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SUBSIDIARY BODY ON SCIENTIFIC, TECHNICAL AND TECHNOLOGICAL ADVICE

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Item 5 of the provisional agenda*

WAYS AND MEANS TO IMPROVE THE EFFECTIVENESS OF THE SUBSIDIARY BODY ON SCIENTIFIC, TECHNICAL AND TECHNOLOGICAL ADVICE

Note by the Executive Secretary

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

In paragraph 21 of decision VIII/10, the Conference of the Parties set out the terms of reference for focal points to the Subsidiary Body on Scientific, Technical and Technological Advice. The same decision, as well as decision X/12, outlines ways and means to improve the effectiveness of SBSTTA through a series of requests to the Executive Secretary and SBSTTA, as well as suggested activities for Parties and other Governments and the Bureau of SBSTTA.

Implementation of these decisions has already yielded improvements in the extent to which SBSTTA is a participatory process engaging relevant stakeholders in preparations, discussions, and the dissemination of results. However, Parties indicated, through decision X/12, that more can be done to improve the dissemination of scientific and technical knowledge and to provide enhanced support to SBSTTA focal points. As such, there is scope for the establishment of further partnerships with key stakeholder groups such as the Consortium of Scientific Partners and the Canadian University Partnership, and the development of training for SBSTTA focal points and meeting participants. There is also further need for the translation of scientific and technical information into formats and languages that reach a broader audience.

This document is relevant for the achievement of target 19 of the Strategic Plan for Biodiversity 2011-2020 (“By 2020, knowledge, the science base and technologies relating to biodiversity, its values, functioning, status and trends, and the consequences of its loss, are improved, widely shared and transferred, and applied”). In particular, by improving the effectiveness of SBSTTA, it will be possible both to produce improved scientific information of relevance to the programmes of work and cross-cutting issues as well as enhance the dissemination of scientific information through the greater involvement of stakeholders in the preparation, convening and follow-up to SBSTTA. In addition, capacity-building activities proposed in the document can be expected to support the implementation of Target 19 at the national level. The further defining of the relationship between SBSTTA and the Intergovernmental Science-Policy Platform on Biodiversity and Ecosystem Services will also help define the specific contribution of SBSTTA to the achievement of target 19.

* UNEP/CBD/SBSTTA/15/1.

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SUGGESTED RECOMMENDATIONS

The following suggested recommendations are made bearing in mind the adoption of the Strategic Plan for Biodiversity 2011-2020 and the Aichi Biodiversity Targets as well as the discussions for the establishment of an Intergovernmental Science-policy Platform on Biodiversity and Ecosystem Services (IPBES).¹

The Subsidiary Body on Scientific, Technical and Technological Advice may wish to:

1. *Request* the Executive Secretary, in collaboration with the relevant academic and scientific institutions, to prepare scientific reports and papers in response to decision VIII/10, annex III, appendix B, paragraph 1 (ii);
2. *Request* the Executive Secretary and encourage host countries, host institutions and donors, when preparing meetings of Ad Hoc Technical Expert Groups on particularly complex and wide ranging issues, to consider holding such meetings in conjunction with a larger expert meeting;
3. *Recommend* that the Conference of the Parties:
 - (a) *Notes* that to improve its effectiveness, SBSTTA should continue to implement decision X/12 and *requests* SBSTTA to report on such implementation to future meetings of the Conference of the Parties;
 - (b) *Recognizes* the potential role of regional and or subregional centres for scientific knowledge management related to the Convention on Biological Diversity;
 - (c) *Requests* Parties, other Governments, and relevant organizations to provide additional resources for the translation of scientific and technical documents, including CBD Technical Series and executive summaries of information documents prepared for meetings of the Subsidiary Body on Scientific, Technical and Technological Advice;
 - (d) *Invites* Parties and relevant organizations such as the Consortium of Scientific Partners to facilitate side events and roundtables on new and emerging issues so as to provide scientific and technical evidence on such matters for consideration by SBSTTA focal points at the meetings of the Subsidiary Body at which such issues will be considered;
 - (e) *Further invites* Parties and relevant organizations such as the Consortium of Scientific Partners to support the elaboration of the reference manual for guidance to SBSTTA focal points, including translation into United Nations official languages;
 - (f) *Requests* the Executive Secretary, subject to the availability of resources, to:
 - (i) Make available web-based tools and training in its use to focal points of the Subsidiary Body on Scientific, Technical and Technological Advice and interested focal points in order to facilitate regional consultations;
 - (ii) Develop training programmes for focal points to the Subsidiary Body on Scientific, Technical and Technological Advice based on the assessment of needs as compiled by the Executive Secretary through notification 2011-104 and the capacity needs assessment of the Global Strategy for Plant Conservation Liaison Group;
 - (iii) Prepare background documents, whenever feasible, to accompany notifications to SBSTTA focal points requesting input and information.

