



# Post-2020 global biodiversity framework: commitment, implementation and accountability

*Report of a workshop held on 8 October 2019  
Hotel Sofitel Brussels Europe, Brussels, Belgium*

## Contents

<b>Introduction .....</b>	1
<b>Topic 1: Commitment: NBSAPs and other national commitments that respond to the Convention and its Protocols, and to the post-2020 global biodiversity framework.....</b>	3
Summary of discussions relating to strengthening of the NBSAP process .....	4
Summary of discussions relating to mechanisms or instruments to support increased ambition .....	6
<b>Topic 2: Implementation: National reports as a means for tracking implementation and achievement of commitments made through NBSAPs and other mechanisms.....</b>	7
Summary of discussions relating to improving reporting processes.....	8
Summary of discussions relating to accessing information from different reporting processes.....	9
Summary of discussions relating to capturing information on contributions of non-State actors .....	10
<b>Topic 3: Learning from review and reporting under other intergovernmental processes, where national efforts to address global commitments and accountability are encouraged .....</b>	10
Summary of discussions relating to lessons to be learnt from other intergovernmental processes .....	11
Summary of discussions relating to the form and function of review .....	12
<b>Topic 4: Accountability and transparency - tracking and reporting on delivery of the post-2020 global biodiversity framework at the global level .....</b>	13
Summary of discussions relating to strengthening the use of indicators .....	14
Summary of discussions relating to tracking commitments .....	15

## Introduction

**Overall aim of the workshop:** This workshop was organized as an opportunity to explore means for enhancing implementation of the post-2020 global biodiversity framework, focusing on the ways in which biodiversity-related commitments are made by Parties (including through NBSAPs and other planning processes), and mechanisms that could be used to increase transparency and accountability with respect to the delivery of those commitments. The workshop provided participants the opportunity to discuss a ‘nexus’ of issues that is emerging from the consultations and submissions on post-2020 to date, the related issues of commitment and accountability. These are not new issues – for decades Parties have been making commitments through their National Biodiversity Strategies and Action Plans (NBSAPs) and reporting on their achievement through National Reports. However the post-2020 discussions provide opportunity to review how commitments are currently being made, identified and reported on, with a view to exploring opportunities for the future.

**The context for the workshop:** The workshop took place shortly after the first meeting of the open-ended working group on post-2020 convened by the Convention on Biological Diversity (CBD). At this time there had been significant consultation and sharing of views on the form and content of the post-2020 global biodiversity

framework and the associated enabling activities, but no decisions had been taken and there was, as yet, no draft text as a basis for negotiation. Many Parties were still assessing the views and discussions that they had been exposed to, and considering future options. Given the wealth of discussion, it was considered important that the workshop build on those discussions, and not simply repeat what had already been said. To facilitate this, all participants were provided in advance with a background document introducing each of the issues under discussion, and identifying key sources. These sources are all referred to in this report.

**Workshop participation:** Participants were invited from each EU Member State and the European Commission, and, in addition, from each of the 23 countries actively participating in the EU-funded project led by Expertise France on “post-2020 biodiversity framework support”. Around 100 people from 36 Parties participated, the majority of whom were negotiators or their advisors. They were supported by a number of resource persons invited to inform discussion. Given the value of open and frank discussion, the workshop operated in the spirit of the Chatham House Rule, and nothing has been done outside the meeting to identify who said what. Immediately following the workshop, there was a social event in the Museum of Natural Sciences (Royal Belgian Institute of Natural Sciences), hosted by the International Union for Conservation of Nature (IUCN). A full list of workshop participants is provided [in Annex 1 or link to webpage].

**Organization of work:** A high proportion of the workshop was spent in small group discussion groups and subsequent reporting back from discussions, in order to maximise opportunities to share views and experience, and to learn from others. The agenda and organization of work is provided [in Annex 2 or link to webpage]. Discussion was divided into the following four topics, with everyone considering the first topic, and participants choosing one of the other three topics to focus on. Discussion groups were provided with a number of questions to help orient discussions. The four topics were:

1. NBSAPs and other national commitments that respond to the Convention and its Protocols, and to the post-2020 global biodiversity framework
2. National reports as means for tracking implementation and achievement of commitments made through NBSAPs and other mechanisms
3. Review of implementation, and learning from commitment, accountability review and reporting under other intergovernmental processes
4. Tracking and reporting on delivery of the post-2020 global biodiversity framework at the global level, and potential for delivering the 2050 Vision

**Workshop outputs and outcomes:** The issues covered by the workshop were very relevant to the ongoing discussion on the post-2020 global biodiversity framework, and therefore it is hoped that the workshop has helped negotiators and their advisors to prepare for future discussion and negotiation. This report is based on a combination of the background documents and summaries of the discussions, and is intended as a resource for supporting further discussion, particularly on what is currently termed the ‘transparency, monitoring, reporting and review’ component of the post-2020 global biodiversity framework. The document does not constitute an agreement on the different issues covered, but aims to present the range of views expressed by participants. The report was completed during the days immediately following the workshop, and made available for review by participants before wider circulation. All workshop documentation and presentations, including a list of participants, can be found at <https://wcmc.io/Brussels-Workshop>.

Resources
<p><b><i>Ahead of the workshop, it was assumed that all participants were familiar with:</i></b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• The <a href="#">CBD COP decision 14/34</a> which established the process for developing the post-2020 global biodiversity framework, including the annex to that decision.</li><li>• The draft outcomes of the first meeting of the open ended working group, including the <a href="#">report</a>, the <a href="#">conclusions</a>, the <a href="#">annex</a> to the conclusions, and the non-paper on <a href="#">possible elements</a> of a post-2020 global biodiversity framework for further discussion. When available final versions will be posted <a href="#">here</a>.</li></ul>

- Recent discussion under the Convention with respect to review of implementation (see for example documents [CBD/COP/14/5](#), [CBD/COP/14/5/Add.1](#) and [CBD/COP/14/5/Add.2](#)) which communicates some of the concerns over the pace of implementation and gaps.

