

Further Views of **The Nature Conservancy** in response to Notification 2019-008:  
**Initial discussion document on the post-2020 global biodiversity framework**

April 15, 2019

The Nature Conservancy thanks the Secretariat for the opportunity to provide further input on the post-2020 global biodiversity framework, following our submission of 15 December 2018. In order to be as relevant and responsive as possible, we are framing our feedback directly in reply to specific “Issues and Questions for Discussion” posed in the discussion paper CBD/POST2020/PREP/1/1 from 25 January.

**1. Structure of the post-2020 global biodiversity framework:** *What could constitute an effective structure for the post-2020 global biodiversity framework, what should its different elements be, and how should they be organized?*

Our December 15 joint submission with nine other organizations suggested a pyramid structure that retains the thematic components of the Aichi targets, but better describes how they relate and simplifies the overall framework. The point of this is not necessarily the pyramid structure, but the recognition that the current Aichi targets vary qualitatively and require different actors, metrics and preconditions to be implemented. TNC continues to think this proposal is a helpful framework to distinguish outcome targets, process-based targets or actions, and enabling conditions in the post-2020 strategy. The pyramid proposal seeks to clarify the relationship between targets; it is not intended as a hierarchical structure, but rather to show the foundational nature of certain targets with respect to biodiversity outcomes.

While some updating is necessary, the Aichi targets have provided a useful framework for action and should not be completely abandoned. TNC believes some simplification might be useful, for example, by linking Target 5 (habitat loss), Target 11 (protected areas), and Target 15 (restoration) in a way that leads to an overall area-based target for nature.

**2. Ambition of the post-2020 global biodiversity framework:** *In the context of the post-2020 global biodiversity framework, what would “ambitious” specifically mean?*

“Ambition” in the context of the post-2020 framework means transformational, effective and accountable:

Ambition means that countries bind themselves, individually and collectively, to actions and targets that require transformational changes in government policies and in the resulting incentives for activities that impact biodiversity. For example, clear commitments to end perverse subsidies, to grant legal rights and recognition to indigenous peoples over their traditional lands and waters, to adopt no net loss/degradation policies as part of environmental licensing procedures, to require strategic environmental assessment that evaluates conflicting

objectives for land use, to end wildlife trafficking, and to increase resources for protection and enforcement would be transformational if implemented at global scale.

Ambition also implies targets that, if implemented, have a reasonable chance to result in a world in which humans can thrive with no net loss of biodiversity by 2050. This is something TNC research has demonstrated is possible in principal<sup>1</sup>. The policy pathways for success are narrow and challenging; country commitments to follow them would reflect considerable ambition.

Finally, it also means that countries are willing to be held accountable for their commitments through regular, interactive and transparent review mechanisms (see 10 and 12 below).

**3. 2050 Vision for Biodiversity:** *What, in real terms, does “living in harmony” with nature entail, what are the implications of this for the scope and content of the post-2020 global biodiversity framework and what actions are needed between now and 2050 to reach the 2050 Vision?*

With respect to the 2050 vision, TNC wishes to note that indigenous peoples around the world have deep wisdom regarding living in harmony with nature. We support the recommendation of IPLC representatives calling to be partners with a permanent body in the post 2020 governance arrangements, agenda and program of work. The Aichi targets include recognition of and respect for indigenous peoples’ traditional knowledge; the Convention should adhere to this target in the process to create the post-2020 framework.

**4. Biodiversity Targets:** *(a) What does “SMART” targets mean in practical terms? (b) How should the set of targets in the post-2020 global biodiversity framework relate to existing Aichi Biodiversity Targets? (c) How should the set of targets in the post-2020 global biodiversity framework align with other global targets, including those adopted under the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development?*

The targets should be based on the best available science, making full use of the information in the forthcoming IPBES assessment report.

