

The following is a summary of BirdLife International's key comments on initial suggestions for what should comprise the scope and content of the post-2020 global biodiversity framework, as requested in [CBD Notification 2018-063](#). We draw upon our comments previously submitted on the post-2020 process, and include some additional suggestions, and will submit more detailed and concrete proposals in April 2019 following in-depth consultations within and beyond our 120-strong Partnership of national NGOs over the next few months.

### Summary

- BirdLife proposes a concise 2030 mission that would serve as both a measurable **'apex' target** and a **compelling communications message** to define and mobilise the action needed to reverse the continuing, and in many cases accelerating, global loss of nature and biodiversity and set us on a path to achieve the 2050 Vision of 'living in harmony with nature'. Such a **2030 mission** could be along the lines of **'Put nature on a path to recovery by 2030 for the benefit of people and the planet [by reversing the loss of biodiversity]'**.
- As a key difference from the 2011-2020 Strategic Plan, BirdLife proposes the current framework be reorganised into a much clearer, logical **'pyramid' structure** that conveys a **'theory of change'**, better clarifying the relationship between targets and mapping a pathway to transformational change. As such, the targets would be clustered under enabling conditions, which would underpin a set of actions, which would in turn then lead to projected conservation outcomes, underpinning the simple overarching mission.
- It should be recognised that many enabling conditions and actions cannot be adequately delivered through the CBD and environmental ministries alone, and will require either **inter-ministerial or whole-of-government approaches** and in many cases wider societal efforts, through other conventions, policy mechanisms and voluntary processes, making **linkages between the CBD and the wider sustainable development agenda** imperative. The targets would benefit from a clearer definition of roles and responsibilities and mapping of targets across these processes.
- Foundational **targets addressing the enabling conditions** required to achieve the mission could include targets on good governance, public and private financing, capacity-building, communications, partnerships and empowerment.
- For **targets focused on actions**, the following could be included for consideration:
  - A revised target for protected and conserved areas (building on Aichi Target 11) including a focus on documenting, retaining and restoring the biodiversity value of all Key Biodiversity Areas and other sites of global and national significance for biodiversity such as Ecologically or Biologically Significant Marine Areas (EBSAs), through protected areas and other effective area-based conservation measures (OECMs);
  - Updated or new target(s) aimed at retaining intact ecosystems and restoring degraded ecosystems to maintain and improve ecosystem services such as clean water and air, maximising nature's contributions to people;
  - A target focused on connectivity, embedding conservation of site networks and ecological processes into spatial planning and development activities at land/seascape, range-wide or flyway-scales.
  - Updated or new targets to manage the rest of the planet sustainably, supported by responsible production and consumption (including mainstreaming actions) and the equitable distribution of resources; many of these targets will be delivered in conjunction with other conventions or policy processes, such as the Sustainable Development Goals (as for current Aichi Target 4 and SDG 12);
  - Potentially a new target on actions aimed at preventing extinctions and recovering threatened species.
- **Targets representing key conservation outcomes** could include the following:
  - **Species:** Prevent species extinctions and reverse the decline of wildlife populations;
  - **Ecosystems:** Stabilise or increase the extent and quality of natural ecosystems and their services and restore degraded ecosystems to maintain ecological function and the provisioning of ecosystem services such as for food, clean water, clean air.
- An improved **monitoring and evaluation system** should be put in place for the post-2020 biodiversity framework, with improved transparency and accountability through cycles of reporting on progress and plans. National or sub-national targets should be able to be 'added up' to the global level, and similarly global indicators can be disaggregated to the national level.

- BirdLife supports the concept of Parties but also other stakeholders such as the private sector and civil society putting forward **voluntary biodiversity contributions** in advance of 2020, and beyond. We recognise the value of these contributions as an ambition-raising exercise in initiating and implementing biodiversity conservation activities, as requested in the Sharm el Sheikh Declaration. A process should be considered for subsequently incorporating contributions made by Parties into their National Biodiversity Strategies and Action Plans (NBSAPs) and other national and sub-national planning processes.
- Finally, BirdLife believes that **significant political and public momentum** is needed in the lead up to COP15 in 2020 to facilitate this work and encourages Parties, observers and all to work within their networks and beyond to ensure commitment to the post-2020 biodiversity framework at the highest political levels. BirdLife has already been active in working with Parties, the Secretariat of the CBD, and others to contribute to the development of the post-2020 strategy from a science, policy and communications perspective. BirdLife looks forward to working further with our own Partnership of 120 organisations worldwide to contribute to the regional consultations and technical process in early 2019, as well as supporting and joining the Open-Ended Working Group in this task.

