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INDICATORS FOR ASSESSING PROGRESS IN THE IMPLEMENTATION OF THE STRATEGIC PLAN FOR BIODIVERSITY 2011-2020 AND DRAFT TERMS OF REFERENCE FOR A MEETING THE AD HOC TECHNICAL EXPERT GROUP

Note by the Executive Secretary

INTRODUCTION

1. At its eleventh meeting, the Conference of the Parties considered the indicator framework for the Strategic Plan for Biodiversity 2011-2020 and the Aichi Biodiversity Targets. In its decision XI/3, the Conference of the Parties took note of the indicative list of indicators (annexed to the decision), recognized that these provided a starting point for assessing progress in the achievement of the Strategic Plan for Biodiversity 2011-2020 at various scales, and invited Parties to use them, in a flexible way, in their updated NBSAPs and reporting. The Conference of the Parties also decided that the framework should be kept under review. Further, the Conference of the Parties requested the Executive Secretary, in collaboration with the Biodiversity Indicators Partnership and other partners:

- (a) To provide capacity-building to support the use of the indicators by Parties (paragraph 11);
- (b) To further develop the global indicator framework (paragraphs 12 (b) and (c));
- (c) To further develop practical information on the application of the indicators, including online (paragraphs 12 (a), (g) and (h));
- (d) To promote collaboration on indicators with other conventions and other sectors and to assist the process to establish the sustainable development goals (paragraphs 12 (d), (e) and (f)).

2. Indicators were further considered by the Subsidiary Body on Scientific, Technical and Technological Advice at its seventh meeting as part of discussions on the scientific and technical needs related to the implementation of the Strategic Plan for Biodiversity 2011-2020. Specifically in decision VII/1, the Subsidiary Body noted with appreciation several reports prepared by the Executive Secretary in accordance with decision XI/13 which considered, among other things, the adequacy of observations, and of data systems for monitoring

* UNEP/CBD/COP/12/1/Rev.1.

the biodiversity attributes in each of the Aichi Biodiversity Targets as well as the use and development of indicators.¹ These reports were supplemented by information notes.²

3. Further, in recommendation XVII/1, the Subsidiary Body requested the Executive Secretary:

(a) To facilitate timely collaboration with the Biodiversity Indicators Partnership, the Group on Earth Observations Biodiversity Observation Network, the Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations, the International Union for Conservation of Nature and other relevant international organizations, including the Working Group on Indicators of the International Indigenous Forum on Biodiversity, with a view to filling the gaps in coverage of indicators for all 20 Aichi Biodiversity Targets by 2014;

(b) Recalling paragraph 17 of decision XI/2, to undertake, in collaboration with relevant centres of expertise and relevant organizations and networks, including the Global Biodiversity Information Facility (GBIF), GEO BON and the Biodiversity Indicators Partnership, regional capacity-building activities and training related to mobilization, management and analysis of data, information and knowledge suitable for monitoring and managing biodiversity, including by strengthening national clearing-house mechanisms;

(c) In line with paragraph 16 of decision XI/3 A, to report to the twelfth meeting of the Conference of the Parties on progress in carrying out the requests in decision XI/3, and taking into account the progress made and the use of indicators in the fifth national reports and the fourth edition of *Global Biodiversity Outlook*, to prepare, for consideration by the Conference of the Parties at its twelfth meeting, possible elements for the terms of reference for a meeting of the Ad Hoc Technical Expert Group on Indicators for the Strategic Plan for Biodiversity 2011-2020;

4. This note has been prepared in response to the above requests. Section I contains information on the indicators used in the fourth edition of the *Global Biodiversity Outlook* and the fifth national reports, and the further development of the global indicator framework. Section II provides an update on the capacity-building activities related to indicators. Section III contains information on the indicators used in the sustainable development goals and other relevant processes. Finally, section IV considers the terms of reference for a possible Ad Hoc Technical Expert Group on Indicators for the Strategic Plan for Biodiversity 2011-2020 and draft terms of reference are provided in an annex.

