



Convention on Biological Diversity

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Item 13 of the provisional agenda*

**Cooperation with international organizations
and bodies established under other conventions**

Report of the United Nations Environment Programme on its activities to support the implementation of the Convention on Biological Diversity and its Protocols

Note by the Secretariat

1. The Executive Secretary is pleased to provide herewith, for the information of participants at the sixteenth meeting of the Conference of the Parties to the Convention on Biological Diversity, the eleventh meeting of the Conference of the Parties serving as the meeting of the Parties to the Cartagena Protocol on Biosafety and the fifth meeting of the Conference of the Parties serving as the meeting of the Parties to the Nagoya Protocol on Access and Benefit Sharing, a report by the United Nations Environment Programme (UNEP).

2. The report provides information on selected programmatic activities conducted by UNEP that respond to the various decisions of the fifteenth meeting of the Conference of the Parties, the tenth meeting of the Conference of the Parties serving as the meeting of the Parties to the Cartagena Protocol and the fourth meeting of the Conference of the Parties serving as the meeting of the Parties to the Nagoya Protocol, that call for action by UNEP and the UNEP World Conservation Monitoring Centre.

3. The report covers the period from January 2023 to September 2024 and follows the interim report submitted by UNEP to the fourth meeting of the Subsidiary Body on Implementation to the Convention.¹

4. The report is provided in the form and language in which it was received by the Secretariat.

* CBD/COP/16/1.

¹ CBD/SBI/4/INF/14.

REPORT OF THE EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR OF THE UNITED NATIONS ENVIRONMENT PROGRAMME ON ITS ACTVITIES TO SUPPORT THE TO SUPPORT THE IMPLEMENTATION OF THE CONVENTION ON BIOLOGICAL DIVERSITY AND ITS PROTOCOLS

I. INTRODUCTION

This report provides information on relevant programmatic activities that the United Nations Environment Programme (UNEP) has undertaken in relation to the work of the Convention on Biological Diversity (CBD) and to support the implementation of the decisions taken at the fifteenth meeting of the Conference of the Parties (COP 15), the tenth meeting of the Conference of the Parties serving as the meeting of the Parties to the Cartagena Protocol (CP-MOP 10) and the fourth meeting of the Conference of the Parties serving as the meeting of the Parties to the Nagoya Protocol (NP-MOP 4). This includes activities conducted in response to invitations for action and activities by UNEP and the UN Environment Programme World Conservation Monitoring Centre (UNEP-WCMC). It furthermore covers the administrative and financial management support provided to the Secretariat of the Convention on Biological Diversity by UNEP.

The report covers the period from January 2023 to September 2024, complementing and retaining the contents of the Interim Report of the United Nations Environment Programme² submitted to the Fourth Meeting of the Subsidiary Body on Implementation of the CBD, held in Nairobi from 21 - 29 May 2024.

II. CONTRIBUTION OF THE SIXTH SESSION OF THE UNITED NATIONS ENVIRONMENT ASSEMBLY OF UNEP (UNEA)

The sixth session of the UN Environment Assembly of the United Nations Environment Programme (UNEA-6) which was held from 26 February to 1 March 2024³, adopted several resolutions and considered an agenda item of particular importance to the work of the Convention, including on protecting and restoring specific ecosystems such as freshwater and oceans. A key highlight of UNEA-6 was the supplementary agenda item on “Cooperation with MEAs” which was considered through the organization of an “MEA Day”⁴ held on 28 February 2024, including MEA related side events during the last three days of the conference and exhibitions that ran throughout the entire UNEA week. The overall goal of the supplementary agenda item was to strengthen the engagement of MEAs in UNEA-6 and subsequent sessions, in order to promote coherence between the resolutions of the Assembly and the decisions of the governing bodies of MEAs, while fully respecting the autonomy of the MEAs and without introducing new and additional requirements for the contracting parties to the MEAs. The agenda item attracted high level participation by Member States, MEA Secretariats including the CBD Secretariat, Presidents of MEAs governing bodies, and other stakeholders. The outcomes of the agenda item on Cooperation with MEAs are expected to be brought to the attention of the governing bodies of the MEAs as appropriate. Furthermore, the agenda item has been included in the provisional agenda for the seventh session of the Assembly⁵. Preparation of the agenda item was done in consultation with MEA Secretariats through the MEA focal points network in which the CBD Secretariat participates.

In its sixth session, UNEA adopted two resolutions focusing on cooperation and collaboration in the implementation of multilateral environment agreements. Through UNEA Resolution 6/4⁶, titled “Promoting synergies, cooperation or collaboration for national implementation of multilateral

²CBD/SBI/4/INF/14: <https://www.cbd.int/documents/CBD/SBI/4/INF/14>

³<https://www.unep.org/environmentassembly/unea6?%2Funea-6>

⁴<https://www.unep.org/environmentassembly/unea6/multilateral-environmental-agreements-day>

⁵https://undocs.org/Home/Mobile?FinalSymbol=UNEP%2FEA.6%2FL_3&Language=E&DeviceType=Desktop&LangRequested=False

⁶UNEP/EA.6/Res.4: <https://documents.un.org/doc/indoc/gen/k24/008/07/pdf/k2400807.pdf>

environmental agreements and other relevant environmental instruments,” UNEA welcomed the adoption of the Kunming-Montreal Global Biodiversity Framework and noted with appreciation the outcomes of the Bern III Conference as an important contribution to the effective implementation of the Framework. On a similar note, UNEA Resolution 6/6⁷, titled “Fostering national action to address global environmental challenges through increased cooperation between the United Nations Environment Assembly, the United Nations Environment Programme and multilateral environmental agreements, provides a framework for strengthening mutually supportive action on the Framework at the national level. So too, UNEA Resolution 6/15⁸ was adopted on “Strengthening ocean efforts to tackle climate change, marine biodiversity loss and pollution”, encouraging Member States to implement fully and effectively the Framework, including its goals and targets relevant to the oceans.

A High-Level Ministerial side event on “*MEAs Cooperation and the GBF⁹: Insights from the Bern III Conference*” was successfully organized by Switzerland, Mexico, Sweden, the CBD Secretariat and UNEP on 29 February 2024, to inform the UNEA discussions on the key outcomes of the conference that took place from 23 - 25 January 2024, emphasizing synergies between UNEA, and the MEAs in support of the Framework, and recommendations for CBD COP 16.

III. PROGRAMMATIC SUPPORT BY THE UNITED NATIONS ENVIRONMENT PROGRAMME TO THE CONVENTION ON BIOLOGICAL DIVERSITY

1. Kunming-Montreal Global Biodiversity Framework (Decision 15/4)

Scientific and technical needs to support the implementation

UNEP including UNEP-WCMC provided to the CBD Secretariat compiled lists of tools and guidance¹⁰ materials, as well as related resources and platforms, available for Parties that address a wide range of aspects in support of the implementation of the Framework, in response to CBD Secretariat *Notification 2023-120*¹¹, titled “Submission of views and information on existing tools and guidance that can support the implementation of the Kunming-Montreal Global Biodiversity Framework”. The compilation was further included in CBD/SBSTTA/26/INF/16/Rev.1¹².

A Cross-Mapping Paper¹³: “Key entry points for cooperation and collaboration amongst MEAs”, was developed to inform discussions at the Bern III Conference on biodiversity-related conventions and other relevant conventions on implementation of the Framework held in January 2024. The paper highlights interlinkages between goals and targets of the Framework and the strategies of 14 MEAs in various thematic clusters. The paper was prepared by UNEP-WCMC and the team developing the Data Reporting Tool for MEAs (DaRT) under the UNEP Environmental Treaties Programme – Realizing Synergies for Biodiversity, which is financially supported by EU, Sweden and Switzerland. The paper benefitted from feedback from MEA Secretariats and was submitted as CBD/SBI/4/INF/13 to CBD SBI-4¹⁴.

⁷UNEP/EA.6/Res.6: <https://documents.un.org/doc/undoc/gen/k24/007/71/pdf/k2400771.pdf>

⁸UNEP/EA.6/Res.15: <https://documents.un.org/doc/undoc/gen/k24/008/25/pdf/k2400825.pdf>

⁹<https://www.unep.org/environmentassembly/unea6/programme>

¹⁰<https://www.cbd.int/notifications/2023-120>

¹¹SCBD/SSSF/JL/MK/91372: <https://www.cbd.int/doc/notifications/2023/ntf-2023-120-kmgbf-en.pdf>

¹²CBD/SBSTTA/26/INF/16/Rev.1: <https://www.cbd.int/documents/CBD/SBSTTA/26/INF/16/Rev.1>

¹³<https://wedocs.unep.org/bitstream/handle/20.500.11822/44506/Bern%20III%20information%20paper%203%20-%20Cross-mapping%20MEA%20strategies.pdf?sequence=1&isAllowed=y>

¹⁴CBD/SBI/4/INF/13: <https://www.cbd.int/documents/CBD/SBI/4/INF/13>

Under United Nations Environment Assembly Resolution 4/23¹⁵, UNEP has been mandated to develop a Global Environmental Data Strategy (GEDS)¹⁶ that will help establish an international framework for the sharing, access, inter-operability, quality control, and governance of global environmental data. The GEDS is to be developed in consultation with Governments, United Nations Agencies, funds and programmes, the secretariats of the MEAs, and international and regional scientific bodies. It will be presented at UNEA-7 in December 2025.

The World Environmental Situation Room (WESR)¹⁷ will be a flagship implementation of GEDS. The WESR, envisioned as a federated environmental data platform, is currently undergoing a redesign phase to enhance user-centricity and technical robustness. It aims to federate all major environmental data resources and platforms onto a unified data architecture, enabling seamless data discovery, visualization, and analysis based on GEDS framework. The WESR's architecture is being developed concurrently with the identification and prototyping of use cases, ensuring tangible impacts on national policies, financial decisions, supply chains, and consumer behaviors. Furthermore, rigorous testing and implementation of data policies, standards, governance, and interoperability frameworks will be conducted within the WESR.

Under the United Nations General Assembly Resolution 73/284¹⁸, UNEP and the Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations (FAO) had been mandated to co-lead the United Nations Decade on Ecosystem Restoration, with the aim of supporting and scaling up efforts to prevent, halt and reverse the degradation of ecosystems worldwide and raise awareness of the importance of successful ecosystem restoration. The adoption of the Kunming-Montreal Global Biodiversity Framework has sparked new momentum in the restoration movement, providing a tangible target of 30% of degraded ecosystems to be under effective restoration by 2030 (Target 2). The 17 initiatives selected after the UN Decade launched its first call for countries to nominate their World Restoration Flagship initiatives in the lead-up to UNEA-5.2 were presented at CBD COP 15 and UNEA-6. The aim is to restore over 158 million ha and create 15.5 million jobs by 2030 as a contribution to achieving Target 2. The UN Decade's Framework for Ecosystem Restoration Monitoring (FERM) has been developed in line with the Target 2 headline indicator methodology to accelerate reporting by providing a framework for compiling areas under restoration across all ecosystems. The Standards of Practice to Guide Ecosystem Restoration were officially launched in September 2023 to assist restoration implementers with developing restoration projects that reflect the UN Decade principles and maximize benefits for nature and people. The UN Decade Action Plan, launched in 2023, sets out the next steps to collectively work towards the goals and vision of the UN Decade, coordinating work for the UN Decade's 280+ partners. Moving from strategy to action, the Action Plan aims to mobilize all stakeholders around key priority areas for restoration and set in motion a wave of activity to protect and restore ecosystems and make peace with nature. All Parties and stakeholders can join the global movement on restoration and act to accelerate progress on the implementation of the UN Decade, as means to synergistically achieve the Framework, the Paris agreement and the SDGs. Further information on the progress of the United Nations Decade on Ecosystem Restoration has been made available to COP 16 as an information document.

CBD COP 16 information document on the Progress of the United Nations Decade on Ecosystem Restoration 2021–2030, providing more details and information on the related activities, has been submitted by co-lead agencies in addition to the current document.

UNEP continues to provide technical support to Member States on the application of economic methods to value nature's contribution to people (i.e. ecosystem services) to make the economic case for biodiversity conservation. The recently closed EU-funded project on TEEBAgriFood ('The Economics of Ecosystems

¹⁵UNEP/EA.4/Res.23: <https://wedocs.unep.org/bitstream/handle/20.500.11822/28486/K1901170.pdf?sequence=3&isAllowed=y>

¹⁶<https://wedocs.unep.org/bitstream/handle/20.500.11822/45310/18-April-SubCo-AgendaItem4-backgrounddoc.pdf?sequence=1&isAllowed=y>

¹⁷<https://data.unep.org/app/>

¹⁸A/RES/73/284: <https://documents.un.org/doc/undoc/gen/n19/060/16/pdf/n1906016.pdf>

for Agriculture and Food') across seven countries led to the launch of the Brazilian National Program for Urban and Peri-urban Agriculture promoting food security, socioeconomic development and climate resilience. UNEP contributed to the National Program (Federal Decree 11, 700/2023) and the Food and Nutritional Security Strategy for Cities (Federal Decree 11,822/2023). In India, UNEP provided support in three States making the economic case for organic and agroforestry. The Research Advisory Committee of the Indian Institute of Farming Systems Research (IIFSR) has recommended the application of the TEEB AgriFood Framework via the All-India Network on Organic Farming (AINOF). Further, the TEEB approach is to be included in the syllabus of undergraduate program of the Indian Council of Agricultural Research's (ICAR) on Natural Farming, expected to be included in 51 State Agricultural Universities by the end of 2024.

UNEP also continues to provide technical support to Member States through the Global Partnership on Nutrient Management. Since January 2024, four webinars have been organized to support the work of the UNEP Working Group on Nitrogen¹⁹. In addition, UNEP is currently supporting Sri Lanka and Trinidad and Tobago on the development of National Action Plans on sustainable nitrogen management, contributing to the implementation of Target 7 of the Framework.