¹ <http://ipbes.net/en/index.asp>

I. INTRODUCTION

1. The present note has been prepared in order to provide a report and present proposals for further ways and means to support implementation of decisions by the Conference of the Parties on ways and means to improve the effectiveness of the Subsidiary Body on Scientific, Technical and Technological Advice (SBSTTA), in particular, decisions VIII/10 and X/12. The document also provides proposals on actions to enhance the implementation of the actions called for by Parties in the above decisions. This note includes relevant findings from the survey for SBSTTA focal points on training and capacity building needs (notification 2011-104). The full results of this survey are available at <http://www.cbd.int/doc/?meeting=SBSTTA-15>. This note also incorporates comments received from the SBSTTA Bureau at a face-to-face meeting held in Montreal on 5-6 June 2011. An earlier draft of this note was posted for review from 23 June to 10 July 2011 in accordance with notification 2011-123, and the comments received have been incorporated as appropriate.

2. This document reviews progress in implementation of the ways and means of improving the quality of the scientific, technical and technological advice of the SBSTTA recommended by the Conference of the Parties in annex III to decision VIII/10 (section II). It further presents proposals on ways to implement the requests and guidance contained in decision X/12 on ways and means to improve the effectiveness of SBSTTA and decision X/40 C, paragraph 3, which calls on Parties to make efforts to include indigenous and local-community organizations who are mandated by their community to represent them in processes under the Convention and to be provided with opportunities to effectively participate in the Convention processes (section III).

II. REVIEW OF PROGRESS IN THE IMPLEMENTATION OF WAYS AND MEANS OF IMPROVING THE QUALITY OF THE SCIENTIFIC, TECHNICAL AND TECHNOLOGICAL ADVICE OF SBSTTA

3. Additional progress on the implementation of the relevant elements of decision VIII/10, annex III, appendix B, has been achieved since the fourteenth meeting of SBSTTA held in Nairobi, from 10 to 21 May 2010. A summary of this progress is outlined in table 1 below. The actions reported below will continue to be implemented where relevant and will support the further actions proposed in section III.

Table 1: Progress in the implementation of decision VIII/10, annex III, appendix B

<i>Element from decision VIII/10, annex III, appendix B</i>	<i>Implementation activity</i>
Providing material about the work of the Subsidiary Body in a format that is accessible and relevant to the scientific and technical community	<p>Technical Series Nos. 47 to 59, published from 2010 to 2011 and accessible at https://www.cbd.int/ts/</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - 2 are available in English, French and Spanish - 1 is available in English, French, Spanish and Japanese <p>Of the new Technical Series produced since SBSTTA 14:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Four are based on expert workshops and symposiums - One was written in collaboration with another multilateral environmental

