



Convention on Biological Diversity

Distr.
GENERAL

UNEP/CBD/COP/13/15
5 October 2016

ORIGINAL: ENGLISH

CONFERENCE OF THE PARTIES TO THE
CONVENTION ON BIOLOGICAL DIVERSITY
Thirteenth meeting
Cancun, Mexico, 4-17 December 2016
Item 13 of the provisional agenda*

ENHANCING SYNERGIES AMONG THE BIODIVERSITY-RELATED CONVENTIONS AT THE NATIONAL AND INTERNATIONAL LEVELS

Note by the Executive Secretary

INTRODUCTION

1. At its twelfth meeting, in decision XII/6, the Conference of the Parties to the Convention on Biological Diversity decided to establish an informal advisory group to prepare, in consultation with the Secretariat, a workshop with the task of preparing options which could include elements for a possible road map, for Parties of the various biodiversity-related conventions to enhance synergies and improve efficiency among them, without prejudice to the specific objectives and recognizing the respective mandates and subject to the availability of resources of these conventions, with a view to enhancing their implementation at all levels.
2. The workshop was held in Geneva, Switzerland, from 8 to 11 February 2016. The report of the workshop was presented to the Subsidiary Body on Implementation for consideration at its first meeting (UNEP/CBD/SBI/1/INF/21), together with a note by the Executive Secretary (UNEP/CBD/SBI/1/9) with an addendum on possible recommendations arising from the options for action identified by the workshop (UNEP/CBD/SBI/1/9/Add.1). The Subsidiary Body also had before it the results of the project of the United Nations Environment Programme on improving the effectiveness of and cooperation among biodiversity-related conventions and exploring opportunities for further synergies, which served as an important input to the workshop (UNEP/CBD/SBI/1/INF/36 and UNEP/CBD/SBI/1/INF/37).
3. The Subsidiary Body prepared a draft decision for consideration by the Conference of the Parties to the Convention at its thirteenth meeting on enhancing synergies among the biodiversity-related conventions (UNEP/CBD/COP/13/2) and also included elements related to synergies in reporting requirements under the various conventions in its draft decision on the sixth national reports.
4. The Subsidiary Body also requested that additional work be undertaken and presented by the Executive Secretary for consideration by the Conference of the Parties at its thirteenth meeting (UNEP/CBD/SBI/REC/1/8). In particular, the Subsidiary Body requested the Executive Secretary to

* UNEP/CBD/COP/13/1.

undertake further analysis of the outcomes of the workshop and actions as presented in the note by the Executive Secretary on possible recommendations¹ and, in consultation with the Informal Advisory Group, the Liaison Group of Biodiversity-related Conventions and Parties to the biodiversity-related conventions through appropriate channels, to:

“refine, consolidate and streamline the outcomes of the workshop, including synergies that may be relevant between two or more of the biodiversity-related conventions as well as the Protocols to the Convention, including:

(a) Options for actions by Parties which may include voluntary guidelines for synergies at the national level;

(b) Options for action at the international level that includes a road map for the period 2017-2020 that prioritizes and sequences actions and identifies actors and potential mechanisms involved.”

5. The present note by the Executive Secretary presents the result of work undertaken in response to that request, taking into account responses received on a consultation draft that was transmitted to Parties,² to the informal advisory group and to the Liaison Group of Biodiversity-related Conventions for their consideration and distribution to Parties. Consistent with the recommendation from the first meeting of the Subsidiary Body on Implementation, options on synergies resulting from the workshop are organized in two annexes: Annex I contains actions that could be taken at the national level and annex II contains actions that could be taken at the international level, including elements of a road map for the period 2017 to 2020. The options included in annexes I and II are not intended to be exhaustive, and there may be additional actions at both the national and international levels that could be taken.

6. The draft decision prepared by the Subsidiary Body on Implementation in recommendation 1/8 for the consideration of the Conference of the Parties is reproduced in the compilation of draft decisions (UNEP/CBD/COP/13/2).

¹ [UNEP/CBD/SBI/1/9/Add.1](#).

² Through notification 2016-112.