5. SBSTTA recommendation XVII/1 also included elements to be included in a draft decision for consideration by the Conference of the Parties at its twelfth meeting. In line with SBSTTA recommendation XVIII/1, these elements have been incorporated into a consolidated draft decision on the fourth edition of the *Global Biodiversity Outlook*, the mid-term review of progress towards the goals of Strategic Plan for Biodiversity 2011-2020 and the Aichi Biodiversity Targets, and further actions to enhance progress comprising elements from both recommendation XVII/1 and XVIII/1 (see UNEP/CBD/COP/12/1/Add.2). It is envisaged that the terms of reference for the proposed Ad Hoc Technical Expert Group, referred to in the previous paragraph, would be annexed to this decision.

¹ *Facilitating the implementation of the Strategic Plan for Biodiversity 2011-2020 and the Aichi Biodiversity Targets through scientific and technical means* (UNEP/CBD/SBSTTA/17/2), and addenda focusing respectively on Strategic Goals A, B, C and D (UNEP/CBD/SBSTTA/17/2/Add.1, UNEP/CBD/SBSTTA/17/2/Add.2, UNEP/CBD/SBSTTA/17/2/Add.3, and UNEP/CBD/SBSTTA/17/2/Add.4).

² Essential Biodiversity Variables (UNEP/CBD/SBSTTA/17/INF/7), Aichi Biodiversity passport (UNEP/CBD/SBSTTA/17/INF/8), Capacity-Building Activities of the Biodiversity Indicators Partnership (BIP) (UNEP/CBD/SBSTTA/17/INF/9), Facilitating National Monitoring and Implementation of the Strategic Plan for Biodiversity 2011-2020 (UNEP/CBD/SBSTTA/17/INF/12), and Review of the Use of Remotely-Sensed Data for Monitoring Biodiversity Change and Tracking Progress Towards the Aichi Biodiversity Targets (UNEP/CBD/SBSTTA/17/INF/16),

I. INDICATORS USED IN THE FOURTH EDITION OF THE GLOBAL BIODIVERSITY OUTLOOK AND THE FIFTH NATIONAL REPORTS AND THE FURTHER DEVELOPMENT OF THE GLOBAL INDICATOR FRAMEWORK FOR MONITORING PROGRESS

6. The fourth edition of the *Global Biodiversity Outlook* and its underlying technical reports³ draw upon several sources of information (national biodiversity strategies and action plans, fifth national reports, extrapolations of recent and current trends to 2020, model-based scenarios to 2050, and scientific literature and other reports),⁴ thus providing multiple lines of evidence to the assessment and the identification of actions to accelerate progress. Indicators are central to several of these lines of evidence. In particular, the assessment of progress towards the Aichi Biodiversity Targets in GBO-4 is informed by recent trends in 55 biodiversity-related indicators and their statistical extrapolation to 2020. These indicators were selected from over 170 candidate indicators, including those identified in decision XI/3 according to criteria of relevance, scientific credibility, temporal and geographical coverage, and the number of data points available.⁵ Additional indicators were used to complement the indicators used for the extrapolations.

7. Overall, GBO-4 shows substantial improvement, from GBO-3, in the use of indicators for assessing biodiversity at a global level. There is reasonable coverage for 16 of the 20 Aichi Biodiversity Targets (though not all of these have a representative indicator sets that meets the aforementioned criteria). However, some important gaps are still evident:

(a) Overall, a greater number of indicators are available to assess responses, than state and pressures. Response indicators are useful for monitoring progress towards the Aichi Biodiversity Targets and informing policy, since, in general, they can show changes over relatively short time periods. However, the relative absence of state and pressure indicators means that our assessment in terms of biodiversity outcomes remains limited;

(b) More indicators (including those that meet the aforementioned five criteria) are available for those targets under strategic goals B and C, than for the targets under goals A, D and E;

(c) The Aichi Biodiversity Targets that are most poorly covered are targets 13 (on genetic diversity), 14 (on ecosystems that deliver services), 15 (on ecosystem resilience and restoration), and 18 (on traditional knowledge and practices). However work is underway to address these gaps;

