



Convention on Biological Diversity

Distr.: General
21 November 2025

English only

Regional dialogue for East and South Asia on biodiversity monitoring and reporting Bangkok, 9 and 10 October 2025

Report of the regional dialogue for East and South Asia on biodiversity monitoring and reporting

Introduction

1. In subparagraph 24 (e) of decision [16/32](#), the Conference of the Parties to the Convention on Biological Diversity requested the Executive Secretary of the Convention, subject to the availability of resources, to convene, under the guidance of the Bureau of the Conference of the Parties, subregional and/or regional dialogues, taking into account the experiences and lessons learned from the previous dialogues. Pursuant to that decision, a regional dialogue for East and South Asia on biodiversity monitoring and reporting was held in Bangkok on 9 and 10 October 2025. The Conference of the Parties made further requests related to exchanging knowledge and building capacity with regard to the monitoring framework for the Kunming-Montreal Global Biodiversity Framework¹ and the provision of capacity-building and development support from regional and subregional technical and scientific cooperation support centres.

2. The dialogue was organized to also address a key requirement, the need for further capacity-building support, as identified by many countries in previous regional and subregional dialogues on national biodiversity strategies and action plans held in 2023 and 2024 as well as during the meetings of the Subsidiary Body on Implementation and the Conference of the Parties.

3. The dialogue was organized jointly by the Secretariat of the Convention on Biological Diversity, the United Nations Environment Programme (UNEP) Regional Office for Asia and the Pacific, the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP) and the Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations (FAO), with the support of the UNEP China Trust Fund, the Global Environment Facility (GEF), the Government of Thailand and relevant partners in connection with a regional workshop for Asia and the Pacific on accelerating the implementation of the Kunming-Montreal Global Biodiversity Framework through an integrated and synergistic approach (7–9 October 2025) and a subregional consultation for the Pacific countries on the implementation of the Framework (9 and 10 October 2025), which were held at the same venue.

Item 1

Opening of the meeting

4. All of the meetings, held back to back, were opened jointly on 7 October 2025 with opening remarks by the Director of the UNEP Regional Office for Asia and the Pacific, Dechen Tsering, and

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

the Director of the Biodiversity National Focal Point Section, Biodiversity Management Division, Office of Natural Resource and Environmental Policy and Planning, Ministry of Natural Resources and Environment of Thailand, Benchamaporn Wattanatongchai. Video speeches were delivered by the Executive Secretary of the Convention, Astrid Schomaker; the representative of the Ministry of Ecology and Environment of China, Gu Li; and the Director General of the Secretariat of the Pacific Regional Environment Programme, Sefanaia Nawadra.

Item 2

Objectives and programme of the dialogue

5. A representative of the Secretariat provided an overview of the objectives, programme and expected outcomes of the dialogue. He stated that the dialogue provided an opportunity for countries in the region to share information on good practices, challenges and opportunities related to monitoring and reporting on the implementation of national biodiversity strategies and action plans and the Kunming-Montreal Global Biodiversity Framework. The expected outcomes of the dialogue included: (a) enhanced national capacities for the development of national monitoring plans and systems and the development and use of indicators; (b) strengthened capacities for the preparation of the seventh national report; (c) strengthened regional cooperation in monitoring; and (d) identification of opportunities for donors and partners to support countries in developing or strengthening their monitoring systems.

Item 3

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

6. To put the dialogue in context, a representative of the UNEP World Conservation Monitoring Centre introduced the monitoring framework for the Kunming-Montreal Global Biodiversity Framework and the technical updates endorsed in decision [16/31](#) of the Conference of the Parties. A representative of the Secretariat delivered a presentation on the enhanced multidimensional approach to planning, monitoring, reporting and review, adopted in decision [15/6](#), and the procedures for the global review of collective progress in the implementation of the Framework set out in decision [16/32](#).

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

Topic A. Development and improvement of national monitoring plans and systems

8. A presentation was made by a representative of the Group on Earth Observations Biodiversity Observation Network (GEO BON) on steps that could be taken by countries to develop a national biodiversity monitoring system. She emphasized the need, to that end, for countries to understand targets and how progress could be monitored and measured, how different approaches could be used for species-based and site-based monitoring and the importance of consistent monitoring and standardized data collection and processing, which were crucial for the detection of trends and prioritization, facilitation of data analysis and national reporting. The representative stated that national monitoring should focus on health of ecosystems, status of species, drivers of biodiversity loss and gaps in monitoring and data and shared a few examples of monitoring systems and data management at various levels (for example, under the Group on Earth Observations Biodiversity Observation Network at global, regional and national levels) and the situation with respect to monitoring data availability in the region. A representative of the UNEP World Conservation Monitoring Centre shared information on key steps in developing a national monitoring plan for the updated national biodiversity strategies and action plans.