## Detailed comments

Below we provide more detailed comments on the scope and content of the post-2020 global biodiversity framework, including (a) the scientific underpinning of the scale and scope of actions necessary to make progress towards the 2050 Vision and (b) a possible structure, targets and needs for the development process for the post-2020 biodiversity framework.

### VISION AND MISSION OF THE POST-2020 BIODIVERSITY FRAMEWORK

Despite the CBD's current Strategic Plan being comprehensive and ambitious, and a considerable improvement on the 2010 Target, we are to failing reverse the continuing, and in many cases accelerating, global loss of nature and biodiversity, as evidenced for example by the most recent CBD scientific assessment of progress towards selected Aichi Targets<sup>1</sup>, the report on progress in the implementation of the Convention<sup>2</sup> as well as BirdLife's 2018 State of the World's Birds<sup>3</sup>. The new framework must drive the conservation and recovery of biodiversity through more effective implementation at the global, national, local, and sectoral level. The **2050 Vision remains relevant**, that *'By 2050, biodiversity is valued, conserved, restored and wisely used, maintaining ecosystem services, sustaining a healthy planet and delivering benefits essential for all people'*. Strategic planning defines a vision as a 'descriptive picture of a desired future state' and BirdLife agrees that this wording reflects an appropriate and necessary overall state for biodiversity and our relationship to it by 2050.

BirdLife supports, as per document [CBD/COP/DEC/14/ADV](#), that 'the post-2020 global biodiversity framework should be accompanied by an **inspirational and motivating 2030 mission** as a stepping stone towards the 2050 Vision, which will be supported by a coherent, comprehensive and innovative communication strategy'. This mission should replace the current 2011-2020 Strategic Plan mission statement<sup>4</sup>. It should, as a mission, be a statement of how the Vision should be achieved and also help to implement the necessary communication goals as mentioned above. BirdLife also feels that the mission should be science-based, measurable and serve as a type of 'apex target'.

Wording for such a **2030 mission** could be along the lines of:

**'Put nature on a path to recovery by 2030 for the benefit of people and the planet [by reversing the loss of biodiversity by 2030]'**.

<sup>1</sup> [Updated Scientific Assessment of Progress Towards Selected Aichi Biodiversity Targets and Options to Accelerate Progress](#)

<sup>2</sup> [Updated Assessment of Progress Towards Selected Aichi Biodiversity Targets and Options to Accelerate Progress](#)

<sup>3</sup> <https://www.birdlife.org/sowb2018>

<sup>4</sup> <https://www.cbd.int/sp/elements/>

## STRUCTURE OF THE POST-2020 BIODIVERSITY FRAMEWORK

As a key difference from the 2011-2020 Strategic Plan, BirdLife, working with other conservation organisations<sup>5</sup>, proposes the current framework be reorganised into a much **clearer, logical, ‘pyramid’ structure**. This structure conveys a **‘theory of change’**, better clarifying the relationship between targets and mapping a pathway to transformational change.

At the base of the pyramid are **enabling targets** focused on cross-cutting needs such as good governance, public and private financing (resource mobilisation), capacity-building, communications, partnership, and empowerment (Article 8j), which are critical and foundational for the implementation of other targets. **Action targets** needed for implementation of the 2030 mission are found in the middle of the ‘pyramid’ and include specific operational activities to address direct pressures on biodiversity loss or carry out conservation activities or responses, such as managing invasive species, ensuring fisheries are sustainable and ensuring that the important sites for biodiversity are effectively conserved through an expanded and strengthened network of protected areas and other effective area-based conservation measures (OECMs). The best science available should inform what the sources of pressures on biodiversity are, and the extent, and this inform the ‘action’ part of the pyramid. The final top part of the ‘pyramid’ would be **conservation outcome targets**, that outline the state of biodiversity desired for 2030, and would wherever possible be specific and quantified, and scalable at global and national levels. These will need to have associated indicators that could be applied nationally, regionally and globally, and have milestones for 2030<sup>6</sup>.

The entire suite of targets together in the pyramid would enable the implementation of actions that map a pathway to achieve the 2030 mission as a milestone to the 2050 Vision.