UNEP also continues to support Member States in developing national source inventories of plastic to inform actions/roadmaps/strategies, through the project “Capacity Development to Catalyze Actions and Commitments at the National and Global Level to Reduce Plastic Pollution, including in the Marine Environment”, contributing to the implementation of Target 7. Through the Global Partnership on Plastic Pollution and Marine Litter Digital Platform, countries including Tuvalu, Kiribati, Vanuatu, Fiji, Papua New Guinea, Tonga, Samoa, Solomon Islands, Trinidad and Tobago, Mauritius, Tanzania, Togo, Guinea, Cote d'Ivoire, Senegal, South Africa, Peru, Ecuador and Cambodia have so far benefitted from this initiative.

UNEP continues to support Albania, Algeria, Bosnia and Herzegovina, Egypt, Lebanon, Libya, Montenegro, Morocco, Tunisia and Turkey, through the *FishEBM MED project*²⁰, co-implemented with FAO. Funded by the GEF with USD 7.27 million and co-financing of USD 72 million, this Mediterranean regional project aims to reverse the over-exploitation of select commercial marine resources by enhancing the capacity of Mediterranean countries to manage fisheries using ecosystem-based management tools in their blue economy development. The project will contribute to biodiversity conservation by promoting sustainable fishing practices, protecting critical marine habitats, and restoring degraded ecosystems to ensure the long-term health and resilience of marine biodiversity. Executed by the General Fisheries Commission for the Mediterranean (GFCM) and the Barcelona Convention, the project supports the attainment of target 10 on enhancing biodiversity and sustainability in fisheries, as well as Target 2 of the Framework.

UNEP, through the GEF International Waters portfolio and working in partnership with Maldives, Thailand and Trinidad and Tobago, received approval for the integrated program *Clean and Healthy Oceans Integrated Program*²¹ to address the critical challenge of nutrient pollution. Nutrient pollution, particularly excess nutrients (eutrophication), combined with the effects of climate change, is a major contributor to marine hypoxia—a growing environmental crisis that leads to biodiversity loss, degraded ecosystem services, and significant socio-economic harm. This program will play a crucial role in conserving and protecting marine biodiversity by mitigating the impacts of eutrophication, reducing harmful algal blooms, and preventing further oxygen depletion in marine environments.

¹⁹<https://www.unep.org/nitrogen-management-WG>

²⁰<https://www.thegef.org/projects-operations/projects/10560>

²¹<https://www.thegef.org/projects-operations/projects/11349>

UNEP continues to support Burundi, Congo DR, Tanzania, and Zambia through the *Lake Tanganyika project*²², which aims to enhance transboundary cooperation and implement the Strategic Action Plan (SAP) by promoting sustainable fisheries co-management, biodiversity conservation, and the restoration of degraded landscapes in key biodiversity areas of Lake Tanganyika. Funded by the GEF with USD 14.6 million and co-financing of USD 60.8 million, the project is executed in partnership with the Lake Tanganyika Authority, national ministries, IUCN, and The Nature Conservancy (TNC). The project will address transboundary threats to lake biodiversity by establishing at least two community-based fisheries co-management areas in each participating country. These areas will collectively conserve and protect at least 1,000 hectares of the lake's key fish spawning and nursery grounds. By the end of the project, illegal fishing activities in these areas are expected to decrease by 50%, contributing significantly to the conservation and protection of Lake Tanganyika's marine biodiversity.

UNEP successfully concluded the implementation of the *CFI-WA project*²³, which had been co-implemented with FAO since July 2018. The objective of CFI-WA was to strengthen fisheries governance, management, and value chains through the application of an ecosystem approach to fisheries, the adoption of relevant international instruments and the establishment of innovative governance partnerships in three West African countries: Cabo Verde, Côte d'Ivoire, and Senegal. This USD 6.4 million initiative not only expanded the total area of sustainably managed, restored, and safeguarded mangroves in Côte d'Ivoire and Senegal to 700 hectares but it also heightened awareness among 718 locals in these countries about the importance of healthy mangroves for better fisheries value chains. These and other significant outcomes have allowed CFI-WA to contribute to several SDGs related to life below water, as well as to the targets of the Kunming-Montreal Global Biodiversity Framework, such as Target 2 on the restoration of degraded ecosystems and Target 10 on enhancing biodiversity and sustainability in fisheries.

2. Monitoring framework of the Kunming-Montreal Global Biodiversity Framework (Decision 15/5)

UNEP-WCMC supports the operationalization of the monitoring framework in a number of ways. Technical, scientific, and logistical support is provided directly to the Ad Hoc Technical Expert Group (AHTEG) on indicators, as mandated at COP 15 to further develop the monitoring framework, to address gaps in the framework, and to assess Parties needs for use of the indicators of the monitoring framework. UNEP-WCMC hosts the metadata for the indicators of the monitoring framework, recently updated by the AHTEG on indicators. By making the metadata accessible to Parties, UNEP-WCMC is supporting the use of the headline indicators at national level. Further support will be provided directly to Parties to better manage the data and information for national monitoring, review and reporting, via the National Monitoring Support Initiative, which aims to enhance national capacity for monitoring implementation of the Framework, by 2030.

UNEP-WCMC was further requested by the AHTEG on indicators to assess national capacity for use of the headline indicators of the monitoring framework²⁴. The summary of the assessment of national needs is available as part of the suite of information for SBSTTA-26²⁵. Capacity needs for national monitoring are further assessed and guidance on how to establish national monitoring systems is provided by UNEP-WCMC through Component 2 of the GEF7 Early Action Support Project.

The UN Biodiversity Lab²⁶ (UNBL) managed by UNEP-WCMC and developed through collaboration between UNEP and UNDP, supports country-led efforts to use spatial data and analytic tools to generate insight for monitoring different relevant indicators of the Framework that are based on spatial data. The

²²<https://www.thegef.org/projects-operations/projects/10388>

²³<https://www.thegef.org/projects-operations/projects/9126>

²⁴<https://www.cbd.int/notifications/2024-030>

²⁵<https://www.cbd.int/meetings/SBSTTA-26>

²⁶<https://unbiodiversitylab.org/en/>

UNBL provides access to over 400 datasets and support Parties in the development of their evidence-based planning, monitoring, and reporting on the state of our planet's vital biodiversity and ecosystems.

The Target Tracker²⁷, which visualizes progress toward the goals and targets of the Kunming-Montreal Global Biodiversity Framework, at national and global levels, is a further tool that can be used by Parties to implement the monitoring framework. The data in the Target Tracker will feed into the CBD Online Reporting Tool²⁸, to allow Parties to use the data directly in their national reports of progress towards the Framework, as appropriate.

The Freshwater Ecosystems Explorer²⁹ provides technical assistance for the monitoring of lakes, rivers, and wetlands, including mangroves. This tool provides real-time data to monitor changes in freshwater ecosystems, as defined by SDG 6.6.1. As a "2020 target" of the SDGs, UNEP has held multiple technical sessions on how SDG 6.6.1 can assist countries in monitoring and achieving the Framework's Targets 2 and 3. A technical session was organized at CBD SBSTTA in May 2024 in Nairobi, and a Water Day being planned at COP 16 on October 25th. UNEP will be providing updates on the Freshwater Ecosystems Explorer online system monitoring progress on SDG target 6.6 through a new Global Wetlands Watch and is seeking to make stronger links to the NBSAP accelerator partnership and platform.

In addition to these activities, UNEP-WCMC also works directly on specific indicators to monitor implementation of the Framework at multiple scales. Notably, UNEP-WCMC is the custodian agency for the headline indicator for Target 3, on the coverage of Protected Areas and Other Effective Area-Based Conservation Measures (OECMs). UNEP-WCMC has delivered this indicator on a monthly basis throughout 2023 and 2024 via <http://www.protectedplanet.net/>. In line with CBD COP Decisions (including Decisions 14/8³⁰ and 13/2³¹), UNEP-WCMC works with Parties to regularly update the data underpinning this indicator. UNEP-WCMC, in collaboration with the Forest Peoples Programme also hosted an expert workshop on traditional knowledge indicators. This work includes an indicator on participation in decision-making of indigenous peoples and local communities.

UNEP-WCMC has also developed a draft indicator methodology on the national implementation for the Gender Plan of Action, which is a component indicator in the monitoring framework. The methodology is being co-developed with Parties to the CBD and relevant organizations and will be ready for use by COP 16.

Support on implementation and use of the Monitoring Framework was available throughout SBSTTA25 and SBSTTA 26 at the Early Action Support helpdesk (supported by UNEP-WCMC, UNEP and UNDP). At COP 16 UNEP-WCMC continues to collaborate with colleagues in UNEP and UNDP through hosting help desk/information booth on the National Monitoring Support Initiative, NBSAP Accelerator Partnership, GEF7 Early Action Support, and GEF8 NBSAP Updates and 7th National Reports to raise awareness about the initiatives and aid collaboration between the initiatives/projects.

UNEP is providing co-financing to the Group on Earth Observation to develop the Global Ecosystem Atlas³² as a direct contribution to the monitoring framework of the Kunming-Montreal Global Biodiversity Framework. The Global Ecosystems Atlas will bring together high-quality global, regional and national ecosystem maps into a single, open, online resource. Presenting the extent, structure and function of the

²⁷<https://target-tracker.org/en>

²⁸<https://ort.cbd.int/>

²⁹<https://www.sdg661.app/>

³⁰CBD/COP/DEC/14/8: <https://www.cbd.int/doc/decisions/cop-14/cop-14-dec-08-en.pdf>

³¹CBD/COP/DEC/XII/2: <https://www.cbd.int/doc/decisions/cop-13/cop-13-dec-02-en.pdf>

³²<https://earthobservations.org/solutions/incubators/global-ecosystems-atlas>

world's ecosystems in unprecedented detail, the Atlas will enable everyone—from governments to individual citizens—to take action to protect nature.

Headline indicators of the Kunming-Montreal Global Biodiversity Framework related to SDG indicators are reflected in the Data and Reporting Tool for MEAs (DaRT)³³. As a trial initiative, DaRT made data for six global headline indicators disaggregated to the national level accessible for national governments to utilize in their reporting. This data is imported from UNEP's data resources³⁴ and DaRT allows for the direct download for further processing according to countries' needs. Based on positive reception of the function, the number of available indicators will be extended with a focus on indicators used for the Framework, allowing countries to bridge data-gaps for upcoming national reports to MEAs.

3. Mechanisms for planning, monitoring, reporting and review (Decision 15/6)

Early Action Support

Under the GEF-funded Global Biodiversity Framework Early Action Support project (GEF-EAS), UNEP and UNDP are supporting a total of 138 countries (UNEP 69 Parties; UNDP 69 Parties) to fast-track efforts to align their NBSAPs and national targets with the Kunming-Montreal Global Biodiversity Framework. This support is focused on four components, namely a) aligning NBSAPs and national targets; b) assessing national monitoring systems and developing monitoring action plans; c) advancing policy coherence across sectors in alignment with the Framework; and d) biodiversity finance.

In the first three quarters of 2023, UNEP convened three regional inception and technical support workshops for Anglophone Africa (Nairobi, May 2023); Asia Pacific and Eastern Europe (Istanbul, May 2023) and Francophone Africa (Dakar, July 2023). These workshops served to sensitize Parties about the GEF-EAS project, facilitate peer to peer learning and promote South-South cooperation.

UNEP has provided further technical support to GEF-EAS project countries through the preparation and dissemination of technical resources, including guidance documents, a webinar series and provision of one-to-one assistance, to develop national capacities on the four focus areas of the GEF-funded project. These resources and webinar recordings have been made available on the NBSAP Forum website³⁵.

In collaboration with United Nations Conference on Trade and Development, United Nations University, UN-Habitat, International Fund for Agricultural Development and World Health Organization, UNEP prepared a set of policy briefs³⁶, ³⁷, ³⁸, ³⁹ to help national focal points understand various contributions these agencies can make for implementing the Framework. These documents were shared with the participants of the NBSAP regional workshop organized by UNEP.

Contributing to the GEF-EAS, UNEP prepared the following documents to help countries prepare for revising/updating their NBSAPs and set national targets in response to the Framework, and establishing national monitoring systems for enhanced monitoring and reporting:

- a. A checklist of key elements, thematic and cross-cutting issues that countries consider while updating the NBSAPs⁴⁰

³³<https://dart.informeia.org/strategy>

³⁴<https://www.unep.org/data-resources?page=0>

³⁵<https://www.learningfornature.org/en/nbsap-forum/forums/gef-early-action-support-project/>

³⁶<https://wedocs.unep.org/bitstream/handle/20.500.11822/43206/IFADFM1.pdf?sequence=1&isAllowed=y>

³⁷<https://wedocs.unep.org/bitstream/handle/20.500.11822/43208/UNUSGBD.pdf?sequence=1&isAllowed=y>

³⁸<https://wedocs.unep.org/bitstream/handle/20.500.11822/43237/Supporting implementation global biodiversity UNCTAD.pdf?sequence=1&isAllowed=y>

³⁹<https://wedocs.unep.org/bitstream/handle/20.500.11822/43236/Supporting implementation global biodiversity.pdf?sequence=1&isAllowed=y>

⁴⁰<https://wedocs.unep.org/handle/20.500.11822/45470>

- b. Guide on undertaking rapid assessment of existing NBSAPs, including undertaking gap analyses of NBSAPs with new targets⁴¹
- c. Guidance on undertaking a whole of society approach to implement the Framework⁴²
- d. Undertaking policy coherence for effective updating of NBSAPs⁴³
- e. Guidance on developing national monitoring systems⁴⁴ (led by UNEP-WCMC)
- f. The Data Reporting Tool (DaRT) for MEAs and the Compendia of Guidance⁴⁵ for NBSAP alignment, knowledge management and harmonized reporting

Further, UNEP collaborated with the CBD secretariat, the Secretariat of the Pacific Regional Environment Programme (SPREP), the Government of Fiji, as well as FAO in organizing the Sub-regional Dialogue on NBSAPs for Pacific Island countries⁴⁶, in Nadi, Fiji from 18 - 26 March 2024. The dialogue was composed of three segments, the first part focused specifically on the knowledge sharing and exchange on NBSAPs, the part focused on Target 3 of the Kunming-Montreal Global Biodiversity Framework, and the third part focused on the UNEP-GEF Early Action Support programme. The dialogue, which was attended by 15 countries from the Pacific region, along with the representatives from the UN, other IGOs, NGOs, youth, and civil society, contributed towards the sharing of experiences and mutual learning related to the updating and revision of NBSAPs as well as providing information to countries on existing tools and initiatives that can support their efforts towards implementing the Framework. While UNEP team contributed to and supported the first two parts of the Dialogue, UNEP led the organization of the third part of the Dialogue, that took part on 25 - 26 March 2024 focused on the GEF-EAS project, with the objective to provide technical support for the implementation of the project, including addressing questions that countries in the region may have about the implementation of the project.

