff:

• After completing the SBSAP the FD was assigned a project for FRLHT, to plan for the utilisation and conservation of medicinal plants through wide stakeholder consultation (Sikkim was one of seven states to do this). The SBSAP process proved a strong base for the FRLHT process: "We already had a process in place – first we did consultation in the different eco-regions, clubbed these together, made a GSAP, etc. We could also improve on the SBSAP process – in SBSAP 90% of our effort went in conducting public hearings, because it was very new for us. So we had very little time left for analysing the outputs of the meetings. For FRLHT we ensured that part of the team was doing public hearings, and part of the team was focused only on writing and analysing the outputs. So the report for FRLHT is technically much stronger."

• In total about 40-50 FD staff were involved in conducting or attending public hearings for the SBSAP, because at all public hearings the officers from that range were invited. Consequently, the officers who were genuinely interested in the exercise also learned about micro-planning: "In fact at the last public hearing in Ribdi, the FD staff did it on their own because they had learned from KCC."

• The process created a strong network of contacts across the country for the FD, which, staff felt, would be of benefit in the future.

Andhra Pradesh

Andhra Pradesh state

The coordinating agency for the Andhra Pradesh state process was the Environmental Protection Training and Research Institute (EPTRI), an institution set up by the state government to provide training, research and consultancy services in the area of environment protection for industries, regulatory bodies, government bodies and non-governmental institutions.

Process Outline

The Andhra Pradesh state-level process is similar to the Maharashtra state-level process in that it was disappointing in terms of process and output (see Maharashtra section for details). Despite an initial enthusiasm from environmental NGOs and individuals, the coordinating agency did not keep up the interest and the momentum, and the process fizzled out leaving a sense of frustration among many of the initial participants. The process essentially consisted of:

- Three meetings in the state capital
- One meeting in a nearby town

This was over the course of 2 years. The process did not percolate down to a grassroots level, and did not secure the active participation of a wide range of actors. In terms of tools used to elicit participation, there is therefore not very much to say.

The main similarity with the Maharashtra state process is the fact that both coordinating agencies (EPTRI and YASHADA) are governmental institutions with a large institutional capacity in terms of human and financial resources. The main difference between the two is the fact that the main weakness of the Maharashtra state process was the coordinating agency's lack of acceptance of the process requirements, whereas it would be more accurate to say that in the Andhra Pradesh state process the main weakness was a lack of institutional capacity of the coordinating agency for undertaking a wide-ranging participatory process. Though orientation was given to coordinating agencies at the beginning of the NBSAP process, this was perhaps insufficient for agencies without sufficient experience in participatory processes. State and local level orientation would have enhanced the national orientation.

Weaknesses

Bureaucratic approach:

- EPTRI did not have experience in conducting a participatory process, and perhaps did not internalise the meaning of wide-ranging, grassroots participation as defined by the TPCG. To a large extent EPTRI based its calls for participation on a series of letters and written communications that seem to have been a sincere effort, but were to a large extent perceived by stakeholders as impersonal. A number of interviewees felt that the lack of a personal touch in terms of invitations and follow-up was a serious lacuna, creating the feeling of dealing with a bureaucratic institution.
- Many interviewees felt alienated from the process. It was widely felt that in meetings the non-governmental invitees were marginalized, while the government officials present dominated the proceedings and seemed to talk to each other over the heads of others present: "[The first meeting] was intimidatingly dominated by senior government people, who were talking to each other, marginalizing people who were not used to talking to higher level people. There was the

notion that biodiversity is a very technical subject. EPTRI did not consciously try to facilitate inclusion of voices... So that was the major flaw in the state level process. People were invited, but not heard properly." Another participant noted:"Representatives from all sectors participated, but it was definitely dominated by the government [people]. They were not open to listening to even the stronger NGOs who could talk."

- Participants felt that many things had been pre-decided without any discussion. For example, several invitees were appointed to the SSC without being consulted, creating surprise and annoyance. It was also felt that the methodology of the planning process had been pre-decided, and that there was insufficient discussion with the invitees regarding this.
- The three major meetings were centralised, held at EPTRI in the state capital, Hyderabad (only one short meeting was held in another town, Tirupati, at a later stage).

Language:

- The language used in the meetings was mainly English, creating a barrier to participation for some NGO representatives who are not fluent in English.

Loss of momentum:

- The long time span between meetings (three meetings over two years) meant that any enthusiasm generated by the process soon fizzled out, as momentum was lost.
- Participants (even some of those on the SSC) often felt disinterested to follow up on the process due to the lack of momentum.

Lack of clear methodology:

- Though responsibilities, like writing papers or collecting information, were allocated to people at the meetings, there was no clear methodology chalked out as to how to go about the tasks. It was not necessarily clear as to what exactly people were expected to do. This was at least partly the reason why some commitments were not kept by participants.

Perception of coordinating agency amongst stakeholders:

- The dynamics amongst local players, and the perception of the coordinating agency amongst local players, are important factors to take into account when choosing a coordinating agency. Several non-governmental interviewees felt that EPTRI was the wrong choice because it does not have a record of handling successful participatory processes or links with local communities. Some people did not take the process seriously because of the institution heading the process, and others dropped out very quickly due to the feeling that it was going to be 'just another' government process.
- The feeling that the coordinating agency was not open or approachable, created hesitation among people in terms of voicing their concerns about the process.

Lack of clear information about NBSAP:

- It was felt that there was insufficient information regarding the implications of participating in the NBSAP, and regarding the purpose of the NBSAP. An important aspect of disseminating clear information is that people and institutions need to be able to clearly see the benefits of participating in something. If there are monetary benefits, these are easiest to communicate. The challenge is in communicating non-monetary benefits, and for this the implications of a process need to be fully explained, for people to know that it is worthwhile to contribute their time, expertise or experience. As one interviewee put it, "People did not really understand the importance of NBSAP, and what their stake in it was. How do I know that participating in NBSAP is going to improve things? Or is not participating going to have any

negative impact?"

- In particular, smaller NGOs and institutions that are pressed for time and resources need to weigh the costs and benefits of participating in a process, and need to make careful decisions about how to make the most effective use of their time and resources. A process that seems impersonal, or which does not seem to have clarity in terms of information or purpose, is likely to very quickly put off people who have too many other things to do: "We get a hundred daily emails. We respond only to certain emails which are personally addressed to us."
- People need to know how their information is going to be used, and for this a clear methodology needs to be discussed: "People are not innocent. If you ask for information from people, the next thing they ask is why you are there, for what purpose... Otherwise you may take the data and go away, and you may not be seen again."
- There were some press advertisements placed in the newspaper by the coordinating agency, but these were not very successful: many respondents misinterpreted the information and felt that the NBSAP was offering paid projects or jobs.

Lack of continuity among personnel:

- A change in personnel in charge of NBSAP at the coordinating agency contributed to a loss of continuity in the process. This is difficult to guard against in any organisation when dealing with a process over a few years; in a government institution though, it is almost inevitable due to routine transfers of officials. This is an important point to keep in mind, when selecting a governmental institution as a coordinating agency.
- The danger, as an interviewee put it, is that "the commitment of the department is on paper – but the soul of that commitment is taken away. The next person to take over that file may or may not be that committed.... Of course, in government, people have never been important. The system does not rest on individuals."

Deccan sub-state site

The Deccan sub-state plan was confined specifically to the Zaheerabad region in Medak district, and focused only on agricultural biodiversity. This was one of the most intensive participatory processes among the NBSAP sites, in terms of grassroots participation. It was co-ordinated by the NGO, Deccan Development Society (DDS), which is a 20 year-old grassroots organisation working mainly with Dalit women in 75 villages around Zaheerabad. DDS has 5000 women members, and works in the areas of local autonomous governance, food security, natural resource enhancement, education and health. A primary focus is on community (especially women's) participation in all activities.

The Deccan sub-state site was one of the few NBSAP sites that prepared an entirely voluntary plan, without accepting any funds from the NBSAP. The planning process was funded by Christian Aid (United Kingdom) and the International Development Research Centre (Canada).

Process Outline

1. Mobile Biodiversity Festival: The Deccan sub-state plan is essentially based on intensive discussions that took place during a 32-day mobile biodiversity festival. The objective of the plan process was "to view agricultural biodiversity from the perspectives of the local farming communities... and to include farmers from various cross-sections, focusing on women and poorer sections of the farming communities" (DDS 2001).

2. Sectoral Meetings: In addition, a series of meetings was targeted towards different sectors (NGOs, FD officials, sarpanches, women and adivasi farmers, and scientists), enabling a wider

cross-section of views to be heard.

- Since the LAC consisted of people from different sectors, each member undertook to organise a meeting for his or her own sector (e.g. the FD representative organised a meeting of FD officials).
- The sarpanches were from those villages not on the route of the biodiversity festival, and belonged to various political parties. Sarpanches of villages on the festival route, participated in the meetings held during the festival.
- Since there are no NGOs (apart from DDS) working in the villages visited by the festival, a separate meeting between grassroots NGOs and farmers in Medak district enabled the inclusion of views and lessons learned from a wider area.
- The FD meeting included just a few officials and a large majority of farmers. This was an opportunity for farmers to interact with officials, rather than getting the views of FD officials for the plan.

The biodiversity festival will be the focus of this section, as there are valuable lessons to be drawn out of the experience.

Procession of women carrying traditional seeds at Deccan Mobile Biodiversity Festival

Tool 01 Mobile Biodiversity Festival

Objectives:

- To stimulate discussion and gain inputs from the grassroots for the Deccan sub-state plan
- To celebrate agricultural biodiversity and culture as interdependent elements
- To raise awareness about local agricultural biodiversity

Two main factors set this festival apart from the other biodiversity festivals held for NBSAP:

- It was a mobile festival, and therefore managed to reach thousands of people at their doorsteps.
- The festival was the main strategy for gaining inputs for the plan, as opposed to using it simply as an awareness-raising tool.

Description and method:

Inauguration of the Festival:

- Villagers decorated the bullock carts and performed rituals to worship them (bullock worshipping is a local tradition).
- Women from 75 villages had been invited by the coordinating agency for the inauguration: "The women sang songs about traditional crops, the importance of the crops, and the type of soil these crops flourish in. Each woman carried a small pot containing the seeds of one of the traditional crops grown in her village. Several traditional crops surrounded the lamp that was placed at the front [of the inauguration site]" (DDS 2001).
- An inaugural meeting was held to explain to farmers the purpose of the festival and the importance of conserving traditional crops, agricultural practices and food recipes. Representatives from different villages were requested by the coordinating agency to mobilise as many people as possible in their villages on arrival of the mobile festival.
- About 400 people participated in the procession as it made its way to its first village stop, accompanied by drumming and music played by villagers.

Procession and Exhibition of Bullock Carts:

All seed, food and decorative exhibits were prepared by DDS and village volunteers.

- There were 10 bullock carts in total, each decorated with various crops and artwork depicting fertility and prosperity.
- Six of the carts displayed about 75 varieties of traditional seeds from the Deccan region. Some hybrid seeds were also displayed to explain the difference between traditional and non-traditional seeds.
- Two carts depicted rural rituals related to crop diversity.
- Two carts displayed an exhibition of foods cooked using traditional crops. Some of the food preparations were distributed as samples during the procession and exhibition. (A small lesson learned was that the food had to be protected from the village children! : "The children really liked all these things and were plucking the food from the carts. After the first 2-3 villages a small mesh was made over the baskets to stop the children eating it all, because it was so tasty!")
- The 10 carts split into two groups (after the inauguration), and separately made their way through a joint total of 62 villages over a period of 32 days.
- A DDS team of 60-80 travelled with the processions from start to finish. Within this team there was a core team of 15-20 key organisers. Key tasks of the team were: documentation of the proceedings; facilitating the village-level meetings; explaining exhibition displays to visitors; and organising and mobilising people to attend the exhibition and meetings.
- The 62 villages were selected because they all had a DDS presence since several years. All-women groups of volunteers, known as DDS Sanghams, were already present in each village, and helped with logistics and other arrangements for the festival.
- In each village the carts made a tour of the village roads with people singing and dancing along in celebration of crop diversity. People voluntarily broke coconuts as a sign of auspiciousness and worshipped the bullocks and carts. Several villages welcomed the carts by washing the bullocks' feet and performing aartis, a Hindu ritual of worship.

• At the end of the procession through the village, the carts stopped at a central location for people to visit the exhibits. DDS team members stood by to give explanations regarding the display.
• In the evening, films on agricultural diversity that had been made by village members of DDS, were screened as an awareness-raising initiative (the making of video films by village community members is a normal DDS activity). The fact that these were made by DDS members created curiosity among people.
• The team accompanying the bullock carts ate and slept in the village before moving on to the next village on the following day.
• It is estimated that about 50,000 people saw the exhibition. It generated a great deal of enthusiasm, and often people who saw the event in their own village would go to see it again if it was moving to a nearby village. People of the younger generation had never seen many of the seed varieties, making it a valuable educational experience.

Meeting:
• A shamiana (covered seating area) was constructed in each village, to hold about 500 people. The seating arrangement for everyone was on the floor, with no particular space reserved for anyone.
• After looking at the exhibits people were invited to settle down for a discussion, which often lasted several hours. The meeting was conducted by two or three DDS facilitators. The discussion began with an introduction by the leader of the DDS women's group in the village. The discussion was specifically for the purpose of getting inputs for the BSAP, and focused on four very specific questions. This was possible due to the exclusive focus on looking at agricultural biodiversity from the perspective of farmers, and it brought forth focused discussions on strategies and actions:

Q.1: Is the traditional cropping system based on biodiversity, which was practiced until about a decade ago, beneficial to people, soil and animals in the region?

Q.2: If beneficial, what were the reasons that led to the gradual decline in this cropping system?

Q.3: Can there be solutions to the problems that led to this decline? Is there a need for, and possibility of, reviving this system?

Q.4: If there is such a need, what roles and responsibilities are farmers willing to take on, and what role do they expect the government to perform? (DDS 2001)

• A team of 10-12 people was in charge of documentation. Points raised by participants were recorded in writing by a group of these people. In addition all discussions were audio and video taped. The audiotapes would be given to a group of transcribers the same evening, who would transcribe the discussion onto computers. The transcription was then passed on to a third set of people who would cull out the most important points in the transcription. A report for each village was prepared by the coordinating agency, based on these points. The aim was to facilitate the creation of a report put together by the community: "Everybody else was just a tool or instrument in the hands of the community to translate their vision into a report."
• The individual village reports were later consolidated by the coordinating agency, and formed the major chunk of the final BSAP for the Deccan region.
• All names of participants were noted down in a register. In each village 300-350 (mostly small and marginal) farmers participated in the meeting. In total, approximately 20,000 farmers from 62 villages participated in the meetings. The extent of participation by large farmers or landowners is not clear.
• During the meetings there were endorsements for villagers who had continued growing traditional crops, with facilitators and DDS members announcing that what they were doing was very valuable.
• At the end of each meeting the points raised were presented back to the audience to review them and make any clarifications.
• Though NGOs, FD officials and other outsiders were often invited to the meetings they did not really participate in the discussions, which were entirely focused on getting inputs from villagers.
The festival was covered widely by the local and national media. DDS had assigned the task of media outreach to specific staff.

Strengths:
Essentially, the festival was a success because it managed to create a *sense of ownership* among villagers, by adhering to *local customs* of celebration or worship, and by celebrating *local crop* diversity. A key facilitator commented:

"Nothing that was available there, was something alien to their [the villagers'] culture – it was all a very integral part of their culture. Whether it was the seed, or the sound, or other manifestations of culture like folk music and dances. Everything was a part of their culture, and it came as a package. So I think people were overwhelmed by that. It was not an imposed ownership, it was an ownership that sprang from within."

Following are some of the key factors that created feelings of

ownership:

Conscious use of Language:

The word 'biodiversity' was not used. The idea was to create a feeling of tradition and celebration, and not an environment where technical terms were used. Thus the event was called "Festival of Traditional Crops" (in Telugu).

Celebrating and Creating Pride in the Local:

The aim was to encourage people to view their crops as something to celebrate, and not simply to discuss in a dry fashion. It was a village festival atmosphere where people came to enjoy the entertainment. Song and dance was an essential aspect of this. The songs were not necessarily about the environment. Most of the songs were traditional, and some were new which had been adapted to the theme of crop diversity. However, the songs avoided 'lecturing' people about what they should or should not do: "No song was a sloganeering song. It never told people to grow this, or do that. It was all about glorifying their own culture, cropping system and different crops. It was a kind of reminder to people about what they have."

Emphasising the Emotions Invested in Traditional Crops:

The intention of the organisers was to emphasise the cultural and emotional aspects of biodiversity:

"We very strongly believed that the issue of biodiversity should be taken up with the attitude where it is not a technical, scientific, intellectual, emotion-less process which should be dissected and analysed. We truly believe, in DDS, that biodiversity is integral to people's culture, and it is a very emotional thing for people to relate to their soil and crops, which have so much of a part to play in their culture. So we felt that biodiversity should be celebrated, and in the process of celebration we should also keep on reminding ourselves that this is so central to us.... So it is like a reminder to the community... which brings people together, which opens a cultural space for them, and through that there is a lot of horizontal transaction between them."

Indeed, seeing the rich variety of traditional crops brought forth strong emotions in many people, and some were moved to tears:

"In Devarampalli village an old woman came and looked at all the different seeds and broke down. She said, this is what I wanted to see on my farm, and what I lost several years ago because my children do not want to grow these crops anymore. Today I have seen this once again, and now my life is complete. If I die tomorrow I will have no regrets."

And:

"In some villages people went into a trance, and became a vehicle for the local devi (goddess) to curse farmers who had switched to chemical-based farming, and to express happiness at the return of old seeds."

This may not necessarily be a positive feature since a trance could possibly frighten people into following a particular course of action or discourage them from expressing dissenting opinions. However the point to note here is that biodiversity can bring forth strong emotional reactions in people, and so it is relevant for a biodiversity festival to address the emotional aspects of biodiversity conservation.

Providing a Wider Vision of Local Biodiversity, to Stimulate Discussion:

On a field or farm a farmer may grow up to 10 or 12 types of crops. A larger vision of the total wealth of the community's agricultural diversity is likely to be absent. All the crops displayed in the same place created "a visually rich matrix... there was a visual availability of the richness of their culture and traditions." It was felt that after seeing the display of agricultural diversity, "their minds had been ennobled and mellowed by all the things that they had seen... So when they sat down [for a discussion] at the end, they would start thinking differently." Thus the festival and exhibits were used as a tool to stimulate thought and discussion. Of course, the festival was also a form of persuasion towards a particular kind of view, since it was a strong endorsement of traditional cropping.

Creation of Ritual:

The ritualistic worshipping and honouring of the crops and bullock carts lent a sense of ownership to the event because the festival was allowed to be subsumed and shaped by local traditions of ritual and worship. (Since then, the biodiversity festival has been held every year; so it would probably be equally true to say that local traditions have been changed and shaped by the arrival of the biodiversity festival as a new annual event – new traditions have been created.)

Avoiding Alien Materials or Tools:

The national Call for Participation brochure (see Tool 2 in

'National Media Campaign' section for description of brochure) was not distributed at the festival, and nor were NBSAP posters displayed – it was felt that this would add an alien element to the occasion, which would clash with the celebration of the local. Local advertising for the festival took the form of single sheet pamphlets of the kind that are normally used to advertise local cinema shows. None of the activities were overtly related to NBSAP, though the purpose of NBSAP and having the discussions was explained to people at meetings.

Explanations by Villagers with First-hand Experience:
Volunteers at the exhibition, who were explaining the benefits of traditional crops, were themselves farmers who were growing traditional crops.

Timing:
The festival was at a time of year when many different ears of crops were available for display.

Follow-up, Review and Empowerment:
DDS has the institutional capacity to ensure that the follow-up to the festival meetings and discussions was thorough and well planned. This sort of follow-up is a key factor in building on any feelings of empowerment created by the meetings themselves. Following the preparation of the Deccan BSAP, the strategy and actions were culled out and produced in Telugu by the coordinating agency. This was presented to the LAC members to get a final endorsement from them. After that, several thousand copies of the Telugu version were printed. The following year there was another DDS biodiversity festival, which was used as an opportunity to distribute the Telugu copies to participating villages. At this subsequent festival the Deccan BSAP was also read out and presented as the outcome of the previous year's festival, and feedback was solicited: "[We told people] that this contains what you said, and if there is something that you do not agree with, you can tell us because the national plan is now being finalised. For each point we would ask, do you agree or not, and there was a voice vote. We had to go back and report to people about what we had done. We did not want them to feel that we are wasting their time."

Existing Capacity and Previous Experience of Coordinating Agency:
The Deccan mobile biodiversity festival was an extremely successful tool in incorporating inputs into the BSAP from thousands of farmers across dozens of villages. To understand this success more fully, it needs to be seen in the context of the past work and existing infrastructure of DDS. The Deccan initiative had some natural advantages which were mostly not present at other NBSAP festival sites, and which played a large role in contributing to the success of the mobile festival:
Focused area and subject: The plan was confined to a relatively small area and focussed on a very specific subject (only agricultural biodiversity). This contributed to the intensity that the process was able to achieve.
Previous experience: DDS had organised a similar festival previously, though the NBSAP event was the first time a mobile festival had been organised. By the time the NBSAP festival occurred, it was felt that "it was already accepted by the community as their own." The festival has since turned into an annual DDS event.
Network of volunteers: The festival moved only through those villages that have a DDS presence and DDS members. Thus, there was a ready network of volunteers to facilitate the logistics of the festival across 62 villages and to decentralise the workload. A festival organiser pointed out that even though the festival was held only in villages with a DDS presence, "everybody worked day and night" – and that it would be too huge a task to do it in other villages.
Foothold for community mobilisation: DDS has been working in these villages for a number of years with marginal women farmers, with a focus on traditional crop diversity and community participation. It therefore had an existing foothold to mobilise community participation (especially marginal women farmers' participation) in the villages. In addition, there already existed in the villages, community members who had coherent or articulate views on crop diversity due to interactions with, and exposure to, DDS. Presumably these villagers would have at least partly shaped the discussions in the festival meetings.

Weaknesses:
Exclusion of non-Dalit women: Dalit women are often the most marginalized members in a village community, which is why DDS has been focusing on working with them for the past 20 years. Due to this background of interaction with DDS, Dalit women were a relatively empowered group in the festival meetings. However, higher caste women could not participate much:
"Due to the cultural practices and a kind of culture that has been

produced because of the existence there of DDS, most of the women who came to the meetings were from Dalit households. Non-Dalit women ventured to the meeting only if they were [DDS] Sangham members. Otherwise middle and upper caste women do not come out and participate in such formal meetings. That was a drawback... we do not know how to tackle that."planning."

Implementation of the Deccan BSAP

The district collector sent official circulars to some student hostels asking them to include millet, a traditional crop, in their canteen menus. A pilot project was scheduled to begin for one hostel and one school to be supplied traditional grains through DDS. DDS will implement this pilot project.

In general, any implementation undertaken by the DDS may be difficult to differentiate from its ongoing work, since a major focus of the organisation is the promotion of agricultural biodiversity.

Decorating the bullock carts for Deccan Mobile Biodiversity Festival

Off-Shoots of the Deccan sub-state process

The main off-shoot of the Deccan process was that it provided an opportunity for local action and activism. Indeed, most of the village-level interviewees put far more emphasis on this aspect of the process, than on the production of the BSAP itself:

Platform for negotiations: The festival meetings provided an opportunity for villagers to do an agricultural and social analysis of their own village. The meetings often created a space for negotiations between different groups, to work towards changing cropping patterns: "Sometimes there would be very open negotiations between the groups there. For example, landlords would say, we would still like to grow foxtail millet, but people do not come to harvest it because they want more money, and so they go elsewhere. Some women would reply, 'times have changed, why do you always expect outside labour to come and work, why doesn't your own family harvest it, why do you put the blame on us?' Sometimes challenges were thrown up – some people would tell the landlords, 'if you grow foxtail millet, we will harvest it for 25% less wages than for other kinds of crops.' "

Documentation for future generations: Village-level interviewees emphasised the importance of documenting their views and knowledge on traditional crops in the BSAP, as a means of passing on their knowledge to future generations. Overall, the plan itself seemed to be of secondary importance to many villagers.

Encouragement of activism: The NBSAP festival, as well as the on-going series of biodiversity festivals by the DDS, throws up challenges for DDS activists and encourages activism: "We have to struggle a lot to keep our promises. If we talk about something this year, in the next festival we should be able to say that, we have done this, we have lobbied with the government, or we have gotten such and such response from them. Otherwise we will be dismissed by people, they will say we only come and preach, we do not do anything."

Encouragement for coordinating agency: Since the outcome of the meetings was overwhelmingly in favour of traditional crops, the DDS, which is strongly in favour of traditional crops, has been encouraged in its ongoing activities. As a DDS member put it, "The NBSAP process has been very important for DDS, because we had never interacted on such a large scale with people who are not from DDS – we did not know [previously] what they were thinking."

North Coastal Andhra sub-state site

The North Coastal Andhra sub-state site focussed on the two districts of Srikakulam and Vizianagram. This sub-state process is interesting firstly in terms of the impact it had on small NGOs in terms of capacity building. Tools and resources produced by the TPCG assumed great importance in a context of scarce information and facilitation, and were used more extensively than at other sites studied. Secondly, this site illustrates the results achieved by intensive personal follow-up and networking by the coordinating agency. Thirdly, the NBSAP produced some interesting off-shoots, from small acts of personal inspiration (e.g. tree planting), to developments with wider implications such as opportunities for networking between far-flung stakeholders.

The North Coastal Andhra process was focussed on grassroots concerns, as evident in its series of village meetings and interactions with adivasi networks. The coordinating agency was Grameena Punarnirmana Kendra (GPK), a small grassroots NGO based in Kurupam village, with only one full-time staff member and several volunteers. GPK works within the local community on environmental and development issues.