***Other key resources relevant to this topic include:***

- The many [submissions](#) made by Parties and observers over the last year, which between them set out the range of views that have been expressed concerning the form and content of the post-2020 global biodiversity framework and its future implementation. Syntheses of the views expressed in the submissions are in documents [CBD/POST2020/PREP/1/INF/2](#) and [CBD/POST2020/PREP/1/INF/1](#).
- Other documents prepared as part of the post-2020 process, including the reports of the regional consultations, and the consultation/expert meetings focused on the Protocols, gender, and on working with the other biodiversity-related conventions. All documents can be found at [www.cbd.int/post2020](#).
- The co-chairs' report from the ninth [Trondheim Conference on Biodiversity](#), which focused on support for the post-2020 process. Abstracts and presentations can also be found on the conference website, together with discussion group outcomes.
- Discussions relating to scenarios for achieving the 2050 Vision (see for example CBD COP [decision 14/2](#) and working document [CBD/SBSTTA/21/2](#) and the associated information documents).
- Documents and presentations from the [Second Bogis-Bossey Dialogue for Biodiversity](#), which focused on motivations and opportunities for transformative change.

## **Topic 1: Commitment: NBSAPs and other national commitments that respond to the Convention and its Protocols, and to the post-2020 global biodiversity framework**

### **Summary of key issues**

Parties use NBSAPs as a key tool for framing their commitments to addressing the objectives of the Convention and successive strategic plans, and for planning action. Most Parties have NBSAPs in place that will remain operational for some years to come.

Given the urgency of effective action, it is important to maintain and further increase the momentum generated by preparing and adopting the post-2020 global biodiversity framework. This will need to build on existing NBSAPs as well as any commitments and other initiatives generated during the preparatory process.

Despite the need for urgent action to address biodiversity loss, yet there is a real concern that current efforts are insufficient. For example, analysis by the CBD Secretariat suggests that many of the current NBSAPs do not yet embody the level of ambition that is necessary for attaining the 2050 Vision for Biodiversity.

However, a major challenge for assessing commitment and level of ambition is the variability in content and level of detail from one NBSAP to another, including the extent to which biodiversity-related commitments made in other sectors (for example in response to climate change or land degradation) are taken into account.

This latter point underlines the value of NBSAPs as a framework for all biodiversity-related commitment and action at the national level, addressing not only the CBD and its Protocols, but also the other biodiversity-related conventions, and other conventions and processes that impact on and benefit from biodiversity.

### **Questions that discussion groups were invited to address**

- How can the NBSAP process be strengthened, at national and international levels, taking into account the Sustainable Development Goals, biodiversity-related MEAs and actions in other fora (climate, land degradation, etc.), and their biodiversity benefits and impacts?
- What mechanisms or instruments could be put in place at the international level to ensure that Parties' actions are sufficiently ambitious, helping to achieve post-2020 targets and milestones, and lead to progress towards the 2050 Vision?

- c) Are there ways in which each Party's commitments (whether in NBSAPs or not) could be more clearly and consistently expressed so that the information can be more readily compiled and analysed?

## Resources

### ***Ahead of the workshop, it was assumed that all participants were familiar with:***

- The form and content of at least one NBSAP (see for example the [strategy](#) and [action plan](#) for Finland, or the [NBSAP](#) for Egypt), and the ways in which NBSAPs are intended to be used to implement the Convention at the national level (see [www.cbd.int/nbsap](http://www.cbd.int/nbsap)), while recognising that form, content and implementation can vary significantly from one Party to another.
- The variety of guidance on preparation of NBSAPs and on their content and implementation provided by the CBD COP, and the range of other guidance currently available, as [summarised on the CBD website](#) in order to support Parties in their preparation of NBSAPs (recognising that the need for enhanced guidance was an issue discussed at the first meeting of the open ended working group).
- COP 14 documents relating to progress in the review of implementation, in particular paragraphs 11-20 on NBSAPs in [CBD/COP/14/5](#), Section IV of [CBD/COP/14/5/Add.1](#) (which is an analysis of contents of NBSAPs), and Figure 1 in [CBD/COP/14/5/Add.2](#) which illustrates and analyses of targets in NBSAPs (the analysis by the CBD Secretariat referred to above).

### ***Other key resources relevant to this topic include:***

- The [assessment of post-2010 NBSAPs](#) prepared by Cristian Prip and Balakrishna Pisupati for UNEP reviews issues such as preparation and adoption approaches, the treatment of mainstreaming, the use of national targets, NBSAPs as tools for implementing other conventions, and both legal and financial preparedness.
- The UNDP paper on [NBSAPs as natural catalysts for accelerating action on SDGs](#) is a recognition of the importance of the link between biodiversity and the SDGs, and seeks to identify NBSAPs as both a tool and opportunity for addressing biodiversity in the context of delivering the SDGs.
- The draft papers prepared as contributions to a post-2020 EU biodiversity strategy by UNEP-WCMC ([Reversing negative biodiversity trends through action: What is needed to bend the curve](#)) and the European Environment Agency ([Review of the existing quantitative national targets in NBSAPs of European countries](#))
- In relation to commitments made in other fora that can have biodiversity benefits and impacts and that should be considered in the context of NBSAPs, the WWF paper on [NDCs – a force for nature?](#), and the policy briefs from the [Nature-based Solutions Initiative](#), provide valuable food for thought.
- Effective biodiversity governance is essential to NBSAP implementation, and UNEP has provided a review paper (2018) on [law and NBSAPs](#) which considers legal preparedness, strengthening and sustaining legal preparedness in NBSAPs, and review of legal considerations within NBSAPs.
- Section 6 of the UNEP [Sourcebook on opportunities for enhancing cooperation among the biodiversity-related conventions at national and regional levels](#) addresses the Strategic Plan for Biodiversity 2011-2020, the Aichi Biodiversity Targets and NBSAPs.
- Given the discussion at the open-ended working group in Nairobi on the need for enhanced guidance for developing and reviewing NBSAPs, it may also be useful to be aware of the [NBSAP Capacity Building Modules](#) on the CBD website, and links to other capacity building resources.

## Summary of discussions relating to strengthening of the NBSAP process

**NBSAPs are a key instrument for implementation of the Convention at the national level, as each State has sovereign rights and responsibilities with respect to natural resources.** There is value in having an ambitious global framework, but flexibility is needed to allow for countries to choose the most appropriate strategies and actions for their circumstances. However, as a result, the ways in which NBSAPs are developed and approved varies significantly from one Party to another, and they can also vary significantly in ambition, content, level of detail and specificity, and the extent to which roles and responsibilities are identified.