In addition, and at the invitation of the CBD Secretariat, UNEP co-hosted two parallel regional dialogues on NBSAPs for African countries⁴⁷ in collaboration with the CBD Secretariat and the Institute for Sustainable Development of the Francophonie on May 30 to June 2 shortly after SBSTTA 26/SBI-4 meeting. The dialogues are part of a series of regional and sub-regional dialogues being convened by the Secretariat in 2023 and 2024 to facilitate the sharing of experiences and mutual learning related to the revision and updating of NBSAPs, including national targets, in alignment with the Kunming-Montreal Global Biodiversity Framework, as requested of Parties in Decision 15/6.

The Freshwater Challenge, a member-state-led initiative launched at the CBD COP 15 in Montreal and expanded at a ministerial roundtable at UNFCCC COP 28, currently comprises 46 countries. Together, these countries aim to protect, restore, and conserve 300,000 km of rivers and 350 million hectares of wetlands to accelerate national implementation of global biodiversity, climate, and sustainable development goals.

Enhanced multidimensional approach to planning, monitoring, reporting and review

In addition to the NBSAP update as a key tool for planning, monitoring and review, UNEP is in the process of initiating actions and support to 139 Parties to prepare their 7th CBD National Reports. UNEP is currently in discussion to prepare proposals for the 5th Biosafety National Reports and the 1st ABS National Reports. All the reports in line with COP Decision 13/27⁴⁸ for harmonised reporting are due by 28 February 2026.

⁴¹<https://wedocs.unep.org/handle/20.500.11822/45468>

⁴²<https://wedocs.unep.org/handle/20.500.11822/45469>

⁴³<https://wedocs.unep.org/handle/20.500.11822/45471>

⁴⁴https://docs.google.com/document/d/1W4VkJTyq-yP9X8-py2HNG_HqTVSW23Fm/edit#heading=h.gjdgx

⁴⁵<https://dart.informea.org/compendia>

⁴⁶<https://www.cbd.int/meetings/NBSAP-OM-2024-03>

⁴⁷<http://www.cbd.int/doc/?meeting=NBSAP-OM-2024-6>

⁴⁸CBD/COP/DEC/XIII/27: <https://www.cbd.int/doc/decisions/cop-13/cop-13-dec-27-en.pdf>

The Data and Reporting Tool for MEAs (DaRT)⁴⁹ continued to be rolled out to support NBSAPs alignment. Further mandated by several COP 15 Decisions⁵⁰, critical developments and activities took place for DaRT over the last twenty months. Following the adoption of the Kunming-Montreal Global Biodiversity Framework, priority was given to supporting CBD Parties to fast-track the revision and alignment of their NBSAPs during dedicated workshops, helpdesks and webinars funded by GEF GBF Early Action Support Project (GBF-EAS), European Union, Switzerland, Sweden, and the Environment Fund under two ongoing UNEP projects⁵¹. Based on interest expressed by Parties inception workshops organized by UNEP GBF-EAS in 2023⁵² and a series of webinars⁵³, a first regional workshop for the Central African Forests Commission (COMIFAC) countries was held in April 2024 in collaboration with Cameroon. Two DaRT national workshops were organized at the request of the governments of China⁵⁴ and Nigeria, in September and November 2023⁵⁵. As a result, both countries indicated their intention to utilize the DaRT for the preparation of CBD 7th national report. The use of DaRT was further promoted during MEA governing bodies meetings: at SBSTTA-25, UNEA-6, and CMS COP 14 and COP 16 of the Cartagena Convention.

At the request of the Ministry of Environment, Science, Technology and Innovation (MESTI) of the Republic of Ghana, UNEP organized a DaRT training workshop in Ghana on 20 - 22 August. As a result of the workshop, Ghana streamlined its new NBSAP targets, which were submitted to the CBD Secretariat on August 1, 2024. Ghana was introduced to Women4Biodiversity and the UNEP-WCMC Gender Index for calculating target 23 of the Framework⁵⁶, and to UNDP's NBSAP Target Similarity Assessment Tool⁵⁷. As Ghana intends to use DaRT to meet its reporting obligations and set a standard for other countries facing similar challenges, it has requested additional capacity building support from UNEP.

Strong collaboration of DaRT within UNEP, with UNEP-WCMC and MEAs allowed for key technical developments supporting users, parties, and secretariats. DaRT's latest technical enhancements primarily aim to support Parties bridging data gaps for national reports to MEAs and visualize linkages of MEA strategic plans with the Framework and SDGs. The DaRT website was revamped in April 2024, where national data for 6 global indicators adopted for the Kunming-Montreal Global Biodiversity Framework are now directly imported and visualized in national working spaces for all Parties. Based on the positive feedback from DaRT users, additional indicators and data disaggregated to the national level will be displayed in the national DaRT working spaces. To enable users to tag contents with taxonomic terms, interoperability with the Global Biodiversity Information Facility (GBIF) has also been established. DaRT users can now use the Compendia⁵⁸ – an open online library developed with UNEP-WCMC launched in all UN languages to access guidance and global and regional biodiversity data. Following the upgrade of the Online Reporting Tool (ORT)⁵⁹ and its presentation during SBSTTA-26, the DaRT team has prepared a draft mini manual to show how DaRT can facilitate the compilation of CBD 7th National Report. Further

⁴⁹<https://dart.informeia.org/about>

⁵⁰CBD COP-15 notably invited the governing bodies of other biodiversity-related conventions and relevant MEAs to use DaRT to support the implementation of GBF. CBD COP 15 also requested the Executive Secretary to facilitate the use of DaRT for Mechanisms for planning, monitoring, reporting and review (CBD/COP/DEC/15/6), biodiversity data and knowledge-management CBD/COP/15/16; and monitoring framework (CBD/COP/DEC/15/5). More specifically, UNEP was invited to continue enhancing synergies in reporting for Parties through DaRT (CBD/COP/15/13). These decisions serve as a basis to further develop and roll-out of DaRT in countries which are parties to biodiversity-related conventions.

⁵¹“Leveraging transformational change through coherent and synergistic implementation of Environmental Treaties (Treaties II)” and “Scaling Up Actions to Realize Synergies for Biodiversity.”

⁵²All of which the DaRT team participated in: Nairobi and Istanbul (May 2023), and Lomé (June 2023).

⁵³Session #5: NBSAP alignment: Tools and technical support: <https://www.learningfornature.org/en/courses/gef-early-action-support-webinar-series-webinar-5-national-target-alignment-tools-and-technical-support/> (September 2023).

⁵⁴<https://www.unep-wcmc.org/en/news/chinas-national-biodiversity-leads-come-together-for-first-time-to-explore-new-reporting-tool>

⁵⁵Respectively in collaboration with the Nanjing Institute of Environmental Sciences (NIES), Ministry of Ecology and Environment (MEE) and UNEP-WCMC, and with the Federal Ministry of the Environment, Department of Forestry of Nigeria.

⁵⁶<https://www.unep-wcmc.org/en/news/call-for-peer-review-from-parties-and-observers-to-improve-monitoring-of-progress-towards-gender-responsive-implementation-of-the-biodiversity-plan>

⁵⁷<https://www.learningfornature.org/wp-content/uploads/2020/07/Target-Similarity-Assessment-Tool-Presentation-GM-final.pdf>

⁵⁸<https://dart.informeia.org/compendia>

⁵⁹<https://ort.cbd.int/>

information on the development and roll-out of DaRT has been made available to COP 16 as an information document.

4. Resource mobilization and financial mechanism (Decisions 15/7 and 15/15)

The Global Fund for Coral Reefs (GFCR) is a blended finance instrument to mobilise action and resources to protect and restore coral reef ecosystems and is the first global UN fund dedicated specifically to delivering SDG 14. The GFCR is working on 17 programmes in 23 countries with an innovative blended public-private finance approach for supporting reef positive businesses that address drivers of coral reef degradation. UNEP has supported the GFCR's resource mobilization efforts in key international conferences and events.

UNEP and UNDP have mobilised resources to support GEF Eligible Parties countries in GEF 8 to update and align their NBSAPs with the Kunming-Montreal Global Biodiversity Framework. The resources will assist parties and also provide technical support/tools to facilitate the process.

Funding mobilization for the Freshwater Challenge is currently underway among the coalition's core partners, which comprise World Wildlife Fund, The Nature Conservancy, IUCN, Conservation International, Ramsar Convention, UNEP and others.

National Monitoring Support (also Decision 15/5)

The National Monitoring Support initiative aims to provide technical support to countries to enhance national capacity for monitoring the implementation of the Kunming-Montreal Global Biodiversity Framework. Following the capacity needs survey undertaken for the AHTEG on indicators⁶⁰, ten countries were identified as having met a set of specific criteria for priority support. These criteria include countries that are OECD-ODA eligible: those that are known to need capacity development to support monitoring of national implementation of the Framework, or those that can play a role in sharing expertise and information at the regional level. So far, two of the ten selected countries have formally confirmed their participation in the initiative (Mexico and Uganda), and one regional agency (the ASEAN Centre for Biodiversity). Countries are currently establishing national actions for project implementation.

NBSAP Accelerator Partnership (also Decision 15/6)

The NBSAP Accelerator Partnership was announced in December 2022, now with more than 50 members committed to upholding the NBSAP Accelerator Partnership's 10 guiding principles⁶¹. The NBSAP Accelerator Partnership's operational launch took place at the margins of the UN General Assembly in September 2023, alongside its first interim Steering Committee meeting⁶². Since this launch, there have been additional Steering Committee meetings and the establishment of a Global Coordination Unit with staff from CBD Secretariat, UNDP and UNEP, with presence at key dialogues and events and strong partnership foundations established.

The NBSAP Accelerator Partnerships Facilitator Programme⁶³ will place 24 national or regional facilitators funded by the International Climate Initiative (IKI), endorsed and hosted by relevant ministries or regional institutions to support and fast-track NBSAP implementation. The first cohort were officially announced at a side event and reception⁶⁴ during UNEA-6 and include Colombia, the Democratic Republic of Congo,

⁶⁰<https://www.cbd.int/notifications/2024-030>

⁶¹<https://drive.google.com/file/d/17PchM1-gYZUReMGBUoh4MI54O7ggkQQH/view>

⁶²https://docs.google.com/document/d/16IYYRSENrZnUnVgk_wUMohSlkUONrn/edit

⁶³<https://drive.google.com/file/d/1FohDLFD7YtKXuEvWSwy3rysvw9qL7PS3/view>

⁶⁴https://nbsapaccelerator.org/news_and_events/accelerating-implementation-of-the-global-biodiversity-framework-supporting-countries-early-actions/

Ecuador, Georgia, Kazakhstan, Kenya, Mozambique, Panama, the Philippines, Sierra Leone, Sri Lanka and Vanuatu. An Expression of Interest for the second cohort of 12 facilitator host countries will be announced at COP 16.

The NBSAP Accelerator Partnership is developing a matchmaking service - an online platform with in-person support to accelerate country access to technical assistance, financial resources and knowledge services across the 23 targets of the Kunming-Montreal Global Biodiversity Framework. Initial priorities engaged CBD parties to understand their Framework-related needs and priorities through a “Rapid Capacity Needs Assessment⁶⁵” and a “Synthesis of progress on early action⁶⁶”. Early requests from countries are project-based which will build up after launching at COP 16 to include sectoral, target based and NBSAP wide requests.

Under the umbrella of the NBSAP Accelerator Partnership, the Federal Ministry for Economic Cooperation and Development of Germany (BMZ) and the Norwegian Agency for Development Cooperation (NORAD) are co-funding the Deutsche Gesellschaft für Internationale Zusammenarbeit (GIZ) to deliver an NBSAP support programme to enhance country capacities to implement national biodiversity targets aligned with the Framework and support priority measures to achieve the national goals, with work in eight countries including Brazil, Colombia, DRC, Indonesia, Laos, Madagascar, Namibia, and Peru. GIZ countries and IKI facilitator hosts came together during CBD SBI-4⁶⁷.

Responding to Framework’s targets related to financing, UNEP undertook the following activities in support of enhancing capacities of the Parties to deal with biodiversity finance. (i) Undertook a study on assessing the biodiversity financing architecture⁶⁸, (ii) prepared a report, focusing on the Caribbean region, on biodiversity financing options – including options for integrated (climate, nature and ocean finance) financing approaches and principles⁶⁹, (iii) organized a Caribbean regional consultation on financing⁷⁰, (iv) established an Africa regional capacity development platform for biodiversity financing⁷¹, ⁷² and (v) organized a webinar series on biodiversity financing. In addition, a glossary of terms for non-experts, a technical note on blended finance options were prepared.

5. Capacity-building and development, technical and scientific cooperation, clearing-house mechanism and knowledge management (Decisions 15/8 and 15/16)

UNEP is coordinating the implementation of an EC-UNEP partnership programme (ACP MEAs)⁷³, which addresses challenging environmental issues in the African, Caribbean and the Pacific (ACP) regions. This programme builds national and institutional capacities, processes, and infrastructure in the 79 ACP countries to enforce and comply with MEAs including those related to biodiversity, and to improve national legal frameworks, including legislations, and mechanisms, for the effective implementation MEAs. The CBD Secretariat is part of the extended partners of the Programme and implements activities under the Programme related to the Convention. It also provides information on developments and activities happening under the convention to other implementing partners in the conduct of their activities.

