

Modus Operandi for the Liaison Group of Biodiversity-related Conventions

Updated 2026

Introduction

Membership

The Liaison Group of Biodiversity-related Conventions (BLG) currently comprises the secretariats of the following conventions and treaties:

- Convention concerning the Protection of the World Cultural and Natural Heritage (World Heritage Convention)
- Convention on Biological Diversity (CBD);
- Convention on International Trade in Endangered Species of Wild Fauna and Flora (CITES);
- Convention on the Conservation of Migratory Species of Wild Animals (CMS);
- Convention on Wetlands of International Importance especially as Waterfowl Habitat (Convention on Wetlands);
- International Plant Protection Convention (IPPC)
- International Treaty on Plant Genetic Resources for Food and Agriculture (ITPGRFA); and
- International Whaling Commission (IWC)¹.

Mandate

The mandate for establishing the Liaison Group of Biodiversity-related Conventions was set out by the Conference of the Parties to the CBD in its decision VII/26 (paras. 1 and 2), by which the Conference of the Parties (COP):

“Recognizing the role of the Joint Liaison Group in supporting cooperation between the Rio conventions, and the role of the Collaborative Partnership on Forests in enhancing cooperation and coordination on Forest issues, where the Secretariat of the Convention on Biological Diversity is the focal agency on forest biodiversity and traditional forest-related knowledge,

1. *Urges* further enhanced cooperation between the Convention on Biological Diversity and all relevant international conventions, organizations and bodies, strengthening and building on existing cooperative arrangements to enhance synergies and reduce inefficiencies in a manner consistent with their respective mandates, governance arrangements and agreed programs, within existing resources;
2. *Requests* in this context, the Executive Secretary, to invite the secretariats of the other four biodiversity conventions (CITES, Ramsar, CMS and World Heritage Convention) to form a liaison group to enhance coherence and cooperation in their implementation, and to report on progress made to the eighth meeting of the Conference of the Parties;”

This mandate has been further supported by several follow-up decisions of the governing bodies of the conventions represented in the Liaison Group, including:

- CBD decisions VIII/16, IX/27, X/20, XI/6, XII/6, XIII/24, 14/30, 15/13 and 16/35;
- CITES Resolutions Conf.[10.4](#) on Cooperation and synergy with the Convention on Biological Diversity and [16.4](#) on Cooperation of CITES with other biodiversity-related conventions;
- CMS Resolution 11.10 (Rev.COP14);

¹ The International Whaling Commission is the intergovernmental body established by the International Convention for the Regulation of Whaling

- Convention on Wetlands Resolutions IX.5; X.1, X.11; XI.6, XII.2, XIII.7, and XIV.6
- World Heritage Committee Decisions 30 COM 6 and 33 COM 5C;
- International Treaty on Plant Genetic Resources for Food and Agriculture (IT/GB-1/06/Report and Resolution 8/2011);
- IWC Resolutions [2014-2](#), [2016-3](#), [2018-3](#), [2018-5](#), [2022-1](#) and [2024-2](#).

Guiding Principles

The following principles guide the work of the BLG:

Principle 1: The BLG is a platform for the secretariats to exchange information and to enhance implementation at the national level of the objectives of each respective convention whilst also promoting synergies at the national level.

Principle 2: The BLG recognizes the distinct and specific objectives of each convention and their different Parties, as well as the individual mandates and independent status of their treaty bodies and Secretariats.

Principle 3: The aim should be to maximize effectiveness and efficiency and avoid duplication of effort in joint activities of BLG members.

Principle 4: Activities are contingent upon the availability of financial and other resources.

History

On its establishment in 2004, the Liaison Group comprised representation of the Secretariats of the CBD, CITES, CMS, the Convention on Wetlands and the World Heritage Convention. ITPGRFA joined the BLG at its fifth meeting in September 2006. IPPC joined as a member at its tenth meeting in September 2015. IWC joined in 2017 and participated for the first time as a member at the thirteenth meeting in September 2018.