Process Outline

1 LAC meetings were held every week for two months, and then once every three to six months. There were also informal interactions among LAC members in between. LAC members were finalised only after the first few meetings and discussions, to ensure that only persons really interested and serious about the process were included. The LAC included NGOs, academics and adivasi representatives.
2 5 themes were chosen as a focus for the BSAP: adivasi livelihoods; medicinal plants and traditional healers; district-level biodiversity education; livelihoods of fisher folk; and micro-level planning for the twin villages of Kurupam and Sivanapetta, on the forest periphery.
3 The co-ordinator contacted various NGOs and scientific experts for informal and formal meetings. Often, this was done by requesting some time (in advance) to talk about NBSAP at an ongoing meeting.
4 Village level meetings and workshops at various sites were organised by the coordinating agency:

- Village level consultations:
  - a More than 10 consultations in 10 different villages
  - b More than seven meetings were held only for consulting with Van Suraksha Samiti (VSS) members in different villages.
  - c Informal discussions with various village-level stakeholders (e.g. panchayat representatives, healers, students).
- Four large workshops:
  - a Two-day adivasi workshop
  - b Workshop for 50 primary school teachers of Kurupam village
  - c Food and Nutrition Workshop for 30 activists from self-help youth groups comprising mainly of adivasis. It was organised by two village youth groups. This workshop was conducted on the same lines as the two-day Adivasi Workshop (described below).
  - d Two-day adivasi review workshop, to fine-tune issues and recommendations that had arisen during the course of the various consultations.
- Sectoral consultations:
  - a Consultations over 10 days for micro-planning for twin villages of Kurupam and Sivanapetta.
  - b Meeting of traditional healers to discuss issues related to medicinal plants, access and benefit sharing.
  - c NGO meeting with 40 participants.

A wide range of grassroots sectors were involved in the meetings and consultations, including women, farmers, adivasis, youth activists, local self-government leaders, traditional healers, cattle breeders, vegetable growers and forest user groups.

Tool 01 Village Level Consultations

Objective:

To elicit village level views for inputs into the BSAP.

Description and Method:

• More than 10 village level consultations were held, with about 50 people attending each.
• The focus was relatively narrow in scope, since discussions related to issues in and around the village where the meeting was held.
• Each meeting was in a different 'type' of area (e.g. marine, VSS, adivasi), to be able to cover the various topics selected for the plan.
• Villagers were invited personally by the LAC member in charge of that area; there were no written invitations. The LAC member also took the help of any community action groups present in a village to mobilise people to participate.
• At least two LAC members were in charge of facilitating each meeting. Often other LAC members would also attend.
• The meeting agenda was usually as follows:

1. The facilitator would tell participants about the NBSAP process.
2. The facilitator would ask about trends in the village regarding the environment. Some pre-prepared points were put before the participants as a stimulus for discussion (e.g. the need to protect traditional seed varieties; the need to collect benefits from the environment without harming it).
3. The current situation would be discussed.
4. Strategies and actions would be discussed.
5. The meeting was concluded by again talking about the value of biodiversity.

• A questionnaire was developed by the LAC for village level meetings, as a tool for the facilitators to guide discussions at meetings (two separate questionnaires were also developed for use at meetings with NGOs and teachers):
• Questionnaires were prepared after one or two meetings with the relevant sector. For example, the first VSS meeting was in Goidi village. Informal questions were developed at this meeting, on the basis of which a formal questionnaire was prepared to guide discussions at subsequent VSS meetings.
• In some cases participants at meetings would take a copy of the questionnaire to collect information independently, and return written answers to the coordinating agency. For example, some VSS members took copies of the questionnaire, prepared answers at their own VSS meetings, and returned the questionnaire in written form. Some adivasi network members also did this.
• Having a questionnaire simplified the process of conducting the meetings, especially at village-level, since the facilitators would first tell participants about NBSAP, and then directly launch into discussing each question. A facilitator noted, "It was important to have a written questionnaire because we should also be clear about what questions to ask, and what not to ask. We did not ask people to write answers – they are mostly illiterate. The questionnaire was more for guiding us, so that we did not deviate from the main focus. It was a guide to the facilitator."
• The co-ordinator later returned to some of the villages for informal follow-up discussions with villagers.

Strengths and Weaknesses:

See strengths and weaknesses of Tool 2.

Tool 02 Adivasi and Review workshops

Objective:

Unlike the 10 village-level consultations, which had a relatively narrow purview, two large workshops were conducted to get inputs for the whole region.

Description and Method:

- Prior to the workshop the leaders of some adivasi networks and some LAC members had a small meeting on how to conduct the workshop.
- About 100 people attended the two-day adivasi workshop, held over two days in Boddamanaguda village. The people who attended this workshop were members of Adivasi networks, and so were more informed about various issues than many of the participants in other village-level consultations; this reflected in the discussions.
- The location was chosen due to the presence of an adivasi network in the village, which helped to facilitate the workshop.
- The meeting was held in a mango plantation.
- Blank NBSAP posters were used by facilitators for listing key points (see Tool 3 in "National Media Campaign" section for details on posters).
- Participants split into smaller groups for discussions, and then reported the outcome to the larger gathering.
- About 6 months after this workshop, another two-day workshop was held with the same participants, to review and refine the output of the first workshop. However the number at the review workshop increased to 200, since the original participants had managed to mobilise more villagers in the intervening months. People were very interested and excited about participating because they had not attended such a meeting before.
- The review workshop format was the same as the previous workshop, with participants splitting up into 10 groups. Each group was requested to discuss one topic that had been identified by the LAC on the basis of information collected in previous consultations. The 10 topics were: cottage industries; seed storage; honey; improvement of development schemes; marketing of agricultural products; pickles, powders, cosmetics and mats; oilseeds, leaf plates, bamboo and wood; forest destruction; village-level planning; working of governmental support institutions.

Strengths of Village Level Consultations and Adivasi Workshops:

The strengths and weaknesses of the village level consultations and adivasi workshops have been clubbed together, since most of the observations are common to the different meetings. The success of the meetings was reflected in a comment by an adivasi network member: "People were so involved in the meeting, they did not care about the time or going for meals. The main focus was discussing issues."

Use of adivasi dialect: When appropriate, meetings were conducted in the relevant adivasi dialect. The use of dialect also addresses the gender balance in participation, since many women do not know Telugu (the official state language) or often feel more comfortable expressing themselves in their own dialect.

Use of familiar songs: In every meeting participants were required to sing songs, (a) initially to break the ice; (b) to break the monotony, once meetings were in full swing; and (c) to create a spirit of enthusiasm. Regarding the songs, a key facilitator noted, "You will not find a government official doing this sort of thing when he goes and talks to a VSS. But if you interact with [adivasis], you have to interact with them on their own terms. These kinds of tools can undo hierarchies."

Equitable seating arrangements and communal activities: In meetings, everyone sat in a circle on the floor to encourage equitable participation: "This has a direct bearing on your mode of interaction, and what gets said. We would also make it a point to all sit and eat there. Communal activities helped." The emphasis on equity was also reflected in the Adivasi Review Workshop, where non-Adivasis and panchayat leaders were expected to participate on equal terms with the Adivasis. A facilitator noted, "Non-Adivasis and panchayat leaders were also invited, and they realised that they were among an empowered crowd who could talk. They had to sit on the floor and eat with

everyone else – normally they may have expected to sit separately. You could tell also that they [felt that they] had to address everyone else as equals. For example, everyone was put into subject groups. All the panchayat leaders were put into one group to talk about the matter of PRIs – but when they came back to report [to the full gathering], they had to report just like any other group, and answer questions. The lesson learned is that the representatives of our bureaucracy need to be sensitised in how to get [marginal] voices into the mainstream. We need an attitudinal shift within the bureaucracy."

Eliciting views from less vociferous people: The facilitators would "constantly point to people sitting at the back to elicit their views, and politely ask a very vociferous person to stop and give someone else a chance to talk. The vociferous person would usually be some leader or elder, and people automatically expect them to talk. But now, the way they [i.e. some adivasi groups] hold meetings has changed, partly due to the way our NBSAP meetings were conducted."

Small group discussions: An adivasi network member noted, "Small group discussions in meetings are good. People are not willing to talk in a big group, but can talk in smaller groups."

Mixing people for group discussions: In at least one large workshop participants were each given a number. They then had to join the group discussion which had been allocated that number. This was done firstly to mix people, and secondly to make the splitting up into groups easier to organise, given the large number of people.

Facilitation by local networks: The BSAP co-ordinators took the help of local networks to facilitate meetings, which created a feeling of local ownership of the process. During a group discussion with members of the Todu adivasi network, it emerged that "A plus point was that local networks organised the meeting. This gives ownership. Earlier [i.e. prior to NBSAP] some outsiders had come and conducted meetings and talked to people, and people listened. Now the local networks are talking to local people, and we are deciding ourselves what to do."

Using existing networks to issue invitations and to use local dialects: Invitations were through word of mouth. This was made easier because of the existence of adivasi networks. Contact persons (already known to the coordinators) from different villages and networks were given information about NBSAP orally and in writing, in Telugu. These contact persons usually knew Telugu as well as their own adivasi dialect (e.g. Savara), and were able to go back to their villages and mobilise people in the dialect. LAC members also visited various villages to mobilise people. Through the networks, the LAC came to know that many villagers wanted a meeting in their own village. In contrast, since there was no formal healers' network at the time, the healer on the LAC had requested 8-10 days just to invite healers to the Healers' Workshop (described below), because he had to travel on foot for over a week, to invite healers from various villages.

Review workshop increased interest: A positive factor of the adivasi review workshop was that it increased people's interest in the BSAP, and created higher levels of satisfaction at participating in finalising the BSAP.

Photographs for future use: The meetings were often photographed. The objective was to be able to use the photos to explain the process to other people. These photos were used at the adivasi festival (discussed below) later, to explain the NBSAP process to people.

Weaknesses of Village Level Consultations and Adivasi Workshops:

PRA exercises would have helped to structure the discussion at village level consultations: A key facilitator noted, "It would have been better to do PRA exercises before the meeting, like some trend analysis or social mapping – so that after that, discussions would have been more rich, and more concrete decisions could have been reached. The way we did it, was with no particular process, though we used a participatory methodology and conducted the meeting with the help of local facilitators."

Understanding NBSAP: It was difficult to explain to villagers that their suggestions would go into a governmental document, but would not necessarily be implemented: "The villagers definitely felt very positive about the process. But there was always an expectation of implementation, in spite of us telling them that we are not promising this." Similar to what emerged in interviews with villagers in the Deccan sub-state process, the villagers were more interested in the discussion and action, rather than a document that could theoretically lead to results : "They were not thinking that what they had said would go into a document. They wanted to know that it would be done."

Tool 03 Micro-Planning for two villages

Objectives:

- To create a model of micro-level planning so that the methodology could be adapted in other villages in the future
- To elicit grassroots, sector-wise inputs for the BSAP.

Description and method:

- Consultations were held over 10 days for micro-planning for the twin villages of Kurupam and Sivanapetta.
- The coordinating agency took the support of local villagers and a local NGO to mobilise people to participate in this.
- A sectoral approach was taken: various sectors and stakeholder groups were identified though informal discussions among local villagers and LAC members.
- The coordinating agency requested one or two individuals from each sector to mobilise people in their own sectors to participate in the sectoral meetings.
- Representatives from two NGOs in the vicinity also heard about the initiative and voluntarily arrived to participate in the discussions.
- Each day over 10 days, a different sector was consulted, e.g. 1 day for farmers; 1 day for milk producers; 1 day for vegetable growers; 1 day for youth; etc.
- Consultations took place on the basis of pre-prepared questionnaires that the facilitator used to guide the discussions.
- Minutes of each meeting were recorded by facilitators, and then used to make the micro-plan. Initially facilitators experienced difficulties in noting down all the points – later this became easier when two people were appointed for writing minutes.

Strengths of micro-planning exercise:

Using a flexible approach to include diverse sectors: Different sectors had to be convinced to participate in different ways, as they all had their own questions or hesitations. The coordinators used a flexible approach depending on the sector they were talking to:

- *Personally addressing communication gaps (How the Farmers were convinced to attend):* "While trying to mobilise people there were some problems in communicating. For example, some farmers said, 'there are no rains at the moment, so why are we gathering?' So I would personally go and convince those people, that it is not about the rains or about the present, but it is for future Though only one meeting had been planned with farmers, they demanded another one, so a second meeting was held with them.
- *Arousing curiosity (How the Milk Producers were convinced to attend):* "Milk producers are tied to their buffaloes. They have no time to meet. In the morning they go to the fields, and in the evening they are busy because the cattle come back home. In the evenings milk is collected, fodder is given to cattle, and cooking begins at home. They are busy and tired the whole day. So we went to their area and sat down on the road – with no arrangements – we just went and sat in the middle of the cow dung. They all gathered to see why we were sitting there, and then the discussion started."
- *Catering to expectations and interests (How the Young People were convinced to attend):* "The youngsters were expecting [to talk about] more modern things. They could not directly understand a discussion on biodiversity. So we started talking about cosmetic practices, and what cosmetics they are using – then we started talking about henna and turmeric [i.e. traditional cosmetics], and then we gradually started talking about other biodiversity issues."

An empowering experience for women: Young women showed a great deal of enthusiasm for the micro-planning exercise. An attempt to interview some of the young women did not succeed as they were too shy to speak much, but a key facilitator felt that it created a sense of empowerment for them: "From their late teens to their early twenties they are at home doing housework – with no channel to do anything else. To get voices like that to speak – was great. They would come at the shortest notice. We sent enthusiastic girls to each street to gather girls for the 'Young Ladies' Meeting'. They discussed the pros and cons of solar power for cooking; the problems and solutions of garbage disposal; what cosmetics people use and how the packaging affects the environment. And we came up with some solutions. The girls

said we can separate the garbage, but the collection has to be organised by the panchayat. This point was then tied up with a meeting of the vegetable growers, who said that they already have a space for composting so the organic garbage can be brought there... Now we need to follow up on all this, but when the discussions happened, it was an amazing, empowering experience [for the young women] to realise that they can talk about what they should tell the panchayat, for example. Even the sole woman panchayat member felt empowered because of this."

Off-shoots of the Micro-Planning exercise

• After the 10-day process, two village women were inspired to demonstrate recycling of paper. They collected newspaper and demonstrated how to grind the paper and make papier-mache bowls. About 20 people attended the demonstration.
• Vegetable growers took the discussions seriously. A facilitator recounted an incident that occurred some time after the micro-planning exercise: "I once told the vegetable growers that the colour of their vegetables was too dim. They retorted, 'you told us not to use chemicals!' So there was a good response to the micro-plans."

Questionnaire used for discussion with farmers during micro-planning

1. Farmer's name and village
2. How many years have you been doing agricultural work?
3. What crops are you growing?
4. What is the seed storage pattern?
5. Are you conserving traditional seed varieties?
6. Do you know any other person who conserves traditional seed varieties? Please give their names.
7. Is there any cultural system for developing agricultural biodiversity?
8. What biodiversity-related conservation activities are you doing in the area?
9. Are there any other farmers doing biodiversity-related conservation activities in the area?
10. What are the plants and animals present in the area, which were not found here in the past?
11. What were the plants and animals in the area that are not found here anymore?
12. How many years ago did they exist in this area?
13. Is the water sufficient for agriculture? What is the source of water?
14. Is there any effect of commercial crops, like banana, cotton, etc., on the traditional cropping system?
15. What plants and animals were used traditionally?

The questionnaire was used orally in a group discussion with farmers. Based on this information there was a discussion to develop action points and strategies.

Tool 04 Sectoral meeting for healers

Objective:

- To identify biodiversity issues specific to traditional healers.
- To get healers' inputs for the BSAP.

Description:

- The effort was initiated by a famous healer of the area who expressed interest to the coordinating agency, in having a separate healers' meeting. He brought 3-4 other healers with him to Kurupam, for an initial discussion with the co-ordinator.
- A women's self-help group from Angarada volunteered to support the meeting by providing food.
- This was the first-ever meeting of traditional healers of Vizianagaram district, attended by about 40 healers.
- Various issues common to all the healers were identified at the meeting, such as the need for legal recognition, the need for medicinal plant nurseries and the difficulties in documenting information.
- Each person came forward to give his recommendations, which were recorded in the meeting minutes by a facilitator.

Strengths:

Confidence building: It was overall a successful meeting, and two healers said that this was because gathering together gave them confidence: "Before this we were doing our service individually. Now we have regular meetings for healers". Healers interviewed felt that the BSAP was relevant because it is important for their recommendations to go into a government sponsored plan in order for healers to get recognition as a group: "As traditional healers, we do not have medical certificates. Sometimes we are afraid to practice in case anyone accuses us of false practice. But as one group, we are more confident now to serve the people."
Sufficient information about NBSAP: The Telugu Call for Participation (CFP) brochure (see Tool 2 in 'National Media Campaign' section for description of brochure) was distributed at the meeting, and was felt by the healers to be useful for understanding the NBSAP, and for understanding different aspects of the environment.

Weaknesses:

Insufficient funding support: Given that the meeting disrupted the daily work of the healers, it was felt by some of the healers interviewed that funding support would have helped to increase participation: "Our routine work was disturbed due to the meeting. Some funds would be useful for this. Those without money may not always be able to attend such meetings."
Limited discussions: Discussion was initially limited, since this was the first time such a meeting was taking place. Discussions improved with subsequent (non-BSAP) healers' meetings.
Shortage of time: The healers could gather only for 5 hours, which was insufficient for satisfactory discussions. Communication problems, due to the differences in dialects, added to the time constraints. Points that had been raised could not be reviewed satisfactorily at the end of the meeting. A facilitator noted that funds for equipment like tape-recorders to document verbal information could counter shortage of time since healers do not have much time to spare for discussions.

Implementation of the North Coastal Andhra BSAP

Festival: Incorporating biodiversity issues into traditional events.

One of the recommendations of the North Coastal Andhra BSAP was to incorporate discussions and exhibitions on biodiversity, into traditional adivasi festivals and events. This recommendation was based on consultations with five adivasi networks over a series of meetings. In 2002, the local communities and adivasi networks who had made this recommendation voluntarily arranged to implement it in Neradivalasa village of the Angarada Hill region of the Eastern Ghats, in Kurupam mandal, with guidance from the coordinating agency.

Every year the local people worship a stone known as Angarada Devata (Angarada God). A biodiversity exhibition was linked to this festival, and there were also discussions on natural resources, and their control and management. Apart from being an example of implementation of the BSAP, the discussions were used as a way of refining the BSAP further: "We had the BSAP draft, and GPK used the discussions to corroborate and double-check the views in the BSAP. So it was an 'unofficial' part of the review process."

Participation:

- Villagers, local leaders, teachers, youth and the press attended the event.
- Four hundred people attended on the first day, and six hundred on the second, from different villages.
- There were more women participants than men. Women who had attended earlier BSAP meetings were more vocal in the discussion, even volunteering to write and read out their group discussion reports.

The Event Included:

- Adivasi dances
- An impromptu theatre workshop for about 50 children with animal sounds and gaits taught by a bystander from a nearby village
- An animal story by a village school teacher
- An exhibition of photographs of the BSAP process
- Adivasi art display using natural colours (the natural colours were displayed in coconut shells, at the foot of panels of paintings)
- Exhibition of medicinal plants, other NTFP and traditional seeds, all labelled. For the medicinal plants exhibition, an academic NGO (the Botanical Society) helped to classify 14 general and chronic diseases, and plants were displayed for each disease. There were also demonstrations by healers to show people how to make medicines from the plants.
- Forest Department representatives distributed over 1000 free saplings.
- There were no large cooking pots to cook for hundreds of people, so the festival organisers gave each household in the village some rice and vegetables, and requested them to cook it. In the end all the cooked food was collected and eaten by everyone.
- At night the participants discussed the village history of Neradivalasa village: "We talked about how it was 50 years ago. In the discussion it came up that trees, water, land and cattle were more available then. Now it is all degraded, and there is suffering due to this. So then we decided to change things, and took some decisions."

Strengths of the Festival

A strong point of the festival was the sense of local ownership:

- Since the discussions had been incorporated into a traditional festival, there was a sense of local ownership over the initiative.
- Microphones had been arranged, but it was decided not to use them, in order to retain a

traditional atmosphere. Locally available resources and materials were used at the event: "No printed material was used. Only oral explanations were given. We used only natural dyes for banners. We used mango leaves for decoration, not coloured paper. We used water and cow dung for cleaning the place." No outside funding support was received, except for video and photography, which were paid for by the coordinating agency.

• The organisation of the event was a communal activity. Each household contributed some thing or some labour. The most telling comment about ownership came from an adivasi network member: "In the whole festival, no-one could identify one main person in charge. Everyone had their own responsibility and they did it. This was a good point."

Healers' Network

Based on agreement at the Healers' Meeting, a Healers' Network was begun around February 2003 and meets approximately twice a month. The network is facilitated by an LAC member, who is also a healer. As of April 2003 it had 120 members. A healer described the network as a "growing plant", which was securing more and more participation. The main aim, as explained by a healer, was "to form a network for developing and growing herbs, and making them available in the area, because many medicinal plants have disappeared. We are also thinking about water sources because this is essential for conserving medicinal plants. We also need co-operation among healers for treatment – if one healer is not able to treat someone, he can get help from another healer. We can also give training to each other in the network."

At the time of the interviews, two training sessions had already taken place in two villages. The training included issues like behavioural change (e.g. do not drink alcohol before treating patients) and conservation (e.g. conserve plants near the village for emergency use, and collect plants for general use far away from the village).

Strengths of North Coastal Andhra process

Coordinating agency links

The coordinating agency, GPK, is well known in the area and is known to work with local communities. It has good links and relations with grassroots and NGO networks. Relations with government officials are also good since GPK has participated in many government programmes in the past. These links helped GPK to achieve fairly broad participation in the BSAP process, and also helped to access information from government departments.

Use of existing networks and piggy-backing on ongoing meetings

The existence of NGO and adivasi networks in the area was a great advantage. A major strength of the BSAP process was to make use of these networks to reach out to a large number of people, especially in remote areas: "Networks always provide good information and participation; we can cover a larger area through a network. So the BSAP was able to get good micro-level information from these networks, from remote areas."

- There are 4 major adivasi networks in the area, and these were used to reach out to adivasi people at village level. The adivasi networks in turn were often linked to various village self-help groups. Three of the networks went on to play a central role in organising the implementation of the Angarada festival and discussions in 2002 (described above).
- The Tanimyeem adivasi network had regular weekly meetings on conserving NTFP, and the president of the network used some of these meetings to talk about NBSAP.
- Sri Seva Samakhya is a network of 35 NGOs in Srikakulam district, and has monthly meetings. The BSAP coordinator attended one of the meetings to do a presentation on the NBSAP and

get feedback and inputs for the plan. (Three or four NGOs came forward to participate actively thereafter.)
- Similarly, the Botanical Society was approached to spare some time in their regular meeting, for the BSAP coordinator to introduce the NBSAP to scientists and academics.

Personal networking and follow-up after LAC meetings

In the first two months the LAC met every Sunday, thus ensuring regular follow-up and upkeep of momentum. (Thereafter the LAC met every three to six months.) The co-ordinator's personal commitment and consistent networking ensured that all LAC members were kept in the loop: "I personally went to each LAC member who could not attend an LAC meeting, and had an individual meeting to brief the person and give him the relevant papers." Another interviewee remarked that this greatly limited any drop-outs from the process, and that the personal networking by the co-ordinator was a major strength of the process: "I think the credit goes to Raju. He would go personally to contact people. That is the strongest point here. Normally we try to invite all the people for a discussion, and record it. At best we send a copy of the proceedings to members who are not able to attend. But Raju would visit them and explain what is happening. So at the next meeting that person would come – he would definitely not be a permanent drop-out. Because of the personal interaction and effort, there were hardly any permanent drop-outs."

A personal mission!

The co-ordinator's commitment to the BSAP process took on the form of a personal mission: "I decided that every day I would make at least one person aware of NBSAP in my leisure time, for example while waiting for the bus. I managed to do this for some months... I found that people were very interested to participate. Even if they could not participate because they were in a different area, they would be interested [to listen]." This commitment was also reflected in the co-ordinator's efforts at intensive personal networking.

Location of LAC meetings

LAC meetings were held at Srikakulam as well as Vizianagaram to make the location convenient for all members. Initially meetings were held in a rented room in Vizianagaram. Then one LAC member pointed out that meetings should be held in a public place so that people should not feel it is a private meeting, but should feel free to walk in. Thereafter a decision was taken to hold meetings in government buildings or in a college building.

Local translations with the help of local writers

The Telugu CFP brochure produced by the TPCG was supplemented with a local adaptation consisting of two photocopied pages, based on the information in the CFP. One of the reasons was that the language in the CFP brochure was too difficult for everyone to relate to, and the CFP's literal translation of the word 'biodiversity' into Telugu was too complicated: "'Biodiversity' is a difficult word, there is no easy local word. Even the press people were trying to find a simpler way of putting it across. We asked some writers for advice on how to put the concept across. They came up with a simple sentence and some bullet points which we used at meetings – and it worked better." The local adaptation was also more specific to North Coastal Andhra, and included information from local NGOs and activists. However, both CFP versions were valued, as they would appeal to different people. For example, the centrally-produced CFP was valuable because it gave credibility to the effort, due to its relatively high production values and aesthetics. The CFPs were distributed during meetings, and often people would come up to LAC members after the meeting to discuss it.

Weaknesses of the North Coastal Andhra process

Insufficient Guidance to Coordinating Agency
The coordinating agency experienced a great deal of difficulty in understanding the requirements of the NBSAP and launching the sub-state process confidently, due to a lack of experience. Understanding the extensive TPCG Guidelines (see Tool 10 in "National Media Campaign" section for a description) was a difficulty since they were in English: "A main gap was not understanding the meaning of biodiversity. It was also difficult to select a focus and relate it to our area – not only in terms of our interest and knowledge, but according to the needs of the area. Because everything is biodiversity. Our capacity of understanding was a gap. We overcame this gap through a lot of discussion." In this light, some interviewees felt that more information and guidance from the TPCG would have helped, such as: organising a local workshop; providing more detailed information about the processes at other sites; providing for more LAC members to attend the national level workshops and orientation (see Tool 11 in "National Media Campaign" section for a description); and more site visits by the relevant TPCG member. On the other hand there was also the feeling among at least two interviewees, that capacity building was perhaps enhanced because the LAC members were forced to work hard at understanding the process: "Maybe it is better we learned slowly on our own!"