⁶⁵<https://www.cbd.int/doc/c/11de/5df8/377614b9edf75bda378ce9dd/nbsap-accelerator-capacityneedsassessment-sbi-04-en.pdf>

⁶⁶<https://www.cbd.int/doc/c/08bc/2d1d/6eb324e32a8116ed2f618736/synthesis-progress-national-targets-sbi-04-en.pdf>

⁶⁷https://nbsapaccelerator.org/news_and_events/bridging-the-gap-knowledge-exchange-for-nbsap-acceleration/

⁶⁸<https://wedocs.unep.org/xmlui/bitstream/handle/20.500.11822/44271/Understanding%20Blended%20Finance%20in%20the%20Lens%20of%20Integrated%20Financing.pdf?sequence=1&isAllowed=y>

⁶⁹<https://www.unep.org/events/working-group-meeting/caribbean-regional-consultation-meeting-integrated-financing-and>

⁷⁰https://wedocs.unep.org/bitstream/handle/20.500.11822/45416/Workshop%20Report_Jamaica%20Meeting%20on%20Integrated%20Financin%202023.pdf?sequence=1&isAllowed=y

⁷¹<https://www.afdb.org/en/news-and-events/press-releases/african-development-bank-un-environment-programme-partner-drive-implementation-kunming-montreal-global-biodiversity-framework-africa-63443>

⁷²<https://wedocs.unep.org/bitstream/handle/20.500.11822/43204/CTAWFBP.pdf?sequence=1&isAllowed=y>

⁷³<https://www.acpmeas.com/>

In the Caribbean, CARICOM Secretariat in partnership with the CBD Secretariat, held a subregional dialogue in April 2024⁷⁴, on NBSAPs for Caribbean countries as an opportunity for Caribbean Countries to share experiences and lessons learned in the revision and/or updating of NBSAPs, including good practices and ways and means to address challenges in this regard. The subregional dialogue will also contribute to the further piloting of the open-ended forum for the voluntary country review of implementation⁶⁵, under the Subsidiary Body on Implementation. A technical study on how countries have responded to the main capacity needs in the three ACP regions is currently underway and will support key technical and scientific cooperation programmes and initiatives in the three ACP regions.

In the African region, the African Union Commission in partnership with the Secretariat of the Organization of the Africa, Caribbean and Pacific States (OACPS) organized a High-Level Conference on the implementation of the outcomes of the CBD COP 15 which was held in June 2023⁷⁵. The outcomes of the conference included the development of an action plan that will support and drive effective implementation of the Framework, including actions to ensure adequate capacity building and resource mobilization from both public and private sectors; and ensure alignment, synergies, and complementarity in financing, developing, and implementing the national biodiversity strategies and action plans.

Upon invitation from the CBD secretariat, UNEP Asia and the Pacific Office and UNEP-WCMC contributed to a series of subregional dialogues on NBSAPs, held by the CBD Secretariat in collaboration with partners in Asia-Pacific region, including: 1) Sub-regional NBSAP Dialogue for ASEAN and Timor-Leste⁷⁶, held by the CBD Secretariat in collaboration with the ASEAN Centre for Biodiversity in Manila, the Philippines from 14 - 17 August 2023; and 2) NBSAP Dialogue for South and East Asia⁷⁷, held by the CBD Secretariat with the support of the Ministry of the Environment of Japan and the United Nations University in Tokyo from 23 - 26 January 2024.

The dialogue successfully brought together participants from environmental as well as agricultural sectors, with support provided by both FAO and the International Treaty for Plant Genetic Resources for Food and Agriculture (ITPGRFA), which contributed to facilitating cross-sectoral dialogues and collaboration in NBSAP-related processes. Furthermore, the dialogue benefited from active engagement with, and contributions from the secretariats of other biodiversity-related MEA, which was facilitated by UNEP, including the Convention on International Trade in Endangered Species of Wild Fauna and Flora (CITES), the Convention on Migratory Species (CMS) and the Ramsar Convention.

Upon invitation from the CBD Secretariat, UNEP West Asia Office contributed to Regional NBSAP Dialogue for the countries in the Middle East and North Africa in Amman, Jordan from 16 - 19 January 2024⁷⁸. Upon invitation from the member countries, namely, United Arab Emirates and Kingdom of Saudi Arabia, UNEP West Asia Office contributed to, including technical review of the goals and targets: 1) National NBSAP dialogue held in Dubai from 22 - 24 August 2023⁷⁹ and 2) National NBSAP dialogue held in Riyadh from 9 - 10 July 2024⁸⁰.

UNEP West Asia conducted a training of Negotiation Skills during the League of Arab States' 21st technical meeting of the "Arab Working Group on the implementation of biodiversity and desertification

⁷⁴<https://www.cbd.int/meetings/NBSAP-OM-2024-05>

⁷⁵<https://au.int/en/news/20230530/africa-caribbean-and-pacific-conference-implementation-outcomes-cbd-COP-15-and>

⁷⁶<https://www.cbd.int/meetings/NBSAP-OM-2023-01>

⁷⁷<https://www.cbd.int/doc/notifications/2023/ntf-2023-114-nbsap-en.pdf>

⁷⁸<https://www.cbd.int/meetings/NBSAP-OM-2024-01>

⁷⁹<https://www.emirates247.com/uae/moccae-concludes-second-national-workshop-to-update-national-biodiversity-strategy-2031-2023-08-24-1.721188>

⁸⁰https://x.com/NCW_center/status/1810596274283987269

related Multilateral Environmental Agreements (MEAs)" on 14 May 2023 in Cairo, Egypt. This training was attended by 13 countries from the Arab region and 10 regional organizations.

Furthermore, a series of events and webinars have been convened by UNEP in collaboration with UNEP-WCMC and UNDP in the Asia-Pacific region. Those events include: a virtual side event on "Accelerating actions towards SDGs through the implementation of the Kunming-Montreal Global Biodiversity Framework"⁸¹, on 22 February 2024, at the 11th Asia-Pacific Forum for Sustainable Development; and a side event entitled, "Accelerating the Implementation of the Kunming-Montreal Global Biodiversity Framework"⁸², held on 5 October 2023, at the Fifth Forum of Ministers and Environment Authorities of Asia Pacific, Colombo, Sri Lanka, 3 - 6 October 2023, with inputs from the representatives of governments, Secretariats of CBD and CMS, SPREP and the private sector. These events showcased key initiatives in the Asia-Pacific region that contribute to accelerating national and regional level efforts towards implementing the Kunming-Montreal Global Biodiversity Framework and highlighted the importance of the linkage between the implementation of the Framework and achieving the SDGs.

UNEP Asia and the Pacific Office and the Coordinating Body on the Seas of East Asia (COBSEA) also contributed technically to the regional training on "Biodiversity Conservation and Human Well-being 2023"⁸³ organized by the SNRD Biodiversity Working Group in coordination with the SNRD Secretariat, IUCN and UNEP in Khao Yai National Park, Thailand from 23 - 26 October 2023. The course, attended by officials from governments around Southeast Asia, contributed to showcasing regional and national biodiversity efforts that support the implementation of the Kunming-Montreal Global Biodiversity Framework.

Under the Global Partnership on Plastic Pollution and Marine Litter Digital Platform, UNEP continues to showcase datasets that cut across the theme of plastic pollution and biodiversity through its Data Hub. Key data layers highlighted include: 1) floating microplastics, 2) mismanaged plastic waste escaping to beaches, oceans, and coasts, 3) plastic beach litter, and 4) protected marine key biodiversity areas. The platform also provides step-by-step guidance to develop a national source inventory, along with relevant knowledge materials, tools, and online technical capacity development sessions covering key plastic issues. National dashboards are currently being developed to provide country-specific narratives on the impacts of plastic pollution on biodiversity, using this data to inform effective policymaking and program formulation.

6. Digital sequence information on genetic resources (Decision 15/9)

UNEP-WCMC collaborated with the CBD Secretariat, and partnered with KPMG, to develop two studies around digital sequence information on genetic resources, in line with Decision 15/9 and made available for the Second meeting of the Ad Hoc Open-ended Working Group on Benefit-sharing from the Use of Digital Sequence Information on Genetic Resources⁸⁴.

In addition to the above, UNEP-WCMC in collaboration with the CBD Secretariat, has developed a scoping document as a contribution to discussions on the multilateral mechanism, in particular, on forward-looking aspects affecting the potential use of DSI that may be considered for its operationalization. This document has been made available to COP 16 as an information document.

⁸¹<https://www.unep.org/events/online-event/accelerating-actions-towards-sdgs-through-implementation-kunming-montreal>

⁸²<https://www.unep.org/environmentassembly/fifth-forum-ministers-and-environment-authorities-asia-pacific>

⁸³<https://snrd-asia.org/training-biodiversity-conservation-and-human-well-being/>

⁸⁴CBD/WGDSI/2/Add.2/Rev.1: <https://www.cbd.int/doc/c/3aac/54e5/ebc4b5a799de17da0ace0b80/wgdsi-02-02-add2-rev1-en.pdf> and CBD/WGDSI/2/INF/1: <https://www.cbd.int/doc/c/58d2/cd87/2ef418cca31155fb8d0a4f5/wgdsi-02-inf-01-en.pdf>

7. Development of a new programme of work and institutional arrangements on Article 8(j) and other provisions of the Convention related to indigenous peoples and local communities (Decision 15/10)

UNEP leads the GEF-funded planetGOLD programme⁸⁵, which aims to make Artisanal and Small-scale Gold Mining (ASGM) safer and cleaner. The planetGOLD programme sets out criteria for “Agreements and Engagement with Rightsholders in Artisanal and Small-scale Gold Mining”⁸⁶, requiring ASGM entities to consult with and seek free, prior, and informed consent (FPIC) from any Indigenous or tribal community whose rights or lands may be impacted. The planetGOLD programme acknowledges the right of Indigenous and tribal communities to withhold consent. In situations that do not involve Indigenous Peoples, the programme emphasizes the importance of inclusion through ongoing community consultation and agreement-making.

Gender Plan of Action (Decision 15/11)

UNEP-WCMC tested the indicator methodology on the national implementation of the Gender Plan of Action with a sample of Parties. The indicator has been welcomed as a useful tool that supports the implementation of the Gender Plan of Action implementation and tracking progress towards the three expected outcomes. This indicator supports the alignment of the GPA and national actions that contribute towards the achievement of Target 23 of the Kunming Montreal Global Biodiversity Framework.

8. Engagement with subnational governments, cities and other local authorities to enhance implementation of the Kunming-Montreal Global Biodiversity Framework (Decision 15/12)

In February 2024, UNEP, in partnership with UN Habitat, and in close coordination with the Mayor of Kota Kinabalu has started implementing the third phase of the action on “Enhancing Wastewater, Nutrient Management and Sanitation Provision for Marginalized Coastal Communities in Sabah, Malaysia”. The intervention is addressing the challenges of wastewater and nutrient pollution, as well as lack of sanitation provision that contribute to marine and freshwater degradation, poor human health, loss of biodiversity and socio-economic poverty. It focuses on the water village of Lok Urai, its community, and provides solutions and capacity opportunities for the local population and main stakeholders working on wastewater in the State of Sabah. This initiative is improving the capacities of the municipality of Kota Kinabalu to implement the Framework, especially Target 7 on pollution, and Target 14 on integrating biodiversity in decision-making at every level. It contributes to the implementation of the “Plan of Action on Subnational Governments, Cities and other Local Authorities for Biodiversity”, especially under action area 4 – Capacity Development.

9. Cooperation with other conventions and international organizations (Decision 15/13)

UNEP has developed an overarching strategy to supports its Member States and the Secretariat of the Convention on Biological Diversity to delivering on the Framework. This can be achieved through three main pathways of change:

- g. Strengthening political engagement and support to CBD Secretariat
- h. Galvanizing collective action in UN system to implement the Common Approach to Biodiversity and Nature-based Solutions
- i. Supporting Member States to accelerate direct implementation of national plans.

To deliver these pathways, UNEP supports a whole-of-society and systemic approach with a clear focus on value addition and impact through critical activities under its Medium-Term Strategy and Programme of Work 2022-2025, including its three core Sub-programmes, Nature Action, Climate Action and Chemicals and Pollution Action. UNEP’s critical activities to deliver impact include:

⁸⁵<https://www.planetgold.org/>

⁸⁶<https://www.planetgold.org/sites/default/files/planetGOLD%20Global.%202023.%20FPIC.pdf>

- j. Advocacy and engagement to generate political momentum and resources for implementation
- k. Building capacities for national planning, finance, action
- l. Increasing transparency and accountability including improved monitoring, reporting and review
- m. Enhancing cooperation and synergies across whole-of-government & society to ensure impact

UNEP's GBF Strategy identifies four Focus Areas in which their work can achieve maximum impact. These are:

- n. Sustainable and inclusive use of biodiversity
- o. Restore and enhance nature's contribution to people
- p. Public policy mainstreaming
- q. Finance and financial flows

UNEP has conducted a mapping of all 514 projects across its 13 Programme Coordination Projects (PCPs) to these four Focus Areas, which has revealed that 95% of its PCP projects contribute to one or more of these focus areas and has provided insights which can support UNEP to optimize its actions for impact.

UNEP convenes a GBF Working Group, which meets monthly, bringing people from across UNEP and UNEP-WCMC to discuss and input to UNEP's Framework-related work.

UNEP has developed a 'Roadmap to COP 16' strategy document, which was presented to the GBF Working Group and has received inputs from across UNEP, which identifies key areas and issues for UNEP support in the lead-up to and during CBD COP 16.

UNEP provides the Secretariat for the "*Bern Process*" which aims to strengthen cooperation and collaboration between biodiversity-relevant conventions, contributing to the effective and efficient implementation of the Kunming-Montreal Global Biodiversity Framework. It builds on lessons from Bern I⁸⁷ and Bern II⁸⁸ consultations on the post-2020 GBF and is recognized by CBD COP Decision 15/13 on "cooperation with other conventions and organisations."⁸⁹ Ultimately, the Bern Process supports a whole-of-society, whole-of-government approach to the implementation of the Framework by facilitating dialogue and exchange between Parties, secretariats of all relevant MEAs, as well as other stakeholders, aiming for synergistic intergovernmental processes around the Kunming-Montreal Biodiversity Framework.

