

## ISDRS – Policy Brief on applying the “Convention Check”

### Addressing the UN Biodiversity Conference 2018

14th meeting of the Conference of the Parties to the Convention on Biological Diversity - COP 14, Sharm El-Sheikh, Egypt, 17-29 November 2018



### Input from ISDRS Topic group 9d: Law and Sustainability

#### 1. Issue to be addressed

Multilateral Environmental Agreements (MEA's) are nationally often hardly or not implemented although signed and/or ratified (Young 2011). National legislative bodies often do not much more than copy and paste MEA into legislation, if at all (Koester 2004, Mauerhofer et al. 2015). This leads to a top-down-deadlock in the implementations of these agreements leaving them behind in the implementation queue in comparison for example to regional agreements of regional integration organizations such as the EU with a much stronger implementation mechanism.

Managers of Protected Areas (PA's) are often confronted with this kind of top-down-deadlock leaving them with a lack of implementation rules out in the field and unable to create these implementation rules themselves.

#### 2. Key findings in recent scientific research

Research has shown (Mauerhofer 2011, Dudley et al. 2016):

- an approach to improve implementation of MEAs (CBD, CMS, AEW, EUROBATS, Bern Convention) protecting Biodiversity without need to change the law.
- how PA-managers can contribute through an “Convention Check” to improved implementation of these MEA's.
- how the Convention-Check method applies through a 10-step system a bottom-up approach to assess the contribution of large-scale PAs to the implementation of these MEA's.
- that this approach allows to overcome deadlocks in MEA implementation, contributing to improved global PA governance.
- a Convention Check as a case study carried out in the Thaya Valley National Park, Austria, demonstrating that the park contributes significantly to implementation of these 5 MEA's.

#### 3. Implications for policy makers

Protected area managers are provided with a tool which they can apply within their managerial and budgetary responsibilities (Mauerhofer 2011).

In this way, “their” protected area can contribute to improve implementation of MEA's. One of these impacts shown is that more than 25 % of the recommendations developed for improved implementation were executed within two years (Mauerhofer 2011).

This Convention Check approach proves to be rather flexible and applicable not only to the five MEAs of the case study but to a wide range of MEAs (Dudley 2016). Similar is valid for the type of Protected area as well as for the geographic range.

These proposals should be added to the discussions on [Item 24. Mainstreaming of biodiversity within and across sectors](#) and [Recommendation SBSTTA-22/5](#)  
<https://www.cbd.int/conferences/2018/cop-14/documents>  
<https://www.cbd.int/meetings/SBSTTA-22>

#### 4. Lead author(s) and related research institutes

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#### 5. Relevant references

- Dudley N., Harrison I.J., Kettunen M., Madgwick J., Mauerhofer V., 2016. Natural solutions for water management of the future: Freshwater protected areas at the 6th World Parks Congress, Aquatic Conservation: Marine and Freshwater Ecosystems (Wiley) 26 (Suppl. 1): 121–132
- Koester, V., 2002. The five global biodiversity-related conventions: A stocktaking. Review of European Community and International Environmental Law 11, 96-103.
- Mauerhofer V., 2011. A bottom-up 'Convention-Check' to improve top-down global protected area governance, Land Use Policy (Elsevier), 28, 877–886
- Mauerhofer V., Kim R.E., Stevens C., 2015. When implementation works: a comparison of Ramsar Convention implementation in different continents, Environmental Science & Policy (Elsevier) 51, 95-105.
- Young, O.R., 2011. Effectiveness of international environmental regimes: Existing knowledge, cutting-edge themes, and research strategies. Proceedings of the National Academy of Sciences of the United States of America 108, 19853-19860.

See also: <https://panorama.solutions/en/solution/assessment-individual-pas-contribution-environmental-conventions>