*Annex I***OPTIONS FOR ENHANCING SYNERGIES AMONG THE BIODIVERSITY-RELATED CONVENTIONS AT THE NATIONAL LEVEL****A. Introduction***Background*

1. The present annex focuses on options for action by Parties of the various biodiversity-related conventions to enhance synergies at the national level. These are derived from the outcomes of the workshop on synergies among the biodiversity-related conventions and actions as presented in the note by the Executive Secretary on possible recommendations arising from the options for action identified by the workshop,³ which themselves had been built on a range of earlier work, including that conducted by the United Nations Environment Programme through its project on cooperation and synergies among biodiversity-related conventions.⁴

Purpose and scope

2. The options for action are voluntary and intended to serve as suggestions and guidance, where needed, for Parties to enhance synergies and cooperation in the implementation of the biodiversity-related conventions, their national biodiversity strategies and action plans (NBSAPs), and the Strategic Plan for Biodiversity 2011-2020.

3. They are intended to provide concrete options for actions that Parties could take in support of effective and coherent implementation of the conventions at the national level.

4. The implementation of these options should be to the mutual benefit of the conventions concerned and be compatible with their provisions, obligations, mandates and objectives, respecting their independent nature.

5. Options that Parties choose to pursue should be adapted to suit national circumstances. Not all options for action would be applicable to all countries and additional options not included in the present note could also be taken up by countries.⁵

6. Some options for action may be relevant to enhancing synergies between just two of the conventions or among a subset of them, rather than among all conventions. Some options may have particular relevance to the Protocols of the Convention on Biological Diversity.

7. Parties could be encouraged to select among the various options for enhancing synergies as appropriate to national circumstance, taking into account their NBSAPs, and to report on any actions taken to enhance synergies at the national level in their national reports.

³ [UNEP/CBD/SBI/1/9/Add.1](#).

⁴ “Improving the effectiveness of and cooperation among biodiversity-related conventions and exploring opportunities for further synergies”. See UNEP/CBD/SBI/1/INF/36 and UNEP/CBD/SBI/1/INF/37.

⁵ For example, the UNEP “Sourcebook of opportunities for enhancing cooperation among the biodiversity-related conventions at national and regional levels” provides a broad spectrum of options based on best practices and lessons learned from national experience.

B. Options for action by Parties of the various biodiversity-related conventions to enhance synergies at the national level

Planning frameworks and coordination mechanisms

8. Common planning frameworks and coordination mechanisms can serve as useful tools for promoting synergies among the biodiversity-related conventions at the national level.

1. *The Strategic Plan for Biodiversity 2011–2020, the Aichi Biodiversity Targets and national biodiversity strategies and action plans*

Rationale

9. The NBSAP aligned to the Strategic Plan for Biodiversity 2011-2020 and its Aichi Biodiversity Targets can serve as a unifying framework to promote and benefit from synergies among the biodiversity-related conventions. National plans aligned to the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development and the Sustainable Development Goals⁶ could also contribute in this regard.

Options for action

10. Parties are encouraged:

(a) To include in their NBSAP, relevant actions to implement commitments and recommendations under each of the biodiversity-related conventions to which they are a Party, in line with the commitments and recommendations agreed to under the conventions concerned. In doing so, Parties may wish to take account of existing guidance to the Conference of the Parties related to updating or revising and implementing NBSAPs, including decisions IX/8, X/2, X/5 and XI/6 of the Convention on Biological Diversity, resolutions 8.18, 10.18 of the Convention on the Conservation of Migratory Species of Wild Animals (CMS), resolution 6/2013 of the International Treaty on Plant Genetic Resources for Food and Agriculture (ITPGRFA), decision 37 COM 5A of the World Heritage Centre (WHC) and Ramsar Resolution XI.6, and resources prepared by the Secretariats of CBD, CITES and CMS;⁷

(b) To conduct a mapping and gap analysis of relevant implementation actions, including those described in subparagraph (a) above and those related to contributions under the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development and the Sustainable Development Goals, and to identify potential needs;

(c) In revising or updating other related strategies and action plans, consider alignment with the Aichi Biodiversity Targets in national implementation of biodiversity-related conventions;

(d) Make use of relevant indicators of other conventions in implementing measures towards the Aichi Biodiversity Targets and, as appropriate, prepare relevant national indicators for other biodiversity-related conventions to track effective implementation and monitoring of actions and also to feed into national actions related to the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development and the Sustainable Development Goals;

(e) Ensure the appropriate participation of all relevant stakeholders and of indigenous peoples and local communities in the finalization and implementation of the NBSAP for better articulation and planning to achieve synergies;

⁶ General Assembly resolution 70/1, annex.

