



Convention on Biological Diversity

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Informal Advisory Group on Technical and Scientific Cooperation

Fourth meeting

Online, 5 and 6 August 2025

Report of the Informal Advisory Group on Technical and Scientific Cooperation on its fourth meeting

Introduction

1. The Informal Advisory Group on Technical and Scientific Cooperation, established by the Conference of the Parties to the Convention on Biological Diversity at its fifteenth meeting to provide advice on promoting and facilitating capacity-building and development, technical and scientific cooperation, technology transfer, knowledge management and the clearing-house mechanism in support of the Kunming-Montreal Global Biodiversity Framework, held its fourth meeting online on 5 and 6 August 2025. As listed in the annex to the present document, a total of 29 of the Group's 31 members attended.

Item 1

Opening of the meeting

2. On behalf of the Executive Secretary, the Head of the Capacity-Building and Knowledge Management Unit of the Secretariat of the Convention on Biological Diversity, Erie Tamale, welcomed the participants to the fourth meeting of the Informal Advisory Group. Mr. Tamale congratulated both new and returning members of the Informal Advisory Group on their selection.

3. The Head of the Capacity-Building and Knowledge Management Unit provided an outline of the key items to be discussed during the meeting. He explained that the meeting aimed at introducing key issues for a preliminary exchange of views and setting the stage for further discussions through an online discussion forum in preparation for the fifth meeting of the Informal Advisory Group, to be held in person from 30 September to 2 October 2025 in Montreal, Canada. The documents to be prepared for the fifth meeting will reflect consideration of the views and inputs shared through those preliminary discussions.

Item 2

Organizational matters

(a) Adoption of the agenda

4. The Informal Advisory Group considered and adopted the provisional agenda of the meeting, as contained in document CBD/TSC/IAG/2025/1/1.

(b) Organization of work

5. In considering the proposed organization of work contained in the annex to the annotated provisional agenda (CBD/TSC/IAG/2025/1/1/Add.1), the Informal Advisory Group decided to address agenda items 4 and 5 before addressing agenda item 3 and approved the organization of work as amended.

(c) Election of officers

6. The members elected Mukondi Matshusa of South Africa and Jan Plesnik of Czechia to serve as co-chairs during the intersessional period.

Item 3**Workplan of the Informal Advisory Group on Technical and Scientific Cooperation for the intersessional period**

7. The Secretariat introduced the draft workplan for the Informal Advisory Group for the intersessional period, which was organized into four workstreams, namely: (a) capacity-building and development; (b) technical and scientific cooperation; (c) knowledge management; and (d) the clearing-house mechanism. The workplan prioritizes tasks requested by the Conference of the Parties at its fifteenth and sixteenth meetings that will feed into the preparation of documents for consideration by the Subsidiary Body on Implementation at its sixth and seventh meetings and the Conference of the Parties at its seventeenth meeting. The workplan includes ongoing work under the workplan for the previous intersessional period.

8. Some members of the Informal Advisory Group requested an adjustment of the timelines for certain tasks, particularly under the knowledge management and clearing-house mechanism workstreams. It was agreed that the draft workplan would be posted on the online discussion forum for further review. The Secretariat would then reflect the changes in a revised version to be discussed further at the next meeting of the Informal Advisory Group.

Item 4**Strategic issues and priorities for in-depth consideration**

9. Members of the Informal Advisory Group were invited to consider and provide feedback and advice on various issues under the Convention and, as appropriate, its Protocols, including specific requests by the Conference of the Parties with respect to capacity-building and development and technical and scientific cooperation set out in [decision 16/3](#) of the Conference of the Parties, as outlined below.

(a) Draft options to address the technological, technical and institutional capability gaps identified

10. In paragraph 6 of decision 16/3, the Informal Advisory Group was invited to provide advice on suitable options for further addressing technological, technical and institutional capability gaps identified, with a focus on the targets and cross-cutting considerations under the Kunming-Montreal Global Biodiversity Framework, including those related to the Protocols.

