



Convention on Biological Diversity

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Subregional dialogue on biodiversity monitoring and reporting for countries in Western Asia Manama, 21–23 December 2025

Report of the subregional dialogue on biodiversity monitoring and reporting for countries in Western Asia

Introduction

1. In subparagraph 24 (e) of decision [16/32](#), the Conference of the Parties to the Convention on Biological Diversity requested the Executive Secretary of the Convention, subject to the availability of resources, to convene, under the guidance of the Bureau of the Conference of the Parties, subregional and/or regional dialogues, taking into account the experiences and lessons learned from the previous dialogues. Pursuant to that decision, a subregional dialogue for countries in Western Asia on biodiversity monitoring and reporting was held in Manama, Bahrain, from 21 to 23 December 2025. The Conference of the Parties made further requests related to exchanging knowledge and building capacity with regard to the monitoring framework for the Kunming-Montreal Global Biodiversity Framework¹ and the provision of capacity-building and development support from regional and subregional technical and scientific cooperation support centres.
2. The present dialogue was organized to also address a key requirement, the need for further capacity-building support, as identified by many countries in previous regional and subregional dialogues on national biodiversity strategies and action plans held in 2023 and 2024 as well as during the meetings of the Subsidiary Body on Implementation and the Conference of the Parties.
3. The dialogue was organized jointly by the United Nations Environment Programme (UNEP), the Secretariat of the Convention on Biological Diversity, the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP) and the Government of Bahrain. It was attended by a total of 50 participants from 10 countries in Western Asia, along with representatives of relevant regional and subregional organizations and stakeholder groups, including representatives of women and youth. The dialogue was held with the financial support of the UNEP China Trust Fund and the Global Environment Facility (GEF).

Item 1

Opening of the meeting

4. The dialogue was officially opened on 21 December 2025, with opening remarks delivered by representatives of the Supreme Council for Environment of Bahrain, UNDP and UNEP and the Executive Secretary of the Convention on Biological Diversity, Astrid Schomaker. In a video message of greeting to participants, the Executive Secretary welcomed the holding of the subregional dialogue for Western Asia in Manama and thanked the Government of Bahrain and partners

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

including UNEP and UNDP, with additional backing from the UNEP China Trust Fund and GEF, for their collaboration and support. She emphasized that the dialogue was being held at a critical moment, which called for collective action to accelerate implementation of the Kunming-Montreal Global Biodiversity Framework – collective action that had a strong commitment to monitoring, reporting, transparency and accountability at its core. Noting that there were only five years left to deliver on the 23 targets of the Framework, the Executive Secretary stressed the urgency of meeting key milestones, especially the submission of seventh national reports by February 2026, which would underpin the global review of collective progress in the implementation of the Framework at the seventeenth meeting of the Conference of the Parties, to be held in Yerevan. Expressing confidence that meaningful collective progress was within reach, she urged all Parties to update and submit their national biodiversity strategy and action plan.

Item 2

Objectives and programme of the dialogue

5. No presentation was made under agenda item 2. According to the annotated agenda, the dialogue would be focused on the following main components, primarily through the sharing among Parties of experiences and lessons learned:

- (a) Identification of challenges, successes and solutions related to developing and monitoring national biodiversity strategies and action plans and the Framework;
- (b) Strengthened capacities for the preparation of the seventh national report, including the use of the online reporting tool;
- (c) Support for Parties to identify opportunities to strengthen regional cooperation and to identify opportunities for Parties to leverage support from donors and partners.

Item 3

Progress in developing and monitoring national biodiversity strategies and action plans and national targets aligned with the Kunming-Montreal Global Biodiversity Framework

6. To put the dialogue in context, a representative of the Secretariat of the Convention on Biological Diversity introduced the enhanced multidimensional approach to planning, monitoring, reporting and review, adopted by the Conference of the Parties in decision [15/6](#), and decision [16/32](#) of the Conference of the Parties on mechanisms for planning, monitoring, reporting and review, including the endorsement of the revisions to the national reporting template for the seventh and eighth national reports. The representative also introduced decision 15/5, in which the Conference of the Parties adopted the monitoring framework for the Kunming-Montreal Global Biodiversity Framework, and decision 16/31 related to the monitoring framework and provided a brief update on the status of submissions of national biodiversity strategies and action plans and national targets.