**NBSAPs also need to be linked to means of implementation, and in particular the provision of the necessary financial resources** (from domestic sources and/ or ODA). The level of ambition is inevitably linked to resource availability, and there may be an argument for introducing the concept of conditional and unconditional commitments of actions, where developing countries could list actions they would like to implement but are constrained in doing so because of lack of resources. This might lead to offers of support. Commitments could also be phased – a first commitment, and then if further resources are secured then another level can be reached.

**NBSAPs need to have a whole-of-government approach in order to help achieve the necessary level of national commitment to implementation.** Cross-cabinet involvement will help ensure that all ministries are on board, which is particularly important. This will help in identifying and addressing the drivers of biodiversity loss through engagement of sectors, and is essential for mainstreaming. It would perhaps be facilitated if NBSAPs were more clearly related to their social and economic context, and to the SDGs. If natural capital accounting processes were integrated in the NBSAPs and their implementation, this might strengthen the process. NBSAPs could through the post-2020 global biodiversity framework and its indicators, be a main tool for delivering on both SDGs and biodiversity.

**All major stakeholders outside government, including the private sector, also need to be actively engaged in the development and implementation of NBSAPs.** This will increase awareness of the issues, increase ownership of the NBSAP, and hopefully therefore reinforce implementation. This engagement needs to be done proactively, and ways need to be found to encourage and cope with multiple inputs. NBSAPs can also be used as a basis for awareness raising in this regard. Also important is engagement with sub-national and local government.

**NBSAPs, and steps to implementation them, might comprise both the formal commitments made by Governments, and voluntary commitments made by a range of other stakeholders** as a contribution to NBSAP implementation. It was suggested that NBSAPs should focus on the role of government in fulfilling the targets, while at the same time using awareness raising and where appropriate capacity-building to encourage the engagement and commitment of the private sector and other stakeholders. Then when reporting at the national level it is important to compile the efforts made by all actors, both formal and informal.

**Mechanisms need to be in place at the national level to coordinate implementation of NBSAPs, to provide the ongoing link to all stakeholders, and to deliver the necessary monitoring and assessment.** This will build on the engagement and of key stakeholders and sectors in developing the NBSAP, and hopefully lead to increased involvement in all aspects of commitment, implementation and accountability.

**There are good arguments for splitting NBSAPs into two clear components, the strategy and the plan.** The strategy would include political strategic elements, commitments, goals, statements and targets and be valid over a longer period of time, while the plan would cover the activities to be undertaken by all stakeholders, together with timeline, resource requirements and so on, possibly over a shorter period of time with periodic update.

**Many Parties have drawn significantly on the global framework provided by the Aichi Biodiversity Targets in developing their NBSAPs, and this needs to be built upon.** Within the context of national circumstances, direct alignment has been easier where targets are clear in intent and SMART.<sup>1</sup> The relationship to the Aichi Biodiversity Targets makes the national contribution to delivering the Strategic Plan for Biodiversity 2011-2020 clearer, and associated reporting more straightforward. However this also means that some realignment is going to be needed following COP-15, and it would be good to see this done relatively rapidly.

**NBSAPs should address implementation of all intergovernmental agreements and processes as they relate to biodiversity and ecosystem services, and in particular delivery of the SDGs.** This is currently quite variable from one NBSAP to another, but would be reinforced in future if the post-2020 global Biodiversity framework itself more clearly relates to the full range of conventions, agreements and processes relating to biodiversity and

---

<sup>1</sup> SMART targets are Specific, Measurable, Ambitious, Realistic and Time-bound

ecosystem services. Mutually reinforcing actions, and the use of nature-based solutions should result in biodiversity friendly outcomes. This could also be supported by further guidance (see below).

**The currently available guidance for developing NBSAPs should be review and revised, while recognising that this is necessarily guidance and not a template.** Such guidance would address both the types of content of value in NBSAPs, and options for the processes for their development and approval. It would also include guidance on target setting, identification of baselines and indicators, and on links to reporting. Revised guidelines could also identify options for addressing links between the Convention and Protocols, as well as with the SDGs, the biodiversity-related conventions, and other conventions and processes (including regional conventions). It could also address options for encouraging engagement and commitment of stakeholders at the national level.

**Variability in NBSAPs can make it difficult to assess the extent to which the ‘sum of all NBSAPs’ will lead to delivery of the 2050 Vision, and identify where further action is needed.** This might be addressed by having a shorter standardised template through which Parties could inform on the commitments they are making in their NBSAPs in an agreed manner. Then a stocktaking would be possible from the beginning. This could also serve as an effective vehicle for informing on realignment of NBSAPs following adoption of a post-2020 global biodiversity framework. Later on the impacts of these commitments would be then addressed through national reporting (see below).

#### **Summary of discussions relating to mechanisms or instruments to support increased ambition**

**Mechanisms and tools need to be identified that will encourage Parties to increase their ambition to meet identified gaps and shortfalls.** This will require periodic review of baselines, intentions and progress at the regional and/or global level (stocktaking) to assess whether the cumulative effort is sufficient, and where necessary the active encouragement of further action and/or increased ambition at the national level, potentially through some form of ratcheting mechanism. It may also include encouragement of peer review of NBSAPs (see below), and other peer-to-peer support and encouragement, and further research necessary to underpin assessment and action. All of this assumes that Parties understand the level of ambition that is needed, and if this is not the case then further explanation and examples may be necessary.

**Many countries have identified lack of resources as a key limiting factor in delivery of the Aichi Biodiversity Targets, so focus on the eighth replenishment of the GEF will be significant.** As this will be the first GEF replenishment following adoption of the post-2020 global biodiversity framework, this will be a significant step in delivering resources that many countries see as necessary for effective implementation.

**The UN Nature Summit proposed for September 2020 will provide a major opportunity for Member States to focus on and promote the efforts they are taking to address biodiversity loss,** and this will hopefully spill over into their commitments to implement the post-2020 global biodiversity framework. The Summit may also help create momentum for adoption of a more ambitious post-2020 global biodiversity framework at COP15, and will help increase the profile of the Convention.

**Increased linking of the biodiversity and climate change agendas through, inter alia, nature-based solutions, will help create major opportunities for mutually addressing concerns** that are being increasingly raised at both political levels and at grass roots in many countries. Increased clarity on how the two agendas relate will have a reinforcing effect on action at the national level, and potentially also on the availability of resources.

