

**Submission by the United States in response to  
the Post-2020 Global Biodiversity Framework Discussion Paper**

**15 April 2019**

**1. 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?**

We like the pyramid structure proposed by a group of consortium NGOs (see below)<sup>1</sup>. We can envision having approximately five main headline goals that are set up similarly. However, rather than objectives, we believe that we should have indicators of progress shown directly below the goal. We believe it might be useful to have these main goals focus on ecosystem services (e.g., pollination, access to safe drinking water), and have the underlying indicators relate to biodiversity targets needed to reach the overall goal. For example, a headline goal of access to safe drinking water may have underlying indicators related to riparian health, healthy freshwater communities, etc. In our view, setting the targets up in this way would ideally garner interest and investment in reaching the goals. We consider that it may also be helpful to have milestones along the way to show that we are making progress, especially if the goals are going to be ambitious.

**Figure 3.1. Foundations, building blocks and elements of a post-2020 framework**



*Source:* Key Elements and Innovations for the CBD's Post-2020 Biodiversity Framework: A Collaborative Discussion Piece. <https://www.conservation.org/publications/Documents/Post-2020-Discussion-Paper-October-2018.pdf>

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

We would prefer to modify the term to “ambitious but achievable.” We consider that targets should be sufficient to provide meaningful protection to biodiversity but should

<sup>1</sup> <https://www.conservation.org/publications/Documents/Post-2020-Discussion-Paper-October-2018.pdf>

also be realistically achievable. In addition, we believe that terms in the targets that are not already defined by other entities with lead responsibilities for those topics should be defined clearly, in collaboration with other relevant entities with equities in the matter, with appropriate indicators of progress so that all actors are working towards the same goals. We consider that if the targets are not achievable, the global community is inadvertently setting itself up to fail. Moreover, we note that overly ambitious goals may seem so difficult that they ultimately discourage any action.

**3. 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?**

“Living in harmony” with nature is a concept that means different things in different circumstances and different national, local and cultural contexts. We believe that as a general principle, it is unlikely to be quantifiable and should remain at the “vision/concept” level.

**4. What would be the elements and content of an actionable 2030 mission statement for the post-2020 global biodiversity framework?**

We consider that it will be most useful to have a statement that is short and easily communicated, easily understandable by the public and political leaders, and for which success can be measured.

**5. Biodiversity targets:**

**a. What does “SMART” targets mean in practical terms?**

Butchart et al. 2016<sup>2</sup> provided an appropriate analysis of where the current targets have ambiguous language and lack measurable elements. We consider that we should conduct this sort of analysis for any new targets before they are adopted to make sure we do not face this issue again.

**b. How should the set of targets in the post-2020 global biodiversity framework relate to existing Aichi Biodiversity Targets?**

In our view, some of the existing targets can be maintained in the next round of targets. However, we believe that targets should focus only on nature and nature’s contributions to people, and that we should eliminate or consolidate targets under strategic goals A and E.

**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?**

We believe that targets should not contradict other global targets, but we do not think that the targets need to exactly match those under the Sustainable

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<sup>2</sup> Butchart, S.H.M., Di Marco, M., Watson, J.E.M. 2016. Formulating Smart Commitments on Biodiversity: Lessons from the Aichi Targets. *Conservation Letters*, 9, 457-468.

Development Goals (SDGs). That said, we do not think there is any benefit to seeking to re-litigate or revise SDGs.

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

We are not sure they have a role other than to identify areas of emphasis.

**7. 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?**

We do not believe that it is the role of CBD to “ensure coherence, integration and a holistic approach to biodiversity governance”, particularly at the global level. We consider that instead the CBD’s role can be to provide coherence, integration, and a holistic approach to the development of goals, which may as an additional benefit contribute to better coherence in governance at the national level. We remain mindful that each of the biodiversity-related and other conventions is legally independent of the CBD and reports only to the respective set of Parties to those conventions, and that regardless of what decisions are taken by the Parties of the CBD they do not create a global governance construct. Ideally, the global framework would be developed in such a way that national governments would see benefits to their respective implementation and wish to associate themselves in some way to the framework.

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

In our view, the biodiversity framework should include goals and targets that are clearly relatable to a variety of sectors and parts of the economy. We anticipate that – though governments should not be prescriptive in expressing in how they should operate – industries and private sector companies should be able to find targets that they can actually implement. We believe that mechanisms would need to be developed to ensure consultation with key stakeholders and industries to develop mainstreaming plans. We consider that basing the headline targets on ecosystem services could also help garner support among governments, industry, and the public.

**9. 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?**

We believe that one lesson learned would be that future targets need to be more measurable, realistic, and achievable, and that we need to develop a succinct, tangible target similar to the 2°C target for climate change. Another lesson in our view is that indicator development is unlikely to be successful if it is conducted independent of target development. We consider that another lesson learned is that we should have fewer,

more specific targets that provide clear guidance to businesses and governments and that we would benefit from having the next round of targets focus only on nature, eliminating or consolidating targets under strategic goals A and E.