7. Representatives of UNEP and UNDP delivered a joint presentation in which they outlined how their organizations provided support to countries in updating their national biodiversity strategy and action plans, strengthening national capacities and accelerating implementation on the ground. They explained how GEF enabling support was helping countries revise their national biodiversity strategy and action plan, prepare their seventh national report and advance implementation of the Kunming-Montreal Global Biodiversity Framework, while underscoring the central role played by nature in human well-being, economic resilience and climate action. The representatives highlighted that, through the umbrella programmes under the seventh and eighth replenishments of the GEF Trust Fund, countries benefited from nationally led and politically visible support which helped align national targets with global commitments, promote whole-of-government and whole-of-society approaches, mainstream biodiversity across key sectors and strengthen readiness for implementation, financing, monitoring and reporting. They showcased the breadth of global and regional support available, including a centralized help desk, peer-to-peer learning, knowledge-sharing platforms and access to thematic experts on biodiversity finance, gender, climate change, food systems, spatial

planning and indigenous peoples and local communities, alongside concrete progress already achieved, particularly in target setting, stakeholder engagement and national biodiversity strategy and action plan updates, with encouraging advances across Western Asia. It was highlighted that the UNEP China Trust Fund project and the Kunming Biodiversity Fund provided support to countries in strengthening institutional capacity and accelerating the implementation of the Framework.

8. A representative of Bahrain indicated that his country had initiated the update of its national biodiversity strategy and action plan in 2023 through a comprehensive policy review and a participatory stakeholder-driven process. In an assessment of the 12 national biodiversity targets for 2016–2024, it was found that 3 had been achieved, 5 had been partially achieved and 4 had not been achieved. That finding highlighted persistent challenges related to policy implementation, incomplete frameworks, limited private sector engagement, data gaps and capacity constraints. In the updated national biodiversity strategy and action plan for 2026–2031 national priorities were aligned with the country’s vision to 2030, international commitments under the Convention on Biological Diversity and the Kunming-Montreal Global Biodiversity Framework, with strong alignment in areas such as mangrove expansion but weaker alignment in the areas of invasive species management and biosafety. Through extensive consultations, data validation and national workshops, Bahrain had identified 23 national targets to be achieved by 2031. Through those efforts, together with recommendations for strengthening institutional coordination, improving monitoring and reporting systems, enhancing public awareness and increasing financial investments, a robust strategic framework was provided for supporting effective biodiversity conservation and sustainable development.

9. A representative of the Government of Egypt delivered a presentation on the country’s updated national biodiversity strategy and action plan 2024–2030, reflecting a highly inclusive and structured national process led by the Ministry of Environment. He explained that the update was guided by a ministerial decision establishing a steering committee supported by national experts and developed through a process entailing multiple steering committee meetings, workshops and wide-ranging intersectoral consultations. In his presentation, the representative outlined how Egypt had: aligned its national biodiversity goals with the Kunming-Montreal Global Biodiversity Framework; undertaken a comprehensive review of policies, institutions, monitoring systems and financing needs; and developed a results-oriented framework with 21 targets, 94 objectives and over 300 indicators. He emphasized key priorities such as ecosystem restoration, protected areas expansion, species conservation, pollution reduction, biodiversity mainstreaming and strengthening of monitoring, while pointing out challenges related to capacity, financing, coordination and awareness.

10. A representative of the Government of the Islamic Republic of Iran presented an overview of the status and evolution of his country’s national biodiversity strategies and action Plans. He detailed the progression from the first national biodiversity strategy and action Plan, submitted in 2006, to the second national biodiversity strategy and action plan (2016–2030) and the current draft of the third national biodiversity strategy and action plan aligned with the Kunming-Montreal Global Biodiversity Framework. The representative highlighted that the current draft of the national biodiversity strategy and action plan, which emphasized national laws, biodiversity loss and governance challenges, the rights and knowledge of local communities, and whole-of-society and cross-sectoral participation, was expected to be finalized by February 2026 following approval by the Supreme Council of the Environment. In his presentation, the representative underscored key achievements, including broad stakeholder engagement; participation of local communities, non-governmental organizations and women; and high-level political mainstreaming of biodiversity, while noting major challenges such as funding limitations, restricted access to international finance, unclear institutional responsibilities and impacts of regional conflicts. In outlining the monitoring strategy of the Islamic Republic of Iran, he focused on the development of indicators, evaluation frameworks and national and subnational databases, while acknowledging persisting constraints related to financing, capacity-building and documentation.