**Effective and far reaching communication on the many values of biodiversity and ecosystem services, and their relationship to delivery of the SDGs, will help create willingness to show ambition.** This would build on the findings of IPBES and other assessments, and focus on the importance of biodiversity to multiple sectors and stakeholders. Additionally it would aim to further clarify the relationships between conservation and sustainable use, and to promote a stronger link between NBSAP implementation and SDGs. Such communication also needs to be picked up and built upon at the national level, around NBSAPs and their implementation, and these issues also need to be better integrated into education programmes. Building on this increased awareness, communication of commitments made by Parties and others will also help to build momentum through encouraging further commitment by other Parties and stakeholders.

**Support both Parties and the private sector in identifying ways to better reflect the values of biodiversity in trade and supply chains**, through mechanisms such as standards, integration in business models, financial and investments plans, consumption patterns and recognition of positive impacts on nature. Associated with this, encourage the business sector to actively communicate on this, demonstrating net impact on nature on biodiversity and ecosystem services. This will involve both creating the conditions where it is becoming rational for a company to be serious about the standards, and supporting and rewarding companies that are championing this challenge? As part of this efforts should be taken to integrate biodiversity mainstreaming in trade and supply chain in the CBD scope, mobilizing WTO, UNESCO, UNCTAD, FAO and all trade regulators.

**Consider providing some form of platform for National Focal Points to share experience amongst themselves, and to ask advice of their peers.** The aim would be to support coordination and discussion among parties, and facilitate sharing of good practices for integration of policies and alignment with climate change, SDGs etc., and also common approaches for contributing to the global level of ambition could be useful. This would build on the level of consultation that has taken place during development of the post-2020 global biodiversity framework.

## **Topic 2: Implementation: National reports as a means for tracking implementation and achievement of commitments made through NBSAPs and other mechanisms**

### **Summary of key issues**

Parties regularly produce national reports on implementation of the Convention and its Protocols, following agreed formats intended to ensure key issues are covered and to encourage a degree of comparability. The format and periodicity of reporting is not fixed, and can be modified in order to improve the value of reports and reporting.

Significant effort is put into reporting by Parties, but concerns have been expressed that the reporting process and the use of reported information is less effective than it could be compared to the content, time and efforts put into the reporting process. With the development of a post-2020 global biodiversity framework, and renewed discussions on accountability and transparency, now might be an opportunity for review and adjusting reporting systems. Guidance and support could also be enhanced.

Parties also report to other intergovernmental conventions and processes, and it is likely that in a number of cases information reported to these bodies will also be relevant to delivery of the post-2020 global biodiversity framework. Indeed there have been concerns expressed on many occasions of the potential for duplication and inefficiencies in reporting across the various biodiversity-related Conventions and other relevant agreements and initiatives.

As a result of the above there are calls for increased coordination in reporting across multiple agreements and processes, and for further development and use of tools to support reporting such as online reporting systems and the evolving Data Reporting Tool for MEAs (DART).

The post-2020 global biodiversity framework could provide a valuable framework for capturing information from multiple sources, including reporting. However in the past reporting has not always been helped by the wording and format of targets, and in particular the current mix of targets for outcomes, pressures and drivers of loss, and actions.

### **Questions that discussion groups were invited to address**

- a) What steps can be taken to improve reporting processes within the Convention and its Protocols, so that delivery of the post-2020 global biodiversity framework can be more effectively tracked?
- b) How can we ensure that relevant information is captured from the reporting associated with other relevant conventions and processes (e.g. Agenda 2030) in the most efficient/effective manner?
- c) How can we capture the multiple contributions made by other actors, including non-Parties, NGOs, IPLCs and the private sector, building on the Sharm El-Sheikh to Kunming Action Agenda and other commitment processes?

Resources
<p><b>Ahead of the workshop, it was assumed that all participants were familiar with:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>The form and content of the sixth national report (see for example the report for <a href="#">Finland</a> or from <a href="#">Egypt</a>), the <a href="#">template and guidelines</a> for the sixth report, and the associated <a href="#">resource manual</a>.</li> <li>CBD COP <a href="#">Decision 14/27</a> on process for aligning national reporting, assessment and review, and document <a href="#">CBD/SBI/2/12</a> on national reporting under the convention and its protocols.</li> <li>The extent to which information from national reports is used in the reviews of implementation periodically prepared by the CBD Secretariat (see for example <a href="#">CBD/COP/14/5</a>, <a href="#">CBD/COP/14/5/Add.1</a> and <a href="#">CBD/COP/14/5/Add.2</a>), or the <a href="#">Global Biodiversity Outlook</a> (noting also CBD COP <a href="#">decision 14/35</a> on the importance of national reports to preparation of the fifth edition).</li> </ul>
<p><b>Other key resources relevant to this topic include:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>The report prepared by UNEP-WCMC and NatureConsult with the support of Switzerland on Elements for a Modular Reporting against the Aichi Biodiversity Targets (<a href="#">UNEP/CBD/COP/13/INF/24</a>)</li> <li>The draft guidance provided by the CBD Secretariat in <a href="#">CBD/COP/14/INF/26</a> for reporting progress on biodiversity to the High-level Political Forum through Voluntary National Reviews (noting that Voluntary National Reviews themselves can be found <a href="#">here</a>, and the associated guidelines <a href="#">here</a>).</li> <li>The concept note on the <a href="#">Data Reporting Tool for MEAs</a> (DART), and description of the <a href="#">Online Reporting System</a> used by a number of conventions (noting that the CBD online reporting is described documents identified above).</li> <li>The tools provided by <a href="#">InforMEA</a> which allow for search across data and information managed by secretariats of international agreements (see for example <a href="#">search across national reports</a>).</li> <li>Tools such as the <a href="#">UN Biodiversity Lab</a> and the Biodiversity Indicators <a href="#">Dashboard</a>, which are intended to increase access to data at the national level.</li> <li>Annotated lists of key information sources identified in the <a href="#">Compendium of guidance on key global datasets related to biodiversity conventions</a> and <a href="#">Compendium of guidance on capturing, managing and using data and information</a> (prepared with support from the European Union and the CBD Secretariat).</li> </ul>

### Summary of discussions relating to improving reporting processes

**In order to deliver on agreed targets, it is important to understand where there is progress and where gaps in progress, and to understand what is working and what is not.** This is not about ‘naming and shaming’, but about identifying needs and opportunities, identifying what further efforts are needed, and to share experiences. Information from national reports and other sources, including regional input, needs to be analysed, synthesised and presented in such a way that it supports and encourages further action. In this regard thematic reports can be particularly useful, and engagement with stakeholders at all levels is crucial.

