The MRV capacity-building approach
to promote the use of biodiversity data for decision-making

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CEBioS
Capacities for Biodiversity and Sustainable Development

The CEBioS programme

- Royal Belgian Institute of Natural Sciences (RBINS)

- Financed by Belgian Development Cooperation

- Capacity building of Belgian development cooperation partners
  o Conservation and sustainable use of **biodiversity and ecosystem services**

- As part of Belgian international commitments
  o Convention on Biological Diversity (CBD)
  o Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs)
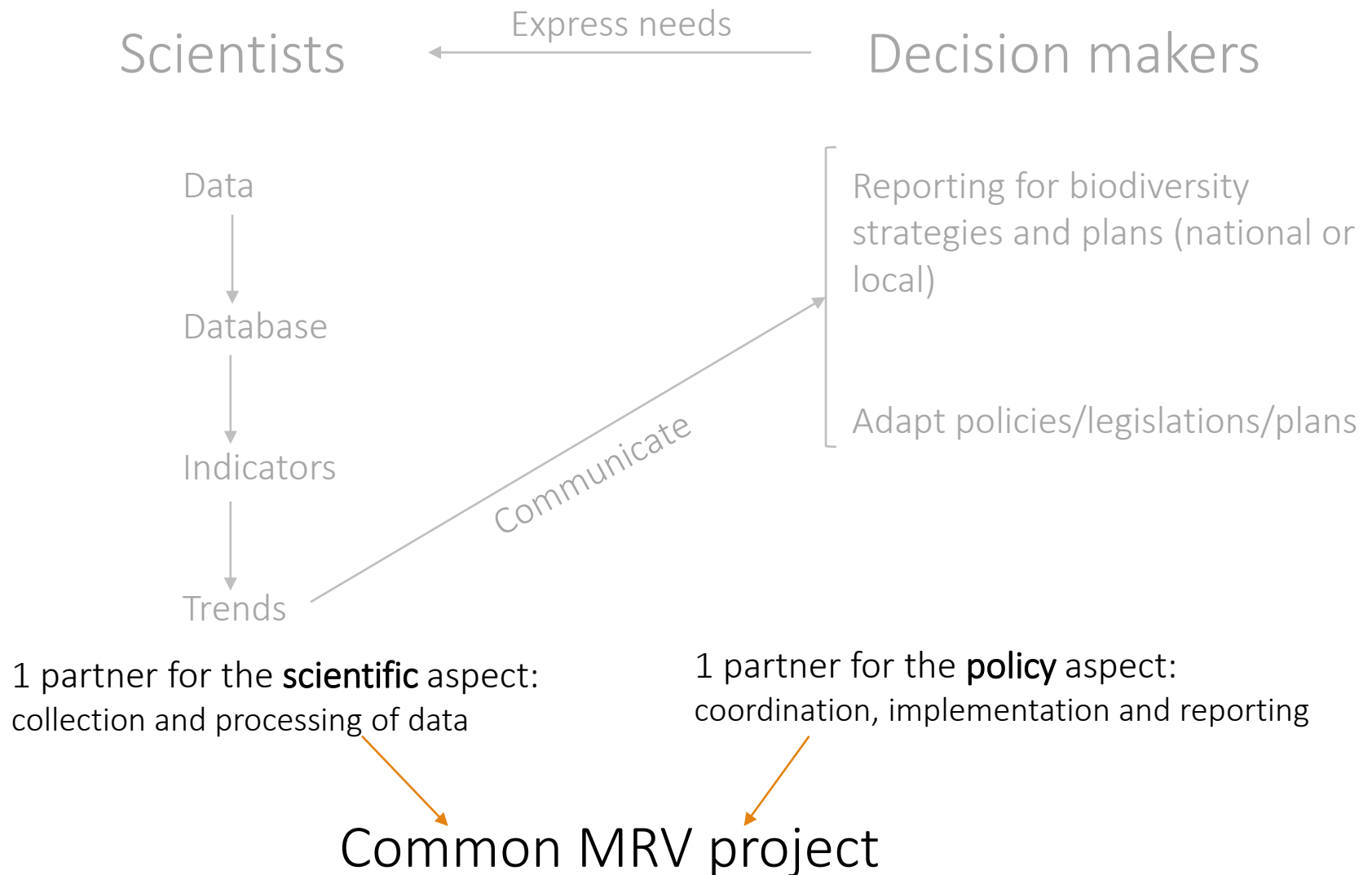 o EU Biodiversity Strategy 2020.