Off-Shoots and Impacts of the North Coastal Andhra Process

Capacity Building:

One of the most significant impacts of NBSAP was capacity building. This was particularly voiced by small, local NGOs that usually have very limited access to information, resources and facilitation. Adivasi network representatives also felt that the NBSAP had led to increased awareness and capacity building. In one of the group discussions held for this study, representatives of three different networks were asked to estimate how important NBSAP was, as a percentage of their normal, ongoing activities. For the Emnaba Adivasi Network NBSAP had 50% relevance in terms of their normal activities. For the Todu Adivasi Network it was also 50% and for the Angarada Adivasi Mahila Samstha (an adivasi women's network) it was 60%. These are just rough estimates, articulated on the spur of the moment, but they give some indication of the importance that the NBSAP activities assumed for these networks. Some of the off-shoots and impacts noted by representatives of small grassroots NGOs and representatives of adivasi networks were as follows:

• **Development of holistic approach to biodiversity and the environment, as opposed to compartmentalised approach:** An NGO representative said, "We have now understood [environment] in an integrated manner. Earlier we tried to work in a sectoral way, like only soil conservation or only forestry. Now, the impact of NBSAP is, that we are integrating all conservation practices, like forest conservation, livestock, human resources and traditional practices. This integration concept came [to us] due to the concept of biodiversity conservation... In our network [Sri Seva Samakhya, a network of 35 NGOs in Srikakulam district] discussions this has become an agenda point. Earlier we used to talk about environment. Now we are talking of biodiversity."

• **Building up of networks and relations across sectors:** New links were forged among NGOs, between NGOs and academics/scientists, and between different adivasi networks - especially since the LAC was selected to include representatives from different sectors. A grassroots NGO representative said, "One of the main advantages has been that NBSAP gave us the chance to discuss many things with lots of other groups. Some of these groups we knew before, some we got to know through the process... Links with other people for a particular purpose, made the links stronger." Coordinating agency links were developed with people from other NBSAP sites, by interacting with other co-ordinators at the national workshops in Delhi. Adivasi network representatives found that the NBSAP opened up opportunities for them to interact with other networks, travel to other villages and meet officials.

• **Generation of eco-friendly ideas and practices:** A facilitator of the North Coastal process said, "Earlier we used to use banners painted with market colours. Now we use banners coloured with turmeric and natural dyes. Earlier [at meetings] we used to give out mementoes made of wood or brass, now we are more interested in giving things like baskets of grass or fruits." An adivasi network representative said, "Five years ago we would go far off to get timber. So we started thinking that we need to grow timber plantations in our area. This [increased] awareness came about due to NBSAP. We were already doing plantation in 5 acres, and after NBSAP we did 5 more acres."

• **Fine-tuning thinking on relevant issues:** Two NGO representatives raised this point, saying, "NBSAP enabled us to identify gaps in development schemes, and to develop thinking on policy and advocacy", and: "Now the understanding of the issues and different dimensions has given us a focus on where to concentrate and what [issues] to take up."

• **Grassroots capacity building on participatory techniques:** Representatives of at least two adivasi networks felt that exposure to NBSAP activities had improved their skills at organising and conducting workshops.

• **Empowerment:** An adivasi network representative felt that after NBSAP their empowerment increased due to awareness and other activities.

Small Activities Inspired by the NBSAP:

A healer planted 10 trees after reading the CFP brochure and attending the healers' meeting; in Tolunguda village, villagers planted a traditional chilli variety and began conserving some forest patches ("They were interested in forest conservation even before, but now their ideas have been strongly developed because of NBSAP."); in Neradivalasa village, villagers collected jackfruit seeds and planted them voluntarily in the area; in Kurupam village, vegetable growers began protecting old seed varieties – subsequently a meeting of 25 vegetable growers was conducted by GPK.

National media campaign

Tools and Strategies

A national media campaign was developed to communicate the message of NBSAP nationally by using various media. The state and sub-state sites were encouraged to draw on the media aims, tools and strategies developed at a national level, but were free to develop independent media strategies. For example, the national media campaign had an insignificant presence on the radio, while one of the flagship successes of the Karnataka state process was its series of interactive radio programmes.

The key way in which the national media campaign differed from media use at state and sub-state levels was that the former aimed to create a presence and momentum at a national level, while the latter's scope was limited to the area for which the local BSAP was being prepared.

This section deals only with the national media campaign, and the tools and strategies of communication developed for the national level, by the TPCG.

Aims of the National Media Campaign:

• The *primary* aim was to raise awareness about the NBSAP process at a national level, in order to attract people to participate and give their ideas and practical assistance to the process.
• The *secondary* aim was to raise awareness about the meaning of biodiversity and implications of biodiversity conservation.
• The *ultimate purpose* of disseminating the above messages, was to generate support for the conservation and sustainable use of biodiversity, and equity in decision-making processes related to biodiversity (Kothari 2002).

The above messages were to be disseminated to as wide a range of citizens as possible.

Functioning of the National Media Campaign:

• The TPCG appointed a Media Campaign Manager (MCM) to develop and execute the national media campaign. He worked on a part-time basis and reported to the TPCG. (There were three MCMs in succession).
• In addition some of the TPCG members voluntarily contributed their ideas and time to many of the media campaign activities.

Principle Tools and Strategies of the National Media Campaign:

Discussion of the media tools is divided into:

1. Media campaign products (e.g. brochures, posters)
2. Media outreach activities (e.g. print articles, website)
3. Media for communication with coordinating agencies (e.g. newsletters, compendium of guidelines)

Some of the activities described below (especially communication with coordinating agencies) were not 'officially' part of the national media campaign or within the purview of the MCM, but have been included here by virtue of being national level communication and outreach strategies that were developed at the TPCG level, with some overlaps with the national media campaign in terms of use and objective.

Media campaign products

Tool 01: **NBSAP Logo**

Objective:

To build up brand identification for NBSAP, and a rapid 'recall value'.

Description:

The logo was developed by the TPCG and MCM early on in the process, and was used on all NBSAP products (e.g. brochures, posters, newsletters). It was used in much the same way that corporate brand logos are used for conceptual and material identification of a product. The logo was designed to reflect the NBSAP's notion of biodiversity, and thus depicted a simple scene within the outline of a leaf, showing a plant, a bullock, a fish and a house to show the interdependence of humans, flora and fauna, and the interdependence of marine, terrestrial and agricultural ecosystems.

There was one example in North Coastal Andhra of the logo being used by an adivasi network to explain the meaning of the term biodiversity, to an adivasi gathering.

Tool 02: **Call for Participation (CFP) brochure**

Objective:

To inform people about the NBSAP process, and invite participation.

Description:

This was the flagship tool of the national media campaign, and the single most important method used to reach out to people.

- The CFP was an attractively designed 4-page colour brochure that gave information about the value of biodiversity and the goals/scope of the NBSAP process.
- It ended with an invitation for people to contact the TPCG if interested in participating.
- The last page of the CFP was a 'cut-out' coupon for people to fill and send in. The coupon indicated five options for participation (organising local meetings; holding an inter-departmental meeting; sending in existing information or documents; contributing new written material; co-ordinating the preparation of an action plan in the respondent's region). A sixth option was any other mode of participation that could be suggested by the respondent. Potential participants could tick-mark the relevant option and send it to the address of the NBSAP administrative agency (BCIL, New Delhi) indicated on the brochure. (However, state and sub-state coordinating agencies often stamped their own address on the brochure so that responses could be sent directly to them).
- The CFP was printed in 19 languages (17 languages produced by the TPCG at a central level, and two languages produced by the coordinating agencies in Assam and Meghalaya). In addition, several coordinating agencies independently revised and adapted the CFP to suit local contexts, for example in North Coastal Andhra where a simple, two-page, photocopied, locally adapted version was produced.

Media campaign products

Distribution of CFP brochures:

Thousands of CFP brochures were printed. The CFP was designed for random distribution to as many people as possible. The idea was to use it to reach the maximum number of people in as many forums as possible. The CFP brochure was distributed in the following ways:

- CFPs were sent in bulk to coordinating agencies, which distributed it in their areas. Coordinating agencies were supplied with extra copies as needed. (The TPCG did not keep track of where and how the coordinating agency distributed the brochures).
- TPCG members distributed CFPs at any meetings they went to, even if the meeting was not directly related to NBSAP.
- CFPs were distributed in large numbers at NBSAP events like biodiversity festivals and public hearings.
- CFPs were posted to NGOs selected by the TPCG, based on the NGO Directory of WWF-India (World Wide Fund for Nature-India), and to key people in the government (e.g. in the FD) selected on the basis of discussions between the TPCG and Ministry of Environment and Forests.

Response to CFP brochures:

Approximately 224 people in total contacted the TCPG and BCIL as a response to the CFP brochure. (The actual figure may be slightly higher, as many respondents did not say what media they were responding to) (Kohli & Bhatt 2002). Many more responses would have been sent directly to coordinating agencies. The coordinating agencies had been requested to track responses sent directly to them, and inform the TPCG about this, but this kind of tracking did not happen very regularly.

Managing the responses to CFP brochures:

Responses that arrived at BCIL were forwarded to the TPCG. One TPCG member was delegated the task of handling the responses. The response was forwarded to the relevant coordinating agency (sometimes to multiple coordinating agencies, in case of overlapping interests), and a copy of this correspondence was also sent to the respondent. Thereafter it was up to the coordinating agency to follow-up by contacting the respondent and organising his/her participation in the process. It is not clear to what extent coordinating agencies managed to follow-up with respondents, but as per the analysis by the TPCG, the follow-up by coordinating agencies was overall weak. However, there were also instances of respondents going on to play significant roles in the NBSAP, such as joining a state working group (e.g. Assam and Manipur) and taking on the preparation of an action plan (e.g. Aravallis eco-region and Simlipal (Orissa) sub-state site) (Kohli & Bhatt 2002).

Strengths:

Multiple use: CFPs could be used for multiple purposes – they were used for general biodiversity awareness raising, and not just for eliciting participation.

Translations: The CFP brochure had a wide reach across the country as it was translated into 19 languages.

Well designed: Several interviewees felt this was a very useful tool, well designed for wide distribution, and which concisely explained what the NBSAP was all about.

Weaknesses:

Translations: The CFP was originally written in English. The TPCG spent a large amount of time refining the CFP and trying to find appropriate translators: "[The translations] had to be done in a lay person's language – so we needed to find translators who were not so technical, but who could understand the text and translate it into very simple language. This was quite a challenge." Still, in some cases the translation of the CFPs to regional languages proved to be a weakness. Interviewees in Andhra Pradesh and Karnataka felt that the translations were too literal and the language used too difficult; it could not be easily understood by laypersons: "People need simple, practical write-ups, in simple language, with a local flavour – and not general prescriptions or theory of it from Delhi. They would not have the time or patience to understand it." This was partly a reason why the CFP was not used much in Karnataka. GPK in North Coastal Andhra rewrote the CFP in more suitable Telugu, with references

Media campaign products

to the local context, and distributed it as two photocopied sheets. Here, the value of producing the attractive brochure on quality paper was clearly lost. An interviewee in Karnataka felt that to counter this problem the writing of the CFP in different languages should have been decentralised to the states. A TPCG member felt that the problem could have been solved by requesting a wider range of people from different backgrounds to read the translations before finalising them.

Ambiguity regarding availability of funds: The CFP brochure did not state explicitly that the suggested activities were to be done voluntarily. Several respondents thought that the NBSAP was offering funding to conduct the activities, and many of these dropped out when it was clarified that there was no funding available.

Distribution of CFPs: One TPCG member felt that the distribution of CFPs was not good enough: "In terms of the effort that went into designing the CFP brochure, I don't think we put in that much effort into targeting its distribution. Distribution was left largely to the coordinating agencies. It was a much-valued document. Any place you took it, people grabbed it. But that was passive – one was not making the effort to see where and how it should be distributed. And finally the quantum of response was not that great... in a country as large as India, there should have been a few thousand responses." The total number of responses to the TPCG was 653, of which only about 224 were a response to the CFP brochure (as opposed to other forms of inviting participation).

Impersonal to some: An interviewee in Maharashtra felt that the CFP brochure was not inviting to a layperson: "I probably wouldn't have participated because of the CFP brochure. It wasn't intimidating – but maybe not personal enough. It gave the impression of a large and impersonal process."

Call for participation brochures translated into different Indian languages

Media campaign products

Tool 03: **Posters:**

Printed posters

This was a poster-version of the CFP brochure. It was based on the information in the CFP brochure and included details of how to contact the TPCG for participating in the NBSAP process. Two Hindi and two English posters were sent to each coordinating agency.

Weakness:

It was printed only in Hindi and English, and so had a limited reach.

Blank 'branded' posters

This innovation grew out of the need to produce posters for a multi-lingual country. Since it was not possible to produce posters in so many languages, a blank poster was prepared, containing only the NBSAP logo. The poster could then be used to write on, in any language. 5 blank posters were sent to each coordinating agency, though not all used them. Coordinating agencies often used them at meetings, for writing points like strategies and actions.

Strengths:

- A TPCG member said, "The fact that people were going to make the poster their own, by writing on it, would be an integrative process."
- The blank posters catered to the flexibility that was built into the NBSAP process: "NBSAP would be a platform for people to present what they wanted [on the posters]. Nowhere was it dictated that x is the ideal way in which it should be presented. You could modify it."
- In the states studied, these seemed to be more popular than the printed posters, due to their adaptability across languages.

Roll-up poster panels

This was a set of four large, vertical paper panels, designed to be easily rolled-up and inserted into a hard tube for transportation. Since these were expensive to produce, only TPCG members received them; each member was given one set for use at meetings and workshops. The text of the panels was based on the content of the CFP brochure.

Strengths:

- The panels were easy to transport, since TPCG members needed to travel extensively with them. A TPCG member felt that "they were a great hit. A lot of coordinating agencies wanted sets, which we could not provide.... Feedback on these panels was very positive, people really did want them because they were very comprehensively done. They came in plastic rods at each end to roll up, and all in a hard tube – you could carry it on a bus or a train, it was so easy to carry. They were well made, laminated, and very handy."
- The panels could be used to create a presence even at meetings that were not directly related to NBSAP, or were collaborations with NBSAP: "The roll-up panels were used especially to make the NBSAP presence felt at collaborative events with other agencies – because NBSAP rode a lot on others' events."

Weakness:

The panels were produced only in English, and so had limited reach in terms of its text.

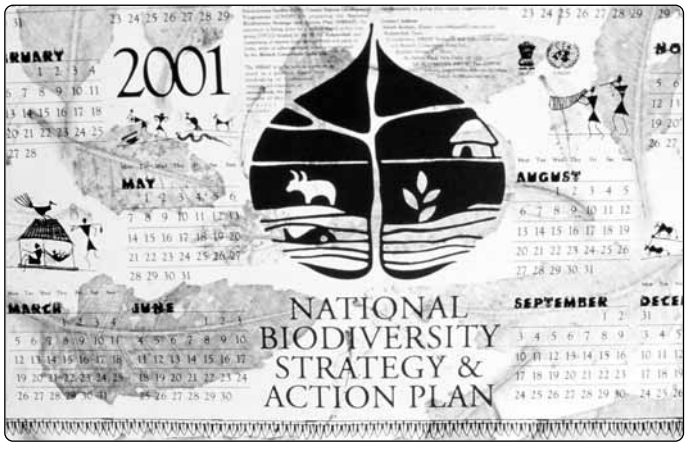
Cloth banners

These were handmade, using natural material like jute and cotton cloth, and projected the NBSAP logo and title. They were not distributed to coordinating agencies, but, like the roll-up panels, were usually carried by TPCG members attending an event.

Media campaign products

An interesting observation by a TPCG member was that the material used to make the posters communicated in different ways to urban and rural audiences: "For the cities we went in for things that were textured and had a handmade look about them, and which are ethnic looking. But at a village level, people prefer things that are machine-made, and that offers a look of credibility and quality to them.... Our logo itself looked very organic, but on the poster it is computer-generated with good printing and paper quality. We tried to make it a fairly swish product so that the gloss value of the product would lend the communication some credibility."

The overall response to the posters (especially the printed ones) was very lukewarm among interviewees in the four states, which was in sharp contrast to the enthusiasm of most of the TPCG interviewees regarding the posters. Posters were more valued in Sikkim and North Coastal Andhra; at all the other sites interviewees either seemed to feel that they did not add much value to the process, or did not remember them which, in some cases, was because the coordinating agency had not thought it necessary to use them much.



Calendar produced for NBSAP with logo

Tool 04: **Wall calendar**

Objective:

To be a method of keeping the NBSAP visibility high, since a calendar would be in use all year. The calendar was also envisaged as a way of breaking the communication barrier across sectors, since it could be equally well displayed in a school, corporate office or NGO, for example.

Description:

A single-sheet, poster-style calendar was produced. Each coordinating agency was to receive 10 calendars. The TPCG also gave away large numbers to the general public at NBSAP events and to many CFP respondents. The calendar had a short description of the NBSAP process with an invitation for people to contact the TPCG to get involved.

Weaknesses:

• Unfortunately production was delayed for bureaucratic reasons and the calendar was produced only six months into the year, thus reducing the lifespan of the product. With hindsight the TPCG felt that the delay could have been overcome by producing a mid-year to mid-year calendar.

• Many interviewees in the four states were not aware of the calendar. A reason may have been low numbers of calendars sent to coordinating agencies (e.g. North Coastal Andhra received 4-6 calendars).

Among the people who had seen the calendar, reactions ranged from the feeling that it was a superfluous product ("it is superfluous, such things do not make a difference" and "there is no shortage of calendars for people") to the feeling that it was very important for keeping NBSAP in the public eye ("A calendar is not a small thing, it is a big thing because it is used all year round. Everyday you see NBSAP when you want to check the date.")

Media campaign outreach activities

Tool 05: **Website**

Objectives:

- To be a method for coordinating agencies to share information and know what is happening at other NBSAP sites
- To promote transparency of information, and be a site where all NBSAP documents (e.g. meeting minutes, draft BSAPs, meeting announcements) and information could be accessed by anyone
- To be a call for participation (there were some responses from people after they looked at the website)
- To contribute towards creating a network of NBSAP coordinating agencies and other participants
- To be a way for people outside India to access information about the NBSAP

The website was promoted in the following ways:

- It was mentioned in a reprint of the CFP brochure
- It was mentioned in each Newsletter (Tool 12 below)
- It was mentioned whenever the TPCG replied to a respondent
- Some NGOs, institutions and coordinating agencies were persuaded by the TPCG to provide a link to the NBSAP website on their own websites
- Word of mouth

The website operated well for 18 months, handled by a TPCG member who would co-ordinate it with the Sustainable Development Networking Programme (SDNP). (SDNP was part of the Environmental Information System (ENVIS) set up by the government to facilitate the exchange of environmental information across India). It then ran into bureaucratic difficulties when the SDNP had some funding problems. The website was not being paid for by the TPCG, and was therefore sidelined. There was a lull in operations and the website never picked up again. A fairly small minority of interviewees used the website; among these, the responses ranged from lukewarm to very positive.

Strengths:

Promoting a transparent NBSAP network: In principle the NBSAP was conceived as a transparent process, and the website helped to put this notion into practice. A TPCG member felt that, "the transparency helped in getting the whole concept of the [NBSAP] network going, and strengthening the network. Everything went on the website, including meeting minutes. Every coordinating agency did feel that they were free to ask for whatever information they wanted. I don't think anyone was ever denied any information. The website really helped in building trust among partners – and the sense of a network, the sense that it was not just 74 agencies working in isolation. Anyone could access the website, not just the coordinating agencies."

Easy access to bulky documents and information updates: Some of the state reports and documents were very bulky, and the website proved to be an easy way to make them easily accessible across the country and outside India.

Weaknesses:

Underestimating resources needed: The TPCG did not hire an external group to work on the website; the hosting of the website by SDNP was free, with a TPCG member converting the documents to html format. This impinged on the time of the TPCG member concerned, as well as on the services received from SDNP during the later phase of difficulties. A TPCG member felt, "with hindsight, we should have just given it out to an external agency – we had the money, we could have easily done it. Because then it is clear you are paying for a service."

Media campaign outreach activities

Tool 06: **Television spots**

Objective:

Awareness-raising about NBSAP and biodiversity issues.

Description:

Two national television programmes featured short segments on NBSAP. One of these was on state television a day before a biodiversity festival was held in Delhi; the timing of this was therefore appropriate. It featured a 15-minute interview with a TPCG member. Following this, a TPCG member made a brief appearance on NDTV (an English language pay news channel). News channels were requested to cover NBSAP related events but this was limited. Overall, the national media campaign was not really able to exploit television as a medium for national communication.

Tool 07: **Radio spots**

Objective:

Awareness-raising about NBSAP and biodiversity issues.

Description:

Two radio programmes featured the NBSAP process with TPCG members appearing on the programme to answer questions on biodiversity from callers. As was the case for television, NBSAP had an insignificant presence on radio at a national level. The most successful use of radio occurred at state level, in Karnataka (see Tool 2 in Karnataka section for details).

Tool 08: **Print articles**

Print sources (excluding the Folio – described below) elicited 38 (5.82%) responses received by the TPCG. The Folio elicited 79 (12.09%) responses.

Folio

Objective:

Awareness raising on biodiversity and NBSAP among the general public.

Description:

The Folio was a regular magazine supplement to the English language, national daily newspaper, The Hindu. One edition of the Folio was dedicated to the theme of biodiversity, compiled and edited by some TPCG members on a voluntary basis. It went out to 700,000 readers. The Folio included a range of articles on biodiversity written by various authors (most connected to the NBSAP in one way or another). There was also a short piece on the NBSAP with a request for interested persons to contact the TPCG for participation in the process. The Folio went out to a very select audience, namely the readers of The Hindu, which is perceived as a 'serious' and rather dry newspaper (as compared to most other English language dailies). In addition BCIL bought up 1000 extra copies to distribute to coordinating agencies. Each coordinating agency received 5-10 copies.

Strengths:

Among the people who had read the Folio, the responses were positive: "It brought NBSAP into the mainstream, because the magazine itself has an air of quality. It is not read by too many people, but among the people who read newspaper magazines, it has a certain credibility. It is well brought out, well researched, has leading people writing in it. It dealt with a certain target audience, and it dealt with them well." The Call for Participation Analysis by the TPCG states, "There was a sudden increase in responses requesting participation after the release of the Hindu

Media campaign outreach activities

Folio. In the short span of a few months there were 79 responses [to the Folio] contributing about 12.09% of the total... responses" (Kohli & Bhatt 2002). Though many interviewees had not seen the Folio, among those who had seen it there was near unanimous agreement that it was a valuable source of information regarding biodiversity. In North Coastal Andhra, extensive use was made of this tool – each LAC member was given a copy, and it was also used to facilitate grassroots level meetings: "It had attractive photos and was good for personal knowledge as well as to use the text and photos for meetings. In adivasi areas the photo of the Kovil tree (gumcurria tree) was very popular because they could identify the tree in their own village."

Chandamama and Vasudha

Objective:

To raise biodiversity awareness among children.

Description:

Chandamama is a popular children's monthly magazine published in 12 Indian languages. It is targeted at the age group 6-16, though a third of the readers are adults. It has a wide reach, and goes beyond the metropolitan areas into districts and towns. From 2002 to 2004, the English language edition (which has a readership of approximately 400,000) carried a series of 24 stories under the playful title, "NBSaaaanp" accompanied by an illustration of a snake (Saanp is 'snake' in Hindi). The stories were related to various aspects of biodiversity, often based on real events and initiatives around the country. This was an unplanned addition to the national media campaign, since the Chandamama editors approached the TPCG after seeing the Folio. The Chandamama initiative took off because members of Kalpavriksh and the TPCG agreed to write the series of stories on a voluntary basis.

Encouraged by the initiative, Chandamama also brought out a special 16-page biodiversity supplement entitled "Vasudha" ('bountiful earth'), which was produced in all 12 languages (and had a readership of approximately 1,200,000). Vasudha began by introducing the concept of biodiversity and then went on to short articles on different themes related to biodiversity, based on real life issues. There were also activities like a quiz, and 'Spot the Difference' between a polluted and non-polluted scene. 'Mosaic of Life' was a picture spread in Warli art style, showing humans' relationship to nature. Readers were asked to interpret the picture and send in an essay to win a prize.

Strengths:

Teachers and parents were especially appreciative of the NBSaanp stories, while children gave a more enthusiastic response to Vasudha, probably because Vasudha was interactive as opposed to the series of stories.

After the collaboration with NBSAP ended, an off-shoot of the initiative was that each English edition of Chandamama carried a 'Vasudha page' which included environmental information, practical tips on what children can do for the environment, and eco-friendly activities (e.g. how to make a cloth bag; how to re-use envelopes; recipes using lesser-known millets). The activities proved to be very popular, with children writing letters in response to it. For example, one reader contributed an activity of her own, on how to make paintbrushes out of grass.

Not many interviewees apart from the TPCG were aware of this initiative, which is not surprising considering that the target audience was children. Among the few who had seen some of the stories, reactions were uniformly positive.

Weakness:

A problem was that the target age group of the magazine is very broad. This meant that the information had to be reasonably diluted to ensure that it would not be inaccessible to the youngest readers. A narrower target age group could ensure the use of more focused themes and vocabulary. An interviewee from Chandamama felt, "A target is very important, to be able to hit it better. But this is difficult to do in a general readership of 6-16 years. A series with a different target group at a time would be better."

Media campaign outreach activities

Media Fellows

Objective:

Awareness-raising on biodiversity and NBSAP among the general public.

Description:

In the last year of the NBSAP process, four journalists were named "media fellows" by the TPCG. They were commissioned to write and publish articles in English and Hindi, on NBSAP and biodiversity. They received a fellowship to travel wherever they chose. The article could be on any aspect of biodiversity, as long as it was 'pegged' to NBSAP. For example, a media fellow could write about an NBSAP biodiversity festival, but then also include general issues of seed variety, the public distribution system, and so on. About 25 articles were written by the Media Fellows in different publications.

