

Template for the Advanced Comments on Draft Documents on Planning, Reporting and Review Mechanisms for the Resumed Session of the Third Meeting of the Subsidiary Body on Implementation

TEMPLATE FOR COMMENTS: Revised guidance and template for the seventh and eighth reports contained in annex to CBD/SBI/3/11/ADD1/AMEND1

Advanced comments on the draft documents on Planning, Reporting and Review Mechanisms for the Resumed Session of the Third Meeting of the Subsidiary Body on Implementation	
Scope of this template for comments	Revised guidance and template for the seventh and eighth national reports, contained in annex to the document CBD/SBI/3/11/ADD1/AMEND1 which includes a draft of Annex C to CBD/SBI/3/CRP.5. This template aims to collect feedback on that Annex.
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Comments	
<p>Please provide any general comments on the structure of the draft template for the seventh and eighth national reports, as well as the introduction to the template.</p> <p><i>The following comments have been prepared by a number of civil society organizations working on accountability and the implementation mechanism in the context of the Global Biodiversity Framework. This submission is supported by Birdlife International, ClientEarth, Friends of the Earth Europe, RSPB, WWF.</i></p> <p><i>We would like to show our general support for the proposed template structure, since we believe that the standardization of national reports (para. 8) and the use of headline indicators in all upcoming national reports (para. 11) will significantly strengthen the national reporting process of Art 26 of the CBD. Furthermore, the reference to the need for national reports to be developed based on an open and participatory process involving all relevant stakeholders (para. 5), is critically important.</i></p>	

Yet, there are some **risks** that would need to be addressed proactively in order to reap the full benefits of a standardized national reporting process:

- Regarding the **timing for the submission of upcoming national reports**, the deadlines for submitting the 7th and 8th national reports must be discussed by Parties, so that there is certainty and coordination. In our view, the 7th national reports should be submitted by 2024, or by June 2025 at the latest, and the 8th national reports by 2028, or by June 2029 at the latest (para 1). A similar problem relates to the **timing of the global biodiversity stocktake**, since its dates must also be discussed by Parties, while taking into account both the need for timely implementation and the timing of the rest of the components of the mechanism. In our view, this global stocktaking should not happen in 2025 and 2030 as suggested in the document, but rather in 2024 or 2025 for the first one, and then 2028 or 2029 for the second one (para. 10 b).
- With a strong emphasis on headline indicators being placed in the reporting template, the Secretariat and the Parties need to make sure that the headline indicators being chosen are functional (in the sense that the data related to them is available and operational) as soon as the GBF is adopted (at CoP15). If indicators are still in development and unlikely to be operational by the 7th national report, “placeholder” measures should be suggested, such as the use of other already available indicators, namely component, complementary or national indicators, in order to avoid significant data gaps that would compromise the entire implementation process and continuity.
- Regarding the legitimacy, scientific accuracy and rigor of the data included in national reports, the template should ensure that Parties share (in an Annex) the methodologies and scientific processes they have used to evaluate it.

Furthermore, there are some **missing elements** from the template, which, if present, would - in our view - significantly strengthen the template. These are:

- A stronger emphasis on the inclusion of component/ national indicators in national reporting, as these are critical elements for tracking national progress on implementation. Components/national indicators must clearly translate across to each element of the goals and targets, and where possible be standardized and comparable (para.3 & 11). We have also made concrete suggestions on their inclusion in our comment on Section V.
- An assessment of progress towards the 2030 milestones of the GBF, in addition to assessing progress towards the 2050 goals and 2030 action targets (para. 7). With this in mind, we therefore suggest adding an additional section after Section III of the template, focusing on assessing progress towards 2030 milestones.
- A soft “review”, or examination of the content of Parties’ submitted national reports by SBSTTA, or the Secretariat itself, to ensure that the latter have the option to request the Party to submit a corrected version of the national report, in case it is incomplete, unclear, or some of its segments are poorly backed. This is in line with the objective of using a Template and/or a Guidance document for the drafting and submission of national reports, namely ensuring their comparability and their aggregation for the

purposes of global assessments (in the form of a global biodiversity stocktake, or any other equivalent global review mechanism adopted during CoP15). (para. 13)

*Lastly, two **issues**, namely financial reporting and stakeholder involvement, are mentioned but are **not sufficiently developed**.*

- *With regards to the former, the document suggests that the 7th and 8th national reports should include financial reporting (para. 4), but this does not appear on the draft template. We therefore suggest adding an additional section to the template, focusing on assessing the means of implementation deployed to implement the GBF. This section should cover resource mobilization, but also capacity-building, technical assistance and technological cooperation. The relationship between financial reporting and the national biodiversity finance plans should also be duly explained, so that the two documents inform each other.*
- *In relation to stakeholder participation, the document makes reference to their involvement in the preparation of national reports, at the discretion of the Parties (para. 5 and Section II). We believe that public consultation should not occur at the discretion of the Parties, but should rather be an essential part (minimum content) of the national reports that is realized through a dedicated, procedurally independent and equitable process that includes the obligation for Parties to at least duly consider the stakeholders' opinions expressed in order to ensure their full and effective participation, with a particular focus on the participation of IPLCs and women. In addition to that, and especially given the lack of a comprehensive country-by-country review instrument, public participation of the rights- and stakeholders listed in paragraph 5 of the Annex should follow one, or both, of the following forms (which we include here as indicative options for Parties):*
 - *Consultation of stakeholders including NGOs and civil society in general and rights-holders during the development of Party-led national reports, in order to enhance the scientific backing of the process (and avoid making it a highly politicized exercise);*
 - *Supplements to the national reports (either in the form of Annexes, or through separate documents) by thematic reports from different sources, such as IPLCs' groups, environmental Civil Society Organizations, UN Special Rapporteurs, etc;*

