



Convention on Biological Diversity

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Subregional dialogue for the Pacific small island developing States on biodiversity monitoring and reporting

Apia, 29 and 30 May 2025

Report of the dialogue

Introduction

1. The subregional dialogue for the Pacific small island developing States on biodiversity monitoring and reporting was held in Apia, Samoa, on 29 and 30 May 2025 pursuant to subparagraph 24 (e) of decision [16/32](#) of the Conference of the Parties to the Convention on Biological Diversity, in which the Conference of the Parties requested the Executive Secretary of the Convention, subject to the availability of resources, to convene, under the guidance of the Bureau of the Conference of the Parties, subregional and/or regional dialogues, taking into account the experiences and lessons learned from the previous dialogues. The Conference of the Parties made further requests related to exchanging knowledge and building capacity with regard to the monitoring framework for the Kunming-Montreal Global Biodiversity Framework¹ and the provision of capacity-building and development support from regional and subregional technical and scientific cooperation support centres.
2. The dialogue was organized to also address a key issue that needed further capacity support, as identified by many countries in previous regional and subregional dialogues on national biodiversity strategies and action plans held in 2023 and 2024 as well as during the meetings of the Subsidiary Body on Implementation and of the Conference of the Parties. While establishing and improving monitoring systems are fundamental to the implementation of national biodiversity strategies and action plans and ensuring that Parties are on track to achieve the goals and targets of the Framework, many Parties have indicated that they have yet to establish monitoring systems or adapt existing ones.
3. The dialogue was organized jointly by the Secretariat of the Convention, the United Nations Environment Programme (UNEP) and the Secretariat of the Pacific Regional Environment Programme, with the support of the Government of Samoa.
4. The dialogue was attended by representatives of all of the 14 Pacific island countries that are Parties to the Convention on Biological Diversity, including national focal points under both the Convention and the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change. Representatives of regional organizations that are members of the Pacific Islands Roundtable for Nature Conservation and other global and regional partners also attended.

¹ The monitoring framework for the Kunming-Montreal Global Biodiversity Framework was adopted by the Conference of the Parties to the Convention in its decision 15/5.

Item 1**Opening of the meeting**

5. The dialogue was opened jointly on 26 May 2025 with the subregional workshop on strengthening national contributions to global environmental commitments through synergetic implementation of multilateral environmental agreements (26–28 May 2025) with a traditional Pacific prayer. The Acting Director General of the Secretariat of the Pacific Regional Environment Programme, Easter Chu Shing, delivered welcoming remarks and the Chief Executive Officer of the Ministry of Natural Resources and Environment of Samoa, Lealaisalanoa Frances Brown-Reupena, welcomed all participants on behalf of the Government of Samoa. The Executive Secretary of the Convention on Biological Diversity, Astrid Schomaker, and the Director of the Law Division of UNEP, Patricia Kameri-Mbote, delivered video speeches. Participants were then invited to introduce themselves.

Item 2**Introduction and overview of the objectives and programme of the dialogue**

6. A representative of the Secretariat provided an overview of the objectives, programme and expected outcomes of the dialogue. Those expected outcomes included: (a) enhanced capacities for the development of national monitoring systems and monitoring of the implementation of the Kunming-Montreal Global Biodiversity Framework using the indicators in the monitoring framework for the Framework;² (b) strengthened capacities for the preparation of the seventh national report, including through the use of the online reporting tool; (c) strengthened regional cooperation in monitoring and reporting; and (d) the identification of opportunities for donors and partners to support countries in developing or strengthening their monitoring systems.

Item 3**Implementation of the monitoring framework for the Kunming-Montreal Global Biodiversity Framework at the national and regional levels**

7. To put the dialogue in context, a representative of the UNEP World Conservation Monitoring Centre introduced the monitoring framework for the Kunming-Montreal Global Biodiversity Framework and the technical updates endorsed in decision [16/31](#) of the Conference of the Parties, as well as the enhanced multidimensional approach to planning, monitoring, reporting and review adopted by the Conference of the Parties in decision [15/6](#) and the global review procedures contained in decision [16/32](#) of the Conference of the Parties.

