CEEweb for Biodiversity
Kuruclesi út 11/a, 1021 Budapest, Hungary
Phone: +36 1 398 0135
Fax: +36 1 398 0136
ceeweb@ceeweb.org
www.ceeweb.org

CEEweb background paper

THEME III: A post 2010 vision for the Pan-European region

Fifth Intergovernmental Conference Biodiversity in Europe

The background paper is prepared by CEEweb for Biodiversity with the participation of Pan-European NGOs. It targets NGOs and other participants of the Fifth Intergovernmental Conference Biodiversity in Europe that takes place on 22-24 September 2009 in Liege, Belgium. The paper is also used and discussed at the NGO preparatory meeting preceding the Conference on 21 September 2009.

Introduction

The Strategic Plan (SP) for the Convention on Biological Diversity (CBD) and the global 2010 biodiversity target to "significantly reduce the rate of biodiversity loss as a contribution to poverty alleviation and to the benefit of all life on earth" was adopted by governments in 2002 at the 6th Conference of the Parties (COP) to the CBD. The Strategic Plan aims to provide strategic and operational guidance for the implementation of the Convention between 2002-2010, thus it shall be revised and updated at the 10th meeting of the COP in 2010. The new Strategic Plan and the new biodiversity target will provide guidance under the CBD for policy making and implementation possibly for decades to come.

The outcomes of the 5th Biodiversity in Europe Conference, but especially the outcomes under Theme III: "A post 2010 vision for the Pan-European region" will be channelled into the Strategic Plan revision process. Thus the meeting provides a unique opportunity to form Pan-European views and recommendations for enhanced biodiversity policy under the CBD after 2010.

Besides, the target of the European Union to stop the loss of biodiversity until 2010 will also be revised in 2010. The formulation of the new EU target and corresponding policies is well under way. The two processes are running in parallel and influence and cross-fertilize each other. Therefore the outcomes of the 5th Biodiversity in Europe Conference will also influence decision making at the EU level.

The review process so far

At its ninth meeting, in May 2008, the Conference of the Parties of CBD agreed on the process for the revision of the Strategic Plan. According to this, the Executive Secretary has invited Parties to submit views on the revision in July 2008. There is also an on-line forum established to facilitate submission of further views. On the basis of the submissions, and other relevant information, the Executive Secretary has prepared a first synthesis/analysis of views. Parties and relevant organizations were requested to submit further views, or reflections to the prepared analysis until 31 August 2009[1].

Expected future process: The WGRI[2] and SBSTTA-14[3] will in the course of 2009 and early 2010 work on a framework of post-2010 goals, targets and indicators and prepare a recommendation for COP 10 on the

[1] All relevant information, decisions and documents can be found on the CBD website http://www.cbd.int/sp/
[2] Working Group on Review of Implementation of the Convention
[3] The Subsidiary Body on Scientific, Technical and Technological Advice

revised and updated Strategic Plan. In October 2010, at its tenth meeting, the Conference of the Parties will consider and adopt the revised and updated Strategic Plan, including the post-2010 goals, targets and indicators.

Lessons learned from the 2002-2010 SP

A failure to target the root causes of biodiversity loss

The goal of Strategic Plan is to provide a strategic framework for the effective implementation of all provisions, decisions and programmes of work under the CBD with the overall objective of reducing the rate of biodiversity loss. Unfortunately the current SP could not achieve this objective: the rate of biodiversity loss has not been reduced but increases. The current SP could not fulfil its role for several reasons; but first of all because it lacks an understanding of the socio-economic drivers behind biodiversity loss and thus the most fundamental impediments of CBD implementation.

- Biodiversity loss is fundamentally rooted in the socio-economic framework of our society. The prevailing economic framework results in that natural resources are cheap in comparison to human labour. Cheap natural resources then lead to production and consumption patterns with energy and material intensive products and services which, at the end, lead to the overuse of resources[4].

- The economic framework is reflected in the institutional structures underpinning it: in the governance setup, state budgets and subsidies, programmes and policies, but also in the education system, etc.