The BLG holds regular (annual) meetings and special meetings, in-person or online. At its meeting in August 2004, the Liaison Group agreed on modalities for the operation of the BLG, which form the basis of the modus operandi. The modus operandi was agreed and signed by the members of the BLG in September 2011. In 2019, the members agreed updated text of the modus operandi to reflect addition to its membership and other developments, and in 2025 it was edited, including to reflect the adoption of the Kunming-Montreal Global Biodiversity Framework and to update and adjust the introductory text. A record of the BLG meetings can be found at: www.cbd.int/blg.

Areas of Activity

Cooperative activities will include, but not be limited to, the following areas:

- Provide support for achieving the objectives of the strategic plans of its members, including the Kunming-Montreal Global Biodiversity Framework, in line with respective mandates;
- Explore practical ways that identify and reinforce mutual coordinated support for the implementation of relevant decisions adopted by the governing bodies of the respective conventions and treaties;

- Support Parties in the revisions and implementation of updated national biodiversity strategies and action plans (NBSAP) so that they incorporate the mandates of multiple conventions to which they are signatories;
- Support Parties' activities in public awareness and education, including the respective international days of the conventions;
- Support Parties in capacity-building activities and other forms of technical assistance; and
- Assist Parties with any future priorities identified by the respective governing bodies of the BLG members.

Modus Operandi

Membership and Participation

BLG members are the Executive Heads (or their deputies or representatives, in the absence of the Executive Head) of the following conventions: CBD, CITES, CMS, IPPC, ITPGRFA, IWC, Convention and World Heritage Convention, plus any other biodiversity-related conventions which may be adopted in the future and invited by BLG to join as a member. Supporting staff may attend meetings as necessary. Others (e.g. subsidiary body chairs, other convention secretariats) may be invited to participate in BLG meetings at the invitation of the Chair, as mutually agreed with the other members.

Secretariat

The CBD will serve as the secretariat for the BLG.

Officers

The meetings of BLG will be chaired by rotation among the Executive Heads of the conventions being a member of the BLG on an annual basis, unless otherwise agreed.

Date and Place of Meeting

Subject to the availability of resources, an annual face-to-face BLG meeting will be held at a date and venue agreed by the members, usually in September. Arrangements for any additional BLG meetings, can be proposed and agreed by the BLG members, and may involve video conferencing.

Agenda and Documentation

The provisional agenda and documentation for BLG meetings will be prepared by the Chair in consultation with and with support from the CBD as the secretariat for the BLG. The documentation will be circulated for comments of other BLG members, finalized and distributed in advance of any meeting. Agenda items will be mutually agreed by the members and include matters of mutual or common interest emanating from governing body decisions, subsidiary body recommendations and other items proposed by the members. Documentation prepared for a meeting will not normally be available publicly unless mutually agreed by the members.

Conduct of Business

BLG meetings will normally not be open to the public unless mutually agreed by the members.

Decision-making

Decisions will be taken by consensus.

Reports of meetings

BLG meeting reports will be prepared by the Chair in consultation with the CBD as the secretariat in consultation with other BLG members, and finalised and distributed to members within two months of the meeting's closure, highlighting action points. Meeting reports will be archived and available at www.cbd.int/blg and may also be made available through hyperlinks on the websites of the other BLG members. Reports on the activities of the BLG will be submitted to the respective meetings of the COP of the members for their information and attention. Members will also bring the issues discussed at the meetings to the attention of their subsidiary bodies, as appropriate, including standing committees, scientific councils/committees, and to the attention of their national focal points, as appropriate, with a view to promoting synergies and coordination in the implementation of the conventions.

Activities

Activities arising from the outcomes of BLG meetings are subject to the availability of resources, should be mutually agreed and should not pose a disproportionate burden on one or more BLG members.

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