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Planning, monitoring, reporting and review: global review of collective progress in the implementation of the Kunming-Montreal Global Biodiversity Framework

Subregional synthesis of selected Parties from Eastern European States on collective progress in the implementation of the Kunming-Montreal Global Biodiversity Framework**

Note by the Secretariat

1. In decision 15/6, the Conference of the Parties decided to consider the global review at its seventeenth and nineteenth meetings. In decision 16/32, it decided that the global review would be primarily based on national reports and a global report on collective progress in the implementation of the Framework and would draw upon relevant recommendations of the subsidiary bodies and working groups and, as relevant, the outcomes of an informal technical dialogue, subregional, regional and interregional dialogues and the global analysis of information in national biodiversity strategies and action plans described in subparagraph 1 (c) of decision 15/6.

2. The present report is intended to contribute input from Parties in the Eastern European States sub region into the global review process. It was prepared in collaboration between the United Nations Environment Programme and the Secretariat of the Convention on Biological Diversity, with guidance from Parties Eastern European subregion, and with financial support from the Global Environment Facility (GEF), through the GEF-8 Umbrella Programme to Support NBSAP Update and the 7th National Reports.

3. The report is presented in the form and language in which it was received by the Secretariat.

* CBD/COP/17/1/Rev.1.
** The present document is being issued without formal editing.

A Sub-Regional Synthesis for selected Parties of the Eastern European States on Collective Progress in the Implementation of the Kunming-Montreal Global Biodiversity Framework



Kunming–Montreal
GLOBAL BIODIVERSITY FRAMEWORK

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This sub-regional report draws from the format, methods and content of the Global Report on Collective Progress in the Implementation of the Kunming-Montreal Global Biodiversity Framework which involved contributions from many individuals from the Secretariat of Convention on Biological Diversity and the Ad Hoc Advisory Group.

List of abbreviations and acronyms

Abbreviation or acronym	Full term
ABS	Access and benefit-sharing
BAT	Best Available Techniques
BIOFIN	Biodiversity Finance Initiative
CBD	Convention on Biological Diversity
CITES	Convention on International Trade in Endangered Species of Wild Fauna and Flora
CHM	Clearing-House Mechanism
COP	Conference of Parties
DSI	Digital sequence information
EbA	Ecosystem-based Adaptation
EGBI	European Green Belt Initiative
EIA	Environmental Impact Assessment
EPR	Extended Producer Responsibility
EU	European Union
GBIF	Global Biodiversity Information Facility
GEF	Global Environment Facility
GMO	Genetically modified organisms
IPBES	The Intergovernmental Science-Policy Platform on Biodiversity and Ecosystem Services
IAS	Invasive Alien Species
KMGBF	Kunming-Montreal Global Biodiversity Framework
LMO	Living modified organisms
MAPs	Medicinal and Aromatic Plants
NAPs	National Adaptation Plans
NBSAP	National biodiversity strategy and action plan
NDCs	Nationally Determined Contributions
NbS	Nature-based Solutions
OECMs	Other Effective area-based Conservation Measures

ORT	Online Reporting Tool
PAME	Protected Area Management Effectiveness
PMRR	Planning, monitoring, reporting and review
SEA	Strategic Environmental Assessment
SMEs	Small and Medium-sized Enterprises
TNFD	Taskforce on Nature-related Financial Disclosures

Key Messages

Overarching Key Message

Parties from Eastern European States[1] have engaged with the Kunming-Montreal Global Biodiversity Framework (KMGBF) and set national biodiversity targets as a contribution to global collective progress on implementation.

Parties have been making progress in establishing biodiversity policies, conservation measures, restoration initiatives and planning frameworks, but implementation is constrained by recurring structural problems: inadequate and fragmented data, weak monitoring, complex institutional competencies, limited technical capacity, insufficient sustainable financing, lack of enforcement and incomplete stakeholder participation. The overarching priority is therefore to move from fragmented, project-based action towards a coherent, inclusive and sustainable approach to biodiversity management, underpinned by adequate financing, sound scientific evidence, effective implementation, and legal and institutional frameworks that embed biodiversity action beyond short-term projects or shifting political priorities.

Key Message 1: Implementation of actions to contribute to achieving each of the KMGBF targets has begun but implementation remains uneven across the Framework.

Parties are increasingly integrating biodiversity into spatial planning, protected area management, ecosystem restoration, agriculture, forestry, fisheries, climate planning, urban development and sectoral policies. In many cases, however, key strategies, action plans and regulatory frameworks are still under development or awaiting approval, while implementation of existing commitments and legal provisions remains uneven. Other actions include expanding protected areas, restoring forests, wetlands, rivers and degraded land, establishing ecological corridors, pollution prevention, managing invasive alien species, conservation of vulnerable (red list) species, identifying areas of potential Other Effective area-based Conservation Measures (OECMs), applying nature-based solutions and implementing biosafety and access and benefit-sharing measures. These efforts are increasingly linked to climate resilience, ecosystem services and human well-being.

Possible opportunities for moving forward:

- Finalize the development, strengthen implementation and enforcement of the required key strategies, action plans and regulatory framework where appropriate to allow for the required biodiversity-related actions.
- Fast track and strengthen the translation of policy commitments and legal requirements into concrete, adequately resourced actions.

[1] Parties participating in this synthesis are Albania, Armenia, Bosnia and Herzegovina, Georgia, Moldova, Montenegro, North Macedonia and Serbia.

Key Message 2: While some actions have been implemented, weak cross-sectoral coordination and cooperation across government departments and low participation of non-government actors continues to be a barrier. Whole-of-Government and Whole-of-Society approaches offer opportunities to strengthen institutions, coordination and cooperation, as well as increase broad participation across society and improve the implementation of biodiversity mainstreaming.

For many Parties institutional fragmentation and weak coordination and cooperation across sectors are major barriers. Biodiversity responsibilities are often spread across ministries, levels of government and sectors, making effective coordination and cooperation essential to ensure coherent planning, policy alignment and implementation. This is particularly pronounced in Parties with decentralized constitutional arrangements, where nature protection competences lie with sub-national jurisdictions and a harmonized national-level framework is lacking, which also complicates the consolidation of data for national planning, monitoring and reporting. Stronger inter-ministerial and cross-sectoral cooperation, clearer responsibilities and improved coordination between national and local institutions are recurring needs. Furthermore, several Parties acknowledge that biodiversity mainstreaming needs to move from policy commitments to practical implementation. Biodiversity is increasingly recognized in sectoral policies and Strategic Environmental Assessment /Environmental Impact Assessment processes, but integration remains inconsistent, particularly at the local level. Economic development, land-use pressures and sectoral interests can conflict with biodiversity objectives.

Across a majority of targets, Parties recognize the importance of community and stakeholder participation in supporting the implementation of actions. Parties have highlighted the need for greater participation of local communities, women, resource users, civil society, businesses and other stakeholders in planning, conservation, monitoring and decision-making. Lack of opportunities and approach are acting as barriers for these identified groups to engage. Awareness and education remain important gaps, including consumer awareness of the environmental impacts of consumption and waste.

Possible opportunities for moving forward:

- Utilize different mechanisms such as science-policy and cross-sectoral platforms and partnerships to allow for sustained engagement and communication to raise awareness and encourage increased implementation of relevant actions to contribute to the targets of the KMGBF
- Recognize and encourage actors other than national Government to submit contributions and commitments to implement the KMGBF into the Online Reporting Tool.
- Continue to develop and implement mechanisms to strengthen cross-sectoral coordination and cooperation at the national and sub-national level.
- Share best practices, lessons learned and create space for dialogues among countries within the Eastern European region.

Key Message 3: Capacity constraints are affecting implementation at almost every level. Targeted capacity building and improved knowledge transfer are central to address operational gaps and improve biodiversity outcomes.

Shortages of trained specialists, enforcement staff, researchers, GIS and artificial intelligence expertise, and technical personnel limit the capacity for effective monitoring, planning, and coordination and cooperation between institutions, as well as necessary implementation of ecosystem valuation, restoration and enforcement efforts. There is also a need to increase capacity to include traditional knowledge into decision-making, as well as to engage traditional knowledge holders. Lastly, the capacity for the public to participate and lack of sustainable biodiversity financing can often contribute to capacity constraints. Capacity building, digitalization, and knowledge transfer are therefore central cross-cutting priorities. For example, for many Parties sustainable use of natural resources requires stronger science-based management. Forestry, fisheries, hunting, agriculture and harvesting of wild species are increasingly addressed through sustainable use frameworks, but insufficient population data, weak enforcement and limited community engagement and monitoring make it difficult to establish and enforce sustainable levels of use. There is also a lack of technical capacity to address issues such as pollution prevention. Further training, recruitment and stronger involvement of academic and research institutions as well as local stakeholders are therefore needed.

Possible opportunities for moving forward:

- Implement new opportunities or engage in existing efforts for peer-to-peer learning among Parties, including exchanges between policymakers and technical experts involved in implementation focusing on priority areas such as ecosystem valuation, restoration techniques and monitoring technology.
- Identify options for knowledge sharing, technology transfer, digitalization of data and up-scaling successful capacity building efforts, not only within a country, but also within the region. The Technical and Scientific Cooperation Support Centres for the Eastern European region could play a particularly important role in this respect.

Key Message 4: Improving sustainable financing is a critical priority for building long-term capacity, comprehensive monitoring systems and implementing on-going actions on the ground.

Many actions carried out by Parties continue to depend on short-term projects or international funding, while domestic biodiversity financing, private investment and innovative mechanisms often remain underdeveloped. UNDP's Biodiversity Finance Initiative BIOFIN is working with Parties in the sub-region to develop financial plans that identify different solutions and mechanisms for biodiversity financing. Parties have identified the following areas for further action: improving biodiversity budget tracking, mobilizing domestic resources and developing instruments such as payments for ecosystem services, green finance and public-private partnerships. The transition towards biodiversity-positive economic systems for many Parties is still at an early stage. Important areas such as biodiversity-related corporate disclosure, sustainable consumption, harmful subsidy reform, access and benefit-sharing, biosafety and biodiversity finance are developing, but legal frameworks, methodologies, incentives, data and institutional mechanisms are often incomplete. Advancing these areas will require not only stronger enabling frameworks, but also meaningful private-sector engagement and greater public awareness and participation.

Possible opportunities for moving forward:

- Put into action the financing options identified through BIOFIN and continue to develop and operationalize biodiversity financial plans to support national implementation of the KMGBF and as a basis for targeting investment towards prioritized actions.
- Identify and implement opportunities and mechanisms for stronger engagement with the private sector to support investment in actions to implement the KMGBF at the national and sub-national level.

Key Message 5: Data, knowledge and monitoring are among the most persistent weaknesses impacting planning, implementation and reporting.

Across targets, Parties are missing baselines, have fragmented databases, lack national indicators, have weak species, ecosystem, ecological network and protected area monitoring, limited interoperability among existing datasets, and insufficient information for measuring progress. There is also a lack of awareness and transparency of different projects being implemented, including their activities, data being generated, and outcomes, which can lead to duplication of efforts. Therefore, there is a need for consolidation of monitoring efforts, development of technical capacity, better data sharing and communication of monitoring results. Better standardized monitoring, digitalization of data and monitoring systems, use of GIS, indicators, use of traditional knowledge and implementation of data sharing protocols are repeatedly identified as priorities.

Possible opportunities for moving forward:

- Further develop and operationalize monitoring plans that identify and prioritize capacity-building needs for national monitoring systems to national and sub-national decision-making and reporting, as appropriate. Plans could also address how greater coordination and cooperation around projects within the country can be achieved to ensure transparency, efficiency and sustainability of the use of data and other outputs.
- Invest in activities such as data collection, establishing baselines, the digitalization of existing data for national priority areas, and development of indicators.
- Engage other actors (e.g. research institutions and non-government organizations) to support activities such as data collection and addressing knowledge gaps.
- Create opportunities for peer-to-peer learning amongst the Parties to showcase good practice, share lessons and, to enhance cooperation and collaboration around data and monitoring within the region. The Technical and Scientific Cooperation Support Centres for the region are well-placed to support these activities.
- Work with businesses and financial institutions on their disclosure frameworks, to ensure alignment with those used by Parties, including alignment with national indicators.

1. Introduction

The Kunming-Montreal Global Biodiversity Framework

In December 2022, the 196 Parties to the Convention on Biological Diversity adopted the Kunming-Montreal Global Biodiversity Framework (KMGBF). It provides a global strategy for protecting biodiversity and supports the UN 2030 Agenda and Sustainable Development Goals. The Framework guides the work of governments, organizations, and other groups from 2022 to 2030. It was developed in response to evidence showing that biodiversity is declining worldwide at an unprecedented rate. It follows the 2011–2020 Strategic Plan for Biodiversity and its Aichi Biodiversity Targets, while aiming to achieve the long-term vision of people living in harmony with nature by 2050.

The Framework sets out four long-term goals for 2050, a mission for 2030, and 23 targets for 2030. These targets focus on urgent action to stop and reverse biodiversity loss and require cooperation from governments and society as a whole. The Framework also emphasizes the participation and rights of Indigenous Peoples and local communities, women, youth, and knowledge holders. Successful implementation depends on clear planning, monitoring, reporting, transparency, and regular review. It also encourages cooperation between the Convention, other biodiversity agreements, international organizations, and different institutions to work together towards protecting biodiversity.

Planning, monitoring, reporting and review

The KMGBF is supported by an integrated planning, monitoring, reporting and review (PMRR) mechanism to support implementation, strengthen accountability and transparency, and facilitate assessment of progress towards the goals and targets. The PMRR was established through Decision 15/6 of the Conference of Parties (COP) to the CBD. The PMRR comprises of four interrelated components:

- Planning: This is undertaken through the preparation, revision and implementation of National Biodiversity Strategies and Action Plans (NBSAPs), which constitute the principal national policy instruments for implementing the CBD. Through Decision 15/6, the COP adopted guidance for revising and updating NBSAPs and requested Parties to align them with the KMGBF, including its goals and targets. The decision also requested Parties to submit standalone national targets aligned with the KMGBF.