(d) Significant gaps remain for target 5 including, perhaps surprisingly so, for changes in forests and forest cover; the data available does not allow for indicators that meet the aforementioned five criteria. However, recent advances in the use of remote sensing data means that we are probably at the cusp of benefiting from significant improvements in this regard in the coming years. Other important gaps relate to ecosystem degradation (relevant to targets 5 and 15, among others), the management of protected areas and the connectivity of protected area systems (target 11). Targets 11 (on protected areas) and 12 (on threatened species) are otherwise relatively well covered by indicators;

(e) Targets 2 (on integrating biodiversity into policy and reporting), 16 (on the Nagoya Protocol) and 17 (on NBSAPs) are related to national processes under the CBD and other international initiatives, and, as such, there tends to be a lack of indicators that meet the aforementioned five criteria. Nevertheless, it is presently possible to assess progress to some of the components under each of these targets and possible improvements

³ To facilitate preparations by Parties for the twelfth meeting of the Conference of the Parties, an advance copy of GBO-4 has been made available from <https://www.cbd.int/gbo4advance/>. Further, two technical studies related to GBO-4 have been made available as Leadley et al (2014). Technical Series 78 - Progress towards the Aichi Biodiversity Targets: An assessment of biodiversity trends, policy scenarios and key actions. Secretariat of the Convention on Biological Diversity (previously available for peer-review as UNEP/CBD/SBSTTA/18/INF/8) and PBL Netherlands Environmental Assessment Agency (2014). Technical Series 79 - How sectors can contribute to sustainable use and conservation of biodiversity. Secretariat of the Convention on Biological Diversity (previously available for peer-review as UNEP/CBD/SBSTTA/18/INF/9).

⁴ For further information, refer to the full GBO-4 report (referenced in UNEP/CBD/COP/12/9).

⁵ See Leadley et al (2014), CBD Technical Series 78 (*op cit.*) and Tittensor D, et al (2014) A mid-term analysis of progress towards international biodiversity targets, *Science* (submitted).

could allow the assessment of other components in future (for Target 2, see also, section III, below). There is limited data for Target 20 on domestic expenditure and private sector flows. The greater use of the reporting framework under the Convention's strategy for resource mobilization is however expected to lead to improvements;

(f) Disaggregation of indicator data by gender and by socioeconomic status remains very limited. This is one of the limitations to progress on monitoring Target 14.

8. The use of indicators in the fifth national reports has not yet been systematically assessed. However, a first review shows 65 per cent of the countries that have submitted their fifth national reports as of 8 August 2014 have used indicators for assessing progress towards the Aichi Targets and/or implementation of their NBSAPs. A full analysis of the use of indicators in GBO-4 and the fifth national reports will be prepared, and this could be a useful input to the proposed Ad Hoc Technical Expert Group should the Conference of the Parties agree that it should be convened.

II. UPDATE ON CAPACITY-BUILDING ACTIVITIES AND THE DEVELOPMENT OF PRACTICAL INFORMATION ON THE APPLICATION OF THE INDICATORS

Capacity-building workshops

9. The Secretariat of the Convention on Biological Diversity, in collaboration with a range of partners, has undertaken a variety of capacity-building activities related to indicators. These include:

(a) A series of eight regional capacity development workshops related on the preparation of the fifth national report held from January 2013 to January 2014. Within each of these workshops, a specific session was devoted to the use of indicators for reporting and assessment;

(b) A regional workshop for Latin America on updating NBSAPS and a global workshop on reviewing progress and building capacity for the NBSAP revisions process both included capacity-building modules related to indicators;

(c) A series of seven workshops on traditional knowledge carried out between April 2013 and June 2014 included sessions on indicators relevant to Article 8(j) and related provisions;

(d) A series of regional workshops on ecosystem conservation and restoration carried out between 2013 and 2014 included capacity-building on the use of indicators for assessing progress towards Aichi Biodiversity Targets 5, 11 and 15.

