Recommendations for a post-2020 Global Biodiversity Framework

Achievements and limitations of the current framework

The Green Economy Coalition recognises that while considerable progress is still necessary to meet the Aichi targets set within the current (2011-2020) framework, and that many targets will not be achieved by 2020, significant progress has been made and conservation successes have been achieved. The new framework should learn from these successes as well as from the areas where less progress – or no progress - has been made, and not 're-invent the wheel'.

The current framework emphasises, through the Aichi Targets, what needs to be halted, reversed, reduced. But it is not clear how these targets should be achieved and who should be responsible. Achieving many of the targets relies on action outside the biodiversity 'sector' to address the drivers of biodiversity loss – hence it is essential that the new framework indicates which sectors are responsible for achieving particular targets and actively engages these sectors in shaping the new targets.

Before new targets are set for the post-2020 period, more reflection is needed on why many of the current targets are not being achieved. Some of the current targets – such as Target 7 – are wildly unrealistic, which undermines their overall credibility in the eyes of governments and other actors. There is also no mention of trade-offs in the current targets, whereas there are often trade-offs between biodiversity conservation and other goals that need to be carefully weighed.

Suggested priorities for the post-2020 framework

An overarching priority is that the new framework links to, and complements, existing international environment and development policy. Specifically, the framework should make reference to, and be coordinated with international agreements on climate change and the UN Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs). Arguably all seventeen Goals and most of their specific targets are related in one way or another to biodiversity.

1. **Align the revised Aichi targets with the SDGs.** Many of the Aichi targets are reflected in the SDGs but expire in 2020, while the SDGs run to 2030. The new framework must be fully aligned to the SDGs, not just including targets where biodiversity contributes to the fulfilment of specific goals, but also mitigating actions where achievement of specific SDGs might present a threat to biodiversity. In addition to updated, SDG-compatible targets, the new framework should be aligned time-wise with the SDGs – i.e. expiring in 2030. Ideally, a joint reporting framework would be developed to further enhance synergies and coordination with the SDGs and other environment and development policy frameworks – particularly at the national level.

2. **Ensure targets are informed by robust science and existing accounting processes.** The new framework has to be more realistic, tangible and measurable than the current one. Targets should be based on the best available science, in particular the IPBES global assessment on biodiversity and ecosystem services and the Global Biodiversity Outlook 5. Given that a clear and consistent monitoring framework is needed for the post-2020 biodiversity agenda, due consideration should be given to existing systems, such as the System of Environmental Economic Accounting (SEEA). SEEA should also be promoted to inform biodiversity policies.

   While needing to set an ambitious overarching goal – the equivalent to the Paris Agreement goal of limiting global warming to below 2 degrees – the new framework should avoid the temptation to adopt "sound-bite" targets such as "Nature Needs Half," or "30% by 2030", unless these are based on sound science.

3. **Revised targets must acknowledge interlinkages.between individual targets.** For example, delivering some of the Aichi Targets which reduce threats to biodiversity (e.g. perverse subsidies, deforestation) will help contribute to the achievement of other targets (reduce extinctions of known threatened species).

4. **New framework must focus on implementation.** Overall, there needs to be more emphasis on implementation and accountability in developing the revised targets. A key step will be to strengthen the National Biodiversity Strategies and Action Plans (NBSAPs) together with the existing national reporting mechanisms so that their accuracy can be improved, and in order that they can be aggregated to provide a global picture.

Linkages to green economy and natural capital approaches

The movement towards greener economies is ramping up around the world, with governments propelled by science, their citizens and international agreements to adopt new policies and strategies. Key to this movement is the need to view nature, science and society as interconnected parts within a single indivisible system. In this context we are seeing a linking up of the green economy and natural capital movements and a realisation that a natural capital approach can be a vital strategy for delivering greener economies. At the heart of a natural capital approach is the understanding that nature underpins human health, wealth, culture, identity and happiness. A natural capital approach works to illuminate this value and enables decisionmakers to understand the complex ways that societies and economies depend on nature, including biodiversity.

5. **Support natural capital approaches as one tool amongst many for better decision making on biodiversity**: Natural capital approaches are providing one useful lens to highlight the economic value of nature, but they need to be seen alongside other important values, which include cultural and spiritual values as well as intrinsic value. Taken together they can help create better informed policies and planning measures to conserve biodiversity.

6. **Connect natural capital and green economy approaches**: GEC members are committed to ensuring that natural capital and green economy policies are integrated more coherently. Green growth plans need to be developed in view of a country's natural capital stocks and flows. Ten countries are currently members of UN PAGE (Partnership for Action on Green Economy), and their green economy strategies need to specifically address biodiversity conservation and be well integrated with national measures to meet CBD convention commitments. The same goes for other countries which are developing green economy and natural capital measures, for instance in collaboration with the Global Green Growth Institute, Green Growth Knowledge Platform, Natural Capital Coalition, etc. Currently green economy discussions and strategies often focus on climate and energy, while neglecting natural capital (including biodiversity). Therefore the post-2020 framework should make reference to green economy policies and plans and should stress the need to go beyond the usual focus on climate and energy to explicitly incorporate biodiversity and natural capital.

7. **Support national natural capital accounting.** The Aichi targets (target 2) mention that biodiversity needs to be incorporated into national and local development planning processes and poverty reduction strategies. The problem is that natural capital initiatives – including biodiversity conservation measures – are happening in isolation from economic and social policy making. For this reason, natural capital approaches and biodiversity conservation measures need to be mainstreamed into policy.

Target 2 also mentions the need to integrate biodiversity into national accounting systems, which is positive but insufficient in itself. There are over 100 natural capital accounts now being produced by governments across the world, but they are currently not being utilised. These accounts need to be integrated with economic governance metrics and incorporated into economic decisionmaking. Only then will they be fully operationalized.

8**. Support links between business and government led approaches.** At the same time, businesses are increasingly recognizing their reliance on natural capital through their supply chains and business models and are becoming sensitized to biodiversity through developing natural capital assessments and environmental profit and loss accounts. Businesses are collecting a growing amount of data on local biodiversity, but that data doesn't currently connect with national accounting systems. In order to motivate businesses and provide the kind of targets that are needed, these accounts need to be translatable to the national level. Similarly, the national capital accounts being produced by governments are far too coarse grained for firms to make use of in their investment decisions in specific locations. This contradiction needs to be resolved so that the natural capital accounting systems used by governments and businesses connect.

9**. Sensitise financial markets to biodiversity loss.** Finally, financial markets are becoming increasingly sensitive to climate risk and are being stress tested against climate change. The finance sector is starting to develop some initiatives to assess their exposure to biodiversity risks (e.g. CDC Biodiversité), but overall biodiversity is less well represented than climate change. Making financial markets and financial investments sensitive to biodiversity is a crucial step towards slowing biodiversity loss and natural capital approaches can be a key means of accomplishing that.