- Monitoring: The monitoring framework, adopted under CBD Decision 15/5, which provides a standardized basis for assessing progress towards achieving the goals and targets. The monitoring framework includes required headline and binary indicators, as well as optional component and complementary indicators.

- Reporting: This is undertaken through national reports prepared and submitted in accordance with Article 26 of the CBD and the reporting guidelines adopted under CBD Decision 15/6. Parties report through the standardized reporting template and CBD Online Reporting Tool (ORT).

- Review: This provides the mechanism through which the COP assesses implementation and collective progress towards the goals and targets. Under CBD Decision 15/6, the COP will conduct global reviews at its seventeenth and nineteenth meetings, based on the findings of the Global Report on Collective Progress in the Implementation of the KMGBF.

The global review and global report

The purpose of the Global Report is to provide an overview of collective progress in implementing the KMGBF since its adoption. It assesses four main areas: the collective ambition shown through national targets and commitments from other actors; progress in implementation based on national reports; the challenges, gaps and opportunities affecting implementation; and non-prescriptive approaches that could help accelerate progress. The report builds on previous Global Biodiversity Outlook reports while avoiding duplication with the work of IPBES[2]. Rather than providing a comprehensive scientific assessment of biodiversity, it focuses primarily on information submitted by Parties and other actors. It also does not rank or compare countries or make recommendations but instead provides an evidence base to support decision-making.

The report will be an important source of information for the first global review of progress, taking place at the seventeenth meeting of the COP in October 2026. Its findings, alongside national reports, will help Parties consider whether further action is needed to achieve the Framework's goals and targets and may inform future revisions of NBSAPs, including support for developing countries. Particular attention is given to challenges faced by least developed countries and small island developing states. As the first Global Report under the Framework, it also has an important learning function, putting the new planning, monitoring, reporting and review mechanisms into practice and helping improve the process for future global reviews.

The synthesis for selected Parties of the Eastern European States

The Global Report draws on 7th national reports received by the CBD Secretariat by 7 March 2026. Not all Parties were able to meet this deadline for a variety of reasons, and hence the Global Report is based upon 129 7th national reports. Three regions were identified to be underrepresented in the Global Report. These regions are the Caribbean, the Eastern European region and the Pacific Islands. To enable those regions with low 7th national report submission rates to engage on the global review, UNEP and UNDP proposed to support the development of sub-regional syntheses based on 7th national report information with the support of the GEF-8 Umbrella Programme to Support NBSAP Update and the Seventh National Reports (GEF-8 NBSAP/7NR project).

The sub-regional Synthesis for selected Parties of the Eastern European States on Collective Progress in the Implementation of the KMGBF, provides an initial sub-

[2] The Intergovernmental Science-Policy Platform on Biodiversity and Ecosystem Services (IPBES) was established to strengthen the global science-policy interface for biodiversity and ecosystems services. As part of its mandate IPBES carries out assessments to provide credible, legitimate and relevant evaluation of the state of biodiversity, ecosystem services and their contributions to human well-being. These assessments do not involve conducting new primary research.

regional perspective on actions implemented and challenges which are hindering implementation. This report was developed as a complementary sub-regional synthesis to the Global Report to ensure that available information on the sub-region's progress and needs is captured and made available to inform Parties during the global review at COP17. This report does not replace individual Parties' 7th national reports or the Global Report; rather, it provides a complementary evidence base drawing on available national reporting information and other relevant sources such as NBSAPs and submitted national biodiversity target information, including for Parties continuing to finalize their 7th national reports under extended timelines. While this report does not replace the Global Report, it provides an opportunity for the Parties taking part to identify common approaches and actions, shared implementation challenges, and successful solutions and good practice that can be shared with other countries. Furthermore, this report aims to support conversations beyond CBD COP17, such as around opportunities for regional cooperation, engagement of the relevant Technical and Scientific Cooperation Centres, and delivery of capacity or funding actions. Participation in this report was voluntary and offered to Parties supported by UNEP under the GEF-8 NBSAP/7NR project. The report is therefore not representative of all Parties in the region. Participating Parties are **Albania, Armenia, Bosnia and Herzegovina, Georgia, Moldova, Montenegro, North Macedonia and Serbia**.

Sub-Regional report sources and methodology

The Eastern European synthesis for selected Parties utilizes components of the methodology used in the Global Report. The synthesis draws on information from national targets, NBSAPs and draft or finalized 7th national reports submitted by participating Parties through the CBD's ORT. The synthesis focuses on a qualitative analysis of actions undertaken or planned, identified challenges and potential opportunities for addressing challenges as identified in the information submitted by Parties. While available information from different Parties varied, some Parties provided considerable details related to actions to be undertaken for each target.

Due to data limitations and reporting challenges associated with the headline indicators, the synthesis does not include a quantitative analysis of progress towards achieving KMGBF targets using data provided in headline, binary and national indicators. Contributions of actors other than national governments that were reported through the ORT were only included if they were relevant to the Parties taking part in this synthesis. These contributions were included in the report without further analysis, in order to assist Parties to communicate with stakeholders about potential contributions and how these might support the achievement of the KMGBF.

The qualitative analysis consisted of extracting relevant information from actions (implemented and planned), progress, challenges and opportunities, from relevant documents as agreed with each Party participating in the synthesis. Information from documents included:

- 7th national reports: implemented and planned actions, progress and challenges reported for each target
- NBSAPs: any planned actions

- National biodiversity targets submitted to the ORT: planned actions and challenges for each national target

For each KMGBF target, information was then mapped against the different elements of the target, clustering relevant responses across Parties. Actions were included under the target in which they were reported against. This is a reflection that some actions are implemented by Parties to address multiple targets and may be either reported under one target or multiple targets. The mapping was then used to generate the text for the report for each target. To ensure that text was a reflection for the participating Parties collectively and to be mindful that Parties are in different stages of the process in developing their 7th national reports, Parties were not individually identified. Key messages were then identified across the report. The report underwent one round of peer review and Parties had an opportunity to provide written comments on the report or attend an online meeting where the key messages were discussed and improved with further input.

Limitations and assumptions

Eight countries from the region participated in the process to develop the synthesis report, providing good coverage and representation of the challenges faced by countries supported by UNEP under the GEF 8 NBSAP/7NR project. In addition to challenges directly linked to national contexts, in some cases, limited national capacity, and delays in accessing and receiving financial and technical support for the preparation of NBSAPs, national targets and national reports, further delayed these processes for a number of Parties in the sub-region. Additional reasons for these differences in timeliness in the preparation of 7th national reports were shared during the regional and sub-regional dialogues on biodiversity monitoring and reporting organized by the CBD (CBD/SBI/6/INF/6), including:

- The length of time required to consult all stakeholders involved among other barriers to the inclusion of information from stakeholders;
- The length of time required to complete bureaucratic processes;
- The reporting burden created by having to report to many different multilateral environmental agreements and other processes, especially when compounded by a shortage of human resources;
- The complex nature of the Framework and of the information needed to describe the national targets fully, and to report on their implementation;
- Gaps in the coverage of national monitoring systems or in technical capacity for monitoring, including gaps related to reporting on the headline indicators; and
- Other delays related to specific national contexts.

Therefore, while most UNEP-supported Parties from the Eastern European States were able to participate and contribute to the production of the sub-regional synthesis report, some of the content of the national reports used may be incomplete. This was also the case for submissions included in the Global Report and, as for the Global Report, has resulted in a number of challenges and limitations in the preparation of this sub-regional report, which should be considered when interpreting its findings. Specifically, a lack of data to report against indicators, means that the synthesis focuses on actions being undertaken or planned by Parties and challenges experienced as the basis to interpret progress towards meeting the KMGBF targets. Three of the national reports

analyzed in the sub-regional synthesis were already published on the CBD ORT, while one was included in a draft format. Three Parties contributed through information that had been submitted alongside their national biodiversity targets and one Party through the peer review process. These four Parties are in the process of developing their 7th national reports.

2. NBSAPs, national targets and 7th national reports

2.1 Overview for the Eastern European sub-region for selected Parties

The NBSAPs, national targets and 7th national reports submitted by Parties through the Convention's Online Reporting Tool are the primary sources of information for synthesizing the collective sub-regional progress in the implementation of the Framework. The submissions available for this synthesis included NBSAPs from two countries, 137 national targets and associated information from eight Parties and national reports from three parties. One additional Party is expected to update its NBSAP and submit its 7th national report before the end of the year.

Table 1: Percentage of national reports, national targets and NBSAPs that have been considered in this report out of eight participating Parties

National Reports	National Targets	NBSAPs
37.5%	87.5%	25%

For each of the eight Parties, an average of 17 national targets was submitted in the ORT, with the number of targets per Party ranging from 4 to 30. On average, these Parties provided national targets addressing 22 of the 23 targets of the Framework, with coverage ranging from 17 targets to all 23 targets.

In their national target submissions, CBD Decision 15/6 asked Parties to identify which target or targets of the Framework each national target was aligned, if any; and in each case, whether the alignment was low, medium or high. The statement of the level of alignment was not mandatory. Each of the eight Parties mapped their national targets to the relevant global targets. The following table presents the percentage of Parties with at least one national target aligned to each global target.

Table 2: Percentage of Parties submitting at least one national target aligned with each KMGBF target

GBF Target	Percentage of Parties with at least one aligned national target
1	100%
2	100%
3	100%
4	100%
5	100%

6	100%
7	100%
8	100%
9	100%
10	100%
11	100%
12	100%
13	100%
14	100%
15	86%
16	86%
17	86%
18	100%
19	86%
20	86%
21	86%
22	86%
23	86%

Relationship between NBSAPs, national targets and NRs

Although NBSAPs, national targets and national reports serve different purposes and provide different types of information, they are closely interconnected. NBSAPs, revised or updated in line with the Framework, its goals and targets, constitute the primary mechanism for implementation, including the establishment of national targets. They are national policy instruments tailored to specific domestic circumstances, aligned with national policy cycles and intended primarily for national audiences. Their implementation periods may differ from the Framework's 2030 target deadlines and its longer-term 2050 goals and Vision, and they are often integrated with other national policy instruments. National targets define the objectives that Parties have established to contribute to the implementation of the Framework. They provide an important link between national policies and the commitments made under the Framework, connecting domestic priorities with its overall scope and global targets. National reports serve as the principal mechanism for monitoring and reporting on

implementation of the Convention and the Framework at the national level. They assess progress towards implementation, including progress made through NBSAPs and national targets, while also documenting achievements, challenges and lessons learned in efforts to reach national targets.

2.2 Support provided to Parties for NBSAPs, national target development and national reporting

The eighth replenishment cycle of the GEF provided financial support to Parties to update their NBSAPs and prepare their 7th national reports. This support has been delivered through an umbrella project jointly implemented by the UNEP and the UNDP, in partnership with the Secretariat of the Convention. The project supports 139 developing countries, small island developing states and countries with economies in transition.

This support provided under GEF-8, has represented the main source of dedicated financial assistance available to Parties for preparing their seventh national reports and updating their NBSAPs. Consequently, both the accessibility and timing of this funding directly affected Parties' capacity to complete these processes. In some cases, funding was received relatively late in the reporting cycle, reducing the time available for the broad consultative and participatory processes recommended for national report preparation. This included engagement with subnational authorities, Indigenous Peoples and local communities, women and other relevant stakeholders. In other cases, funding was received too late to allow national reports to be submitted within the agreed timeframe. These delays help contextualize the submission rates and may also have affected the depth and completeness of some national reports.

Beyond GEF financial assistance, numerous organizations have contributed to capacity-building activities and developed guidance to support NBSAP updates, implementation of the monitoring framework and preparation of national reports. The Secretariat and its partners also convened a series of regional and sub-regional dialogues in 2024 and 2025 to support these processes.

3. Collective progress towards implementation of the targets

Target 1: Plan and manage all areas to reduce biodiversity loss

Ensure that all areas are under participatory, integrated, and biodiversity inclusive spatial planning and/or effective management processes addressing land and sea use change, to bring the loss of areas of high biodiversity importance, including ecosystems of high ecological integrity, close to zero by 2030, while respecting the rights of indigenous peoples and local communities.

Actions implemented or planned

Actions under Target 1 have focused on the **development or updating** of territorial plans (at national and sub-national scales) and other spatial planning strategies and regulatory frameworks including Strategic Environmental Assessment (SEA)/Environmental Impact Assessment (EIA). This includes ensuring that biodiversity considerations such as existing and new protected areas, biodiversity-rich areas and ecological connectivity are integrated into the appropriate mechanisms including

relevant sectoral policies. For EU accession countries, advancement of the Emerald Network and EU Natura2000 through policy alignment processes is also mentioned. **Strengthening opportunities for local community participation** in spatial planning activities including improving approaches to public consultations and participation of interested stakeholders in decision-making has also been highlighted as an area of action by Parties.
Some Parties also emphasize the undertaking of actions to support the **operationalization of spatial planning frameworks and regulations**. This includes the improvement and expansion of protected area networks, establishment of ecological corridors and introducing area-based conservation measures outside protected areas (OECMs).

Challenges and opportunities identified for addressing the challenges

Key **monitoring challenges** identified by Parties is the absence of national baselines for headline and national indicators, and a lack of nationally agreed definitions for different ecosystems which is a barrier to developing ecosystem maps. Fragmentation, lack of accessibility and lack of interoperability of datasets also causes challenges for Parties. Parties highlighted the need to undertake a national Red List of ecosystem assessment to ensure a robust scientific baseline.

Despite advancement in **legal and institutional reforms**, governance gaps, weak cross-sectoral coordination and ongoing required legal reforms (including integration of biodiversity into planning processes and increasing community involvement) are identified by Parties as a challenge in implementing actions. Weak implementation and enforcement of frameworks and policies also pose a challenge for achieving targets and implementing actions.