11. A representative of Jordan shared information on that country's national biodiversity strategy and action plan 2025–2050, which had been successfully developed, approved by the cabinet and officially launched and was fully aligned with the Kunming-Montreal Global Biodiversity Framework. The national biodiversity strategy and action plan, developed under the leadership of the Ministry of Environment through an inclusive whole-of-government and whole-of-society process, offered a clear long-term vision to 2050 and concrete national targets to 2030 and served as the country's main road map for biodiversity conservation, restoration and sustainable use. The representative emphasized that the updated national biodiversity strategy and action plan of Jordan, formally approved by the Council of Ministers in October 2025, constituted a major achievement, which reflected strong political commitment; broad stakeholder participation across government, academia, civil society, the private sector and communities; and clear alignment with national development priorities, climate and land-use planning and the Kunming-Montreal Global Biodiversity Framework, and was supported by a defined implementation framework with established roles and priorities. Key challenges remained, however, including ensuring effective cross-sectoral implementation beyond the environment sector, mobilizing sustainable long-term financing, addressing fragmented and uncoordinated biodiversity monitoring systems, clarifying national custodianship of biodiversity data, improving data-sharing and filling gaps associated with certain ecosystems and species.

12. A representative of the Government of Lebanon indicated that that country had successfully updated its national biodiversity strategy and action plan in alignment with the Kunming-Montreal Global Biodiversity Framework and submitted it to the online reporting tool under the Convention on Biological Diversity by the end of November 2025. The team was now finalizing the executive summary and cover design. A key achievement was the strong and inclusive engagement of a wide range of stakeholders, including line ministries, academics, research institutions, environmental non-governmental organizations, individual experts and natural reserve committees, throughout the drafting and review process. The representative noted that, while such broad participation strengthened the quality and ownership of the national biodiversity strategy and action plan, it posed challenges, as multiple rounds of consultation had resulted in the creation of numerous draft versions before the final submission was produced.

13. A representative of the Government of Saudi Arabia gave a presentation on the country's road map for developing its national comprehensive biodiversity framework (2025–2030) as an updated successor to the 2005 strategy that was fully aligned with the Kunming-Montreal Global Biodiversity Framework, the Saudi vision 2030 and relevant decisions of the Conference of the Parties to the Convention. The representative highlighted the nationally led and highly participatory process involving more than 40 entities, supported technically by UNEP, and resulting in 22 nationally endorsed biodiversity targets submitted through the Convention on Biological Diversity reporting system and outlined the phased development process, the vision and mission underpinning the framework, the structure of national goals and targets, the time-bound action plan for 2025–2030, key implementation enablers (governance, finance, data, technology and capacity-building) and the robust monitoring, reporting and accountability system. The representative concluded by noting that the full technical content had been completed, national reviews were under way and the next steps, towards 2030, were focused on formal adoption, implementation and reporting.

14. A representative of the Government of Yemen presented an update on the country's third national biodiversity strategy and action plan, which had been officially submitted to the Convention on Biological Diversity Secretariat in December 2024. In the presentation, the representative highlighted that Yemen had identified six strategic pathways and 19 national targets aligned with the Kunming-Montreal Global Biodiversity Framework and underscored key achievements, including successfully shifting the national focus from the humanitarian response towards longer-term development and biodiversity priorities, integrating spatial planning for improved protected area management and establishing a dedicated biodiversity fund within the environmental protection authority to enhance sustainability and co-financing opportunities. At the same time, the representative noted persisting challenges linked to ongoing conflict, such as fragmented data,

limited technical capacity and fragile institutions, which affected national biodiversity strategy and action plan monitoring. While the third national biodiversity strategy and action plan included defined indicators, baselines, targets and evaluation mechanisms, effective monitoring remained constrained by insufficient resources, weak infrastructure and the absence of robust and reliable indicators.