Strengths:

The initiative was a reliable way of producing a sustained stream of print articles (as opposed to, for example, relying on persuading journalists from different publications to write an article).

Weaknesses:

Unfortunately this initiative was thought of too late in the process to make a significant contribution to the national media campaign. Also, the languages of the articles were limited to English and Hindi.

Two Media Workshops

Objective:

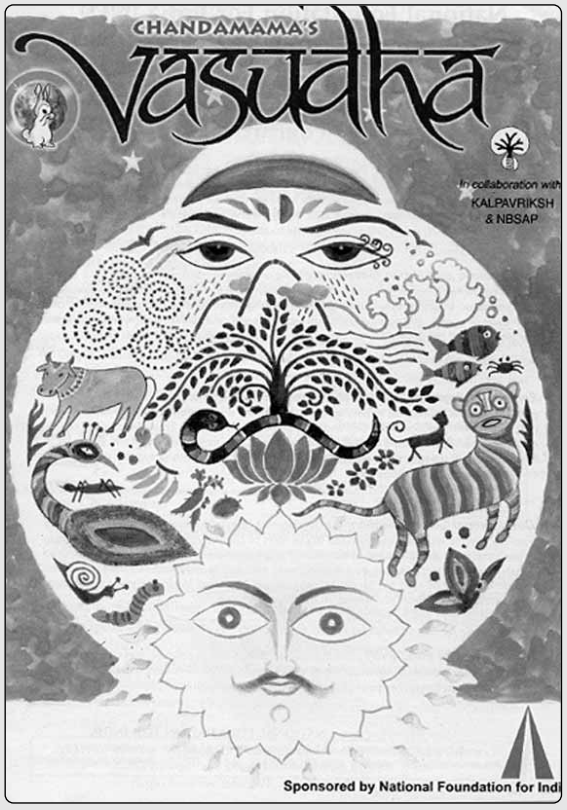
To sensitise journalists to take up issues related to biodiversity.

Description:

One workshop was for senior journalists and the other for younger, upcoming journalists. The workshops aimed to create interest in the NBSAP by linking it to topical issues. Thus the first workshop focussed on Bt cotton, genetically modified products and patents, since these topics were very much in the news at the time. Following this a few journalists wrote articles, usually focusing on a topical issue and mentioning NBSAP as an 'add-on'.

Other articles

Various TPCG members took it upon themselves to write NBSAP-related articles for various publications, throughout the process.



Chandamama magazine - special biodiversity supplement

Media campaign outreach activities

Tool 09: **Collaborative workshops**

Objective:

To get inputs and ideas for the NBSAP from a wide range of stakeholders who may not necessarily be directly involved with the NBSAP process.

Description:

There were three thematic national workshops, which were collaborations between NBSAP and other organisations (Adivasi National Workshop in Delhi, Prajateerpu (a "citizens' jury" on food and farming) in Andhra Pradesh, and Human-Wildlife Conflict in Bangalore, Karnataka). The results of the workshops were integrated into the national plan. Of these the Adivasi National Workshop is interesting to take note of, because it was an example of sectoral targeting of adivasi organisations at a national level.

Strengths:

By creating a formal collaboration with the All-India Coordinating Forum of the Adivasi/Indigenous Peoples for the adivasi workshop, and incorporating the statement issued by the workshop into the national plan, the NBSAP created a parallel process of bringing adivasi voices into the NBSAP. Even if adivasi concerns had been left out of some state plans (for whatever reasons), this collaboration ensured that their concerns were included at a national level. For example, a TPCG member felt that some crucial adivasi voices had been left out of the state process in Nagaland. The collaborative workshop ensured that at least broad adviasi concerns, if not region-specific ones, were included in the NBSAP.

Other National Communication Strategies included

• Meeting for donors and aid agencies to appraise them of the possibilities of funding the implementation of BSAPs
• NBSAP CD-Rom distributed to coordinating agencies (and anyone else who was interested), containing all the NBSAP material available.
• Advertisements in the press inviting participation in the NBSAP process.

The following tools were central to communicating (exclusively) with coordinating agencies, i.e. they were designed for internal communication within the NBSAP network, as opposed to the media products and outreach activities which were designed for wide public communication. Though these tools were not officially part of the national media campaign, they have been included here by virtue of being national level communication tools, and because in practice they sometimes overlapped with the media campaign in terms of use and application (this was especially the case with the newsletter, Tool 10 below).

Communication with coordinating agencies

Tool 10: **Newsletters**

Objective:

To create an information exchange network of NBSAP coordinating agencies.

Description:

Every 2-3 months, two TPCG members compiled a newsletter based on information sent by coordinating agencies and TPCG members. The newsletter contained NBSAP news from all over the country, including announcements for forthcoming meetings, activity updates and general messages from the TPCG to all the coordinating agencies. Each edition had to be sent to the MoEF for approval before printing (though there were never any objections from the MoEF about the content). 5-10 copies were sent to each coordinating agency, though not all chose to distribute it beyond a few people who were directly working on the process along with the coordinating agency. In North Coastal Andhra the coordinating agency photocopied the newsletters for a slightly wider distribution.

Strengths:

Information exchange: There was near unanimous agreement among interviewees that the newsletter was an extremely valuable tool for coordinating agencies to keep up-to-date on NBSAP progress at other sites around the country.

Sustaining the NBSAP network: A TPCG member noted, "It was a way of sustaining the NBSAP network – of letting coordinating agencies know what the others are doing."

Multiple uses: After it was no longer relevant to use the CFP brochure to invite participation, the newsletter was used as a way of letting people know about NBSAP – for example, all CFP respondents received copies of the newsletters. Eventually the newsletters also proved to be valuable process documentation, since they had tracked the NBSAP for over two years.

Weakness:

Language: The main weakness of the newsletter was that it was produced only in English; even CFP respondents who had responded in another language, received the newsletter in English.

Communication with coordinating agencies

Tool 11: Compendium of Guidelines and Concept Papers

Objective:

To provide guidelines for preparing BSAPs, and explanations of key concepts to coordinating agencies.

Description:

The compendium was probably the most important communication tool used by the TPCG to communicate with coordinating agencies. It was written by the TPCG and other volunteers, and distributed to all coordinating agencies at the beginning of the NBSAP process. It was a useful source of information for coordinating agencies who joined the NBSAP process late and therefore missed out on the orientation sessions held at the beginning. The compendium covered just about every aspect of the NBSAP process including:

Guidelines and suggestions for BSAP processes (e.g. Process outline; NBSAP site maps; guidelines for ensuring widespread participation; media campaign strategy proposal; biodiversity festivals proposal; guidelines for process documentation; suggested formats for writing BSAPs)

Cross-cutting theme papers, which discussed various issues being addressed by NBSAP (e.g. why biodiversity should be conserved; integrating biodiversity into sectoral planning; integrating gender sensitivity into biodiversity conservation and the NBSAP process)

Thematic notes, which discussed the thematic foci of NBSAP (e.g. health and biodiversity; natural aquatic eco-systems; wild biodiversity; domesticated biodiversity)

Listing and Contacts (contact details of all coordinating agencies and TPCG members) (MoEF 2000)

Strengths:

Interviewees repeatedly mentioned that this was a very useful and comprehensive document to guide the process at various levels from conceptualisation to writing the BSAPs. Over the course of the process it was also used extensively for reference within the TPCG. In some cases it continues to be of use beyond the NBSAP process. For example, a small, grassroots NGO representative in North Coastal Andhra said, "In rural areas we have no access to information... Before NBSAP we had no idea how to identify and address environmental issues. The guidelines really helped field-based activity. A lot of information was there, like how many people are working on environmental aspects, who is an expert in which field, how to document and gather information from people. So the guidelines are a very useful tool for social activists."

Communication with coordinating agencies

Tool 12: National and Regional Workshops

Objectives:

To initially provide orientation and guidance to coordinating agencies, and subsequently to discuss updates and progress of the NBSAP process.

Description:

Three national workshops and five regional workshops were organised exclusively for coordinating agencies. The national workshops were held in the capital city, New Delhi. The regional workshops were held at five locations in different regions around the country, for the coordinating agencies in that region. In the last two national workshops there was limited time for coordinating agencies to speak about their processes, so an exhibition was set up by the MCM, where people could display information about their sites as an additional method of sharing information. Co-ordinators handed over the display material to the MCM as and when they arrived, and the display was set up while the workshop was on. The displays could be viewed during breaks in the workshop. The regional meetings were smaller and more informal, and had no exhibitions or displays.

Strengths:

Democratic functioning: Anyone who wanted to speak was welcome to do so.

Networking: The workshops were valuable opportunities for coordinating agencies to network with each other, particularly for those belonging to the same region since it was an opportunity for common regional concerns and solutions to emerge. The regional workshops were especially important for this, as well as the national workshop activity of breaking up into regional groups for detailed discussions: "By the final national workshop, the central and western eco-regions had been interacting for over three years. And they announced at the final workshop that they are going to have a network of people – in the Maharashtra, Vidarbha, Nagpur, Gujarat, Kutchh, Aravallis, Aravari and Rajasthan sites – to take on issues together and support one another. So that was a clear output of the western regional workshop and interactions."

Based on needs of participants: The regional workshops were a result of demands by coordinating agencies at the second national workshop: "At the mid-term [second] workshop people realised that certain aspects [of the process] like empowerment and equity really needed to improve. So to have localised, regional level meetings to see what specific approaches can be developed to deal with this, was very useful."

Provided valuable guidance: There was unanimous agreement among coordinating agencies that the workshops were extremely valuable in providing encouragement, learning from progress at other sites, as well as practical guidance in terms of methodology.

Created momentum and enthusiasm among coordinating agencies: The workshops provided a sense of enthusiasm among coordinating agencies: "There was a feeling of understanding that you were not the only one who had done or not done something. It was a very positive thing of enthusing each other. It dispelled the cynicism that it [NBSAP] cannot happen." Another interviewee said, "Without the workshops we would have lost the motivation to work. It inspired us to go ahead and complete the task."

Weaknesses:

Time limitations: There were long working hours and fatigue levels were high. Due to this the number of people participating in the workshops fluctuated during the day.

Limited scope for innovations: Despite a feeling within the TPCG that the workshops needed to be done differently and creatively, there was not much scope to do so due to time and other constraints: "They were very structured, like any other workshop because of the budget and the need for organising logistics. We wanted to innovate a lot, but there was no time, energy or resources to do so. It could have been not in an auditorium with a podium – and the whole structure that comes with that, having a

plenary, breaking up into groups, etc. But because the agenda was so vast, we could not get into things like role-play, or innovative, non-formal methodologies. Also in terms of the people who came – expecting high-level FD officials to get down to those methodologies was not something we could risk at that point. There was just too much to get through. The most one could innovate was in terms of the gifts – we did not give bouquets. But we could have innovated on the food – when you are talking about biodiversity, why not eat biodiverse food and learn from each other's foods? But in the regional workshops we insisted that we would have regional food."

Responses to National Media Campaign

It is very difficult to gauge the impact of the media campaign especially since there was no mechanism to track impacts, apart from keeping a track of those people who wrote in or responded directly to the TPCG. Responses were received by the TPCG from all over India, by fax, email and post. Three years into the process (i.e. by end-2002), the TPCG had received 653 responses seeking participation in the NBSAP, arguably a small number compared to the number of national media products and activities. However, these responses were only those that were sent directly to the TPCG as a response to the national media campaign, and do not reflect the responses sent directly to coordinating agencies (e.g. many CFP brochure responses were sent directly to coordinating agencies). Of course, they also do not reflect the impacts in terms of the awareness-raising objective of the media campaign.

Thus, among the TPCG, the perceived impacts were to a large extent based on speculation or estimates. As a TPCG member put it, referring to the CFP brochure, "we sometimes think something will reach [out to people], but actually we have no idea. We thought we did our best – we put in the relevant issues, we requested people to participate, we did it in several languages and tried to make sure it goes to as many people as possible. But whether it actually went to as many people as possible, did it reach in the way it should have reached - I am not in a position to say."

Challenges of the National Media Campaign

Much of the national media campaign strategy seems to have been developed intuitively, given the absence of a sustained team of experienced media specialists. Given the sophisticated and intensive media use prevalent in India today (advertising, cinema, print, radio, television, internet), particularly in urban and semi-urban areas, making a presence felt at the national level is no easy task. Most interviewees across the four states felt that there was insufficient media coverage of the NBSAP (which was, of course, also a reflection of media outreach by the local coordinating agencies).

The principle failure of the national media campaign was that it failed to secure a significant, sustained presence in the national media, and to generate a momentum in the media. NBSAP did not become a mass movement at the national level, though it did manage to achieve a great deal of vibrancy at various state and sub-state sites. At a national level there were significant pockets of activity, such as the appointment of media fellows, or much-appreciated initiatives like the Folio; but these did not seem to spread horizontally or create a strategic momentum. They seemed to remain at a general and diffuse level.

Two key challenges faced by the national media campaign were firstly, priorities of the mainstream media, and secondly, a general unfamiliarity with the concept of participation.

Priorities of the mainstream media

A key challenge lay in the priorities of the mainstream print and electronic media, which did not necessarily coincide with giving space to the NBSAP. The NBSAP was not one event which created a 'newsworthy' splash, but a series of events over time. This made it difficult to keep the mainstream media interested: "The electronic media was not very forthcoming because NBSAP was not an event – which is what TV and radio want. NBSAP was recurring events... It was not a priority for the mainstream media... The response was not encouraging. The Hindu [newspaper] and Frontline [magazine] were very responsive and gave good coverage. The other papers were not that interested."

A TPCG member made the interesting point that the mainstream media tends to be not only 'event-

centric', but also tends to favour 'personality-centric' coverage. The fact that the NBSAP was not promoted as a personality-centric process, given the democratic ideology of the process, may have also hindered the press coverage: "Ashish Kothari [TPCG co-ordinator] was not lionised – which was a successful thing, because all the people got their due and NBSAP proved to be a very democratic movement. But this is no good for the media! The media fascination for an event and a personality makes it difficult." Movements or processes in India that have projected a personality as a 'leader' have often indeed been successful in retaining media interest; the mainstream media often reports on the actions of the personality as a 'peg' on which to base the reportage of the movement. It is debatable as to whether a personality-centric approach would have been ideologically desirable in the context of the NBSAP; but purely in terms of a strategy to capture media interest a personality-centric projection could perhaps be a useful component of a media strategy.

On the other hand, NBSAP was a process that did create some visually interesting events and photo opportunities, and potentially newsworthy 'stories'. Many of the available media opportunities and options could not be maximised due to weaknesses within the media campaign strategy, as discussed below.

Unfamiliarity with concepts of participation and biodiversity

Another challenge, as noted by a TPCG member, was an unfamiliarity with this type of participatory process and the concept of biodiversity, which may have led to a relatively low number of responses to the national call for participation: "Indian citizens are not used to calls for participation. Secondly, it is on biodiversity, and people still have weird notions about it, it is definitely seen as a specialists' sector." A similar comment from a key co-ordinator in Sikkim is also relevant, though it referred to the Sikkim state-level media campaign, which included calls for participation through radio talks in six languages, newspaper advertisements, cable television advertisements and announcements on the news on television: "All this did not give any response. We did a lot with the media, we went overboard with it. But though people listen, we have not cultivated the habit of responding. People would say that we heard the talk, but it did not strike them to respond."

There can be no definitive analysis of the national media campaign in this study. However, some of the strengths and weaknesses that emerged were as follows.

Strengths of the National Media campaign

Credibility:

A package of well-produced products gives credibility to a process. Several TPCG members felt that the products were likely to lend a feeling of credibility and importance to the process: "The calendar [for example] creates a snowballing effect in the minds of people. It becomes part of a collective consciousness, it becomes institutionalised – which is important, given that NBSAP was a fairly loose network of people and organisations. It gives NBSAP a formality. The logo has the same function." An interviewee in North Coastal Andhra stressed that particularly in a rural or semi-rural context, a product from 'outside' has a different kind of credibility compared to a locally produced tool: "The advantage of [products like] Chandamama and Folio is that people feel some additional credibility is given to biodiversity and NBSAP. It is not the same thing as seeing a CFP brochure which has been printed by GPK [the coordinating agency]...Biddaka Ballamma, an adivasi person, read his name in the NBSAP newsletter [in connection with him talking about adivasi culture and plant protection]. He does not know English, but he took the newsletter to his village and his teacher read it for him. He was very

happy to see his name in an English paper from Delhi, because an outside person, who knows English, has written his name. This made him very satisfied. This has a different importance than a local newsletter. And is a greater encouragement that his words and name have reached all over India."

Opportunism and Flexibility:
The TPCG had a flexible and opportunistic approach to the media campaign. Unexpected opportunities like the Folio and Chandamama were taken advantage of, as and when they came up.

Language:
The multiple-language component of the media campaign was a clearly thought out aspect from the beginning. Though multiple language use could not be extended to all media products due to resource constraints, the CFP brochure was produced in several regional languages, and there was scope for regional language use on the blank posters. The encouragement of independent media campaigns at state and sub-state level was to ensure high use of local languages – though this was achieved only to the extent that state and sub-state media campaigns were successful.

A 'buffet' of Tools to Pick and Choose From:
Most coordinating agencies made selective use of the national tools and products, depending on the context. In the biodiversity festival for the Deccan process (see Tool 1 in Deccan section for details) there was a deliberate avoidance of any externally produced material in order to retain an authentic, local flavour to the event. It was a strength of the national media campaign that coordinating agencies were free to use all or none of the tools developed by the TPCG.

Increased Value and Multiple uses in Resource-poor Contexts:
In general, where the coordinating agency had low access to information and resources, greater value was attached to the media products, and more use made of them, sometimes beyond the NBSAP process. For the North Coastal Andhra process, extensive use was made of products such as the Newsletter, Folio and CFP brochure since the coordinating agency usually lacks access to such resources. The Sikkim FD made use of the Folio as a resource that stretched beyond the requirements of NBSAP: "The Folio was used to train our staff, and we gave it to all the people who helped us to conduct public hearings and to key resource persons who helped us." Similarly, a small grassroots NGO in North Coastal Andhra used the CFP brochure as a training resource for its local NGO network, to understand the concept of biodiversity to help make biodiversity registers in 14 villages in Srikakulam district. A grassroots NGO working in Cudappah, Andhra Pradesh, distributed 400 CFP brochures with the primary aim of creating awareness about biodiversity and national planning at grassroots level. In contrast, the Karnataka state process made far less use of such material since the coordinating agency has regular access to a range of information resources. Most interviewees in Karnataka had not seen (or could not remember) even the CFP brochure. Clearly, the context and existing resources of the coordinating agencies reflect on how much value such tools add to (and beyond) a process.

Weaknesses of the National Media campaign

Distribution of Products:
There were examples of products reaching sites rather late. Posters reached Sikkim and Karnataka late (in the latter case this led to low usage of posters); newsletters sometimes arrived late in North Coastal Andhra; the calendar was 6 months late across all sites, and did not reach Sikkim at all (none of the Sikkim interviewees were aware of it); Karnataka received Kannada CFP brochures late because initially Hindi ones had been mistakenly sent.

There seemed to be some weaknesses in the strategy for dissemination of products. A TPCG member felt, "The distribution [of products] left something to be desired. It was just that one did not quite recognise the importance of the dissemination strategy. While it is important to produce a product, it is equally – if not more – important to have a dissemination strategy designed well in advance. Because that also helps you to fine-tune your products to some extent, if you know whom you are targeting, how you will distribute it, and what kind of follow-up action you have in mind. And also [a dissemination strategy] helps you to maximise the use of the product. Definitely it should all have gotten off the shelves pretty quickly. There was no point in things sitting on people's shelves. They had to go out, and go out quickly. And that distribution had to be targeted; there had to be certain events around which many of these things could have been distributed."

However, there did not seem to be any problems regarding numbers distributed of each product. When there was a shortfall of materials like the CFP brochure or newsletters, either coordinating agencies requested additional copies from the TPCG, or else were quite happy with photocopying the material themselves.

Follow-up to Outreach Activities:
Various TPCG members acknowledged that there was insufficient systematic follow-up to national media campaign outreach activities (mainly television, radio and print), often resulting in relatively isolated pockets of activity and one-off events – described by a TPCG member as "several flashes in the pan, which created a bit of a stir". The most systematically sustained initiative was the series of children's stories in Chandamama over two years. The appointment of media fellows generated a consistent series of articles, but the idea of having media fellows emerged a little late in the process. A weakness of having pockets of activity and one-off events is that people may easily forget the message, when there is no sustained follow-up to ensure a higher recall value. In contrast, media communication with coordinating agencies was unanimously acknowledged to be regular and systematic.

Communication from Coordinating Agencies:
Coordinating agencies were requested to let the TPCG know well in advance when an NBSAP event was to take place, so that media coverage could be organised. However, coordinating agencies often did not do so, often because their events were not planned well in advance.

Insufficient Sectoral Targeting:
A key problem seems to have been a lack of sufficient sectoral targeting by the national media campaign; and confusion between the requirements of sectoral targeting and the need for a democratically homogenous message across the country. The national media campaign wanted to reach out to people across dozens of languages, ethnic groups, social strata and occupations – sectors as diverse as hunter-gatherers, farmers, rural and urban students, housewives, computer analysts, armed forces personnel, industrialists and politicians. Though some of the tools spoke specifically to certain sectors (the Folio for an English-speaking, middle-class readership; the National Adivasi Workshop for adivasis), the sectorally oriented initiatives tended to be opportunistic rather than strategic. Sectoral targeting was not a central element of the national media campaign. A TPCG member closely involved with the Media Campaign felt, "On the one hand, we were telling ourselves that we want each and every citizen of India to participate. On the other hand, the messaging itself was not sufficiently formulated. What were we seeking from city dwellers, for example?... So the homogenisation of this national mass campaign was – I would not even call it ambitious – it was wrong. When you have this kind of homogenisation, you do not get

your targets in place... For some of the constituencies we had to figure out whether they had anything concrete to contribute to the planning process at all. There was, to begin with, a very inclusive attitude, that everyone has something to say and it affects everybody's life. But there were several constituencies who by definition would not care at all. How does biodiversity affect students in Delhi? I am sure it does, but we have to figure out how.... What NBSAP ended up doing was to scream out loud that NBSAP exists, and that it is a national level plan. And that is it. So people already plugged into the environment scenario would respond out of their self-interest. But our approach was just not the kind to produce a mass phenomenon.... Our communication was – 'look at NBSAP, and look at biodiversity which is an all-enveloping phenomenon' That was our big selling point... now even though that is a big statement by itself, I don't think it makes a lot of sense [to many people]... So our identification of constituencies, and targeting of messages, was not well worked out."

A key factor in this was the inexperience of handling a national media campaign, and the huge workload of the TPCG in what was even otherwise a very ambitious process. As another TPCG member put it, "We could have been more nuanced in seeking participation from women and other sectors. But with hindsight, it was too new. The scale at which we were trying to do things was already a huge workload. So we did not have the space to think about whether the corporate sector [for example] would respond to something like the CFP brochure. If we had thought about it, we would probably have realised that the corporate sector would not respond to something like the CFP brochure."

The Flagship Tool Excluded Non-literate People:
This is linked to the above point of sectoral targeting. Since television and radio outreach did not take off at the national level, a gap in the national media campaign was that its flagship communication tool – the CFP brochure - excluded non-literate people (i.e. about 47.79% of citizens) (1991 figure, www.censusindia.net). A TPCG member commented, "The most obvious shortcoming is that the largest constituency you are trying to reach, does not know how to read it. That is a big problem. Because the CFP brochure was the single largest highlight of the media campaign. So there was an imbalance there that needed to be remedied. The CFP could have been translated into other [non-print] mediums... Maybe it needed to be followed up by a guy on a cycle going around with a loudspeaker in villages." In some cases this problem was partially overcome; for example in North Coastal Andhra the CFP brochure was often read out and explained at village level meetings.

Underestimation of Human and Financial Resources:
The human and financial resources required for the national media campaign seem to have been vastly underestimated. The strategies for the media campaign were perhaps not adequately woven around the available resources; the initial media campaign strategy was very ambitious in comparison to the available resources, envisaging a great deal more than the activities and level of intensity which eventually materialised.

It was perhaps the human resource requirements that were underestimated more than the overall financial resources; thus, the MCM was a relatively low-paid, part-time consultant, constrained in terms of time, energy and resources: "The MCM was a consultant to NBSAP, and he was free to be doing other things. It was not a full-time job. So you were creating a situation whereby the time and energy devoted to such an important aspect of the whole process, was bound to be challenged by other commitments... there was too much work and too little investment in terms of energy and time... if these were our objectives, we ought to have gone about it differently... For us to have imagined that one MCM would actually be able to

run this national campaign, was a colossal myth." Indeed, many TPCG members found that they needed to give a great deal of their time voluntarily, to help with the media campaign; this was extra time that had not been envisaged. Unluckily, the situation was exacerbated by the lack of continuity in the post of the MCM, with three individuals being appointed in succession over the course of the NBSAP process.

The fees allocated for the MCM meant that it was not possible to hire very experienced media specialists, which impinged on the formulation and execution of the national media campaign. Given that media is big business in India, most specialists charge very high fees; paying such fees is relatively alien to the environmental sector. However, it is worth considering the fact that in engaging a person from a different sector (e.g. media sector), it can be necessary to consider the internal dynamics and requirements of that sector. If a media specialist is indeed required, either the requisite funds have to be made available, or the scale of ambition has to be significantly toned down: "When you have a pre-decided sum of money, then what becomes important is identification of your human resources. And your financial resources need to be enough to empower the human resource".

Lack of Work Plan and Time Line for MCM:
The TPCG regularly drew up elaborate work plans and time lines for each TPCG member, to enable members to plan their work and to collectively keep a track of what had been accomplished. This system worked very well. However this was not done for the MCM, which partly impinged on the progress of the media campaign.

Ambiguities in the Strategy for Achieving Objectives of the Media Campaign:
While the aims of the media campaign were clearly laid out, there was some ambiguity in the strategies to be used to achieve the dual aims of (1) creating awareness about NBSAP for gaining active inputs for the plans; and (2) creating general awareness about biodiversity.