Parties which are **EU accession** countries are experiencing challenges in undertaking a complete legal alignment with the EU Habitats and Birds Directives and the Nature Restoration Regulation, leading to delays in designation of protected areas and restoration activities.

Capacity challenges have been identified in a number of different areas including the enforcement of policies and regulations, ecological planning, undertaking the required assessments and GIS analyses, as well as public participation processes.

Sustainable financing for spatial planning-related actions at all levels of government is an ongoing challenge for Parties.

Contributions of actors other than national governments

No commitments related to Target 1 have been submitted through the ORT by actors other than national governments.

Target 2: Restore 30% of all degraded ecosystems

Ensure that by 2030 at least 30 per cent of areas of degraded terrestrial, inland water, and coastal and marine ecosystems are under effective restoration, in order to enhance biodiversity and ecosystem functions and services, ecological integrity and connectivity.

Actions implemented or planned

Parties have carried out actions which have **expanded protected areas** and aimed to improve their management to support ecosystem recovery and ecological connectivity. Specific ecosystems have also been a focus of actions for Parties including, the restoration of forests and degraded land through afforestation, reforestation, and erosion control and the restoration of wetlands, coastal lagoons, rivers, grasslands and pastures, including community-based and pilot restoration initiatives.

To underpin restoration efforts, Parties have identified and prioritised degraded ecosystems **using ecosystem condition assessments**, biodiversity and ecosystem-service criteria, and drafted restoration plans for priority areas. Parties are also in the process of developing restoration standards and guidance, including technical guidelines and manuals covering major ecosystem types. Actions focusing on mapping and tracking restoration progress are also being developed.

Challenges and opportunities identified for addressing the challenges

Parties face challenges with different ministries having restoration responsibilities depending on the strategy, legislation and ecosystem, coupled with **limited institutional coordination** resulting in fragmentation and insufficient implementation. Parties also identified that key policy and technical restoration frameworks are still under development or awaiting approval. Legacy degradation from mining and quarrying, combined with weak enforcement of post-exploitation remediation and recultivation obligations and the absence of a cadastre of degraded areas, is a specific challenge for some Parties.

While actions are underway to carry out restoration activities, Parties also face challenges in reporting due to **inconsistent approaches to monitoring and lack of standardized indicators**. More specifically, Parties identified insufficient systematic post-restoration monitoring to determine whether ecological objectives have actually been achieved and whether interventions should be scaled up.

Parties have identified **technical challenges** including the lack of a national baseline for degraded ecosystems, as well as agreed definitions of ecosystems. Parties also identified challenges in agreeing methodologies for assessing ecosystem condition. Insufficient technical and human capacity including shortages of trained specialists, field personnel, research capacity, GIS expertise and nursery capacity have also been experienced by Parties.

Lack of sustainable funding is a challenge with restoration actions often dependent on short-term or donor-funded projects, with insufficient dedicated and sustained domestic financing and limited integration of restoration costs into public budgets.

Contributions of actors other than national governments

Two commitments relevant to Target 2 have been submitted for the region through the ORT. The Bosnia and Herzegovina-based organisation FEA (Forestry and Environmental Action), shared its commitment to supporting the restoration of degraded terrestrial and

inland water ecosystems through spatially informed, risk-based and policy-aligned restoration planning. Activities take place in Albania, Bosnia and Herzegovina, Montenegro, North Macedonia and Serbia and are implemented in partnership with UNEP, line ministries and local self-government authorities.
Further, the Bund für Umwelt und Naturschutz Deutschland e.V. (Friends of the Earth Germany) shared information on the DaRe to Connect (D2C) - Interreg Danube Transnational Programme, aimed to strengthen ecological connectivities along the European Green Belt in the Danube Region. Activities were implemented from 2018 to 2021. Outputs were mainstreamed via the strategic vision "Green Belt in the Danube Region 2030" and stakeholder alliances to continue work after the project.

Target 3: Protect 30% of land, water and seas

Ensure and enable that by 2030 at least 30 per cent of terrestrial and inland water areas, and of marine and coastal areas, especially areas of particular importance for biodiversity and ecosystem functions and services, are effectively conserved and managed through ecologically representative, well-connected and equitably governed systems of protected areas and other effective area-based conservation measures, recognizing indigenous and traditional territories, where applicable, and integrated into wider landscapes, seascapes and the ocean, while ensuring that any sustainable use, where appropriate in such areas, is fully consistent with conservation outcomes, recognizing and respecting the rights of indigenous peoples and local communities, including over their traditional territories.

Actions implemented or planned

Actions undertaken by Parties show a focus on **expanding and strengthening protected and conserved area networks**, including through the designation of new protected areas, expansion of existing networks and improved connectivity. The establishment of community-based conservation approaches and the mapping of ecological corridors are actions to support landscape-level conservation and identify potential OECMs. Some countries have also agreed on actions to develop frameworks for the recognition and reporting of OECMs.
Alongside quantitative expansion of conserved areas across terrestrial and, where relevant, coastal and marine areas, actions point to efforts to **improve the quality and effectiveness of area-based conservation**. These include the use of different tools to assess protected area management effectiveness (PAME), as well as efforts to strengthen PAME, adaptive management and, more broadly, equitable and effective governance. Site-level capacity building is also being pursued to support implementation and management.
A second major focus of actions relevant to target 3 is on **strengthening the legal, institutional and governance frameworks** underpinning area-based conservation. This includes, for example, strengthening EIA legislation and establishing mechanisms for inter-sectoral coordination, as well as aligning national conservation standards with international frameworks. In countries pursuing EU accession, this includes alignment with the Emerald Network and preparatory steps towards the Natura 2000 network as part of the EU acquis[3].

[3] EU acquis is the accumulated legislation, legal acts and court decisions that constitute the body of European Union law

Actions also relate to the **strengthening of monitoring and information systems**, including through digitalization of monitoring, development of indicators for ecological representativeness, connectivity and conservation outcomes, and improved access to biodiversity information and participation.

Challenges and opportunities identified for addressing the challenges

A key challenge is **limited financing for biodiversity conservation**, including constrained national budgets and the need to mobilize alternative funding sources, with international cooperation and EU funding remaining important sources of support. This creates challenges for sustaining and scaling conservation efforts over the longer term. **Capacity constraints** are also significant, with limited technical and human resources within relevant institutions at different levels. Shortages in staffing effect, in particular, enforcement, monitoring and the effective management of protected areas.

A further challenge concerns the **enabling legal and institutional framework and its implementation**. Gaps in legislation and enforcement mechanisms, as well as complex institutional competences and insufficient inter-sectoral coordination, hinder effective implementation of nature protection measures, including EIA requirements.

Further challenges highlighted by Parties are **gaps in the coverage and management of area-based conservation**, including the need to further expand marine protected areas where relevant and ensure coverage of areas of biodiversity importance. National legal frameworks for the recognition of OECMs are generally non-existent, although at least one Party has initiated the development of a regulation on the identification, assessment, recognition, monitoring and reporting of OECMs. One Party also highlighted the presence of **military zones** within protected areas, including due to the presence of enemy forces, as a major challenge.

Contributions of actors other than national governments

Two commitments relevant to Target 3 have been submitted for the region through the ORT. The Bosnia and Herzegovina-based organization FEA (Forestry and Environmental Action), shared its commitment to provide technical, policy and institutional support for the establishment, expansion and effective management of protected areas and OECMs in Bosnia and Herzegovina, Serbia, Montenegro, Albania and North Macedonia. Activities are implemented in partnership with UNEP and UNDP.

Further, the Bund für Umwelt und Naturschutz Deutschland e.V. (Friends of the Earth Germany) provided information on the work of the European Green Belt Initiative (EGBI) as a long-running conservation commitment that has been underway since early 2002. The key objective is the operationalization of ecological networks at continental scales in the former Iron Curtain border zone. In total more than 150 organizations are active within the EGBI.

Target 4: Halt species extinction, protect genetic diversity, and manage human-wildlife conflict

Ensure urgent management actions to halt human induced extinction of known threatened species and for the recovery and conservation of species, in particular threatened species, to significantly reduce extinction risk, as well as to maintain and restore the genetic diversity within and between populations of native, wild and domesticated species to maintain their adaptive potential, including through in situ and

ex situ conservation and sustainable management practices, and effectively manage human-wildlife interactions to minimize human-wildlife conflict for coexistence.

Actions implemented or planned

Actions undertaken by Parties show a strong focus on **species-specific conservation, recovery and population management**, alongside efforts to strengthen species monitoring, legal protection and the conservation of genetic diversity.

Actions include the development and implementation of **species-specific conservation, recovery and population management plans**, particularly for threatened, rare or endemic species. Practical measures include restoration and recovery programmes, reintroduction and translocation, population management, habitat restoration and GIS-based mapping of habitats of rare species. In some cases, these measures combine **in situ and ex situ approaches**.

A significant area of action is **strengthening research, monitoring and species-status assessments**. Several Parties are working to improve and systematize national monitoring of species and biodiversity, including through standardized approaches and more regular collection and updating of information on species status, distribution, population trends and breeding sites. Actions also include strengthening national biodiversity information systems and revising and updating **National Red Lists and Red Books** to support the prioritization of conservation measures.

Actions also focus on **strengthening legal and regulatory frameworks for species protection**, including through alignment with the **EU acquis and international agreements**. Measures include species protection legislation, hunting regulations and management plans, as well as efforts to strengthen enforcement and implementation. Some Parties specifically focused on measures against illegal killing, capture and trade and the implementation of the Convention on International Trade in Endangered Species of Wild Fauna and Flora (CITES).

Some Parties planned or implemented measures to **maintain genetic diversity**, including gene and seed banks, scientific collections and other ex situ conservation systems. Some actions specifically address **agrobiodiversity**, including the conservation of local breeds and crop varieties and support for farmers and other custodians maintaining genetic resources. Actions have also aimed to support in situ conservation.

Finally, some Parties are undertaking measures to address **human-wildlife conflict**. These include systems for recording and analyzing conflicts, preventive and mitigation measures such as fencing and waste management, community involvement, and compensation arrangements for affected communities and livelihoods.

Challenges and opportunities identified for addressing the challenges

The implementation of these measures is constrained by **gaps in monitoring systems, data and indicators**. Countries identify fragmented data sources, insufficiently harmonized monitoring methodologies, gaps in baseline and population-trend data, and limited monitoring of genetic diversity. In some cases, National Red Lists are outdated or prepared using different methodologies across different jurisdictions, making them

mutually non-comparable, while ex situ collections lack a central database and coordination. In some cases, biodiversity information is not sufficiently digitized, centralized or accessible, and technical and digital resources remain inadequate. Proposed responses include strengthening systematic population monitoring, improving National Red List assessments and indicators, and extending genetic diversity monitoring to wild species.

Insufficient and unpredictable financing is another constraint. Monitoring and conservation activities can remain fragmented and predominantly project-based, limiting continuity and the ability to sustain or scale up measures. Stable national financing for long-term species monitoring and clearer allocation of budgets and responsibilities through species action and recovery plans are identified as ways to address these gaps.

A further challenge concerns **institutional capacity, coordination and enforcement**. Countries point to complex coordination between different levels of authority and sectors, as well as limited human and technical capacities within institutions responsible for threatened species. These constraints are particularly relevant to enforcement, anti-poaching and human-wildlife conflict management. Proposed responses include capacity building from field researchers to decisionmakers, stronger enforcement against illegal killing and habitat degradation, and improved coordination among relevant institutions and stakeholders.

One Party also identified the absence of systematic mechanisms for recording and managing conflicts and **limited awareness and engagement of local communities** as a barrier to effective human-wildlife conflict management, pointing to the need for education, community engagement and training alongside prevention and compensation mechanisms.

Finally, implementation in several countries is affected by **incomplete or evolving policy and legislative frameworks**. The ongoing alignment with EU and international requirements is therefore an important part of strengthening the enabling framework for target implementation.

Contributions of actors other than national governments

Reverse the Red, an international coalition committed to deliver on the KMGBF Goal A and Target 4, has submitted several commitments on behalf of the IUCN SSC Cat Specialist Group regarding species in the Eastern European region. Ongoing commitments to species conservation through the Reverse the Red initiative relate to (1) the European Wildcat (*Felix silvestris*) and the Eurasian Lynx (*Lynx lynx*) in Albania, Armenia, Bosnia and Herzegovina, Georgia, Montenegro, North Macedonia, Republic of Moldova and Serbia; and (2) the Leopard (*Panthera pardus*), the African Wildcat (*Felis lybica*) and the Jungle Cat (*Felis chaus*) in Armenia and Georgia.

Target 5: Ensure sustainable, safe and legal harvesting and trade of wild species

Ensure that the use, harvesting and trade of wild species is sustainable, safe and legal, preventing overexploitation, minimizing impacts on non-target species and ecosystems, and reducing the risk of pathogen spill-over, applying the ecosystem approach, while

respecting and protecting customary sustainable use by indigenous peoples and local communities.

Actions implemented or planned

Actions planned or undertaken by Parties show a strong focus on **strengthening legal and regulatory frameworks for the sustainable and legal use and trade of wild species**, alongside improved enforcement, monitoring and science-based management,

Several Parties have strengthened **controls on international trade in wild species**, including through CITES permits and certification, customs cooperation and staff training, alongside measures against illegal killing, capture and trade and strengthened inspection and enforcement capacities.

A significant area of action is the development or revision of **domestic frameworks regulating hunting, fishing and the harvesting of wild species**. Measures include reviewing hunting regulations and hunting grounds, managing game populations, regulating fisheries and controlling the collection of edible and medicinal and aromatic plants (MAPs) and other non-wood forest products. Some Parties are also recording quantities harvested and monitoring the status and biodiversity impacts of harvested resources. Several Parties are aligning these frameworks with the **EU acquis and international standards**.

Actions also focus on **research, monitoring and science-based management**, including inventories and assessments of flora and fauna, monitoring of species, habitats and fish stocks, and standardized methodologies for determining sustainable levels of use. Some Parties are strengthening information systems to record harvesting and trade and improve data for quotas, permits and other management measures.

