

Summary of the discussions during the pilot open-ended forum for voluntary country review of implementation at the fifth meeting of the Subsidiary Body on Implementation*

Summary prepared by the Chair

1. During its fifth meeting, the Subsidiary Body on Implementation piloted an open-ended forum for voluntary country review according to the modus operandi provided in the documents prepared for its fourth meeting¹ and procedures outlined in document CBD/SBI/5/3.
2. The open-ended forum had an opening session and three substantive sessions addressing:
 - (a) Whole-of-government and whole-of-society approaches and the integration of the Protocols to the Convention on Biological Diversity and other multilateral environmental agreements into national biodiversity strategies and action plans;
 - (b) National target setting and monitoring;
 - (c) Means of implementation, including national biodiversity finance planning and capacity-development planning.
3. The open-ended forum was interactive and focused on the experiences of Parties and observers in implementing the Convention on Biological Diversity and in particular on the efforts of Parties and observers to implement the Kunming-Montreal Global Biodiversity Framework at the national level.
4. The present note contains a summary of points raised during the open-ended forum prepared by the Chair of the Subsidiary Body on Implementation, in consultation with the chairs of each session. The text has not been negotiated by Parties and the issues raised in the summary should not be taken to mean that an agreement was reached on any particular issue.

Opening session

5. This session set the stage for those that followed and highlighted experiences relevant to issues discussed in the later sessions. Participants mentioned the following issues, some of which were discussed in more detail in other sessions:
 - (a) Positive examples of how elevating political will improved the whole-of-government and whole-of-society approach and will be crucial for implementation;
 - (b) There are different world views with clear implication for the development and implementation of national biodiversity strategies and action plans;
 - (c) Examples of challenges in meaningfully engaging with some actors as they may have different objectives, knowledge and needs;
 - (d) Regional cooperation is important given the transboundary nature of biodiversity;
 - (e) Different institutional settings remain a barrier at the regional levels, as different countries have ratified different agreements and protocols. In this regard some noted that there is a need for synergistic cooperation amongst the environmental agreements at the international level;
 - (f) Competing political priorities, such as security and desertification/land degradation, remain a challenge for implementation. However, some also noted that synergistic implementation between climate change, desertification/land degradation and biodiversity were highlighted as crucial;

* Issued without formal editing.

¹ CBD/SBI/4/4 and CBD/SBI/4/4/Add.1

(g) Funding, including its disbursement and allocation, remains a challenge. Some noted that there are differences in the accessibility and availability of financial resources among countries, which impacts how countries can implement the Convention and cooperate with each other.

Session 1: whole-of-government and whole-of-society approaches and integration of the Protocols to the Convention on Biological Diversity and other multilateral environmental agreements into national biodiversity strategies and action plans

6. Participants reflected on the key factors that contributed to successful coordination, communication, institutional arrangements and mechanisms for meaningful participation, as well as innovative approaches for engagement. The following issues were each noted by several participants:

(a) Whole-of-government and whole-of-society approaches, and the integration of other relevant multilateral environmental agreements, are important for the effective review, updating and implementation of national biodiversity strategies and action plans;

(b) Engaging across government and sectors in the process of the revision and updating of national biodiversity strategies and action plans is important. The ministries dealing with productive sectors, such as those responsible for fisheries, mining and agriculture, as well as ministries of finance and economy, were identified as particularly important in this regard;

(c) The Protocols are technically complex and require specialized skills. It was indicated that the implementation, integration and mainstreaming of the Protocols in the national biodiversity strategies and action plans require specific expertise, and that dialogues, workshops and capacity-building can facilitate this;

(d) Investment of time for awareness-raising, knowledge-sharing, communication/media, incentives and an adequate structure for the coordination are key elements to take into account in the implementation of the whole-of-government and whole-of-society approach;

(e) The mapping of stakeholders can support effective implementation of whole-of-government and whole-of-society approaches, including recognition that some may have dual roles as users and “caretakers” of biodiversity;

(f) The importance of using and leveraging good practices related to indigenous peoples and local communities, women and youth engagement, for example in consultations and project design;

(g) Meaningful dialogue with indigenous peoples and local communities needs to be strengthened at all levels, this requires resources and effective coordination mechanisms;

(h) Academic and research organizations also play an important role in the review and update of national biodiversity strategies and action plans and monitoring in support of effective implementation;

(i) Domestic institutional arrangements and contexts at the national level are important determinants of national capacities and need to be taken into account in process for national biodiversity strategies and action plans and the implementation of whole-of-government and whole-of-society approaches and the integration of other relevant multilateral environmental agreements.

(j) The importance of political will and the rule of law;

(k) The development of national biodiversity strategies and action plans can benefit from regional coordination among neighboring countries;

(l) National biodiversity strategies and action plans should use incentives for partners and stakeholders to take actions;

(m) Inclusive participation and representation of stakeholders at all stages and across generations requires a concerted and sustained effort. This requires resources, the provision of platforms and mechanisms, as well as other opportunities for meaningful engagement;

(n) Meaningful dialogue is a key element that needs to be encouraged, including through innovative and effective consultative processes such as citizen assemblies, and the use of interactive exchange platforms (from local to national levels, and vice versa);

(o) Good practices for the implementation of national biodiversity strategies and action plans that take into account whole-of-society and whole-of-government approach include:

(i) Additional effort, in particular, in terms of ensuring the participation and interaction of women, youth and indigenous people and local communities;

(ii) Engagement with other ministries can be facilitated through management structures, coordination mechanisms and processes, such as the Bern process, that facilitate cooperation and synergies among and between focal points of different sectors, conventions and multilateral environmental agreements;

(p) It is important to engage with youth, and youth can also proactively engage national governments in different manners and through different means in processes for developing and implementation national biodiversity strategies and action plan. Such processes can result in different outcomes and generate specific lessons learned on effective participation, in particular on a subnational level;

(q) Governments should report to local communities who depend on ecosystem services, such as fishing, on the ongoing implementation of national biodiversity strategies and action plans.

