

Biodiversity Capacity Development Update



Capacity development:
A key means of
implementation for the
biodiversity agenda



A trainers' manual
published for indigenous
peoples and local
communities



A step-by-step guide
for developing DNA
barcoding capacity made
available to CBD Parties



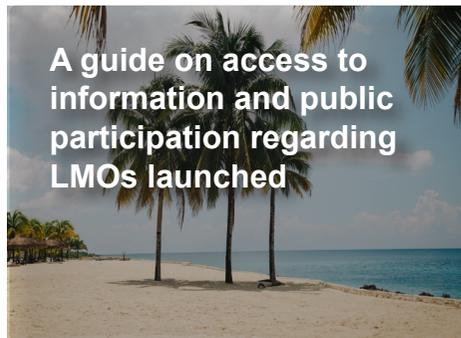
Training materials on
gender and biodiversity
developed for S.E. Asia
and the Pacific



New guidance on
national ecosystem
assessments made
available



A new and improved
Biosafety Clearing-
House platform launched



A guide on access to
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BBI helps to develop
technical capacity
to conserve Lesser
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Capacity development: A key means of implementation for the post-2020 global biodiversity framework

The year 2020 was projected to be a “Super Year for Nature”. Parties to the Convention on Biological Diversity (CBD) planned to negotiate and adopt an ambitious post-2020 global biodiversity framework (GBF) as a stepping-stone towards the 2050 Vision of Living in Harmony with Nature. Nevertheless, the Covid-19 pandemic disrupted all the plans. Key intersessional meetings to prepare the framework were re-scheduled and the fifteenth meeting of the Conference of the Parties (COP 15) to adopt it was postponed.

To keep up the momentum, the CBD Secretariat resorted to adaptive management and capitalized on the use of information technology tools, including interactive videoconferencing platforms, to enable Parties and stakeholders to hold discussions on various issues.

Throughout 2021, informal online sessions were organized in preparation for the twenty-fourth meeting of the Subsidiary Body on Scientific, Technical and Technological Advice (SBSTTA 24) and the third meeting of the Subsidiary Body on Implementation (SBI 3). Regional briefings were also organized on the first draft of the post-2020 GBF in preparation of the third meeting of the Open-ended Working Group on the Post-2020 Global Biodiversity Framework (OEWG 3). The first part of COP 15 was held virtually from 11 to 15 October 2021.

As Parties prepare the post-2020 global biodiversity framework and plan to roll it out once adopted by COP 15, they must put capacity development at the center of this preparatory process. For example, capacity development is included in the draft post-2020 GBF as one of the key means of implementation and a draft long-term strategic framework for capacity development is being discussed by SBI 3.

The [draft long-term strategic framework](#) highlights that capacity development strategies, programmes and initiatives must address the priority needs identified by governments and relevant stakeholders involved in the implementation of the biodiversity agenda. As a starting point, governments and relevant stakeholders are encouraged to assess existing capacities and define their capacity needs at the individual, organizational and enabling environment levels.

While waiting for the formal adoption of the post-2020 global biodiversity framework, Parties may, as a practical step, wish to review their national biodiversity strategies and action plans (NBSAP) and start identifying their capacity development needs and gaps as well as the potential partners and stakeholders they would need to engage during the implementation of the post-2020 GBF. This stocktake and needs analysis exercise would

provide the basis for preparing their national capacity development action plan or capacity development components of the NBSAPs.

A review of the 177 [NBSAPs](#) prepared and submitted to the CBD Secretariat to date shows that at least 55% (98/177) explicitly highlight capacity development as a means of implementation. In addition, 31 of the 98 NBSAPs (32%) include a national capacity development strategy or action plan, which is a good starting point for these countries as they prepare for the implementation of the GBF.

As biodiversity loss continues, every minute is valuable and cannot be wasted. Governments and relevant stakeholders should use the time between now and the adoption of the post-2020 GBF to carry-out the necessary assessments and other activities to prepare the ground for implementation.

More information on national capacity development plans is available on the [CBD website](#).