⁷ NBSAP capacity building modules (CBD 2015), online at: <https://www.cbd.int/nbsap/training/default.shtml>; *Contributing to the development, review, updating and revision of National Biodiversity Strategies and Action Plans (NBSAPs) - A Draft Guide for CITES Parties* (CITES 2011), online at: <http://www.cites.org/eng/notif/2011/E026A.pdf>; *Guidelines on the integration on migratory species into National Biodiversity Strategies and Actions Plans (NBSAPs)* (UNEP/CMS/Conf.10.27), CMS Secretariat and Prip, C (2011), online at: http://www.cms.int/sites/default/files/document/doc_27_guidelines_nbsap_e_0.pdf.

(f) Link the NBSAP and other relevant national implementation plans and strategies to the national clearing-house mechanism and/or other information-sharing hubs.

2. *Institutional arrangements and coordination mechanisms*

Rationale

11. Coordination mechanisms and coordinated actions serve as the foundation for enhancing coherence and synergies in the implementation of the biodiversity-related conventions across all issue areas.

12. Institutional and coordinative arrangements are made at the discretion of the Party so any consideration of coordination mechanisms needs to take account of: (a) the great variation in national circumstances, including the conventions to which a country is a Party, which has a bearing on the need; and (b) differences between the conventions in their requirements of national authorities.

13. Consideration could be given to building or enhancing coordination mechanisms around national focal points and equivalent authorities of the conventions at the individual and the institutional levels. Advantage should be taken of relevant existing institutions to work on common issues under biodiversity-related conventions.

Options for action

14. Parties are encouraged to undertake an assessment of national needs for coordination and synergy of commitments and recommendations under the biodiversity-related conventions.

15. Parties are encouraged to establish or strengthen a formal coordination mechanism for efficient coordination among national focal points and relevant authorities of biodiversity-related conventions and to consider further strengthening such coordination mechanisms by providing for meaningful engagement of other stakeholders, including women, young people and indigenous peoples and local communities, in accordance with relevant legislation, regulations and practice.

16. Such national coordination mechanisms could, inter alia:

(a) Facilitate collaboration and coordination between national focal points or equivalent authorities of biodiversity-related conventions, including the exchange of information on priorities with regard to actions for implementation and resource needs so that there is a common understanding;

(b) Foster provision of coordinated input into national priority-setting, including funding options, for action on areas of common interest and to achieve synergies;

(c) Facilitate coordinated needs assessments, for example on joint actions for implementation of biodiversity-related conventions in the framework of NBSAPs, and for targeted capacity-building;

(d) Facilitate a national coordination process related to national reporting to the various biodiversity-related conventions to, inter alia:

(i) Align data collection and reporting;

(ii) Link focal points and institutions to assist each other in meeting reporting requirements;

(iii) Foster quality control and consistency of reporting of similar information across conventions where appropriate;

- (e) Facilitate enhanced coordination among the conventions at national level with respect to communications, information-sharing and awareness-raising, that would:
- (i) Enable the national entities responsible for the various biodiversity-related conventions to collaborate in the development of communications and awareness-raising, including through the international observances that relate to the conventions, in conducting joint information and awareness campaigns; and to integrate and coordinate messages related to the various biodiversity-related conventions to which they are a Party;
 - (ii) Enable preparation of a national biodiversity-related communication and awareness strategy and implementation plan;
- (f) Facilitate coordination among the conventions at the national level with regard to resource mobilization and utilization in the framework of NBSAPs that could:
- (i) Enable development of a joint resource mobilization strategy, taking into account the strategic plans of individual biodiversity-related conventions and mainstreaming of biodiversity into different sectors;
 - (ii) Strengthen coordination and collaboration between the national focal points of biodiversity-related conventions and the operational focal point of the Global Environment Facility (GEF), as well as the focal points for other conventions for which GEF serves as a financial mechanism, as appropriate, so as to reflect relevant priorities in GEF projects;
 - (iii) Enable the consideration of conducting pilot projects for promoting synergies on thematic areas, such as plant and animal health to support food security, food safety and environmental protection, including designing innovative projects for funding by GEF to contribute to collaborative action;
 - (iv) Enable the national focal points of biodiversity-related conventions to coordinate their funding efforts to leverage synergies among the conventions by engaging with donor country representatives in their countries.
- (g) Facilitate coordination among the conventions at the national level with regard to capacity-building, for example the training of national focal points, the conducting of joint workshops on common areas of responsibility among the conventions, such as national reporting and resource mobilization, the identification of common areas of capacity-building needs and the delivery of coordinated capacity-building for implementation of the conventions (see subsection 6 below);
- (h) Help to facilitate the holding of national preparatory meetings before the meetings of the governing bodies of biodiversity-related conventions, involving officials and stakeholders associated with the other biodiversity-related conventions.
- (i) Enable the national focal points, or equivalent authorities, of biodiversity-related conventions to collaborate with other sectors, as appropriate (e.g. climate change, inter-ministerial dialogue).