With respect to SMART targets, we wish to draw Parties’ and the Secretariat’s attention to the work of our colleagues Green et al. in their recent paper showing significant positive relationships between progress on the Aichi targets and the extent to which the target elements were perceived to be measurable, realistic, unambiguous and scalable<sup>2</sup>. We believe these are important characteristics for targets in the post-2020 strategy, and will permit better implementation, reporting, and assessment of activities. In practice, this may result in more process- or policy-based targets (i.e., “does a party have X policy in place”). This may raise questions about the ultimate effectiveness of these targets (e.g., a country may have achieved a numerical metric for area-based protection, but it may not have resulted in meaningful outcomes

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<sup>1</sup> Tallis HM, Hawthorne PL, Polasky S, et al. An attainable global vision for conservation and human well-being. *Frontiers in Ecology and the Environment*. 2018;114:6722-6728. doi:10.1002/fee.1965.

<sup>2</sup> Green EJ, Buchanan GM, Butchart SHM, et al. Relating characteristics of global biodiversity targets to reported progress. *Conservation Biology*. April 2019:cobi.13322. doi:10.1111/cobi.13322.

for biodiversity.<sup>3</sup>) These questions should be addressed through meaningful scientific and stakeholder review processes at the national level and within the Convention, as described in 10 (NBSAPs) and 12 (Review mechanisms) below.

The new targets should be fully aligned with the 2030 SDG agenda, but this should be done by updating the biodiversity-related targets in the SDGs, particularly those with a 2020 deadline in accordance with new targets negotiated at COP15. Where applicable, new targets should be added to the relevant SDG. Discussions to permit these updates should begin in 2019 to prepare for rapid adoption by the entire UN system after COP15. Please see our discussion in section 6 below regarding integration with other MEA targets.

**5. Voluntary commitments and contributions:** *What form should voluntary commitments for biodiversity take and how should these relate to or be reflected in the post-2020 global biodiversity framework?*

The new targets should be binding on CBD Parties, but, as we expressed in our previous submission, successful implementation of any effective biodiversity strategy will require a whole of society approach. While the CBD cannot place requirements on non-Parties, it should create a space for them to make real and accountable contributions. Such voluntary commitments are critical to engage broader parts of society, including businesses, local governments, indigenous communities, civil society groups and faith-based organizations. Even with optimal legislation and enforcement, governments are unlikely to be successful in eliminating drivers of biodiversity loss on their own. Steps taken by industry and other private-sector leaders and by other organizations to reduce their footprint and to fill gaps across all the targets, will be essential. These contributions will have both a direct impact, and also a role in educating the broader public about the relationships between production and biodiversity – thus building public support over time.

In creating a platform for voluntary commitments, the post-2020 framework should be as explicit as possible in identifying useful actions that could be taken by non-Party stakeholders. This may most logically be done by creating sub-targets specifically geared to voluntary actors under each target. The framework should encourage that commitments made also be specific and measurable, with some way to provide updates on progress and outcomes, perhaps through an online platform.

**6. Relationship between the post-2020 global biodiversity framework and other relevant processes:** *How could a post-2020 global biodiversity framework help to ensure coherence, integration and a holistic approach to biodiversity governance and what are the implications for the scope and content of the post-2020 global biodiversity framework?*

The new biodiversity framework could provide a valuable unifying coherence around the ecological components of the Climate and Desertification conventions, as well as the New York Declaration on Forests, by creating an overarching habitat-based target that includes the role of natural ecosystems in mitigating climate change and incorporates restoration targets into an

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<sup>3</sup> Specifically, we note that, in an era where expansion of the protected area system has been substantial there is no sign that extinction rates are slowing down.

overall “net gain” (for habitat, biosequestration and land quality) approach while reinforcing the role of indigenous peoples in biodiversity conservation and their rights as set forth in the UNDRIP and ILO 1690. As we noted in our earlier submission, nature remains an under-utilized and under-financed method of addressing climate change in countries’ NDCs under the Paris Agreement. An ambitious CBD target, tied to both the UNFCCC and the UNCCD, that maximizes the role of natural ecosystems in climate mitigation (and adaptation vis-à-vis the Sendai Framework) would provide coherence and also ensure that habitat quality and biodiversity outcomes were preeminent in climate mitigation and restoration efforts. The land degradation neutrality goal of the UNCCD also provides valuable synergies with the CBD on addressing impacts from agriculture on natural habitat and can help create a unifying “net gain” approach across the three conventions.