10. The United Nations Environment Programme's World Conservation Monitoring Centre (UNEP-WCMC), as secretariat of the Biodiversity Indicators Partnership (BIP), has also organized several capacity-building activities related to indicators. Between 2012 and 2013 a total of six regional indicator capacity-building workshops, together with the UNEP Regional Offices, the CBD Secretariat, regional partners and host governments, were organized.⁶ The objectives for these workshops, which were targeted to government agencies, NGOs and academic institutes involved in NBSAP updating, were to increase skills and confidence in developing and using indicators as part of NBSAP updating and implementation, to improve understanding of the information needs to develop national targets and indicators within the framework of the Strategic Plan for Biodiversity 2011-2020, and to gain new ideas, inspiration and opportunities for NBSAP updating from the experience of other countries in the region.

Toolkits and online services

11. A progress report on the development of online information and toolkits was provided in the documents made available to the seventeenth meeting of the Subsidiary Body.⁷ Further work to complete the practical toolkit to facilitate monitoring of progress by Parties will proceed as soon as resources allow.

⁶ The reports of these workshops are available at <http://www.bipindicators.net/nationalindicatordevelopment/workshopsprojects> .

⁷ UNEP/CBD/SBSTTA/17/2 and UNEP/CBD/SBSTTA/17/INF/12.

12. To facilitate the regular review by the Conference of the Parties of progress in the implementation of the Strategic Plan for Biodiversity 2011-2020 and the achievement of the Aichi Biodiversity Targets, as envisaged in decision X/2, an online reporting facility has been developed. This tool has been developed in light of the ongoing efforts to further develop and enhance the clearing-house mechanism and draws on the functionality of the Biosafety Clearing-House. The system will also allow Parties to enter information related to their national indicators, policy support tools, and activities. The pilot-phase of the online reporting system⁸ has now been completed, and in preparation for the full operationalization of the system, Parties are being invited to confirm or nominate to the Secretariat the details of the person(s) who would be allowed to submit national information through this online reporting system.⁹

13. The technical report on the use of earth observation (including remote sensing) for monitoring biodiversity, which was available for review at the seventeenth meeting of the Subsidiary Body has now been published in the CBD Technical Series.¹⁰ The report maps available data and sensors to essential biodiversity variables (EBVs), indicators and the Aichi Biodiversity Targets.

14. The Secretariat has collaborated with UNEP-WCMC and the Secretariat of the Global Environment Facility to develop a project on “Mainstreaming biodiversity information into the heart of government decision-making”.¹¹ The project aims to ensure that biodiversity is taken into account in policy frameworks across government sectors by improving decision makers’ access to and use of biodiversity information and embedding biodiversity information within national decision-making processes.

III. INDICATORS USED IN SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT GOALS AND OTHER RELEVANT PROCESSES

15. In decision X/22, the Conference of the Parties encouraged Parties and all partners, institutions, organizations and processes concerned to consider the Strategic Plan for Biodiversity 2011-2020 and the Aichi Biodiversity Targets in developing the post-2015 United Nations development agenda and in the process of establishing sustainable development goals under the United Nations General Assembly. Moreover, in decision X/3 the Conference of the Parties requested the Executive Secretary to provide information about the indicator framework for the Strategic Plan for Biodiversity 2011-2020 and the Aichi Biodiversity Targets to assist in the process to establish the sustainable development goals agreed by the United Nations Conference on Sustainable Development. Further, in recommendation XVII/1, the Subsidiary Body on Scientific, Technical and Technological Advice noted that the Aichi Biodiversity Targets provide readily available elements for biodiversity-related goals, targets and indicators that could be integrated into the set of sustainable development goals currently under development.

16. Accordingly, as noted in the progress report on the process of integrating biodiversity into the post-2015 framework for sustainable development,¹² the Secretariat, with a view to promoting the integration of biodiversity in line with this mandate, as part of the United Nations Technical Support Team (TST), has contributed to the issues brief on biodiversity,¹³ and to the compendium of statistical notes¹⁴.

⁸ Information on the pilot phase was provided in UNEP/CBD/SBSTTA/17/INF/12

⁹ See notification SCBD/SAM/NR/LC/83832 (2014-107), dated 26 August 2014, on the nomination or confirmation of national report focal point and national authorized user(s) for the CBD On-Line Reporting System.

