



Convention on  
Biological Diversity



## **2024 Biodiversity Capacity-Building and Development Forum** **19 October 2024, Cali, Colombia**

### **Summary Report**

---

#### **Background**

The Conference of the Parties (COP), in its [decision 15/8](#), requested the Executive Secretary to convene, in collaboration with partners, a forum to facilitate networking and sharing of experiences, good practices and lessons learned in capacity-building and development for biodiversity, and to organize events to showcase capacity-building and development and technical and scientific cooperation initiatives, technologies and opportunities. The forum is to be organized back-to-back with a meeting of the Subsidiary Body on Implementation (SBI), and each forum will focus on a different theme related to the implementation of the Convention and its Protocols, including the Kunming-Montreal Global Biodiversity Framework (KMGBF).

The overarching objectives of the Forum are:

1. To facilitate the sharing of experiences, best practices and lessons learned in the design and implementation of national capacity-building and development action plans, programmes and projects among relevant stakeholders, experts and practitioners.
2. To review capacity-building and development needs and challenges identified by Parties and relevant stakeholders for the implementation of NBSAPs, the Convention and its Protocols and the KMGBF, and discuss possible ways to address them.
3. To identify overlaps and gaps in the geographic and thematic coverage of capacity-building and development and technical and scientific cooperation initiatives.
4. To foster coordination and cooperation among Parties, indigenous peoples and local communities, capacity-building and development providers and other relevant stakeholders.
5. To promote partnerships and synergies in the design and implementation of capacity-building and development and technical and scientific cooperation initiatives.

Pursuant to the decision, the Secretariat, in collaboration with the Government of Colombia, the NBSAP Accelerator Partnership and other partners, organized the first Biodiversity Capacity-Building and Development Forum on 19 October 2024 in Cali, Colombia. More than 150 participants, including Party representatives, capacity development practitioners and providers, indigenous peoples and local communities, women and youth representatives, as well as other relevant stakeholders, attended the Forum.

Held under the theme “Strengthening Capacities for the Implementation of National Biodiversity Strategies and Action Plans (NBSAPs)”, the 2024 Capacity-Building and Development Forum, with the assistance of two professional facilitators, provided participants an opportunity to:

- Share experiences, best practices and lessons learned in the design and implementation of national capacity-building and development initiatives in support of NBSAPs,
- Foster coordination and cooperation on biodiversity capacity-building and development initiatives, and
- Promote partnerships and synergies in the capacity-building and development efforts to support the implementation of NBSAPs and the KMGBF.

## High-level Opening

During the first session of the 2024 Forum opening remarks were delivered by Ms. Astrid Schomaker, Executive Secretary of the Convention on Biological Diversity; Mr. Mauricio Cabrera Leal, Vice Minister of Environmental Policies and Standardization, Ministry of Environment and Sustainable Development of Colombia; Ms. Inka Gnittke, Deputy Director General, Nature Conservation, Federal Ministry for the Environment, Nature Conservation, Nuclear Safety and Consumer Protection of Germany; and Mr. Ning Liu, Director General, Ministry of Ecology and Environment of China, Representative of COP 15 Presidency.

Ms. Schomaker underlined that the success of the KMGBF hinged on effective local action. She recognised that translating global policy into actions at the national level is a challenge, and that capacity-building and development action plans, alongside finance plans, constitute an important component of the robust NBSAPs that are needed to implement the KMGBF. Lastly, she also underlined that the 18 subregional support centres are a “game-changing support” that need significant investment and capacity (both technical and scientific) to promote and facilitate technical and scientific cooperation.

Mr. Cabrera Leal highlighted the need to better understand the national capacity needs and priorities of each country and their unique challenges. He also stressed the need for collaborative partnerships, such as the NBSAP Accelerator Partnership, which is co-chaired by Colombia and Germany.

Ms. Gnittke emphasized that all countries have gaps in national capacity. Some of the capacity challenges and gaps in implementing NBSAPs, include lack of access to biodiversity finance, limited technical skills in specific areas such as monitoring biodiversity targets, data management, and limited institutional capacity for policy alignment and mainstreaming, biodiversity planning, implementation and enforcement, and mobilizing resources to ensure the sustainability of national systems. She also highlighted that knowledge (know-how) needs to be measured to effectively communicate and show the contributions to the Sustainable Development Goals and other conventions (i.e. climate, desertification, etc.).

Mr. Liu stressed the importance of strengthening capacity-building to improve implementation at the national level and to promote sustainable economic and social development. He also underscored the need to formulate capacity-building programmes with mid-term and long-term objectives, in areas such as policy formulation, laws and regulations, scientific research, education and public awareness, among others, to ensure efforts are comprehensive and systematic. At the same time, it is equally important to ensure adequate financial support for capacity-building.

## Panel discussions

The Forum included three panel discussions. The first panel focused on the Parties' perspectives regarding the status of capacity-building and development at the national level, including the capacity needs assessments and the national capacity action plans. The second panel featured the experiences and lessons learned by capacity providers in supporting the implementation of NBSAPs and the third panel featured the perspectives of non-state actors and other relevant stakeholders.