Finally, some actions seek to **reduce pressures from unsustainable use**, including through close-to-nature forest management, sustainable management of game and fish populations and more sustainable harvesting practices. Public awareness, education and capacity-building are also identified as supporting measures.

Challenges and opportunities identified for addressing the challenges

A key challenge is **gaps in monitoring, enforcement and reliable data on the use of wild species**. Insufficient monitoring of harvest levels, population impacts and trade, including weaknesses in monitoring game species and wild flora and fauna poses challenges for several Parties. For fisheries, a few Parties identified incomplete stock assessments and the need for more systematic assessment of exploited stocks. Proposed responses include strengthening species and stock assessments, improving data systems and establishing integrated digital systems for permits, traceability and monitoring. More generally, Parties highlighted the need for science-based approaches to determine sustainable levels of use and distinguish legal and sustainable use from illegal or unsustainable extraction.

A further recurring challenge is **limited enforcement and institutional capacity**, including insufficient surveillance and control of illegal and unreported fishing, hunting and wildlife trade. Several Parties identify shortages of specialized personnel and technical infrastructure and weaknesses in cooperation among CITES authorities, customs, police, inspection bodies and other institutions. Illegal markets, complex trade flows and difficulties in identifying derived wildlife products further complicate enforcement. In one Party, all tasks of the CITES Management Authority are carried out

by a single staff member without an electronic permit system, and inconsistent application of CITES implementing decisions across jurisdictions has disrupted a unified permit and enforcement system. Proposed measures include strengthening authorities' capacities, improving digital traceability, enhancing CITES and illegal, unreported and unregulated fishing controls, and strengthening cooperation among relevant authorities and scientific institutions.

Insufficient financial, human and technical resources constrain the establishment and maintenance of monitoring systems, databases, inspection capacity and scientific assessments. Dependence on time-limited international funding and shortages of specialized expertise can limit implementation. Capacity-building, training and improved technical and digital infrastructure are therefore identified as important enabling measures.

Gaps and fragmentation in legal and institutional frameworks remain another challenge. For several Parties legislative or sub-legislative gaps, lengthy adoption processes and difficulties in ensuring effective implementation and enforcement are sources of challenges. In some cases, EU-aligned nature and CITES legislation remains under development. Proposed responses include refining the legal framework, strengthening integrated systems for inventory, monitoring and licensing, and improving intersectoral coordination.

Further challenges highlighted by individual Parties include gaps in knowledge and awareness of sustainable harvesting practices and the absence of a unified platform for traditional knowledge and sustainable use practices. One Party also highlighted human-wildlife conflict involving increasing populations of some protected species, pointing to the need for approaches that support coexistence and address impacts on affected livelihoods.

Contributions of actors other than national governments

No commitments related to Target 5 have been submitted through the ORT by actors other than national governments.

Target 6: Reduce the introduction of invasive alien species by 50% and minimize their impact

Eliminate, minimize, reduce and or mitigate the impacts of invasive alien species on biodiversity and ecosystem services by identifying and managing pathways of the introduction of alien species, preventing the introduction and establishment of priority invasive alien species, reducing the rates of introduction and establishment of other known or potential invasive alien species by at least 50 per cent, by 2030, eradicating or controlling invasive alien species especially in priority sites, such as islands.

Actions implemented or planned

Actions planned or undertaken by Parties to contribute to Target 6 show a focus on strengthening the prevention, control and management of invasive alien species (IAS), alongside efforts to improve the knowledge base and monitoring of their distribution and impacts.

Actions include **strengthening controls on the introduction, transport, trade and release of IAS**, including border inspection and enforcement. In some cases, risk

assessment procedures are being developed to identify priority species and inform management options. Some Parties have carried out actions focused on practical control measures, including mechanical, chemical and biological control and ecological restoration, as well as measures targeting particularly problematic species.
A significant area of action is the **strengthening of national legal and regulatory frameworks requiring action plans and the development or regular updating of lists for priority IAS**. Some Parties focus on developing action plans to improve controls over pathways of introduction, including through trade, breeding and transport. Actions also include strengthening administrative mechanisms for monitoring species introduced for economic purposes.
Actions also focus on **strengthening research, monitoring and early detection**, including baseline inventories and documentation of IAS distribution and impacts across terrestrial, coastal, marine and freshwater ecosystems. Some countries have started monitoring high-impact or priority species by integrating them into broader biodiversity and ecosystem monitoring programmes, while efforts are underway to strengthen early detection and rapid response mechanisms and to develop or harmonize monitoring systems. One country's IAS monitoring system is still at an early stage, with efforts currently focused on a limited number of species.
Finally, the Parties highlight efforts to **expand institutional, technical and societal capacities** for IAS management, including through research, education and engagement of civil society. Development and improvement of environmental information systems, national databases and mechanisms for data exchange are also being pursued. Public awareness and reporting of IAS by citizens, including through information campaigns, are also fostered.

Challenges and opportunities identified for addressing the challenges

The implementation of these measures is constrained by **gaps in legislation, institutional capacity and coordination**, including incomplete or fragmented legal frameworks, slow administrative processes and unclear mandates across sectors involved in IAS management.
Limited human and financial resources are another recurring challenge, with reliance on international project funding and shortages of relevant technical expertise making it difficult to establish sustained national surveillance and management capacities. Countries also identify gaps in baseline data, analytical tools and interoperable databases.
A further challenge is the **limited functioning of early detection and rapid response systems**, as well as weaknesses in border and quarantine controls. The spread and reinvasion of IAS is exacerbated by trade, maritime transport, tourism, aquaculture, agricultural imports and climate change. Some Parties also highlight that the use of alien species in economic activities can create additional pathways for introduction and spread. To address these gaps, countries identify measures including scaling up monitoring programmes, strengthening border and quarantine controls and ballast water management, establishing early warning systems, and developing analytical tools such as quantified impact indicators and cost-of-impact assessments. Other proposed measures include digital mapping of IAS distribution and strengthened cross-border cooperation for monitoring species along shared river basins.
Finally, **stronger cross-sectoral cooperation, information exchange and public and community engagement** are identified as important enabling measures. Proposed

responses include national platforms for data and information exchange, improved coordination among relevant ministries, inspections, research institutions and civil society, and greater involvement of local communities in early detection and control.

Contributions of actors other than national governments

One commitment relevant to Target 6 has been submitted for the region through the ORT. The Bosnia and Herzegovina based-organisation FEA (Forestry and Environmental Action), shared its commitment to reduce the introduction and impacts of invasive alien species in the country through structured management planning, species-specific action plans and institutional capacity building. Actions are implemented in partnership with protected area authorities, environmental ministries and local governments.

Target 7: Reduce pollution to levels that are not harmful to biodiversity

Reduce pollution risks and the negative impact of pollution from all sources, by 2030, to levels that are not harmful to biodiversity and ecosystem functions and services, considering cumulative effects, including: reducing excess nutrients lost to the environment by at least half including through more efficient nutrient cycling and use; reducing the overall risk from pesticides and highly hazardous chemicals by at least half including through integrated pest management, based on science, taking into account food security and livelihoods; and also preventing, reducing, and working towards eliminating plastic pollution.

Actions implemented or planned

Actions planned or undertaken by Parties focus broadly on **strengthening pollution prevention and control**, particularly through improved water and waste management, regulation of pesticides and chemicals, pollution monitoring and environmental governance.

Several Parties are **strengthening measures to reduce pollution from agriculture**, including pesticide regulation and monitoring, measures to reduce pesticide use, and targeted reductions of nutrient and pesticide inputs in sensitive ecosystems and catchments. Actions also include improved manure and agricultural waste management and monitoring of nitrogen and phosphorus inputs.

Water pollution is a further area of action, including monitoring of surface, groundwater and coastal water quality, identification of pollution sources, wastewater treatment and development of pollution indicators. Some Parties are strengthening monitoring through improved laboratory and technical capacity, environmental information systems and remote sensing. Actions also include basin-level planning and coordination, including river basin management plans and water monitoring strategies.

Actions addressing waste, air pollution and chemicals include strengthening waste legislation and infrastructure, reducing landfill disposal, improving hazardous waste management, remediating contaminated sites, reducing industrial and combustion emissions, applying Best Available Techniques (BAT), and strengthening chemical safety, inventories, reporting and inspection systems. Soil protection and remediation are also addressed by some Parties.

Several Parties are strengthening the **legal and institutional basis for pollution control** through environmental strategies, integrated permitting, Strategic Environmental Assessment, Pollutant Release and Transfer Registers, inspection and enforcement, the

polluter pays principle, and alignment with EU and international requirements. Public awareness and institutional capacity-building support these measures. One Party is undertaking to restrict single use plastic products. One Party has explicitly included the demining and release of mine-contaminated land among its measures under this target, recognizing the physical contamination of areas of high importance for biodiversity.

Challenges and opportunities identified for addressing the challenges

Implementation is constrained by **gaps in data, monitoring and technical capacity**. Several Parties have incomplete or fragmented information on pollution levels and sources, including nutrient and pesticide pollution and hazardous chemicals. In some cases, outdated monitoring infrastructure and technologies limit the ability to assess pollution trends and progress towards pollution reduction targets.

A further challenge is **inadequate wastewater and waste-management infrastructure**. Some Parties identify insufficient wastewater treatment capacity, particularly outside major urban areas and, in some cases, even in larger urban centres, where the vast majority of municipal wastewater is still discharged untreated into surface waters, while others highlight ineffective management of municipal, industrial and hazardous waste and associated pollution of water and soil. Proposed responses include increased investment in wastewater treatment, particularly in sensitive catchments, and improved waste management infrastructure and services.

Enforcement and implementation capacity are also significant barriers. Several Parties have weak enforcement, non-compliance, insufficient inspection and control capacity, and coordination gaps across sectors and levels of government, particularly in relation to pesticides, hazardous chemicals and agricultural and industrial pollution.

Insufficient financial, technical and institutional resources further constrain implementation. Parties identify limited funding for pollution control infrastructure and modernization, as well as gaps in technical and institutional capacity. Some also identify limited awareness and capacity among local communities and low prioritization of environmental protection in public spending.

Some more specific challenges include difficulties in **quantifying nutrient losses from dispersed agricultural sources and assessing pollution from privately operated activities**, as well as persistent contamination from hazardous chemicals accumulated in the past. One Party identified contaminated and mine-threatened areas as constraints on field work.

Contributions of actors other than national governments

No commitments related to Target 7 have been submitted through the ORT by actors other than national governments.

Target 8: Minimize the impacts of climate change on biodiversity and build resilience

Minimize the impact of climate change and ocean acidification on biodiversity and increase its resilience through mitigation, adaptation, and disaster risk reduction actions, including through nature-based solution and/or ecosystem-based approaches, while minimizing negative and fostering positive impacts of climate action on biodiversity.

Actions implemented or planned

Actions planned or undertaken by Parties focus particularly on **strengthening ecosystem resilience to climate change through restoration and nature-based solutions (NbS)**, alongside integrating biodiversity considerations into climate planning and strengthening the knowledge and institutional basis for climate-resilient biodiversity management.

Several Parties are implementing or planning **restoration of degraded ecosystems as a climate adaptation measure**, including forests, wetlands, rivers, grasslands and other natural ecosystems. Actions include afforestation and reforestation, wetland restoration, restoration of near-natural habitats and measures to reduce land degradation. Some Parties are developing or applying NbS to strengthen resilience to droughts, floods, wildfires and other climate-related risks, including through watershed management, urban greening and green infrastructure. Forest restoration and expansion are a particularly recurring area of action, with some Parties also highlighting the link to carbon sequestration and emission reductions.

Several Parties are **embedding biodiversity considerations into climate mitigation and adaptation planning**, including Nationally Determined Contributions (NDCs), National Adaptation Plans (NAPs), disaster risk reduction and spatial or sectoral planning. Actions include integrating NbS into climate and disaster risk policies, strengthening coherence between biodiversity, climate and spatial planning, and developing measures to avoid maladaptation.

Actions also focus on **improving knowledge of climate impacts on biodiversity and strengthening climate-resilient management**. These include developing methodologies and indicators for monitoring climate impacts on species and ecosystems, identifying climate-sensitive species and habitats, and preparing targeted protection measures. For example, one Party highlighted how nine protected area management plans were prepared that for the first time integrated climate change. Some Parties are developing guidance, safeguards and monitoring frameworks for NbS, including approaches to assess both climate adaptation and biodiversity outcomes.

Additional actions include **strengthening institutional, technical and infrastructure capacities for climate resilience**, including capacity-building, knowledge development and international cooperation. Some Parties are also establishing or expanding systems for forest reproductive material and prioritizing native species and appropriate seed provenance in restoration.

Challenges and opportunities identified for addressing the challenges

Implementation is constrained by **limited financial resources for climate adaptation, mitigation and ecosystem resilience**. Several Parties identify insufficient domestic budget allocations for NbS, restoration and other adaptation measures, alongside reliance on international financing. Limited financial resources for large-scale adaptation actions can hinder the transition from emergency response to proactive nature-based planning. Capacity to mobilize and leverage external funding is also limited.

A further challenge is **fragmented planning and institutional coordination**. Some Parties identify insufficient integration of biodiversity, climate and land-use policies, fragmented decision-making and gaps in institutional and legal frameworks. Weak coordination across institutions can also limit effective implementation of landscape-level restoration and NbS.

Several Parties also identify **shortages of technical expertise and institutional capacity**. Gaps include insufficient specialists in climate adaptation and ecosystem-based approaches, limited capacity for multidisciplinary studies and monitoring, and weaknesses in technical support, knowledge transfer and project development. In the forest sector, some challenges relate specifically to limited advisory capacity, skills and knowledge for climate-resilient management.

The practical implementation of **NbS and ecosystem-based approaches** presents additional challenges. Some Parties identify difficulties in ensuring their effective application at landscape level, including the need for appropriate criteria, scientific justification, land-use arrangements and long-term maintenance. Local and community-driven approaches are also identified as important for measures such as water retention and soil improvement.