15. A representative of the CBD Women's Caucus group delivered a presentation on the role and priorities of the Women's Caucus as the official women's major group under the Convention on Biological Diversity, during which she emphasized its global reach and long-standing advocacy for gender justice in the context of biodiversity governance. She explained why the meaningful involvement of women in national biodiversity strategy and action plan updating, monitoring and reporting was essential, noting in that regard that women contributed critical local and traditional knowledge, strengthened community engagement and improved the quality, relevance and sustainability of biodiversity-related data and policies. The representative underscored the importance of sex-, age- and ethnicity-disaggregated data in revealing hidden inequalities, ensuring accountability and enabling evidence-based decision-making, while triggering key questions for Parties on gender targets, indicators and inclusiveness. She outlined the key demands set forth by the Caucus's, including ensuring women's participation throughout national biodiversity strategy and action plan-related processes, integrating gender-responsive monitoring and reporting into national reports, appointing national gender focal points and strengthening synergies with other multilateral environmental agreements, and called on Governments to address those demands by moving from commitment to concrete and measurable action.

16. On behalf of the Global Youth Biodiversity Network, a representative of the youth group gave a presentation in which he highlighted the critical role of young people in ensuring inclusive planning, monitoring, reporting and review under the Convention on Biological Diversity. He emphasized that youth were not only among those most affected by biodiversity loss but also key actors driving action on the ground, policy advocacy and transformative change. Drawing on evidence of the global reach and experience of the Network, the representative underscored the importance of meaningful youth participation in updating national biodiversity strategies and action plans, integrating intergenerational equity and Target 22, strengthening inclusive monitoring frameworks with youth responsive indicators and recognizing contributions of youth in national reporting and global review processes. He concluded by calling for a human rights-based whole-of-society approach that moved beyond maintaining business as usual, avoided false solutions and positioned youth as partners, leaders and decision makers in delivering the Kunming-Montreal Global Biodiversity Framework.

17. In a summarization of the country presentations, it was shown that the success factors and challenges associated with the revision and implementation of national biodiversity strategies and action plans were closely linked to governance quality, stakeholder engagement and access to finance and data. Major successes were driven by strong and inclusive stakeholder engagement, clear alignment with national development priorities and international commitments and effective resource mobilization and financing mechanisms. While technical advances, including spatial planning and integration of climate and land-use considerations alongside clear implementation frameworks, were recognized as further strengthening national biodiversity strategy and action plan revision processes, persistent challenges affecting national biodiversity strategy and action plan revision, implementation and monitoring were highlighted. Common constraints included weak stakeholder coordination and institutional fragmentation, data gaps and uncoordinated information systems, chronic financial limitations and shortages of technical and human capacity.

Item 4

Special session on a regional biodiversity and wildlife programme

18. During the special session, a combination of presentation and panel discussion approaches was used. A representative of the UNEP Regional Office for West Asia presented an overview of the

regional biodiversity and wildlife programme for Western Asia, in which he highlighted its vision which encompassed ensuring that biodiversity and wildlife were valued, conserved and sustainably managed across the region. In the presentation, the representative emphasized that the UNEP Regional Office for West Asia was supporting Saudi Arabia in advancing the regional programme. In the presentation, he addressed the shared challenges of the region, including climate change, biodiversity loss, pollution, limited financing, capacity gaps, governance constraints, weak data systems and a low level of public awareness, and outlined how the programme complemented the technical and scientific cooperation mechanism under the Convention on Biological Diversity, which, pursuant to decision 15/8 of the Conference of the Parties was dependent on demand-driven regional collaboration, while the proposed regional programme would focus on the implementation of coordinated and concerted biodiversity actions. The representative described the core pillars of the programme, including strengthening implementation of the Kunming-Montreal Global Biodiversity Framework; promoting coordinated regional action and common positions in global processes; enhancing wildlife conservation and sustainable management, for example, through conservation breeding and reintroduction; advancing knowledge-sharing and data management; and building national and regional capacities. He outlined proposed outputs, such as a regional action plan, a capacity-building strategy, conservation breeding forums and standardized monitoring frameworks, and called on partners to provide feedback, participate in consultations and jointly advance the next steps of the programme. The representative concluded by emphasizing the importance of partnerships with all relevant regional and global organizations and partnerships, as well as working closely with the newly established International Union for Conservation of Nature Regional Office for West Asia subregional technical and scientific cooperation support centre.