**Concerns were expressed that the current format for CBD national reports was cumbersome in nature, and that the format was changed for every reporting period.** This is not helpful to Parties trying to set up efficient processes to track implementation and deliver reports, and lack of consistency between successive reports also means that it is less easy to track change over time in a consistent manner through the national reports. These issues need to be thought about as plans are made for the next reporting round, and for successive reporting periods during the life of the post-2020 global biodiversity framework, and as guidance is developed and potential indicators identified (see below).

**While the online reporting tool used by the CBD is a good innovation, lessons need to be learnt from experience with its implementation in the sixth reporting round.** Concerns expressed relate to some extent to the agreed format, and trying to present information to the best effect in this format. However, reference was also made to difficulties engaging other ministries and stakeholders in an efficient and effective manner. When plans are made for the next reporting round, reporting formats need to be considered taking into account how any reporting tools will be utilised in the process.

**Questions are being asked on whether the Secretariat has the capacity to use all of the material provided by Parties in their national reports**, particularly given the effort put into producing them. As the next reporting rounds are planned, thought needs to be given as to exactly how the information requested will be used, and then reporting formats and guidance adjusted accordingly. For example, is the current form and content of the national report the most useful for the analyses/syntheses based on these reports, and for really understanding situation, progress and expected impacts?

**Guidance provided is helpful, but there was a general feeling that feedback from the Secretariat on the national reports submitted would also be valuable**, helping Parties to understand whether they were providing the information needed in the right form and with the necessary level of detail. The intention is to make future reports more useful (something also addressed by those discussing Topic 3). Careful guidance is also important in this regard, helping in ensure consistent and comparable content, and the right level of detail. This would be helped by a much clearer understanding of exactly how the extensive content of the reports is being used.

**Significant thought needs to be put into the form, content and frequency of reports that will be needed over the next ten years**, drawing on the experience under the CBD and other Conventions. This includes not only the issues identified above, but also relates to discussions on topics 3 and 4 below. Plans could be set at COP 15, so that Parties know what to expect over the coming decade. Also relevant is the relationship to the reporting processes under other Conventions, and how inputs can be drawn from multiple sources in ways that are acceptable to Parties (something that will be on the agenda at SBI-3 based on decision 14/27).

#### **Summary of discussions relating to accessing information from different reporting processes**

**The post-2020 global biodiversity framework will provide a valuable framework for bringing together information from multiple sources**. If we put the right processes in place this means that assessment of progress in achieving targets can be based on compilation of data and information from reports made to a range of different intergovernmental conventions and processes. Conversely, the framework could also be used at the national level as a basis for helping to organize data and information that is providing input to these reports.

**Tools aiming to assist Parties in preparing national reports have the potential to significantly increase the efficiency of reporting processes**. These include both the Data and Reporting Tool (DART) and the different online reporting tools used by the Conventions, through increasing access to reported information and helping to organize inputs. Efforts need to continue, including through working with Parties, to ensure that these tools provide real help to Parties in meeting their reporting commitments. This can include tagging reported information to create links to elements of the post-2020 global biodiversity framework.

**It is important to also create and maintain access to all reported information so that it can be appropriately shared and used**. This includes both access to the reports on the websites of those conventions and processes receiving reports, and access through information tools and services such as InforMEA. This is facilitated through increased interoperability in the management of data and information by Secretariats, and those managing data and information on their behalf. Again the engagement of Parties in the designing and testing of such tools is important, and again the post-2020 global biodiversity framework is valuable as an organizing framework.

**This also relates to how information is managed and reports are developed at the national level**. The tools and guidance provided by intergovernmental conventions and processes can help in promoting and facilitating increased coherence and efficiency in reporting processes. However this also needs to be actively addressed at the national level, making sure that the reporting processes to the different MEAs and intergovernmental processes are appropriately aligned. More guidance may be needed on how to achieve this, including on linking national targets to global targets.

**At the national level this would be facilitated if NBSAPs integrated the aims and priorities of national response to other conventions and intergovernmental processes**, as was discussed earlier. If national-level implementation is coordinated, or at least aligned, then it is easier for this to also be recognised in the reporting processes to each of the relevant agreements and processes.

**Questions were also raised about the possible value of some form of process for bringing together the findings of the different reporting processes in a meaningful way**, but this was not discussed further and would need to

be thought through rather more in terms of both purpose and approach. This could be an approach involving Parties to the different agreements (possibly through cooperation amongst their advisory bodies, or something that could be done independently).

#### **Summary of discussions relating to capturing information on contributions of non-State actors**

**Assessment processes such as IPBES and the IPCC have made a substantial contribution to the state of knowledge on biodiversity, and the impacts and implications of different response options.** This knowledge base is critical not only to assessing progress in achieving biodiversity-related goals and targets, it is also critical in providing support to policy setting and decision making. The findings of such processes need to be made widely accessible. However in addition the underlying research is also needed as a basis for the assessment processes, and informing the response options.

**The current implementation of the Sharm-El-Sheik to Kunming Action Agenda for Nature and People could be significantly improved,** both as a mechanism to encourage commitment, and as a mechanism to capture information on the commitments made so that their combined potential impact can be realistically assessed against national, global and regional needs with respect to achievement of the 2050 Vision. The current iteration may need to be supplemented for particular stakeholders with clear indication of the types of commitments that might be needed. A more proactive and systematic approach to the Action Agenda is needed, which has resource implications.

**Meanwhile there are many other initiatives which encourage biodiversity-related commitments by different actors,** some of which appear to be potentially duplicative. Encouraging commitment is essential, but this needs to be part of ongoing effort and political engagement with a focus not only on making a commitment but also on follow up. Again it is important to be able to capture information on the commitments made so that their combined potential impact can be realistically assessed. There also may be value in exploring relationships among different commitment initiatives, and building links.