There seem to have been some underlying assumptions about cause-and-effect, which may or may not have been valid. These were not explicitly stated in any of the media strategy documents, but often came through during interviews. In particular, there seemed to be assumptions that:

a. General awareness-raising on biodiversity would lead to inputs for NBSAP: Creating awareness about biodiversity was also seen as a precursor to getting inputs: "To raise awareness about NBSAP, we had to raise awareness about biodiversity. So we had to tell people about biodiversity, and tell them we want your inputs." Here there was a potential contradiction, because the aim was to simultaneously educate people about biodiversity – which is very different from reminding people about their biodiversity, which is what the Deccan biodiversity festival did - while also asking for their inputs on biodiversity conservation.

And:

b. General awareness-raising on biodiversity and NBSAP would lead to support for implementation of the NBSAP: As a TPCG member put it, "The idea behind the use of various tools at various levels was also the raising of awareness – where even if people don't give you inputs into the plan itself, they could probably give inputs into the implementation. It was a slightly longer-term idea – that goes for all the tools, like biodiversity festivals, etc... The whole idea of raising awareness was that people could get involved *at some point of time*." However, implementation was in the unforeseen, unplanned future, thus creating an unknown timeline in terms of making use of any media build-up. At state and sub-state level it was possible to create some small pockets of activity and implementation arising out of local awareness-raising; however this kind of implementation did not happen at the national level or due to the national media campaign.

Such assumptions about the effects of the media campaign may perhaps have reflected on the thrust of the media campaign, to some extent.

Some TPCG members expressed doubts at some of the strategies used, wondering, with hindsight, what end they served. At least two TPCG members, who were centrally involved in the media campaign, felt that 'what media and for what purpose' remained unresolved questions till the end.

Stalls in Delhi Biodiversity Festival

Conclusion and Summary

Some lessons learned

Key lessons drawn out of the NBSAP experience are summarised here. Many of these lessons have come up in preceding sections, and are presented here in a consolidated form. This section would therefore be useful for all readers, whether they have looked at all or only some of the previous sections.

1. Ownership

Many of the lessons learned from the NBSAP experience have been to do with creating a feeling of ownership among participants. People need to identify with, and feel ownership over, a process in order to participate meaningfully and value the output. In different contexts, different things are likely to create ownership or alienation: the type of coordinating agency selected, the kinds of resource materials or decorations used in a biodiversity festival, the opportunity for teamwork, the use of dialects, are all elements that can create or dispel feelings of ownership. Many of the 'lessons learned' below are related to the issue of generating ownership over the process and the product. In terms of implementation of the BSAPs, this was crucial; since there was no in-built mechanism or guarantee of implementation, the idea was that ownership over the process would create a pressure or momentum for implementation by stakeholders.

2. Complementary Cluster of Tools

Strategic complementarity within the cluster of tools utilised, is valuable in order to reach a cross-section of stakeholders.

The Karnataka state process is an excellent example of a process that utilised a complementary cluster of tools to reach across various social sectors, and to get inputs at a number of different levels in the process, from grassroots data collection, to reviewing the final Karnataka Biodiversity Strategy and Action Plan.

The tools used for the KBSAP complemented each other in the sense that together they targeted a range of sectors: experts wrote the commissioned papers; NGOs prepared the case studies and participated in the thematic meetings; students and teachers were involved in preparing School Biodiversity Registers; general public opinion was solicited through the radio programmes and newspaper articles; and direct local community input was solicited through the School Biodiversity Registers and the case studies. The thematic meetings invited various sectors, including government officials, for discussion.

3. Coordinating Agency Selection

A key aspect that impinged heavily on the NBSAP process in the various states was the selection of coordinating agencies (see 'Methodology of NBSAP Process' in the Introduction, for details on coordinating agency selection). This is not surprising, given that the process was a very decentralised one with independent decision-making by coordinating agencies. The TPCG went through a detailed process of identifying appropriate agencies. The criteria for selection were that the agency should be:

- Relatively independent;
- Not seen to be on any one side of the spectrum between conservation and livelihoods;
- Acceptable to governmental and non-governmental organisations.

This was a difficult set of criteria to meet for

every selection, but the TPCG tried to find a reasonable balance within it.

There were two main bureaucratic requirements in the procedure of appointing coordinating agencies:

• All state-level coordinating agencies had to be approved by the state government (but this was not required for sub-state level agencies). In most cases the agency suggested by the TPCG was approved, but in some cases the state government chose another agency. This requirement was not necessarily a weakness, since it meant that the state government assumed official ownership of the process, with the Ministry of Environment and Forests corresponding directly with the state government regarding coordinating agency selection. In some cases the coordinating agencies recommended by the TPCG itself did not operate satisfactorily (e.g. EPTRI in Andhra Pradesh and YASHADA in Maharashtra).

• Once a state-level coordinating agency had been appointed it could not be changed, regardless of the quality of the process (again, this was not the case for sub-state coordinating agencies). This was a significant constraint, since it affected the possibilities of ensuring accountability of coordinating agencies.

The following lessons emerged regarding selection of coordinating agencies:

Government or NGO?:
Some interviewees were of the opinion that a government agency in general is the wrong agency to handle a wide-ranging, participatory process like NBSAP – it was felt that government institutions usually have their own agenda, are too bureaucratic and find it difficult to be self-critical. It is often difficult for a government agency to understand or mobilise participation. However, though the experience with EPTRI (Andhra Pradesh) and YASHADA (Maharashtra) supports this view, a completely different picture emerged in Sikkim where the Forest Department conducted one of the most participatory NBSAP processes. Some factors to keep in mind when selecting a governmental coordinating agency are as follows:

Who is in charge?: Much depends on the capacity and interest of the individuals in charge. As is so often the case, when the right individuals are in charge, a government agency can show high levels of achievement because of the immense human resources and institutional back-up that it commands.

Low accountability: The flip side is that when a government institution is disinterested in a process, there is very little that can be done by outsiders due to the frequent lack of accountability within government institutions, or simply due to the slow workings of the bureaucracy if accountability is to be made possible through official channels. Non-governmental organisations and institutions are usually (not always) more approachable in terms of informality and openness to 'outside' ideas; at any rate they are more concerned about maintaining a certain image of efficacy and responsibility. Funds are not likely to be a lever for accountability of a government organisation, unless perhaps it is a very large sum in relation to the institutional resources of the government organisation. NBSAP funding was negligible in the context of large (especially governmental) institutions, and so holding back funds to ensure accountability would have made little difference to such agencies. Such action could perhaps have made a difference in the context of smaller, non-governmental institutions that tend to be dependent on even relatively small amounts of funding. Thus, coordinating agencies need to be selected keeping in mind that the type of agency will affect the possibilities of accountability.

Lack of continuity among personnel: A change in personnel in charge of NBSAP at EPTRI (Andhra Pradesh) contributed to a loss of continuity in the process. This is difficult to guard against in any organisation when dealing with a process over a

few years; in a government institution though, it is almost inevitable due to routine transfers of officials.

Arrangements within the agency: Arrangements within a coordinating agency are significant – in most cases the NBSAP was one of several things a co-ordinator was doing. A full-time person on the job would be more obliged to produce results, if relieved of other responsibilities. A TPCG member noted that particularly within government institutions, internal arrangements can often create constraints: "One conclusion which can be deduced is that a government institution requires much more attention, care or time to perform as well as, say, an NGO. That could either be because in government they are all oriented to one kind of thinking; or it could be that the systems are difficult – where you have one official in charge, and he has three bosses, and has to do other things, and is not in control of his or her own time – so there could be all kinds of constraints which NGOs may not have. On the other hand, governments have greater resources."

Pre-existing Financial, Institutional and Human Resources:

The pre-existing financial, institutional and human resources of coordinating agencies reflected significantly on the processes across the four states. The capacity of the CES (Karnataka) in terms of its institutional resources, as well as its sterling reputation within the state, greatly contributed to the success of the KBSAP process. Its series of radio programmes, which was one of the flagship successes of not only the Karnataka process but of NBSAP as a whole, was possible only because the CES had the resources to sponsor it independently; it would not have been possible to do it (in addition to all the other Karnataka process activities) by relying solely on the budgetary allocation from NBSAP. CES' resources also reflect on its capacity to follow up implementation or create opportunities for off-shoots to develop (e.g. inclusion of KBSAP recommendations in the Karnataka State of the Environment Report; creating awareness among NGOs for taking up implementation of KBSAP recommendations; further development of School Biodiversity Register guidelines for teachers).

In Sikkim the FD had the advantage of being able to maximise NBSAP resources due to its existing programmes and infrastructure. Clubbing NBSAP meetings along with ongoing projects that also required grassroots meetings (e.g. meetings for the Integrated Wasteland Development Project, Ministry of Rural Development) saved time as well as funds.

The Deccan sub-state plan was done without any recourse to NBSAP funds. A significant factor in the success of the mobile biodiversity festival, was the fact that DDS had a ready network of volunteers across 62 villages, and an existing foothold for community mobilisation.

In all these cases, the existing resources of the coordinating agency were important factors in the success achieved. Coordinating agencies without this kind of infrastructural back-up (e.g. in Uttar Kannada, Nagpur, North Coastal Andhra) had more modest processes, and fewer possibilities of developing follow-up activities. They were also far more pressed for time and funds.

Differing Levels of Experience:

Previous experience of conducting participatory processes differed significantly across coordinating agencies. In some cases there were gaps in experience that could not be filled with the resources (time, human power, funds) available to the TPCG. In Nagpur the coordinating agency did not have the capacity or experience to draw participation across different sectors, and it therefore tended to concentrate more on compiling a scientific database rather than on consultative planning. EPTRI (Andhra Pradesh) also did not have a strong background in participatory planning and took a rather bureaucratic approach to inviting

participation. In North Coastal Andhra even though the coordinating agency was deeply involved with local communities, limited previous experience created difficulties in launching the process confidently, with some key persons feeling that they needed more information and guidance from the TPCG. A TPCG member felt that "though orientation was given to coordinating agencies at the beginning of the NBSAP process, this was perhaps insufficient for agencies without sufficient experience in participatory processes."

The point to make here is that the choice of coordinating agency needs to reflect the resources available to make that choice a viable one – in terms of being able to provide sufficient orientation and guidance to counter gaps in the capacity of the coordinating agency.

Perception of Coordinating Agency Amongst Stakeholders:

The perception of the coordinating agency amongst local stakeholders affects the extent to which the coordinating agency can get people on board a process. Therefore it seems important to take into account local dynamics among stakeholders when choosing a coordinating agency.

For example, some non-governmental interviewees in Andhra Pradesh felt that EPTRI was the wrong choice of coordinating agency because it did not have a record of handling successful participatory processes or links with local communities. Consequently, some people did not take the process seriously because of the institution heading the process, and others dropped out very quickly due to the feeling that it was going to be 'just another' government process. In Sikkim there were widely differing reactions to the selection of the FD as coordinating agency; urban NGOs generally felt it was a mistake to appoint a bureaucratic organisation, while at the grassroots there seemed to be no complaints (which also, of course, reflects the fact that greater effort was put into the grassroots process). At sites where interviewees were overall more positive about the coordinating agency, this reflected on their keenness to be part of the process. For example, for the Uttar Kannada and Karnataka processes it was widely felt that the coordinating agency selection was good because both agencies were seen as 'neutral' and well networked amongst key stakeholders. GPK in North Coastal Andhra was also seen as a good choice among interviewees since it has good links with grassroots and NGO networks as well as with government officials. These links helped GPK to achieve fairly broad participation in its BSAP process.

In short it seemed important for stakeholders and potential participants to have the perception that the coordinating agency was:

- Neutral
- Well networked with key players in different sectors
- Capable of conducting a participatory process

4. Urban Challenges

Eliciting participation in an urban context throws up very specific challenges. In Nagpur the urban context seemed to restrict the scope for general public participation, with some amount of cynicism about this especially since past attempts at mobilising the public over specific issues had not been wholly successful.

In New Delhi, a biodiversity festival was organised by the TPCG, targeted at an urban audience. The aim was to raise awareness about NBSAP and biodiversity. It was also intended to be a demonstration or example of what could be done within a biodiversity festival. The Delhi festival will not be described in detail, since the tools used were not significantly different from those already described for other festivals. In brief, a Nature Bazaar is organised every year in New Delhi by Dastkar, an organisation that aims to ensure the survival of traditional crafts. In 2001 the TPCG collaborated in this event, and included an NBSAP biodiversity festival within the Nature Bazaar.

Among the media used were street theatre, displays of regional biodiversity produce, and a rock concert by Indian Ocean (a well-known rock band) who performed with a large NBSAP logo displayed in the background. A TPCG member gave a slide show on NBSAP and biodiversity to the rock show audience, prior to the concert.

In terms of urban challenges, there is the question of how much of an impact such an event could make, on a public already jaded by similar events. This is particularly the case since the Nature Bazaar is held every year, and since the concerns of the NBSAP festival within that were not very extraordinary to the already ongoing event. A TPCG member noted, "The environment of a mela (festival) is not uncommon to Dilli Haat (the venue) or to Nature Bazaar. In retrospect, I don't think many people care about or think about why Nature Bazaar was started and why it is going on [every year]... people just come there to have fun. People were attracted to the NBSAP stalls, there was a lot of crowd, lots of people saw our street plays. But I am not so sure whether biodiversity – and less so NBSAP – created any dent. And a large factor in that is that the public is in Delhi – it does not pertain to them, or affect them in any obvious way... There was also the Indian Ocean show for NBSAP. There was a big party and everyone enjoyed themselves – and went home. I think people knew and remembered that it was for NBSAP, but beyond that they couldn't care..... NBSAP's presence was felt, but we did not know to what end... In an urban centre it was a rather remote proposition for housewives or office-goers or students to actually be able to connect to the notion of biodiversity and how it did or did not affect their daily lives. " Another TPCG member felt that an event like the Delhi festival would probably succeed in reaching out to the 'already converted', rather than raising any significant amount of awareness among the general public.

Street Play in Delhi Biodiversity Festival

A key weakness was that the festival remained a one-off event in the context of Delhi; there was no follow up to 'cash in' on any awareness creation, mainly because the local BSAP process did not pick up the lead to organise more such urban-centric events.

Some of the challenges of eliciting participation in an urban context are:

Apathy about environmental issues: Unorganised urban citizens tend to be relatively unconcerned about conservation and environmental issues. Since migrant and resettled populations may have lesser attachment to a city, the task of orienting people towards urban biodiversity conservation may be even more challenging in this sector.

Preparing the ground for participation: Due to apathy, in order to get a successful response a very large effort would have to be made, with a correspondingly greater amount of time and resources. In a context where the ground has not been prepared for meaningful participation, a restrained approach may have its own value – it may be preferable to immediately launching into a participatory exercise regardless of the context, time and resources available for achieving a desired result. In some senses, adequate preparation for

participation is as important as participatory activity itself. Some interviewees (e.g. in Nagpur) felt that a small effort may perhaps be misdirected energy in a context where the ground has not been prepared for participation, and where the effort is therefore not likely to pay off proportionately. On the other hand, others felt that even though an effort may be a drop in the ocean, it is necessary and of value.

Hype Vs. Substance: Using participatory tools in the context of a relatively un-sensitised public can lead to hype without substance. This was strongly felt by key interviewees in Nagpur: "It does not help to just go to the public. It is not enough to just organise marches and leaflets". Similarly though the Delhi biodiversity festival created a splash, its impact in an urban context is debatable, particularly given that it had no strategic follow-up in the context of the city.

Challenges of using media: The challenges of using media in an urban (or even semi-urban) setting are huge; it is easy for a message to be lost or forgotten in the flood of media images and sounds that urbanites are almost constantly exposed to. Effective use of media for targeting the urban sector is likely to require considerable resources.

5. The Challenge of Information Management

Many of the NBSAP tools were designed to solicit large numbers of responses. *A crucial element of such participatory initiatives is to have in place a system of information management to manage and organise the responses.*

In Nagpur an advertisement issued in the newspaper by the coordinating agency generated responses, but the coordinating agency did not have the capacity to organise the respondents in any meaningful way; therefore the responses could not be followed up. The CFP brochure invited hundreds of people to respond. While the responses were ably handled at the central TPCG level, it is not clear whether all the coordinating agencies were satisfactorily able to follow-up the CFP responses that were forwarded to them, in terms of allocating sufficient time and resources for this, or simply in terms of strategising how to organise the people who responded.

In Karnataka the coordinating agency was overwhelmed by the responses to its radio programmes and newspaper articles (it received about 800 letters), but being a large institution it was able to organise the resources and manpower to deal with the responses effectively. The task was nevertheless very difficult, and it was acknowledged by the coordinating agency that the information received may not have been digested and utilised as effectively as if there had been a well worked-out mechanism to do so. Another lesson learned in Karnataka was that it would have been better to conduct the exercise of reading the letters periodically, as and when they arrived. Since all the letters were collected and then read only at the end, this created a large, concentrated workload.

Soliciting participation is one thing, and being able to strategically organise the respondents, is another. Coordinating agencies need to be clear about their capacity to handle respondents and queries; the objectives and outreach of a call for participation need to be strategized accordingly.

6. Information Dissemination

Build Up and Follow Up. Two common complaints across the sites studied were:

- Insufficient prior information (e.g. circulating an agenda or objectives, prior to a stakeholders' meeting)
- Insufficient follow-up information afterwards (e.g. updates on further activity or implementation)

In particular, the need for *follow-up* information usually seems to be under-estimated. This was especially the case for the Maharashtra, Andhra Pradesh and Sikkim state processes, and Nagpur and Rathong Chu sub-state processes. Often participants did not take the initiative to follow up with coordinating agencies either. Dissemination of

follow-up information needs to be marked out in the timeframe or work plan of a coordinating agency as a separate activity, requiring the allocation of time, resources and responsibility.

The Personal Touch:
It seems that there is no substitute for face-to-face contact, or the personal touch, as a tool for communication. This emerged in interviews across all four states. Information and updates sent on email or through letter have less value when not supplemented by telephone calls, regular meetings or briefings. In some cases, invitations through a general email or letter, without personal communication, even caused offence or irritation. The most successful example of personal communication was in North Coastal Andhra where the coordinator made it a point to personally meet any LAC members who had not attended a meeting, to give them an update. This ensured a sustained interest from most LAC members.

Prior Information:
Negative outcomes of insufficient prior information:
Commitment levels remain low: People need to know the implications of being involved in a process; they need to be able to clearly see the benefits of participating in something. If there are monetary benefits, these are easiest to communicate. The challenge is in communicating non-monetary benefits, and for this the implications of a process need to be fully explained, for people to know that it is worthwhile to contribute their time, expertise or experience. This is particularly important when targeting smaller NGOs and institutes - these usually tend to be pressed for time and resources, and therefore need to make careful decisions about how to make the most effective use of their time and resources by weighing the costs and benefits of participating in a process. A process which does not seem to have clarity in terms of information or purpose, is likely to very quickly put off people who have too many other things to do.
Quality of inputs at a meeting is directly affected: If a meeting is called without distributing an agenda beforehand, people are likely to come out with knee-jerk reactions rather than coming mentally prepared for what they are going to say.
Scope for wider participation and unexpected, interesting outcomes is reduced: In Sikkim, for example, an NGO representative felt that with better prior information he would have taken the initiative to independently invite other stakeholders to the state-level workshop.

Follow-up Information:
Sufficient follow-up information is needed for:
Maximising impacts: Follow up is crucial in terms of maximising the initial impact of a festival or meeting, and 'cashing in' on its value by keeping people interested and involved. For example, it seems evident that attracting people to a biodiversity festival is only the first step in biodiversity awareness-raising, and that the event would only partially retain its value if not followed up by a strategy of further awareness-raising activity.
Creating feelings of empowerment and ownership over output: In Sikkim most villagers and other interviewees were not aware of the fact that there had already been some implementation of the Sikkim BSAP; the long information gap and the feeling that 'nothing was happening' had created some amount of disillusionment. There was no specific mechanism in place to ensure that people were made aware of developments in implementation. People did not feel they were 'informed'. Another example of insufficient follow-up was that villagers were not given copies of their own village-level plans (CSAPs) in their own language. This would clearly impinge on ownership of the output, and any possibilities of local level initiative to implement the CSAPs.

In contrast, after the Deccan process, the coordinating agency (DDS) used its institutional

capacity to ensure that follow-up to the mobile biodiversity festival meetings was thorough and well planned, which is a key factor in building on any feelings of empowerment created by the meetings themselves. The DDS biodiversity festival in the following year was used as an opportunity to distribute thousands of Telugu summaries of the BSAP to participating villages; the plan was also read out and presented as the outcome of the previous year's festival, and feedback was solicited. As a DDS member put it, "We had to go back and report to people about what we had done. We did not want them to feel that we are wasting their time." Similarly in Karnataka, 5000 Kannada copies of the KBSAP summary were printed by CES, the coordinating agency, and sent out to all participants and respondents, including schools.

7. Maximising Locally Available Resources

It is vital to survey and make use of locally available human resources and networks in order to maximise opportunities. An observation across the states studied was that coordinating agencies often do not make use of existing networks and human resources to achieve their aims. For example:
In Nagpur, the meeting organised for fisher-folk comprised of 10-12 participants. The fisher representative interviewed felt that had he been asked to mobilise people, he would have brought 500 people to the meeting. Though the coordinating agency did not have the capacity to handle a meeting of 500 people due to lack of experience in conducting such meetings, this could have been achieved by requesting another NGO with grassroots experience to conduct the meeting. Similarly, though the coordinating agency did not have the capacity to directly reach out to certain urban sectors like slum dwellers, it would have been possible to do so through other NGOs that already work among, and have a network of, slum dwellers in the city.
In Sikkim networks like the Voluntary Health Association of Sikkim's network of district level NGOs, or the Travel Agents' Association of Sikkim network could have been a vehicle for NBSAP to spread further at the grassroots and to reach out to the tourism sector, but this opportunity was not tapped. Urban NGOs also have the potential to form a consolidated voice at the level of the state capital, as opposed to most rural NGOs which are scattered all over the state and work mainly at a local level, but urban NGOs were involved only marginally in the Sikkim process.
In Uttar Kannada the network of the District Areca and Spice Growers' Association, with 600 members across Uttar Kannada, was not tapped as a formal body for getting inputs for the UKBSAP. Areca and spice growing is an important occupation in the district, with implications for the state of the environment.

Conversely, there were some examples of successfully utilising existing resources:
• **North Coastal Andhra** maximised resources by making good use of existing NGO and adivasi networks and by piggy-backing on ongoing meetings. Mobilising networks made it possible to cover larger areas and to get valuable micro-level information from remote areas.
• **In Sikkim** the FD found that it could maximise resources by clubbing NBSAP meetings with other government programmes that also required grassroots meetings.
• **In Uttar Kannada** the resources of the Agriculture Department were tapped for conducting an agricultural survey among farmers.

8. The Media Challenge

Given the sophisticated and intensive media use prevalent in India today (advertising, cinema, print, radio, television, internet), particularly in urban and semi-urban areas, making a presence felt at the national level is no easy task. Some challenges of the NBSAP national media campaign were:

Priorities of the mainstream media: The priorities

of the mainstream print and electronic media, did not necessarily coincide with giving space to the NBSAP. The mainstream media tends to be event-centric; but the NBSAP was not one event that created a 'newsworthy' splash, it was a series of events over time. This made it difficult to keep the mainstream media interested. The mainstream media also tends to favour 'personality-centric' coverage. It is debatable as to whether a personality-centric approach would have been ideologically desirable in the context of the NBSAP; but purely in terms of a strategy to capture media interest, a personality-centric projection could perhaps be a useful component of a media strategy.

Unfamiliarity with concepts of participation and biodiversity: Indian citizens are not used to calls for participation. Unfamiliarity with this type of participatory process and the concept of biodiversity may have led to a relatively low number of responses to various media initiatives. Of course there were also examples that elicited significant responses such as the series of radio programmes in Karnataka, where a key strategy for eliciting responses was offering prizes for the best letters.

Some lessons learned from the experience of the NBSAP national media campaign were as follows:

Credibility: A package of well-produced media products (e.g. brochures, posters) gives credibility to a process, giving it an institutional formality. Credibility is also achieved through collaborations with established organisations or publications (e.g. the Folio magazine produced by The Hindu national newspaper). In a rural context a product from 'outside' has greater credibility and importance compared to a locally produced tool.

Opportunism and flexibility: Leaving space for flexibility within a media strategy ensures that creative use is made of unexpected opportunities. The TPCG had a flexible and opportunistic approach to the media campaign. Thus, opportunities like the Folio and Chandamama were taken advantage of, as and when they came up.

Language: In a multi-cultural, multi-lingual context the issue of addressing people across languages needs to be a central component of a media strategy. A strength of the national media campaign was that its multiple-language component was a clearly thought-out aspect from the beginning. Innovations like the blank 'branded' posters increased the scope for local language use. Decentralisation and encouragement of independent media campaigns at state and sub-state level was to ensure high use of local languages – though this was achieved only to the extent that state and sub-state media campaigns were successful.

A 'buffet' of tools to pick and choose from: It is most likely that all tools will not be suitable to all contexts. Most coordinating agencies made selective use of the media tools and products, depending on the requirements of the context. In the biodiversity festival for the Deccan process there was a deliberate avoidance of any externally produced material in order to retain an authentic, local flavour to the event. It was a strength of the process that coordinating agencies were free to use all or none of the media tools developed by the TPCG.

Increased value and multiple uses in resource-poor contexts: The context and existing resources of the coordinating agencies reflected on how much value media tools added to (and beyond) a process. In general, where the coordinating agency had low access to information and resources, greater value was attached to the media products, and more use made of them, sometimes beyond the NBSAP process. The North Coastal Andhra process made extensive use of media campaign products, such as the newsletters, since the coordinating agency usually lacks access to such resources. Another grassroots NGO in North Coastal Andhra used the CFP brochure as a training resource for its local NGO network. In Sikkim the FD used the Folio to

train staff. In contrast, the Karnataka state process made far less use of such material since the coordinating agency has regular access to a range of other information tools and resources.