¹⁰ Secades, C., O'Connor, B., Brown, C. and Walpole, M. (2014). Earth Observation for Biodiversity Monitoring: A review of current approaches and future opportunities for tracking progress towards the Aichi Biodiversity Targets. Secretariat of the Convention on Biological Diversity, Montréal, Canada. Technical Series No. 72, 183 pages, available at: <http://www.cbd.int/doc/publications/cbd-ts-72-en.pdf>

¹¹ Further information will be presented on the margins of COP-12. The project identification form is available at: [http://www.thegef.org/gef/sites/thegef.org/files/gef_prj_docs/GEFProjectDocuments/Biodiversity/Global%20-%20\(5730\)%20-%20Mainstreaming%20Biodiversity%20Information%20into%20the%20He/03-25-14_PIF_and_PPG_Request_Document_revised.pdf](http://www.thegef.org/gef/sites/thegef.org/files/gef_prj_docs/GEFProjectDocuments/Biodiversity/Global%20-%20(5730)%20-%20Mainstreaming%20Biodiversity%20Information%20into%20the%20He/03-25-14_PIF_and_PPG_Request_Document_revised.pdf)

¹² UNEP/CBD/COP/12/15.

¹³ The Issues Brief on Biodiversity is available in six languages at: <https://chm.cbd.int/database/record?documentID=200547>

17. Also, as noted in the progress report, the “Proposal of the Open Working Group for Sustainable Development Goals”¹⁵ includes proposed goals on marine and terrestrial biodiversity, and also incorporates biodiversity into other goals such as those related to food and water security. Yet other goals are relevant to biodiversity, but the linkages have not been clearly elucidated. Thus, there is an important opportunity to identify potential indicators to facilitate the integration of biodiversity into broader socioeconomic and development policies, including indicators that relate biodiversity and ecosystem services to human well-being, and biodiversity-related indicators for sustainability (i.e. indicators of progress in the various dimensions of sustainable development that incorporate the use of, and impact on biodiversity). Work on indicators is expected to proceed at the technical level; both the United Nations System Task Team and the Leadership Council of the Sustainable Development Solutions Network have documents on indicators for sustainable development.¹⁶ In view of the need for measuring progress in the implementation of the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) the TST, including the Secretariat of the Convention on Biological Diversity, will pursue work on relevant indicators for the SDGs.

18. The Secretariat has also been collaborating with the United Nations Statistical Division in the ongoing development of the System of Environmental-Economic Accounting and, within this framework, on Experimental Ecosystem Accounting.¹⁷

IV. AD HOC TECHNICAL EXPERT GROUP ON INDICATORS FOR THE STRATEGIC PLAN FOR BIODIVERSITY 2011-2020

19. In recommendation XVII/1, the Subsidiary Body on Scientific, Technical and Technological Advice recommended that the Conference of the Parties request the Executive Secretary, subject to the availability of the necessary resources, to convene a meeting of the Ad Hoc Technical Expert Group on Indicators for the Strategic Plan for Biodiversity 2011-2020. The Subsidiary Body also requested the Executive Secretary to prepare draft terms of reference for the proposed group for consideration by the Conference of the Parties at its twelfth meeting. Accordingly, draft terms of reference are provided in the annex to this note. Further, in recommendation XVIII/8 the Subsidiary Body also requested the Executive Secretary to include among the elements of the terms of reference for a meeting of the Ad Hoc Technical Expert Group on Indicators the review of the headline indicators related to Aichi Biodiversity Target 3, based on inputs from the fifth national reports and the fourth edition of the *Global Biodiversity Outlook* as well as other relevant submissions and sources.

20. The terms of reference have been drafted taking into account the progress in the development of the global indicator framework, and the gaps identified, described in section I above; the need to further support countries in assessing progress at national level (see section II above), and the need and opportunity to enhance the linkages of biodiversity in the emerging post-2015 United Nations development agenda (see section III above).