During the first panel discussion, country representatives from Bangladesh, Belgium, Colombia, South Africa, Suriname and Tajikistan shared their experiences. There was a common observation that capacity-building is required for the effective implementation of NBSAPs. The panelists emphasized that carrying out a national needs assessment is a critical first step in

identifying capacity gaps and priority areas for action. They also highlighted the importance of engaging with partners and relevant stakeholders, including indigenous peoples and local communities, women, youth, academia and business. They emphasized that capacity development interventions require a long-term vision and secured funding. The interventions cannot be stand-alone components, and a “one-size” fits all approach does not work. A whole-of-society and whole-of-government approach must be considered. As well, the local context and the national priority needs must be considered when designing capacity development interventions.

During the second panel, organizations that provide capacity-building support to countries (UNEP, UNDP, FAO, IUCN, ASEAN Centre for Biodiversity and CARICOM) highlighted the importance of carrying out studies or surveys to identify the needs and priority areas for capacity interventions, and of scaling up multisectoral interventions to mainstream biodiversity. They also highlighted the need to involve all stakeholders from the beginning to co-design projects in a participatory manner, to share knowledge and lessons learned and to being agile. Capacity-building providers identified working in silos, bureaucracies, lack of seed funding for smaller projects and difficulties in integrating a human-rights approach, as some of the major challenges they are facing at the national and regional levels.

During the third panel, representatives of non-state actors and other relevant stakeholders (CBD Women Caucus, Global Youth Biodiversity Network (GYBN), Indigenous Peoples of Africa Coordinating Committee (IPACC), Japan Biodiversity Fund and Secretariat of the High Ambition Coalition for Nature and People) shared their perspectives and suggestions for improving capacity-building and development. Referencing the principle of “inclusion not invitation”, they underlined the importance of ensuring that non-state actors, particularly marginalized groups, are not simply invited for consultation but are effectively and meaningfully included in all the stages of capacity-building – needs assessment, design, implementation and monitoring of capacity-building interventions – at the national level. To ensure effective inclusion, language barriers as well as cultural sensitivities and conflicts must be addressed from the outset and international and local partners should provide funding without taking away ownership by the beneficiaries. Some of challenges they highlighted include short-term project durations, conditionalities and inflexibility of the support provided which is sometimes not adapted to the national and local contexts and varying circumstances, and lack of effective monitoring to show the real operational impact and how to effect systemic change.

### **Key observations and take aways from the panel discussions**

The participants, among other things:

- Highlighted the major capacity challenges and gaps in implementing NBSAPs, including lack of access to biodiversity finance, limited technical skills in some specific areas such as monitoring of biodiversity targets and data management, limited institutional capacity for policy alignment and mainstreaming, biodiversity planning, implementation and enforcement, and lack of resources to ensure the sustainability of national systems.
- Noted that capacity development interventions require a long-term vision and secured funding. Capacity-building cannot be a stand-alone component, or a “one-size” fits all formula. The local context, the national priority capacity needs, and a whole-of-society and whole-of-government approach must be considered when designing capacity development interventions.

- Called for adequate and sustainable means of implementation for developing countries to ensure the full implementation of the Convention and its Protocols and the KMGBF, including new and predictable financial resources, technological and capacity-building and development support.
- Highlighted the need for countries to undertake systematic capacity needs assessments, ensuring that they are inclusive and country-led and communicate their national priorities and unique challenges. It was emphasized that conducting a national needs assessment is the first step in identifying capacity gaps and priority needs. It was reported that many countries have capacity gaps, including technical and scientific cooperation and know-how in relation to monitoring.
- Noted that capacity-building and development action plans, alongside finance plans, constitute an important component of the robust NBSAPs that are needed to implement the KMGBF.
- Stressed the need to formulate capacity-building programmes with medium-term and long-term objectives with an emphasis on localizing solutions. They noted that while global frameworks provide guidance, it is crucial that capacity-building initiatives are tailored to specific local needs.
- Observed that the 18 subregional support centres of the technical and scientific cooperation mechanism established by the Conference of the Parties at its fifteenth meeting (COP 15) could be a potential “game-changer” in delivering support to Parties. However, significant investment is required to enable them to fulfil their mandate.
- Underlined the need for shift from the traditional model of provision training and support at the individual level towards a greater emphasis on strengthening institutions, and the enabling environment and leveraging of partnerships and financing from multiple sources.
- Highlighted the importance of engaging with partners and relevant stakeholders, including indigenous peoples and local communities, women, youth, academia and business in national capacity needs assessments and capacity planning and implementation.
- Stressed the importance of breaking silos by designing capacity development opportunities involving various stakeholders through a whole-of-society and whole-of-government approach, and discussed the role that non-state actors, including non-governmental organizations (NGOs) and the private sector, can play in supporting capacity development for NBSAPs.
- Underlined the need to establish collaborative partnerships and strengthen cooperation and exchanges among Parties and relevant organizations, promote joint capacity development initiatives and biodiversity programmes to accelerate cooperation, reduce competition between organizations, and foster the sharing of knowledge and resources to amplify collective impact.
- Emphasized that capacity-building and development, technical and scientific cooperation and technology transfer should be promoted and carried out in a fair and equitable manner.