11. The Secretariat introduced the item, highlighting the proposed approach to addressing the above-mentioned request and possible sources of information. The Secretariat noted the challenge of identifying relevant technological, technical and institutional capability gaps owing to the lack of comprehensive capacity needs assessments and gap analyses and emphasized the need to identify and analyse a representative set of formal assessments in order to identify those gaps. Possible sources of information include the national targets and revised national biodiversity strategies and action plans submitted by Parties and the needs assessments conducted by entities such as the Intergovernmental Science-Policy Platform on Biodiversity and Ecosystem Services and the NBSAP

Accelerator Partnership, as well as documents being prepared for the twenty-seventh meeting of the Subsidiary Body on Scientific, Technical and Technological Advice.

12. The Secretariat shared findings from a preliminary analysis of some of the national targets submitted by developing country Parties, which identified technical assistance, capacity-building, regulatory and legal frameworks and regional and local collaboration as key needs for achieving national targets. Further analysis of the information derived from the national targets will be undertaken to determine whether more detailed needs have been included in the submissions which could be used to identify gaps.

13. Members of the Informal Advisory Group proposed several other sources of information that could be of help in identifying needs and gaps, such as the outcomes of the recent regional dialogues on biodiversity monitoring and reporting led by the Secretariat, as well as the capacity needs assessments being carried out by subregional technical and scientific cooperation support centres and relevant reports from partner organizations such as the WILDLABS State of Conservation Technology report. Information related to the analysis will be uploaded to the discussion forum and members of the Informal Advisory Group were invited to recommend additional sources of information that could be used in preparation for its next meeting.

14. The Informal Advisory Group suggested that it would be useful to elaborate a recommendation calling for future capacity assessments to be carried out using the Kunming-Montreal Global Biodiversity Framework as the basis for the analysis, including examination target by target and addressing institutional and systemic gaps to ensure a more comprehensive understanding of capacity needs, gaps and challenges. Such assessments could also emphasize best available tools, technologies and methods for a specific target or group of targets.

(b) Elements of the terms of reference for the independent evaluation of the relevance and effectiveness of the long-term strategic framework for capacity-building and development and the technical and scientific cooperation mechanism

15. To facilitate the work of the Informal Advisory Group in responding to the request contained in paragraph 7 of decision 16/3, the Secretariat prepared elements of the draft terms of reference for the independent evaluation of the relevance and effectiveness of the long-term strategic framework for capacity-building and development and the technical and scientific cooperation mechanism, which will be submitted for consideration by the Subsidiary Body on Implementation at its sixth meeting and by the Conference of the Parties at its seventeenth meeting.

16. The elements of the draft terms of reference include a proposal for two separate but interconnected evaluations, with one focusing on the long-term strategic framework and the other on the technical and scientific cooperation mechanism. The proposed evaluation methodology includes document reviews, surveys and targeted interviews with key stakeholders. In the evaluations, relevant indicators from the monitoring framework for the Kunming-Montreal Global Biodiversity Framework, including those related to Target 20, will be used.

17. In responding to questions from the Informal Advisory Group, the Secretariat provided an explanation of the timeline in relation to the preparation of the terms of reference and clarified that the consultant, or team of consultants, in charge of the evaluations, will employ standard definitions of effectiveness and relevance commonly used in evaluations. The Secretariat noted that in the case of the technical and scientific cooperation mechanism, the workplans of the subregional support centres and of the global coordination entity, which are expected to be results-based, could be of help in assessing effectiveness and relevance.

18. Some members of the Informal Advisory Group questioned the timing of the preparation of the terms of reference, as the independent evaluations of the long-term strategic framework for capacity-building and development and the technical and scientific cooperation mechanism are scheduled to be carried out in conjunction with the global review of the Kunming-Montreal Global

Biodiversity Framework in advance of the nineteenth meeting of the Conference of the Parties. The Secretariat clarified that in paragraph 7 of decision 16/3 of the Conference of the Parties(), the Conference of the Parties had requested that the terms of reference be prepared for consideration by the Subsidiary Body on Implementation at a meeting prior to the seventeenth meeting of the Conference of the Parties. The Secretariat explained that the terms of reference might be further revised after the seventeenth meeting of the Conference of the Parties, if necessary, and noted that a more detailed evaluation methodology and workplan would be developed by the consultants on the basis of the terms of reference.