¹⁴ Statistical Note 26 (Biodiversity) contained in the Compendium of statistical notes for the Open Working Group on Sustainable Development Goals prepared by UN Statistics Division, in collaboration with the Friends of the Chair group on broader measures of progress (March 2014) <http://sustainabledevelopment.un.org/content/documents/3647Compendium%20of%20statistical%20notes.pdf>

¹⁵ Available online at: <http://sustainabledevelopment.un.org/focussdgs.html>

¹⁶ UN TST (2014) *Statistics and Indicators for the Post-2015 Development Agenda*, available at http://www.un.org/en/development/desa/policy/untaskteam_undf/UNTT_MonitoringReport_WEB.pdf and SDSN (2014) *Indicators and a monitoring framework for Sustainable Development Goals: Launching a data revolution for the SDGs* available at <http://unsdsn.org/resources/publications/indicators/>

¹⁷ see <http://unstats.un.org/unsd/envaccounting/default.asp>

*Annex***TERMS OF REFERENCE FOR A MEETING OF THE AD HOC TECHNICAL EXPERT GROUP ON INDICATORS FOR THE STRATEGIC PLAN FOR BIODIVERSITY 2011-2020**

1. The terms of reference for the meeting of the Ad Hoc Technical Expert Group on Indicators for the Strategic Plan for Biodiversity 2011-2020 are:
 - (a) Review the use of indicators to date in monitoring progress in the implementation of the Strategic Plan for Biodiversity 2011-2020 and towards the achievement of the Aichi Biodiversity Targets, in light of their use in the fourth edition of the *Global Biodiversity Outlook* and the fifth national reports;
 - (b) Identify potential additional indicators to monitor progress towards those Aichi Biodiversity Targets that are currently not well addressed, including Aichi Biodiversity Target 3, by the suite of indicators listed in decision XI/3;
 - (c) Identify ways and means of improving the use of biodiversity-related indicators by Parties (i) to monitor progress in the implementation of the Strategic Plan for Biodiversity 2011-2020 and towards the achievement of the Aichi Biodiversity Targets, and (ii) to inform decision-making, at all levels, with a view of enhancing implementation of the Strategic Plan, including through capacity-building activities;
 - (d) Identify potential indicators to facilitate the integration of biodiversity into broader socioeconomic and development policies, including indicators that relate biodiversity and ecosystem services to human well-being, and biodiversity-related indicators for sustainability (i.e. indicators of progress in the various dimensions of sustainable development that incorporate the use of, and impact on biodiversity).
 2. The work of the Ad Hoc Technical Expert will be informed by background information prepared by the Executive Secretary in collaboration with the members of the Biodiversity Indicators Partnership and other partners. This will include analyses of the use of indicators in the fourth edition of the *Global Biodiversity Outlook* and the fifth national reports, a compilation of the use of biodiversity-related indicators in other international processes related to sustainable development and a study on the use of biodiversity-related indicators in linking relevant activities in research, monitoring, and implementation. The work of the Ad Hoc Technical Expert will also draw upon relevant work of the Biodiversity Indicators Partnership and its member organizations, the Group on Earth Observation Biodiversity Observation Network (GEO-BON), the Intergovernmental Science-Policy Platform on Biodiversity and Ecosystem Services, the Technical Support Team for the post-2015 United Nations development agenda and the sustainable development goals, the United Nations Statistics Division, the Indicators Working Group of the International Indigenous Forum for Biodiversity, and other partners.
 3. The procedures for Ad Hoc Technical Expert Groups outlined in the consolidated *modus operandi* of the Subsidiary Body on Scientific, Technical and Technological Advice (decision VIII/10, annex III), will be followed. It is envisaged that there will be one physical meeting of the Ad Hoc Technical Expert Group in 2015, with additional interactions among the members in preparation to and in follow-up of the physical meeting. The report of the Ad Hoc Technical Expert Group will be peer-reviewed prior to its finalization by the members of the Ad Hoc Technical Expert Group.
 4. The final report of the Ad Hoc Technical Expert Group will be made available to the Subsidiary Body on Scientific, Technical and Technological Advice for its consideration prior to the thirteenth meeting of the Conference of the Parties.
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