8. Discussions under this agenda item were focused on three topics: (a) the development of national monitoring plans and systems; (b) the development and use of indicators; and (c) regional cooperation in monitoring.

Topic A. Development of national monitoring plans and systems

9. A presentation was made by representatives of the Global Ecosystems Atlas and the Group on Earth Observations Biodiversity Observation Network (GEO BON) on key steps that could be taken to develop a national biodiversity monitoring system, including the collation of representative primary data, the creation of national and regional dashboards and the transformation of data through analysis into meaningful conservation intelligence which could inform policymaking.

10. A representative of the Global Ecosystems Atlas delivered a presentation on the development and usage of the Global Ecosystems Atlas, including an overview of the International Union for Conservation of Nature Global Ecosystem Typology, the phases of development of the Atlas and the integration of artificial intelligence into the development process. The presentation provided further

² In its decision 16/31, the Conference of the Parties endorsed the technical updates to indicators in the monitoring framework as contained in annex I to that decision.

details on phase one of the development of the Global Ecosystems Atlas including on the Atlas synthesis map, the Atlas data catalogue, the Atlas application and the EcoTrain Training and Validation Dataset.

11. A representative of the Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations (FAO) delivered a presentation on the Framework for Ecosystem Restoration Monitoring. The linkages to headline indicators 2.1 and 7.2 in the monitoring framework were explored.

12. The representatives of Samoa, Vanuatu and Papua New Guinea shared their countries' experiences and lessons learned in the development of national monitoring plans and systems when updating their national biodiversity strategies and action plans, including good practices, challenges, solutions and needs. Their presentations were centred on the following topics:

- (a) Current status of biodiversity monitoring approaches;
- (b) Data and tools used in biodiversity monitoring;
- (c) Challenges experienced throughout the biodiversity monitoring process.

13. A representative of Samoa described the country's road map to updating the national biodiversity strategy and action plan, including an assessment of the previous national biodiversity strategy and action plan and the details of its institutional mechanisms such as the sectoral steering committee, the national biodiversity strategy and action plan steering committee and technical groups. He stated that a national monitoring system was under development in the context of the updated national biodiversity strategy and action plan.

14. A representative of Vanuatu described several challenges encountered in monitoring such as the lack of alignment between indicators and targets, broad and/or unclear targets and the lack of stakeholder mapping and engagement. He detailed plans to engage other sectors through various consultations and working groups and provided an overview of the data sources, tools and approaches related to the monitoring and evaluation of the national biodiversity strategy and action plan.

15. A representative of Papua New Guinea highlighted key challenges faced by her country in establishing a national monitoring system, including lack of resources for monitoring, data collection conducted by different agencies and non-governmental organizations, difficulty in keeping data updated and absence of the technical expertise needed for interpretation of the available data. She briefly mentioned challenges faced in updating the national biodiversity strategy and action plan due mainly to delays in the implementation of related Global Environment Facility (GEF) projects especially with respect to the procurement process of the GEF implementing agencies.

16. Following the country presentations and the question-and-answer session, country representatives, using guiding questions, worked in three groups to identify key priorities and actions that needed to be taken to develop or improve national monitoring plans and systems. The following points, among others, were voiced in the discussions:

- With respect to the development of national monitoring plans or systems for the national biodiversity strategy and action plan, representatives of four countries indicated that their countries were working on a national monitoring plan as part of the updated national biodiversity strategy and action plan
- With respect to specific needs for support, many countries highlighted the need to simplify and integrate national monitoring, as well as the need for simplified and ranked indicators and clear timelines for effectively monitoring the implementation of national targets in the national biodiversity strategy and action plan
- Representatives emphasized that their countries needed support in data management, geographic information system (GIS) access, establishing centralized data sets and developing a monitoring and evaluation framework