One Party specifically identifies **trade-offs between climate mitigation or development objectives and biodiversity**, including hydropower, solar power plants, tourism, agricultural intensification and infrastructure development. Strategic Environmental Assessment is suggested as one means of addressing such trade-offs.

Finally, one Party identified a lack of baseline information on ocean acidification, pointing to the need for technical monitoring.

Contributions of actors other than national governments

One commitment relevant to Target 8 has been submitted for the region through the ORT. The Bosnia and Herzegovina-based organization FEA (Forestry and Environmental Action), committed to strengthening ecosystem resilience to climate change and reducing biodiversity loss associated with climate-related risks, including forest fires, extreme weather events and land degradation. Actions include development of climate-resilient protected area management frameworks, strengthening early warning, monitoring and data-based risks assessment systems, capacity building and promotion of nature-based solutions that enhance ecosystem-based adaptation (EbA). Activities are implemented in Bosnia and Herzegovina, Albania, Montenegro, Serbia and North Macedonia and partners include forestry authorities, protected area management institutions, civil protection agencies and UNDP and UNEP regional cooperation platforms.

Target 9: Manage wild species sustainably to benefit people

Ensure that the management and use of wild species are sustainable, thereby providing social, economic and environmental benefits for people, especially those in vulnerable situations and those most dependent on biodiversity, including through sustainable biodiversity-based activities, products and services that enhance biodiversity, and protecting and encouraging customary sustainable use by indigenous peoples and local communities.

Actions implemented or planned

Parties have established a broad set of **legal, institutional, and policy measures** aimed at ensuring the sustainable use of forests, fisheries, wildlife, game, medicinal and aromatic plants (MAPs), and other natural resources. Key actions include sustainable management of forest and pasture resources, sustainable harvesting of MAPs and other non-wood forest products, fisheries monitoring, enforcement of controls on international wildlife trade, and measures to prevent illegal killing, capture, and trade of wild species. These actions are complemented by support for rural livelihoods through value chains based on natural resources and by predominantly public forest ownership.

One Party carried out preparatory work between 2020 and 2025 to establish a basis for more **sustainable hunting practices**. This included reviewing international experience on ethical and controlled hunting, particularly approaches to quotas, hunting seasons, species conservation, and enforcement. Existing hunting legislation was assessed, and hunting grounds and their boundaries were also reviewed against biodiversity objectives. Another Party aims to address the **sustainable management of non-wood forest products**, including medicinal, edible and aromatic plants. Measures will include registering commercial collectors, maintaining records of quantities collected, establishing collection controls amongst other measures.

Actions by Parties also seek to **mainstream biodiversity considerations across sectors** that depend on natural resources. This includes introducing ecosystem services approaches into legislation, planning and management; applying close-to-nature forest management; developing good practices for sustainable game management; protecting and sustainably using fish stocks; promoting organic production; conserving agrobiodiversity; and integrating biodiversity requirements into agriculture, forestry, fisheries, hunting, water management, construction, energy, transport and tourism.

Challenges and opportunities identified for addressing the challenges

For many Parties **Monitoring and data availability are major constraints.** Biological monitoring of exploited species remains limited, while systems for quantifying benefits and establishing sustainable yield indicators are still under methodological development. Similar gaps affect hunting and the management of other wild species, where population and habitat data are often incomplete, fragmented or not regularly updated. Stronger, routine stock and population assessments and unified systems for data collection and analysis are therefore needed.

Conservation coverage and ecosystem-based management are also insufficient, with ecosystem-based management not yet fully integrated across production landscapes. Sustainable use objectives are also weakly incorporated into sectors such as forestry, agriculture, tourism and local development, limiting a coordinated approach to biodiversity conservation.

Institutional and enforcement capacity presents another significant challenge. There are shortages of trained personnel, particularly at local and subnational levels, as well as insufficient funding for monitoring, inventories and protection. Weak inspection and enforcement capacity, gaps in legislation, delays in adopting management plans, and inadequate control of illegal exploitation and trade continue to hinder implementation. The incomplete implementation of international conventions and the time required to adopt and apply legal amendments add further difficulties.

Coordination and stakeholder engagement need strengthening. Cooperation between government authorities, scientific institutions, local communities and resource users is often insufficient, and scientific research is not always effectively incorporated into policy and management decisions. Greater community participation, education, technical assistance and awareness-raising have been highlighted as a way to increase understanding and acceptance of sustainable use principles and create incentives for communities to maintain healthy wild populations and ecosystems.

Contributions of actors other than national governments

No commitments related to Target 9 have been submitted through the ORT by actors other than national governments.

Target 10: Enhance biodiversity and sustainability in agriculture, aquaculture, fisheries and forestry

Ensure that areas under agriculture, aquaculture, fisheries and forestry are managed sustainably, in particular through the sustainable use of biodiversity, including through a substantial increase of the application of biodiversity friendly practices, such as sustainable intensification, agroecological and other innovative approaches contributing to the resilience and long-term efficiency and productivity of these production systems and to food security, conserving and restoring biodiversity and maintaining nature's contributions to people, including ecosystem functions and services.

Actions implemented or planned

Actions planned or implemented by Parties focus on strengthening **science-based and sustainable management of natural resources** through better monitoring, data collection, and decision-making. This includes establishing systems to monitor forests, fisheries, agricultural land, soils, wildlife and other natural resources, while using scientific evidence to set and review quotas, permits and other resource use controls. Improved information systems and data sharing between relevant institutions are also proposed to support more informed and coordinated management.

A major area of action is **sustainable agriculture and land management**. Measures undertaken and planned by Parties include expanding organic production, improving

soil fertility and protection, regenerating degraded land, promoting agroforestry and nature-based solutions, reducing pesticide use, improving irrigation and drainage, and conserving agricultural genetic resources. These actions aim to improve the long-term productivity of agricultural systems while reducing pressures on biodiversity and natural resources.

Parties have also undertaken or planned actions for **forests and other wild resources** including developing sustainable forest management frameworks, increasing forest restoration and afforestation, improving forest health monitoring, strengthening fire prevention, and applying ecosystem-based and close-to-nature forestry approaches. There are also measures to regulate and monitor the collection and trade of edible and MAPs and other non-wood forest products, alongside efforts to strengthen ranger services and reduce illegal activities.

For **fisheries and wildlife**, the proposed actions by Parties include improving regulatory frameworks, establishing information and monitoring systems, protecting fish stocks and promoting sustainable use, and developing better management practices for game populations. Wild species and habitats are to be monitored more effectively, with stronger controls on collection, use and trade, implementation of CITES, and measures to address illegal killing, capture and trade

Challenges and opportunities identified for addressing the challenges

A key challenge for several Parties is the lack of full integration of biodiversity considerations into agricultural subsidy schemes, forest certification, fisheries governance, and wider sectoral policies. In some cases, framework legislation for key sectors is missing at relevant administrative levels, resulting in fragmented and inconsistent regulation across jurisdictions.

For many Parties monitoring and data systems remain weak. Biological monitoring of exploited species is limited, standardized indicators and metrics are lacking, and data on the status and use of natural resources are insufficiently collected, integrated, and applied to decision-making.

Inadequate enforcement and institutional capacity remain a challenge for Parties. Enforcement capacity is particularly constrained in marine and remote areas, while fragmented institutional responsibilities, limited cross-sectoral cooperation, and insufficient coordination between different levels of government hinder implementation.

Insufficient financial resources are a key challenge identified by Parties. Biodiversity conservation and sustainable production receive inadequate dedicated budget allocations, while specific financial mechanisms to support sustainable and agroecological production remain underdeveloped for some Parties. Administrative barriers also limit access to international funding and investment needed for innovative technologies and biodiversity-friendly practices.

Current legal and administrative barriers have slowed implementation for Parties. The adoption and implementation of necessary legislation, strategies, and policy instruments remain slow. Gaps in the legal framework, incomplete transposition of relevant environmental requirements, and delays in adopting agricultural and rural development strategies create uncertainty and hinder effective implementation.

Strengthening human, technical, and institutional capacities remains a challenge for Parties. There are shortages of appropriately skilled multidisciplinary expertise, technical equipment, digital monitoring tools, research capacity, and training. Stronger collaboration among ecologists, agronomists, biologists, foresters, economists, lawyers, and local stakeholders is needed.

Insufficient information, education, and awareness among producers, local communities, vulnerable groups, and other stakeholders are constraining uptake of sustainable practices for one Party. The Party aims to improve participation in biodiversity management by also increasing understanding of the benefits of sustainable production systems.

Contributions of actors other than national governments

No commitments related to Target 10 have been submitted through the ORT by actors other than national governments.

Target 11: Restore, maintain and enhance nature's contributions to people

Restore, maintain and enhance nature's contributions to people, including ecosystem functions and services, such as regulation of air, water, and climate, soil health, pollination and reduction of disease risk, as well as protection from natural hazards and disasters, through nature-based solutions and/or ecosystem-based approaches for the benefit of all people and nature.

Actions implemented or planned

The actions carried out or planned by Parties focus on **strengthening ecosystem protection, restoration and monitoring** through improved national standards, harmonized indicators and regular assessments of ecosystem condition and ecosystem services. These assessments are intended to support evidence-based decision-making, prioritize restoration needs and guide management within protected areas and wider landscapes.

A key area for planned and implemented actions by several Parties is the **identification and restoration of degraded ecosystems**, particularly those with high biodiversity value, strong potential to provide ecosystem services, or an important role in climate resilience. Restoration of near-natural habitats in protected areas was also prioritized, alongside the expansion and improved management of protected areas. Actions include restoring floodplains, wetlands and aquatic ecosystems and integrating nature-based approaches into watershed management. These measures aim to improve natural water retention and flow regulation, reduce flood and drought risks, improve water quality, support livelihoods and strengthen biodiversity and climate resilience.

Actions carried out by several Parties also promoted the **implementation of NbS** across natural resource management, climate adaptation, agriculture, forestry, urban development and local planning. This includes restoring degraded rural landscapes, expanding forest and agroforestry elements, restoring riparian ecosystems and wetlands, improving sustainable management of pastures and communal land, and incorporating green infrastructure into territorial planning. These measures are intended to improve water retention, reduce soil degradation and climate risks, strengthen agricultural resilience and support local communities. Parties yet to implement actions under this target have also planned action focusing on NbS.

Several Parties have action planned that seeks to **strengthen biodiversity financing and institutional capacity**. Proposed approaches include increasing public environmental budgets, establishing dedicated funds, improving access to international finance, encouraging private-sector investment and public-private partnerships, and developing innovative mechanisms such as green bonds, biodiversity banking and payments for ecosystem services. Greater transparency in the use of environmental funds and stronger coordination across sectors are also proposed.

Challenges and opportunities identified for addressing the challenges

The key challenges and barriers experienced by Parties are primarily **institutional, financial, technical, legal, social and data related**. Lack of coordination and policy coherence resulting from institutional fragmentation impacts decision-making and action between sectors. Responsibilities are often dispersed across sectors, with weak horizontal and vertical coordination and limited capacity at local level to plan, implement, monitor and evaluate biodiversity and ecosystem-related measures. This makes it difficult to translate national strategies and concepts such as nature-based solutions and natural capital into coordinated action. In practice, action to enhance nature's contributions to people is in some cases largely limited to afforestation, while the broader range of nature-based solutions is not applied systematically.

Parties identified **significant data and information gaps** as a barrier to implementation. Environmental and sectoral databases are insufficiently integrated, while important information is missing on air emissions, health impacts of unsafe water and sanitation, community participation in water governance, biodiversity status, ecosystem condition and ecosystem services. The absence of comprehensive ecosystem accounting and poorly systematized information on biodiversity financing and project outcomes make it difficult to assess economic benefits, track impacts or incorporate natural capital into planning and budgeting.

Financial constraints are a major barrier for Parties**.** There are insufficient and unstable domestic resources for biodiversity and ecosystem restoration, with continued dependence on international donors and project-based funding. Dedicated biodiversity financing mechanisms remain weak, while innovative instruments such as green funds, public-private partnerships, payments for ecosystem services and fiscal incentives are insufficiently developed. Inadequate transparency and coordination in the allocation of revenues from environmental fees and other resource-related charges,

as well as limited capacity to mobilize and manage available funding has been experienced by one Party.

For many Parties **institutions lack enough qualified experts**, particularly in biodiversity financing, ecosystem valuation, monitoring and management. There are also weak links between economists, biologists, planners and other specialists. Limited technical capacity at local level makes implementation of ecosystem restoration and nature-based solutions particularly challenging. Further training, recruitment and stronger involvement of academic and research institutions are therefore needed.

For many Parties, in relation to Target 11, **public awareness of biodiversity and ecosystem benefits remains limited**, participation of communities in relevant initiatives is insufficient, and private sector engagement and investment in conservation are constrained by limited incentives and knowledge. Gender and social inclusion are also not consistently incorporated, with the needs of women, young people and marginalized groups insufficiently reflected in biodiversity activities.

Legal and regulatory weaknesses create additional obstacles for Parties to implement actions relating to Target 11. Regulations concerning resource mobilization, private investment and biodiversity financing are not always sufficiently clear or complete, while enforcement of existing provisions can be weak.

Contributions of actors other than national governments

No commitments related to Target 11 have been submitted through the ORT by actors other than national governments,

Target 12: Enhance green spaces and urban planning for human well-being and biodiversity

Significantly increase the area and quality and connectivity of, access to, and benefits from green and blue spaces in urban and densely populated areas sustainably, by mainstreaming the conservation and sustainable use of biodiversity, and ensure biodiversity-inclusive urban planning, enhancing native biodiversity, ecological connectivity and integrity, and improving human health and well-being and connection to nature and contributing to inclusive and sustainable urbanization and the provision of ecosystem functions and services.