9. A representative of the FAO Regional Office for Asia and the Pacific gave a presentation on a road map for achieving Target 2 of the Framework and the Framework for Ecosystem Restoration Monitoring. She shared findings derived from a recent workshop for member States of the Association

of Southeast Asian Nations (ASEAN) on monitoring and reporting with a focus on Target 2, which was held in Bangkok in September 2025.

10. Representatives of China, Japan and Bhutan shared their countries' experience and lessons learned in developing national monitoring plans and systems when updating their national biodiversity strategies and action plans. A representative of China shared information on that country's biodiversity monitoring network, which was composed mainly of the China Ecosystem Research Network, the China Biodiversity Observation Network and the National Ecological Quality Monitoring Network. She provided a few examples of monitoring schemes at local level including smart monitoring systems supported by remote sensing and artificial intelligence. The representative indicated that China had developed or was developing guidelines and standards for biodiversity monitoring and data collection and management.

11. A representative of Japan indicated that that country's updated national biodiversity strategy and action plan included over 200 indicators and mechanisms for monitoring and reviewing the implementation of the national biodiversity strategy and action plan mainly through the expert assessment of the status of the conservation and sustainable use of biodiversity and the interministerial review of the implementation of relevant policies and indicators. That monitoring and reviewing system was made possible mainly through mainstreaming of biodiversity into relevant ministries' policies and involvement of the private sector and local governments. The representative did note challenges such as time-consuming consultation processes and difficulty in introducing new indicators in the national biodiversity strategy and action plan including some of the headline indicators of the monitoring framework for the Framework.

12. A representative of Bhutan stated that after having completed its updated national biodiversity strategy and action plan, her country was in the process of establishing a strategic national biodiversity monitoring and evaluation system and a dashboard, featuring clear institutional roles and responsibilities, standardized indicators, integrated databases (where feasible) and a results-based management framework to support evidence-based decision-making, adaptive management and reporting. She noted that the absence of a national-level biodiversity monitoring and evaluation system had resulted in weak coordination, limited routine data flows and subjective tagging of outputs to national targets in the national biodiversity strategy and action plan. The representative shared the details of a conceptual module being developed for a national monitoring and evaluation system, including a real-time tracking and reporting system which allowed agencies and stakeholders to provide data and updates and a dashboard which consolidated various existing online systems and data sets and integrated them in a single coherent interface. She did note, however, a few challenges in that regard including fragmented data ownership, variable institutional capacities leading to inconsistent reporting, lack of formal data-sharing protocols hindering data flow, challenges associated with ensuring data quality and verification and uncertain operationalization and functionality of the online reporting system.

13. Following the country presentations, participants worked in three groups to identify, using guiding questions, key priorities and actions that would need to be taken to develop or improve national monitoring plans and systems. Key points emerging from the group discussions are summarized directly below. Their focus was on:

(a) Key challenges identified, which included inadequate political will, challenges to setting up a usable monitoring system or infrastructure, lack of standards for the consistent collection and recording of different data types, fragmented monitoring and data collection, unwillingness of local partners and other data holders to share data, inadequate mechanisms for data flows or data-sharing, non-standardization of data-sharing protocols, lack of reporting structures or mechanisms, lack of baseline data for assessing progress, limited human resources, constraints associated with technical capacities and financial constraints, retaining talent at home, data loss despite investments, unavailability of data needed for specific targets, challenges to collecting data from remote communities and islands and difficulty in collecting data such as digital sequence information;

(b) Key priorities or needs identified, which included identifying what was urgent, what data were available and where gaps lay, short- and long-term planning for the monitoring needed, putting in place a monitoring system for the updated national biodiversity strategy and action plan, the capacity development needed for data collection, deciding on key parameters so that all data coming in covered key fields and were interoperable with comparable data from elsewhere, establishing partnerships for monitoring and data collection, establishing data-sharing standards, strengthening integration of different types of data for use including through engaging relevant agencies and ministries, training data holders on data-sharing, translating science into policy and management measures and increasing human resources and financial investments.