It should be recognised that many enabling conditions and actions cannot be adequately delivered through the CBD and environmental ministries alone. These will require either **inter-ministerial or whole-of-government approaches and in many cases wider societal efforts**, through other conventions, policy mechanisms and voluntary processes, making linkages in particular between the CBD, UNFCCC, and the wider sustainable development agenda imperative. The targets would benefit from a clearer definition of roles and responsibilities and mapping of targets across these processes.

## TARGETS FOR THE POST-2020 BIODIVERSITY FRAMEWORK

BirdLife believes that the **post-2020 targets should focus on similar themes as the 2011-2020 Strategic Plan**, for example on preventing species extinctions, protecting and conserving habitats, maintaining ecosystem services, mainstreaming biodiversity into key sectors and tackling the drivers of biodiversity loss. However, post-2020 targets should be **more ambitious and also allow for new concepts and targets**.

The post-2020 biodiversity framework should incorporate and implement all three main tenets of the Convention on Biological Diversity to ensure the achievement of the 2030 mission and 2050 Vision: the **conservation** and **sustainable use** of biodiversity and **fair and equitable sharing** of the benefits arising from the use of genetic resources.

We suggest consideration of a limited set of **targets representing key conservation outcomes (the top layer of the pyramid structure)**, which could include the following or similar versions:

- **Species extinctions prevented:** Trends in species extinction risk are improving, for example as demonstrated by the Red List Index;
- **Wildlife population abundance recovering:** Both threatened and common species population declines are halted and recovering, for example as shown by the Living Planet Index and the Wild Bird Index;
- **Intact ecosystems maintained:** The extent and condition of intact natural ecosystems are stabilised or increasing;
- **Degraded ecosystems restored:** degraded ecosystems are restored to maintain and improve ecological function and the provisioning of ecosystem services such as for food, clean water, clean air, focusing where possible on connecting and buffering key areas for biodiversity or ecosystem services to support land/seascape, range-wide or flyway-scale conservation (and thus linking to the action targets highlighted below).

<sup>5</sup> [Key Elements and Innovations for the CBD’s Post-2020 Biodiversity Framework: A Collaborative Discussion Piece; this joint paper has already been submitted to the 15<sup>th</sup> December 2018 CBD consultation on behalf of all 10 signatory NGOs including BirdLife](#)

<sup>6</sup> Such as those proposed by [Mace et al. \(2018\). Aiming higher to bend the curve of biodiversity loss. Nature Sustainability](#)

For **targets focused on actions (the middle layer of the pyramid)**, we propose consideration of (but not limited to) the following, among others:

- A revised target for **protected and conserved areas** (building on Aichi Target 11) including a focus on documenting, retaining and restoring the biodiversity value of all Key Biodiversity Areas and other sites of global and national significance for biodiversity such as Ecologically or Biologically Significant Marine Areas (EBSAs), through expanded networks of protected areas and OECMs. To retain and restore their biodiversity value, these networks will by implication need to be effectively and equitably managed, ecologically representative, well-connected and appropriately located.
- Updated or new target(s) aimed at **retaining intact ecosystems and restoring degraded ecosystems** to maintain ecosystem services such as clean water and air, maximising nature's contributions to people.
- A target focused on **connectivity/mainstreaming**, embedding conservation of site networks and ecological processes into spatial development planning, policy and implementation at land/seascape, range-wide or flyway-scales as mentioned above;
- Updated or new targets to **manage the rest of the planet sustainably**, supported by sustainable production and consumption and the equitable distribution of resources. Many of these targets will be delivered in conjunction with other conventions or policy processes, such as the Sustainable Development Goals (as for current Aichi Target 4 and SDG 12).
- New target(s) on actions aimed at **preventing extinctions and recovering threatened species**, such as developing and implementing species conservation action plans and addressing illegal/unsustainable killing and trade of wildlife.

**Enabling targets** would focus on cross-cutting needs such as good governance, public and private financing (resource mobilisation), capacity-building, communications, partnerships and empowerment (Article 8j). We feel in particular that it is very important that a finance/resource mobilisation strategy be developed and agreed at the same time as the post-2020 biodiversity framework.

## OTHER PRINCIPLES

**Building on our previously submitted comments, other general principles for the post-2020 framework include:**

We strongly support that the **post-2020 targets should be developed at the same time as, and their approval be dependent upon, robust<sup>7</sup> and possibly joined up<sup>8</sup> indicators** being defined to assess their degree of implementation.

The post-2020 global biodiversity framework needs to support and be integrated into other related conventions and global initiatives including the **2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development** and **The Paris Agreement under the UNFCCC**.