Actions implemented or planned

Several Parties plan to strengthen the **protection, expansion and management of urban green and blue spaces**. Measures include developing green infrastructure plans and standards for urban areas, establishing minimum green space requirements, restoring urban green and blue areas, and improving the management and accessibility of existing spaces. Some Parties are already implementing urban green infrastructure initiatives and local green city plans.

A significant area of action is the integration of **green and blue infrastructure into urban and spatial planning**. **Several Parties also refer to NbS, including for urban resilience and environmental quality.** Measures further include linking urban green

and blue spaces with protected areas, ecological networks and corridors, and, in some cases, OECMs, to strengthen ecological connectivity.
Actions also focus on strengthening the **legal, regulatory and information basis for urban green and blue spaces**. These include incorporating environmental factors, green spaces and protected natural areas into planning legislation, establishing legal frameworks for urban green spaces, and developing indicators, monitoring systems and green space inventories or cadastres. Some Parties have already strengthened relevant planning legislation, while others plan further legal and methodological measures.
Finally, **financing and implementation mechanisms** feature in some national approaches, including mobilizing national environmental and regional development funds for green space creation and reconstruction.

Challenges and opportunities identified for addressing the challenges

A key challenge is the **uneven integration of urban green and blue infrastructure in planning and practice**. Several Parties identify differences between municipalities and administrative levels, with green and blue spaces sometimes integrated into planning only at a declarative level and without concrete effects on zoning and land-use decisions. In some cases, spatial planning legislation lacks explicit requirements for blue-green networks or a dedicated national framework, while existing provisions may also be applied inconsistently. Fragmented regulations and limited inspection and enforcement further constrain implementation.
Gaps in data, monitoring and information-sharing are another recurring challenge. Several Parties lack systematic national or subnational datasets on urban green spaces and their accessibility, while existing data may be fragmented or unconnected. The absence of standardized indicators also limits assessment of urban biodiversity and green-space provision.
A further challenge is **limited institutional capacity and coordination**. Some Parties identify shortages of staff, specialized expertise and inspection capacity, alongside weak coordination between institutions responsible for spatial planning, environment and urban development.
Insufficient and uncertain financing can constrain the development and long-term maintenance of urban green and blue infrastructure. Some countries highlight that the economic and social benefits of urban greenery are also not systematically quantified, making it more difficult to demonstrate its value in planning and investment decisions.
Some Parties also highlight **urban development pressures and unequal access to green space**. One Party identifies increasing urban land pressures and disparities in access to green infrastructure, particularly in densely populated neighbourhoods, while another identifies illegal construction and inefficient land use as wider pressures on sustainable urban development, including in coastal zones.

Contributions of actors other than national governments

One commitment relevant to Target 12 has been submitted for the region through the ORT. The Bosnia and Herzegovina-based organization FEA (Forestry and Environmental Action), committed to strengthening urban green and blue infrastructure for biodiversity and climate-resilience in cities of Bosnia and Herzegovina through the promotion, planning and implementation of urban green and blue infrastructure and nature-based solutions (NbS) in cities. Actions are implemented in partnership with local self-

governing authorities, urban planning institutions, UNDP, UNEP and environmental and spatial planning ministries.

Target 13: Increase the sharing of benefits from genetic resources, digital sequence information and traditional knowledge

Take effective legal, policy, administrative and capacity-building measures at all levels, as appropriate, to ensure the fair and equitable sharing of benefits that arise from the utilization of genetic resources and from digital sequence information on genetic resources, as well as traditional knowledge associated with genetic resources, and facilitating appropriate access to genetic resources, and by 2030 facilitating a significant increase of the benefits shared, in accordance with applicable international access and benefit-sharing instruments.

Actions implemented or planned

Key actions undertaken or planned focus on **developing and strengthening legal and institutional frameworks for access and benefit-sharing (ABS)**, including alignment with the Nagoya Protocol and other international obligations. Four Parties in the sub-region are Parties to the Nagoya Protocol, while others are preparing for ratification or further alignment with its requirements.

Several Parties also aim to **strengthen institutional and technical capacities** for ABS implementation, including through clearer administrative responsibilities, inter-institutional cooperation, enforcement capacity and awareness-raising among government officials, researchers, the private sector and other stakeholders. Capacity-building and training activities have already been undertaken in some cases.

Some Parties have already undertaken actions concerning the **conservation and management of genetic resources**, while others plan to strengthen or establish gene banks and other ex situ conservation measures, support the conservation of plant and animal genetic resources and agrobiodiversity, and improve research, monitoring and data collection. Some Parties also plan to develop **genetic resource and digital sequence information (DSI) systems**, including digital registries, standardized metadata and links to international databases.

Several Parties also identify **traditional knowledge associated with genetic resources** as an area for action. Measures include documenting and promoting traditional knowledge, strengthening safeguards for its use, and developing mechanisms for its protection through community-level approaches. **Benefit-sharing mechanisms themselves are less developed**, with actions largely focused on establishing the legal and institutional foundations needed for future implementation.

Challenges and opportunities identified for addressing the challenges

A key challenge is the **incomplete development and operationalization of ABS frameworks**. In several cases, there is no dedicated ABS legislation, clearly designated competent authority or established procedures for access and benefit-sharing. This is particularly pronounced where the Nagoya Protocol has not yet been ratified. Even where legal provisions exist, their practical implementation remains limited.

Institutional fragmentation and limited coordination are also significant challenges. In one case, responsibilities are distributed across different levels of government and institutions, with no established ABS competence, while coordination between environmental authorities, agricultural research institutions and intellectual property

bodies is limited in another. These institutional gaps can hinder the development of coherent national ABS systems and the translation of legal and institutional arrangements into actual benefit-sharing outcomes.

Several challenges relate to **capacity and resources**. Financial and institutional limitations constrain the establishment and operation of ABS mechanisms, including access agreements and benefit-sharing arrangements. Limited technical and scientific capacities are highlighted as additional challenges in one country. Maintaining and strengthening genetic resource collections and associated research infrastructure also requires sustained resources.

Further, some Parties point out that the **protection and documentation of traditional knowledge** remain underdeveloped. Challenges highlighted include the absence of registers or formal protection mechanisms, limited awareness among local communities, the loss of traditional knowledge associated with urbanization and migration, and the lack of procedures for ensuring community participation.

Contributions of actors other than national governments

No commitments related to Target 13 have been submitted through the ORT by actors other than national governments.

Target 14: Integrate biodiversity into decision-making at all levels

Ensure the full integration of biodiversity and its multiple values into policies, regulations, planning and development processes, poverty eradication strategies, strategic environmental assessments, environmental impact assessments and, as appropriate, national accounting, within and across all levels of government and across all sectors, in particular those with significant impacts on biodiversity, progressively aligning all relevant public and private activities, fiscal and financial flows with the goals and targets of this framework.

Actions implemented or planned

Several Parties plan to **strengthen the integration of biodiversity into sectoral legislation, policies and planning**, including in agriculture, forestry, water management, energy, transport, mining, tourism and spatial planning. Measures include developing guidelines and criteria for mainstreaming biodiversity and ecosystem services, aligning sectoral frameworks with biodiversity objectives, and **strengthening cross-sectoral coordination mechanisms**. Several Parties also highlight the integration of biodiversity and ecosystem services into spatial and urban planning.

Environmental Impact Assessment (EIA) and Strategic Environmental Assessment (SEA) are important existing and planned mechanisms for mainstreaming biodiversity. Several Parties plan to strengthen their application, including through improved biodiversity criteria and data, assessment of cumulative impacts and ecological connectivity, and stronger monitoring of biodiversity impacts. In some cases, new or strengthened legal requirements make biodiversity considerations in sectoral and spatial planning more explicit.

Actions also include strengthening the **legal, institutional and information basis for mainstreaming**. These include improving institutional capacity and enforcement, developing biodiversity and ecosystem service guidance, and making biodiversity and natural capital information more available for planning and decision-making. One Party has also published an Assessment of the State of Nature and the Management of Natural Resources, providing a basis for sectoral strategies, SEA, EIA and spatial planning. Binding environmental restrictions are also being built directly into sectoral legislation in some cases, for example a legal prohibition on issuing energy permits for new hydropower plants with a capacity below 10 MW.

A further area of action concerns **economic and financial instruments**. Some Parties plan to strengthen environmental financing, assess financing needs for biodiversity, develop mechanisms to support green transformation and assess or reduce harmful incentives. Green public procurement and ESG-related measures are also emerging in individual cases.

Challenges and opportunities identified for addressing the challenges

A key challenge is the **gap between formal integration of biodiversity into policies, legislation and planning frameworks and its effective implementation** across sectors and levels of government. Several Parties identify uneven mainstreaming across sectors, limited implementation at local level and weak enforcement of existing biodiversity, SEA and EIA requirements. In some cases, substantial differences in implementation between subnational jurisdictions further limit consistent application.

A further recurring challenge is **fragmented institutional responsibilities and weak horizontal and vertical coordination**. Several Parties identify limited cooperation

between environment and sectoral authorities, as well as difficulties in coordinating national and local institutions. In some cases, complex governance structures and inconsistent approaches across administrative levels make implementation particularly difficult**. Limited institutional capacity, expertise and awareness** of the value of ecosystem services and biodiversity further constrain effective mainstreaming, especially at local level.

Gaps in data, monitoring and technical tools also constrain implementation. Some Parties identify insufficient or poor quality biodiversity data for spatial and sectoral planning, limited access to ecosystem service information and weaknesses in biodiversity information systems. These gaps make it difficult to integrate ecological connectivity and cumulative impacts into planning and to assess whether mainstreaming measures are producing results. Transboundary and inter-jurisdictional cumulative impacts of large infrastructure projects, particularly hydropower, remain a weak point, even where Espoo Convention[4] mechanisms have been activated.

Insufficient financial resources are another recurring barrier. Several Parties identify limited funding for biodiversity mainstreaming, particularly at local level, as well as insufficient sectoral financing and difficulties in accessing or mobilizing external funding. In some cases, existing fiscal instruments and public expenditure are not sufficiently aligned with biodiversity objectives. Limited engagement of the business and financial sector is also highlighted as a challenge.

Further, **economic development interests** and established approaches to land use management can conflict with biodiversity objectives, while **poor stakeholder participation** can limit the integration of biodiversity considerations into planning.

Suggested **responses** include stronger inter-ministerial coordination, improved quality control and enforcement of SEA/EIA requirements, better integration and sharing of biodiversity and ecosystem-service data, and more systematic monitoring of whether mainstreaming changes decisions and reduces pressures.

Contributions of actors other than national governments

No commitments related to Target 14 have been submitted through the ORT by actors other than national governments.

Target 15: Businesses assess, disclose and reduce biodiversity-related risks and negative impacts

Take legal, administrative or policy measures to encourage and enable business, and in particular to ensure that large and transnational companies and financial institutions:
(a) Regularly monitor, assess, and transparently disclose their risks, dependencies and impacts on biodiversity, including with requirements for all large as well as transnational companies and financial institutions along their operations, supply and value chains and portfolios;
(b) Provide information needed to consumers to promote sustainable consumption patterns;
(c) Report on compliance with access and benefit-sharing regulations and measures, as applicable;

[4] The Espoo Convention is the UN treaty adopted in Espoo, Finland, requiring countries to assess and notify neighboring states of environmental impacts from projects with possible transboundary effects. It came into force in 1997 and has a protocol setting out Strategic Environmental Assessment.

in order to progressively reduce negative impacts on biodiversity, increase positive impacts, reduce biodiversity-related risks to business and financial institutions, and promote actions to ensure sustainable patterns of production.

Actions implemented or planned

Some Parties plan to **strengthen the integration of biodiversity considerations into corporate and financial sector decision-making**. Proposed measures include developing guidance and indicators for assessing biodiversity-related risks, dependencies and impacts, introducing or progressively expanding sustainability disclosure requirements, and supporting companies and financial institutions in preparing for requirements under frameworks such as the EU Corporate Sustainability Reporting Directive and the Taskforce on Nature-related Financial Disclosures (TNFD). However, comprehensive biodiversity-specific disclosure requirements are not yet in place across the sub-region.

Financial sector measures are also emerging in some Parties. These include climate-related financial risk supervision, planned development of a national green taxonomy aligned with EU standards, and proposals to promote green bonds and other financial instruments supporting biodiversity-related outcomes. One Party also plans to develop a national biodiversity finance plan and pilot innovative financing instruments.

Several Parties refer to **environmental assessment procedures** as an existing means of addressing biodiversity impacts from development and investment activities. Additional actions aim to promote greener production and resource efficiency, particularly among small and medium-sized enterprises and rural businesses.

Challenges and opportunities identified for addressing the challenges

A key challenge is the **limited development and implementation of biodiversity-specific corporate disclosure and risk management frameworks**. Where sustainability reporting and financial risk assessment are already in place, the focus is more strongly on climate than on biodiversity.

Capacity and data gaps further constrain implementation. Several Parties identified limited technical expertise and a shortage of specialists able to assess biodiversity-related risks and impacts, while Small Medium Enterprises (SMEs) face particular capacity and resource constraints. In addition, biodiversity data are described as incomplete, outdated or difficult to access, and existing biodiversity information systems are not necessarily integrated into private sector reporting.

A further challenge is **weak institutional and regulatory integration of biodiversity into business and financial decision-making**. One Party identified fragmented institutional responsibilities and weak implementation of existing environmental legislation, including limited follow-up on biodiversity impacts identified through environmental assessment. Limited private sector participation in biodiversity conservation and restoration was also identified as a challenge by one Party.

Parties have identified that insufficient incentives and market mechanisms can further limit changes in corporate behaviour. One Party identified limited use of biodiversity or environmental criteria by banks and investors and a lack of effective financial incentives such as tax relief, subsidies and green procurement. Other challenges include limited consumer information on the biodiversity impacts and origin of products and underdeveloped eco-labelling and certification schemes.