Session 2: national target setting and monitoring

7. Participants reflected on the key factors for successfully reflecting the Kunming-Montreal Global Biodiversity Framework in national processes and policies. They also discussed elements critical to setting and monitoring national targets. Participants expressed interest in learning more about the tools developed by others. The following were noted by participants, noting that not all issues were raised by all participants:

(a) The involvement of rightsholders and stakeholders in the development of national biodiversity strategies and action plans and national targets has great value for the comprehensive development of the national biodiversity strategy and action plans and national targets, and helps realizes benefits for the groups involved while also supporting the effective implementation, but can be challenging to involve all rights and stakeholders in the development of national targets and to take into account the perspectives and ambitions of everyone and meaningful involvement requires resources, the provision of accessible platforms and opportunities for meaningful dialogues and engagement;

(b) Capacity development, communication, awareness-raising and knowledge-sharing are essential for developing national biodiversity strategies and action plans and setting and implementing national targets. Dialogue is a key element that needs to be encouraged;

(c) Flexible approaches are useful for setting and implementing national targets in decentralized systems while coordination is required to ensure that joint efforts will be made to achieve commonly shared national targets;

(d) Decentralizing the collection of data, for example by using different government institutions and processes or engaging with civil society, other government institutions and partners, can help to support effective monitoring of implementation;

(e) When other ministries lead the planning and development of some national targets allowed responsibilities to be spread out and enhance shared accountability across the government.

In this respect it was noted by some that engagement with other ministries can be facilitated through interministerial structures and the identification of focal points and contact points;

(f) Coordination with the national focal points for the protocols and for other multilateral environmental agreements helped to develop synergies in target setting and monitoring;

(g) At the national level some targets may have higher national prioritization;

(h) A review of existing laws and institutions can provide a basis to develop ambitious but realistic targets in line with the Kunming-Montreal Global Biodiversity Framework;

(i) Legal and policy clarity and coherence were essential for setting and implementing national targets to ensure all actors will contribute to implementation. A common and legally binding framework for biodiversity was cited as an important component to bolster implementation;

(j) National monitoring systems underpin decision-making, but there are gaps in national monitoring systems and significant resources may be required to develop them.

Session 3: means of implementation, including national biodiversity finance planning and capacity-development planning

8. Participants reflected on means of implementation, including national biodiversity finance planning and capacity-development planning. Participants used this session to share experiences and good practices, and also identify current needs, gaps and challenges related to capacity-building and financing for the development and implementation of national biodiversity strategies and action plans. The following were noted by participants, noting that not all issues were raised by all participants:

(a) The development process for national biodiversity strategies and action plans development was a good opportunity to identify funding needs and attract additional finance from diverse sources, including private sector and philanthropy;

(b) Conducting an analysis of existing financing, the costing of national biodiversity strategies plans and associated actions, determining the current gaps and identifying sustainable financing models to address such gaps, including through innovative financing solutions provides a strong foundation for implementation;

(c) Securing strong commitment and tracking the biodiversity expenditures of all Ministries, based on their mandate, can help ensure sustained commitment and improve implementation;

(d) Innovative financing solutions were highlighted, including payment for ecosystem services, green bonds, debt-for-nature and debt-for-climate swaps, tourist payments, private sector contributions, taxes, carbon credits, micro credits, and fiscal transfers (e.g. to subnational governments to encourage local conservation efforts);

(e) Public financing remains the main source of finance for biodiversity, while underlining the need to diversify sources. Domestic financing could be enhanced, for example by establishing or strengthening national financing mechanisms and the adoption of short- and long-term domestic finance plans;

(f) There are co-benefits to integrating climate and biodiversity finance, while others cautioned that measured need to be taken to avoid double counting;

(g) Identifying national priorities to guide the allocation of national budget to biodiversity, including by engaging with different ministries and agencies, can support resource allocation;

(h) The need to focus on domestic sources of funding both public and private, while others stressed the importance to increase external sources of funding;

(i) The importance of proactively engaging ministries of finance and planning to recognize the critical contribution of biodiversity and ecosystem services to the national economy and of making the business case for biodiversity to the private sector;

(j) Experiences conducting capacity-needs assessment for their national biodiversity strategies and action plans, including mapping of skills required for the implementation of specific targets in their national biodiversity strategies and action plans, such as restoration;

(k) Needs related to the capacity for monitoring the achievement of the national targets, the development of national capacity-building plans, and data and knowledge gaps;

(l) The steps undertaken to address the identified capacity needs and gaps, including the development of human resource development strategies, targeted trainings for specific skills, placement of young graduates in biodiversity-related organizations, and the development of institutional capacity for research to support implementation of biodiversity-related programmes;

(m) The need to strengthen the capacity of stakeholders, including youth, women and local authorities at different levels to contribute to the development and implementation of national biodiversity strategies and action plans.