Science

Policy

By Frits Ahlefeldt

Measuring, reporting and verification (MRV) of biodiversity

The CEBioS-MRV approach

Formulation workshop
Express needs

Scientists ← **Decision makers**

Lack of data

Poor quality of data/poor use of existing data

Lack of capacity for database management

Poor knowledge of indicator concept

Data rarely interpreted to define trends

Data
↓ Formulation/training workshop
Database
↓ Calls for projects
Indicators
↓
Trends

Reporting for biodiversity strategies and plans (national or local)   Poor reporting

Reporting and policies not based on scientific/evidence-based data

Adapt policies/legislations/plans

Poor/no communication
Communicate

Awareness and communication training

Closing workshop

Awareness project calls

The CEBioS-MRV approach

Scientists ← Express needs — Decision makers

Data
↓
Database
↓
Indicators
↓
Trends

Reporting for biodiversity strategies and plans (national or local)

Adapt policies/legislations/plans

Communicate

1 partner for the **scientific** aspect:
collection and processing of data

1 partner for the **policy** aspect:
coordination, implementation and reporting

Common MRV project

Calls for MRV projects

	Call 2015	Call 2016	Call 2018	Call 2019	Call 2020
Country	Benin, Burundi, DR Congo, Morocco	DR Congo	Ghana, Kenya, Uganda, Palestine, Rwanda, Tanzania	Follow-up of 2015 & 2016 - Benin, Burundi, DR Congo, Morocco	Follow-up of 2018 - Uganda, Palestine, Tanzania
#	5	11	10	9	5
Themes	• National Indicators • Medicinal plants • Selected ecosystems and species	• Charcoal • Bushmeat • Fishing	• Charcoal • Bushmeat • Fishing in protected areas	Same	Sustainable use of natural resources • Fisheries • Shea nut • Protected areas

Formulation/training workshops

Pre-projects presentations

Training by CEBioS and African experts

Group work with the experts to improve the proposals

New improved proposals

- MRV approach
- Developing policy-relevant biodiversity indicators
- Database management
- Science Policy interface
- Biodiversity governance
- Mainstreaming of biodiversity in policy sectors
- Online biodiversity data portals
- Project management

→ South-South cooperation
→ Exchange of experience
→ Building a network

Closing workshops

- Projects presentations
- Exchange of best practices
- Training about:
  - Communication towards policy-makers and different target groups
  - Creation of policy briefs
- Common publications
  - **Policy briefs** to share key results and recommendations
  - **Scientific papers** to share lessons learnt
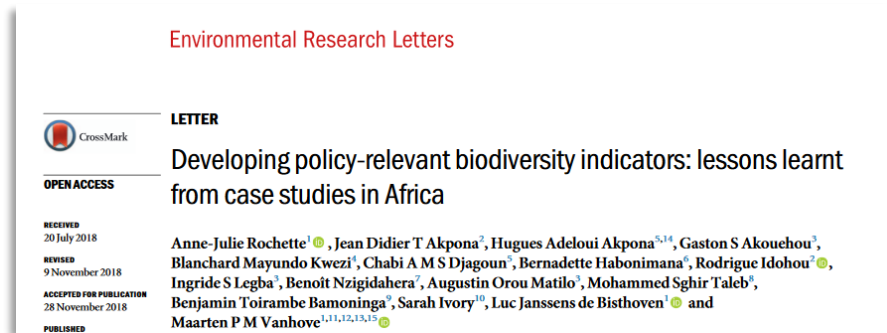
Follow-up projects: awareness

Need expressed at the closing workshops: awareness raising on

- the results of the MRV research, and/or
- good practices and legislation related to the theme

  for

  - the local population
  - authorities in the research area

Examples:

- **Posters,** leaflets, flyers...
- **M**eetings with the local population
- **I**nformation session with decision-makers;
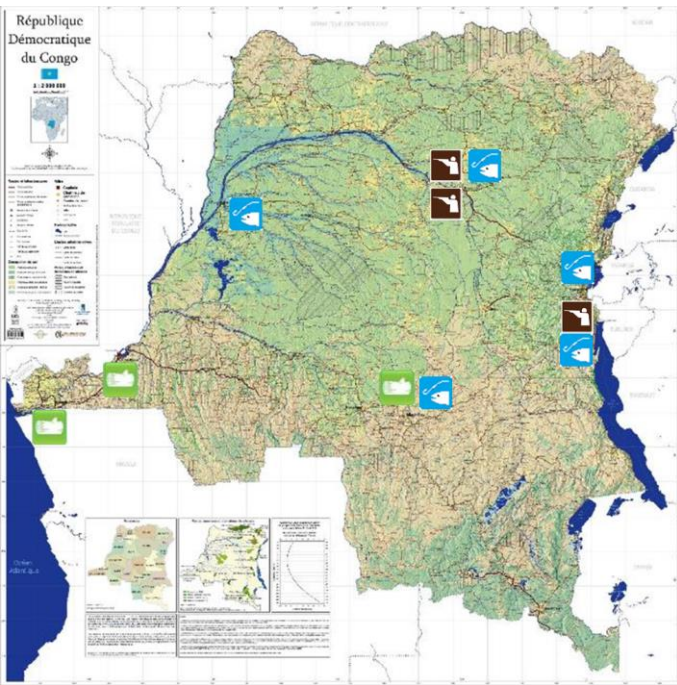- **Radio or TV** programme

Policy briefs

Co-creation during closing workshops or during awareness projects
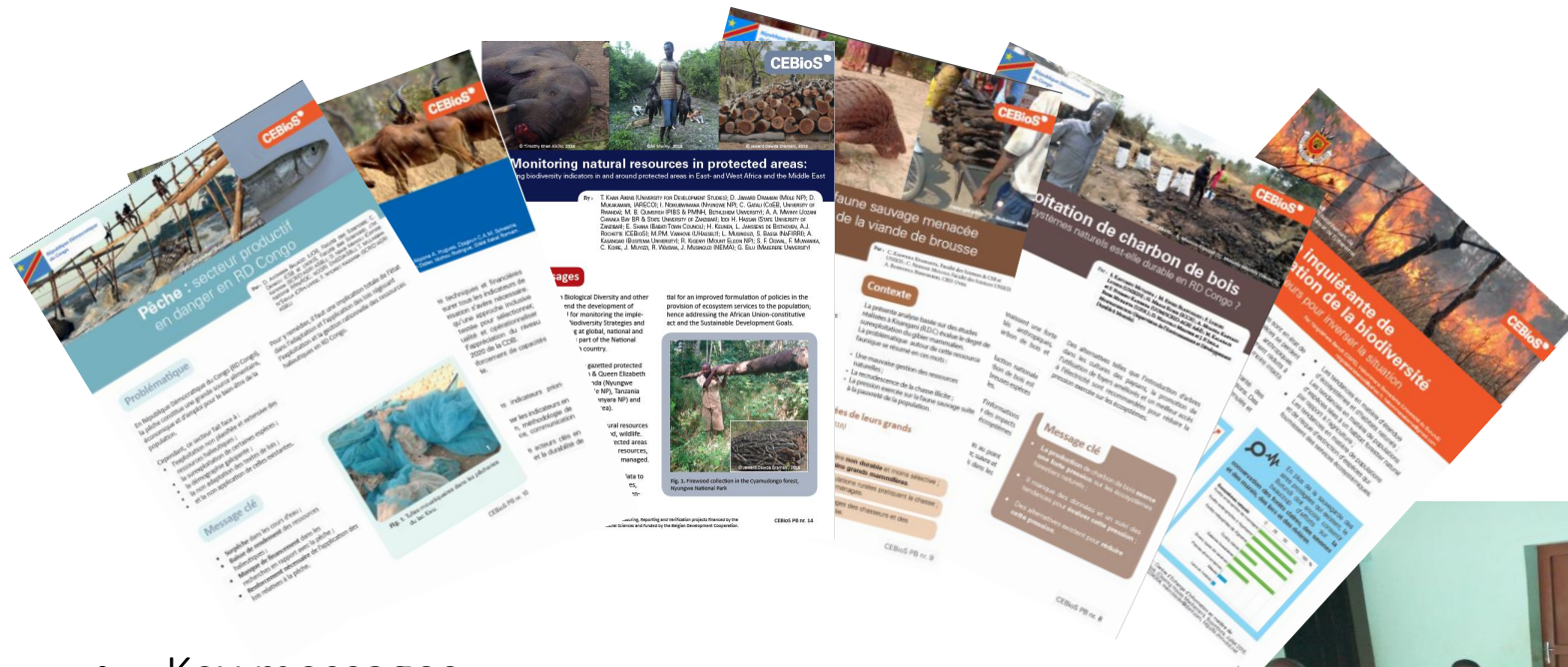
- Key messages
- Simple and visual
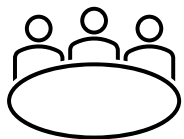- Importance of the dissemination strategy!