Actions in specific areas

17. In addition to the options for actions that would be facilitated by enhanced coordination mechanisms, described in subsection 2 above, the following sections outline specific options for action in the areas of: the management of information and knowledge, national reporting, monitoring and

indicators; communication and awareness-raising; the science-policy interface; capacity-building; and resource mobilization and utilization.

3. *Management of information and knowledge, national reporting, monitoring and indicators*

Rationale

18. Collaboration in information-sharing and knowledge-management can provide mutual benefits in the implementation of the biodiversity-related conventions, particularly with regard to reporting and monitoring. Opportunities to reduce reporting burdens may lie in overlapping data requirements and accessing relevant data from shared sources. The development and refinement of indicators for the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) will have implications for biodiversity-related conventions and agencies that act as custodians for SDG indicators.

Options for action

19. Parties are encouraged:

- (a) To develop thematic national databases, or strengthen existing databases that are open and interoperable between conventions, while having adequate appropriate safeguards;
- (b) To exchange information and experience across conventions on tools, mechanisms and best practices for data collection and reporting as well as information and knowledge management;
- (c) To undertake an inventory of their datasets to better understand the availability of information and approaches across conventions and identify commonalities of data across some or all of the conventions;
- (d) To optimize monitoring and data gathering, within available resources, to meet information needs shared across some or all of the conventions;
- (e) To update clearing-house mechanisms to streamline reporting under the different biodiversity-related conventions;
- (f) To consider how reporting under each biodiversity-related convention could benefit from the collection of information from other biodiversity-related conventions;
- (g) To contribute mutually to discussions regarding biodiversity-related indicators under each of the conventions and to discussions on the development and refinement of indicators for the Sustainable Development Goals;
- (h) To establish linkages of the national focal points with the agency designated for reporting on achievement of the Sustainable Development Goals (national statistical agency in many countries) to harmonize information on the Aichi Biodiversity Targets and Indicators;
- (i) To explore the possibility of linkages of the national databases of biodiversity-related conventions to the national statistical database;
- (j) To make use of global tools, including UNEP Live and InforMEA.

4. *Communication and awareness-raising*

Rationale

20. Understanding of the social and economic importance of the objectives of the biodiversity-related conventions and their mutually supportive relationship is essential to enhance synergies in their implementation.

Options for action

21. Parties are encouraged:

(a) To take measures to improve understanding of the specific and related objectives of each of the biodiversity-related conventions;

(b) To take measures to ensure that the national entities responsible collaborate on the various international observances relevant to and promoted by the biodiversity-related conventions to which they are a Party in order to increase awareness of the conventions, the issues they address and their interrelationship;

(c) To utilize information from all the biodiversity-related conventions;

(d) to develop web-based communication tools for national audiences relevant to all the biodiversity-related conventions, their objectives and synergies between them, which could include a single entry point to channel users to the information sought and other related information and interactive features including for sharing success stories.

5. Science-policy interface

Rationale

22. The conventions have a common objective to base the advancement of policy and assessment of progress on the best available science and, in areas of overlap, draw from shared bodies of information and knowledge. The work of the Intergovernmental Science-Policy Platform on Biodiversity and Ecosystem Services (IPBES) can contribute to each of the conventions.

Options for action

23. Parties are encouraged:

(a) To establish and make use of a national roster of experts across all biodiversity-related conventions;

(b) To facilitate the collaboration and involvement of national scientists engaged in the processes of the biodiversity-related conventions in the science–policy interface, for example that related to IPBES;

(c) To establish a science–policy platform or coordination mechanism at national level, involving all relevant institutions, to ensure use of the best available knowledge and strengthen implementation of the conventions;

(d) To establish institutional arrangements to enable interface between scientists and the national officials responsible for the development and implementation of policy related to the biodiversity-related conventions.