**Gaps should be addressed**, such as better consideration of issues related to climate change (e.g. nature-based solutions for adaptation and mitigation including forests and blue carbon, as well as incorporating climate change adaptation into species conservation efforts) and economic/ financial aspects (valuation/ undervaluation, demand, resource mobilisation).

The post-2020 targets should be based on **science-based evidence** including social science, and be **'SMART'** - specific, measurable, ambitious, realistic and time-bound, to clarify the actions needed and enable progress to be measured.

In addition to more ambitious, clear, and quantifiable targets, efforts must be made to improve implementation, and recognise synergies and trade-offs between targets when implementing them, and put in place an improved **monitoring and evaluation system** for the post-2020 biodiversity framework, with improved transparency and accountability through cycles of reporting on progress and plans. National or sub-national targets should be able to be 'added up' to the global level, and similarly global indicators can be disaggregated to the national level.

Recognition and incorporation of benefits to and contributions of **local people and indigenous peoples** to the development of the post-2020 biodiversity framework, its implementation and conserving biodiversity, is key. BirdLife Partners will be consulting accordingly with local and indigenous people, for example regarding on their priorities and views in terms of how

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<sup>7</sup> [Joppa et al. \(2016\) Filling in Biodiversity Threat Gaps. Science Translational Medicine.](#)

<sup>8</sup> [Sparks et al. \(2011\). Linked indicator sets for addressing biodiversity loss. Oryx, 45\(3\), 411-419.](#)

traditional knowledge (article 8j) and natural resource management (article 10c) are to be included in the post-2020 biodiversity framework.

The wider involvement of civil society, in particular conservation NGOs and academia, should be recognised and incorporated where possible through multi-stakeholder processes at national and international level to strengthen cross-sectoral collaboration and successful examples can be taken from other conventions and multi-stakeholder processes. Examples include the Convention on Migratory Species' Energy Task Force, which BirdLife coordinates, and our GEF-funded Migratory Soaring Birds Project working across sectors and stakeholders in 11 countries along the Red Sea-Rift Valley flyway.

Lack of political will to implement NBSAPs and mobilise resources to ensure their success remains a key issue for the post-2020 agenda to tackle. Therefore, the post-2020 agenda should also strongly address **governance** issues, and carefully consider how to provide CBD National Focal Points with the tools to leverage better with the rest of the government as well as the private sector.

## ENSURING POLITICAL BUY-IN FOR THE POST-2020 FRAMEWORK

A simple, common and compelling narrative about the importance and urgency of biodiversity conservation for the post-2020 framework is fundamental, starting with the 2030 mission and further elucidated through a post-2020 biodiversity framework **communications strategy**. Communication efforts must go beyond awareness-raising to help enable **behavioural and transformational change**. The Sharm El-Sheikh to Beijing Action Agenda for Nature and People has the potential to catalyse a groundswell of actions from all sectors and stakeholders in support of biodiversity conservation and its sustainable use. We must ensure that the potential for the Action Agenda is capitalized as much as possible to be a proactive and outward facing rather than a passive online platform.

There is a need to build **high level political engagement** in the post-2020 framework development process over the next 18 months. BirdLife therefore supports the ask for a Heads of State Summit in the margins of the UNGA 2020, however we would like to note that as a stand-alone event this summit will not be enough to achieve adequate high level political buy-in. This will need to act as the public-facing end-point of a more holistic, longer high-level political process, where biodiversity is central to other key global meetings such as the G7, World Economic Forum, and High Level Political Forum on Sustainable Development in preparation for this moment.

BirdLife supports the concept of Parties, other stakeholders such as the private sector, and civil society, putting forward **voluntary biodiversity contributions** in advance of 2020 and beyond, as an ambition-raising exercise in initiating and implementing biodiversity conservation activities, as requested in the Sharm el Sheikh Declaration<sup>9</sup>. A process should be considered for subsequently incorporating contributions made by Parties into their **National Biodiversity Strategies and Action Plans** (NBSAPs) and other national and sub-national planning processes.

**Increased private sector and NGO engagement** in CBD processes is needed, including championing of key targets (the latter relating to their effective contributions on producing and holding knowledge and for conservation actions implemented). This relates to maximising the potential of the Sharm el Sheikh to Beijing Action Agenda, World Economic Forum, and other opportunities for engagement, including the Global Partnership for Business and Biodiversity.