<i>Element from decision VIII/10, annex III, appendix B</i>	<i>Implementation activity</i>
	<p>agreement</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - the remainder were written in partnership with other partners such as International Union for the Conservation of Nature, the Biodiversity Indicator Partnership and the United Nations University-IAS <p>Various guides, brochures, learning modules, toolkits and periodic newsletters have been published based on scientific work developed for and resulting from SBSTTA background work and suggested recommendations</p>
Actively disseminating the results of the work of the Subsidiary Body through scientific literature, both as reporting items and scientific papers, as reviewed and approved by the Conference of the Parties	A proposal is before SBSTTA on a partnership between the CBD Secretariat, SBSTTA focal points and the Canadian Universities Partnership with the CBD (see the annex)
Participating in, and contributing to, the scientific and technical components of other biodiversity-related processes	<p>The CBD Secretariat is a member of the Biodiversity Liaison Group (BLG) and contributes scientific and technical input when requested, including through participation in the Ramsar Scientific and Technical Review Panel. The reports of the BLG are available at: http://www.cbd.int/cooperation/related-conventions/blg.shtml</p> <p>The CBD Secretariat is engaging in discussions on the establishment of liaison officers in Bonn and Geneva to enhance links with the other biodiversity-related and Rio conventions</p> <p>The CBD Secretariat has participated in relevant scientific and technical meetings of the UNGA, UNCCD, UNFCCC, UNCSD, UNFF, UN-Water, IPBES, TEEB, Committee on Fisheries, OECD, GEF-STAP, Diversitas, BioNet and World Ocean Council</p>
Using other bodies as a bridge between the Subsidiary Body and the scientific and technical community in relation to work programmes	The SBSTTA Bureau has made a commitment to, whenever feasible, ensure that one member of the Bureau attends each scientific meeting convened by the Secretariat in order to strengthen links with the scientific community
Engaging the scientific community in scientific assessments	The Secretariat has established a scientific peer-review process for SBSTTA documents At SBSTTA 14 this process yielded peer-reviews as follows:

<i>Element from decision VIII/10, annex III, appendix B</i>	<i>Implementation activity</i>
	<p>30 from United Nations organizations 38 from Intergovernmental organizations 138 from non-governmental organizations 24 from indigenous and local communities 9 from business 7 from universities and scientific organizations</p> <p>Invitation for prominent members of the scientific community to meet with the SBSTTA Bureau (e.g. Thomas Lovejoy)</p> <p>Presentation of relevant scientific contributions as information documents to meetings of SBSTTA</p>
<p>Raising delegates' awareness about, and encouraging informal debate on, key issues through the provision of scientific and technical publications, keynote speakers, poster sessions, roundtable debates and other side-events during meetings of the Subsidiary Body</p>	<p>Technical Series published; poster sessions and keynote presentations at every SBSTTA meeting; technical training workshops on the margins of COP and SBSTTA meetings (including the Linnaeus Lectures); issue papers published on programmes of work and cross cutting issues</p> <p>At the fourteenth meeting of SBSTTA, 58 posters were submitted on the theme of "Biodiversity and Climate Change: Achieving the 2020 Targets" (published as Technical Series No. 51)</p>
<p>Identifying other opportunities to prepare delegates, particularly those with limited experience, for the discussions on scientific and technical matters</p>	<p>Training sessions continue to be organized by the Consortium of Scientific Partners²</p> <p>E-modules, such as those produced for the programme of work on protected areas are also made available to SBSTTA delegates ahead of SBSTTA meetings</p>
<p>Dedicating sufficient time to the consideration of results of scientific and technical assessments</p>	<p>The number of agenda items has been reduced and time has been allocated for discussions of each agenda item in working groups</p>

4. The ongoing work of the Consortium of Scientific Partners on Biodiversity and the Canadian University Partnership has also contributed to the dissemination of scientific and technical information

² The Consortium of Scientific Partners was established on 27 March 2006 through a Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) between the CBD and the Royal Botanic Gardens, Kew, the Smithsonian National Museum of Natural History, the Muséum National d'Histoire Naturelle de France, the Royal Belgian Institute of Natural Sciences, the National Commission for Wildlife Conservation and Development of the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia, and the German Federal Agency for Nature Conservation. The purpose of the MoU is to leverage the expertise and experience of these institutions in order to implement education and training activities to support developing countries that are building scientific, technical and policy skills in the area of biodiversity. The Consortium now includes 18 partners. Additional information is available at: <http://www.cbd.int/csp/>.

considered and produced by SBSTTA, including through the convening of training workshops at the margins of meetings of SBSTTA (48 participants) and Conference of the Parties although there may be scope to further strengthen this contribution through targeted work plans and partnerships with members of these consortia.

5. Other actions to promote the further implementation of the above activities could include the facilitation of informal roundtables on selected issues to be convened at the margins of relevant meetings. Finally, with regards to improving awareness of new and emerging issues, the Secretariat could invite and facilitate side-events on new and emerging issues at a SBSTTA meeting held prior to the meeting at which such issues will be considered.