**When reporting on biodiversity action at the national level, this should go beyond what governments at various levels are doing, and also bring in the contributions of other actors.** Effective mechanisms need to be put in place to engage with other actors including the private sector, to share information, to raise awareness, and to encourage alignment of actions. This needs to be an ongoing process, and not only done when preparing national reports. One suggestion raised was the possibility of using the national CHM to gather information on what national stakeholders are doing.

### **Topic 3: Learning from review and reporting under other intergovernmental processes, where national efforts to address global commitments and accountability are encouraged**

#### **Summary of key issues**

COP14 agreed that SBI-3 would further consider options for enhancing review mechanisms, with a view to strengthening implementation of the Convention. Enhancing review mechanisms has been under discussion for some time. In addition to the voluntary peer review of NBSAPs, at SBI-3 a new mechanism based on voluntary review reports by Parties will be tested.

Other intergovernmental agreements and processes use a range of different approaches for reporting on and reviewing national efforts to address global commitments, and there may be lessons to be learnt relevant to implementation of the Convention and its Protocols. Such lessons might relate to reviewing implementation, increasing political commitment, ‘ratcheting up’ of national targets, and so on.

The ultimate aim to improve implementation, and to develop a mechanism (or mechanisms) that encourage and support such improvement, including identifying where enabling conditions need to be enhanced.

#### **Questions that discussion groups were invited to address**

- a) Which approaches to transparent implementation review and reporting used by other intergovernmental processes might be considered further as possible models for the Convention and its Protocols now or in the future?
- b) To what extent, or for which types of issues
  - is a technical review sufficient?
  - is it sufficient to understand state of implementation and gaps towards global/national targets?
  - should review mechanisms focus on identifying best practices and show-casing achievements?
  - could review mechanisms focus on building political pressure for stepping up implementation?
  - could review mechanisms include options to trigger additional support where it is needed?

#### **Resources**

##### ***Ahead of the workshop, it was assumed that all participants were familiar with:***

- CBD COP [decision 14/29](#) on review mechanisms, and the two SBI documents which have substantively addressed this issue, in particular [CBD/SBI/2/11](#) and [UNEP/CBD/SBI/1/10/Add.3](#) on mechanisms to facilitate review of implementation.

##### ***Other key resources relevant to this topic include:***

- An [issue brief on review and accountability mechanisms](#) of selected international agreements to inform the development of the post-2020 global biodiversity framework, developed by UNEP-WCMC
- The policy brief on [Insights gained from the UNFCCC Paris Agreement for the post-2020 global biodiversity framework](#) published by the PBL Netherlands Environmental Agency
- The presentations and documents prepared for the “Friends of the CBD” workshop on mechanisms to support review of implementation of the Convention ([www.cbd.int/meetings/IMPWS-2016-01](#)), and the report of that meeting ([UNEP/CBD/SBI/1/INF/50](#))
- Amongst the biodiversity-related conventions, these presentations include brief description of the [review mechanisms under CMS](#) and its daughter agreements, and [review mechanisms under CITES](#).

#### **Summary of discussions relating to lessons to be learnt from other intergovernmental processes**

**When considering lessons to be learnt from other conventions and intergovernmental processes, it is important to remember the mandate and scope of the CBD.** For example, a compliance mechanism such as that used by CITES would not be appropriate for the CBD. Currently only national reporting is mandated through the Articles of the Convention, and all other review and reporting mechanisms are voluntary and respond to COP decisions. The situation is different for the protocols.

**While recognising that CBD mandates and processes are different, compliance committees and mechanisms in other processes may have useful lessons,** and this could be explored further. The ultimate aim would need to be to identify where support (including financial support) is needed rather than to apply sanctions, as this would be more effective in the context of the CBD. This could be linked to reporting, and involve SBI. However an important issues for Parties are likely to be: what initiates the process; who is involved; what is under the review; what is the aim of the review; and how much will it cost?

**The different review processes that have been explored include a number that can be applied by countries as part of their own efforts to improve implementation.** This includes OECD environmental performance reviews, which are essentially invited peer review across the environment sector, or the work of national audit offices or their equivalent. Stronger review is politically possible in a bottom-up approach when clear benefits can accrue from participating in the process.

**Differences in approach to national reporting by different conventions and processes might also be worth exploring further,** as this relates to a process that already has a mandate within the CBD. For example, within UNFCCC the secretariat evaluates/analyses the national communications and provides feedback to Parties (as

well as providing a helpdesk, e-learning courses, guidelines and manuals). This is in addition to developing compilation and synthesis reports.

#### **Summary on discussions relating to the form and function of review**

**There is a need for a sound review mechanism of some form, as this allows Parties to identify gaps and mobilize political attention**, with the aim of both identifying needs and priorities, and increasing the interest and engagement of others. Self-evaluation is important in this regard, and this also relates to building capacity. One approach to review will be tested at SBI-3, but consideration of options should continue and in the future guidance and support will be needed for such review. This would include identification of what will need to be reviewed, when. Alternatively Parties could choose from a list of options what would be addressed in national reviews, and when.

**All five aspects of review identified in the second question are important though in different ways, and thought needs to be given to how they would work in practice.** This implies different types of review, and it would be necessary to consider the extent to which they address COP decisions as well as the post-2020 global biodiversity framework, the extent to which the mechanisms prioritize review of key issues, and the link to review of NBSAPs and national commitments. The implication is that multiple approaches to review would be needed. There could also be value in exploring regional approaches to review, which might increase engagement by Parties.

**Any future review could include some form of upscaling of the existing voluntary peer review process to include all parties.** The challenge is how to upscale this process, and to make clear that it is not about ‘pointing fingers’ but about helping to identify gaps and capacity needs, and potentially also to support NBSAP development and implementation. At present, as peer review is voluntary it is not seen as a priority, so more incentive needs to be found in terms of both resources and clearer benefits. However also valuable would be review by the Secretariat, or another appropriate organization such as UNEP or UNDP, who have been actively supporting countries in developing NBSAPs.

**Technical missions (which could be part of the voluntary peer review process) can be beneficial to clarify implementation gaps and capacity needs,** which can then be used as a basis for seeking further support. These would need a very clear mandate and focus in order to avoid becoming too resource intensive, but done in the right way this could incentivise engagement in the review process.

