

THEMATIC WORKSHOP ON ECOSYSTEM RESTORATION FOR THE POST-2020 GLOBAL BIODIVERSITY FRAMEWORK

Rio de Janeiro, Brazil, 6-8 November 2019

CONCEPT NOTE

Background and rationale

Ecosystem restoration refers to the process of managing or assisting the recovery of an ecosystem that has been degraded, damaged, altered, fragmented or destroyed, relative to an appropriate reference model. It is a means of conserving and restoring biodiversity, ecosystem function, services and resilience, given adequate time and investment. The reference model, degradation and restoration are context-specific and refer to both the state of ecosystems and to ecosystem processes.

The aim of this workshop is to discuss how terrestrial, freshwater, marine and coastal ecosystems restoration should be addressed in the post-2020 global biodiversity framework. The policy momentum for restoration has been growing steadily in recent years, including through the adoption of the United Nations Decade on Ecosystem Restoration (2021-2030). In 2015, the Conference of the Parties to the United Nations Convention to Combat Desertification, at its twelfth meeting, adopted its 2030 agenda for Land Degradation Neutrality. In 2016, Parties to the Convention on Biological Diversity adopted decision XIII/5 on ecosystem restoration (Short-term action plan). The United Nations Strategic Plan for Forests, adopted in 2017, calls for a 3 per cent increase in global forest cover by 2030. The global assessment on land degradation of the Intergovernmental Science-Policy Platform on Biodiversity and Ecosystem Services, published in 2018, showed the dire consequences of the continued degradation of the Earth's ecosystems, as well as the clear economic case for restoration. The year 2030 is also the year for the achievement of the Bonn Challenge and New York Declaration on Forests that have set ambitious forest landscape restoration targets totalling over 350 million hectares of land under restoration by 2030, of which 170 million hectares are already pledged by national and subnational governments.

Despite this momentum, Aichi Biodiversity Targets relevant to ecosystem restoration, such as Targets 5, and 14 and in particular Target 15, which called for the “restoration of 15 per cent of degraded ecosystems”, will likely not be met. A review of national targets under Aichi Biodiversity Target 15 conducted in 2016 concluded that many national commitments lacked specificity and often did not account for ecosystem-based commitments under the same countries' Nationally Determined Contributions (NDCs) submitted under the Paris Agreement,¹ or their Bonn Challenge commitments. This shortcoming could be due to a number of issues including: complexity in interpreting the wording of Aichi Biodiversity Target 15, incomplete national reporting, lack of data and capacity to assess the extent of degraded ecosystems and lack of coordination between different branches of government responsible for national ecosystem-based commitments under a variety of international agreements and policy platforms.

In this context, the present workshop will provide a much-needed opportunity for Parties to the Convention on Biological Diversity and stakeholders to discuss key questions regarding the role of ecosystem restoration in the post-2020 global biodiversity framework and create a common understanding about the issue. An indicative list of these questions could be:

- (a) Should there be global quantitative and qualitative goals and targets for terrestrial, freshwater, marine and coastal ecosystems restoration in the post-2020 framework taking into account the existing targets in other international agreements and processes?
- (b) How can goals and targets be cost-effective and specific, measurable, and achievable?

¹ United Nations, Treaty Series, Registration No. I-54113.

- (c) What indicators and metrics should be used to define global goals and targets? (percentage of degraded ecosystems, area, benefits-related indicators and metrics such as avoided extinctions or carbon sequestration, etc.)
- (d) Should there be specific targets by biome or ecoregion?
- (e) Should there be voluntary contributions in respect to an overall goal, and in this case in which metrics should they be expressed?
- (f) How to ensure alignment, coherence and synergies between national targets for ecosystem restoration under the Convention on Biological Diversity and other national instruments that may contain ecosystem-based measures? (e.g. NDCs under the Paris Agreement, LDN targets under UNCCD, VNCs under the United Nations Strategic Plan for Forests, Forest and Landscape Restoration (FLR) strategies under the Bonn Challenge, Regional Seas Conventions)

Key principles

Key principles are as follows:

- (a) Discussions among Parties and stakeholders experts are conducted in line with the principles of transparency and inclusiveness agreed at the fourteenth meeting of the Conference of the Parties;
- (b) The thematic workshop is an expert meeting aiming at providing the Co-Chairs of the Working Group on the Post-2020 Global Biodiversity Framework with concrete and constructive inputs for consideration in their future work on the post-2020 global biodiversity framework. The workshop does not constitute a negotiating process but will serve to seek areas of convergence;
- (c) The format and overall approaches used for previous regional and thematic consultations/workshops will be followed;
- (d) Build on the Aichi Biodiversity Targets, lessons learned from their implementation and current state-of-the-art in ecosystem restoration, while also identifying issues that are not included in the Aichi Targets;
- (e) Consider interlinkages between terrestrial, freshwater, marine and coastal ecosystems;
- (f) Provide outcomes that can be further discussed at the thematic expert workshops on marine and coastal ecosystems and on area-based conservation measures;
- (g) Being guided by relevant decisions of the Conference of the Parties;
- (h) Involve and consider alignment with strategies and approaches in other multilateral agreements and relevant international processes;
- (i) Bringing a reasonable number of Parties (50-75) with balance between CBD regions (equally 10-15 Parties per region); Following existing practices of the Convention for such workshops in involving important stakeholders in the meeting, and with financial support as per CBD protocol for eligible Parties and representatives of major stakeholder groups (indigenous peoples and local communities, women, youth, civil society);
- (j) To be organized in the period before the second meeting of the Working Group on Post-2020;
- (k) Consideration of ecosystem restoration issues within a comprehensive framework addressing all three objectives of the Convention;
- (l) Conducted in English;
- (m) Two co-leads chosen from among Parties will be identified. They will be engaged in this issue from the preparation of the workshop to the delivery of the outcomes of the thematic workshop to the Co-Chairs of the Working Group on Post-2020 and through the post-2020 process.

Expected outcome

Concrete proposals to be considered in the further development of the post-2020 global biodiversity framework. To the extent feasible and appropriate, these proposals will cover the different elements of the framework with particular focus on goals, targets, indicators and baselines.

Elements of a provisional agenda

An additional day (5 November) is included to allow selected countries to work on the pilot application of a decision-support tool for restoration developed by IIS (in partnership with and through the support of the Forest Ecosystem Restoration Initiative (FERI), the Center for International Forestry Research (CIFOR), and the European Union). Results could then be presented by those countries at the consultation to feed into the discussions on science-based targets.

Day 1. Wednesday 6 November 2019

- Participant's **Welcome and registration**
- Opening session
 - Welcome
 - Expectations from this workshop
 - Review and adoption of the agenda
 - Background on the post-2020 global biodiversity framework process
- **Status and current and future trends**
 - Presentations highlighting findings of recent major cross-cutting reports/assessments on the state of terrestrial, freshwater, coastal and marine ecosystem degradation (i.e., GBO-5, IPBES, IPCC)
 - Global priority areas for ecosystem restoration
- **Taking stock of lessons learned and challenges for global ecosystem restoration efforts**
 - The Bonn Challenge and Forest Landscape Restoration
 - Standards in ecosystem restoration
 - break-out discussions focused on challenges and reviewing lessons from the design and implementation of the Aichi Biodiversity Targets, in particular Targets 5, 14 and 15
- **Achieving the 2050 Vision, and relevant 2030 milestones**
 - Break-out groups to identify where different ecosystems need to be in order to be on track to achieve the 2050 vision and discuss what the 2050 vision should be for ecosystem restoration in different ecosystems
 - Discuss possible 2030 and other milestones required in order to reach the 2050 Vision

Day 2. Thursday, 7 November 2019

- **Potential substantive elements on ecosystem restoration for the post 2020 global biodiversity framework**

Break-out group discussions (four stations, each supported by a facilitator and a note-taker) on specific potential elements, based on Aichi Targets 5, 14 and 15 and linked to CBD decisions on ecosystem restoration as well as the existing targets in other international agreements and processes.

The objective of this session is to discuss individual potential elements relevant to ecosystem restoration in a post-2020 global biodiversity framework.

Station 1 – Linkages to other potential thematic areas within the post-2020 global biodiversity framework (e.g. species and ecosystems conservation, prevention of ecosystem loss and degradation, and protected areas).

Station 2 – Principles to guide the goals and targets representation: representativeness, connectivity, efficiency, outcome-oriented, integrated landscape/seascape approach, types of ecosystems to be covered for terrestrial, freshwater, marine and coastal ecosystem restoration (e.g. natural habitats, biomes, ecoregions, ecosystems that provide essential services, and degraded ecosystems).

Station 3 – Global goals and targets for terrestrial, freshwater, marine and coastal ecosystems restoration including baselines and indicators (rate of loss is halved; rate of loss is close to zero; degradation is significantly reduced; 15% is restored, etc.).

Station 4 – Integrating existing goals/targets from other international instruments (e.g. SDGs, Paris Agreement, UNCCD, UNFF, Bonn Challenge).

Day 3. Friday, 8 November 2019

- Report back from Day 2
- Review of key points raised in the workshop and identified items for further in-depth discussion on the basis of proposals from Day 2 (in small groups).
- Considerations and needs related to monitoring and review of the post-2020 global biodiversity framework

Break-out groups to discuss issues related to:

- Baseline information and indicators on different aspects of ecosystem restoration
 - Data needs to support monitoring and review of progress
 - **Closing of the workshop**
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