Topic B. Development and use of indicators

14. A technical presentation on developing data flows for monitoring species- and ecosystem-related indicators was made by a representative of the Group on Earth Observations Biodiversity Observation Network. The representative discussed the need for standardized data and the current major data gaps, in particular data gaps related to species monitoring, and delivered a presentation on essential biodiversity variables and pipelines for converting data into indicators to help monitor progress towards achieving biodiversity targets, including through the use of the “BON in a box” tool box.

15. A representative of Women4Biodiversity shared information on a project for developing and using indicators for reviewing the implementation of the Gender Plan of Action in the context of the implementation of Target 23 and Section C of the Kunming-Montreal Global Biodiversity Framework, including methodologies and linkages with reporting.

16. A representative of Sri Lanka shared that country’s good practices and lessons learned related to development and use of indicators when updating its national biodiversity strategy and action plan. In selecting indicators for the national biodiversity strategy and action plan, Sri Lanka focused on leveraging existing data streams and linking national biodiversity strategy and action plan indicators with those developed for other relevant strategies and policies, such as the national climate change policy and the road map for the Sustainable Development Goals. Among the key lessons learned were the following: using simple indicators that could track progress was more valuable than use of perfect indicators that were complex and investing in baseline data, institutionalizing data-sharing among agencies and capacity-building were essential for generating local data. The representative recommended that simple and adaptable methodologies for measuring complex Framework targets be developed and shared and that capacity-building be provided to developing countries to enable biodiversity data management and analysis.

17. Following the presentations, countries were invited to select, from among the headline indicators for which they had started to collect data, those that they felt confident about with respect to reporting and those whose use in the national report they found challenging.

18. Participants proceeded to work on exercises in three groups, with each group selecting one of the headline indicators. The focus was on the following: readiness to use the indicator, proposed methodologies, possible data sources or flows for use in implementing the methodologies, key challenges in using the indicator and possible solutions. Key points emerging from the group exercises are reflected in the following descriptions of the work of each group:

(a) Group 1 selected headline indicator 3.1 (coverage of protected areas and other effective area-based conservation measures). The members of the group shared mainly their readiness to use the indicator. All of the participating countries had been monitoring and collecting data on land and marine areas, with different focuses. Sri Lanka was focusing on forest area; Nepal was focusing, using satellite monitoring, on freshwater; and Japan was issuing certificates for other effective area-based conservation measures. One challenge identified was the difficulty in monitoring and collecting data from exclusive economic zones. Representatives of countries discussed community monitoring approaches, including the use of applications (apps) (such as Kobo forms) to facilitate regional coordination and reporting. Reporting structures varied considerably among countries;

(b) Group 2 selected headline indicator B.1 (services provided by ecosystems). Reflecting its readiness to use the indicator, China was making broad assessments of ecosystem services, focusing on supporting services but not on all of the important services. While a few other countries had forest data, those data were not directly linked to ecosystem services. Countries were assigning monetary values to ecosystem services using tools available for valuation including opportunity costs. Some countries had natural capital accounting projects under way. No country was using the System of Environmental-Economic Accounting. Challenges included lack of understanding of ecosystem services and lack of identification of important ecosystem services, limited skills for evaluation of and difficulty in assigning monetary value to ecosystem services, lack of consistent or comprehensive valuation studies and lack of familiarity with valuation tools or lack of human resources to carry out valuations. Possible solutions included utilizing e-learning courses on ecosystem services, collating data from and estimating value ranges based on review of the academic literature and existing studies, developing a prioritization list in consultation with experts and stakeholders, exploring other ways to quantify the value of nature and learning from countries that produced valuation studies, data and accounts;

(c) Group 3 selected headline indicator 6.1 (rate of invasive alien species establishment). Reflecting its readiness to use the indicator, Bhutan had included an invasive alien species plan in its updated national biodiversity strategy and action plan and passed legislation on invasive alien species. While Bhutan had developed an invasive alien species list, the list was by no means exhaustive and further examination of the list by relevant agencies was needed. Maldives had developed an invasive alien species list but the list was not extensive. While Pakistan had developed a draft plan on invasive alien species, acceptance by local governments was still needed. Pakistan was considering the adoption of an integrated approach combining field operation and satellite monitoring as well as the data to be used for headline indicator 6.1. Challenges included unclear definitions of responsibilities of relevant agencies and levels of government, lack of coordination among those entities, identification and tracking of invasive alien species, lack of baseline data and limited capacity to address invasive alien species-related issues. Possible solutions included addressing invasive alien species-related issues through awareness-raising, legislation, advocacy, consensus-building, better coordination and enhancing technical capacities.