- All this is based on the prevailing values of society: consumerism, materialism, loss of identity and traditional lifestyle and the loss of relationship to nature. In this framework nature and ecosystem services are not understood and valued by society. [5]

Consequently, the new CBD SP can only be successful if it understands and targets the drivers of biodiversity loss. This can be facilitated if the boundary conditions of the economy are changed through limiting the use of natural resources. As long as the drivers are not tackled, they will continue regenerating biodiversity loss however well designed our biodiversity policies are.

The current Strategic Plan includes four goals and several objectives, which, however, cannot influence the drivers substantially. For example, neither improved capacities for the implementation of the Convention (Goal 2.) nor better integration of biodiversity concerns into sectoral policies (Goal 3.) will help much to limit the use of natural resources by the economies. The SP also lists the impediments of implementation in the Annex. However, this is not an appropriate and useful analysis for revealing the socio-economic drivers and thus finding ways for changing their course. Listing the lack of political will, the lack or proactive measures or the unsustainable production and consumption patterns is not enough if it is not explored what causes them.

Lacking a holistic approach, the SP does not sufficiently reveal the complex nexus of cause-effect relationships, which connect biodiversity changes and socio-economic trends. Therefore the underlying problems remain untouched by global and national efforts. The revision of the SP is a unique opportunity to step out of the box of traditional biodiversity policy making. It is important to realise that biodiversity loss cannot be tackled by biodiversity policy measures alone. The revised SP could become much more successful through facilitating better understanding of the socio-economic drivers of biodiversity loss as well as through initiating more ambitious actions towards fundamental changes in the drivers.

[4] Population growth is another driving force behind biodiversity loss, which multiplies the problem.
[5] In the Annex you can find a conceptual framework on the relationship between Drivers-Pressures-Sate-Impacts-Response of biodiversity loss based on a model developed by the European Environmental Agency.

A failure to ensure implementation

Furthermore, the SP has not defined clearly the target groups, which are responsible to bring it forward; and the tools and measures to achieve the set goals and objectives. Also a compliance mechanism linked with economics, and appropriate monitoring and review mechanism are missing. Particularly:

- It is not clear, who are responsible to realise the goals and objectives and through what actions. This is especially true when we consider the issue of mainstreaming, where the involvement of other sectors is the key. The SP is well justified and formulated towards the conservation sector, however, it does not provide sufficient guidance for the other sectors on their necessary involvement. It lacks the framework, where the various sectors could find their role in reducing the various pressures on biodiversity (through natural resource use, use of space and pollution, release of GMOs, IAS).

- Obviously, the SP is not an action plan, which lists the clearly defined tasks of the various actors. However, the SP is very vague on how the necessary actions would be identified, especially when it comes to changing the socio-economic drivers. There should be clear mechanisms specified, which can result in the necessary actions.

- The SP does not have a review mechanism with indicators to measure progress towards the goals and objectives. Thus the responsibility of implementation by governments and economic sectors is not ensured.

Recommendations for the revised SP

Taking a new, proactive approach for designing the targets

The main goal of the revised SP should be to reduce the pressure on the global environment through limiting the use of natural resources (including energy). In order to address different environmental pressures in a holistic way, the socio-economic drivers need to be tackled themselves. This is possible through changing the boundary conditions of the economy, which in turn requires limiting the total input into it. This should include a global and absolute limitation of the use of natural resources, including species and ecosystems, as well as the use of space by humans. For achieving this, economic measures should be applied for limiting natural resources use, while effective spatial planning policies should be employed for limiting the use of space and ensuring coherence and connectivity. It must be clear from the revised SP that without an absolute limitation of environmental pressures halting the loss of biodiversity is not possible.

Targets for the period 2010-2020 and up to 2050 should be ambitious, meaningful, inspiring and equally reflect on all three attributes of the state of environment and thus avoid trade-offs among them. They should relate to:

1. The abundance of natural resources on genetic, species and ecosystem level,

2. The spatial structure, reflecting on the coherence and connectivity among ecosystems,

3. The quality of environment, determined by pollution, the spreading of IAS and GMOs.

Without taking this holistic approach to environment and to pressures on biodiversity, actions might lead to shifting of environmental pressure in space or time (as it has been proved in the case of biofuel production).