Item 5

Biodiversity monitoring

19. In an introductory presentation, a representative of the Secretariat of the Convention on Biological Diversity discussed the monitoring framework for the implementation of the Kunming-Montreal Global Biodiversity Framework. He explained the mandate of the monitoring framework under decisions 15/5, 15/6, 16/31 and 16/32 of the Conference of the Parties and highlighted the review of progress in the implementation of the Framework to be undertaken at the seventeenth meeting of the Conference of the Parties to the Convention through a global stocktake and the need to use indicators in national reporting. The representative emphasized that the indicators of the monitoring framework would be a core element of the seventh national report and stressed the importance of the seventh national reports, as the global review would be based primarily on those reports.

20. A representative of the Group on Earth Observations Biodiversity Observation Network provided an overview of the process through which countries could develop effective national biodiversity monitoring systems that were fit for purpose under the Kunming-Montreal Global Biodiversity Framework. She emphasized that meaningful monitoring must be based on standardized, interoperable and repeatable data; must draw on both in situ observations and remote sensing; and must be organized around essential biodiversity variables in order to track trends in species, ecosystems and drivers of biodiversity loss. Using global and national examples, the representative illustrated how raw biodiversity data could be transformed into conservation intelligence and decision support tools for protected areas-related planning, ecosystem accounting and national reporting. She highlighted critical challenges, particularly in Western Asia, including fragmented data, limited long-term species monitoring and gaps in habitat quality and restoration monitoring, while underscoring the importance of agreed standards, regional collaboration and clear priorities to ensure that monitoring systems genuinely supported policy, planning and action for biodiversity conservation.

21. During group discussions, participants reflected on the subject of shared challenges and needs and in that regard identified persisting technical and financial capacity constraints as major barriers to effective biodiversity monitoring and implementation of the Framework. Those challenges were

closely linked to fragmented and limited biodiversity data, weak data-sharing practices, gaps in skills and knowledge, outdated systems and weak national coordination and institutional arrangements. Inadequate infrastructure, unclear or missing indicators and benchmarks, limited stakeholder participation and difficulties in data validation further undermined effective monitoring, while insufficient collaboration and chronic funding shortages added to the complexity of implementation. More broadly, biodiversity monitoring was constrained by interconnected governance, capacity and resource limitations, including fragmented systems, weak institutions, limited data integration and shortages of skilled human resources. Those constraints were compounded by transparency and documentation gaps, challenges related to retaining trained personnel and wider contextual pressures such as economic constraints, fragile institutions, limited access to finance, weak intersectoral coordination and a low level of public awareness. External shocks, including conflict, climate and environmental pressures, invasive species and unsustainable production and consumption patterns, further intensified those challenges, thereby underscoring the need for sustained financing, coherent institutional frameworks, integrated and accessible data systems and long-term investments in capacity development to enable the establishment of effective and credible biodiversity monitoring systems.

Item 6

Preparation and submission of the seventh national report

22. A representative of the Convention on Biological Diversity Secretariat, in presenting an overview of the preparation and submission of the seventh national report, explained its legal mandate under the Convention and its central role in tracking progress towards implementing the Kunming-Montreal Global Biodiversity Framework. He highlighted key decisions of the Conference of the Parties, emphasized the February 2026 submission deadline and outlined how national reports would serve as a primary source for the global report and global review at the seventeenth and nineteenth meetings of the Conference of the Parties to the Convention. The representative walked participants through the intricacies of the new report structure, the shift towards reporting against national targets, the use of indicators and the mandatory online reporting tool, while sharing practical guidance on coordination, stakeholder engagement, data sources and common challenges with a view to helping countries prepare comprehensive and meaningful reports. The presentation served to remind the participants that timely submission of the national reports, by February 2026 at the latest, as requested by the Conference of the Parties in decision 15/6, was crucial for the review of implementation of the Framework.