- Underlined the importance of monitoring the effectiveness and impact of capacity-building efforts as a key aspect for structured approach to capacity-building and development. Capacity development programmes should include monitoring and evaluation support and periodic reviews of implementation (adaptive management and learning from both success stories and failures).
- Emphasized the need to implement strategies to retain capacities at the institutional level.

### **World Café sessions**

The panel discussions were followed by World Café sessions in the afternoon, which focussed on five topics, namely 1) capacity assessment and national capacity development action plans as part of the updated NBSAPS; 2) capacity-building and development approaches for the effective implementation of NBSAPS; 3) enhancing coordination and synergies among capacity-building and development initiatives; 4) monitoring and evaluation of capacity-building and development initiatives; and 5) institutionalizing capacity-building and development. For each of the topics, participants analyzed what had worked well, what had not worked, and made recommendations for improvement. The recommendations are summarized below.

### **Key take aways and recommendations from the World Café discussions**

From the discussions of the five different topics, the participants encouraged Parties and relevant stakeholders to, among other things:

- Establish capacity-building processes - rather than frameworks – across and within sectors (i.e. capacity-building as an iterative process, not a compliance issue).
- Map the impact of capacity-building and development towards the delivery of NBSAPs to support the delivery of outcomes (i.e. establish a process for measuring impact).
- Establish institutions and other pathways for engagement at chief executive level of government on biodiversity on a permanent and sustained basis involving ministers from all relevant sectors.
- Launch basic biodiversity literacy public communication campaigns, targeting all of society to sensitize the public at large about biodiversity.
- Increase the participation of women in all kinds of capacity-building for biodiversity to ensure a gender responsive approach.
- Translate the KMGBF and NBSAPs into national legislation, laws, government programmes and in all national languages and dialects.
- Raise awareness at the national level and mainstream the biodiversity, degradation and climate change emergencies through participatory and collaborative approaches, which include multiple stakeholders such as policymakers, local governments, government agencies, NGOs, indigenous peoples and local communities, women and youth, for an effective, rights-based, transformative, cross-sectional and meaningful implementation of NBSAPs and the KMGBF.

- Design bottom-up, country-based, and demand-driven multi-year capacity-building programmes with long-term financial support considering the needs, culture, worldviews, different knowledge systems, socio-ecological contexts and priorities of local communities and rights-based, transformative, cross-sectional implementation of the KMGBF and NBSAPs at the country level.
- Create a multi-stakeholder (decentralized) platform to align the Rio Conventions, particularly in areas of implementation and reporting, and share capacity-building and development opportunities.
- Identify common needs for implementation by the regional and subregional technical and scientific cooperation support centres.
- Ensure adequate and predictable funding for the regional and subregional technical and scientific cooperation support centers to enhance synergies and capacity-building initiatives at the national and regional levels.
- Strengthen monitoring and evaluation of capacity-building and development initiatives by engaging relevant stakeholders in the development of monitoring metrics from the start to ensure desired impacts.
- Assess the value chain of capacity development that leads towards long-term solutions and sustainability (i.e. enhance accountability).
- Ensure capacity development programmes have monitoring and evaluation support for the design and implementation throughout the cycle and have periodic reviews to take advantage of adaptive management and learn from failures from improved approaches.
- Institutionalize capacity-building and development, *inter alia*, through strengthening institutions and creating systematic knowledge management systems at national and regional levels, and establishing a whole-of-society, whole-of-government capacity process to align national policies.



## **Annex**

### **End of session feedback**

#### **1. How do you see the future of capacity development for biodiversity?**

- Capacity development in the future needs should be led by institutions at the national and regional levels and not from the global level.
- Informal learning from daily experiences is crucial.
- Capacity development requires good coordination and resources.
- Providers doing things differently, the programmes should be designed with the beneficiaries in a participatory way. Projects/programmes need to be demand-driven and co-created with those who they are supposed to benefit.
- Use local knowledge to modify and apply global best practices.
- Adopt a tailored approach for diverse stakeholders.
- Hopefully with a more streamlined system for matching providers will need to accelerate results.

#### **2. Who needs capacity-building?**

- Donors, Governments and Enablers
- Co-funding is crucial to have joint ownership.
- 80% of participants in the Forum have received capacity-building support from stakeholders.
- Donors also need recipients of funds to give feedback on what has helped and what needs changing. Also, appreciation where appropriate!
- Community engagement needs enabling – as does good donorship!
- Focus on less privileged groups (e.g. in remote areas).
- Existing funds, such as the Japan Biodiversity Fund, could be used to leverage funding from other larger funds.
- Need to offer synergized capacity development with the Rio Trio.