Possible elements of a new Pan-European biodiversity policy

A possible new Pan-European biodiversity could be formulated based on the following components:

In the introductory part:

1. A **positive vision**, which reflects both on the state of biodiversity and its positive contribution to human wellbeing.

2. A **justification of the urgency and importance of the issue for the whole society**. There is good evidence available from the Millennium Ecosystem Assessment, the Global Biodiversity Outlooks and the ongoing TEEB study on biodiversity loss and its impact on human wellbeing, as well as the causes behind biodiversity loss. Special attention should be devoted to the underlying socio-economic drivers, which clearly justifies the responsibility of the whole society and the different sectors. Ecosystem tipping points and their possible consequences could provide justification for ambitious targets and effective policy responses.

3. An **annex on the socio-economic drivers of biodiversity loss** in order to provide a conceptual basis for holistic policy responses (for example see the Annex of this document). It should explore the complex relationships among drivers and pressures, and the trade-off relationships between the various measures targeting the different environmental pressures. Such concise, but comprehensive analysis of the drivers would help the decision makers from all sectors to find the appropriate tools for achieving the targets and subtargets and thus avoid the mistakes of the current SP.

Targets and actions:

4. A **statement on the necessity to absolutely limit the overall pressure on the environment** as a precondition for halting the loss of biodiversity.

5. **Targets for the limitation of the use of energy and natural resources** on regional and global levels. The targets should reflect on all three attributes of environment (see above) in order to prevent shifting of environmental pressure.

6. **Fields of action, where sectoral subtargets need to be set** and implemented for reducing the overall environmental pressure. The sectoral subtargets should be elaborated by the sectors themselves on regional level, and their implementation should be followed up with the help of appropriate indicators and a review mechanism.

7. **Ways and means of review and monitoring** including indicators. Indicators should not only reflect on the state and pressures on biodiversity, but also on the underlying drivers. This is the only way to receive appropriate feedback on the drivers, which generate environmental pressures.

8. **Provision for the establishment of compliance mechanism.**

Positive social consequences and contribution to poverty alleviation

Limiting natural resource use would mean making them more scarce globally. A horizontal and fundamental change like this would have, however, positive social consequences and contribute to poverty alleviation in various ways:

- Limiting resource use also means limiting the use of energy. This inevitably results in the “glocalisation” of the economy, where production and consumption is based much more on local resources. This benefits local economies and poor, marginalised areas, which are now under great pressure within the globalised economy for their natural resources.

- Limiting natural resources also increases the competitiveness of human labour, as labour intensive but material and energy poor products and services become relatively cheaper on the market. This has a positive impact on employment, while also spur innovation for higher resource efficiency and recycling.

- Limiting the total environmental pressure and by that stopping further environmental degradation ensures the maintenance of ecosystem services, which is the basis of local livelihood.

Mobilizing other sectors for the SP implementation

Both the responsibility of the various sectors for decreasing biodiversity and the consequences of biodiversity loss for their operation have become increasingly well known. Clearly there is a need for making the business case for the sectors even more convincing based on the TEEB study and other evidence. However, there are some fundamental conflicts that need to be tackled as well, because awareness raising, voluntary commitments and even the possible development of schemes for the payment for ecosystem services alone cannot ensure genuine involvement of the sectors.

Currently there is an inherent conflict between biodiversity conservation and the other sectors, which cannot be resolved through sectoral integration efforts alone. In the current socio-economic framework there is an ever increasing demand and use of land and natural resources (i.e. for the input into the economy), which results in an ever increasing environmental pressure. Without changing these boundary conditions of the economy (e.g. by absolutely limiting the natural resource use of the society), the success of any awareness raising and sectoral integration efforts will be extremely limited, as it is also shown by recent experience. This problem needs to be clearly explored in the revised SP and there needs to be a strategic approach how these boundary conditions of the economy can be changed for the aim of limiting total environmental pressure. In an economy, where there is no inherent conflict between conservation and other sectors related to the use of resources and land, additional measures aimed at awareness raising and sectoral integration could have significantly higher effectiveness and open up the possibility for ownership by the other sectors for biodiversity targets and measures.