In response to Decision 15/13 and to recent intergovernmental calls directed to UNEP to continue the Bern Process, UNEP organized the Bogis-Bossey Expert Meeting⁹⁰ (27 - 30 June 2023) in collaboration with the Swiss Federal Office for the Environment to gather advice on the aim, scope, agenda, participation, and modalities for a conference to support the Bern Process. This advice informed the organisation of the 'Bern III Conference on the biodiversity-related conventions and other relevant conventions on implementation of the Kunming-Montreal Global Biodiversity Framework', which took place from 23 - 25 January 2024 in Bern, Switzerland and was organized by UNEP in close collaboration with the Swiss Government, the CBD Secretariat, UNEP-WCMC, and the conference co-chairs. The Co-Chairs of the Bern III Conference are Ms. Clarisse Kehler Siebert from Sweden and Ms. Camila Isabel Zepeda Lizama from Mexico. Three Background documents were prepared to inform the conference discussions⁹¹. In the run-up to the Bern III

⁸⁷<https://www.cbd.int/doc/c/de6d/6f08/e6f5ab406bf39019f9d5db62/post2020-ws-2019-06-02-en.pdf>

⁸⁸<https://wedocs.unep.org/bitstream/handle/20.500.11822/35906/Bern2rep21.pdf?sequence=3&isAllowed=y>

⁸⁹CBD/COP/DEC/15/13: <https://www.cbd.int/doc/decisions/cop-15/cop-15-dec-13-en.pdf>

⁹⁰https://wedocs.unep.org/bitstream/handle/20.500.11822/43140/Bogis-Bossey_Meeting_Report.pdf?sequence=3&isAllowed=y

⁹¹Mandates for the Bern Process and cooperation in implementing the Kunming-Montreal Global Biodiversity Framework:

<https://wedocs.unep.org/bitstream/handle/20.500.11822/44500/Bern%20III%20information%20paper%201%20-%20Mandates.pdf?sequence=1&isAllowed=y>; Relevant Meetings:

Conference, participants were invited to submit case studies on good collaborative practice at national, regional, or global levels. UNEP received forty-five case studies, including forty-two responses to the online questionnaire and thirty-five posters.⁹²

The Bern III Conference brought together representatives of parties and secretariats of sixteen MEAs, as well as a range of other stakeholders, organizations, and individual experts. The exchange resulted in a wide range of concrete ideas for increased collaboration among MEAs in the implementation of the Framework at global, regional, and national levels. Outcomes include: i) building on the cross-mapping of strategic plans to establish partnerships and groups of friends for targets of the Framework; ii) establishing national platforms that bring together National Focal Points for MEA cooperation and NBSAPs preparation, iii) MEAs contribution for specific chapters in the global stock take report, and iv) using windows of opportunities to implement actions through upcoming meetings. Furthermore, the importance of the upcoming COPs of the three Rio Conventions was highlighted. The outcomes of the conference effectively promote the use of synergies among Parties and Secretariats in implementing the Framework. They are made available to inform relevant MEA governance processes as opportunities for further engagement. Preliminary highlights⁹³ were released at UNEA-6, which recognized the Bern Process through its Resolution 6/4⁹⁴ on “promoting synergies, cooperation or collaboration for national implementation of multilateral environmental agreements and other relevant environmental institutions”. See CBD/SBI/4/INF/15⁹⁵ for the full Bern III meeting report.

Following on the practical steps proposed by the Bern Process, the government of Mexico organized a national meeting on synergies on 6 - 7 August 2024, among 130 experts, MEAs focal points, policy makers and stakeholders, to discuss the creation of national cooperation bodies for effective coordination on the implementation and monitoring of the Kunming-Montreal Global Biodiversity Framework. Mandates of the focal points were mapped in support the implementation of the Framework’s targets, including analysis of administrative, financial, and human resource challenges.

UNEP has been providing substantive input in promoting identification of the potential interlinkages between the Kunming-Montreal Global Biodiversity Framework and the Global Framework on Chemicals, For a Planet Free of Harm from Chemicals and Waste. From 29 - 31 August 2023, UNEP facilitated a regional capacity-building workshop for Montevideo and MEA focal points from nine Eastern African and SADC countries in Bugesera, Rwanda, to strengthen institutional arrangements for legislative and policy support for the synergistic implementation of biodiversity, as well as chemicals and waste MEAs. The outputs of this workshop supported the conference room paper prepared by UNEP on the potential interlinkages of the two frameworks submitted to the 5th Session of the International Conference on Chemicals Management held in September 2023 in Bonn, Germany, which ultimately fed into the outcomes of the Conference. These included the request to the Secretariat, subject to the availability of resources and in collaboration with relevant organizations, to prepare for the next conference in 2026 a report on interlinkages between the Global Framework on Chemicals and the Kunming-Montreal Global Biodiversity Framework.

The UNEP *Faith for Earth Coalition*⁹⁶ established an interfaith working group focused on Religion and Biodiversity, which has evolved into the Faith for Biodiversity Alliance, comprising numerous faith-based

<https://wedocs.unep.org/bitstream/handle/20.500.11822/44499/Bern%20III%20information%20paper%202%20-2%20Meetings.pdf?sequence=3&isAllowed=y>; Key entry points for cooperation and collaboration amongst MEAs: <https://wedocs.unep.org/handle/20.500.11822/44506>

⁹²https://wedocs.unep.org/bitstream/handle/20.500.11822/44835/1.%20Final_Overview%20Case%20studies_14.02%20%282%29.pdf?sequence=1&isAllowed=y

⁹³<https://wedocs.unep.org/bitstream/handle/20.500.11822/44836/Bern%20III%20Conference%20-2%20briefing%20note%20%28final%29%20%281%29.pdf?sequence=1&isAllowed=y>

⁹⁴UNEP/EA.6/Res.4: <https://documents.un.org/doc/undoc/gen/k24/008/07/pdf/k2400807.pdf>

⁹⁵CBD/SBI/4/INF/15: <https://www.cbd.int/documents/CBD/SBI/4/INF/15>

⁹⁶<https://www.unep.org/about-un-environment/faith-earth-initiative>

organizations. As part of the lead-up to CBD COP 16, the alliance has issued a Multifaith Triple COP Call to Action⁹⁷, aimed at addressing the alignment of the three Rio Conventions. It is furthermore actively preparing for the Faith Hub at CBD COP 16, with a focus on showcasing how faith-based organizations are contributing to the implementation of the Kunming-Montreal Biodiversity Framework by integrating issues of land, food, biodiversity, and climate change, and highlighting the comprehensive approach faith actors are taking to address the multiple dimensions of environmental degradation. This effort involves mapping local faith-based actions as a follow-up to the successful engagement of faith actors at CBD COP 15 where they reviewed the Framework and facilitated numerous discussion sessions at the Faith Pavilion.

Between September and November 2024, UNEP is organizing regional technical workshops on Nature-based Solutions (NbS) across Africa, Asia-Pacific, and Latin America and the Caribbean. These workshops aim to complement the outcomes of the 2023 UNEA Resolution 5/5 intergovernmental consultations by engaging with NbS practitioners and policymakers to address challenges and barriers to implementing and upscaling NbS. A key focus is on leveraging NbS to strengthen synergies between MEAs, with a clear message on NbS's potential to enhance cooperation across the Rio Conventions. The first workshop, held in Rio de Janeiro in September, brought together a diverse group of stakeholders who presented a Recommendation Statement to the Special Session of the Forum of Ministers of Environment, urging the inclusion of NbS in COP outcome documents as a point of connection across the Biodiversity, Desertification, and Climate Change conventions. Both the dialogues and declarations highlighted NbS's role as a bridging tool in national planning efforts like NBSAPs and NDCs.

UNEP West Asia Office and CMS Abu Dhabi Office convened a Regional Dialogue on Biodiversity Beyond Borders and Raptor Monitoring Strategy for West Asia in partnership with Ministry of Climate Change and Environment (MoCCAE) United Arab Emirates; from 18 - 20 Dec 2023 in Abu Dhabi⁹⁸. The dialogue addressed two key areas: 1. Strengthening Regional Cooperation for Biodiversity Conservation: Discussions focused on utilizing global and regional frameworks and institutions to foster collaboration between West Asian nations and best practices for regional cooperation, including addressing transboundary biodiversity and wildlife issues and 30x30 target under the Global Biodiversity Framework. 2. Developing a West Asia Raptor Monitoring Strategy: Representatives from 10 member states contributed to development a regional strategy for monitoring raptor populations including identification of top 5 priority species of raptors which require urgent conservation measures.

Recognizing the need for addressing rampant illegal killing and taking of migratory birds in Lebanon, UNEP West Asia Office in collaboration with Ministry of Environment in Lebanon organized a national stakeholder meeting on 15 May 2024 in Beirut, Lebanon to discuss strengthening national legislation and institutional frameworks. Experts from CMS, Intergovernmental Task Force on Illegal Killing, Taking and Trade of Migratory Birds in the Mediterranean (MIKT) and African-Eurasian Migratory Waterbird Agreement (AEWA). A key recommendation from the meeting was to develop a national action plan, including the need to strengthen enforcement and capacity building for enforcement agencies and raising public awareness⁹⁹.

10. Communication (Decision 15/14)

UNEP has contributed toward Goal A of Decision 15/14¹⁰⁰ through World Environment Day (WED), a global awareness-raising campaign in June 2024 focused on ending land degradation, desertification, and drought while showcasing the potential of ecosystem restoration. UNEP raised awareness and understanding of the value of biodiversity and the solutions to address the nature crisis through this

⁹⁷https://docs.google.com/document/d/1W1w-wkDs8zjCB-E_a6dwjy3Uaw9We8HrwjHKkJRkdM/edit#heading=h.umglwbo4ttmg

⁹⁸<https://www.unep.org/events/workshop/regional-dialogue-biodiversity-beyond-borders-west-asia>

⁹⁹<https://www.unep.org/events/workshop/stakeholder-dialogue-conservation-migratory-birds-and-their-habitats-lebanon>

¹⁰⁰CBD/COP/DEC/15/14: <https://www.cbd.int/doc/decisions/cop-15/cop-15-dec-14-en.pdf>

successful campaign that saw a globally top trending hashtag on X, 480 million views of WED content on social media, and 22,420 articles published in 5,934 media outlets across 148 countries in 49 languages.

UNEP has been raising awareness among all actors of the existence of the goals and targets of the Kunming-Montreal Global Biodiversity Framework and progress made towards their achievement, contributing toward Goal B of Decision 15/14, through its Nature Action social media and editorial content that reaches a global audience and: showcases solutions to advance implementation of the framework; makes specific references to the framework's goals and targets; highlights projects and initiatives that advance priority areas under the Framework. To date in 2024, this has included 22 stories, 133 social media posts, 7 press releases, 4 report releases, several media interviews and speeches at the Executive Director level.

Through the UN Decade on Ecosystem Restoration's UN World Restoration Flagship campaign, UNEP has contributed toward Goal A of Decision 15/14 by raising awareness on the values of biodiversity and advancing different visions, approaches and knowledge systems, including those of indigenous peoples, to achieve sustainable development. It has reached around 30 million viewers through its documentary films and billions of readers through a global, multilingual press campaign in 2024, featuring stories in The Guardian, CNN, Mongabay, as well as locally important outlets across 64 countries and in 14 languages. The campaign further announced 7 new restoration flagships through a 'Gala of Hope' at UNEA-6.

Through the UN Decade on Ecosystem Restoration, UNEP is contributing to Goal C of Decision 15/14 through its Ecosystem Restoration Hub set for launch in September 2024. This will be the first global, crowdsourced digital tracker of restoration initiatives, showcasing the power of the restoration movement. This platform will be interactive and collaborative engaging all partners of the UN Decade on Ecosystem Restoration and through them their partners involved in restoration efforts in order to share information on successes, lessons learned and experiences in acting for biodiversity. It will also serve as a key resource for governments and media to access the latest information on active restoration efforts across the world.

UNEP is contributing to Goal D of Decision 15/14 through its communication efforts to support "A common approach to integrating biodiversity and Nature-based Solutions for sustainable development into the UN's policy and programme planning and delivery", demonstrating the relevance of the Kunming-Montreal Global Biodiversity Framework to advance sustainable development. This includes the development of an interactive tool, set for launch in 2024, to bridge the gap between the framework and the SDGs mapping the goals and targets of the framework to the corresponding components of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development.

UNEP is contributing toward Goal D of Decision 15/14 through the launch of its "Journey of Food" interactive tool at the High-level Political Forum in July 2024, which saw SDG 2 "Zero Hunger" under review. This narrative-driven interactive tool illustrates the critical role of healthy biodiversity in achieving sustainable food systems and food security and elevates critical solutions for sustainable use of biodiversity in global food systems. Highlighting the critical links between biodiversity, food systems and sustainable development, UNEP's Journey of Food interactive is an important knowledge product demonstrating how actors across all sectors of the food system can contribute toward targets of the framework focused on agriculture, aquaculture, food loss and waste, and overconsumption.

UNEP and the UN Decade on Ecosystem Restoration have developed and will be launching a 'Nature Campaign' to raise awareness among all actors of the existence of the goals and targets of the Kunming-Montreal Global Biodiversity Framework contributing toward Goal B of Decision 15/14. The Nature Campaign features a practical guide that has been developed to translate the Framework into actionable language and is accessible to a wide audience. Under the practical guide, individuals will be informed on the importance of the Framework and various actions to take in key levers for change in its implementation,

including conservation and restoration, food systems, and finance. Additional communication assets will be developed to support the launch and further amplify messages.