19. The draft terms of reference will be posted on the online discussion forum of the Informal Advisory Group for further comment and a revised version will be made available to the Group at its next meeting in September 2025.

(c) Identification and mapping of relevant initiatives and partnerships supporting capacity-building and development for the implementation of the Kunming-Montreal Global Biodiversity Framework

20. In paragraph 8 (b) of decision 16/3, the Conference of the Parties requested the Secretariat, with the support of the Informal Advisory Group, to further identify and map relevant initiatives and partnerships supporting capacity-building and development for the implementation of the Framework.

21. The Secretariat introduced the item, recalling the work undertaken in previous meetings of the Informal Advisory Group, including the initial compilation of key initiatives and partnerships to support Parties and relevant stakeholders in the implementation of the Framework.¹ The Secretariat noted the limitations linked to the static format of the compilation, which does not allow for interactive searches, ongoing updates and integration of data, for example, in the context of geographical and thematic coverage.

22. The Secretariat informed the Informal Advisory Group that the utilization of technological tools, to assist in organizing the list of key initiatives in a more efficient and interactive manner, was being explored. One of the options being considered is the use of artificial intelligence, particularly large language models and machine learning, in collecting, organizing, categorizing, mapping, analysing and disseminating information on existing initiatives and identifying capacity gaps (covered under sub-item 4 (a) of the agenda), best practices and emerging trends in capacity-building and development. A draft proof of concept document prepared by the Secretariat containing additional details on the use of artificial intelligence will be shared with the Group on the online discussion forum to enable further review and elicit comments.

23. Members of the Informal Advisory Group expressed reservations regarding the use of artificial intelligence. In that regard, members remarked that in order for appropriate and meaningful outputs to be produced, especially as related to a dynamic and context-dependent entity such as the Framework, proficiency in using the tool would be necessary. The Secretariat described options for reducing the risks of using artificial intelligence, including source curation and identification of the best large language models. The Secretariat noted the initial suggestions regarding additional resources and existing initiatives, as well as proposals concerning leveraging of resources in languages other than English, collaboration with other organizations that are exploring their own approaches to artificial intelligence and the unified use of the clearing-house mechanism.

¹ See www.cbd.int/cb/support.

Item 5**Technical and scientific cooperation mechanism****(a) Update on the operationalization of the technical and scientific cooperation mechanism**

24. Under this sub-item, the Secretariat provided an update on progress made on operationalizing the subregional technical and scientific cooperation support centres and the global coordination entity. In line with decision 16/3, under the Bio-Bridge Initiative, coordination support is being provided to the technical and scientific cooperation mechanism until such time as the global coordination entity, hosted by the Secretariat, is fully operational.

25. The Secretariat noted that, among other milestones, significant progress had been made in drafting host agreements with the subregional support centres.² Two host agreements have been signed,³ five are in the final stages and eight are in process. Regarding financial support, the Secretariat explained that the European Union had committed funding in 2025 for a consultant to provide assistance for the operationalization of the support centres and in 2026 for two staff working for the global coordination entity. The Republic of Korea has agreed to fund a Junior Professional Officer positions for a period of two to three years. The recruitment process for the Junior Professional Officer has started.

26. The Secretariat responded to questions and points of clarification from the Informal Advisory Group on different organizational matters and processes of the technical and scientific cooperation mechanism. Further clarification was given on the respective roles of the interim global coordination entity, the Secretariat and the Bio-Bridge Initiative and the relationship between the mechanism and other initiatives, such as the NBSAP Accelerator Partnership and the Global Knowledge Support Service for Biodiversity.

(b) Draft guidance for developing the biennial workplans of the subregional technical and scientific cooperation support centres

27. At the request of the co-chairs, the Secretariat provided an update on the development of draft guidance for the subregional technical and scientific cooperation support centres on the preparation of their biennial workplans and activity reports.