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A trainers' manual published to facilitate capacity development for indigenous peoples and local communities on the Convention on Biological Diversity

The CBD Secretariat has produced a “Training Manual for Indigenous Peoples and Local Communities on the Convention on Biological Diversity”. The manual was prepared in response to the demand for building the capacity of indigenous peoples and local communities (IPLCs) on the Convention, including its background and history, and the policies and procedures for the effective participation of IPLCs in the CBD process and associated activities.

The manual aims to increase IPLCs' understanding of the CBD, the national processes for its implementation, the monitoring and review tools and good practices, as well as the importance of and mechanisms for their participation in CBD processes and how they could effectively engage in the implementation of the post-2020 global biodiversity framework and contribute to the achievement of its proposed goals and targets. It also aims to enable local and community trainers to coach new trainers for delivering and presenting the work of the CBD to IPLCs using a train-the-trainer approach.

The training manual contains six units. Each unit addresses topics relating to, inter alia, articles of the Convention, the Strategic Plan for Biodiversity 2011-2020 and the Aichi Biodiversity Targets, national biodiversity strategies and action plans, national reports, monitoring biodiversity and

traditional knowledge status, and the post-2020 global biodiversity framework. Each unit also proposes capacity-building activities based on specific learning objectives and includes templates and supplementary reference sources.

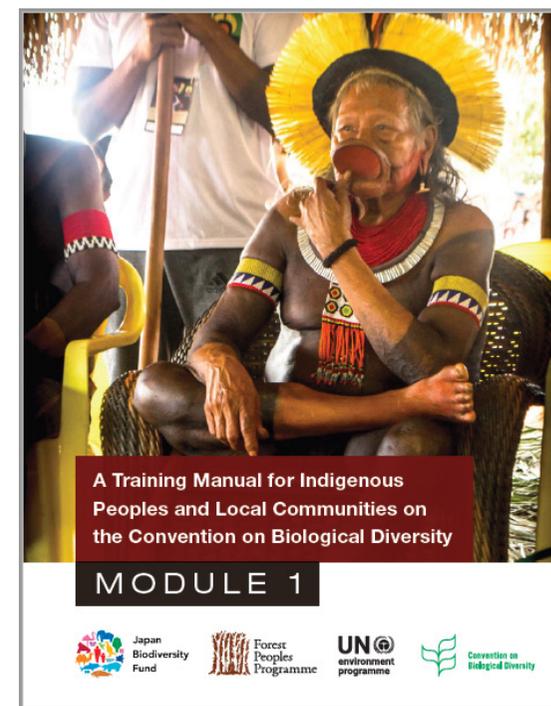
The manual highlights the importance of trainers carrying out knowledge assessments of the target audience prior to any training sessions (for example through a questionnaire), in order to design the learning activities accordingly and select the most appropriate training methods (i.e. lectures, role play, presentations, field trip, case study, etc.). A post-training evaluation is also strongly recommended as a good practice.

The role and contributions of IPLCs, including their traditional knowledge, customary practices, and local actions, provide a unique perspective to the implementation of the Convention and to the achievement of the 2050 Vision of “Living in Harmony with Nature” as set out in the draft post-2020 global biodiversity framework. Unit six of the manual provides an update on progress made in ensuring the full and effective participation of IPLCs at all levels of implementation and emphasizes that more capacity development will be needed in the post-2020 period.

The manual, developed in collaboration with the Forest Peoples Programme and with financial

support by the Government of Japan through the Japan Biodiversity Fund, is the first module of a three-part series available in [English](#) and [Spanish](#). Modules two and three on customary sustainable use, and on access and benefit-sharing, respectively, are tentatively scheduled to be released in May and October 2022.

More information on traditional knowledge and customary sustainable use of biodiversity is available on the [CBD website](#).



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A step-by-step guide for developing DNA barcoding capacity made available to CBD Parties

To further assist Parties to develop capacity for rapid identification of species using DNA barcoding techniques in their countries, the CBD Secretariat published, in collaboration with iBOL, a guideline, titled “Global Taxonomy Initiative 2020: A Step-by-step Guide for DNA Barcoding”, as [Technical Series No.94](#).