Topic C. Regional cooperation in monitoring

19. A representative of the UNEP World Conservation Monitoring Centre, also on behalf of the UNEP Regional Office for Asia and the Pacific, made a presentation on regional cooperation in addressing biodiversity issues within the context of a few relevant regional environmental partnerships, forums and initiatives. She introduced the national monitoring support initiative, whose goal would be strengthening national monitoring systems for the enhanced implementation of the Framework, and noted the importance of engaging regional or subregional scientific and technical cooperation support centres in facilitating cooperation.

20. A representative of the International Centre for Integrated Mountain Development shared an overview of biodiversity monitoring systems in its member States, while noting the important roles of relevant national institutions, local biodiversity registers, citizen science and community forest user groups in supplying valuable data. She shared information on a few regional or transboundary initiatives for developing maps and data sets for biodiversity hotspots or ecoregions. The representative highlighted the roles played by the International Centre in biodiversity monitoring and assessment, for example, through hosting the Mountain GeoPortal and the Hindu Kush Himalayan Biodiversity Information Facility, providing capacity support and promoting innovative monitoring approaches, such as community-based monitoring, use of apps for data collection, camera trap networks and eDNA barcoding for species identification. She shared a few suggestions for enhancing regional cooperation, including developing mountain-specific indicators under the Framework, strengthening the implementation of the programme of work on mountain biological diversity and enhancing networks and coordination among relevant national focal points.

21. A representative of the South Asia Cooperative Environment Programme introduced a number of initiatives and platforms for promoting subregional cooperation in biodiversity monitoring, including through development of a regional biodiversity data repository, encouragement of harmonization of data standards, strengthening of national monitoring systems through capacity support and promotion of cross-boundary ecosystem monitoring, collaborative research and early warning for biodiversity loss.
22. A representative of the ASEAN Centre for Biodiversity delivered a brief presentation on the ASEAN biodiversity plan and its role in advancing the implementation of the Framework and shared information on the support that the Centre for Biodiversity in its role as a technical and scientific cooperation support centre could provide to countries and related activities.
23. A brief plenary discussion was held to identify key priorities and actions for enhancing regional cooperation in monitoring. Noting that there were few regional or subregional monitoring programmes devoted to biodiversity, with biodiversity monitoring being mainly absorbed into existing regional environmental monitoring programmes, participants underlined the need to establish cooperation mechanisms or programmes devoted to biodiversity monitoring at the regional or sub-regional level. Increasing political will, resources and capacities were identified as main priorities for regional cooperation.

Item 4

Preparation and submission of the seventh national report

24. A representative of the Secretariat provided an overview of the guidance and template for the seventh and eighth national reports, as contained in decisions [15/6](#) and [16/32](#) of the Conference of the Parties. He provided suggestions related to completion of each section of the seventh national report and highlighted the use of headline and binary indicators for assessing progress in achieving national targets and implementing national biodiversity strategies and action plans and the Framework. The representative made suggestions regarding the preparatory process and some approaches that could be used for assessing progress. He concluded by stressing that timely submission of the seventh national report before or by 28 February 2026 would be crucial if the global review was to be undertaken at the seventeenth meeting of the Conference of the Parties in October 2026.
25. Representatives of a few Parties shared their countries' experience or approaches in reviewing progress towards achieving national targets and the implementation of national biodiversity strategies and action plans. A representative of Maldives shared the methods or approaches used by that country for reviewing the existing national biodiversity strategy and action plan, including progress made and gaps, as part of the process of updating the national biodiversity strategy and action plan and national targets in alignment with the Framework.
26. A representative of Pakistan introduced approaches used for reviewing national targets while setting and aligning national targets with the Framework, including coordination with relevant ministries and agencies, engagement with relevant stakeholders and consultations undertaken at various levels. He highlighted that the review was instrumental and provided examples of a few important deliverables, including drafting of the updated national biodiversity strategy and action plan, national target alignment, gap analysis for monitoring and an action plan for policy coherence. He indicated that his country was strengthening a monitoring and evaluation system through the establishment of provincial and regional coordination committees and strengthening of reporting and accountability mechanisms.
27. A representative of Bangladesh shared information on the rapid review of the national biodiversity strategy and action plan and national targets undertaken by her country, mainly through stakeholder consultations, as part of the updating or revision of the national biodiversity strategy and action plan in alignment with the Framework. She provided information on policy consistency reviews and a biodiversity monitoring system gap analysis including data gaps.