III. PROGRESS AND PROPOSALS ON THE IMPLEMENTATION OF RELEVANT RECOMMENDATIONS FROM THE TENTH MEETING OF THE CONFERENCE OF THE PARTIES

6. At the tenth meeting of the Conference of the Parties held from 18 to 29 October, 2010, in Nagoya, Japan, Parties adopted decision X/12 on improving the effectiveness of SBSTTA. This decision contains specific reference to improving the following activities identified in the terms of reference of SBSTTA focal points:

(a) Developing linkages and facilitating information exchange between the SBSTTA and relevant regional and national agencies and experts;

(b) Responding to requests for input from the Conference of the Parties and the Secretariat related to scientific, technical and technological issues;

(c) Communicating and collaborating with SBSTTA focal points for to improve the effectiveness of the Subsidiary Body and to facilitate implementation of the Convention;

(d) Collaborating with other national-level focal points for the Convention on Biological Diversity and focal points from other biodiversity-related conventions to facilitate implementation of the Convention at the national level.

7. Progress in the implementation of the relevant elements of decision X/12 has already been achieved. Further suggestions for activities are proposed in table 2 below for the consideration of SBSTTA at its fifteenth meeting.

Table 2: Report on progress and suggestions for further actions in response to decision X/12

<i>Element from decision X/12</i>	<i>Progress</i>	<i>Suggestions for further activities</i>
Focus the work of SBSTTA, in particular, on the scientific and technical aspects of the Strategic Plan for Biodiversity 2011-2020 and the multi-year programme of work	In each pre-session document prepared for SBSTTA-15 a list of relevant elements within the Strategic Plan is included	Continue to include, in each pre-session document prepared for SBSTTA, a list of relevant elements of the Strategic Plan
Organize training workshops for national focal points for the Subsidiary Body based on an assessment of their training needs, so as to assist Parties in implementing the three objectives of the Convention	A survey was prepared and disseminated to SBSTTA focal points to assess capacity building and training needs (notification 2011-104) 26 responses to the survey were received	Based on the results of the survey, training on the following topics is suggested (in order of preference as identified by SBSTTA focal points): - Strategic Plan for Biodiversity 2011-2020;

<i>Element from decision X/12</i>	<i>Progress</i>	<i>Suggestions for further activities</i>
		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Ecosystem restoration; - Global Strategy for Plant Conservation; - New and emerging issues; - Sustainable use of biodiversity; - Global Taxonomy Initiative; - Incentive measures; - Invasive alien species; - Biodiversity and climate change; - GBO-4: - Inland water biodiversity; - Island biodiversity; - Marine and coastal biodiversity; - Arctic biodiversity.
<p>Organize and coordinate online consultations to facilitate regional consultation on matters to be discussed at upcoming meetings</p>	<p>The Secretariat has developed real time conferencing software for use by the Biosafety Protocol to share information and coordinate and report online meetings</p>	<p>Training can be provided to SBSTTA Bureau members and other interested focal points to allow for the convening of regional consultations using the real time conferencing software</p> <p>Proposals on other options for information sharing could also be developed (web-based bulletin boards, email lists, etc) based on the prominence of email and web-based communication as the most important tools for communication used by SBSTTA focal points</p> <p>Statistics on the use of web-based tools provided will be presented to a future meeting of SBSTTA</p> <p>Explore options for the role of regional and/or subregional centres for scientific knowledge management related to the CBD</p>
<p>Prepare a reference manual to serve as guidance for SBSTTA focal points, Bureau members, and delegates, including: a</p>	<p>An outline for a practical online reference manual (outlined below) is proposed for the consideration of SBSTTA at its</p>	<p>Upon finalization, the reference manual will be made available through the clearing-house</p>