Distribution of products: A distribution and dissemination strategy helps fine-tune products and maximise use by reaching out to target audiences in good time. Products and information need to be distributed strategically for them to have sufficient value; stakeholders like NGOs often receive and sift through a great deal of information in their ongoing work, and in such a context information needs to be in a consolidated, user-friendly package to have the desired effect. Fragmented information, arriving in bits and pieces, will not have the same effect. Creating events (e.g. festivals) around distribution can be an effective method of dissemination.

Follow-Up: Lack of a systematic follow-up of media initiatives can result in relatively isolated pockets of activity and one-off events. A problem with having pockets of activity and one-off events is that people may easily forget the message of the activities. A sustained follow-up can ensure a higher recall value. The potential value of an activity is likely to be decreased by standing alone, rather than as part of a strategic media package with follow-up.

Sectoral targeting: A media strategy should include sectoral targeting to ensure the appropriate use of media for different social sectors. Key problems in the NBSAP national media campaign were:

- Insufficient identification of constituencies and insufficient targeting of messages towards specific sectors. The few sectorally-oriented initiatives tended to be opportunistic rather than strategic.
- Confusion between the requirements of sectoral targeting and the need for a democratically homogenous message across the country.

Financial and human resources: Considerable resources (e.g for hiring experienced media specialists) are needed for a national media campaign to make an impact, particularly in urban and semi-urban areas. The financial and human resources required for the national media campaign seem to have been vastly underestimated.

9. Work Ethics: Who is Using the Tools?

Why did the NBSAP process take the shape that it did? Much of it had to do with the nature of the 25 year-old NGO, Kalpavriksh, which coordinated the effort. The work ethic of Kalpavriksh includes some of the following key points:

Voluntarism and collective activities: For many years all work was done on a voluntary basis. Members are still expected to volunteer time for collective activities that are outside their paid projects.

Minimal and equitable pay: Salaries are kept to a minimum, and are perhaps among the lowest amongst urban NGOs.

Non-hierarchical structure: There is an attempt to maintain equity through collective decision-making, transparency and a non-hierarchical structure.

Working on a shoestring budget: Work is done on minimal budgets. Project funding and office facilities reflect the low budget operations.

Staying small: There is a concern that an expanding organisation would find it difficult to retain a non-hierarchical structure with a stress on low budgets and voluntarism.

Underlying this work ethic is the belief that a simpler lifestyle is most harmonious with ecological sustainability. The NBSAP is by far the largest project handled by Kalpavriksh in terms of resources and scale, and the practicalities of managing a time-bound, nation-wide project have often impinged on its ideals of staying small and simple.

The main point to emphasise for the purposes of this handbook is that the work ethic of the organisation greatly influenced the way the NBSAP process was conceptualised and carried out. What was expected of the coordinating agencies and of the process was shaped to a large extent by this

work ethic. Only a strong philosophy of working on a minimal budget and contributing voluntary time could have envisaged Rs.4 crore (US$ 916,588) spread out over about 71 coordinating agencies across the country, leaving no more than approximately Rs. 4-5 lakhs (US$ 9166 – US$ 11,457) per state site and Rs.50,000 - 1 lakh (US$ 1146 – US$ 2291) per sub-state site – peanuts compared to any national planning process - for completing a 2-3 year participatory planning process. Compared to the scale of the TPCG's ambition, the resources available were very small. Coordinating agencies were requested to treat the funds as seed money, and extend it as much as possible through their own resources. Selection of TPCG members also reflected the expectation of voluntary work – many members contributed far more time and effort than they had originally been contracted to do. The initial agreement of each individual doing a week's work per month for two years, for relatively low fees, turned (for many people) into an almost daily involvement for three years for no extra remuneration.

The reason for pointing out the above is to emphasise that many of the tools and design elements to elicit participation were developed and used in the context of a very specific work ethic. A number of interviewees mentioned that the 'spirit' of the process was in its approach of voluntarism. An interviewee in North Coastal Andhra felt, "With [more] money, many people who are interested in the funds would come and contribute their skills – but after the money was over, they would disappear. But with less money, people with commitment, who understand it is a voluntary programme, will participate and will be there even after the planning is over. So that is more sustainable. With more money, the plan would turn into a project. After the money was over, the plan also would be over and would be shown as an output of the project. But now we are looking at it as a continuing process." About 70% of the North Coastal Andhra process was funded by local groups or individuals, e.g. in the form of food, voluntary work or personal travel costs. Of course, there were also coordinating agencies that did not necessarily subscribe to this approach. However, at least a few TPCG members felt that the NBSAP process managed to challenge the assumption that huge amounts of money are needed for such a process, and felt that it demonstrated what is possible to achieve with limited resources. A lesson clearly illustrated by the NBSAP experience is that tools, on their own mean very little. The success or failure of tools depends on the users, and how the tools are developed and used within the constraints of available resources. No amount of sophisticated tools could have lent to the process the dynamism and creativity that it acquired at so many sites by virtue of some of the above philosophies.

Conversely, it is equally true to say that in the face of practical realities, some of these philosophies proved far too idealistic and short-sighted, often creating stressful situations and impacting on the process, by trying to stretch resources (time, funds, human resources) to their limits. The most obvious example of this was the hiring of a part-time Media Campaign Manager instead of a full-time person, which had an adverse impact on the national media campaign. Relying on free hosting of the NBSAP website was a factor in the mid-way collapse of the initiative. In Uttar Kannada a shortage of manpower meant that the coordinating agency could not do justice to the national media tools (newsletters, calendar, etc.) in terms of disseminating them, as there were simply too many other things to do. There was also not enough time or human power to develop a strategic local media campaign in Uttar Kannada. An internal evaluation report of the NBSAP noted that there was a lack of resources for some key activities such as reaching out through expensive media like television advertisements; publishing the state and sub-state BSAPs; and organising more orientation for coordinating agencies (Kothari et al 2002).

10. Capacity Building

One of the most consistent trends across the four states was the positive impact NBSAP had in terms of capacity building in sectors as diverse as academics, NGOs, adivasi networks and government institutions. This trend is a strong argument for a decentralised planning process that mobilises people to innovate and experiment, and presents opportunities for learning and networking. The benefits of capacity building were particularly stressed by small, grassroots NGOs in North Coastal Andhra, who usually have very limited access to information, resources and facilitation.

The main capacity-building benefits named by interviewees were:

- Networking
- Exposure to new information and resource materials
- Consolidation and fine-tuning of thoughts

A few examples are summarised here:

Capacity Building of Teachers:

There was a strong sense among teachers in Karnataka that the SBR exercise had contributed greatly to their experience and knowledge, particularly due to the exposure to fieldwork and the interactions with local people. Most teachers were initially apprehensive about the SBR exercise; they felt that they would not be able to handle it and that the students would not be serious about the work. Not only did they gain confidence by the end of the process, they also realised that their perceptions about their students were not true. Teachers in Nagpur voiced almost identical opinions.

Capacity building of NGOs:

- BGVS, a small academic NGO, was recruited to provide resource persons for the SBR exercise in Karnataka. BGVS representatives felt that the capacity of the organisation had greatly expanded due to being involved in the SBR exercise, by providing exposure to experts, resource materials and field-based learning.
- WANC in Karnataka gained the opportunity to update and consolidate some of its own data on Amanikhere and Bhadra Tiger Reserve in the process of preparing case studies for the KBSAP. The KBSAP process also provided exposure to the working of different government departments. The NGO meeting at the end of the process provided networking opportunities for WANC.
- Sneh Kunja, one of the key participants in the Uttar Kannada BSAP, felt that the process provided valuable capacity building for the organisation by consolidating thoughts on biodiversity issues, creating a 'vision' to work towards, and enhancing networking by providing the opportunity to work with other people.
- The NBSAP process was the first time that members of VNHS, the coordinating agency in Nagpur, were exposed to participatory processes, and they felt it was a valuable learning opportunity.
- The experience gained by KCC through its involvement in the intensive participatory process in Sikkim, helped it to get micro-planning assignments with The Mountain Institute in Ladakh and with the FD.

Capacity Building of FD Staff:

- The FD in Sikkim was assigned a project for FRLHT, to plan for the utilisation and conservation of medicinal plants through wide stakeholder consultation. The NBSAP process proved a strong base for the FRLHT process; a similar format, with improvements, was used.
- In total about 40-50 FD staff were involved in conducting or attending village-level public hearings in Sikkim. Range-level officers who were genuinely interested in the exercise learned about micro-planning, and the last public hearing

in Ribdi was conducted by FD staff who had learned from the previous meetings.
- The process created a strong network of contacts across the country for the FD in Sikkim, which, staff felt, would be of benefit in the future.
- Learning how to involve women in grassroots events contributed to the capacity building of FD staff in Sikkim.

Capacity Building of Adivasi Networks:
Adivasi network representatives in North Coastal Andhra felt that the NBSAP process had led to increased awareness and capacity building. NBSAP had become an important component of their ongoing work. Some of the capacity building impacts named by representatives of adivasi networks and representatives of small grassroots NGOs in North Coastal Andhra were as follows:
- Development of holistic approach to biodiversity and the environment, as opposed to compartmentalised approach
- Building up of networks and relations across sectors
- Generation of new eco-friendly ideas and practices
- Fine-tuning thinking on relevant issues, such as identifying gaps in development schemes and developing thinking on advocacy
- Representatives of at least two adivasi networks felt that exposure to NBSAP activities had improved their skills at organising and conducting workshops and participatory techniques.

11. Understanding NBSAP and Empowerment

At a grassroots level it often (not always) proved difficult to explain to villagers what exactly the NBSAP was all about. The formation of sub-state and state plans, which would all feed into a national plan, were intangible and abstract concepts that were difficult to communicate to people within the space of a meeting or two. In some cases, even villagers who were fairly central to the process, such as some LAC members in the Deccan sub-state process, did not seem totally sure of the implications or workings of the NBSAP process. Feedback in Uttar Kannada also indicated that understanding of a process like NBSAP would take more than one or two grassroots-level meetings.

Within the concept of the NBSAP it was difficult to explain that the plans would not necessarily be implemented in the near future (or at all).

For example, during the village-level planning in Sikkim, efforts were made to tell villagers that it was a purely planning exercise, but this was often difficult for them to comprehend. It also was difficult to explain to villagers that they had a 'blank canvas' for planning, because people automatically wanted to know what the 'scheme' was, and what was possible within the 'scheme', since they are used to planning within particular government schemes. Having explained that they had a blank canvas, it was then difficult to explain that it was only for planning, and not necessarily for immediate implementation. Both these things were, understandably, alien concepts - to plan for whatever one wishes, but then also to know that it is not for implementation. Similarly, in North Coastal Andhra it was difficult to explain to villagers that their suggestions would go into a governmental document, but would not necessarily be implemented.

In both cases the planning process raised expectations, and there is clearly a danger of unfulfilled expectations leading to disillusionment. (It must be said here that the TPCG was well aware of this potential danger at an early stage in the process, though it is not clear what specific strategies were adopted to avoid it).

The difficulty, at grassroots level, of communicating the purpose of creating a planning document was at least partly reflected in the fact that several villagers (North Coastal Andhra, Deccan) placed more importance on discussions at BSAP meetings, on what could be practically

accomplished, and on impacts such as documenting knowledge for future generations, rather than the fact that their recommendations would be included in an official planning document.

Since the NBSAP process was as important as the product, empowerment through participation was clearly a desirable outcome. Assuming that an integral component of empowerment is for participants to understand the implications of the process that they are participating in, then how to communicate this information needs to be strategised. This is especially important for communicating relatively abstract concepts such as the movement of information from sub-state to national level; tools like maps and flow-charts could prove useful in explaining such concepts. A TPCG member noted, "Such tools were not there. With hindsight, that could have been done. It may be an urban bias. We assume that people know what is 'India' or 'government'. But for some people Delhi is a different country, or just a vague idea."

The need for *time* to explain and understand is clearly an important factor; the pace at which the NBSAP was designed for completion was a strong reflection of the urban pace of life where information can fly back and forth on email and fax, and multiple knowledge resources are at hand for facilitating research and personal understanding. It is very difficult to translate that pace of work into a rural or semi-rural context, in terms of formulation, understanding, and acceptance. To give a perspective to this: twenty years ago, when there was no email in India, and telecommunications in general were more difficult even in urban, developed areas, it is highly doubtful whether a process like this could have been conceived at the same pace and with the same ambition in terms of the time frame available. An activist in Uttar Kannada made an interesting observation regarding this: "The rate at which things are happening now, especially in the cities, is much higher.... I think this is very important in the planning [of the NBSAP process]. The urban-rural divide is so strong... for people in the villages, it is not possible to cram six lifetimes worth of experience into one. That way, NBSAP was very ambitious."

12. Dissenting Opinions

In the overall NBSAP process there have been key individuals who have chosen to stay outside the process – or peripheral to the process - because of differences in ideology and approach to the issue of biodiversity conservation. Others have attempted to be involved in the process only to find that their views were often marginalized because they did not fit in with the ideological framework of the NBSAP. Some have felt that the process was not radical enough in terms of advocating social change; others have felt that it was too radical an approach to conservation; some felt that the methodology of putting together the state and national plans was deeply flawed. An interesting point made by two or three interviewees in different states, was that people with serious differences of opinion might feel it unnecessary to voice their objections too strongly while making a general plan. It was felt that a real picture of dissenting opinions is more likely to come to light at the implementation stage, or when planning a specific project that is going to be implemented.

Does participation mean that all voices are recorded? The TPCG guidelines to coordinating agencies recommended the recording of all perspectives in the event of conflicting views. In a perfect world, participation would mean that all voices are recorded and acknowledged, whether or not the authors of the BSAP take all views into account while framing strategies and recommendations. In practice, this does not necessarily happen; dissenting views are not always included. Tools to elicit views from different sectors are a crucial part of participatory planning. But equally crucial is what happens to the views that are collected; how the information is recorded,

edited, and consolidated is directly linked to the possibilities of views getting marginalized at these various stages.

In the context of the NBSAP, it was crucial to include (or at least acknowledge) all voices, since strategies and action plans may be framed but cannot be smoothly implemented in the face of conflicting groups. Indeed, the TPCG recommended that in the case of conflicting opinions, the BSAP could include a strategy for trying to resolve the conflict or trying to have a dialogue between conflicting parties.

Though serious differences of opinion were apparently relatively few, it is significant (though not surprising) that they are there. From the point of view of an analysis of the NBSAP process, it is relevant to examine what could be the factors that marginalize views within a process that aims so fundamentally to be as inclusive as possible:

Biases and Beliefs:
Firstly, in a scenario of decentralisation, there is the question of personal biases and beliefs. TPCG guidelines to record and include all dissenting views were recommendations, not stipulations. Coordinating agencies made independent decisions about how to conduct their processes.

Difficulties of Monitoring:
Secondly, it is not possible to monitor what views get included and what views get left out, from the centre. Even at the state level, it would be very difficult for a state coordinating agency to monitor what views are recorded and which are not, where the coordinating agency has chosen to decentralise the state process. For example, in the case of a participatory field study being commissioned by the coordinating agency to another NGO, it is not possible to fully monitor whether all views at field level have been taken on board equitably. In terms of decentralisation - especially the way the NBSAP envisaged it, and the way it was taken on by some states such as Karnataka, which decentralised operations to the grassroots level - the challenge of adequate monitoring can perhaps never really be overcome.

To some extent, participatory review processes may help to ensure that most opinions are included. For example, the KBSAP thematic meetings were called to review information that had already been collected in previous phases of the Karnataka process. The Deccan process' village-level meetings ended with a recap of points to ensure nothing had been left out; North Coastal Andhra followed a similar method at the end of village-level meetings. Several interviewees across the four states mentioned that BSAPs should be updated and reviewed periodically, so that they are not static, one-time documents. The use of the Angarada festival to further fine-tune the North Coastal Andhra BSAP, is a good example of how a BSAP can be an ongoing initiative by integrating it into regular events, and revisiting it for review, discussion and updating. In Sikkim the coordinating agency circulated CDs of the SBSAP to NGOs and officials for comments before finalisation of the report. The national plan (NBSAP) was also circulated by the TPCG for comments from key people, before finalisation.

Pre-Determined Product?
One interviewee felt that the entire NBSAP exercise had a pre-conceived ideological framework that was biased too much in favour of livelihoods at the cost of wildlife conservation, and biased too much in favour of strategies based on participatory inputs at the cost of strategies based on scientific input. There was a particular concern that people were invited to give inputs that were then not taken into account due to pre-conceived ideas of what should be in the plan. This was seen as a form of co-option, and is probably a reaction to past consultative processes as much as a reaction specifically to the NBSAP process: "I have very serious reservations about the ideology that underlies [this process]. I see this project as one

manifestation of the current dominant approach to conservation worldwide, which is not very science driven. It is driven more by good wishes...The participation of divergent views does not mean a thing, because the end product is already fixed in the minds of those who are designing these documents. The rest becomes a kind of window-dressing.... I realised that they want you there, even if you are a vehement critic. They want you to say your spiel, and then they will go on doing whatever they want to do. The participatory nature itself becomes the driving force rather than the quality of the participation..."

Bias Against Certain Sectors

(e.g. corporate houses): In the case of Karnataka, the thematic focus on medicinal plants meant that pharmaceutical company representatives were invited to be part of the discussions. Similar to the above point, it was strongly felt that the views of the pharmaceutical industry were heard, but were marginalized and not taken seriously enough (however a commissioned paper on medicinal plants that included the concerns of the pharmaceutical industry was included in an annexure to the KBSAP). During meetings there was a feeling that a strong bias against corporate houses created a blanket response to all corporate interests without differentiating those who had legitimate concerns which were also in line with conservation: "When I started to speak 5-10 other people would want to shut me up, as if I am from an enemy camp... The gathering was basically pro-conservation, not pro-utilisation. I also sent it in writing that the minutes are being prepared in a very biased manner and that what I am saying, is not being included. .... So KBSAP was in a way participatory, but they still did what they had pre-decided. So our participation was no use .... There is a pre-conceived bias against industry... when people think about industry they think of Dabur and Himalaya Drug Company [which have turnover in millions of rupees] – not about smaller industries...."

Thus it was felt by some people that the NBSAP was a pre-determined product with a pre-determined ideology, despite its participatory tools and techniques. A TPCG member admitted that there may be a bias against industrial houses: "Yes, it may be that there is a bias against industry. There is not much experience in handling industry [among environmentalists]. Also there is a danger of getting overwhelmed – industry does represent an economic force but its track record in terms of biodiversity is not so good – so there is a fear of getting overwhelmed by the powerful."

It should also be noted that there was not a very positive response from corporate houses when efforts were made by the TPCG to begin a dialogue, by contacting corporate associations with letters and offers of personal meetings. Subsequently, the effort was not sustained by the TPCG partly because members were too busy with an already large workload. There was no one TPCG member specifically in charge of following up with the corporate sector, though there were members specifically assigned to follow up with the 'armed forces' and 'politician' sectors. As another TPCG member noted, "I think there was a semi-conscious stand we took – that environment is marginalized to begin with, and industry calls the shots. So is it more our concern to get those voices who are marginalized, or spend our energies on getting voices who anyway call the shots? So we decided to concentrate on the former. It was a trade-off we decided to make... Of course industry also dismisses environmentalists. We made an effort that was not proportionate to the level of alienation... I [also] think there was a latent feeling in us [the TPCG] that in trying too hard to collaborate, we would be selling out. We had a 'building bridges' orientation with reference to the State, but we didn't have it with reference to industry."

This is not to say that all TPCG members were of the same opinion; at least one TPCG interviewee

felt that there was scepticism about the corporate sector among some members, but not within the TPCG as a whole.

Involving corporate houses would most likely need a separate strategy and special skills. For example, a TPCG member who had tried initiating contact with corporate associations felt that the kind of language and incentives being used by the NBSAP was not something that would interest industry, and that the mode of communication would need to be modified in order to find a common ground of engagement. A crucial gap was that the Ministry of Environment and Forests did not take the initiative to write directly to corporate houses or associations, which could have elicited a more positive response.

Taking the Middle Path:
The NBSAP was envisaged partly as an exercise in building bridges, by virtue of getting on board as wide a range of opinions as possible. However, this approach necessarily entails walking a middle path, at least to some extent. For example, the TPCG had to negotiate with the Ministry of Environment and Forests for the inclusion of a few of its recommendations in the national plan. A TPCG member noted, "We wanted to recommend that Genetically Modified Organisms (GMOs) should not be allowed, but the Ministry could not accept this because they had already cleared Bt cotton for cultivation. So we negotiated, and came up with recommending a moratorium on further clearances till there was a long-term study and public involvement in the issue...."

The NBSAP cannot be a revolutionary document because it is a Government of India initiative. It cannot be a bureaucratic perspective because it is a consultative process with numerous NGOs and local communities on board. Its bottom-line is conservation and livelihoods; but it can be neither totally pro-conservation nor totally pro-livelihoods, and therefore has the potential to alienate a section of conservationists as well as a section of human rights activists. In a word, the NBSAP, because of its very nature, is likely to exclude (or draw criticism from) some of the people at extreme ends of the spectrum of opinion on conservation and livelihoods, central governance and people's self-governance – either by marginalizing their opinions, or by alienating certain groups who then simply choose to exclude themselves.

13. Under-represented Sectors

Some key sectors were left out or significantly under-represented in the NBSAP process, most notably women, politicians, the armed forces and industry. Some of the possible reasons for the under-representation of industry have already been outlined above in the section on 'Dissenting Opinions'. The sectors addressed in this section were under-represented due to various factors not related to ideological divisions or dissenting opinions.

Women:
Despite the fact that the TPCG was conscious of the need to ensure women's participation in the NBSAP process, women's overall involvement remained very limited. The TPCG had to rely on the coordinating agencies to integrate gender sensitivity into their processes. Thus guidelines were issued to coordinating agencies on ensuring women's participation in the process and integrating gender issues in the plans. In addition, all the regional workshops included a segment on gender sensitivity.

These efforts proved insufficient; an analysis of the gender balance across the state, sub-state site, eco-regional and thematic co-ordinating groups showed that only about 7% of the groups' members were female. (The actual figure may be slightly higher since the gender of 28% of the group members was not known to the TPCG). Women's participation was much stronger within the TPCG, with 40% women members (Kothari et al 2002). Mainly it was coordinating agencies that were already interested in gender issues, such as the

DDS (Deccan sub-state, Andhra Pradesh), that showed high levels of female participation. The Forest Department coordinators in Sikkim were interested in the issue and learned how to involve women in village-level meetings, during the process itself. However, in many other coordinating agencies it proved very difficult to break through mindsets, especially where government agencies were in charge.

A TPCG member commented, "We realised, that in a three-year process it is extremely difficult to break what has happened over the last few hundred years. The gender analysis and recommendations regarding gender in the BSAPs was better, but the processes remained very weak in terms of gender. I am not sure what we could have done differently. We just have to chip away at it slowly."

Politicians:
The TPCG approached several politicians for informal briefings on the NBSAP. There were some stray instances of politicians showing an interest in the NBSAP, but by and large this sector was absent from the process. For instance, a Member of Parliament (MP) approached the TPCG for a meeting and agreed to call a meeting of MPs from all the sub-state sites. This did not happen, though the TPCG tried to follow up. A suggestion for interaction was made by the TPCG to the Parliamentary Committee for the Biological Diversity Act, but nothing came of this either.

The main gap seemed to be that the Ministry of Environment and Forests did not take much initiative to involve politicians, though this was suggested by the TPCG (e.g. one suggestion was that the Minister of Environment and Forests could call a meeting of other ministers on the issue). A TPCG member felt, "We couldn't follow it up beyond a point. The Ministry not taking it up is a serious gap. Someone at that high level has to take it up, otherwise why would politicians listen to us?"

Army:
The non-inclusion of the army at a national level was due to special circumstances, since army representatives had shown considerable interest in being involved in the NBSAP process. This could have been valuable since there is an army presence in many sensitive areas that are rich in biodiversity. However, talks of doing a biodiversity sub-plan specific to the army were stalled due to a defence emergency. The Sikkim process did manage to organise interaction with the army, which was especially relevant for preparing strategies for North Sikkim.

Key Lessons:
Two key lessons emerge from the experience of left-out sectors, as outlined by a TPCG member:

- To identify in advance the sectors which have a high potential of being left out; and then put specific TPCG members in charge of following up those sectors. This did happen in the NBSAP process, but not intensively enough.
- To insist from the beginning that the Ministry of Environment and Forests take greater ownership of the process, in terms of eliciting participation from formal sectors like political bodies, the armed forces and corporate bodies. These sectors are more likely to respond positively if approached by the Ministry directly.

Summary of key tools

School Biodiversity Registers

(For details see: Tool 1 in Karnataka section)

Strengths:

Education: SBRs were a very successful way to educate students who found it far more interesting to learn in a practical environment rather than within a classroom. A key aspect was that students were not forced to take on the activity, but encouraged to come forward voluntarily.

Capacity building of teachers: There was a strong sense that the SBR exercise had contributed greatly to the experience and knowledge of teachers, particularly due to the exposure to fieldwork and the interactions with local people. Due to the enthusiasm it generated among students, the SBR exercise often created a special bond between teachers and students.

Capacity building of an NGO: BGVS, an NGO recruited to provide resource persons for the SBR exercise, benefited from capacity building due to being involved in the exercise.

Village involvement and ownership: Villagers often felt pleased with the SBR activity because the students were busy doing something productive even after school hours, instead of playing or watching television. Like the teachers, other villagers' perceptions about what students were interested in, or what they could do, changed. The exercise created general interest within the village, sometimes turning into a village level activity.

Data collection: In a context of scarce human resources for research activity, the information gathered through SBRs was seen as a valuable contribution to data collection, even though they were not comprehensive surveys.

Weaknesses:

Limitations of data collected: The SBR exercise was not spread through the year, so the data collected missed out some seasons. There are also obvious limitations in a data-collection exercise conducted as a school project, as opposed to one conducted by professionals or scientists. The SBR exercise as a method of data collection needs to be used as a complement to existing scientific data and analysis.