A further challenge is a **limited culture of corporate sustainability and biodiversity engagement**. Biodiversity is not yet consistently viewed as a business and development issue, and short-term economic interests can take precedence over ecological considerations. At the consumer level, limited awareness and engagement, combined with economic constraints, can make sustainable products and practices a low priority.

Contributions of actors other than national governments

No commitments related to Target 15 have been submitted through the ORT by actors other than national governments.

Target 16: Enable sustainable consumption choices to reduce waste and overconsumption

Ensure that people are encouraged and enabled to make sustainable consumption choices including by establishing supportive policy, legislative or regulatory frameworks, improving education and access to relevant and accurate information and alternatives, and by 2030, reduce the global footprint of consumption in an equitable manner, including through halving global food waste, significantly reducing overconsumption and substantially reducing waste generation, in order for all people to live well in harmony with Mother Earth.

Actions implemented or planned

Several Parties plan to **strengthen waste management systems and the regulatory framework** for waste prevention, separate collection, sorting, reuse, repair and recycling. Measures include improving municipal and special-waste management, addressing illegal and unregulated dumping, increasing recovery rates and developing regional waste management systems. **Extended Producer Responsibility (EPR)** is explicitly planned in some cases, including for packaging and electronics, alongside measures to improve waste records, reporting and traceability.

Several Parties also plan measures to **prevent food loss and waste and promote sustainable consumption and behavioural change**. These include measures to facilitate redistribution of surplus food and address overconsumption, alongside public awareness and education campaigns on waste separation, responsible consumption and sustainable lifestyles. Some actions also integrate circular economy and sustainable consumption concepts into school education.

A further area of action is **improving the information and institutional basis for sustainable consumption and waste management**. Measures include digital waste reporting and information systems, improved data collection on waste generation, recovery and management, and stronger institutional capacity and public awareness.

Some Parties also plan to support **green innovation and circular business models**, including through financial support for businesses adopting resource efficient approaches.

Challenges and opportunities identified for addressing the challenges

A key challenge is **inadequate waste management infrastructure and low recycling capacity**. Several Parties identify limited separate collection, sorting and recycling infrastructure, low recycling rates and continued reliance on inadequate or non-compliant disposal facilities.

Insufficient financial, technical and institutional resources further constrain implementation. Several Parties identify limited funding for waste infrastructure,

recycling systems and circular economy initiatives, alongside shortages of technical and institutional capacity, particularly at local level.

A further challenge is the **gap between legal and strategic frameworks and their effective implementation and enforcement**. Some Parties have established waste management legislation, EPR arrangements and strategic frameworks, but implementation remains uneven and some regulations are not supported by adequate infrastructure, oversight or enforcement.

Gaps in data and monitoring are particularly evident for food waste and sustainable consumption. Weaknesses in waste flow data and the absence of indicators capturing material use and biodiversity pressures limit the ability to assess whether circular economy measures are reducing pressures on biodiversity. Strengthening food waste monitoring and integrating material flow and biodiversity-related indicators into national statistics are identified as potential responses.

Consumer behaviour and awareness present another challenge. Several Parties identify low public awareness of waste separation and recycling, limited understanding of sustainable consumption practices and continued reliance on inexpensive, disposable or short-lived products. Further, economic constraints limit demand for more sustainable products and services.

Contributions of actors other than national governments

No commitments related to Target 16 have been submitted through the ORT by actors other than national governments.

Target 17: Strengthen biosafety and distribute the benefits of biotechnology

Establish, strengthen capacity for, and implement in all countries biosafety measures as set out in Article 8(g) of the Convention on Biological Diversity and measures for the handling of biotechnology and distribution of its benefits as set out in Article 19 of the Convention.

Actions implemented or planned

Parties have focused on implementing and planning actions that **strengthen national biosafety and biotechnology governance** in line with the Cartagena Protocol. Key actions include developing and harmonizing legislation on genetically modified organisms (GMOs), including rules covering contained use, deliberate release, transboundary movement, coexistence, genetically modified food and feed, and risk assessment. Efforts are also being made to align national and subnational legislation and strengthen the participation of academic institutions and the public in the development of the regulatory framework.

Other proposed actions by Parties include strengthening **institutional and technical capacity** through improved laboratory infrastructure, staff training, inspection capacity, expert support, enhanced risk assessment systems and establishing reference laboratories. Emergency preparedness, enforcement and reporting mechanisms will also be strengthened.

Parties also have identified actions needed around **education, awareness raising and stakeholder engagement** to improve knowledge exchange and implementation.

Challenges and opportunities identified for addressing the challenges

Incomplete and insufficiently operational legal and institutional framework for biosafety have been identified as a challenge by several Parties. Comprehensive biosafety legislation is still being finalized or requires further alignment with international requirements, while responsibilities and provisions may remain fragmented across different levels of governance. Biosafety is also not yet fully mainstreamed across relevant environmental, agricultural, health, food safety and research policies, creating gaps in coordinated implementation.

Despite planned actions, several Parties have limited **technical and laboratory capacity**, particularly for the detection and identification of living modified organisms (LMOs). The absence of accredited national laboratories means that testing may depend on external facilities and can involve significant costs. Human resources and scientific expertise also need strengthening in areas such as risk assessment, risk management, monitoring, sampling and identification, and post-release surveillance.

Weaknesses in risk assessment, monitoring and enforcement systems remain a challenge. Scientifically robust risk assessment protocols are not yet fully developed, while monitoring and reporting of biotechnology and GMO impacts on biodiversity, human health and the environment require further development. Customs and border controls may rely heavily on documentation rather than laboratory verification, increasing the risk that unauthorized or improperly documented LMOs could go undetected. Inspection capacity and cross-border coordination also require strengthening.

Additional barriers exist in **information, awareness and participation gaps**. Civil servants, customs officials, scientific institutions, producers and other relevant stakeholders require further training, while public awareness and participation in biosafety decision-making need to be strengthened. Information exchange, data management and effective participation in international biosafety information systems also require continued development.

Finally, **financial, technological and institutional constraints** may limit implementation. Further investment is needed for laboratory infrastructure, human resources, monitoring systems and technical expertise. Continued cooperation with international and regional partners is important for knowledge and technology transfer, technical assistance and access to financing. Staff continuity, institutional coordination and stronger links between national biodiversity strategies and biosafety frameworks are also needed to ensure that existing legal provisions translate into effective implementation.

Contributions of actors other than national governments

No commitments related to Target 17 have been submitted through the ORT by actors other than national governments.

Target 18: Reduce harmful subsidies by at least $500 billion per year, and scale up positive incentives for biodiversity

Identify by 2025, and eliminate, phase out or reform incentives, including subsidies, harmful for biodiversity, in a proportionate, just, fair, effective and equitable way, while substantially and progressively reducing them by at least 500 billion United States dollars per year by 2030, starting with the most harmful incentives, and scale up positive incentives for the conservation and sustainable use of biodiversity.

Actions implemented or planned

Parties are predominately focused on analytical and preparatory stages, including **reviewing and reforming incentives and subsidies that may harm biodiversity,** as a basis for planning further action to reduce harmful subsidies. Actions include conducting assessments of public incentives, subsidies and financial flows across sectors such as agriculture, forestry, energy, fisheries and infrastructure; identifying direct and indirect harmful subsidies; and developing criteria for determining which incentives are harmful. Proposed actions include gradually phasing out, limiting or redirecting harmful subsidies, while providing transition support to affected beneficiaries and encouraging more sustainable practices.

The proposed approaches also emphasize the introduction of **positive incentives for nature conservation**. These include support for agro-ecological practices, traditional landscapes, organic farming, afforestation and habitat restoration, as well as the development of payment-for-ecosystem-services mechanisms to reward land users who contribute to the protection of natural values. Biodiversity considerations are also intended to be incorporated into sectoral strategies and public incentives through environmental screening.

The broader policy framework proposes to operationalize these measures through nature-protection and environmental strategies and programmes. Key actions include developing methodologies to assess biodiversity damage caused by subsidies, reducing harmful incentives in priority sectors, integrating biodiversity into other sectoral policies and planning, aligning legislation with international obligations and relevant EU requirements, strengthening institutional capacity across levels of governance, and developing financing mechanisms that support green economic transformation.

Challenges and opportunities identified for addressing the challenges

The main challenges and barriers for Parties relate to **limited understanding, weak policy integration, and insufficient reform of existing fiscal incentives**. There is a lack of comprehensive national inventories of biodiversity-related subsidies and incentives, making it difficult to identify, quantify and assess environmentally harmful support.

Institutional fragmentation makes reform difficult, as responsibilities for biodiversity, subsidies and economic incentives are divided across different levels and entities. This is compounded by the **absence of clear and consistent methodologies for identifying harmful subsidies** and assessing their biodiversity impacts. Weak enforcement and

selective or inefficient application of existing environmental rules further limit the effectiveness of the current framework.

There are also **economic and regulatory barriers**. Market systems often fail to reflect the true value of ecosystems, while existing environmental taxes, penalties and damage payments may be too low to cover the actual costs of environmental restoration. Biodiversity-positive instruments such as payments for ecosystem services, biodiversity offsets and biodiversity-related tax or subsidy measures remain underdeveloped or absent, while outdated damage assessment methodologies reduce the effectiveness of existing incentives.

Political and stakeholder barriers can further slow reform. Beneficiaries of existing subsidies and incentives may resist changes, particularly in sectors such as agriculture, forestry and fisheries. Limited awareness of the relationship between subsidies and biodiversity loss among decisionmakers and the wider public can reduce support for reform, while political instability and changes in government may delay policy adoption and implementation.

Finally, **financial and administrative capacity constraints** remain significant. There are also gaps in the technical capacity, digital systems, monitoring tools and cross-sectoral coordination needed to analyse incentives, track their biodiversity impacts and ensure transparency. Overall, the transition from fragmented fiscal support towards biodiversity-aligned incentives is constrained by inadequate data, methodologies, institutional coordination, enforcement, financing and stakeholder engagement.

Contributions of actors other than national governments

No commitments related to Target 18 have been submitted through the ORT by actors other than national governments.

Target 19: Mobilize $200 billion per year for biodiversity from all sources, including $30 billion through international finance

Substantially and progressively increase the level of financial resources from all sources, in an effective, timely and easily accessible manner, including domestic, international, public and private resources, in accordance with Article 20 of the Convention, to implement national biodiversity strategies and action plans, by 2030 mobilizing at least 200 billion United States dollars per year, including by:
(a) Increasing total biodiversity related international financial resources from developed countries, including official development assistance, and from countries that voluntarily assume obligations of developed country Parties, to developing countries, in particular the least developed countries and small island developing States, as well as countries with economies in transition, to at least US$ 20 billion per year by 2025, and to at least US$ 30 billion per year by 2030;
(b) Significantly increasing domestic resource mobilization, facilitated by the preparation and implementation of national biodiversity finance plans or similar instruments according to national needs, priorities and circumstances;

(c) Leveraging private finance, promoting blended finance, implementing strategies for raising new and additional resources, and encouraging the private sector to invest in biodiversity, including through impact funds and other instruments;
(d) Stimulating innovative schemes such as payment for ecosystem services, green bonds, biodiversity offsets and credits, benefit-sharing mechanisms, with environmental and social safeguards;
(e) Optimizing co-benefits and synergies of finance targeting the biodiversity and climate crises;
(f) Enhancing the role of collective actions, including by indigenous peoples and local communities, Mother Earth centric actions and non-market-based approaches including community based natural resource management and civil society cooperation and solidarity aimed at the conservation of biodiversity;
(g) Enhancing the effectiveness, efficiency and transparency of resource provision and use.

Actions implemented or planned

Several Parties have implemented or planned actions focusing on **mobilizing, improving and diversifying biodiversity financing**. Key measures include increasing domestic public funding, integrating biodiversity priorities into national and sectoral budgets, and establishing dedicated funds for nature protection. Governments are also encouraged to improve the transparency and monitoring of environmental fees and expenditures, redirect harmful incentives towards nature-positive investments, and develop multi-year financial plans based on identified biodiversity needs.

A range of **innovative financing mechanisms** are also proposed by Parties, including green bonds, environmental fees, biodiversity banking, crowdfunding, social investment and Payment for Ecosystem Services. Biodiversity financing is further linked to climate finance by aligning nature strategies with climate policies and developing projects that deliver both climate and biodiversity benefits.

Further planned actions include developing **national biodiversity finance plans**, conducting financial needs and expenditure assessments, establishing biodiversity budget tagging systems, tracking biodiversity finance flows, and piloting innovative financing instruments. Private sector participation is to be increased through mechanisms that encourage nature-positive investment and reduce negative impacts.

At the policy and institutional level, planned actions include **integrating biodiversity into sectoral policies and planning, strengthening legislation and institutions, assessing financing needs, preparing financing plans, and developing methodologies to identify and reduce harmful subsidies**.

Challenges and opportunities identified for addressing the challenges

For several Parties challenges and barriers focusing on **limited and poorly tracked biodiversity financing** remain. Public spending on biodiversity remains very low, with no consolidated biodiversity budget tagging system or green budgeting mechanism to identify biodiversity expenditure. Environmental tax revenues are also largely not reinvested in environmental protection, while biodiversity-related resource taxes and

ministry level allocations remain limited. In some cases, there is also a persistent gap between planned and actually allocated budgets, particularly for protected areas managed at lower levels of government.

For several Parties **private sector and alternative financing remain underdeveloped.** There is no standardized system for tracking private biodiversity investment, biodiversity is rarely incorporated into ESG reporting, and Payment for Ecosystem Services mechanisms remain largely at the pilot stage. Tourism-sector mainstreaming is still limited, while natural-resource revenues are generally not specifically earmarked for biodiversity activities.

Insufficient institutional and technical capacity is a challenge for several Parties**.** Capacity gaps include shortages of protected area staff and rangers, underdeveloped marine monitoring, outdated GIS systems and laboratories, and limited expertise in biodiversity finance. There are also weak links between economists, biologists and planners, alongside limited capacity for planning, monitoring and evaluating biodiversity financing. **Weak data, digital infrastructure and financial tracking further constrain implementation.** Modern IT tools and databases for tracking financial flows and biodiversity impacts are lacking.