If these boundary conditions are changed for the benefit of biodiversity (and environment in general), that would also reduce the resource demand for CBD implementation. At the same time the increased competitiveness of human labour to the use of natural resources would also help increasing the human capacities in understaffed fields of conservation activities.

Developing sectoral subtargets and at regional and national level

The revised SP should determine biodiversity targets and subtargets reflecting on the state of biodiversity at global level. However, in order to achieve them, there need to be commitments made from the various sectors. These commitments can be best facilitated through changing the boundary conditions of the economy, which resolves their fundamental conflict with biodiversity conservation.

The sectoral subtargets should be developed on regional level, so they can reflect on the different environmental, economic and social conditions. While biodiversity and other environmental experts can provide important input into the process by offering biodiversity expertise and making the links to the global biodiversity targets, the ownership of the sectors can be best generated if the sectoral subtargets are truly developed by the sectoral representatives. A regular review mechanism should provide feedback on the contribution of the subtargets to the biodiversity targets as well as on their implementation.

The use of existing policy platforms should be preferred in the regional processes, with the Pan-European Biological and Landscape Diversity Strategy (PEBLDS) and the Ministerial Conference on the Protection of Forests in Europe (MCPFE) being such examples. The Regional Commissions of the United Nations Economic and Social Council could also play a role in this process.

The achievement of the biodiversity targets and the sectoral subtargets should be integrated into national plans and programmes dealing with both horizontal policies (e.g. national sustainable development strategies) for changing the boundary conditions of the economy and sectoral issues (e.g. energy policies, forestry strategies, National Biodiversity Strategy and Action Plans.