**There is potentially a need for more frequent national reporting, so that gaps and needs can be identified and addressed earlier.** More frequent reporting (mid-term reports) would help review, and would further efforts to increase transparency and accountability. Such reports should be on actions taken, providing a basis for gaining a better understanding of progress and intent. They could also focus on specific areas, making the reports more comparable and potentially more useful. The reporting process should necessarily involve all relevant stakeholders.

**Transparency is increased where the Secretariat is able to provide a regular overview of implementation,** and it may be necessary to give the Secretariat more of a role in facilitating the reporting and review process, particularly if reporting and review increase. This would involve checking whether they have sufficient capacity and resources.

**It is also important to also have an independent assessment from time to time, and there is potential for a greater role for science in such a review.** Such an independent review could help attract political attention, and could be a basis for identifying not only future priorities for action, but also areas where further resources and support are needed. Such reviews could take place at global, regional or even potentially national level. Questions were asked as to whether such independent reporting was something that IPBES could do or support.

**One discussion group identified three possible approaches to establishing a review mechanism, which are presented in the box below, in the form in which they were received.**

**First proposal**

- *Step 1 – Verification of the status of the global ecosystem*
- *Step 2 - National action targets*
- *Step 3 – Are the actions relevant for the country and do they contribute a fair share*
- *Step 4 – Do the national targets add up to the global plan*

**Second proposal**

- *1) Identify both the desired and actual status of biodiversity*
- *2) Identify the gap between the desired and actual status of biodiversity*
- *3) Agree on the gap*
- *4) Reduce the gap*

**Third proposal**

- *1) Are the right actions in the national action plan*
- *2) Do some of the national actions add up to address the gap*
- *3) Do the global actions make the difference*
- *4) Do the national actions meet the national commitment*

## **Topic 4: Accountability and transparency - tracking and reporting on delivery of the post-2020 global biodiversity framework at the global level**

### **Summary of key issues**

Assessing progress in delivery of the post-2020 global biodiversity framework will require a suite of global indicators, building on experience gained in using indicators under the Convention over the past nearly 20 years. This helps to track both actions (i.e. responses<sup>2</sup>) across outputs (e.g. new legislation and policies), outcomes (e.g. increases in protected areas coverage or reduced levels of pollution) and eventually their impacts (e.g. improved condition of biodiversity such as species status). In developing the refreshed suite of indicators it will also be valuable to consider further the relationship to other processes using indicators, including IPBES, other MEAs and tracking the SDGs.

However it is also important to track national levels of ambition, so that we can assess at the global level whether we are on target to deliver the post-2020 global biodiversity framework, and ultimately to achieve the 2050 Vision for Biodiversity. In order to do this it will be important to more effectively review the commitments that Parties and others have made, and to analyse them, so that an assessment can be made of the extent to which the commitments made demonstrate a sufficient level of ambition to ensure progress on the path to the 2050 Vision on Biodiversity. This will be an important part of any concerted effort to increase ambition and to increase implementation.

Transparent understanding of sufficiency of commitments and progress towards them will require a clear understanding of whether targets are addressing intended outcomes, actions to be undertaken, or enabling conditions. It is important to recognise that such an analysis or assessment requires an understanding of the baselines upon which these commitments build.

### **Questions that discussion groups were invited to address**

- a) Can we further strengthen the use of indicators so that they provide a more effective way of tracking both implementation and achievement of targets at all levels, and if so how?
- b) What information do we need in order to assess whether the commitments made by Parties through whatever means (NBSAPs, etc.) add up to delivery of the post-2020 global biodiversity framework?

<sup>2</sup> Responses can be classified into inputs, processes, outputs, outcomes and impacts

- c) Where does the necessary information for assessing the total commitment – the add-up-ability of national commitments – come from, and how can we ensure efficient information flows so that the key information is available?

Resources
<p><b><i>Ahead of the workshop, it was assumed that all participants were familiar with:</i></b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The use of indicators to track progress in achievement of the Aichi Biodiversity Targets, as agreed in CBD COP <a href="#">decision XIII/28</a> and described in its Annex (which also identifies where these indicators are used as SDG indicators).</li> <li>• Current approaches to review of implementation carried out by the CBD Secretariat, as set out in COP 14 documents <a href="#">CBD/COP/14/5</a>, <a href="#">CBD/COP/14/5/Add.1</a> and <a href="#">CBD/COP/14/5/Add.2</a>.</li> </ul> <p><b><i>Other key resources relevant to this topic include:</i></b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The report of the <a href="#">OECD Expert Workshop on the Post-2020 Biodiversity Framework</a>, which looked at targets, indicators and measurability implications at global and national level.</li> <li>• The information document prepared for CBD COP 14 on Developing indicators for the post-2020 global biodiversity framework: Lessons from the Biodiversity Indicators Partnership (<a href="#">CBD/COP/14/INF/40</a>)</li> <li>• The table <a href="#">mapping of current and potential use of biodiversity indicators across intergovernmental processes</a> developed by UNEP-WCMC with the support of Finland, which looks at indicators across CBD, SDGs, Ramsar, CITES, CMS and IPBES.</li> <li>• The draft papers prepared as contributions to a post-2020 EU biodiversity strategy by UNEP-WCMC (<a href="#">Reversing negative biodiversity trends through action: What is needed to bend the curve</a>) and the European Environment Agency (<a href="#">Review of the existing quantitative national targets in NBSAPs of European countries</a>)</li> <li>• The <a href="#">synthesis report on the aggregate effect of the intended nationally determined contributions</a> prepared by the UNFCCC secretariat, is one of the key documents for governments to understand their collective effort on climate change and to shape the discussions and negotiations in Paris.</li> <li>• The <a href="#">Emissions Gap Report</a> produced by UNEP, which presents an assessment of current national mitigation efforts and the ambitions countries have presented in their NDCs.</li> <li>• The <a href="#">Sharm El-Sheik to Beijing Action Agenda for Nature and People</a> and the policy brief on <a href="#">Opportunities for the Action Agenda for Nature and People</a> published by PBL.</li> </ul>

#### Summary of discussions relating to strengthening the use of indicators

**Indicators for tracking implementation of the post-2020 global biodiversity framework should be identified concurrently with development of the targets for the framework**, so that targets and indicators are well aligned, and so that indicators are known, available and ready for use from the start. While there is no shortage of indicators that could be used, identification and use of indicators will be rather easier for SMART targets. Experience with use of indicators to date might also help inform target development. It might be useful to organize a discussion with a panel of experts within the post-2020 process to help take this forward.