The guide is divided into six chapters providing an overview of the principles underpinning DNA barcoding. It describes step by step the workflows and laboratory equipment used to generate and interpret specimen collections. A discussion of future directions of DNA technologies for species identification is also provided at the end, emphasizing the need to continue reviewing available methods and protocols and providing further training.

Identification of species is the foundation for the effective management of biodiversity. Through its Global Taxonomy Initiative (GTI), the CBD Secretariat has collaborated with the International Barcode of Life Consortium (iBOL) and other partners to enhance Parties’ capacity to discover and understand biodiversity components.

Similarly, through the GTI DNA Technologies Training Programme ([GTI-DNA-tech](#)), a five-year training of trainers programme established in 2015 in partnership with iBOL, the Secretariat

continued to address some of the taxonomic capacity challenges, including the lack of scientific experts, taxonomic knowledge, and infrastructure needed to achieve the objectives of the Convention and its Protocols.

DNA barcoding for rapid species identification has been recognized as an entry point for countries to build molecular capacity in DNA technologies for the conservation and sustainable use of biodiversity. Over its lifespan, the GTI-DNA-tech programme has enhanced technological and scientific capacity of researchers from various developing countries and enabled them to acquire and interpret DNA barcode records. These scientists have subsequently become trainers in their countries and regions; thus, building capacity and promoting collaboration within a global network of experts in this field.

Other taxonomic capacity development activities have also been undertaken in the past as part of the GTI. A brief review of the effectiveness of those activities is provided in Chapter VII of [Technical Series No.96](#) (pg. 45-47). Annex 11 of the same technical series (pg. 101-103) proposes the continuation or renewal of various taxonomic activities (including initiatives and projects) for the 2021-2030 period.

Technical Series No. 96 also identifies some of

the key areas for further capacity development, as highlighted by the participants of the [GTI Forum 2020](#).

The key areas include, inter alia, project coordination at the national and regional levels to scale up training activities; development of infrastructure to apply advanced technologies; career development support for young taxonomists; and long-term funding to sustain newly attained technical capacities. Supplementary capacity building activities related to GTI are also presented in the technical series (pg. 23-25) to support Parties with the implementation of the post-2020 global biodiversity framework.

More information on taxonomic capacity development activities is available on the [GTI website](#).



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Training materials on gender and biodiversity developed to support capacity development in South-East Asia and the Pacific

On 25 March 2021, the CBD Secretariat, in collaboration with the ASEAN Centre for Biodiversity (ACB) and the Deutsche Gesellschaft für Internationale Zusammenarbeit (GIZ) Philippines, launched a set of training materials as part of an innovative process to strengthen capacity of Asia-Pacific countries to integrate gender issues in their efforts to implement the Convention.

The training materials are organized in three modules. Module 1 covers key gender concepts and gender-biodiversity linkages, and features a quiz designed to promote discussion of typical preconceptions about gender equality and women's empowerment, and to enable shared understanding. Modules 2 and 3 cover key international policy commitments and programming practicalities respectively.

These modules also provide additional resources containing regional examples, discussion questions, case studies and references. Comprehensive Facilitator Notes and Participant Handouts are also provided for each module to support the delivery of the different exercises and information.

The training materials were developed in a participatory manner with input from gender and biodiversity experts from the Asia-Pacific region.

The input was gathered during an expert workshop held in Thailand in November 2017, which was followed by a training of trainers workshop and a pilot roll-out of the training in the Philippines in December 2019.

The materials are intended to strengthen understanding of gender-biodiversity linkages among government officials and associated actors working on biodiversity policy and programming. This includes understanding of (a) why gender-responsive approaches are important for biodiversity policy and planning; (b) key policy considerations; and (c) how to go about integrating gender dimensions into biodiversity policy and programming in practical terms.

The exercises and timings included in the materials are for guidance purposes – gender trainers will need to adapt them to the training needs of the participants and their level of experience with gender issues.

Raising awareness on gender-biodiversity linkages and advancing efforts to integrate a gender perspective into national biodiversity planning processes are an important part of implementing the CBD 2015-2020 Gender Plan of Action. Following a [review of implementation](#) of the 2015-2020 plan, a series of consultations were held over a period of a year and a half to

enable the development of a new gender plan of action for the post-2020 period. A [draft gender plan of action](#) has been prepared for consideration by SBI 3.