6. Capacity-building

Rationale

24. Strengthening national capacity for implementation is of common concern to each of the biodiversity-related conventions. This includes, as appropriate, the need to strengthen knowledge and skills, including on synergies among the biodiversity-related conventions; increase coordinated capacity-building and awareness-raising efforts among the biodiversity-related conventions; increase human and financial resources dedicated to the implementation of the biodiversity-related conventions

and towards greater cohesion in their implementation, and; strengthen the sustainability of capacity-building.

Options for action

25. Parties are encouraged:

(a) To prioritize skills and capacities of human resources, including national focal points of biodiversity-related conventions, and assign or delegate roles and responsibilities appropriately;

(b) To provide common training and other learning opportunities to the national focal points of the biodiversity-related conventions and other relevant staff to build capacity and mutual understanding of:

(i) Each of the biodiversity-related conventions, including their specific objectives, with a view to promoting synergies, pooled resources, and the retention of skills and knowledge;

(ii) The role of indigenous and local knowledge for coordinated integration in the implementation of biodiversity-related conventions;

(iii) Communication methods to raise awareness on the value of biodiversity and ecosystem services with their respective high-level policy decision-makers;

(iv) Technical knowledge on synergy and coordination.

(c) To conduct joint capacity-building workshops for entities with responsibilities for the biodiversity-related conventions on common areas of responsibility among the conventions, such as national reporting and resource mobilization;

(d) To identify common areas of capacity-building needs through a coordinated and collaborative approach;

(e) To conduct coordinated capacity-building for implementation of biodiversity-related conventions;

(f) To undertake measures designed to ensure the sustainability of national capacity-building that could include:

(i) Providing training on the biodiversity-related conventions to trainers, including scientists and policy-makers;

(ii) Creating, updating and/or improving databases and platforms for information-sharing to ensure institutional memory and consolidation of human resources available for implementation of biodiversity-related conventions;

(iii) Developing a curriculum on biodiversity and advocating its inclusion in relevant university faculties to support and ensure sustainability in capacity-building and synergistic implementation of biodiversity-related conventions;

(iv) Conducting targeted community capacity-building for effective assimilation and coordinated implementation of biodiversity-related conventions at site and national level.

26. Parties should take advantage of existing networking opportunities for capacity-building to help synergistic implementation of biodiversity-related conventions.

7. *Resource mobilization and utilization*

Rationale

27. The common recognition among the biodiversity-related conventions of the Strategic Plan for Biodiversity 2011-2020 and NBSAPs as common frameworks provide opportunities to strengthen synergies among the conventions in the areas of resource mobilization and utilization, including through relevant international financial mechanisms and instruments.

Options for action

28. Parties are encouraged:

(a) To ensure adequate staffing dedicated to the biodiversity-related conventions for their effective and synergistic implementation and leverage appropriate financial support for effective implementation of the conventions through advocacy and by demonstrating benefits;

(b) To build into funding proposals, where appropriate, provision to utilize some of the national Global Environment Facility (GEF) funding allocation to implement aspects of the NBSAP that serve common objectives of biodiversity-related conventions, mindful of the specific needs and mandates of each of the conventions;

(c) To collaborate regionally to explore regional opportunities for fund-raising to foster synergies among the biodiversity-related conventions and to share, at regional and subregional levels, best practices and lessons learned from successful access to the GEF biodiversity focal area.

*Annex II***ENHANCING SYNERGIES AMONG THE BIODIVERSITY-RELATED CONVENTIONS:
INTERNATIONAL LEVEL**

1. The measures outlined in the present annex are aimed at enhancing synergies among the biodiversity-related conventions, in a manner consistent with the mandates of the conventions and their secretariats, and those of the international organizations concerned that have a mandate in addressing biodiversity-related matters. It groups needs and actions identified by the workshop on synergies among the biodiversity-related conventions into three areas:

- (a) Enhancing coordination mechanisms;
- (b) Enhancing convergence in the management of information and knowledge, national reporting, monitoring and indicators;
- (c) Enhancing the provision of capacity-building and guidance;

2. The annex further provides a road map in the form of ordering steps to implement the actions set forth in these three areas between 2017 and 2020.

A. Coordination mechanisms

3. Many options for action to enhance synergies would be based on or require coordination mechanisms. Efforts would therefore be taken to enhance coordination mechanisms at the international level.