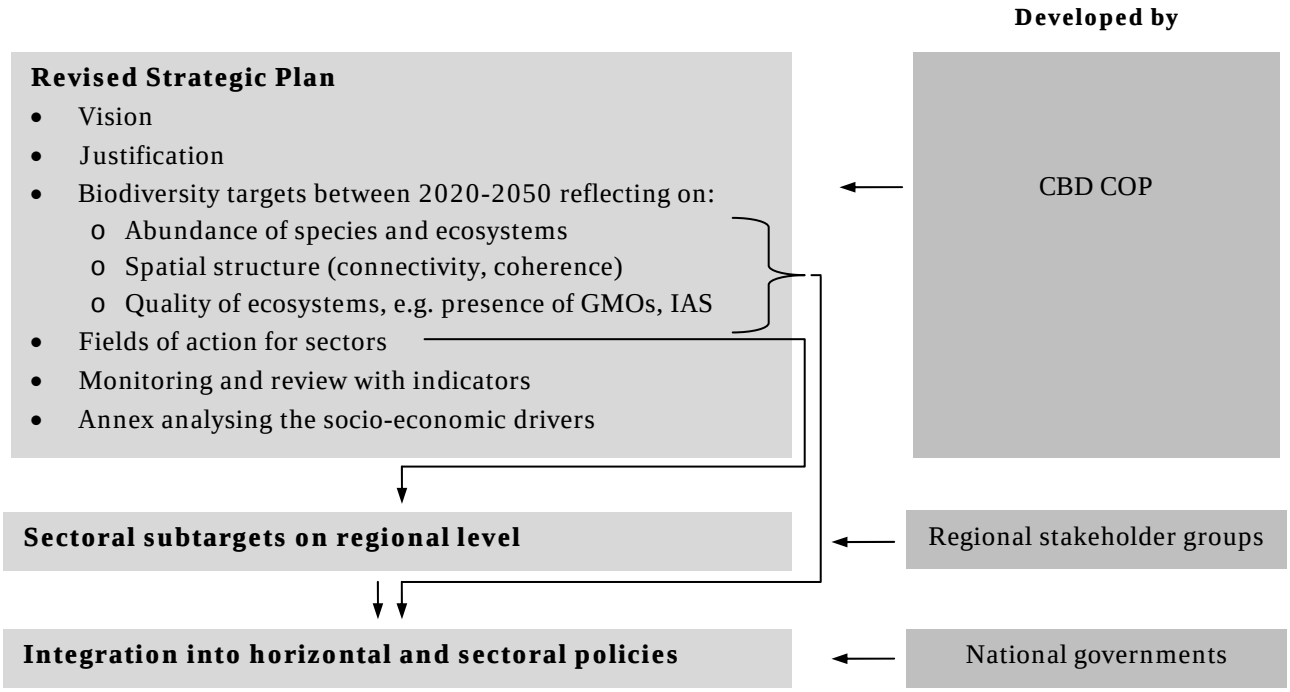

Figure 1. Global, regional and national actions related to the revision of the SP

Review and monitoring

The implementation of the SP should be monitored and reviewed regularly, where regular feedbacks (e.g. in every four or five years) are provided at global, regional and national levels to the whole society and the various sectors on their performance.

The regular review should be based on appropriate indicators using both the currently available CBD indicators, but also complemented with additional ones reflecting on the socio-economic drivers. The success of the SP implementation could be measured by monitoring how much global, regional and national efforts change the course of drivers that generate environmental pressures and lead to biodiversity loss.

If progress is insufficient in changing the drivers, then necessary horizontal measures need to be revised with a view to improve their effectiveness.

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CEEweb for Biodiversity is a network of non-governmental organizations in the Central and Eastern European region. Our mission is the conservation of biodiversity through the promotion of sustainable development.

Annex

Building upon the conceptual framework of the DPSIR model

In order to provide effective policy responses to biodiversity loss it is crucial to carry out an in-depth analysis of the causes behind the problem. The list of impediments contained in the annex to the SP proved to be insufficient, because it lacked an understanding of the complex relationships of the various factors and could not provide sound basis for the necessary actions. Instead, the DPSIR (drivers-pressures-state-impact-response) model developed by the European Environment Agency could provide a useful causal framework (figure 2).

The model describes the interactions between society and environment. For the issue of the SP the state of environment is the biotic condition, i.e. biodiversity at genetic, species and ecosystem level. *Pressures* exerted by the society change the *state* of environment. They include the release of substances (emissions), physical and biological agents, the use of resources and the use of space. *Drivers* are the social, demographic and economic developments in societies, which manifest themselves in the exerted pressures. *Impacts* on human and ecosystem health, as well as resource availability result from the adverse changes of the state of environment. *Responses* are the measures taken to address drivers, pressures, state or impacts by the society.

It is important to stress that – as the Brundtland report pointed out – the issues of environment and development are inherently interlinked. It means that in a thorough analysis the pressures, drivers and impacts will be the same in the case of all environmental problems, let they be biodiversity loss, climate change, waste or air pollution. The same drivers are behind these environmental problems, and the pressures, responses and impacts interlink the various environmental issues.

Let's take a closer look at the driving forces. They have different roles and characteristics in the socio-economic framework. Structural drivers (e.g. consumption and production patterns, infrastructures, urban structures) are rather static, which are hard to change in the short term and require continuous investment for maintaining their function in the society and economy. Institutional drivers (e.g. economic and legal regulations, sectoralisation in institutions, the education system) determine the structural drivers through setting the framework for economic and social activities. Cultural drivers (the knowledge, approach, values of the people) are the most deeply underlying root causes, which determine the institutional drivers and indirectly the structures and environmental pressures in each case. However, as we fail to recognise these root causes behind environmental problems, policy responses remain just end-of-pipe solutions. This also leads to the further sectoralisation of the environment sector and often results in incoherent and contradictory policies.