23. All of the participating countries shared their indicative timeline for submitting their seventh national report. With the exception of one country, all participating countries confirmed their intention to submit their report by or before February 2026.

24. A live demonstration of the online reporting tool was provided by a representative of the Convention on Biological Diversity Secretariat, who showcased its key functionalities and reporting workflow. He provided participants with guidance on how to access relevant articles and help resources through the knowledge base, as well as seventh national report guidance and the reporting template available on the Convention on Biological Diversity website.

Item 7

Discussion on opportunities, challenges and next steps

25. During the group discussion, participants reflected collectively on key challenges and needs affecting effective implementation of the Kunming-Montreal Global Biodiversity Framework, notably persistent funding and resource constraints at both national and international levels; gaps in knowledge, innovation, technology and technical capacity; weak governance structures and limited cooperation in national biodiversity strategy and action plan-related processes; and insufficient integration of biodiversity considerations into other sectors. Participants stressed the value of multilateral and subregional cooperation, improved national coordination mechanisms and greater

inclusiveness of stakeholder engagement processes and noted gaps in modelling capacity, technology and technical support. They called for better platforms for sharing lessons learned and strengthening working relationships across countries and institutions. It was re-emphasized that capacity-building efforts must urgently move beyond largely generic, academic and theoretical approaches, as well as ad hoc or one-off training sessions. Instead, greater emphasis should be placed on practical, hands-on and application-oriented capacity-building initiatives. Such an approach would more effectively address existing capacity gaps and strengthen countries' ability to report on and implement the Framework.

26. Participants emphasized the need for stronger coordination among ministries, greater private sector engagement and more systematic inclusion of youth, whose awareness was growing but whose sustained participation remained limited. They highlighted, as a response to that need, priority solutions including improving access to finance through dedicated biodiversity finance plans and incentives for private investment; strengthening capacity-building, knowledge-sharing and data systems, particularly for indigenous peoples and local communities; aligning national biodiversity strategies and action plans with national development goals; enhancing youth integration and cross-sector collaboration; and reinforcing governance through national biodiversity committees, stronger legal frameworks and improved coordination. Underscoring the importance of regional cooperation, participants proposed the following steps to address shared biodiversity challenges: establishment of subregional biodiversity funds, use of other effective area-based conservation measures for transboundary conservation, creation of a Gulf Cooperation Council youth Convention on Biological Diversity network and strengthened collaboration through regional programmes, conventions and multilateral and bilateral initiatives.

27. The main points emerging from the dialogue may be summarized as follows:

(a) Five Parties in the subregion (Egypt, Iran (Islamic Republic of), Jordan, Yemen and State of Palestine) had already submitted a revised or updated national biodiversity strategy and action plan. All participating countries shared their timeline for revising or updating their national biodiversity strategy and action plan;

(b) All participating Parties but one planned to submit their national report by or before February 2026;

(c) Stakeholders' involvement could be improved through building capacity of their representatives; integration of indigenous and local knowledge in databases or policy- and decision-making processes; and creation of an enabling environment and processes to enable stakeholder representative to participate actively;

(d) Parties called for increased capacity-building on monitoring and data collection, using available tools and technology for biodiversity monitoring and leveraging existing regional coordination mechanisms to close capacity and knowledge gaps.

Item 8

Closure of the meeting

28. The dialogue concluded on 23 December 2025 with the closing remarks of a representative of the Convention on Biological Diversity Secretariat. He expressed his sincere appreciation to all participants and the organizers, particularly the Supreme Council for Environment of Bahrain and the UNDP Bahrain office, as well as UNDP and UNEP, for their strong collaboration and support. He noted that, collectively, the dialogue had successfully achieved its objectives, namely: strengthening national and subregional capacities, providing clearer guidance on the road map ahead, fostering a shared understanding of subregional priorities and establishing a clear and achievable path towards the submission of the seventh national report by the agreed deadline of February 2026.