Enhancing inter-secretariat coordination*1. Enhancement of the Liaison Group of the Biodiversity-related Conventions*

4. The Biodiversity Liaison Group (BLG) of the convention secretariats serves an important function in facilitating cooperation among the biodiversity-related conventions. One area for enhanced synergies is to enhance the work of the BLG, including through the establishment of task groups, similar to that already established on communications, to address specific areas as needed, such as resource mobilization, capacity-building and Internet technology. Areas for additional common work could include communications, reporting and indicators, including those related to the Sustainable Development Goals. Such work would also include the preparation of guidance materials for Parties outlined in the relevant section below.

2. Establishment of a wider inter-agency coordination group on biodiversity

5. Relevant international organizations have an important role to support Parties in the implementation of the biodiversity-related conventions and to enhance synergies in their implementation. In order to enhance efficiencies, there are opportunities to enhance coordination among such organizations, build on existing initiatives where possible, and to avoid duplication.

6. Such consultation and coordination could be provided through the development of an inter-agency consultative group or network of relevant international organizations, focusing on matters related to biodiversity. The aim of such a group would be to serve as a coordination mechanism. It would not implement activities; on the contrary, among its outcomes might be to more clearly identify the role of a particular organization in a particular niche or the role of an ongoing partnership or joint work plan between two or more such entities. Its establishment would take account of and be complementary to

other relevant mechanisms such as the United Nations Environment Management Group and the Aichi Biodiversity Targets Task Force. It could take the form of similar coordination mechanisms that exist in the United Nations system, or be more informal in nature.

7. Such a group would comprise the secretariats of the biodiversity-related conventions and international organizations that have a mandate in addressing biodiversity-related matters. These include the Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations, the International Union for the Conservation of Nature, the United Nations Development Programme, the United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization and the United Nations Environment Programme. They also include the Secretariats of the Global Environment Facility and of the Intergovernmental Science-Policy Platform on Biodiversity and Ecosystem Services (IPBES).

8. One of the functions of the group could be for coordinating system-wide action on capacity-building to facilitate cooperation in the implementation of the biodiversity-related conventions. Another would be to help clarify roles and responsibilities in mutually-supportive activities. Such a group would also be able to provide links with appropriate processes related to the Sustainable Development Goals.

9. In addition to the benefits that could be gained through such a coordination mechanism, the secretariats of the conventions could further explore with relevant organizations opportunities for the strengthening of collaboration and support provided by regional organizations and mechanisms to Parties, including in the areas of communications and awareness-raising, resource mobilization and utilization, capacity-building and synergies at the science-policy interface. In addition, relevant regional organizations play an important role in regional strategies and initiatives and could also contribute to ensuring that discussions and options for enhancing effective implementation and cooperation among the biodiversity-related conventions extend also to relevant regional agreements and conventions.

Enhancing coordination among the governing bodies

3. *Establishment of a joint working group among representatives of the Parties to the conventions*

10. Establishing a joint informal working group across the conventions would build on the experience gained in implementing decision XII/6 in which an informal advisory group was created and a forum with regionally-balanced representation of the Parties to each of the seven global biodiversity-related conventions was convened (the workshop). The joint working group could comprise members of the bureau, standing committee or equivalent body of each of the conventions or other national officials designated by the members of those bodies. It could serve in an informal advisory capacity to the governing bodies of the conventions.

4. *Enhancing the work of the Chairs of the Scientific Advisory Bodies of Biodiversity-related Conventions*

11. The Chairs of the Scientific Advisory Bodies of Biodiversity-related Conventions (CSAB) involves representatives of Parties to the conventions – the Chairs of the scientific advisory bodies – together with the secretariats. Typically, other organizations have joined its meetings. It has convened in the margins of meetings of the scientific bodies on an opportunistic and irregular basis, being without a formal mandate or budget. Perhaps there could be fresh consideration and incentive for the CSAB to serve as a mechanism between the conventions, IPBES, and their respective secretariats to enable the biodiversity-related conventions to contribute in a coordinated manner to the development of assessments, scenarios and models, and other tools catalysed by IPBES, their assessment of needs for input to the next IPBES work programme, and to avoid duplication.