11. Long-term strategic approach to mainstreaming biodiversity within and across sectors (Decision 15/17)

UNEP highlighted the linkages and importance of synergetic actions across biodiversity and pollution pillars in the implementation of the Kunming-Montreal Global Biodiversity Framework at various international fora, including International Conference on Mercury as a Global Pollutant¹⁰¹, and Global Forum on Artisanal and Small-Scale Gold Mining¹⁰², further contributing to mainstreaming of biodiversity across sectors and efforts to strengthen the cross thematic and cross sectorial collaboration.

UNEP is supporting the Parties to the Minamata Convention of Mercury to develop and implement National Action Plans to reduce, and where feasible eliminate mercury use in the Artisanal and Small-Scale Gold Mining (ASGM). In this context, UNEP has published and disseminated a global overview of the linkages and options to minimize the impacts on biodiversity from the use of mercury in small-scale gold mining¹⁰³.

The planetGOLD programme sets out specific criteria¹⁰⁴ to govern operations of ASGM entities engaged with the programme. Conformance with the criteria ensures that artisanal and small-scale miners participating in the planetGOLD programme undertake sufficient efforts to avoid, minimize, mitigate, and where appropriate, offset adverse impacts to people and the environment. Recognized as a branched version of the Code of Risk-mitigation for ASGM Engaging in Formal Trade (CRAFT), the planetGOLD Criteria are composed of three additional requirements, including: (1) Eliminating mercury in the mining process; (2) Respecting and protecting the rights of Indigenous Peoples; and (3) Minimizing impact on biodiversity.

12. Sustainable wildlife management (Decision 15/23)

UNEP has developed the wild biodiversity initiative that intends to strengthen sustainable use practices of land and species as a competitive livelihood and development strategy to meet people's needs, whilst also reducing biodiversity loss. Four regional scoping studies covering Asia and Pacific, Europe, Latin America and Caribbean and North America were done to create a knowledgebase to help understand how different regions have recognised biodiversity related economies and integrated this dimension into their national/regional policies. This initiative will promote the uptake of viable and attractive biodiversity economy approaches to support the conservation, restoration, and sustainable use of biodiversity in a manner that it delivers socio-economic development to countries and, in particular those communities that are the stewards of biodiverse land.

In response to SBSTTA Recommendation 25/7¹⁰⁵ and in support of Decision, 15/23 UNEP contributed to a gap analysis done by the Collaborative Partnership on Sustainable Wildlife Management, in line with the mandate of the Convention and the goals and targets of the Framework, to identify areas of sustainable wildlife management and others that are not adequately covered by existing guidance developed under relevant multilateral environmental agreements and by competent intergovernmental organizations. The gap analysis will be considered by the CBD COP 16.

¹⁰¹<https://www.mercurycapetown.com> (UNEP featured as keynote speaker at the Plenary on Mercury and its potential impacts on biological diversity)

¹⁰²<https://www.planetgold.org/2024-global-forum> (UNEP featured as panelist in the session on Addressing Biodiversity Impacts of ASGM)

¹⁰³<https://www.unep.org/globalmercurypartnership/what-we-do/artisanal-and-small-scale-gold-mining-asm/ASGM-and-biodiversity>

¹⁰⁴<https://www.planetgold.org/criteria>

¹⁰⁵CBD/SBSTTA/REC/25/7: <https://www.cbd.int/doc/recommendations/sbstta-25/sbstta-25-rec-07-en.pdf>

13. Marine and coastal biodiversity (Decision 15/24, 15/25 and 15/26)

UNEP is enabling Member States to adopt a whole-of-government and whole-of-society approach to tackle the ‘blue’ triple planetary crises of climate change, nature loss and pollution. Specifically, this includes a new practical ‘Sustainable Blue Economy Transition Framework’, a planning tool that helps national and local governments develop tailored policy pathways to sustainable, resilient and equitable blue economies for prosperity, ensuring sound and circular use of marine, coastal and freshwater ecosystems and natural resources, while mitigating impacts of pollution, resource over-extraction and infrastructure development. A novel ‘Rapid Readiness Assessment’ tool helps identify and put in place enabling conditions, including policy coherence, integrated governance and blue finance targeted at local contexts to support the green/blue transition in close dialogue with stakeholders and communities. This includes local actions to conserve and restore valuable biodiversity and ecosystem benefits applying Nature-based Solutions. Pilot-applications of these tools have been undertaken and are ongoing in countries, including Antigua & Barbuda, Comoros, Indonesia, Kenya, Saint Lucia, Trinidad & Tobago, and Vietnam. This approach support delivery of a suite of Kunming-Montreal Global Biodiversity Framework targets (notably targets 1, 2, 3, 7 and 16 in a comprehensive, more cost-effective way).

The UN Decade on Ecosystem Restoration has launched a global “SIDS Restoration Flagship” programme to build resilience and prosperity of vulnerable and fragile Small Islands Development States. Active in Comoros, Saint Lucia and Vanuatu, UNEP, in close collaboration with FAO and UNDESA, is supporting national and local governments and stakeholders in creating enabling environment for a sustainable blue economy transition to halt the triple planetary crisis of climate change, nature loss and pollution. Actions span from local conservation and restoration of valuable coastal and marine ecosystems to development of national integrated policy, spatial planning and area-based management to mitigate drivers of ecosystem degradation, thereby unlocking a range of environmental, social and economic benefits, including, nature-based climate solutions. Global capacity building and policy advocacy and learning is facilitated through SIDS-to-SIDS peer learning in collaboration with the SIDS Coalition for Nature and the UN Ocean Decade. The SIDS Flagship is supported by the governments of Germany and Denmark through the Restoration Decade Multi Partner Trust Fund to empower countries in delivering Kunming-Montreal Global Biodiversity Framework Targets 1, 2 and 3.

Enhancing MPA effectiveness: UNEP has launched a novel online learning platform to support the design, development and implantation of effective and equitable marine protected areas. This Marine Protected Area Tool Hub (MPATH) provides national and local planners and practitioners easy and targeted access to relevant technical guidance, tools and practical examples on key issues, such like climate change, MPA effectiveness, for sustainable livelihoods and MPA finance. It provides a structured learning journey approach to identify and address key considerations and solutions at different MPA implementation steps in a local context. MPATH will support regional and national efforts to deliver Kunming-Montreal Global Biodiversity Framework Target 3 and related spatial targets in collaboration with regional MPA managers network and parties to Regional Seas Conventions & Action Plans.

UNEP Small-Grants Programme (also Decisions 15/7 and 15/15)

UNEP, through collaboration with the Global Fund for Coral Reefs (GFCR), is working in 23 coral reefs countries around the world to build capacity in monitoring of key indicators related to coral reef ecosystems and communities. UNEP has developed the monitoring and evaluation framework for the GFCR and is developing a software platform for reporting of data sets, including online training for programmes and partners. Furthermore, UNEP is collaborating with the Global Coral Reef Monitoring Network to ensure that GFCR data sets are included in regional and global reporting on the status of coral reef ecosystems. UNEP will also ensure data collection on indicators under the GFCR is used in support of reporting on the Framework’s targets. UNEP is also supporting strategic communications and advocacy for the GFCR.

UNEP, in collaboration with the United Nations Human Settlement Programme (UN-Habitat), is implementing the European Union (EU) funded programme in Kenya titled “*Go Blue - Connecting People, Cities and the Ocean: Innovative Land-Sea Planning and Management for a Sustainable and Resilient Kenyan Coast*”. It aims to support the development of a sustainable blue economy in Kenya by contributing to environmentally sustainable economic development of coastal urban centers through integrated land-sea planning and the protection of coastal and marine ecosystems and natural resources. Key achievements under the Go Blue include implementation and upscaling of Nature-based Solutions, including ‘blue carbon’ generating climate finance to coastal communities through community-led mangrove restoration and integrated coastal management, and ‘constructed wetland’s reducing flow of wastewater into coastal and marine areas. In Lamu community, a blue carbon project will protect 3000 hectares of mangroves, generating carbon credits projected at USD 600,000 annually. Through Go Blue, UNEP is further empowering local coastal community groups in operationalising Locally Marine Management Areas, government agencies in MPA management, as well as the designation of a proposed marine RAMSAR site within the Msambweni-Vanga seascape, all contributing to the Framework’s Targets 1, 2 and 3.

UNEP is working to support Member States in the ratification and early action on the BBNJ Agreement, including through the production of information and awareness tools and regional trainings on Marine Biodiversity of Areas Beyond National Jurisdiction (BBNJ) through Regional Seas Conventions and Action Plans (RSCAPs) and capacity building for legal and institutional mechanisms to support ratification and implementation, working through GEF-IW MSP (International Waters Medium Sized Projects and an Enabling Activity mechanism). The overarching 3-prong approach is as follows: 1) Information and Awareness Raising on the BBNJ Agreement 2) Legal and Institutional Capacity Building to Support Ratification and Implementation, and 3) Technical Assistance on Applying Area-based Management Tools, including MPAs, working with UNEP administered RSCAPs to enhance policy congruence between areas within and beyond national jurisdiction.

In June 2024 the GEF Council Meeting approved a draft MSP for BBNJ Ratification and Early Action Support as Enabling Activity, which UNEP, FAO and UNDP are collaborating closely on. By end of August 2024 a growing number of currently 15 countries have provided letters of endorsement (and also letters of intent by those countries which did not yet sign the agreement) seeking support from UNEP on the pathway to ratification. Requests were received from around the world with a certain focus on the African Region. This support will range from a national baseline assessment to working towards national legal requirements, awareness raising and capacity development.

Engagement towards BBNJ is illustrated in the case of the Nairobi Convention which during its COP11 (August 2024) adopted decisions related to BBNJ. The High Seas Alliance joined to support outreach efforts. In the WIO Reion this decision is feeding into a ten-year integrated programme under the Nairobi Convention aiming at inclusive regional Blue Economy and bridging to the Framework’s Targets and BBNJ.

On the 18th of July 2024 the Reef-World Foundation launched a new coral bleaching toolkit¹⁰⁶ in response to the 4th global coral bleaching event confirmed by NOAA and ICRI in April 2024. This toolkit is part of UNEP’s Green Fins initiative and provides guidance to the marine tourism industry on how they can help manage and monitor impacts of coral bleaching and get involved in the recovery process.

In Aug 2023, UNEP in collaboration with GRID-Arendal, launched a publication entitled “*Wastewater. Turning Problem to Solution*”¹⁰⁷ which urges decision makers and action takers from all regions of the world to implement the three key actions, to overcome barriers, and to put in place the building blocks,

¹⁰⁶<https://greenfins.net/news/coral-bleaching-response-toolkit/>

¹⁰⁷<https://www.unep.org/resources/report/wastewater-turning-problem-solution>

described in the publication to tackle the issues of wastewater pollution, including on marine life and biodiversity in coastal regions. This publication brings examples with a diverse regional distribution, describing how governments can take action to protect marine and freshwater ecosystems from degradation, along with supporting them to implement and achieve the Kunming-Montreal Global Biodiversity Framework, especially its Target 7, on pollution, and relevant UNEA resolutions as well.

14. Biodiversity and agriculture (Decision 15/28)

UNEP, FAO and WHO are expediting the approaches to accelerate the transition to nature and climate change positive, pollution-free agricultural systems. In March 2023, UNEP accepted the invitation of the FAO and WHO to be part of the Joint Programme for the sound management of pesticides and to further discuss their collaboration modalities as to continue strengthening the joint efforts to address the triple planetary crisis. UNEP has officially been invited to join as Panel Member the FAO/WHO Joint Meeting on Pesticides Management and its Secretariat, and details of this invitation are being considered. To date, UNEP has been attending and contributing as Observer to the discussions of the FAO/WHO Joint Meeting on Pesticides Management which is mandated to support the development of guidelines to facilitate the implementation of the individual articles of the International Code of Conduct on Pesticide Management.

In 2023, FAO together with UNEP and WHO prepared a “*Progress Report on Addressing Highly Hazardous Pesticides (HHPs) in 2019-2022*” and the “*Initial Considerations and Elements of an Action Plan on Highly Hazardous Pesticides*”, which have been included in the “*IOMC Report on SAICM Emerging Policy Issues and Other Issues of Concern*” put forward for the fifth meeting of the International Conference on Chemicals Management (ICCM 5) consideration as an information document¹⁰⁸.

At ICCM 5 the new *Global Framework on Chemicals – For a Planet Free of Harm from Chemicals and Waste* (GFC) has been adopted and a specific target¹⁰⁹ to phase out highly hazardous pesticides in agriculture where the risks have not been managed and where safer and affordable alternatives are available, and to promote transition to and make available those alternatives has been set. Additionally, the Conference adopted Resolution V/11: Highly Hazardous Pesticides¹¹⁰. This resolution endorses the formation of a global alliance on highly hazardous pesticides to phase out such pesticides in agriculture where risks are unmanaged and safer alternatives exist. This voluntary, multi-stakeholder initiative, under the auspices of FAO, ILO, UNDP, UNEP, and WHO, invites all stakeholders to join and contribute resources or expertise. The alliance is tasked with supporting the implementation of targets set by the Conference, including raising awareness about the impacts of these pesticides, promoting safer agricultural practices, sharing success stories, assisting low- and middle-income countries, supporting farmers in transitioning to safer alternatives, and aiding the agrifood supply chain. FAO leads the alliance's operationalization and coordination, and progress will be reported at the next Conference session and relevant regional meetings.

The ICCM 5 Resolution V/11¹¹¹ has been reinforced in 2024, by the adoption of UNEA Resolution 6/11 on *Highly Hazardous Pesticides*¹¹² which is encouraging stakeholders, including Member States, in accordance with target A7 of the voluntary, multi-stakeholder and multisectoral GFC, to take effective measures to phase out highly hazardous pesticides in agriculture where the risks have not been managed and where safer and affordable alternatives are available, and to promote transition to and make available those alternatives. Additionally, it invites Member States and all other relevant stakeholders to become

¹⁰⁸SAICM/ICCM.5/INF/16: https://www.chemicalsframework.org/sites/default/files/documents/SAICM_ICCM.5_INF_16.pdf

¹⁰⁹Target A7: By 2035, stakeholders have taken effective measures to phase out highly hazardous pesticides in agriculture where the risks have not been managed and where safer and affordable alternatives are available, and to promote transition to and make available those alternatives.