Focus on the DR Congo

Very high potential in terms of biodiversity conservation

- Very biodiverse and huge country

- Many (biodiversity) research institutes, very active dynamic scientific community, with high motivation and many data

World café

Policy-relevant monitoring of biodiversity in DR Congo

Priority biodiversity **themes** in the region?

Long-term biodiversity monitoring systems?

How to **improve collaboration** between research institutes?

How can scientists **impact** decision-making?

Who are the **decision-makers** to be reached and why?

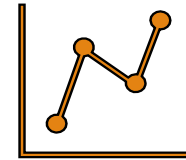Ensuring that decision-makers **use data** for decision-making

What **type of data** may be of interest to decision-makers?

Brakes to obtain **reliable scientific data**?

Challenges in DRC
Why no long-term monitoring systems?

Use & sharing of data
- Lack of data exchange between scientists/decision-makers (afraid)
- Weak mobilization of existing data

No global approach, no long-term research vision
- No/weak research programme in the institutions
- Lack of clear national strategy for research

Funding
- Lack of financial means for large-scale/long-term data collection (opportunism)
- DRC does not attract donors (not internationally competitive, not visible enough, perceived as unstable (insecurity / corruption)).
- Sustainability issues of punctual financed projects

No harmonization of data collection methods, and weak data quality

Challenges in DRC
Barriers for reliable scientific data

- Lack of
  - Capacities regarding data collection, processing and analysis
  - Collaboration among scientists (harmonization of methods, expertise sharing)
  - Adequate equipment, infrastructure, and dedicated laboratories
  - Accessibility to data banks/portals (language, internet, software availability)

- Issues of
  - Material for data archiving
  - Skills in database management

Recommendations for DRC
Science-Policy interface

Efforts to improve collaboration must be made on both sides
- Data sharing (researchers / provincial administrations)
- Common meetings, hoc biodiversity projects and trainings

Role of scientists
- Stimulate political interest
  - Monitoring and alert role
  - Clear and captivating messages - Improving communication
  - Creative information mechanisms (environmental committees, regular visits,…)
- More cooperation (to broaden/share their expertise and jointly address decision makers)
- Increase their understanding of decision-makers needs
- Decision-makers : not only the environment sector, biodiversity is cross-sectoral! (e.g. mining, energy, agriculture)

General conclusions
Lessons learnt

Biodiversity Indicators

- Good communication tools toward decision-makers: synthetic, visual (trends), easy to understand

- Concept of indicators not sufficiently understood + lack of (national) structures responsible for the recurrent calculation of the indicator

- Not adapted to all contexts, e.g. traditional knowledge

Many central African countries :

- High potential: very biodiverse, very high motivation

- Left behind in terms of biodiversity monitoring (cf global initiatives)

- Have no access to international efforts such as online data portals

General conclusions
Lessons learnt

Capacity building needs

- The indicator concept
- Database management
- Sharing data and accessing online data
- Cf BID call

Promoting

- Mobilization of existing data
- Triangular cooperation (North South South)
- Indicator development initiatives with South expertise
- Tandem approach Science/Policy
- Active communication tools at the SPI (e.g. policy brief)
- Research topics formulated based on their research agenda
- Strategies for sustainability of data collection

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http://cebios.naturalsciences.be