Time Constraints: Teachers have many demands on their time especially since they are often required for duties other than teaching, such as manning polling booths. A more extensive study could have been prepared if teachers had been officially deputed for the exercise, or if the exercise had been incorporated into the curriculum, with the attendant back-up of more teachers and resources available.

Lack of official support: There was often lack of official support for teachers, with authorities viewing SBRs as an extraneous activity. This had mainly to do with set notions of what school education should entail. Prize distribution for the best SBRs proved to be of help in countering some of the scepticism within schools.

Insufficient training: Insufficient guidance to teachers was a significant weakness, particularly with regard to species identification to counter the confusion often caused by generic local names. There was a need for more extensive support material as well as practical, field-level training.

Biodiversity Festivals

(For details see: Tool 3 in Karnataka section; Tool 2 in Sikkim section; Tool 1 in Deccan sub-state section; and "Implementation of the North Coastal Andhra

BSAP" in the North Coastal Andhra sub-state section)

A successful biodiversity festival can achieve at least some of the following things:

- Bringing to light the commercial potential of local products
- Developing pride in local produce and enthusing people to conserve the local diversity
- Creation of nostalgia at increasingly rare forms of biodiversity and traditional culture
- Raising conservation awareness by creating a memorable occasion
- Showcasing a range of local biodiversity in one place (normally seen only in scattered, day-to-day form), thus helping to create linkages between resources, sources and consumption.

Successful Practices and Possible Pitfalls

Based on the experience of the biodiversity festivals described in the preceding sections, following are some best practices and possible pitfalls in organising a biodiversity festival in a rural or semi-rural area (the requirements of an urban festival are likely to be very different)

Successful practices:

Politically neutral: A location identified with any religion or political party discourages a section of the community from attending. Inauguration of a festival by a political figure may also have this effect.

Showcasing success stories of biodiversity conservation, especially by inviting the conservationists and people with first hand experience to present their own work and achievements.

Using ongoing festivals and events as a platform for a biodiversity festival to maximise attendance, save funds and create a feeling of local ownership.

Personal explanations: Volunteers at each stall or display to give explanations to visitors about the display.

Local teamwork: In a village or small town setting, minimal 'outside' help, and encouragement of communal organisation, can create local ownership and a spirit of team work.

Personal efforts by 'outsider' organisers to integrate into the local culture, for example by attempting to speak the local language (even imperfectly!) while giving a presentation.

Provision of transport for villagers coming from far-off areas.

Creating an entertaining atmosphere to attract visitors and hold their interest (e.g. cultural performances).

Creating an atmosphere of celebration, for biodiversity to be celebrated and enjoyed; acknowledging that biodiversity often has emotions and cultural traditions invested in it, and need not be discussed only in a dry, scientific and use-oriented way.

Follow-Up: Appropriate follow-up activity soon after the festival to cash in on the momentum and awareness created.

Avoiding technical terms: It may not always be appropriate to use the word 'biodiversity', which can sound technical and alienating even when translated into the local language. An appropriate word or phrase in the local language may be more useful to advertise and describe the festival (e.g. festival of traditional crops).

Avoiding alien materials or tools: In some rural contexts it may be appropriate to avoid using any 'outside' materials like posters and pamphlets. This can help the festival to blend in as much as possible with traditional local celebrations, and can contribute to a sense of local ownership.

Interactive displays can encourage visitors to enter into the spirit of the event. This can also be useful for engaging with officials or decision-makers. For example, in the Yuksam festival in Sikkim, the District Collector was persuaded to contribute a written pledge to an interactive display ("The Commitment Tree"), where he pledged to reduce unsustainable yak grazing. An interactive display and popular pressure could thus encourage an official or politician to enter into the spirit of the event and make a specific public commitment,

which can then be followed up later by local people.

Possible pitfalls:

Insufficient advertising: It is important to identify the best local network of information and plug into it.

Insufficient advance notice to potential visitors and participants, and limited time for preparation.

Inaccessible location (e.g. far away from a bus stand) and dates clashing with other local events.

Small town politics can hinder organisation and local support for the event.

Capacity of the organisers: Festival organisers need to have the capacity (or guidance) to organise a festival. An organisation may be experienced and established in its normal work/projects, and be sincere and hardworking. However this does not necessarily translate into the capacity to organise a festival with the attendant requirements of publicity, press liaison, choosing a suitable location, etc.

Reading material is off-putting: People may not like to read pamphlets and brochures in the context of a festival. They would probably prefer to look at things and buy things. The main impact in a festive environment is probably achieved through visual media (e.g. exhibitions, slide shows, songs and dances).

Congestion of people within space available; lack of sufficient seating arrangements

Wrong season: An outdoor festival needs to take account of the season to avoid disruption due to bad weather. Seasons (e.g. harvest time) will also determine the number of visitors in agricultural areas.

Village Level Meetings

(For details see: Tool 1 in Sikkim section; Tool 1 in Deccan sub-state section; and Tools 1, 2, 3 and 4 in North Coastal Andhra sub-state section)

Strengths:

Invitations:

- The presence of higher level officials can encourage people to attend a meeting, especially if they usually interact only with lower ranking officials. However, too large an official presence can be a hindrance by bringing a formality to the proceedings, and can restrict time for discussion.
- Using existing networks (e.g. adivasi or village youth networks) to issue invitations is an efficient way of spreading the word, especially to remote areas.

Location:

- Neutral locations, such as a school or forest rest house, are better than using personal residences in order to avoid local politics.

Facilitation:

- The presence of a local NGO or local network representative on the team of facilitators encourages villagers to express themselves more frankly.
- Use of local advisors is helpful to advise on how and where to invite people.
- A written questionnaire can be a helpful tool for facilitators to guide discussions and keep them focussed. In the case of a series of meetings, the first one or two meetings can be used as a base for developing the questionnaire.

Conducting the Meeting:

- Ice-Breaking techniques help people open up, and encourage them to talk.
- Use of familiar songs (a) to break the ice; (b) to break the monotony, once meetings are in full swing; and (c) to create a spirit of enthusiasm.
- Equitable seating and eating arrangements, such as everyone sitting in a circle on the floor. This has a direct bearing on the mode of interaction.
- Eliciting views from less vociferous people, and encouraging equitable participation by, for example, constantly pointing to people sitting at the back to elicit their views, and politely asking very talkative persons to stop and give someone else a chance to speak. The vociferous person

would usually be a leader or elder, and people automatically expect them to talk.
- Breaking up a large meeting into smaller group discussions, which then come back and report to the larger gathering, encourages people to talk as everyone is not willing to speak out in a large group.
- Mixing people for group discussions: This can be done for example by giving each participant a number; the participant then has to join the group discussion that has been allocated that number.

Including Specific Sectors

Women's Participation: If women's participation is seriously sought, a strategy needs to be worked out in advance, e.g. events like separate women's meetings need to be included in the time-frame or schedule, right from the beginning. Some successful practices that emerged from Sikkim with regard to gaining women's participation at village level:
- Information dissemination (e.g. through posters) specifically at places where women congregate, like at dairy co-operatives.
- Ensuring that the best location at meetings is reserved for women to sit together. E.g. if chairs were available, these were reserved for women. If there was a carpet, one portion would be reserved for women.
- Sitting collectively created a 'good feeling' and more confidence to speak up. Women could talk amongst themselves, and even if there was only one old lady who spoke, the others would tell her their points and she would speak out.
- Old women or middle-aged women usually speak up more. So there was a special effort made to involve older women and tell them that their presence was needed.
- Separate women's meetings.
- Using a flexible approach to include diverse sectors: Different sectors may need to be convinced to participate in different ways, as they all may have their own hesitations or constraints.
- Coordinators personally addressing communication gaps can help to convince people of the need to attend.
- Arousing curiosity by doing something unusual (e.g. in North Coastal Andhra the coordinating team went and sat in the middle of the road, without any seating arrangements, near the milk producers to arouse their curiosity. The milk producers gathered to see what was happening, and the meeting was begun.)
- Catering to expectations and interests (e.g. in North Coastal Andhra youngsters found it difficult to relate to the subject of biodiversity. So the meeting began by discussing cosmetics use, and went on to naturally occurring cosmetics and other biodiversity issues. A separate meeting for young women discussed issues relevant to their daily lives, such as the use of solar power for cooking).

Empowerment:
- Consolidation of collective knowledge (e.g. on conservation), which is usually dispersed within the community
- The motivation of a dream: This was especially the case in Sikkim, where the APPA methodology was used with its techniques of generating a 'Dream' Map for the village, and building on strengths instead of only identifying weaknesses.
- Confidence building: Gathering together can be a confidence building measure, especially for members of a sector that is normally dispersed, such as traditional healers dispersed across villages.

Weaknesses:

Lack of follow-up information after a meeting leads to people feeling uninformed and frustrated.

Poor timing: Meeting timings need to consider the convenience of all relevant stakeholders (e.g. a weekday morning excludes teachers and students;

monsoon timing can mean that people find it difficult to attend because of bad roads).

Insufficient prior information means that people cannot prepare themselves mentally before the meeting. Prior information would also be likely to initiate informal discussion among people before the meeting, perhaps leading to more crystallised thoughts or questions at the meeting itself.

Insufficient advance notice / advertising, prevents more people (especially from remote villages) from gathering at meetings.

Insufficient funding support: Since meetings disrupt daily work, especially for people travelling from other villages, some funding support to cover the loss of a day's work can ensure that those without sufficient money are not left out of meetings. In such cases it is possible that a small amount of funding could go a long way.

Participation fatigue: This point is more a challenge for the future, rather than a weakness within the NBSAP. In some areas of Sikkim it seems that excessive participatory activities may have led to 'participation fatigue'. Almost every village interviewee in Sikkim said that the NBSAP meetings were the first time they had been involved in village-level planning, with some people emphasising that it was the first time the FD had asked for their opinions. Since then, however, the NBSAP has emerged as just one component in a general trend towards participatory planning. For example in Yuksam (which comprises five villages), there were at least nine village meetings in 2003 alone: KCC has regular meetings thrice a year with all the villagers; the Joint Forest Management Committee, of which all villagers are members, had already had three meetings that year by the time of the field visit for this study; and the Panchayat had also held three Gram Sabhas by the time of the field visit. Prior to 2003 the Sikkim Biodiversity and Ecotourism Project (a collaboration between four non-governmental institutions, aiming to conserve biodiversity and generate income through eco-tourism) had held several meetings over a period of three years. Yuksam is perhaps an exceptional case in having so many meetings in a single year, but it is mandatory now for many government schemes to include a participatory exercise.

Though it would be reasonable to assume that there was a feeling of empowerment generated among villagers at being consulted regarding their own development, it should be noted that there currently seems to be an overdose of participation in some areas (though this was not the case when the NBSAP meetings took place - the momentum of participatory planning picked up a little later.) As participation becomes more and more of a buzzword, this is relevant to keep in mind for participatory planning in the future.

An additional problem, as noted by an FD official in Sikkim, is that many PRAs are not focussed, dealing with general wishes of the community even if the department concerned does not have the mandate to fulfil all the wishes (E.g. a demand for water-pipes in a PRA done by the FD is not likely to yield any result). This can lead to repetitive PRA exercises as well as a sense of disappointment when all wishes are not addressed. On the other hand, as an FD official noted, "after so many PRAs, villagers are more confident to say what they want. At least now they know what is going to happen – before, the department used to do things and the people didn't know anything."

In the case of a formal workshop in, say a state capital, a common weakness is:

• Formal and intimidating setting for rural participants: The setting of a formal conference hall and the presence of officials are usually too intimidating and unfamiliar for villagers to participate confidently. The language used excludes them since proceedings are often at least partially conducted in English, and translation facilities are not provided. This is a problem that persistently comes up in workshops of such a nature; though the intentions may be good, villagers who have often

travelled for hours to attend a workshop end up being victims of tokenism. This applies not only to participants like farmers and herders, but also those who may be more educated, such as village school teachers or small, grassroots NGO representatives. (For details see: Tool 4 in Sikkim section; and "Weaknesses" in Andhra Pradesh state section.)

All India Radio Series

(For details see: Tool 2 in Karnataka section)

Strengths:

Timing of Broadcasts
The series was broadcast at 7pm, a time when people are usually home and are free.

Retaining Authenticity
Incorporating voices of grassroots interviewees, and retaining local accents and dialects in the episodes gave authenticity to the series.

Keeping it Simple and Attractive
Local folk music and songs that explained the rich diversity of the area were recorded during field interviews and included in the dramatisations. Humour and emotion were created within the dramatic situations, to make the story more attractive. Scientific jargon was avoided - the word 'biodiversity' was not introduced immediately into the programme, particularly because in Kannada it translates into a complicated word. This could have put off people, making them feel that it was a technical science programme. At the end of each episode there was a recap of important points.

Interactive Episodes
The interactivity of the series and offer of prizes helped to keep listeners interested.

Flexibility
The series was not planned rigidly; the flexibility of the producers in following new leads as and when letters came in, maximised new and interesting opportunities.

Inclusion of Women's Voices
The presence of a woman on the team of field interviewers helped to include women's voices in the interviews, as the interviewer could approach women directly in their homes.

State-wide Coverage Including Remote Areas
Radio breaks the barrier of literacy, and is heard even in remote areas where there is little or no electricity. The broadcasting of the series across the entire state of Karnataka was possible due to the ability of the coordinating agency to pay for this service.

Weaknesses:

Information Management
Letters received by All India Radio were not passed on to the coordinating agency till the end of the series. This created a concentrated workload at the end, of sifting through hundreds of letters.

Short Time for Phone-in
The interest generated by the series meant that the final phone-in episode was too short. The panel of experts was obliged to provide very brief answers, and many callers could not be included in the episode.

Tools and Strategies for Involving Government Officials

The following lessons and strategies emerged from attempting to involve government officials in the NBSAP process, in the four states:
Government departments tend to be lethargic, so special skills are required for engaging with departments.
Sikkim and Nagpur experimented with using written questionnaires to elicit inputs from government officials (for details see Tool 1 in Nagpur sub-state section and Tool 3 in Sikkim

section). In both cases the attempt was largely unsuccessful. This was partially dealt with in Sikkim, where officials were subsequently invited to a workshop where they were requested to fill out the questionnaires on the spot. Regarding the use of written questionnaires as a participatory tool:

- If requested for information, officials often prefer not to put it in writing. In Nagpur some officials were willing to part with factual information only as long as it was informal and off the record. It seems clear that a written questionnaire is not the right format to use for official departmental inputs unless it is backed by official orders.
- If at all a questionnaire must be used, it needs to request factual information, and not the personal opinion of the official.
- Questionnaires need to avoid provocative questions as well as broad, open-ended questions that would take a long time to answer.

Personal contact may be the most appropriate way to engage with a government department. Invitations to meetings (especially invitations from governmental institutions like the FD or EPTRI) or personal networking by the coordinating agency, seemed to be a relatively effective means of getting officials on board.

Official directives are the best way to ensure inputs from government officials. Officials often do not have the time to cater to requests if they have not received orders to do so. In Sikkim as well as Nagpur, the feeling was that a directive from the Ministry of Environment and Forests to various departments would be the only way to get full co-operation and inputs from government departments. Such a directive was never sent in any of the states.

Senior officers in government departments usually do not have the time to get involved in processes like the NBSAP. Requesting for a coordinating officer to be appointed within a department to handle all matters / queries related to the participatory process would systematise engagement with the department.

A concluding note: What Next?

The official acceptance and implementation of the NBSAP (i.e. the national plan, not the state and sub-state plans) now depends on approval by the cabinet. In a separate development, the cabinet mandated the Ministry of Environment and Forests (MoEF) to prepare a National Environment Policy. The MoEF delegated the task to TERI (The Energy Research Institute – formerly Tata Energy Research Institute). The MoEF then decided that the approval of the NBSAP would have to wait till the National Environment Policy is prepared, in order to avoid any contradictions between the two; the NBSAP would need to be in harmony with the National Environment Policy since the latter would be the more overarching document.

These requirements were put to the TPCG after the NBSAP had been prepared, raising concerns about how long the NBSAP would need to wait for approval, and whether there would be significant changes made to it. It was not clear whether any TPCG members would be involved in any redrafting that might be required. As of March 2005, the status of the NBSAP remains unclear.

There is clearly a contradiction between the original basis of preparing the NBSAP, i.e. giving it to an NGO to make a participatory 'people's plan', and the new requirement to have it officially vetted to ensure it is in harmony with a separate National Environment Policy to be prepared by the MoEF. (It may be worth referring back to Arnstein's typology of participation outlined in the Introduction, and considering whether the TPCG has moved from 'partnership' in "Degrees of Citizen Power", to any of the categories within "Degrees of Tokenism").

In a context of uncertainty over the fate of the NBSAP, the TPCG's consistent emphasis, that the process of putting the plan together was as important as the final product, assumes even more importance, and emerges as the principle strength of the NBSAP process. States and sub-state sites possess independent plans that do not need approval by the central or state governments. Many of these plans have a support base – in differing degrees - among stakeholders, built up during the process of preparing the plans. Government departments and other agencies (e.g. donors, NGOs, local communities) are free to take up parts of the plans for implementation if they see fit. There are already various examples of local-level implementation of BSAP recommendations. The many off-shoots created during the process in terms of new networks, awareness raising, capacity building and empowerment, are valuable impacts.

Many local and state-level processes that have been put into motion by the NBSAP have the potential to develop independent momentum towards achieving at least some of the goals of biodiversity conservation that are within the plans' recommendations. These various momentums do not necessarily depend on the official approval of the national plan to gain pace and develop further. It is in this sense that the NBSAP process was a form of activism, as much as it was the putting together of a formal national plan.

Appendix

Acronyms

4D: Discovery, Dream, Design and Delivery.
AIR: All India Radio
APPA: Appreciative Participatory Planning and Action
BCIL: Biotech Consortium India Ltd
BGVS: Bharatiya Gyan Vigyan Sanstha
BSAP: Biodiversity Strategy and Action Plan
CBD: Convention on Biological Diversity
CEE: Centre for Environment Education
CES: Centre for Ecological Sciences
CFP: Call for Participation
CSAP: Community Strategy and Action Plan
CYDA: Centre for Youth Development and Activities
DDS: Deccan Development Society
DFO: Divisional Forest Officer
ECOSS: Ecotourism and Conservation Society of Sikkim
ENVIS: Environmental Information System
EPTRI: Environmental Protection Training and Research Institute
FD: Forest Department
FDA: Forest Development Agency
FRLHT: Foundation for Revitalisation of Local Health Traditions
FSAP: Female Strategy and Action Plan
GPK: Grameen Punnarnirmana Kendra
GoI: Government of India
GSAP: Government Strategy and Action Plan
JFM: Joint Forest Management
KBR: Khangchendzonga Biosphere Reserve
KBSAP: Karnataka Biodiversity Strategy and Action Plan
KCC: Khangchendzonga Conservation Committee
KHLWC: Khecheopalri Holy Lake Welfare Committee
LAC: Local Advisory Committee
MCM: Media Campaign Manager
MoEF: Ministry of Environment and Forests
MSAP: Male Strategy and Action Plan
NBSAP: National Biodiversity Strategy and Action Plan
NGO: Non-Governmental Organisation
NIT: Nagpur Improvement Trust
NMC: Nagpur Municipal Corporation
NTFP: non-timber forest produce
PBR: People's Biodiversity Register
PESA: Panchayat (Extension to Scheduled Areas) Act, 1996
PRA: Participatory Rural Appraisal
PRI: Panchayati Raj Institution
SBR: School Biodiversity Register
SBSAP: Sikkim Biodiversity Strategy and Action Plan
SDNP: Sustainable Development Networking Programme
SEED: Society for Environment Education and Development
SPSS: Sikkim Paryavaran Samrakshan Sangh
SSC: State Steering Committee
TAAS: Travel Agents' Association of Sikkim
TPCG: Technical and Policy Core Group
UKBSAP: Uttar Kannada Biodiversity Strategy and Action Plan
UNDP: United Nations Development Programme
VFC: Village Forest Committee
VHAS: Voluntary Health Association of Sikkim
VNHS: Vidarbha Nature and Human Science Centre
VSS: Van Suraksha Samiti
WANC: Wildlife Aware Nature Club
WWF: World Wide Fund for Nature
YASHADA: Yashwant Rao Chavan Academy of Development Administration

Glossary

Adivasi: indigenous person (used interchangeably with 'tribal')
Dalit: the lowest social group according to the Hindu caste system
Ghat: a flight of steps to water; a riverbank (not to be confused with the use of the word in 'Western Ghats').
Gram Sabha: body / assembly comprising all adult voters in a village
Kannada: official state language of Karnataka
Mandal: administrative area for revenue
Panchayat: village council made up of elected representatives
Participatory Rural Appraisal: A participatory method used for gathering and analysing information on community resources and needs. Typical techniques include group discussions, transect walks, mapping, time-lines and trend analysis, and diagrams using locally available materials.
Rakhi: a decorative bracelet given by women to their brothers on the occasion of the Rakhi festival
Sarpanch: elected head of a panchayat
Taluka: an administrative area
Telugu: official state language of Andhra Pradesh
Tribal: indigenous person (used interchangeably with 'adivasi')
Van Suraksha Samiti: forest protection group
Warli: an adivasi community in Maharashtra

Conversions

US$1 = Rupees 43.64 (on 9 April 2004)
Rupees 1 lakh = Rupees 100,000
Rupees 1 crore = Rupees 10,000,000

List of interviewees

Technical and Policy Core Group (TPCG):

1. **TPCG Coordinator: Ashish Kothari**, Kalpavriksh Environmental Action Group, Pune.
2. **Bansuri Taneja**, member, Kalpavriksh Environmental Action Group, New Delhi
3. **Bina Thomas**, member, Kalpavriksh Environmental Action Group, Pune
4. **Darshan Shankar**, Foundation for Revitalisation of Local Health Traditions (FRLHT), Bangalore
5. **Dr. PC Bhattacharjee**, Zoology Department, Guwahati University, Guwahati, Assam
6. **Dr. Vibha Ahuja**, Biotech Consortium India Ltd, New Delhi
7. **Gam Shimray**, All India Coordinating Forum for Adivasi / Indigenous Peoples, New Delhi
8. **Kanchi Kohli**, counterpart to TPCG coordinator; member, Kalpavriksh Environmental Action Group, New Delhi
9. **Oroon Das** (Media Campaign Manager), independent media consultant, New Delhi
10. **PV Satheesh**, Director, Deccan Development Society, Hyderabad
11. **Ravi Chellam**, UNDP, New Delhi (ex-Wildlife Institute of India, Dehra Dun)
12. **Seema Bhatt**, Biodiversity consultant, New Delhi
13. **Sujatha Padmanabhan**, member, Kalpavriksh Environmental Action Group, Pune
14. **V. Shruti Devi**, Advocate and legal consultant, New Delhi
15. **Vagesh Jha** (Media Campaign Manager), Communicators' Cooperative Limited, New Delhi.

NB: The Media Campaign Managers were not technically part of the TPCG. However they have been included here since, like the TPCG, they had a national mandate. Within the report they have been referred to as TPCG members.

Ministry of Environment and Forests (MoEF)

16. **DD Verma**, National Project Director of NBSAP, Ministry of Environment and Forests, New Delhi.
17. **JR Bhatt**, Additional Director, Ministry of Environment and Forests, New Delhi.