International and policy coordination challenges remain for a couple of Parties, including dependence on external funds that can be affected by geopolitical and economic conditions, as well as difficulties aligning domestic policies with international biodiversity frameworks.

Contributions of actors other than national governments

No commitments related to Target 19 have been submitted through the ORT by actors other than national government

Target 20: Strengthen capacity-building, technology transfer, and scientific and technical cooperation for biodiversity

Strengthen capacity-building and development, access to and transfer of technology, and promote development of and access to innovation and technical and scientific cooperation, including through South-South, North-South and triangular cooperation, to meet the needs for effective implementation, particularly in developing countries, fostering joint technology development and joint scientific research programmes for the conservation and sustainable use of biodiversity and strengthening scientific research and monitoring capacities, commensurate with the ambition of the goals and targets of the framework.

Actions implemented or planned

Several Parties have implemented or planned actions focusing on **strengthening institutional, technical and scientific capacity for biodiversity conservation and monitoring**.

A major emphasis is also placed on **improving biodiversity monitoring and information systems**. Actions include establishing integrated monitoring systems,

developing standardised indicators and protocols, improving data collection and reporting, connecting biodiversity databases, and maintaining a national Biodiversity Clearing-House Mechanism (CHM) and information exchange portal. Digital technologies such as GIS, remote sensing and biodiversity databases are also being expanded.

Planned and implemented actions also aim to **build institutional and professional capacity** through training, technical equipment, expert development, continuous professional development, stronger scientific institutions and improved cooperation between government bodies, research organizations, protected area authorities and civil society.

Scientific research, innovation and technology transfer are being promoted through support for research and development projects, modern digital and biotechnological tools, green transition initiatives, and participation in international research and funding programmes.

Further actions focus on strengthening **public awareness, environmental education and stakeholder participation**. These planned and implemented actions include communication and awareness programmes, formal environmental education, improved access to environmental information, greater participation of civil society and vulnerable groups in decision-making and strengthened access to environmental justice. Several Parties are also planning to integrate gender-responsive and anti-discrimination approaches into biodiversity and environmental policies.

Challenges and opportunities identified for addressing the challenges

Target 20 is cross cutting in nature and subsequently Parties discuss the challenges under other targets. These challenges include **institutional and human resource capacity**. For example, staffing shortages within protected area management where additional rangers are needed. The required capacity is compounded by coordination across government departments which remain fragmented. **Research and innovation capacit**y is also constrained, largely through low financial investment. **Technological and digital capacity also remain uneven for many Parties.** Remote sensing and satellite monitoring are only partially developed, drone-based biodiversity surveillance is limited, and advanced GIS platforms require upgrading. Limited platforms for sharing biodiversity data, weak digitization and poor interoperability further restrict access to and use of information. One Party highlights a good practice, which provides an opportunity to address some of these challenges through the establishment of an Association of Protected Area Managers which is a permanent platform for knowledge exchange and management standards.

Contributions of actors other than national governments

No commitments related to Target 20 have been submitted through the ORT by actors other than national governments.

Target 21: Ensure that knowledge is available and accessible to guide biodiversity action

Ensure that the best available data, information and knowledge, are accessible to decision makers, practitioners and the public to guide effective and equitable governance, integrated and participatory management of biodiversity, and to strengthen communication, awareness-raising, education, monitoring, research and knowledge management and, also in this context, traditional knowledge, innovations, practices and technologies of indigenous peoples and local communities should only be accessed with their free, prior and informed consent, in accordance with national legislation.

Actions implemented or planned

Actions undertaken by Parties show a particularly strong focus on **strengthening biodiversity information systems and improving access to and exchange of biodiversity data**. Actions include establishing or strengthening CHMs, national information systems, databases and information exchange portals, as well as strengthening biodiversity monitoring and systems for data management and reporting. Examples include databases covering biodiversity projects and digital platforms and applications providing biodiversity information to decisionmakers and the wider public. Countries are also working to strengthen the transfer and exchange of biodiversity data between scientific institutions, conservation authorities, policymakers and other relevant sectors, including through more interoperable information systems. In some cases, actions address open access to biodiversity information; one example specifically recognizes the need for safeguards for sensitive data and traditional knowledge.

Actions by some countries also address **traditional knowledge, innovations and practices of Indigenous peoples and local communities**. Relevant approaches include developing national frameworks to research, identify and document traditional biodiversity-related knowledge, establishing ethical safeguards for its documentation and use, and creating mechanisms for the meaningful participation of knowledge holders and local communities. There are also efforts to integrate relevant traditional knowledge and practices into sectoral policies and natural resources and protected area management.

There is comparatively **limited evidence of specific legal and regulatory measures directly linked to Target 21**. The examples focus on institutional arrangements and access to environmental information, including strengthening public access to biodiversity data and stakeholder participation in environmental decision-making. This includes actions related to implementation of the Aarhus Convention and associated access-to-information, participation and access-to-justice provisions.

A further area of action is **environmental education, biodiversity literacy and public awareness**. Examples include awareness and communication programmes, public campaigns, educational curricula and training for researchers, decisionmakers, public officials and other relevant groups. Some actions also use digital portals, mobile applications and data visualizations to make biodiversity information more accessible and understandable to wider society.

One country additionally identified the **strengthening of international and regional cooperation in biodiversity governance** as an action relevant to Target 21. This complements the focus on national information systems by supporting the exchange of biodiversity information, knowledge and expertise across institutions and jurisdictions.

Challenges and opportunities identified for addressing the challenges

Parties identify **institutional and data fragmentation** as a key challenge to implementing Target 21. Biodiversity information is dispersed across institutions and sectors, with insufficient coordination, limited interoperability and, in some cases, legal and technical barriers to data sharing. For one country, considerable biodiversity information remains in analogue and fragmented formats, while electronic data are not yet sufficiently standardized or supported by interoperable GIS infrastructure. For some Parties, national monitoring and information systems remain only partly functional and require further integration and routine updating. Where parallel information systems are developed at different levels of governance, the absence of a common monitoring protocol, mandatory updating cycles and automatic data exchange with the national CHM and GBIF limits their use for national reporting.

Limited and unsustainable financing, together with **human and technical capacity gaps**, is another challenge for Parties. These include shortages of specialists in biodiversity data collection, analysis, database management and GIS, as well as reliance on project-based funding for monitoring and information systems. **Proposed responses** include strengthening institutional capacities and coordination, increasing state funding for regular monitoring and data updates, and mobilizing international, public and private financing.

Some Parties additionally identify **limited public involvement in nature monitoring and low digital literacy** as constraints for citizen science and wider use of biodiversity platforms. One country's input also highlights challenges in translating scientific information into policy, including the need for more concise and policy-relevant analysis to support decision-making.

Contributions of actors other than national governments

One commitment relevant to Target 21 has been submitted for the sub-region through the ORT. The Armenia-based organization Carota Cultural Education Development NGO committed to implementing a four-month interdisciplinary research and public engagement program exploring the cultural dimensions of biodiversity in Armenia, titled "Culture of Flora & Fauna". The initiative will document and analyze traditional ecological knowledge related to flora and fauna, embedded in cultural expressions such as rituals, crafts, oral traditions, and historical manuscripts. Partners include RA NAS Institute of History, RA NAS Institute of Art, Matenadaran Sharambeyan Museum, WWF Armenia and "Kayt" NGO.

Target 22: Ensure participation in decision-making and access to justice and information related to biodiversity for all

Ensure the full, equitable, inclusive, effective and gender-responsive representation and participation in decision-making, and access to justice and information related to biodiversity by indigenous peoples and local communities, respecting their cultures and their rights over lands, territories, resources, and traditional knowledge, as well as by women and girls, children and youth, and persons with disabilities and ensure the full protection of environmental human rights defenders.

Actions implemented or planned

Several Parties plan **measures to strengthen public participation in biodiversity-related planning and decision-making**. These include more transparent and inclusive

consultation procedures, greater involvement of local communities and civil society, and mechanisms for participation of women, youth and other groups. Some Parties also envisage advisory bodies, working groups and local consultation processes to support participation in natural resource management and conservation.

Several Parties also plan **measures to improve access to environmental information and justice**. These include making environmental information more accessible, strengthening public participation in environmental assessments and permitting, and developing or revising procedures related to access to information, public consultation and judicial or administrative review. In some cases, alignment with the Aarhus Convention and relevant EU requirements are highlighted as an important element of these measures.

Actions also include **planned legal and institutional changes** to provide a more consistent basis for participation and related procedural rights. These include developing or updating legislation and implementing procedures for EIA, SEA, public consultation and access to information. Some Parties also identify measures to strengthen the capacities of authorities and stakeholders to use these mechanisms effectively.

Challenges and opportunities identified for addressing the challenges

A key challenge is the **gap between formal provisions and their effective implementation**. Several Parties identify uneven implementation of existing participation and information access frameworks, while the effectiveness and accessibility of mechanisms for marginalized groups are not always clear. In some cases, limited expertise among local organizations and other stakeholders can also constrain their ability to engage effectively in complex policy and legislative processes.

A further challenge is that **participation does not necessarily translate into meaningful influence or decision-making power**. Biodiversity-related consultation remains primarily advisory, with limited integration of local perspectives into strategic documents and insufficiently mandatory consultation of affected communities and other groups. Participation mechanisms may also be periodic or project-based rather than embedded in stable governance structures, while co-management arrangements in protected areas are not always formally institutionalized. Low trust in institutions and limited communication between authorities and local communities, particularly in remote areas, can further reduce effective participation.

Limited financial, technical and institutional resources also constrain implementation. Challenges identified by Parties include insufficient resources to maintain participation mechanisms, collect and disaggregate information on representation and participation, and support outreach to communities and other groups. Fragmented institutional responsibilities across different levels of government can further complicate implementation.

Some challenges relate to **wider social and territorial conditions affecting participation**. One Party identifies patriarchal patterns and economic dependence as barriers to the participation of women, particularly in rural areas, alongside limited recognition of community knowledge. Territorial inequalities, including substantial differences in access to services and opportunities between the capital and other areas, were also identified by one Party. The lack of dedicated legal protection for environmental human rights defenders and the absence of formal mechanisms for free, prior and informed consent were also pointed out by individual countries.

Contributions of actors other than national governments

No commitments related to Target 22 have been submitted through the ORT by actors other than national governments.

Target 23: Ensure gender equality and a gender-responsive approach to biodiversity action

Ensure gender equality in the implementation of the framework through a gender-responsive approach where all women and girls have equal opportunity and capacity to contribute to the three objectives of the Convention, including by recognizing their equal rights and access to land and natural resources and their full, equitable, meaningful and informed participation and leadership at all levels of action, engagement, policy and decision-making related to biodiversity.

Actions implemented or planned

Actions focus mainly on integrating gender equality and gender-responsive approaches into environmental and biodiversity policies and institutions, alongside measures to strengthen women's participation and access to opportunities.

Some Parties aim to **integrate gender equality and gender-responsive approaches into environmental and biodiversity policies, strategies and programmes**, while in other cases such integration has already been incorporated into relevant policy and strategic frameworks. Measures include integrating gender considerations into environmental and forest policies, sectoral strategies and programmes, and strengthening gender-responsive approaches to planning, data and reporting. Some Parties also aim to strengthen institutional arrangements for gender equality and women's participation in leadership. Gender-responsive budgeting is another element of this approach, with one Party having introduced a gender-sensitive budget circular requiring public institutions to consider gender equality in fiscal planning, although implementation remains uneven.

Some Parties plan measures specifically to **strengthen women's participation and capacity in biodiversity-related activities**. These include ensuring gender-balanced representation in institutional or working structures, capacity building and training, and measures to support women's involvement in natural resource management.

A further area of action is **improving women's access to land, natural resources and livelihoods**. Planned measures include promoting equal rights and opportunities in access to resources and involving women in sustainable harvesting and other natural resource activities.

Challenges and opportunities identified for addressing the challenges

A key challenge is the **gap between formal recognition of gender equality and its implementation** in biodiversity governance. For some Parties gender considerations are included in policies and strategic documents but are not consistently translated into practice. In some cases, gender mainstreaming remains fragmented across sectors or levels of government, while institutional responsibilities are dispersed, making implementation less consistent.

A further challenge is **limited availability of sex-disaggregated data and gender-specific biodiversity indicators**. One Party identified gaps in data on women's representation in biodiversity governance, land ownership and tenure, participation and access to ecosystem service benefits, as well as the absence of systematic

assessments of gender dimensions in protected area governance. Another Party similarly identified insufficient data on participation, resources and benefits.

Limited financial and institutional resources also constrain implementation. One Party identified underfinancing of gender equality and inclusion measures, alongside limited resources for monitoring, data systems and institutional capacity. More generally, fragmented governance arrangements can make it difficult to implement gender-responsive approaches consistently across institutions and levels of government.

Parties also highlight **structural barriers affecting women's participation and access to resources**. Several Parties identify persistent disparities in women's access to land and natural resources, while challenges for rural women include unpaid care responsibilities, economic dependence and vulnerability to climate and environmental pressures. Patriarchal norms and limited representation in conservation institutions are identified as additional barriers in individual cases. Low trust in institutions and limited confidence that participation will influence decisions may further reduce meaningful engagement.

Contributions of actors other than national governments

One commitment relevant to Target 23 has been submitted for the region through the ORT. The Bosnia and Herzegovina-based organization FEA (Forestry and Environmental Action), committed to advancing gender-responsive biodiversity governance in the Western Balkans through structured implementation of gender-responsive biodiversity governance, capacity building, and empowerment of women in biodiversity-related sectors. Activities are implemented in Albania, Bosnia and Herzegovina, Montenegro, North Macedonia and Serbia, in cooperation with various partners, including the CBD Women's Caucus, UNEP and GEF-supported initiatives, as well as organizations participating in the Fem2Forests consortium under the EU Interreg Danube Region Programme.