More information on gender and biodiversity, including an [open online course](#), is available on the [CBD gender webpage](#).



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New guidance document on national ecosystem assessments launched to support implementation of the Convention on Biological Diversity

A new [guidance](#) document titled “National Ecosystem Assessments to support implementation of the Convention on Biological Diversity” was launched on 23 November 2021.

It was developed by UNEP-WCMC in collaboration with the CBD Secretariat and with financial support from the Government of Japan through the Japan Biodiversity Fund.

The guidance aims to help CBD and IPBES national focal points and other interested stakeholders to better understand how national ecosystem assessments could assist countries overcome implementation challenges.

National ecosystem assessments provide countries with up-to-date information on the status of and trends in biodiversity and ecosystem services, their drivers of change, the impacts those drivers are having and/or could have in the future, and the effectiveness of interventions.

The guidance highlights key areas where national ecosystem assessments can provide support to national implementation of the Convention.

It also describes how the conceptual framework and assessment process of the Intergovernmental Science-Policy Platform on Biodiversity and Ecosystem Services (IPBES) could be tailored to

specific country needs to guide the development of national ecosystem assessments.

Through stakeholder engagement and capacity-building, these assessments can support various aspects of CBD implementation at the national level, including biodiversity planning, national reporting, technical and scientific cooperation, capacity-building, resource mobilization and communication, education and public awareness.

The guidance also highlights how capacity-building encouraged by national ecosystem assessments provides opportunities for developing and strengthening specific skills for national CBD implementation.

For instance, the knowledge base of these assessments can form a basis for developing education and public awareness activities and materials and contribute to mobilizing resources to support implementation at the national level.

An information document outlining the initial impact of national ecosystem assessments on national implementation in eight countries (Azerbaijan, Bosnia and Herzegovina, Cambodia, Cameroon, Colombia, Ethiopia, Grenada and Viet Nam) was produced by UNEP-WCMC and submitted for consideration by SBSTTA 24 ([CBD/SBSTTA/24/INF/18](#)).

More information on national ecosystem assessments, including a recording of the November 2021 launch webinar, is available on the [CBD website](#).



(source: Figure 4, page 23 of the guidance document)



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A new and improved Biosafety Clearing-House platform launched to facilitate implementation of the Cartagena Protocol on Biosafety

A new and improved Biosafety Clearing-House (BCH) platform is now available online to further facilitate the exchange of information on, and experience with, living modified organisms (LMOs) and assist Parties to implement the Cartagena Protocol on Biosafety.

The new platform will also help ensure consistency, coherence, integration and stronger alignment of the BCH with the Access and Benefit-Sharing Clearing-House (ABSCH) and the central Clearing-House Mechanism (CHM).

Parties to the Cartagena Protocol are required, as per Article 20, to share information on living modified organisms. Through the new platform, the CBD Secretariat continues to work with governments as well as relevant stakeholders to ensure the timely submission, management, and accessibility of technical and scientific information on LMOs.

The previous version of the BCH platform was developed almost 20 years ago, and since then, technology has evolved considerably. There was clearly a need to migrate the BCH to a new modern platform as recommended by the BCH Informal Advisory Committee in 2016 and requested in COP-MOP decisions CP-VIII/2 and CP-9/2 in line with the joint modalities of operation for the three clearing-houses.

The key features of the new BCH, which are consistent with modern web design standards, include:

- A user-friendly and intuitive interface with improved graphical representation of data and better analysis tools.
- Similar features and functionality as the CHM and ABSCH, thus, easily recognizable to national and regular users.
- Streamlined and improved procedures for registering and publishing information on the clearing-house.
- A simplified approach for record status tracking.
- New advanced search tools and an interface that still preserves the multi-level search capability of the previous BCH platform.
- Modern guidance materials to assist users in site navigation and the submission process, including in-browser tours that walk users through key functions on the BCH, as well as a “Knowledge Base” that provides thorough explanations of the site’s many facets.