- Challenges identified include fragmented data or data gaps, lack of standardized indicators and limited engagement of key sectors such as agriculture and the private sector
- With regard to indicators and data for specific targets under the Kunming-Montreal Global Biodiversity Framework, some representatives stated that their countries were struggling. Further, those representatives identified Targets 3, 6, 10 and 18 as presenting particular challenges. Regarding solutions, tools such as “BON in a Box” and community-based monitoring might be helpful in closing some knowledge gaps and contributing to the achievement of biodiversity monitoring and reporting. The Cook Islands was using a whole-of-islands approach to planning and monitoring, under which planned actions and monitoring activities were divided up for implementation by different islands and communities. Further, the Cook Islands is giving consideration to the establishment of a national reporting system through which different actors could report on their actions and monitoring results
- Representatives indicated that their countries had identified the marine environment, sustainable forest management and renewable energy as priority areas for monitoring

Topic B. Development and use of indicators

17. A technical presentation on developing data flows for monitoring species- and ecosystem-related indicators was made by representatives of the Global Ecosystems Atlas and the Group on Earth Observations Biodiversity Observation Network. They discussed the need for standardized data and highlighted the current major gaps, in particular with respect to species monitoring-related data. Moreover, the presentation covered essential biodiversity variables and pipelines for converting data into indicators to support the monitoring of progress towards achieving biodiversity targets, including through the use of the BON in a Box tool box.

18. The representatives of Solomon Islands and Tonga shared their countries’ experiences and lessons learned in the course of developing and using indicators when updating their national biodiversity strategies and action plans.

19. A representative of Tonga provided details on the key areas of the country’s updated national biodiversity strategy and action plan, explained the key areas under the seventh national report which the country was in the process of preparing and presented a list of recommendations for the country’s third strategic development framework.

20. A representative of Solomon Islands explored the interlinkages of the country’s national biodiversity strategy and action plan with relevant sectoral strategies and plans developed by other ministries as well as strategies and plans for implementing other relevant conventions. He stated that his country used tools and approaches such as stakeholder consultations and GIS mapping to monitor implementation. Challenges identified included, but were not limited to, the lack of technical capacity and financial constraints.

21. A representative of the Cook Islands informed participants that her country had undertaken a mapping exercise between global and national indicators when selecting indicators for measuring progress towards achieving national targets and the implementation of the updated national biodiversity strategy and action plan.

22. Plenary discussions were conducted on the development and use of indicators, including methodologies, data flows and challenges. The discussions focused on the implementation of and challenges associated with the monitoring framework for the Kunming-Montreal Global Biodiversity Framework and headline indicators.

23. Key points that emerged from the plenary discussions included the following:

- There was a need for better dissemination of indicator information and for recognition of the importance of national monitoring systems and associated data or information management systems
- There were challenges associated with availability of data, particularly data on invasive alien species
- Improvement of monitoring would require improved stakeholder engagement and addressing of capacity gaps
- Regional and national indicators were important for understanding progress and it was therefore important that the focus not be only on headline indicators
- There was a need to create regionally specific and simplified metadata which could be used to describe how to leverage existing data sets so as to improve reporting and address data gaps
- Engaging with indicator custodians was necessary to facilitate an understanding of definitions and terminology and enable an exploration of the question whether indicators could be tailored or disaggregated to better suit national needs
- Analysing existing regional and national indicator frameworks could be a starting point for mapping to determine how current monitoring systems were aligned with the targets under the Framework and relevant headline and other indicators
- Further development of monitoring systems would require identifying data gaps and challenges and determining how to use data to inform the implementation of the monitoring framework
- It was essential to ensure effective coordination and communication among different stakeholders, such as relevant ministries, departments and technical working groups, so as to maintain cohesion and integration of the reporting process

Topic C. Regional cooperation in monitoring

24. A representative of the Secretariat of the Pacific Regional Environment Programme provided information on how a regional monitoring strategy and system could be developed to support countries in the region, taking into account regional needs identified through a survey conducted before the dialogue. The representative discussed the opportunities to streamline monitoring and reporting to achieve the regional goals for the environment through the use of: Pacific state of environment and Pacific regional environment indicators; the Pacific Islands Framework for Nature Conservation (2022–2026); the Sustainable Development Goals; the Kunming-Montreal Global Biodiversity Framework; and various regional and global conventions such as the Convention for the Protection of the Natural Resources and Environment of the South Pacific Region (Noumea Convention), the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change and the Convention on Wetlands of International Importance especially as Waterfowl Habitat (Ramsar Convention).