In addition to the aforementioned options, annual or bi-annual submission of "headline indicators reports" should be provided by the relevant entities that had led to their development, coordinated by the Secretariat. It is key that parties monitor and report on the establishment or strengthening of effective multi-stakeholder and multi-sectoral processes on biodiversity as means of implementing a whole of society (namely, one of the enabling conditions for the implementation of the GBF, listed in Chapter I. of the First Draft) and rights-based approach, including in the monitoring framework, in the gender plan of action, and through harmonized guidance to support NBSAPs and national reporting processes. Additional benefits of strengthening stakeholders' involvement through inclusive, fair and independent processes, are that their contributions may serve in filling significant gaps on biodiversity status and trends and verifying data provided by Parties themselves.

Please use the table below to provide any specific comments on the template:

Section	Comment
I	<p>Please include comments or specific suggestions for Section I. Executive summary of the seventh and eighth national reports.</p> <p><i>The segment on “changes observed in status and trends of biodiversity” has significant space for improvements, such as the following:</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● <i>Beyond changes related to actions taken, it should also include changes due to Parties’ omissions to act, despite prior identification of an area of (future) concern.</i> ● <i>In addition to that, it should undertake a comparison of current status with that established in the previous national report.</i> ● <i>Lastly, the segment should categorize positive and negative biodiversity trends on the basis of their gravity, highlighting the most alarming ones (incl. reference to habitats and species on the brink of extinction).</i> <p><i>The “Summary of progress towards the 2050 Goals and 2030 Action Targets” should also make reference to Parties’ progress towards the 2030 Milestones.</i></p> <p><i>For the purposes of the 7th National Report, an additional sub-section should be added here, where Parties should provide a summary of the implementation challenges they faced during the 2011-2020 period (and with which Aichi Targets they were associated), and explain how they are planning to remediate them in the post-2020 period. For the 8th National Report there should be a similar sub-section related to the post-2020 Global Biodiversity framework with its goals and targets.</i></p> <p><i>The suggested word count of 100-300 words for the segment on ambition gaps, key challenges encountered in implementation and further steps seems far too limited, even for the provision of a brief overview of the issues covered under this segment. On top of the aforementioned issues, implementation gaps should also be mentioned (and properly reported) under this section.</i></p>
II	<p>Please include comments or specific suggestions for Section II. Brief overview of the process of preparation of the report</p> <p><i>The suggested word count seems inadequate. To the (indicative) list of rights- and stakeholders to be consulted, academic institutions and environmental Civil Society Organizations should be explicitly mentioned, given the resources and expertise they have been deploying over the years in biodiversity monitoring that can potentially fill significant gaps to Party-led reports and even improve the methodologies adopted.</i></p> <p><i>The plan for further use of national reports should go beyond biodiversity planning and, in this segment, Parties should rather indicate how their national reports inform (non-)environmental sectoral and cross-sectoral policies, from development and poverty alleviation strategies and accounting systems, to Nationally Determined Contributions and progress reports for other Multilateral Environmental Agreements, when relevant.</i></p>

	<i>In addition to reporting on the inclusiveness of the reporting process, we strongly suggest to add a point in this section that requires parties, and invites stakeholders, to report on the respect of human rights in the process and to state whether any breaches of human rights obligations in the course of the implementation of the actions contained in their NBSAP have been reported, and, if so, how they have been remedied.</i>
III	Please include comments or specific suggestions for Section III. Status of the updated or revised NBSAP in the light of the post-2020 global biodiversity framework (This section is for the seventh national report only)
IV	Please include comments or specific suggestions for Section IV. Assessment of progress towards the 2050 goals of the post-2020 global biodiversity framework <i>Another section should be added after Section IV, to assess progress towards the 2030 milestones of the GBF.</i>
V	Please include comments or specific suggestions for Section V. Progress towards the 2030 action targets <i>The lower bounds of the word counts suggested for elements within this section are insufficient to provide the level of detail required to assess actions, progress, effectiveness, successes and key challenges (including examples and outcomes) at the national level. Details which are important in reviewing progress and guiding subsequent actions at the national and global level. Minimum word counts should be at least 200 words.</i> <i>Regarding the content of this section, the guidance should make clear that the actions included by the Party in the first (“main actions to implement national ambition/target”) and fourth (contributions of national target implementation to the 2030 Action Targets) of the segments to be filled, should correspond to all components of each of the 2030 Action Target, meaning that no component of the 2030 Action Targets should remain without an action associated with it. Otherwise, the National Report should be deemed incomplete.</i> <i>Importantly, in the second to last box on progress, progress should not only be explained in relation to the global targets (and the countries’ fair share of it), but also to the national targets. And it should indicate the value of the national target so the gap / distance to the target can be estimated.</i> <i>Furthermore, the final segment (on “other” indicators) should not be filled at the discretion of the Parties, but should rather be filled by all Parties, since -for many of the 2030 Targets- Headline Indicators of the Monitoring Framework do not address all of their components exhaustively. Such a consideration would be particularly relevant if –as is currently being discussed- the number of Headline Indicators is to be reduced.</i> <i>This Section could be further improved by an inclusion of a segment where Parties could report on their progress on implementing the Gender Plan for Action and the</i>

	<p><i>application of a rights-based, multi-stakeholder and whole-of-society approach throughout the implementation of the GBF.</i></p>
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	<p><i>Lastly, another section should be added after Section V, to assess the means of implementation deployed to implement the GBF.</i></p>
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