Finally, BirdLife believes that significant **political and public momentum** is needed over the next 18 months to facilitate this work and encourages Parties, observers, and all, to work within their networks and beyond to leverage discussions on the development of the post-2020 biodiversity framework. We look forward to working with our own Partnership of 120 organisations worldwide to support and join the **Open-Ended Working Group** in this task.

## RECENT BIRDLIFE EVIDENCE AND INFORMATION TO SUPPORT THE DEVELOPMENT OF THE POST-2020 FRAMEWORK

RSPB (BirdLife UK Partner) and BirdLife have conducted a criteria-based assessment of how SMART the Aichi Targets are and whether there is a relationship with progress made<sup>10</sup>. The lessons learned from this assessment can help to inform the development of a post-2020 framework. The key conclusions of this assessment were that any new or revised targets should:

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<sup>10</sup> [Literature-based Assessment and Lessons Learnt Analysis of Progress Towards the Aichi Targets: CBD/SBSTTA/22/INF/35](#)

- be ambitious but realistic, recognising that ambition without realism can undermine confidence in the ability to deliver on targets – but equally that ambition also promotes and drives progress;
- be clearly and unambiguously worded, and provided with necessary definitions, so that the intent and necessary action or actions, are apparent;
- be clear and well defined with explicit deliverables, and therefore amenable and easy to measure in any realistic way;
- include quantifiable elements wherever practicable so as to facilitate both action and the tracking of progress;
- be considered and framed against an extended SMART-type set of criteria, similar to that used by Green et al. and suggested by others.

BirdLife has also been working with the CBD Secretariat, Parties and a number of other science-based organisations to review the **evidence needed for a post-2020 biodiversity framework**. In this regard, BirdLife worked with the CBD, RSPB and other members of the Cambridge Conservation Initiative (CCI) to convene an international expert workshop in April 2018 to generate a 'roadmap' for the effective use of evidence in developing a more effective post-2020 global biodiversity framework<sup>11</sup>. CCI will be providing a separate submission to this call for feedback as well.

To support the development of area-based targets for the post-2020 biodiversity framework, BirdLife co-organised an international symposium with the CBD, IUCN, National Geographic Society, UNEP-WCMC and the Zoological Society of London in February 2018 on 'Safeguarding space for nature, securing our future: developing a post-2020 strategy'<sup>12</sup>. The meeting reviewed both evidence and options for area-based conservation post-2020 and key messages included:

- The current area-based protection target is not adequate in terms of quantity or quality – **there is a need to effectively conserve at least 30% of land<sup>13</sup> and sea<sup>14</sup> to conserve biodiversity**;
- **Further expansion of protected areas and OECMs** needs to take place in sites important for biodiversity such as Key Biodiversity Areas<sup>15</sup> to ensure their effective conservation;
- **Conserving ecosystem services often requires area-based approaches in locations that are different** from those of highest biodiversity significance, with local and global benefits not necessarily in the same place, with more than half the earth's terrestrial area required in order to provide the ecosystem services that people need and currently use. Ensuring the continued and sustainable delivery of ecosystem services through effective conservation of the ecosystems that provide them should be the focus of a specific target in the new framework (see below);
- Safeguarding space for nature - and for people, who have the right and need to access nature - cannot be addressed in isolation, and depends on **people everywhere living more sustainably**.

BirdLife looks forward to further supporting and contributing to the discussions on the development of the post-2020 biodiversity framework, with our science and expertise, and would request to be a member of the Open-Ended Working Group in this regard.

**BirdLife International is the world's largest conservation partnership, with 120 national Partners, and the pre-eminent international authority on bird conservation.**

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<sup>11</sup> [Effective Use of Knowledge in Developing the Post-2020 Global Biodiversity Framework: CBD/SBI/2/INF/33](#)

<sup>12</sup> [Safeguarding Space for Nature and Securing our Future: Developing a Post-2020 Strategy: CBD/COP/14/INF/25](#)

<sup>13</sup> [Butchart et al. \(2015\) Shortfalls and Solutions for Meeting National and Global Conservation Area Targets. Conserv Lett. 8: 329–337.](#) [Venter et al. \(2014\) Targeting Global Protected Area Expansion for Imperiled Biodiversity. PLoS Biol.12.](#)

<sup>14</sup> [O'Leary et al. \(2016\) 'Effective coverage targets for ocean protection' Conserv. Lett.](#)

<sup>15</sup> [www.keybiodiversityareas.org](http://www.keybiodiversityareas.org)