25. A plenary discussion was held to identify key priorities and actions for enhancing monitoring at the regional level. The capacity or technical support needs identified included:

- (a) Providing further support to Pacific state of the environment-related reporting;
- (b) Facilitating regional monitoring with data visualization;
- (c) Assisting with open access to data, including for the public;
- (d) Undertaking more national-level trainings on data management, monitoring and reporting.

Item 4**Preparation and submission of the seventh national report**

26. A representative of the Secretariat provided an overview of the guidance and template for the seventh and eighth national reports, as contained in decisions [15/6](#) and [16/32](#) of the Conference of the Parties. The presentation covered elements such as timelines for reporting, relevant sources of information, the uses to which national reports would be put, the details of the contents of each of the five sections of the seventh national report and proposed next steps related to preparation of submissions in time to meet the 28 February 2026 deadline. The representative briefly shared suggestions for national reporting under the Cartagena Protocol on Biosafety to the Convention on Biological Diversity and the Nagoya Protocol on Access to Genetic Resources and the Fair and Equitable Sharing of Benefits Arising from Their Utilization to the Convention on Biological Diversity.

27. A representative of UNEP gave a presentation on the subject of support available from the Global Environment Facility for updating national biodiversity strategies and action plans and preparing the seventh national report. The overview provided included an explanation of the five biodiversity-related programmes of the UNEP Nature Frameworks Support Unit, with an emphasis on the early action support project under the seventh replenishment of the GEF trust fund and the umbrella programme under the eighth replenishment of the GEF trust fund with respect to supporting updates of national biodiversity strategies and action plans and the seventh national report.

28. The representatives of the Cook Islands, Fiji and Micronesia (Federated States of) shared their experiences and approaches in reviewing progress towards national targets and the implementation of national biodiversity strategies and action plans.

29. The representative of the Cook Islands summarized the country's rapid review of the 2002 national biodiversity strategy and action plan and use of the strengths, gaps, opportunities and recommendations identified to inform drafting of the national biodiversity strategy and action plan for 2025–2035, the monitoring framework and the implementation plan, with the support of the umbrella programme under the eighth replenishment of the GEF trust fund.

30. The representative of Fiji detailed the key findings set out in the sixth national report and highlighted key elements of the country's current work, including applications of ecological and traditional knowledge, marine and terrestrial ecological gap assessments, community engagement, protection of endemic and endangered species, policies for species conservation, and management of invasive alien species. Recommendations included, but were not limited to, strengthening of institutional frameworks, implementation of the Nagoya Protocol and assessment of legislative gaps. He indicated that the review of the sixth national report would provide a basis for the preparation of the seventh national report.

31. The representative of the Federated States of Micronesia provided details of the country's progress towards updating the national biodiversity strategy and action plan, which included a timeline for all necessary submissions, and the project implementation plan for completing the seventh national report. That plan included coordination mechanisms and encompassed involvement of relevant stakeholders, data sources, tools and implementation challenges.

32. A representative of the Secretariat had prepared a video on the use of the online reporting tool for the submission of the seventh national report which was shared with participants ahead of the dialogue. The representative joined the dialogue online to answer questions raised by participants.

33. A representative of the UNEP World Conservation Monitoring Centre gave a presentation on the target tracker tool designed to provide support to countries in using indicators in their seventh national report. He highlighted the use of the tool as: a means of visualizing global progress, a platform for identifying trends and gaps and a venue for action mobilization. Seven of the headline indicators adopted in decision [15/5](#) of the Conference of the Parties were currently available in the target tracker tool.