B. Management of information and knowledge, national reporting, monitoring and indicators

12. Convergence in the management of information and knowledge and alignment in national data gathering, reporting, monitoring and indicators, where relevant, would serve as an important foundation to enhancing synergies and efficiencies among the biodiversity-related conventions. Actions aimed to support capacity-building in this regard are outlined in this section rather than in section C below on capacity-building and guidance. Actions would be required of the secretariats of the biodiversity-related conventions, including in the framework of the BLG and by relevant organizations, including the United Nations Environment Programme through the Multilateral Environmental Agreement Information and Knowledge Management (MEA-IKM) Initiative and the UNEP World Conservation Monitoring Centre (WCMC). The important role of the MEA-IKM and InforMEA⁸ to the Convention and to enhancing synergies among the biodiversity-related conventions would be emphasized and supported by Parties and other Governments. Such actions could include the following measures:

(a) Undertake a gap analysis of existing tools and approaches in information management and knowledge management and an assessment of their effectiveness (UNEP MEA-IKM/InforMEA and the UNEP WCMC, in collaboration with the secretariats of the biodiversity related conventions);

(b) Provide support in designing data collection and monitoring systems (UNEP-WCMC, Convention Secretariats);

(c) Advance and make use of relevant case studies on information management, such as those described in the UNEP Sourcebook (UNEP-WCMC, Convention Secretariats);

(d) Provide guidance on national databases, data access and use, and share experience in national database development and use, taking into account and utilizing relevant initiatives including those under the clearing-house mechanism of the Convention on Biological Diversity, MEA-IKM/InforMEA and the Global Biodiversity Information Facility (GBIF) (UNEP MEA-IKM/InforMEA and the UNEP WCMC, in collaboration with the secretariats of the biodiversity related conventions);

(e) Support national efforts in national data gathering, reporting, monitoring and indicators, building on the work of InforMEA and the mapping exercises identified in the Sourcebook (Convention Secretariats, BLG, in collaboration with UNEP);

(f) Ensure data compatibility and enhance links between the data systems of the conventions and relevant global knowledge products; ensure harmonization, links and interoperability of all relevant biodiversity-related data initiatives (Convention Secretariats, BLG and relevant reciprocal organizations);

(g) Contribute to the ongoing processes on indicators for the Sustainable Development Goals, including their refinement, and to the discussion of biodiversity-related indicators under each of the other conventions (Convention Secretariats, BLG);

(h) Provide, at the regional and subregional levels, capacity-building related to data management and national reporting that would, among other things, provide training on database systems and help to build capacity;

(i) Keep under review opportunities for cooperation in reporting under the conventions, in line with the recommendation 1/10 of the Subsidiary Body on Implementation, and for ensuring interoperability between reporting systems or platforms (BLG).

⁸ InforMEA is the Internet platform of the Multilateral Environmental Agreement Information and Knowledge Management (MEA-IKM) Initiative.

13. Relevant organizations, including the United Nations Environment Programme and the United Nations Development Programme, could also provide countries with capacity-building support at the national level in the area of information and knowledge management; for example:

- (a) Provision of appropriate provision of tools and technology for database development;
- (b) Pilot studies on database planning and management, for example in two countries per region.

C. Capacity-building and guidance

14. Many options for action by international organizations, including the convention secretariats, focus on capacity-building, or the provision of guidance, to support synergies in the implementation of the conventions. These include a number of basic guidance materials that could be prepared or made more readily available through immediate action as well as capacity-building initiatives/mechanisms that may involve preparatory actions and process. Such actions could include the measures set out below.

Guidance materials

15. Aimed at a target audience of the national focal points and authorities and other relevant national actors involved in the implementation of the biodiversity-related conventions, make existing materials more widely known and readily available or prepare new materials to address any gaps, as follows:

- (a) List of existing guidance materials on synergies (UNEP-WCMC);
- (b) A guide and other communications material about the biodiversity-related conventions, their relationships and synergies among them (BLG);
- (c) Guidance on synergies in implementing the national biodiversity strategy and action plan and similar strategies and action plans of other biodiversity-related conventions (BLG);
- (d) Guidance document on possible opportunities for a coordinated approach to funding from the GEF and other multilateral systems including the Green Climate Fund (CBD Secretariat in collaboration with GEF and GCF secretariats and consultation with the Secretariats of other biodiversity-related conventions);
- (e) Success stories of synergies in the implementation of the biodiversity-related conventions (CBD Secretariat, BLG and GEF).