¹¹⁰https://www.chemicalsframework.org/sites/default/files/documents/GFC_Main_Brochure_6_March_2024.pdf

¹¹¹<https://www.chemicalsframework.org/sites/default/files/documents/Resolution%20V-11.pdf>

¹¹²UNEP/EA.6/Res.11: <https://undocs.org/UNEP/EA.6/Res.11>

members of the voluntary, multi-stakeholder global alliance on highly hazardous pesticides, to be established under the GFC.

15. Biodiversity and health (Decision 15/29)

Draft Global Action Plan on Biodiversity and Health

In relation to notification SCBD/SSSF/JL/SK/MAQ/VA/91436¹¹³, which invited governments and organizations to participate in the peer review of the updated draft of the Global Action Plan on Biodiversity and Health, UNEP provided consolidated feedback to the CBD Secretariat. In collaboration with the CBD Secretariat, UNEP also disseminated the notification to the other members of the Quadripartite Collaboration on One Health (namely the Food and Agriculture Organization, the World Health Organization and the World Organisation for Animal Health), as well as to first-term members of the One Health High Level Expert Panel and the partners of the Nature4Health initiative.

Nature4Health initiative

UNEP leads and provides the secretariat for the Nature4Health initiative and multi-partner trust fund. Nature4Health brings together eight international partners to mainstream the linkages between biodiversity and health at country level, following a preventative One Health approach and in direct support for the draft Global Action Plan for Biodiversity and Health. Nature4Health promotes a participatory systems approach to generate a shared understanding amongst stakeholder groups of the links between biodiversity, climate and health, and to co-develop strategies, policies and actions to mainstream those linkages into policies and actions on the ground. In the lead up to 2030, the Nature4Health Multi-Partner Trust Fund will be supporting at least 18 countries and regions to mainstream the interlinkages between biodiversity and health in line with the Kunming-Montreal Global Biodiversity Framework and the draft Global Action Plan for Biodiversity and Health, which is expected to be adopted at CBD COP 16. Each participating country or region will receive technical assistance valued in excess of USD 2.5 million per country. Through a call for expressions of interest, six countries (Ecuador, Ghana, Mongolia, Rwanda, Vietnam and Zambia) were selected for a first phase of work in-country, which commenced in early 2024. A further 12 countries or regions are expected to be selected in two further phases in the lead up to 2030, and a new call for expressions of interest for the second round of six countries will be announced on the margins of COP 16. The Nature4Health multi-partner trust fund was established with generous seed funding from Germany's Ministry of the Environment, Consumer Protection and Nuclear Safety (BMUV) through its International Climate Initiative (IKI). Efforts are underway to secure substantial additional resources from additional donors to scale up Nature4Health activities to at least 50 countries. More details can be found in the Nature4Health website¹¹⁴.

In collaboration with the Government of Colombia, the World Health Organization and the Secretariat of the CBD, UNEP has organized the Biodiversity and Health Day, to be held at the GBF Pavilion on 24 October, on the margins of COP 16. The day will consist of a series of sessions on topics relevant to the linkages between Biodiversity and Health and will include a high-level event and a reception to highlight opportunities for Parties to obtain support to implement the Global Plan of Action in line with the Kunming-Montreal Global Biodiversity Framework.

One Health Joint Plan of Action

UNEP, in collaboration with the One Health Quadripartite Alliance partners (FAO, WHO, and WOAH), has been supporting countries in the Asia-Pacific region in rolling out the One Health Joint Plan of Action at the national level, in close coordination with the efforts towards implementing the Kunming-Montreal Global Biodiversity Framework. At the Asia-Pacific Quadripartite One Health Workshop held in Bangkok, 5 - 8 September 2023, representatives of human, animal health, and environment sectors from 24 countries

¹¹³SCBD/SSSF/JL/SK/MAQ/VA/91436: <https://www.cbd.int/doc/notifications/2024/ntf-2024-002-health-en.pdf>

¹¹⁴<https://nature4health.org/>

discussed national-level roadmaps for implementing the One Health Joint Plan of Action. They underscored the importance aligning One Health-related efforts with the implementation of MEAs, including the CBD. As a result of the workshop, representatives of Australia, Bangladesh, Brunei, Cambodia, Japan, Lao PDR, Mongolia, Nepal, New Zealand, Philippines and Sri Lanka specifically highlighted the mainstreaming biodiversity into One Health and aligning their NBSAPs and One Health-related strategies and action plans.

From 5 to 9 August 2024, UNEP and its Quadripartite partners, together with the Pacific Community (SPC), SPREP and the Asian Development Bank, co-convened a meeting on One Health in Nadi, Fiji for Pacific SIDS. Representatives from human health, animal health and environment sectors, as well as representatives of environment ministries from 11 countries (Fiji, Vanuatu, Tonga, Samoa, Solomon Islands, RMI, Kiribati, Nauru, PNG, Palau, Cook Islands) participated. The participants identified existing initiatives that align with the One Health Joint Plan of Action, as well as challenges, gaps and next steps. It was recognized that many ongoing efforts in the environment sector are already using the One Health approach, however, often not being labelled as such. Particularly, efforts related to implementing MEAs provide an important foundation for scaling-up One Health implementation in the future. Key recommendations for Pacific Island countries include identifying One Health focal points, strengthening coordination mechanisms, and developing national One Health action plans. For Quadripartite partners, the recommendations are to support member states in implementing One Health activities aligned with the Joint Plan of Action, build cross-sector capacity, and engage environment sector stakeholders by leveraging existing initiatives and mechanisms related to MEAs. Targeted support for national One Health implementation will be provided to selected countries based on sub-regional groupings (Melanesia, Polynesia and Micronesia) under the leadership of SPC with support from SPREP and the Quadripartite Alliance partners.

Remarkable progress is being made under action track on antimicrobial resistance (AMR) where the Quadripartite organizations continue supporting the global managing the AMR Multi-partner Trust Fund.

Wastewater Surveillance in Africa

In July 2024, UNEP began the implementation of the project titled “Support strategies, capacity and data for global wastewater and environmental surveillance” which focuses on Africa. The project involves all sub-regions of Africa, targeting selected countries to advance capacity-building, transfer of knowledge and awareness raising on wastewater surveillance through tailored training, awareness and communication material. It is also supporting governments and relevant stakeholders to establish and scale up wastewater surveillance systems for environment and public health purposes. This intervention will result in stronger surveillance and cooperation for health emergency detection, response, and recovery. Overall, the project is implemented through the lens of One Health. This project takes into account the linkages between health and biodiversity and is providing guidance and training to the application of One Health approach in the Framework, especially under Target 7, on pollution.

16. Biodiversity and climate change (Decision 15/30)

The UN-led World Adaptation Science Programme, with its Secretariat hosted at UNEP, has published a policy brief on ‘Advancing Effectiveness of Climate Adaptation’¹¹⁵ in October 2023. Biodiversity conservation has been identified as one of the co-benefits for effective climate adaptation. It emphasizes that adaptation interventions need to be assessed for their potential effectiveness (ex-ante) and measure actual effectiveness (ex-post) using a set of metrics identified based on specific criteria.

¹¹⁵<https://www.unep.org/resources/policy-and-strategy/advancing-effectiveness-climate-adaptation-science-adaptation-policy#:~:text=The%20goal%20of%20this%20issue.adaptation%20effectiveness%20in%20international%20and>

With the aim to inform the UN climate negotiations, and to raise climate ambition and action, UNEP produces two annual reports on climate change mitigation and adaptation.

The Emissions Gap Report¹¹⁶ (EGR) series provides an annual update of the gap between estimated future global greenhouse gas (GHG) emissions, and the reductions required to limit global warming to well below 2°C and pursuing 1.5°C in line with the Paris Agreement. It also highlights opportunities to bridge the emissions gap, tackling also issues with close connection to biodiversity. For example, the 2023 edition looked at Carbon Dioxide Removal (CDR), including its sustainability-related risks and potential co-benefits of different CDR options on biodiversity.

The Adaptation Gap Report¹¹⁷ (AGR) series provides a regular science-based assessment of the global progress on adaptation planning, financing and implementation and explores options for enhancing and advancing national and global adaptation efforts. The 2023 edition included a deep-dive topic on loss and damage, including non-economic losses and damages, such as loss of biodiversity among others.

UNEP, at Climate COP28 which took place in Dubai, November 2023, organised a side event and launched a fact sheet which emphasised the role of wastewater as solution to address the triple planetary crises of climate change, biodiversity loss and pollution.

17. Synthetic biology (Decision 15/31)

UNEP is contributing to ongoing work on Synthetic Biology through technical contributions and field experiences to support Member States on Biosafety through the work of the National Biosafety Framework projects under the Cartagena Protocol on Biosafety¹¹⁸.

IV. PROGRAMMATIC SUPPORT BY THE UNITED NATIONS ENVIRONMENT PROGRAMME TO THE IMPLEMENTATION OF THE CARTAGENA PROTOCOL ON BIOSAFETY

1. Implementation plan for the Cartagena Protocol on Biosafety (Decision CP-10/3)

UNEP, in partnership with the Korea Institute for Promoting Biosafety Cooperation (KIPABiC) and in collaboration with the Secretariat of the CBD, is providing a platform through a series of global webinars to support Parties in integrating the Cartagena Protocol on Biosafety. The first webinar was held in March 2024.

2. Risk assessment and risk management (Decision CP-10/10)

UNEP is contributing to the work of the Ad Hoc Technical Experts Group on Risk Assessment and Risk Management by providing better practices through learning meetings. UNEP also initiated work with Member States through the Biosafety Programme to enable them review and update national Risk Assessment guidelines in line with the updated and ongoing global guidance on Articles 15 and 16 and Annex 1 of the Cartagena Protocol on Biosafety across its Biosafety Portfolio. In line with ongoing global practices to ensure safety of all biological introductions to the environment, UNEP through its GEF Supported Biosafety Programme, is evolving new and innovative Biosafety and Biosecurity projects which address the safe management of living organisms and Invasive Alien Species through a coordinated approach based on risk analysis through Biosafety, Food Safety, Plant and Animal Health as a Biosecurity Projects. New Biosecurity projects have been started in Cameroon, Moldova and Ethiopia. Under GEF 7

¹¹⁶<https://www.unep.org/resources/emissions-gap-report-2023>

¹¹⁷<https://www.unep.org/resources/adaptation-gap-report-2023>

¹¹⁸<https://www.unep.org/explore-topics/biosafety/what-we-do/developing-biosafety-frameworks/unep-gef-project-development#:~:text=The%20Cartagena%20Protocol%20on%20Biosafety%20aims%20to%20contribute%20to%20ensuring%20of%20biological%20diversity%2C%20taking>

cycle. UNEP in partnership with Korea Institute for Promoting Biosafety Cooperation (KIPABiC) is supporting parties will hold a global Webinar on Risk Assessment and Risk Management.

3. Detection and identification of living modified organisms (Decision CP-10/11)

UNEP continues to support Member States through its GEF supported Biosafety program in building institutional capacity in Detection and Identification of Living Modified Organisms (LMOs). In the reporting period, UNEP provided technical guidelines, equipment and training on laboratory spatial orientation, delivery of Real Time PCRs, ELISA and related laboratory equipment to 11 laboratories in Angola, Congo DR, Lesotho, Madagascar, Malawi and Mozambique. The laboratories went through proficiency testing with scientists and technicians trained in LMO Testing. UNEP continues to provide LMO Detection capacity support through training and laboratory equipment support to all ongoing and new GEF supported Biosafety and Biosecurity Projects.

V. PROGRAMMATIC SUPPORT BY THE UNITED NATIONS ENVIRONMENT PROGRAMME TO THE IMPLEMENTATION OF THE NAGOYA PROTOCOL ON ACCESS AND BENEFIT SHARING

4. Capacity-building and development action plan for the Nagoya Protocol (Decision NP-4/7)

Support was provided to Botswana for effective implementation of the national ABS Act and to Eritrea to enhancing their capacities to implement the Nagoya Protocol.

Through the UNEP-GEF Programme on Access and Benefit Sharing UNEP is providing capacity building support to countries in Africa, Asia-Pacific, Central and Eastern Europe and the Group of Latin America and the Caribbean focused on development and implementation of National ABS Frameworks and issue specific themes under the Nagoya Protocol.

VI. ADMINISTRATIVE AND FINANCIAL MANAGEMENT SUPPORT PROVIDED TO THE SECRETARIAT OF THE CONVENTION ON BIOLOGICAL DIVERSITY BY THE UNITED NATIONS ENVIRONMENT PROGRAMME

5. Policy guidelines and procedures

Delegation of Authority Policy and Framework – On 18 December 2018, the Secretary General of the United Nations issued a new framework for the delegation of authority effective January 2019¹¹⁹. The objective of the new framework was to transfer centrally held authority closer to the point of service delivery. On 15 September 2021, UNEP Executive Director approved an updated delegation of authority policy and framework for the management and administration of the secretariats of multilateral environmental agreements (MEAs). The respective Executive-Secretaries (including acting Executive Secretary) of the CBD Secretariat have accepted their delegation of authority, reflecting the new policy and framework, from UNEP Executive Director.

Logo and branding strategies – Effective 11 October 2022, UNEP adopted an updated policy on the use of UNEP name and emblem. The policy recognizes the right of MEAs to develop their own logos and branding strategies and provides guidance where these may incorporate UN or UNEP name or logo.