Andhra Pradesh State Plan:

18. **Coordinating Agency:** Shri Baquer, Environment Protection Training and Research Institute (EPTRI), Hyderabad
19. **Coordinating Agency:** Smt Umamaheshwari, Joint Director (Technical), Environment Protection Training and Research Institute (EPTRI), Hyderabad
20. **A. Ravindra**, Watershed Support Services and Activities Network (WASSAN), Secunderabad.
21. **BN Chetty**, Jana Vikas Society, Kurnool.
22. **Dr D. Surya Kumari**, Centre for People's Forestry (CWS), Secunderabad
23. **Dr Rajamani**, ex-Secretary, Ministry of Environment and Forests, retired, Hyderabad.
24. **Goparaju Sudha**, Andhra Pradesh Rural Livelihoods Network, Hyderabad
25. **K. Nageswar Reddy**, People's Action in Development (PAID), Cuddapah.
26. **Sagari Ramdas**, Anthra, Hyderabad
27. **Satya Srinivas**, Andra Pradesh NGO Committee on Joint Forest Management, Hyderabad
28. **Shri Devullu**, Samatha, Vishakapatnam
29. **Shri Joginaidu**, Sharada Valley Development Samiti (SVDS), Vishakapatnam.
30. **Shri Mukherjee**, ex-Principle Chief Conservator of Forests, Forest Department, Hyderabad
31. **Siva Rama Krishna**, Sakthi, Hyderabad
32. **Smt Bhanu**, Samatha, Hyderabad
33. **Suresh Jones**, Foundation for Ecological Security, Madanapalle
34. **VR Sowmithri**, Andra Pradesh NGO Committee on Joint Forest Management, Hyderabad

Deccan Plan:

35. **Coordinating Agency: Suresh Reddy**, Deccan Development Society, Hyderabad
36. **Baliah**, Deccan Development Society, Pastapur village
37. **Basavaraj Patil**, farmer, Mamidigi village; member, Deccan Development Society
38. **Chandramma**, permaculture teacher; member, Deccan Development Society
39. **Chilachandramma**, member, Deccan Development Society
40. **Chinnamma**, health worker, Chhaalki village; member, Deccan Development Society
41. **Dr Venkat**, ex-Permaculture Association
42. **Gangwar Anjamma**, seed keeper; member, Deccan Development Society
43. **Jagannath Reddy**, Joint Director, Deccan Development Society
44. **Jayappa**, coordinator, Deccan Development Society
45. **KS Gopal**, Centre for Environment Concerns, Hyderabad
46. **Laxmamma**, seed keeper; Deccan Development Society sangham supervisor
47. **Miriyampur Saramma**, Sangham policy group member, Deccan Development Society
48. **Mogullana**, farmer; member, Deccan Development Society
49. **Premachandra Reddy**, District Collector, Medak

district.
50. **Punnama**, agricultural labourer, Zaheerabad; member, Deccan Development Society
51. **Pushpalamma**, health worker; member, Deccan Development Society
52. **Santhammama**, Sangham policy group member, Deccan Development Society
53. **Santoshamma**, health worker, Basantapur village; member, Deccan Development Society
54. **Sarmamma**, member, Deccan Development Society
55. **Satyamma**, Chhaalki village; member, Deccan Development Society
56. **Sharnappa**, Deccan Development Society, Pastapur

North Coastal Andhra Plan:

57. **Coordinating Agency: K. Sanyasir Raju**, Grameena Punarnirmana Kendra, Kurupam.
58. **A. Mukeshwaram**, secretary, Emnaba tribal network
59. **A. Padmavathi**, member, Angarada Adivasi Mahila Sanstha
60. **A. Rajesh**, member, Emnaba tribal network
61. **Adameshwar Rao**, president, Tanimyeem tribal network
62. **B. Pornayya**, member, Emnaba tribal network
63. **B. Prabhakar Rao**, Nehru Yuvak Kendra
64. **B. Purnamma**, member, Angarada Adivasi Mahila Sanstha
65. **B. Trenadarao**, member, Todu tribal network, Gungurada village
66. **BHV Ramamurthy**, teacher, Kurupam
67. **Biddika Anandrao**, healer
68. **Biddikar Bhaskar**, member, Emnaba tribal network
69. **BVA Rama Rao Naidu**, Botanical Society, Srikakulam.
70. **K. Lingaraj**, member, Todu tribal network, Kaikitada village
71. **MRG Naidu**, Deputy Executive Engineer, ITDA, Warangal.
72. **N. Mohanrao**, president, Todu tribal network, Karitada village
73. **SV Ramanna**, District Youth Coordinator, Nehru Yuvak Kendra
74. **Sanyasir Rao**, ARTS (NGO), Srikakulam and Kurupam districts.
75. **Shankar Reddy**, Janachetana, Palakonda village, Srikakulam district.
76. **Shri Ramamurthy**, healer
77. **Shri Sowmayya**, healer
78. **T. Chakrapani**, member, Todu tribal network, Gisirada village
79. **T. Narayana**, member, Angarada Adivasi Mahila Sanstha
80. **Uday Barum**, member, Todu tribal network, Keringi village
81. **V. Krishnarao**, healer
82. **VV Ramanna**, Secretary and Project Director, Association for Rural Development and Action Research (ARDAR), Vizianagaram

Sikkim State plan:

83. **Coordinating agency: Sandeep Tambe**, Divisional Forest Officer, Forest Department, Gangtok.
84. **Coordinating agency: Usha Lachungpa**, Wildlife researcher, Forest Department, Gangtok.
85. **AS Chauhan**, Botanical Survey of India, Gangtok.
86. **BB Rai**, Voluntary Health Association of

Sikkim, Gangtok.
87. **Chukie Tobden**, Concerned Citizens of Sikkim, Gangtok.
88. **DT Lepcha**, Minister of Forests, Mines and Geology, Sikkim. Gangtok.
89. **Gokul Rai**, Sikkim Paryavaran Samrakshan Sangh, Bikmat.
90. **JR Subba**, Director Horticulture, Government of Sikkim, Gangtok
91. **KC Pradhan**, ex-Secretary, Forest Department; Sikkim Development Foundation, Gangtok.
92. **Lodav Chugyal**, Sikkim Development Foundation, Gangtok.
93. **ML Arrawatia**, Chief Conservator of Forests, Forest Department, Gangtok.
94. **Neem Bahadur Chhetri**, Sikkim Paryavaran Samrakshan Sangh, Bikmat.
95. **PC Rai**, Voluntary Health Association of Sikkim, Gangtok.
96. **PD Rai**, Member of the State Planning Commission; Ecotourism and Conservation Society of Sikkim; Chairman, Sikkim Industrial Development and Investment Corp. Ltd., Gangtok.
97. **Pema Namgyal**, Concerned Citizens of Sikkim, Gangtok.
98. **Renzino Lepcha**, Executive Secretary, Ecotourism and Conservation Society of Sikkim (ECOSS), Gangtok.
99. **Satish Bardewa**, General Secretary, Travel Agents' Association of Sikkim, Gangtok.
100. **SBS Badauria**, Conservator of Forests, Forest Department, Gangtok.

Rathong Chu Valley Plan:

101. **BB Gurung**, Mansabong
102. **Birhang Subba**, Ting ting.
103. **BM Subba**, vice-president JFMC; ex-Forest Guard, Yuksam
104. **Chamkyong Bhutia**, Yuksam
105. **Chewang Bhutia**, Khangchendzonga Conservation Committee, Yuksam
106. **Domo Tshering Bhutia**, Yuksam
107. **Guyabso Bhutia**, Secretary, Khecheopalri Holy Lake Welfare Committee, Khecheopalri.
108. **KB Gurung**, Tsong
109. **Kesher Khatiwoda**, Yuksam
110. **Khengzang Bhutia**, home stay entrepreneur; pack animal owner, Yuksam
111. **Lozema Subba**, student, Yuksam
112. **Nakul Chhetri**, ICIMOD, Kathmandu. (ex-member, Ashoka Trust for Research in Ecology and Environment, West Bengal)
113. **Nima Lhamu Bhutia**, teacher, Yuksam
114. **Pema Bhutia**, Khangchendzonga Conservation Committee, Yuksam
115. **Pema Rinzong Bhutia**, Khecheopalri Holy Lake Welfare Committee, Khecheopalri.
116. **Pema Wongda Bhutia**, Lama, Yuksam
117. **Pradeep Kumar**, Divisional Forest Officer (Land Use and Environment), Forest Department, West Gyalshing
118. **Sarita Gurung**, student, Yuksam
119. **Shuva Pardhan**, Yuksam
120. **Sonam Wangda Bhutia**, Treasurer, Khecheopalri Holy Lake Welfare Committee, Khecheopalri.
121. **ST Bhutia**, contractor, Yuksam
122. **T. Uden Bhutia**, Panchayat member; Khangchendzonga Conservation Committee, Yuksam
123. **Teng Hang Limboo**, Panchayat President, Khecheopalri

124. **Tsetan Norbu**, Yuksam

Maharashtra State plan:

125. **Coordinating agency: Bharat Bhushan**, Yashwantrao Chavan Academy of Development Administration (YASHADA), Pune.
126. **Erach Bharucha**, Bharati Vidyapeeth Institute of Environment Education and Research (BVIEER), Pune.
127. **Kapil Ramesh Sahasrabuddhe**, Research and Action in Natural Wealth Administration (RANWA), Pune.
128. **Kaustubh Moghe**, Kalpavriksh Environmental Action Group, Pune
129. **Mahesh Shindikar**, Agarkar Research Institute, Pune.
130. **Nitya Ghotge**, Anthra, Pune.
131. **Prakash Gole**, Ecological Society, Pune
132. **Sanjeev Ghotge**, Centre for Applied Systems and Development (CASAD), Pune
133. **Sanjiv Nalavade**, Department of Geography, Fergusson College, Pune.
134. **Sanskriti Menon**, Centre for Environment Education, Pune
135. **Sujit Patwardha**n, Parisar, Pune.
136. **Vijay Paranjape**, Gomukh, Pune.

Nagpur plan:

137. **Coordinating agency: Pradyumna Sahasrabhojanee**, Vidarbha Nature and Human Science Centre, Nagpur
138. **Coordinating agency: Ramesh Ladkhedkar**, Vidarbha Nature and Human Science Centre, Nagpur
139. **Anil Pimplapure**, Dentist and ornithologist, Nagpur
140. **Arun Dolke**, Vidarbha Nature and Human Science Centre, Nagpur
141. **Avantika Chitnavis**, Vidarbha Heritage Society, Nagpur
142. **Damayanti S. Pandharipande**, Nagpur Mahila Manch, Nagpur
143. **Datta Patil**, Yuva Rural, Nagpur
144. **Dilip Gode**, Vidarbha Nature Conservation Society, Nagpur
145. **Dr Kalantri**, Agriculture Department, Punjabrao Krishi Vidyapeeth, Nagpur
146. **Dr Savarkar**, Zoology Department, Nagpur University, Nagpur
147. **Gopal Thosar**, Vasundhara; Hon. Wildlife Warden, Nagpur.
148. **Manu Srivastav**, Municipal Commissioner, Nagpur
149. **Nalini Nisal**, Nagpur Mahila Manch, Nagpur
150. **Nitin Zatkar**, Vanrai, Nagpur
151. **Prakash Gandhi**, Senior Environmental Engineer, Western Coalfields Ltd; Hon. Secretary, Vikalp, Nagpur.
152. **Ram Gavande**, Surajya Pratishthan, Nagpur
153. **Shri Bhrushundi**, ex-Deputy Director of Fisheries, Nagpur
154. **Shri Kurzadkar**, school teacher; Nisarg Seva Sangh, Nagpur
155. **Sridhar Babulalji Gaur**, fisherman and small fish trader, Nagpur
156. **Sushma Dilip Pankule**, Nagpur Mahila Manch, Nagpur
157. **Vijay Ghoghe**, Nisarg Vidya Mandal, Nagpur

Karnataka State plan:

158. **Coordinating agency: Prof. Madhav Gadgil**, Centre for Ecological Sciences (CES), Bangalore
159. **Amit Agarwal**, Natural Remedies, Bangalore.
160. **BV Gundappa**, teacher, Government Pre-University College, Nagarvalli, Tumkur district.
161. **Dr Chandrashekhariah**, Society for Advancement of Aquaculture, Bangalore
162. **Dr H. Sudarshan**, Hon. Sec., Vivekananda Girijana Kalyan Kendra (VGKK); President, Karuna Trust, Bangalore.
163. **Dr Sathya Narayan Bhat**, Professor, Government

Ayurveda Medical College, Bangalore.
164. **E. Basavaraju**, Bharatiya Gyan Vigyan Sanstha (BGVS), Bangalore
165. **Gladwin Joseph**, Director, Ashoka Trust for Research in Ecology and Environment (ATREE), Bangalore
166. **GN Shrikantiah**, Deputy Conservator of Forests, Forest Department, Tumkur.
167. **Guru Prasad**, Wildlife Aware Nature Club, Tumkur
168. **Harish Bhat**, Centre for Ecological Sciences, Bangalore
169. **MH Swaminathan**, ex-Chief Conservator of Forests; Director General EMPRI, Bangalore
170. **N. Indiramma**, teacher, Government Pre-University College, Chikkanayakanahalli, Tumkur district.
171. **Ranjan Rao Yerdoor**, Nagarika Seva Trust, Bangalore
172. **S. Karthikeyan**, Sr. Education Officer, World Wide Fund for Nature – India (WWF), Bangalore.
173. **Shri Ramakrishnappa**, teacher, Government Pre-University College, Venkatapura, Tumkur district.
174. **Shri Vajramuni**, Bharatiya Gyan Vigyan Sanstha (BGVS), Bangalore
175. **Shri Yathiraju**, principal, Kalidasa Junior College, Tumkur; president, Tumkur Science Centre.
176. **SK Chakrabarti,** Principal Chief Conservator of Forests, Forest Department, Bangalore.
177. **Sudarsanam Sridhar**, Institute for Natural Resources Conservation, Education, Research and Training (INCERT), Bangalore.
178. **Sumangala Mummigatti**, Transmission Executive (Science Reporting), All India Radio (AIR), Bangalore
179. **Suresh Heblikar**, Eco-Watch Centre for Promotion of Environment and Research, Bangalore.
180. **Ulhas Karanth**, Wildlife First, Bangalore
181. **Vanaja Ramprasad**, Green Foundation, Bangalore.

Uttar Kannada plan:

182. **Coordinating agency: Dr MD Subhash** Chandran, AV Baliga College, Kumta.
183. **Ananth Hegde**, Viksha Laksha Andolan; General Secretary, District Environment Committee, Ashisar village, Sirsi.
184. **Dr GG Sambamurthy**, ayurvedic doctor, Sameeksha Ayurvedalaya, Sirsi
185. **Dr GS Savithri**, ayurvedic doctor, Sameeksha Ayurvedalaya, Sirsi
186. **GD Hegde**, District Areca and Spice Growers Association, Onikeri village, Bengle, Sirsi.
187. **Ibrahim Uperkar**, Fisher leader, Taluka level Fisherworkers' Union, Gudkaagal village, Kumta.
188. **Mohini Pujari**, Tribal Environmental and Educational Development Trust, Yellapur
189. **MR Hegde**, Sneh Kunja Trust, Kassarkod village, Honnavar
190. **Pandurang Hegde**, Parisara Samrakshana Kendra, Sirsi.
191. **Prabhakar Bhat**, Centre for Ecological Sciences, field station, Sirsi.
192. **R Vasudev**, College of Forestry, Sirsi.
193. **Sadanand Holangadde**, President, District level Traditional and Mechanised Fisher Union, Holangadde village, Kumta.
194. **SG Hegde**, plant breeder, Deoragaddhe village, Hulekal.
195. **Sunita Rao**, Kalpavriksh Environmental Action Group, Karkolli village, Hullekal.
196. **VN Nayak**, Department of Marine Sciences, Karwar.

Other Interviewees:

197. **Shri Ramakrishna**, Consultant Editor, Chandamama Magazine, Chennai.
198. **Sumathi Sudhakar**, former Editorial Associate, Chandamama Magazine, Chennai.

References

Agarwal, A. 2003. *Some Concerns of Herbal Industry*. Presentation at Policy Consultation on Threatened Medicinal Plants of Eastern and Western Ghats, Trading of Wild Medicinal Plants and Promoting their Cultivation. February 17-18. Tirupati. Unpublished.

All-India Coordinating Forum of the Adivasi/Indigenous Peoples. 2001. *Voices of the Adivasi / Indigenous Peoples of India*. AICFAIP. New Delhi.

All-India Coordinating Forum of the Adivasi/Indigenous Peoples. 2001. Statement of the National Workshop on Biodiversity and Adivasi/Indigenous Peoples. Workshop held 29-31 January 2001, New Delhi, in collaboration with NBSAP. Unpublished.

Anuradha RV, Taneja B and Kothari A. 2001. *Experiences with Biodiversity Policy-Making and Community Registers in India*. (Participation in Access and Benefit-Sharing Policy Case Study No.3). International Institute of Environment and Development. London.

Apte, T and Kothari, A. 2000. *Joint Protected Area Management: A Simple Guide. How it will benefit wildlife and people*. Kalpavriksh. Pune.

Apte, T. 2002. *India Report: Community Forestry Networks*. Centre for International Forestry Research (CIFOR) website: http://www.cifor.cgiar.org

Arnstein, Sherry R. 1969. *"A Ladder of Citizen Participation"*. In: Journal of the American Planning Association. Vol.35, No.4, July.

Bhutia C, Chettri N and Tambe S. 2002. *Khangchendzonga, The Sacred Mountain: A Biodiversity Handbook*. Khangchendzonga Conservation Committee. Yuksam.

Centre for Ecological Sciences. 2002. *Karnataka State Biodiversity Strategy and Action Plan* (KBSAP). Vols. 1& 2. Centre for Ecological Sciences, Indian Institute of Science. Bangalore.

Chandran, S. et al. 2003. *Biodiversity Strategy and Action Plan Sub-State Site: Uttara Kannada*.

Deccan Development Society. 2001. *Strategy and Action Plan for Agro-Biodiversity for Sub-State Site of Zaheerabad Region in the Deccan, Andhra Pradesh, India: An Outcome of the Mobile Biodiversity Festival of the Deccan Development Society and a Series of Discussions with Principal Stakeholders*. DDS. Pastapur, Medak.

Department of Forest, Environment and Wildlife. 2001. *National Biodiversity Strategy and Action Plan, Rathong Chu Valley: Phase 1 Project Report*. Unpublished. South West Wildlife Division, Sikkim.

Department of Forest, Environment and Wildlife. 2002. *Rathong Chu Valley (Sikkim) Sub-state Biodiversity Strategy and Action Plan*. Government of Sikkim. Gangtok.

Department of Forest, Environment and Wildlife. 2002. *Sikkim State Biodiversity Strategy and Action Plan*. Government of Sikkim. Gangtok.

Environmental Protection and Training Research Institute (EPTRI). *Biodiversity Strategy and Action Plan for Andhra Pradesh*. Hyderabad. Draft.

Gadgil, M. 2002. *People's Biodiversity Register: A Methodology Manual*. Draft. Centre for Ecological Sciences. Bangalore. http://ces.iisc.ernet.in/hpg/cesmg/

Ghotge, S. n.d. "*Domesticated Biodiversity of Maharashtra: Perspectives and Conservation Concerns of Agricultural Diversity in Maharashtra*". In: MahaBSAP Thematic Report: Agricultural Diversity in Maharashtra. YASHADA. Pune.

Ghotge, S. n.d. "*Law and Policy Perspectives for Biodiversity: Intellectual Property Rights and Benefit Sharing Perspectives about Biological Diversity in Maharashtra*". In: MahaBSAP Thematic Report: Agricultural Diversity in Maharashtra. YASHADA. Pune.

Gokhale, M. 2002. "*State wakes up late for mapping its biodiversity*." In: Indian Express, 1 May. Pune.

Government of India. 1996. *The Provisions of the Panchayats (Extension to the Scheduled Areas) Act*, 1996. No.40 of 1996. Dated 24th December 1996.

Government of Sikkim. 2001. *Sikkim: Genuine Commitments, Unique Achievements*. Department of Information and Public Relations, Government of Sikkim. Gangtok.

Grameena Punarnirmana Kendra (GPK). 2002. North Coastal Andhra Sub-State Site Biodiversity Strategy and Action Plan. Kurupam, Vizianagram District, Andhra Pradesh.

Jackson, WJ and Ingles, AW. 1998. *Participatory Techniques for Community Forestry: A Field Manual*. IUCN, Switzerland and UK, and WWF, Switzerland.

Kohli, K and Bhatt, S. 2002. *Call for Participation Analysis*. Unpublished report.

Kohli, K and Bhatt, S. 2002. *Process Documentation: National Biodiversity Strategy and Action Plan, India*. Draft. Forthcoming publication. New Delhi.

Kothari, A. 2002. "*Running with the Hare and Hunting with the Hounds? Reflections on a Diverse Relationship with the State*". Draft article. Subsequently appeared in Seminar Magazine.

Kothari, A. 2000. *NBSAP Review Document: The National Forestry Action Plan* 1999. Unpublished report.

Kothari, A. 2002. "*How Does One Make a Biodiversity Action Plan for One Billion People? The Communication Challenge in India's NBSAP Exercise*." Paper presented at the Global Biodiversity Forum Workshop on Mainstreaming Biodiversity: The Role of Communication, Education and Public Awareness, The Hague, 5-7 April 2002.

Kothari, A. 2003. *How Will the NBSAP be Implemented at Various Levels? Some tips for executing and coordinating agencies*. Unpublished report.

Kothari, A. et al (eds.) May 2001. *Folio: Earthscapes*. Supplement to The Hindu Sunday Magazine. The Hindu. Chennai.

Kothari, A. et al. 2002. "*National Biodiversity Strategy and Action Plan: Did We Achieve What We Wanted To? An Internal Evaluation Report*". Workshop Papers. Final National Workshop, New Delhi (December 20-23, 2002).

Menon, M. 2003. "*Saved! The Story of Rathong Chu.*" In: The Ecologist Asia. Vol.11, No.1, January-March. Mumbai, India.

Ministry of Environment and Forests. 2000. *National Biodiversity Strategy and Action Plan – India: Guidelines and Concept Papers*. Government of India. New Delhi.

Ministry of Environment and Forests. 2002a. *From the Local to the Global: Developing the National Biodiversity Strategy and Action Plan*. Paper presented at WSSD Forum, 2002. http://envfor.nic.in

Ministry of Environment and Forests. 2002b. *National Biodiversity Strategy and Action Plan (NBSAP) Project: Executive Summaries of Biodiversity Strategy and Action Plans (Eco-regions, States, Sub-State Sites and Themes) and Sub-thematic Reviews*. Government of India. New Delhi.

Ministry of Environment and Forests. 2002c. *National Biodiversity Strategy and Action Plan (NBSAP) Project: Final National Workshop, Workshop Papers*. (INSA Auditorium, New Delhi, December 20-23, 2002). Government of India. New Delhi.

Ministry of Environment and Forests. 2002d. *National Biodiversity Strategy and Action Plan – India*. Draft. Government of India. New Delhi.

Panwar, HS. 2002. "*Report on the Appraisal of NBSAP Process and Progress in Selected States, Sub-State Sites and Eco-regions*". In: MoEF. 2002. National Biodiversity Strategy and Action Plan (NBSAP) Project: Final National Workshop, Workshop Papers. GoI. New Delhi.

Pimbert, MP and Wakeford, T. 2002. *Prajateerpu: A Citizens' Jury / Scenario Workshop on Food and Farming Futures for Andhra Pradesh, India*. IIED, London and IDS, Sussex.

Reddy, BS and Barua, P. 2002. *A Report on the Southern Regional Workshop* (NBSAP). January 5-7. Village Pastapur, Andhra Pradesh. Unpublished report.

Sarin, M. 2001. "*De-Democratisation in the Name of Devolution? Findings from Three States in India*". Manuscript.

Singh S, Sastry ARK, Mehta R and Uppal V (eds.) 2000. *Setting Biodiversity Conservation Priorities for India: Summary of the Findings and Conclusions of the Biodiversity Conservation Prioritisation Project*. Vols. 1 & 2. World Wide Fund for Nature – India. New Delhi.

Sekhsaria, P. 2004. "*Pitting Communities Against Conservation: The case of the two new categories of protected areas*". In: Protected Area Update. Nos.47 and 48, April. Kalpavriksh. Pune.

Technical and Policy Core Group (NBSAP). n.d. *Assessing Existing National Documents Relevant to NBSAP: A synthesis of the findings*. Unpublished report.

Technical and Policy Core Group (NBSAP). 2000-2003. NBSAP News. *Bi-monthly newsletter of India's National Biodiversity Strategy and Action Plan*. Government of India. New Delhi.

The Mountain Institute. 2000. *Resource Kit for Community-Based Tourism for Conservation and Development*. Nepal.

Vermeulen, S. 2002. *How to work the policy process: A typology of steps and tools for marginalized managers of natural resources. Draft working paper of the IIED initiative on sharpening policy tools for marginalized managers of natural resources.* Unpublished paper. IIED. London.

Vidarbha Nature and Human Science Centre (VNHS). 2002. *National Biodiversity Strategy and Action Plan Sub-State Site – Nagpur - Maharashtra.* Nagpur.

Yashwant Rao Chavan Academy of Development Administration (YASHADA). 2001. *Maharashtra State Biodiversity Strategy and Action Plan*: Report – May 2000 to June 2001. Pune.

Yashwant Rao Chavan Academy of Development Administration (YASHADA). *Maharashtra State Biodiversity Strategy and Action Plan.* Draft. Pune.

Internal progress reports and correspondence of the TPCG and coordinating agencies.

Websites

Biotech Consortium India Ltd:
http://www.biotech.co.in

Census of India:
www.censusindia.net

Centre for Ecological Sciences:
http://ces.iisc.ernet.in

Centre for Environment Education:
www.ceeindia.org

Convention on Biological Diversity:
http://www.biodiv.org

Deccan Development Society:
www.ddsindia.com

Environmental Protection and Training Research Institute:
www.eptri.com

Kalpavriksh Environmental Action Group:
http://kalpavriksh.tripod.com

Ministry of Environment and Forests:
http://envfor.nic.in

National Biodiversity Strategy and Action Plan:
http://sdnp.delhi.nic.in/nbsap

The Mountain Institute:
http://www.mountain.org

Yashwant Rao Chavan Academy of Development Administration:
http://www.yashada.org

Addresses of Coordinating Agencies

TPCG Coordinator:

Ashish Kothari,
Kalpavriksh,
5 Shri Dutta Krupa Apts,
908 Deccan Gymkhana,
Pune - 411 004,
Maharashtra.
Tel/Fax: 020-25654239
Email: ashish@nda.vsnl.net.in

Andhra Pradesh State:

Environmental Protection Training and Research Institute (EPTRI),
Gachi Bowli,
Hyderabad, Andhra Pradesh
Tel: 040-23000489
Email: mgg@eptri.ernet.in

North Coastal Andhra sub-state site:

K. Sanyasir Raju,
Grameen Punnarnirmana Kendram (GPK),
5-174, Palace Road,
Kurupam - 535524,
Vizianagaram District,
Andhra Pradesh
Tel: 08963-225146 (R); 225749 (O)

Deccan sub-state site:

PV Satheesh,
Deccan Development Society (DDS),
A6 Meera Apartments,
Bashirbagh,
Hyderabad – 500 029
Andhra Pradesh
Tel: 040-27764577
Email: ddshyd@hd1.vsnl.net.in

Karnataka State:

Madhav Gadgil,
Centre for Ecological Sciences,
Indian Institute of Science,
Bangalore - 560 012
Karnataka
Tel/Fax: 080-23601453
Email: madhav@ces.iisc.ernet.in

Uttar Kannada sub-state site:

Subhash Chandran,
Department of Botany,
Dr AV Baliga College,
Kumta – 581 343
Uttar Kannada
Karnataka
Tel: 08386-223142
Email: mdschandra@yahoo.com

Maharashtra State:

Bharat Bhushan,
Yashwantrao Academy of
Development Administration (YASHADA)
Baner Road,
Pune
Maharashtra
Tel: 020-25650784
Email: bharatbhushan@yahoo.com

Nagpur sub-state site:

Pradyumna Sahasrabhojanee,
Vidarbha Nature and Human Science Centre (VNHS),
498 Old Ramdas Peth,
Near Landra Park,
Nagpur – 10
Maharashtra
Tel: 0712-2529240

Sikkim State and Rathong Chu Valley sub-state site:

Sandeep Tambe (DFO) and Usha Lachungpa
State Forest Department,
Deorali,
Gangtok, Sikkim

Sikkim Field Partner:

Pema Bhutia and Chewang Bhutia,
Khangchendzonga Conservation Committee (KCC)
Yuksam,
West Sikkim – 737 113
Sikkim
Tel: 03595-241211 (O); 241212 (R)
Email: kcc_sikkim@hotmail.com