The BCH is fundamental to the implementation of the Cartagena Protocol and its improvement

is a major step forward in making it an effective practical tool to further enable Parties to fulfil their obligations under the Protocol and the Convention.

By sharing technical and scientific information on LMOs and their associated risk assessments, Parties empower each other to take informed decisions on biosafety. A [webinar](#) to introduce the new platform and its main features was held on 7 December 2021. Other webinars will be organized in due course.

More information on the BCH and the Cartagena Protocol on Biosafety is available on the [CBD website](#).



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A pocket guide developed to enhance capacity on access to information and public participation regarding living modified organisms

In May 2021, the CBD Secretariat and the UNECE Convention on Access to Information, Public Participation in Decision-making and Access to Justice in Environmental Matters (known as the Aarhus Convention) jointly launched a [pocket guide](#) to enhance the capacity of Parties to put in place procedures for access to information and public participation regarding living modified organisms / genetically modified organisms (LMOs/GMOs).

The guide was prepared based on the experiences shared by Parties and stakeholders working on biosafety-related issues and the implementation of Article 23 of the Cartagena Protocol on Biosafety on public awareness, education and participation regarding LMOs and the Aarhus Convention amendment on public participation in decision-making relating to GMOs.

It also builds on other capacity-building resources, including [e-learning courses](#) on access to information and public participation regarding LMOs, developed by the CBD Secretariat.

The pocket guide is divided into three main sections:

- Section 1 describes the key benefits of effective access to information and public participation in decision-making, including, inter alia,

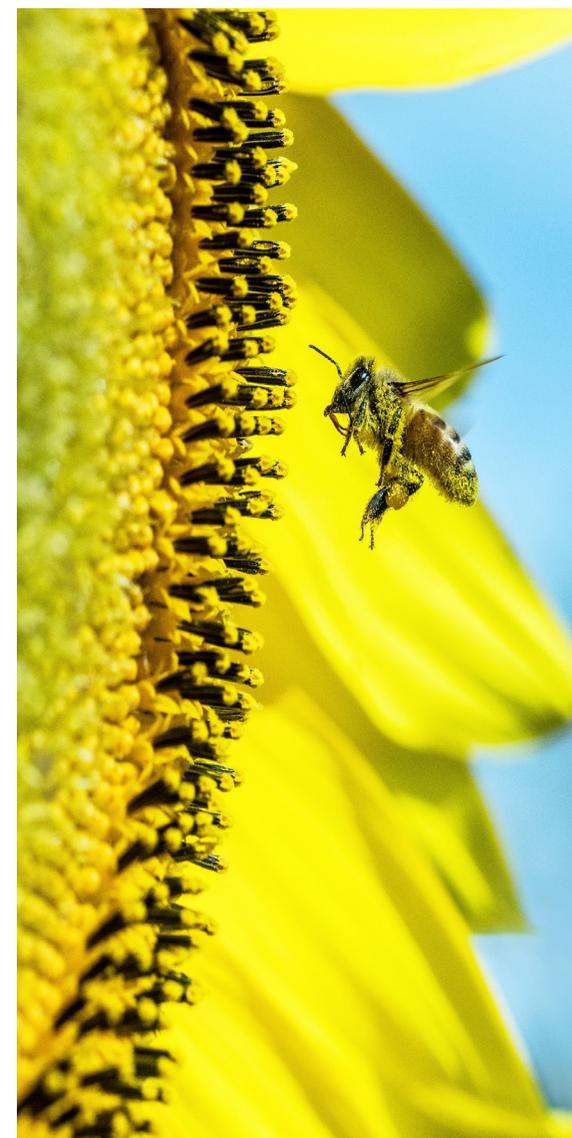
better quality of decisions, accountability and governance, as well as an improved relationship between decision-makers and the public, and among different stakeholders.

- Section 2 highlights key systemic challenges encountered by countries when seeking to advance public participation and access to information. For example, lack of understanding of procedures and means for accessing information and public participation in decision-making regarding LMOs/GMOs, and/or limited technological capacities and resources to make information available in local languages or through traditional methods.