<i>Element from decision X/12</i>	<i>Progress</i>	<i>Suggestions for further activities</i>
<p>compilation of existing documents, an updated <i>modus operandi</i> (including the procedure for the identification of new and emerging issues³), functions of the focal points and Bureau members, peer-review process for preparation of working documents, process of meetings and products, etc.</p>	<p>sixteenth meeting</p>	<p>mechanism</p> <p>There will be a need to translate the reference manual into all United Nations languages (subject to the availability of financial resources)</p>
<p>Convene joint meetings between the SBSTTA Bureau and the bureaus of the subsidiary bodies of the Rio conventions as well as with relevant biodiversity-related conventions meetings to promote synergies and collaboration as per the relevant decisions of the Rio conventions;⁴</p>	<p>Invitations have been extended to the Bureaus of the Rio conventions however due to different roles and responsibilities such invitations have not been accepted</p> <p>For the other conventions, the Chairs of the Scientific Advisory Bodies of the Biodiversity Related Conventions (CSAB) can serve as a coordination mechanism</p>	<p>Continue to explore options for closer collaboration between the relevant bureaus among the biodiversity related conventions through the BLG and CSAB, including such collaboration in budgets</p> <p>The Secretariat can provide information notes on relevant items on the agenda of the CBD SBSTTA to the chair of the Bureaus of the Rio conventions Subsidiary Bodies and attend meetings when feasible</p>
<p>Streamline the texts of suggested draft recommendations for submission to the Subsidiary Body and make these recommendations as short as possible so that the actions required are clear</p>	<p>Draft recommendations have been kept as short as possible and Parties and scientists participating in the peer-review process have been requested to review such recommendations to ensure that actions are clear</p> <p>In some cases, instead of draft recommendations, conclusions are presented for the consideration of SBSTTA and development of recommendations after scientific discussion ahead of the formulation of suggested recommendations</p>	<p>Maintain through the CBD website a table with an updated list of current valid COP mandates to SBSTTA and links to relevant sections of the website of the Convention on Biological Diversity</p> <p>Circulate such an updated list to the SBSTTA Bureau prior to each meeting for its consideration and guidance</p>

³ See decision IX/29, section II.

⁴ UNFCCC decision 13/CP.8, paragraph 2; UNCCD decision 7/COP.5, paragraph 5 and decision 15/COP.6, annex 2.

<i>Element from decision X/12</i>	<i>Progress</i>	<i>Suggestions for further activities</i>
<p>Make available documents, such as Technical Series, newsletters and other information documents of the CBD, and where possible, make available executive summaries for information documents introduced under items on the agenda for meetings of SBSTTA, as early as possible, in all United Nations languages</p>	<p>The Executive Secretary is planning to produce executive summaries of information documents in all United Nations languages</p> <p>A total of six Technical Series publications are now available in at least one language other than English</p> <p>One additional Technical Series publication (TS 53) includes an executive summary translated into all United Nations languages as well as Japanese</p> <p>Additional tools were proposed through a survey for SBSTTA focal points to assess needs (notification 2011-104)</p>	<p>Provide funding for the translation and dissemination of additional Technical Series and explore options for including future Technical Series Executive Summaries in all United Nations languages</p> <p>Provide a report, for each meeting of SBSTTA, of additional research needs identified through focal points</p> <p>Prepare background documents, whenever feasible, to accompany notifications to SBSTTA focal points requesting input and information</p>
<p>Prepare a reference manual to serve as guidance for SBSTTA focal points, Bureau members, and delegates, including: a compilation of existing documents, an updated <i>modus operandi</i> (including the procedure for the identification of new and emerging issues), functions of the focal points and Bureau members, peer-review process for preparation of working documents, process of meetings and products, etc.</p>	<p>An outline for a practical online reference manual (outlined below) is proposed for the consideration of SBSTTA at its sixteenth meeting</p>	<p>Upon finalization, the reference manual will be made available through the clearing-house mechanism</p> <p>There will be a need to translate the reference manual into all United Nations languages (subject to the availability of financial resources)</p> <p>As far as possible, when an ad hoc technical expert group (AHTEG) is to be established on complex issues, the possibility of having it back to back with any other expert meeting should be explored, for the purpose of achieving better results and cost-effectiveness.</p>

8. In order to facilitate the improved functioning of SBSTTA, an online reference manual can be prepared by the Secretariat of the Convention on Biological Diversity in consultation with the SBSTTA Bureau for the consideration of SBSTTA at its sixteenth meeting. This reference manual will include both decision text as well as practical advice on fulfilling the roles and responsibilities mandated by the Conference of the Parties. The reference manual will be made available online through the clearing-house mechanism and may be organized along the following headings:

- (a) *Modus operandi*
 - (i) Mandate from the Conference of the Parties, including terms of reference for focal points
 - (ii) Link to Working Group on Review of Implementation (WGRI)
 - (iii) Link to IPBES and the scientific bodies of other multilateral environmental agreements.
- (b) SBSTTA focal points: Roles and responsibilities of focal points
- (c) Role of the Bureaus:
 - (i) Structure, composition and responsibilities of the Bureau of the Conference of the Parties
 - (ii) Structure, composition and responsibilities of the SBSTTA Bureau
- (d) Peer-review process: timeline for scientific peer-review and peer-review by Parties
- (e) Process of meetings
 - (i) Nomination process
 - (ii) Process for setting agendas
 - (iii) SBSTTA working documents and evolution during SBSTTA meetings
 - (iv) Procedure for the identification of new and emerging issues
 - (v) Side-events and poster sessions
- (f) Additional resources
 - (i) Links to COP decisions on the role and functions of SBSTTA
 - (ii) Online tools available for SBSTTA focal points

9. In addition to the above decision, the tenth meeting of the Conference of the Parties adopted decision X/11, in paragraph 4 of which it requested the Executive Secretary, in collaboration with the Bureau of SBSTTA, to consider, once the arrangements and modalities for the intergovernmental platform on biodiversity and ecosystem services are decided, how the Convention could make full and effective use of the platform, seeking complementarity and avoiding duplication between the work of the Convention, in particular SBSTTA, and the proposed platform, and to report thereon to a meeting of SBSTTA before the eleventh meeting of the Conference of the Parties. The first plenary meeting of the Intergovernmental Platform on Biodiversity and Ecosystem Services is scheduled to be held in Nairobi from 3 to 7 October 2011. The report of that meeting will be made available as an information note, which SBSTTA may wish to consider.

Annex

**PROPOSED PARTNERSHIP BETWEEN THE CANADIAN UNIVERSITY PARTNERSHIP,
THE SECRETARIAT OF THE CONVENTION ON BIOLOGICAL DIVERSITY AND FOCAL
POINTS OF THE SUBSIDIARY BODY ON SCIENTIFIC, TECHNICAL AND
TECHNOLOGICAL ADVICE**

Background

1. Decision VIII/10, annex III, appendix B, of the Conference of the Parties (COP) to the Convention on Biological Diversity (CBD) calls for the active dissemination of the results of the work of the Subsidiary Body on Scientific, Technical and Technological Advice (SBSTTA) through scientific literature, both as reporting items and scientific papers, as reviewed and approved by the Conference of the Parties.
2. In order to produce such reporting items and scientific papers, a partnership is proposed between the Canadian University Partnership, the Secretariat of the Convention on Biological Diversity and the SBSTTA Bureau, with an invitation to participate also extended to other universities.
3. A Letter of Intent between the Secretariat and several Canadian universities and research institutes was opened for signature in 2006. The agreement lays the foundation for a strong scientific and technical partnership among participating institutions targeting Article 18 of the Convention requiring parties to promote such cooperation, along with access to and transfer of technology (Article 16) and exchange of information (Article 17).
4. To facilitate operations of the Canadian University Partnership, a working group has been established with the view to develop a proposal of working modalities for collaboration. The Partnership currently has eight members from across Canada. Additional information and the reports of the working group are available at: <http://www.cbd.int/universities/canada.shtml>.

Objectives

5. The objectives of the proposed partnership are:
 - (a) To provide access by participating students to SBSTTA processes and expertise; and
 - (b) To produce high quality reports and scientific papers on the work of SBSTTA for the review of the Conference of the Parties.

Deliverables

6. The reports and scientific papers will be published as a Technical Series following their approval by the Conference of the Parties. All authors will receive full acknowledgement in this publication.

Commitment by the Secretariat of the Convention on Biological Diversity

7. The Secretariat of the Convention will inform the participating members of the Canadian University Partnership of the items to be discussed at upcoming meetings of SBSTTA and will submit the final reports and papers for the approval of Conference of the Parties.
8. The Secretariat of the Convention will also send the participating students all relevant background documents and materials and make available experts within the Secretariats for interviews and peer-review as needed.

Commitment by SBSTTA focal points

9. SBSTTA focal points will make themselves available for interviews and peer-review as needed.

Commitment by participating members of the Canadian University Partnership

10. The participating members of the Canadian University Partnership will disseminate the list of topics among their students and will identify and select graduate students capable of producing high quality reports and papers.