Capacity-building

16. The secretariats of the conventions and international organizations have an important role to support national capacity-building across the various relevant areas. Benefiting from the enhanced coordination mechanism outlined above, this could include actions by the secretariats of the conventions and relevant organizations as follows:

- (a) Identify common areas of national capacity-building needs, across the conventions;
- (b) Share information on ongoing, planned and upcoming capacity-building programmes, projects and initiatives relevant to the biodiversity-related conventions in order to facilitate a coordinated approach, avoid duplication, ensure coherence of their delivery, maximize their utilization and enable cooperation in implementation where relevant;
- (c) Deliver coordinated capacity-building, including through regional and subregional mechanisms and online mechanisms, taking advantage of existing networking opportunities for capacity-building and addressing common needs and areas of two or more conventions and including building capacity for synergistic implementation of the conventions;

(d) Conduct webinars, regional workshops and other activities for the national focal points of biodiversity-related conventions on accessing funds in the GEF biodiversity focal area;

(e) Design and facilitate a multi-stakeholder initiative or forum to enable sharing of experience among Parties and involving international organizations, relevant non-governmental organizations and convention secretariats. Such an initiative could complement the coordination mechanisms outlined in section A and contribute to the identification of priorities and review of needs.

D. Road map

17. This section aims to briefly outline a possible sequence of actions from 2017 to 2020.⁹ Some actions, including many activities outlined in sections B and C would not require new mandate and, subject to the availability of resources, could be initiated immediately and implemented on an ongoing basis. Other possible measures to enhance synergies at the international level may require a decision by the Conference of the Parties to the Convention on Biological Diversity and, in some cases, by the governing bodies of other biodiversity-related conventions and international organizations. There may also be financial and human resource implications related to some of the options.

18. *Phase 1:* This phase would include initiation of activities, including those outlined in sections B and C of the present annex, for which no new mandate would be required. An initial task, involving consultation between relevant actors, could be to prepare an implementation plan that identifies activities, their origin and mandate, timeline and responsibilities. It could also involve the development of an inter-agency consultative group or network of relevant international organizations addressing matters related to biodiversity, as described in section A, paragraphs 5 to 8 of the present annex, involving dialogue among the relevant secretariats outlined in paragraph 7. It could also involve preparation for a joint informal working group across the conventions as described in paragraph 9 and a multi-stakeholder forum described in paragraph 15(e). Further work as may be requested by the Conference of the Parties would be conducted by the Executive Secretary. This phase could include relevant gap analysis and needs assessment, with consultation among the BLG and relevant organizations.

19. *Phase 2:* This phase would include the regular meetings of the BLG as well as initial meetings of the consultative group and the joint working group. It could include actions of the BLG and relevant organizations to provide capacity-building and guidance among those described in sections B and C of the present annex, including the development of a coordinated approach for capacity-building.

20. *Phase 3:* This phase would include further delivery of supportive actions, including capacity-building activities, by relevant organizations and the consideration by the governing bodies of other biodiversity-related conventions and organizations.

21. Consideration could be given to these matters by the governing bodies of each of the biodiversity-related conventions between 2017 and 2020, taking into account the calendar of their meetings as follows:

- The General Assembly of States Parties to the World Heritage Convention meets every two years (21st session, 2017) during the sessions of the General Conference of UNESCO; and the World Heritage Committee meets once a year (40th session, 10-20 July 2016 to resume 24-26 October 2016; 41st session, 2017, etc.).

⁹ The workshop did not have time to discuss or provide advice on a possible road map. This section represents the Secretariat's work to fulfil the request of the Subsidiary Body on Implementation for a road map, based on options developed out of the workshop and experience with the synergies process to date.

- The Conference of the Contracting Parties to the Ramsar Convention meets every 3 years (COP 13, 2018) and its Standing Committee meets once a year (52nd session, 13-17 June 2016; 53rd session, 2017, etc.).
- The Governing Body of ITPGRFA holds its regular sessions at least once every two years (7th session, 2017).
- The Commission on Phytosanitary Measures (CPM) meets once a year (11th session, 4-8 April 2016; 12th session, 2017, etc.).
- The Conference of the Parties to CMS meets every three years (COP 12, 2017; COP 13, 2020); and during the intersessional period its Standing Committee usually meets once a year (45th session, 9-10 November 2016; 46th session, 2017, etc.), as well as immediately before and after each COP.
- The Conference of the Parties to CITES meets every three years (CoP 17, 24 September to 5 October 2016; CoP 18, 2019); and during the intersessional period its Standing Committee meets twice, as well as immediately before and after each CoP.
- The Conference of the Parties to CBD meets every two years (COP 13, 4-17 December 2016; COP 14, 2018; COP 15, 2020).

22. Work undertaken by the Executive Secretary during the intersessional period and progress in implementation, could be reported to the Subsidiary Body on Implementation at its second meeting and to the Conference of the Parties at its fourteenth meeting, in 2018.