As noted in 4 above, the biodiversity-related targets in the SDGs should be updated to reflect the new CBD post-2020 framework.

**7. Mainstreaming:** *How can the post-2020 global biodiversity framework incorporate or support the mainstreaming of biodiversity across society and economies at large?*

TNC strongly advocates for elevating the mainstreaming component in the post-2020 framework. The Aichi mainstreaming agenda suffered from ambiguity, lack of good indicators and diffuseness. As noted in our previous submission, mainstreaming should be defined around specific actions that should be taken in key sectors (infrastructure, resource extraction, agriculture) to reduce impacts on biodiversity loss. The government ministries overseeing these production sectors should be accountable for the delivery of the post-2020 targets. Clear sector-based targets may also include sub-targets for voluntary commitments by the private sector or other stakeholders, as suggested in 5 above.

Mainstreaming can also be supported in the framework by calling on countries to develop strategic spatial plans and scenarios that identify the least-harmful development options and locations for the greatest return-on-investment through positive interventions, and by national legal frameworks that require no net loss of biodiversity and ecosystem services through application of the mitigation hierarchy.

Also, transparency protocols analogous to those developed by the Task Force on Climate-Related Financial Disclosures could be an important tool for improving understanding of biodiversity risk in the private sector.

**8. Relationship with the current Strategic Plan:** *What are the lessons learned from the implementation of the current Strategic Plan? And how can the transition from the current decade to the post-2020 framework avoid further delays in implementation and where should additional attention be focused?*

The current strategy was able to make significant strides where goals were clear (see 4 above) and where outcomes could be driven largely by environmental ministries, e.g., developing NBSAPs or expanding and improving protected area networks. We have also learned (or in fact,

already knew) that the largest threats to biodiversity could not be resolved simply by working within the environmental, or even the natural resource, sectors.

As noted in 1 above, the post-2020 framework should build on the current Strategic Plan to enhance specificity of targets, and to focus on implementation and on engaging other sectors and stakeholders. It should be updated to reflect the latest IPBES assessments about what is necessary to halt and reverse the degradation of natural habitats and the loss of species.

Over a third of remaining natural lands are on territories controlled by indigenous people. The establishment of protected areas, when done improperly, has continued to result in loss of rights over and access to land and resources by these communities. The post-2020 framework should include stronger safeguards against rights abuses and support tenure rights and financing for community management of these areas.

**9. Indicators:** *What indicators, in addition to those already identified in decision XIII/28, are needed to monitor progress in the implementation of the post-2020 global biodiversity framework at the national, regional and global scales?*

Current indicators around mainstreaming and sustainability of production sectors are not specific enough to identify or incentivize policy changes in the relevant sectors and should be updated to drive transformational change. For example, process-based indicators that address the presence and effectiveness of environmental licensing procedures could help create more robust norms around environmental impact assessment and mitigation that could more effectively measure mainstreaming in the infrastructure sector.

Overall, many indicators that measure ecological systems cannot be delivered at a frequency and accuracy to allow for effective policy responses on a reasonable timescale. Process- or policy-based indicators are easier to measure, report on and evaluate. While effectiveness must be ultimately measured by biological outcomes, a focus on monitoring of actions and policies that can be simply derived from national reports will eliminate further delays in developing and delivering new field-based indicators. Additional attention can then be focused on improving the confidence and delivery of a shorter list of quality indicators that can be regularly aggregated to provide a global snapshot of the state of biodiversity.

**10. Implementation and NBSAPs:** *How can the effectiveness and implementation of the NBSAPs be strengthened, what additional mechanisms or tools, if any, are required to support implementation of the post-2020 global biodiversity framework and how should these be reflected in the framework?*

NBSAPs should be reframed as nationally determined contributions (NDCs) toward the achievement of the 2030 targets, and national reporting should reflect progress vis-à-vis both NBSAPs and allow for aggregation to measure progress toward global targets. The lack of spatially-explicit plans in most NBSAPs is a major gap that hinders implementation and accountability; NBSAPs should be required to develop systematic plans that identify and protect areas of high ecosystem service and representative biodiversity values. Where possible, IPLC based mapping should complement other data and reporting systems.