Biodiversity loss in the DPSIR (driver-pressure-state-impact-response) model

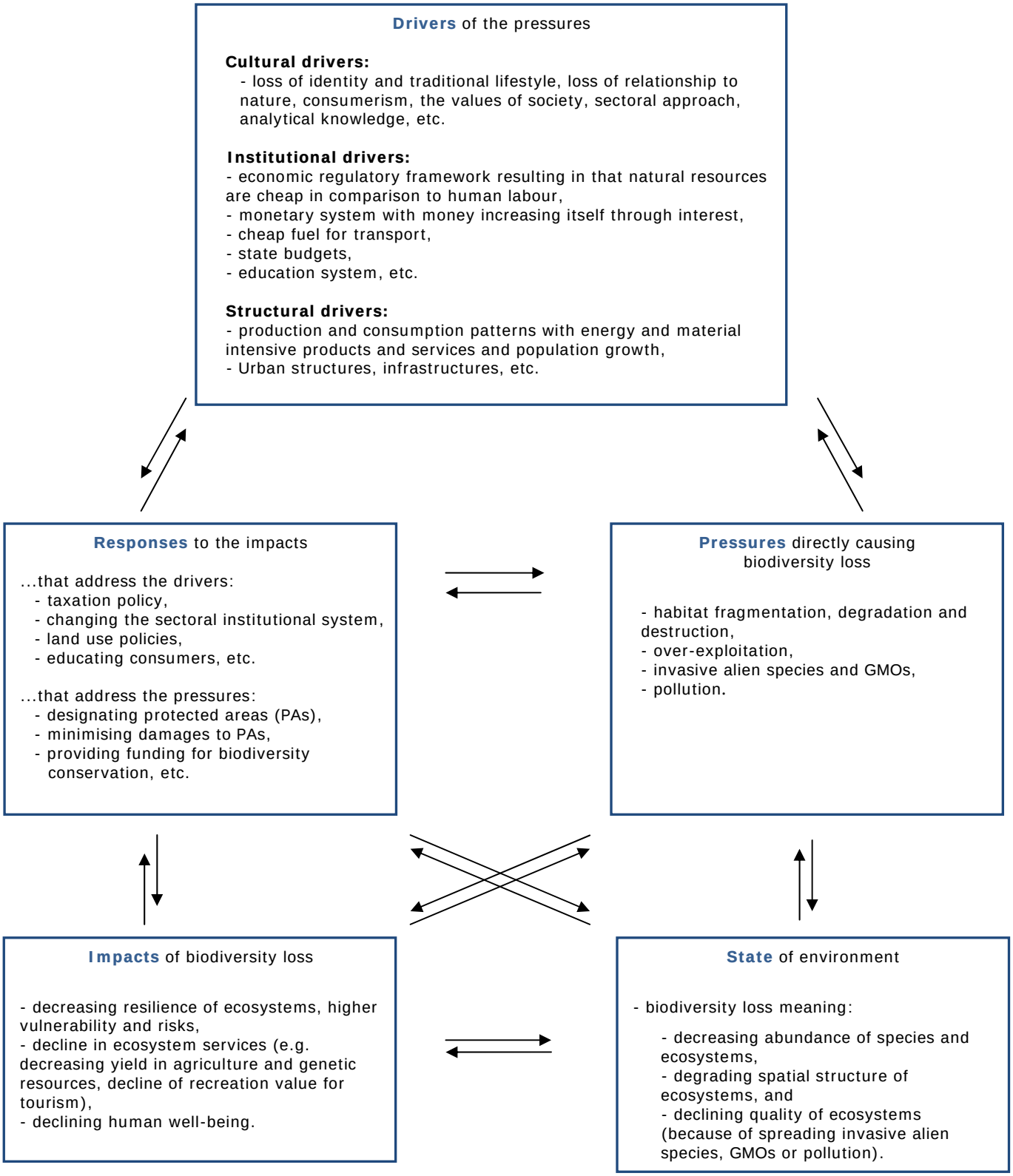

Figure 2. Biodiversity loss in the DPSIR (drivers-pressure-state-impact-response) model