28. A representative of Nepal presented findings derived from her country's review of its national biodiversity strategy and action plan 2014-2020, including achievements and lessons learned. The review, which was mainly a qualitative assessment based on inputs from relevant officials and experts, focused on main themes and priority actions and grouped achievements in five categories. The representative shared information on the key content that might be included in the updated national biodiversity strategy and action plan following the review.

29. A representative of the UNEP World Conservation Monitoring Centre gave a presentation on the target tracker tool, focusing on how the tool compiled data on global progress against headline indicators and how it could be used to illustrate national disaggregation or, in certain cases, include global data in national reports.

30. Representatives of the Nanjing Institute of Environmental Sciences of China and the International Union for Conservation of Nature Asia Regional Office shared information on the support that their organizations, in their roles as subregional technical and scientific cooperation support centres, could provide to countries in the region for enhancing their monitoring and reporting capacities, including offers tailored to specific country needs.

31. A representative of UNDP, also on behalf of UNEP, delivered a presentation on the support available from GEF for the updating of national biodiversity strategies and action plans and the preparation of seventh national reports.

32. A representative of the NBSAP Accelerator Partnership shared information on the support available to countries from that initiative for the national biodiversity strategy and action plan updating process, in particular with regard to monitoring and reporting, including through its MatchMaking mechanism, country or regional facilitator programme and national projects on biodiversity monitoring and reporting.

Item 5

Summary of the dialogue and next steps

33. Many of the important points arising from the dialogue have been captured above. The general observations emerging from the dialogue may be summarized as follows:

(a) Participants in the dialogue recognized that biodiversity monitoring was a long-term investment essential for the effective implementation of national biodiversity strategies and action plans, the Convention on Biological Diversity and the Kunming-Montreal Global Biodiversity Framework. It was critical that monitoring be carried out consistently and that standardized data-collection protocols or methods be used to facilitate data analysis, data-sharing and data reporting;

(b) Fundamental gaps existed in the biodiversity monitoring systems of many of the countries of South and East Asia. While increasingly large portions of data originated from citizen science programmes, those data focused largely on birds and did not cover many of the more intact areas and were therefore a complement to rather than a substitute for targeted biodiversity monitoring data. Little data existed for marine systems, with the exception of the data for commercially valuable fish stocks. Ecosystem data were better monitored across the region;

(c) Main challenges for monitoring included lack of political will, limited resources and capacities for monitoring, fragmented data management and sharing, lack of reporting structures, permitting issues for data collection, limited data from the local level and limited capacities to convert data into indicators, policies and management measures. Priorities identified included putting in place a monitoring system, establishing partnerships for monitoring, identifying gaps related to monitoring and data collection, developing key parameters for data collection, establishing data-collection and data-sharing standards or protocols, integrating different types of data for use and increasing resources and capacities;

(d) Overall, countries had limited capacities to use headline indicators although some countries were ready to use certain headline indicators in reporting. The main challenges were limited monitoring, lack of baseline data, the need for wide ranging cross-sector knowledge in order to operationalize indicators and the availability of no data or little data for some targets (especially at national level) or indicators;

(e) Main challenges for the preparation of the seventh national report included time constraints on consultation and data collection, no data availability for some targets and headline indicators, difficulty in reporting on all elements of the targets and difficulty in reporting on actions aimed at implementing national targets and updated national biodiversity strategies and action plans due to the short amount of time available for implementation. Countries were encouraged to use various sources of information for measuring and reporting on progress, including those actions relevant to implementing national targets and the national biodiversity strategies and action plans that were still valid.

34. Through emails or discussions at the margin of the meetings, representatives of most Parties shared their countries' plans for completing updated national biodiversity strategies and action plans and submitting the seventh national reports. Representatives of most Parties indicated their countries' intention of submitting their seventh national reports by the deadline.

Item 6

Closure of the meeting

35. The dialogue was closed at 5.15 p.m. on 10 October 2025, with brief closing remarks delivered by representatives of the UNEP Regional Office for Asia and the Pacific and the Secretariat of the Convention on Biological Diversity.