In order to improve the accuracy and accountability of national reports, countries should provide for domestic public engagement processes to allow input from a range of actors and observers, especially including indigenous and local communities, prior to the reports' submission. SBSTTA should further create a scientific peer review framework to assess whether current NBSAPs are sufficient to achieve global targets, and if not, what further steps are necessary to fill gaps.

**11. Resource mobilization:** *How should the post-2020 global biodiversity framework address resource mobilization and what implications does this have for the scope and content of the framework?*

The biggest gains for addressing resource needs will come from changing the policies and perverse incentives that drive biodiversity loss. The resource mobilization strategy therefore first should seek to enumerate the costs and benefits of policy reforms as a step toward engaging finance and development ministries and the private sector, and to identify the most advantageous and cost-effective policy reforms.

Secondly, the post-2020 framework should enable reforms and conditions for private sector investment in biodiversity, including financing for natural infrastructure (e.g., coral reef insurance, water funds, storm water credits for urban areas), sustainable supply chains, natural climate solutions (including restoration), and the use of biodiversity offsets through application of the mitigation hierarchy. Clear targets and objectives within the strategic framework could help establish regulatory mechanisms to drive this investment in natural capital and help mobilize domestic finance.

International development assistance for biodiversity will continue to play an important role in achieving the goals of the Convention. It should be focused on capacity building for countries to address the drivers of biodiversity loss.

**12. Review process:** *What additional mechanisms, if any, are required to support the review of implementation of the post-2020 global biodiversity framework and how should these be integrated into the framework?*

Implementation of the CBD would benefit from more rigorous and frequent review processes to measure progress vis-à-vis targets. The post-2020 framework must be reflected not only in national biodiversity strategies, but also in the policies of other sectors that impact biodiversity, and all relevant sectors should be accountable for delivery against national commitments. National reports should reflect the inputs and impacts of all relevant actors, with special consideration for reflecting the views of indigenous peoples and local communities, and should allow for public review and comment at the national level to ensure transparency and increase accuracy of reporting, as described in 10 above.

The new framework should establish more frequent and rigorous review mechanisms, such as the SBSTTA peer-review concept suggested in 10 above. National reports should be aggregated regionally and globally, with results compared to third party assessments when available, to judge whether we are collectively making progress vis-à-vis the targets.

**13. Role of Indigenous peoples and local communities:** *How can the post-2020 global biodiversity framework facilitate the involvement of indigenous peoples and local communities and support the integration of traditional knowledge as a cross-cutting issue?*

The new framework should emphasize the important role of indigenous peoples and local communities in biodiversity conservation on their lands and waters, and their contribution to formally designated protected areas and OECMs. We also recommend a technical working group be established support and integrate the contribution of ICCAs to all post-2020 targets. This would provide a more formal role for indigenous peoples in the Convention and highlight the centrality of their contribution globally.

The post-2020 framework should further reinforce principles of free prior and informed consent in registering any contribution from IPLCs in delivering on any and all of the post-2020 targets, and should seek input from indigenous peoples and local communities to ensure that the highest standards for human rights and FPIC have been met during this process.

To further facilitate involvement of indigenous peoples and local communities in the future work of the Convention, we recommend the post-2020 framework renew commitments around Aichi Target 18, particularly with respect to securing tenure in traditional territories and recognizing indigenous rights and management in existing designated protected areas. We also recommend that indigenous representatives participate in the Informal Advisory Group on Mainstreaming established by COP 14.

**14. Role of cities:** *How should issues related to subnational governments, cities and other local authorities be reflected in the scope and content of the post-2020 global biodiversity framework? How should issues related to the engagement of the private sector be reflected in the scope and content of the post-2020 global biodiversity framework?*

Most people now live in urban areas, so creation of sustainable cities will be central to achieving the goals of the Convention, and as such, it is an important component of the mainstreaming agenda. The Voluntary Contribution platform described in 5 above should clearly seek to engage cities and other local authorities in making contributions by describing specific actions in support of biodiversity that can be addressed by local governments.

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