**It is important that there is also effective use of indicators at the national level, for reviewing and reporting on pressure, state and response in the national context.** This would be intended to include the sub-set of headline indicators once identified, but Parties would also use the broader set of indicators and metrics as appropriate to national circumstances.

**There are calls for wide use of a smaller sub-set of ‘headline’ indicators, to help prioritise and converge efforts towards a set of indicators which are measured in a consistent and comparable way across countries** (though further work would be needed to build consensus on what this sub-set of headline indicators could be). Headline indicators (or the core set of indicators) would most effectively be those which have the potential to be used in every country, noting that currently countries are using different indicators (or metrics for the indicators) to

assess and report on progress against the same target. While there is clear value in having a smaller sub-set of headline indicators for high-level use in tracking progress in implementation (i.e. responses), this should be complemented by a larger set of indicators for potential use for other purposes and at other levels.

**The indicators must be carefully selected to make sure that they are addressing the purpose for which they are selected.** One recommendation is to work with the best indicators available, even where they are not perfect, improving them over time through research and improved knowledge management. It is important to be selective, putting resources into getting useful results, whether these are for communication, or for assessing progress. It is necessary to ensure that for all indicators there are baseline data, as well as someone responsible for maintaining the necessary data and delivering the indicators. It is also necessary to ensure that there are indicators for tracking pressure-state-response or driver-pressure-state-impact-response (two of the most frequently used indicator frameworks).

**Opportunities should be taken to enrich the headline (or core) set of indicators with those used by other related processes, increasing consistency in messaging and increasing efficiency.** This would include those indicators used by other biodiversity-related conventions, relevant indicators from the other Rio Convention, and indicators used for tracking delivery of the SDGs (to which indicators identified for tracking the post-2020 global biodiversity framework will also contribute). It may also include other indicators from outside the biodiversity-related conventions and processes, particularly when considering issues such as indirect drivers for biodiversity loss.

**There are some areas where indicators are missing or currently inadequate, and these need to be addressed or we risk reporting becoming unbalanced.** In this regard there is need for a balance between the three objectives of the convention, with better indicators being identified for sustainable use (a workshop is planned) and for access and benefit sharing. Further indicators would also be valuable on the impacts of the responses to address direct and indirect drives on biodiversity loss identified by IPBES, and potentially also on the levers of change. Remote sensing also provides scope for new indicators.

**There is a clear role for the existing mechanisms that coordinate work on indicators,** including that of the Biodiversity Indicators Partnership (BIP) and primary users of indicators such as IPBES. Data and information on which indicators are based comes from multiple sources. Currently the main indicators used at the global level are provided by international organizations working at the global level, but much of this is based on data from the national level, particularly on the responses (i.e. actions), and there is potential to build this further through national reporting (as is already done for protected areas, where data is submitted and compiled in response to COP decision).

#### **Summary of discussions relating to tracking commitments**

**A better understanding of the commitments made and of the progress being made in delivering on those commitments, combined with effective use of indicators, would be a powerful tool for understanding progress towards the post-2020 targets and the 2050 vision.** However this will require increased efforts at information capture with guidance and common formats, while retaining the necessary level of flexibility for engaging with countries with very different approaches and capacities. It would help in understanding progress if there were templates to present commitments in a standard way, which would necessarily vary from one target to another.

**Information is needed not only on the commitments being made and how they scale up, but also on how progress to deliver those commitments scales up.** This would necessarily include tracking the commitments made, monitoring the implementation of those commitments, and ultimately demonstrating the impact of responses on the pressures on biodiversity that are resulting in biodiversity loss. It is important to recognise that timing, and time lags in seeing impacts, needs to be taken into account.

**There are many different kinds of commitments (or responses), and we need to be aware of the differences in order to build a clear picture of potential achievement.** These will range from commitments by States to commitments by non-State actors, and from non-voluntary commitments to voluntary commitments. They will also range from the commitments embedded within NBSAPs, to commitments or pledges made on other occasions, to the biodiversity-related aspects of commitments made in other fora (such as national response to the UNFCCC Paris Agreement, or to the Bonn Challenge).

**We need to understand and cater for the fact that commitments may vary significantly, depending on circumstances and priorities.** For example, States may need the opportunity to identify ‘conditional’ commitments, where they commit to certain responses/actions if the necessary resources are identified. Meanwhile commitments made by the private sector, for example with respect to supply chains, may be very different from the sorts of commitments made by Parties in their NBSAPs.

**An inventory of commitments is important, and needs doing early on in implementation of the post-2020 global biodiversity framework,** and perhaps for input to COP 16 building information on existing commitments from NBSAPs and elsewhere. This might be relatively straightforward for something like protected areas and other effective area-based conservation measures, but the approach for addressing other topic areas in consistent ways might need rather more consideration. For example, subsidy regimes might be difficult to assess in a comparable way, but this would be a useful exercise for understanding potential impacts of different commitments in this area. Similarly commitments around sustainable consumption and production. It may also be timely to develop the templates referred to above, while working on the inventory or audit.

**Information on commitments and progress made in addressing them could be regularly ‘captured’ through the use of COPs as opportunities for a ‘light reporting’.** This would need dedicated time before the COP negotiations begin, to allow time for Parties to self-assess and to declare the commitments they have made (particularly new commitments), and progress in achieving these commitments and those previously made. This would be based on the country’s own research and assessment of progress, but also relates to the discussion on review earlier.

**Over time a systematic and transparent online process for reviewing commitments made and actions to realise them could be developed.** This would require a certain level of consistency in how commitments are reported and monitored, so as to increase comparability and hence opportunity to sum contributions to achieving goals and targets, and ultimately the 2050 vision. The proposed templates referred to above would also be relevant here. The online system could even be developed as a complementary or alternative approach to national reporting under the Convention. This would need to be significantly more robust than current approaches through the Action Agenda.

**There may be other opportunities, such as asking independent organisations to assess progress for specific targets,** at both global and national levels. Such independent scrutiny could be a powerful additional approach if it were acceptable to Parties in some form.