¹¹⁹ST/SGB/2019/2: <https://documents.un.org/doc/undoc/gen/n18/430/62/pdf/n1843062.pdf>

6. Human Resources

The human resources (HR) management services provided by UNEP to CBD through its Secretariat play a crucial role in ensuring the adequacy, effectiveness, and compliance of human resources functions, systems, policies, and procedures to deliver the organizational mandates and effectively manage HR risks. These services include:

- r. position management, covering the entire span of human resources staffing activities, ensuring consistency in the application of the Staff Rules and Regulations and related human resources procedures;
- s. recruitment, whereby UNEP oversees the engagement of staff and non-staff personnel, ensuring that recruitment processes are carried out effectively, objectively, and in accordance with the organization's policies and procedures;
- t. provision of training, identifying training needs, developing training programs, and monitoring compliance with mandatory training; and;
- u. performance management, ensuring that performance management processes are implemented effectively and in a timely manner.

UNEP's human resources management services also play a crucial role in promoting diversity and inclusivity within the CBD Secretariat, other UNEP-administered MEA secretariats and UNEP at large. UNEP further provides guidance and support in implementing best practices in human resources management, fostering a culture of accountability and transparency. In the period between January 2023 and September 2024, UNEP assisted the CBD Secretariat in processing 130 requests related to position management (including creation, reclassification and extension of position validity), 88 requests related to recruitment (including job advertisements and selections for different staff and non-staff categories) and 42 requests related to personnel administration (including processing of lateral assignments, transfers, resignations, separations, special post allowance and exceptional extensions of Consultants and Individual Contractors (CICs) and temporary appointments). UNEP has oversight for over 369 CIC contracts issued for the CBD Secretariat within the same period.

In addition, UNEP provides the CBD Secretariat with a human resources dashboard and a monthly staffing report containing updated workforce data and metrics. These new data management tools, launched in December 2022, enhance management information and facilitate decision-making, enable monitoring of new trends/challenges/opportunities, tracking challenges in a transparent way, and strengthening corporate oversight and accountability systems. They do so by providing insight on staffing resources disaggregated in critical areas such as staffing overview, geographical representation, gender parity, duty station overview, age analysis and retirement, vacancy and recruitment overview, mandatory training, and performance compliance.

UNEP also has a Service Level Agreement (SLA) with the United Nations Office in Nairobi (UNON) for the provision of administrative support functions, including direct assistance to CBD Secretariat personnel. Such assistance includes human resources related issues such as staff administration (including administration of benefits and entitlements, time management, client support desk, processing of CICs) and recruitment (including job building, review by Central Review Bodies, offer management and onboarding).

7. Budget and Finance

Status of budget performance and financial management – In 2022 and 2023, UNEP monitored the impact of COVID-19 on funding and programme delivery ensuring that required administrative support was effectively provided. Consultations between UNEP Corporate Services Division and the CBD Secretariat reviewed the inflow of contributions, generation of PSC, as well as expenditure trends, and suggested prudential measures where necessary, to meet programmatic and staff related expenses. Overall, the assessment revealed that funding was sufficient to cover expenses. Details of this analysis have been shared

with the CBD Secretariat. The UNEP Programme and Budget Unit in the Corporate Services Division continues to support the CBD Secretariat in Financial Management roles, including the review of donor reports and grants closure, invoicing, and response to queries from Parties.

After Service Health Insurance (ASHI) – The ASHI programme is a benefit provided to eligible retired staff members of the UN that enables continued access to the same health insurance schemes available to active staff coverage throughout their retirement. This benefit is earned during active service but utilized after retirement. It, therefore, creates an accrued liability for the UN which does not have secured funding allocated to it. The financing of the ASHI liability has been a topic of ongoing discussion among various UN bodies, including the General Assembly and the Advisory Committee on Administration and Budget Questions (ACABQ). These bodies have made various recommendations to the executive heads of the UN organizations, urging them to explore ways of financing the unfunded portion of the liability. The goal is to ensure that UN organizations do not continue to have unfunded ASHI liability by applying available funds to the recognized future liability. In the case of UNEP, it has been accruing 6 per cent of staff costs to offset the ASHI liability. However, a financial review done for the periods 2018 to 2021 determined that this rate is not sufficient to cover the liability. Urgent containment measures were required to address the growing portion of the unfunded liability and as a response, in Q4 2022, the UN Controller approved an increase in the ASHI accrual rate to 9 per cent. All UNEP staff budgets should now reflect the increased cost associated with the ASHI programme. The CBD Conference of the Parties (COP) may wish to consider increasing its 2025 - 2028 staff budget accordingly.

UMOJA - Beginning 2021, additional modules have been rolled out to complete the implementation of Umoja as a one-stop solution for all administrative processes. These modules, collectively known as Umoja 2 include: (a) Integrated Planning and Management Reporting; (b) budgeting tool; (c) programmatic view that incorporates Sustainable Development Goals and gender markers; (d) management tools that measure and record partner performance as well as highlight any existing funding gaps; and (e) dashboards that present visualization tools of captured data for reporting purposes. UNEP will continue to engage the CBD Secretariat to ensure adequate training and incorporation of Umoja requirements toward successful implementation. In this regard, in June 2024 the UNEP Finance Module was launched which offers a self-paced course covering 17 distinct topics related to financial management. The Module aims to build the capacity of staff members to effectively manage financial resources, including in mobilizing resources and enabling efficient accounting and reporting practices and is available to the CBD Secretariat.

It is important to note that the roll out of the additional modules has led to an increase of Umoja license fees that are settled by all UNEP offices, including UNEP-administered MEA secretariats. The increase in the license fee for the year 2020 and 2021 was significantly higher than previous years due to the new cost distribution methodology implemented by UN Headquarters, which is now based on the number of registered users per entity.

Programme support costs (PSC) – In accordance with General Assembly Resolution 35/217¹²⁰ and UN procedures stipulated in the administrative instruction on Program Support Accounts¹²¹, PSC is charged on all extrabudgetary resources at a standard rate of 13 per cent. This is to recover the incremental costs incurred while supporting activities financed through such resources. Waiver or reduction of the PSC rate is strongly discouraged by the Controller as this could lead to inability to meet administrative costs associated with program implementation. In a memo dated 10 June 2022, the Controller noted that decreasing programme support resources could not sustain demands unless the established PSC rate of 13 per cent charged against voluntary contributions is applied consistently to all donors, including Member States. Any deviation would draw the attention of auditors and other compliance-monitoring bodies.

¹²⁰<https://documents.un.org/doc/resolution/gen/nr0/392/36/pdf/nr039236.pdf>

¹²¹ST/AI/286: <https://documents.un.org/doc/undoc/gen/ns0/001/49/img/ns000149.pdf>

Requests for lower PSC rates must be approved by the Controller. In 2022, based on UNEA Decision 2/18¹²², a UNEP-administered MEA secretariat requested a waiver of PSC for contributions to support travel to meetings by participants from Developing Countries. This request was not approved by the Controller. The decision set a precedent and no further such requests will be considered.

PSC Income – The amount of PSC income available in any given year is dependent on the income generated in the previous year. 67 per cent of PSC income collected from the CBD trust fund is allocated to the CBD Secretariat while 33 per cent is retained by UNEP to fund the provision of advisory services, policy formulation, and core services in human resource, finance, procurement, legal and other administrative services provided by UNEP and its main Service Provider, UNON. As per the annual memorandum from the UNEP Executive Director to Heads of UNEP-administered MEA Secretariats, the final allocation of PSC income to CBD Secretariat for the year 2024 was USD1,653,212 which includes deductions for UMOJA costs and 2022 - 2023 biennium overrun. The administrative staff of the CBD Secretariat are funded by the PSC allocation to the CBD Secretariat.

Settlement of contributions – The United Nations secretariat adopted the International Public Sector Accounting Standards (IPSAS) in 2014. Umoja implements strict IPSAS-based liquidity management, which requires that cash be available for the settlement of payments. Parties are therefore encouraged to settle their assessed contributions in full early in each year to guarantee continuity of operations under CBD. Those Parties that are in arrears are requested to engage with the CBD Secretariat on settlement modalities.

8. Legal

The UNEP Legal Unit in the Corporate Services Division provides corporate legal advice and solutions, reviews standard and non-standard legal instruments, drafts legal instruments as appropriate; represents the Organization/Administration before the Management Advice and Evaluation Section (MAES) and the United Nations Dispute Tribunal (UNDT) and provides advice on issues pertaining to liability/indemnity, privileges and immunities, interpretation and application of constitutive, legislative and other instruments governing UNEP's programmes of work with various Implementing Partners, amongst other things. The Unit continues to deliver reliable and consistent advice on the use of legal instruments, non-standard contribution agreements with donors, and contractual modalities for engaging with Implementing Partners as requested by the CBD Secretariat. In particular, the Legal Unit assisted the CBD Secretariat in (a) cases which pertained to the law and practice of international administrative law before the MAES; (b) handled preliminary assessments of confidential referrals from the Office of Internal Oversight Services (OIOS); (c) reviewed matters which concerned the interpretation and application of UNEP's internal policies (i.e. Delegation of Authority Policy and Framework); and (d) provided relevant legal advice on global frameworks which address climate change, climate adaptation and biodiversity issues (i.e. Kunming-Montreal Global Biodiversity Framework).

9. Procurement

The UNEP Programme Advisory Services Unit in the Corporate Services Division facilitates the effective provision of goods and services to meet the organization's needs. All low value acquisitions are managed by CBD Secretariat directly. All other acquisitions raised by CBD requisitioners come to the Unit for review and routing to service providers or an internal execution function. In the period January 2023 - September 2024, UN Secretariat procurement teams processed 121 purchase orders (POs) for the CBD Secretariat. Of these 75% were processed by the UNEP Programme Advisory Services Unit with an average of three working days from PO creation to approval. The two main service providers for CBD Secretariat are United Nations Office at Nairobi and the United Nations Office in Geneva. In addition, UNEP and the International

¹²²UNEP/EA.2/Res.18:

https://wedocs.unep.org/bitstream/handle/20.500.11822/11191/K1607203_UNEPEA2_RES18E.pdf?sequence=1&isAllowed=y

Civil Aviation Service (ICAO) have signed a Memorandum of Understanding on 22 September 2023, for ICAO to provide additional support for procurement related activities, capacity development and implementation support. Programme Advisory Services Unit also provided training on supply chain transactional processing, to the CBD Secretariat in March 2023. Programme Advisory Services Unit and the CBD Secretariat continue to engage on a regular basis.

10. Oversight

Established in 2021, the UNEP Operations and Risk Management Unit in the Corporate Services Division provides coordination services between UNEP, UNEP-administered MEA secretariats and various audit, evaluation, and oversight bodies such as the UN Board of Auditors (BOA)¹²³, Office of Internal Oversight Services (OIOS)¹²⁴, and Joint Inspection Unit (JIU)¹²⁵ to increase efficiency during ongoing audits and ensure timely implementation of audit recommendations. OIOS audited the CBD Secretariat during June and July 2019 which resulted in 12 recommendations, none of which were critical.

As of 31 July 2024, 10 recommendations have been ‘closed as implemented’, 1 recommendation was closed (‘closed without implementation - reasons acceptable’), and 1 recommendation remains under implementation. The outstanding recommendation is being addressed by the CBD Secretariat, the UNEP Corporate Services Division and the Policy and Programme Division collectively and covers the following themes: strategic management, financial management, human resources management and performance management.

The BOA audited the CBD Secretariat in both 2019 and 2021. For the 2019 Audit, 20 recommendations were issued, including 4 high-priority and 16 medium-priority recommendations. As of July 31, 2024, 19 recommendations have been ‘closed as implemented’, and 1 recommendation is under implementation. For the 2021 Audit, 3 medium-priority recommendations were issued. As of July 31, 2024, 1 recommendation has been ‘closed as implemented’, while 2 recommendations remain under implementation. The outstanding BOA recommendations are being addressed by the CBD Secretariat and the UNEP Corporate Services Division, and cover the following themes: resource mobilization, voluntary contributions, and grants management (clearance of outstanding balance of closed grants).

11. Support to Multilateral Environmental Agreements

Multilateral Environmental Agreements Advisory Unit – In 2018 the UNEP Executive Director decided to provide extra administrative coordination to the secretariats of UNEP-administered MEA secretariats through the establishment of a dedicated unit within the Corporate Services Division and under the supervision of the Division Director. Following the retirement of the initial Principal Advisor and Head of Unit, a new officer was appointed as of 1 June 2023. The purpose of the Unit has been revised as follows:

The Unit aims to facilitate effective and timely advice on administrative services which support the achievement of the objectives of UNEP-administered MEAs within the parameters of UN secretariat regulations and rules, and by sharing knowledge and best practices across MEA secretariats. The Unit works closely with administrative staff in UNEP-administered MEA Secretariats to implement decisions made by parties and upon request by governing bodies, performs bench-marking exercises and/or assessment studies.

¹²³<https://www.un.org/en/auditors/board/index.shtml>

¹²⁴<https://oios.un.org/>

¹²⁵<https://www.unjiu.org/>

Support provided by the Unit includes interpretation of policy, guidelines and procedures; human resources; budget and finance administration; corporate legal advice; supply chain management; audit coordination and risk management; information and communications technology; and backstopping of administrative staff, and treasury functions for multilateral funds. In the reporting period, the Unit has developed Standard Operating Procedures aimed at bringing precision to administrative processes, coordinated the process between UNON and UNEP Corporate Services Division to issue UNON Guidelines for Depositing Low Value Contributions through UNDP Country Offices, and initiated a UNEP-wide process to ensure consultation of UNEP-administered MEA Secretariats in the development of UNEP corporate policies of programmatic and administrative relevance.

Furthermore, to increase and improve knowledge and sharing of best practices on administrative-related matters, the Unit has organised quarterly meetings with the Chief Administrative/Fund Management Offers of UNEP-administered MEA Secretariats and circulates weekly tips of relevance to them.

The UN Secretary General reforms on management have been an effective instrument for improving efficiency and effectiveness of administration and engagement across the United Nations. The UNEP Executive Director reaffirms the commitment and engagement in the UN reform processes and wishes to assure parties that through the engagement and oversight of the Division of Corporate Services, the CBD Secretariat has an appropriate and effective avenue for having their perspectives and needs included in policy decisions as well as benefitting from efficiency gains introduced in a manner which allows the secretariat to maintain its focus on the programme of work including deliverables outlined by the meeting of parties.