28. The Secretariat explained that the hiring of a consultant to, among other things, develop guidance and a draft template for the biennial workplans was in process. It was expected that the guidance would be ready in time for further discussion at the next meeting of the Informal Advisory Group. The support centres, in close collaboration with the Parties that they support, are expected to conduct needs assessments which will feed into the development of their biennial workplans. It was emphasized that the guidance should be inclusive and that the workplans should also address capacity-building and development as related to indigenous peoples and local communities and relevant stakeholders. The Secretariat highlighted the importance of stakeholder engagement in the governance of the centres and the need to adopt a whole-of-government and whole-of-society approach.

29. Some members of the Group – noting that the centres were required to submit their biennial workplans to the global coordination entity, followed by their reports, ahead of the next meeting of the Conference of the Parties – expressed concern over the timeline for the preparation of the guidance and the date at which it would be made available to the subregional support centres. The Secretariat acknowledged the delays and explained that the first biennial workplans would cover the remaining months until the end of the biennium. The subregional support centres will be invited to

² See www.cbd.int/tsc/tscm/subregionalcentres.

³ Host agreements were signed with the Sahara and Sahel Observatory and the Regional Centre for Mapping of Resources for Development in the margins of the twentieth session of the African Ministerial Conference on the Environment, on 18 July 2025.

submit progress reports by the end of May 2026 so as to allow time for review and preparation for the seventh meeting of the Subsidiary Body on Implementation.

Item 6

Other matters

30. Under this agenda item, some members sought clarification on how to join the subcommittees of the Informal Advisory Group and how the work of various workstreams would be organized. The Secretariat explained that the use of subcommittees and their possible reconstitution would be discussed at the next meeting of the Group.

31. The Secretariat explained that the online discussion forum would be created and opened during the week of 11 August 2025. Separate threads would be created for each topic that required feedback from the Group. Members will be invited to review the documents and post their views and comments through the forum.

Item 7

Conclusions and recommendations

32. The Informal Advisory Group agreed to further review the documents that will be posted on the online discussion forum by 10 September 2025 to accommodate the unavailability of some of the members during the summer holidays, while ensuring sufficient time for updated documents to be made available in advance of the fifth meeting of the Group, to commence on 30 September 2025.

Item 8

Closure of the meeting

33. In his concluding remarks, Mr. Plesnik, speaking on behalf of the co-chairs, expressed his appreciation to all of the members of the Informal Advisory Group for their active participation and productive discussions. He thanked the Secretariat for organizing and servicing the fourth meeting of the Group and wished everyone an enjoyable summer break. The meeting was closed at 9.15 a.m. on 6 August 2025.

Annex

List of participants

Parties	
Antigua and Barbuda	Tricia Lovell
Australia	Karel Mokany
Belarus	Galina Mozgova
Belgium	Abraham (Han) de Koeijer
Brazil	Marcelo Henrique Aguiar de Freitas
China	Yan Liu
Colombia	Diana Pulido
Czechia	Jan Plesnik
European Union	Grégoire Dubois
Hungary	Kinga Öllerer
Indonesia	Gono Semiadi
Japan	Motohiro Hasegawa
Malawi	Martha Mphatso Kalembe
Mexico	Eduardo Robelo
Morocco	Mostafa Madbouhi
Nigeria	Onyeka Kingsley Nwosu
Republic of Korea	Jeongeun Lim
South Africa	Mukondi Matshusa
United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland	Philip McGowan
Major groups	
CBD Women's Caucus	Pamela Tapia Diaz
Center for Indigenous Peoples' Research and Development	Biswash Praja
Global Youth Biodiversity Network	Mika Mei Jia Tan
Organizations	
ASEAN Centre for Biodiversity	Clarissa Arida
International Union for Conservation of Nature	Valerie D'Hoedt Meyer
International Organisation of la Francophonie	Issa Bado
Science Panel for the Amazon	Paulette Bynoe
United Nations Development Programme	Christina Supples

United Nations Environment Programme World Conservation Monitoring Centre	Natasha Ali
World Wildlife Fund (WILDLABS)	Talia Speaker
Ex officio member (Consortium of Scientific Partners Co-Chair)	
Smithsonian Institution	Britta Garfield