- Section 3 describes priority areas that may be considered to improve access to information and public participation.

The guide, which is available in all 6 UN languages, also provides a list of relevant resources, as well as contact information.

More information on access to information and public participation regarding LMOs under the Cartagena Protocol on Biosafety is available on the [CBD website](#).



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The Bio-Bridge Initiative supports the development of technical capacities to conserve Lesser Flamingos in West Africa

Smaller than its cousin the Greater Flamingo but boasting an even brighter pink, the Lesser Flamingo (*Phoeniconaias minor*) is an icon of African wildlife. The near-threatened species found on the [IUCN Red List](#) is located primarily in Eastern and Southern Africa. However, a small and relatively vulnerable population, currently numbering an estimated 30,000 birds, lives in West Africa.

Little is known about this semi-migratory bird's habits, other than its very specific diet of algae and its preference for large undisturbed alkaline and saline lakes and lagoons, usually far out from the shore. In order to give a significant boost to conservation efforts, the National Parks Directorate of Senegal, the Directorate for the Protection and Restoration of Species and the Environment of Mauritania, the Secretariat of the Agreement on the Conservation of African-Eurasian Migratory Waterbirds (AEWA) and the French research institute Tour du Valat joined forces to learn more about the species' flyways and the locations critical for resting and nesting.

With additional support from the Bio-Bridge Initiative ([BBI](#)), implemented by the CBD Secretariat, the four institutions embarked on a project to satellite-tag a number of Lesser Flamingos in the Djoudj National Bird Sanctuary, a key wetland habitat for the species in Senegal.

The project started in April 2020 with a field visit conducted by the National Parks Directorate at the Djoudj Bird Sanctuary to assess the landscape and the presence of the birds. Based on the assessment, and the technical guidance provided by Tour du Valat experts, the National Parks Directorate acquired the necessary equipment (four BioLoc satellite tags of the type Argos) to monitor the specimens.

Within the objectives of AEWA's [Plan of Action for Africa](#) 2019-2027, the institutions organized a training workshop to build the capacities of local technical experts to attach satellite tags on birds captured in the wild and use them for monitoring and learning purposes.

The four-day workshop, which took place from 2 to 5 December 2021, brought together nineteen technical experts from Senegal and Mauritania working in national parks of known importance to the survival of the species. Led by trainers from Tour du Valat, the workshop included one day of theoretical training to familiarize participants with the concept and practical aspects of satellite tracking and using mapping tools, and three days of practical field training and an expedition to capture and attach light satellite tags to some of the Lesser Flamingos with minimal disturbance to the entire bird population.

By accessing data transmitted by the satellite tags to track the movements of the birds in real time and space, Senegalese and Mauritanian authorities and technical experts will monitor the migration behaviour of the West African population of Lesser Flamingos and the sites frequented by them during their annual cycle.

This data is expected to lead to the identification of additional sites of national and international importance for the conservation of the Lesser Flamingo and feed into relevant decision-making in relation to the protection of the species and their habitats.

More information on the outcomes of the project is available on the [CBD website](#) and [AEWA website](#).



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Resources and Opportunities

Invitation to submit project proposals under the [Bio-Bridge Initiative](#), Deadline: 1 March 2022

Register for the online course on [Ecosystem Restoration](#) available on the Learning for Nature platform.

The [Action Agenda Newsletter on Biodiversity Commitments](#) offers regular updates on progress in support of the post-2020 global biodiversity framework.

Visit the new website of the Sharm El-Sheikh to Kunming Action Agenda for Nature and People to make a commitment.



Upcoming Events

Due to the on-going global pandemic, physical meetings have been postponed. Please visit the [calendar of events](#) for regular updates.

Resumed sessions SBSTTA-24, SBI 3 and OEWG 2020-3, Geneva, Switzerland, 13-29 March 2022

About BioCAP

BioCAP: Biodiversity Capacity Development Update was developed by the Secretariat of the Convention on Biological Diversity to provide periodic updates on the main outcomes of capacity development and technical and scientific cooperation activities facilitated and supported by the Secretariat in collaboration with partners. Previous issues of BioCAP are available on the [website](#).