**10. 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?**

We believe that we need to agree on the post 2020 targets before we agree on indicators. In our view this was a weakness of the last process in which indicator development was conducted independent of target development. At present, the indicators for the Aichi targets are mix of metrics that we believe do not necessarily measure progress towards the goal and are not comprehensive. In our view, once the end-points are decided, metrics can be selected to actually measure progress rather than selecting popular or common indicators and trying to fit them to a target. In addition, we believe we should seek to avoid creating an undue reporting burden from the post-2020 monitoring. Some of our additional views on indicators include:

- The indicators for many targets are narrow in scope and do not provide information for the goal as a whole. For example, the indicators related to ecosystem services (target 14) only relate to pollination, protected areas, and species used for food and medicine. The climate change indicators (target 10) only focus on marine ecosystems and European and North American birds.
- Compiling a list of available datasets, including at what scale these datasets can be used, might be helpful when we are deciding on indicators, although as mentioned above, we believe that specific targets would first need to be decided. In our view, some targets and indicators will only be relevant at certain geographic and time scales, and these need to be defined clearly in the framework.
- There are currently no freshwater/wetland indicators in the list. We consider that the next round of targets should avoid the current trend of viewing the conservation of inland water ecosystems principally in terms of delivery of water and should emphasize the conservation of freshwater ecosystems and biodiversity.

**11. 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?**

**12. 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?**

We believe that resource allocation from all sources may be an outcome of a completed biodiversity framework development process (i.e., governments and the private sector will allocate resources if the framework has been developed well), but not a part of it.

**13. How can the Global Environment Facility support the timely provision of financial resources to assist eligible Parties in implementing the post-2020 global biodiversity framework?**

The Global Environmental Facility will support the implementation of the post 2020 global biodiversity framework in its first two years under the GEF-7 replenishment: 2021 and 2022. We encourage CBD Parties, GEF Council members, and the GEF Secretariat to work together to ensure that appropriate provision of funding for future post 2020 global biodiversity framework implementation is provided during the GEF-8 replenishment, for which negotiations begin in 2021.

**14. 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?**

In our view this could be a good place to work directly with IPBES to conduct reviews of various goals, targets, and potential indicators. We anticipate that it would also be useful for the CBD to collaborate with GEOBON, which has been developing Essential Biodiversity Variables (EBVs) to track progress in the status and trends in biodiversity.

**15. What are the issues associated with biosafety under the Convention and what are the implications for the post-2020 global biodiversity framework?**

We suggest the Convention work to advance the objectives described in paragraphs one and two of Article 19. We believe that there is still progress to be made in promoting developing country participation in biotechnological research, as well as promoting access, on mutually agreed terms, to the results and benefits arising from biotechnologies. In our view, the safe use of biotechnology can contribute to the achievement of the Convention's objectives and the SDGs. We consider that progress can be made on these objectives by acknowledging the history of safe use of LMOs and recognizing the vast experience that exists within the international community regarding risk assessment.

**16. What are the issues associated with access and benefit-sharing under the Convention and what are the implications for the post-2020 global biodiversity framework?**

Access and benefits sharing (ABS) is one of the objectives of the CBD. We believe that access to and sharing of benefits – including monetary and non-monetary benefits – can be an important incentive for conservation and can generate knowledge and resources for advancing conservation and sustainable use objectives. However, in our view overly restrictive ABS measures can stifle research and innovation, and hinder progress on the CBD objectives. We consider that the post-2020 global biodiversity framework might usefully include measurable targets related to how ABS can contribute to conservation by fostering collaborative research, or investments in capacity building and natural sciences research and education.

**17. A “whole of society approach”:**

- a. 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?**

In our view, this could usefully be part of the implementation of the framework, i.e., to address applying scientific, traditional, and other relevant (e.g., economic, cultural, etc.) knowledge to implementation, with the appropriate procedures in place to ensure the rights of the knowledge holders are respected.

- b. How should gender issues be reflected in the scope and content of the post-2020 global biodiversity framework?**

We believe that the protection of biodiversity and ecosystem services benefits all genders, and we do not think gender issues necessarily need to be incorporated into the framework itself.

- c. 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?**

We do not believe it is appropriate for the CBD to interact with entities below the national government level since the national governments are the Parties to the convention. This kind of engagement could potentially be incorporated into NBSAPs.

- d. How can the post2020 global biodiversity framework facilitate the involvement of civil society in the development and implementation of the framework?**

We believe it could be useful to develop an information document and outreach campaign focused on how different sectors and the general public might engage.

- e. How can the post-2020 global biodiversity framework facilitate the involvement of youth in the development and implementation of the framework?**

In our view, all of the calls for involving x, y, z groups seem like actions that should be undertaken at the national or sub-national level, and not necessarily included in the goal document itself in order to keep it more focused and clear.

- f. 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?**

We believe it is important to engage with the private sector to find out what kinds of information would be helpful for them to better understand the ultimately decided goals.

**18. How should the post-2020 global biodiversity framework reflect diverse and multiple perspectives?**

Please see the response to question 17f above regarding the private sector. In our view, in order to engage diverse and multiple perspectives, it is important to invite those actors to engage in the process.

**19. How should the post-2020 global biodiversity framework address issues related to communication and awareness and how can the next two years be used to enhance and support the communication strategy adopted at the thirteenth meeting of the Conference of the Parties to the Convention on Biological Diversity to ensure an appropriate level of awareness?**

Please see responses above. In our view these considerations are all related to implementation rather than the goals themselves.