Item 5

Summary of the dialogue and next steps

34. A representative of the NBSAP Accelerator Partnership delivered a presentation on opportunities for leveraging matchmaking support for implementing and monitoring national biodiversity strategies and action plans. Participants learned that they could make requests in multiple domains of activity, such as selecting, adapting or reporting on indicators, building national data platforms and collecting spatial data to support ecosystem-level monitoring, and could receive support from a range of partners including, but not limited to, the Group on Earth Observations Biodiversity Observation Network, the Global Biodiversity Information Facility and FAO. The presentation also covered the NBSAP Accelerator Partnership Facilitator Programme which provided countries and regions with direct technical support in accelerating implementation and enhancing coordination in biodiversity-related action. The presentation concluded with information on membership criteria and the steps required for membership in the NBSAP Accelerator Partnership. Representatives of the Group on Earth Observations Biodiversity Observation Network and the UNEP World Conservation Monitoring Centre summarized key steps that needed to be taken in the development of a national monitoring system and a national monitoring plan.

35. Key observations that emerged from the dialogue included the following:

- It was recognized that monitoring was essential for reporting on, reviewing and enhancing progress in the implementation of the national biodiversity strategy and action plan, the Convention and the Framework at various levels. Monitoring required long-term investment, consistent and standardized data collection and involvement of all relevant stakeholders.
- Very limited national systems and capacities for monitoring and reporting or the lack of such systems and capacities was viewed as huge challenges, considering that only a few countries had developed national monitoring systems for the updated national biodiversity strategy and action plan and even fewer countries had put in place a national monitoring system with adequate coverage of species and ecosystems for the purpose of monitoring. The need for regional cooperation in monitoring was highlighted in the context of the very limited capacities and the very limited ownership of resources of most individual countries in the region.
- Specific challenges included the huge investment needed for building monitoring infrastructure; the very limited capacities for collecting, processing and sharing data in a standardized manner; fragmented data or information management systems; and data gaps for reporting and evaluation due to the lack of consistent monitoring over a period of years. Integrating various means of monitoring at various levels, using various means of data collection such as GIS and community-based monitoring, establishing centralized data sets, using tools such as BON in a Box and addressing data gaps through increased data sharing were identified as options for addressing those challenges.
- With respect to the use of headline indicators in the monitoring framework, countries were facing challenges such as data gaps or lack of data availability due to the absence of data collection for those indicators that had not been developed at the national or regional level. Mapping relevant regional and national indicators with headline indicators and identifying gaps could be a first step in this regard. Those gaps could be addressed while a monitoring system for collecting relevant data was being improved. Relevant regional and national indicators could be used in some cases where headline indicators were not applicable or accurate enough for national circumstances or could not be used owing to the lack of relevant data.
- Main challenges for the preparation of the seventh national report included data gaps for some headline indicators, lack of data sharing on the part of some data holders, difficulty in

reporting on all of the elements of some targets, a limited amount of time for consultation and validation and difficulty with respect to reporting on national targets or action recently established in the updated national biodiversity strategy and action plan due to a short period time available for implementation. Using various sources of data, reporting on national targets and actions that were still valid and using a review of implementation of an earlier national biodiversity strategy and action plan were identified as options for addressing those challenges.

- Priorities identified for greater action at the national and regional levels included setting up or improving national or regional monitoring systems, in particular for those areas with data gaps; enhancing capacities for data collection and processing; establishing or improving data or information management system; increasing the level of resources and technical support; and addressing data gaps for those headline indicators within the monitoring framework.

36. Some representatives shared their countries' plans to finalize the updated national biodiversity strategy and action plan and submit the seventh national report through emails transmitted to the Convention Secretariat or bilateral discussions with the Convention Secretariat at the margin of the dialogue.

Item 6

Closure of the meeting

37. After brief closing remarks delivered by representatives of UNEP, the Secretariat of the Pacific Regional Environment Programme and the Secretariat of the Convention, the dialogue was closed at 2.30 p.m. on 30 May 2025.
