

OPTIONS TO ENHANCE SYNERGIES AMONG THE BIODIVERSITY-RELATED CONVENTIONS

CONSULTATION DRAFT

1. At its twelfth meeting, in decision XII/6, the Conference of the Parties to the Convention on Biological Diversity decided to establish an informal advisory group to prepare, in consultation with the Secretariat, a workshop with the task to prepare options which could include elements for a possible road map, for Parties of the various biodiversity-related conventions to enhance synergies and improve efficiency among them, without prejudice to the specific objectives and recognizing the respective mandates and subject to the availability of resources of these conventions, with a view to enhancing their implementation at all levels.

2. The workshop was held in Geneva, Switzerland, from 8 to 11 February 2016. The report of the workshop was presented to the Subsidiary Body on Implementation (SBI 1) for consideration at its first meeting (UNEP/CBD/SBI/1/INF/21), together with a note by the Executive Secretary (UNEP/CBD/SBI/1/9) with an addendum on possible recommendations arising from the options for action identified by the workshop (UNEP/CBD/SBI/1/9/Add.1).

3. The Subsidiary Body prepared a draft decision for consideration by the thirteenth meeting of the Conference of the Parties (COP 13) on enhancing synergies among the biodiversity-related conventions (UNEP/CBD/COP/13/2) and also included elements related to synergies in reporting requirements under the various conventions in its draft decision on the sixth national reports.

4. The Subsidiary Body also requested that additional work be undertaken and presented by the Executive Secretary for consideration by the Conference of the Parties at its thirteenth meeting (UNEP/CBD/SBI/REC/1/8). In particular, the SBI requested the Executive Secretary to undertake further analysis of the outcomes of the workshop and actions as presented in the note by the Executive Secretary on possible recommendations¹ and, in consultation with the Informal Advisory Group, the Liaison Group of Biodiversity-related Conventions and Parties to the biodiversity-related conventions through appropriate channels, to “refine, consolidate and streamline the outcomes of the workshop, including synergies that may be relevant between two or more of the biodiversity-related conventions as well as the Protocols to the Convention, including:

(a) Options for actions by Parties which may include voluntary guidelines for synergies at the national level;

(b) Options for action at the international level that includes a road map for the period 2017-2020 that prioritizes and sequences actions and identifies actors and potential mechanisms involved.”

5. This note prepared by the CBD Secretariat responds to that request, and provides the foundation for a pre-session document for consideration at COP 13 that will be prepared by the Secretariat taking into account responses received on the consultation draft. Consistent with the SBI 1 recommendation, options on synergies resulting from the workshop are organized in two annexes: Annex 1 contains actions that could be taken at the national level and Annex 2 contains actions that could be taken at the international level, including elements of a road map for the period 2017 to 2020. The options included in Annexes 1 and 2 are not intended to be exhaustive, and there may be additional actions at both the national and international levels that could be taken.

¹ [UNEP/CBD/SBI/1/9/Add.1](#).

Annex 1

OPTIONS FOR ENHANCING SYNERGIES AMONG THE BIODIVERSITY-RELATED CONVENTIONS AT THE NATIONAL LEVEL

A. Introduction

Background

1. The present annex focuses on options for action for Parties of the various biodiversity-related conventions to enhance synergies at the national level. These are derived from the outcomes of the workshop on synergies among the biodiversity-related conventions (the workshop) and actions as presented in the note by the Executive Secretary on possible recommendations arising from the options for action identified by the workshop².

Purpose and scope

2. The options for action are voluntary and intended to serve as guidance for Parties to enhance synergies and cooperation in the implementation of the biodiversity-related conventions, their national biodiversity strategies and plans (NBSAPs), and the Strategic Plan for Biodiversity 2011-2020.

3. They are intended to provide concrete options of actions for Parties to take in support of effective and coherent implementation of the conventions at the national level.

4. The implementation of these options should be to the mutual benefit of the conventions concerned and be compatible with their provisions, obligations, mandates and objectives.

5. Options should be adapted to suit national circumstances: not all options for action would be applicable to all countries and additional options not included in this note could also be taken up by countries³. Some options for action may be relevant to enhancing synergies between just two of the instruments or among a subset of them, rather than among all seven conventions. Some options would have particular relevance for the Protocols of the Convention on Biological Diversity.

6. Parties could be encouraged to prioritize the various options for enhancing synergies, taking into account their NBSAPs, and to report on their prioritization and any actions take to enhance synergies at the national level in their national reports.

B. Options for action for Parties of the various biodiversity-related conventions to enhance synergies at the national level

Building on a foundation of common planning frameworks and coordination mechanisms

7. Major tools for promoting synergies among the biodiversity-related conventions at the national level are provided by (1) common planning frameworks and (2) coordination mechanisms.

1. *The Strategic Plan for Biodiversity 2011–2020, the Aichi Biodiversity Targets and national biodiversity strategies and action plans*

Rationale

8. The NBSAP aligned to the Strategic Plan for Biodiversity 2011-2020 and its Aichi Biodiversity Targets can serve as a unifying framework to promote and benefit from synergies among the biodiversity-related conventions. National plans aligned to the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development and Sustainable Development Goals⁴ could also contribute in this regard.

² [UNEP/CBD/SBI/1/9/Add.1](#).

³ For example, the UNEP “Sourcebook of opportunities for enhancing cooperation among the biodiversity-related conventions at national and regional levels” (UNEP, 2015) provides examples of experience.

⁴ General Assembly resolution 70/1, annex.

Options for action

9. Parties are encouraged:

(a) To include in their NBSAP, relevant actions to implement commitments under each of the biodiversity-related conventions to which they are a Party, in line with the commitments agreed to under the conventions concerned. In doing so, Parties may wish to take account of existing COP guidance related to updating or revising and implementing NBSAPs, including COP decisions IX/8, X/2 and X/5;

(b) To conduct a mapping and gap analysis of relevant implementation actions in terms of the inclusion of commitments described in subparagraph (a) above, including those related to contributions under the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development and the Sustainable Development Goals, and:

(i) Identify potential needs from the gap analysis;

(ii) Assess whether actions on synergies in NBSAPs and other relevant national implementation plans are in line with priorities, commitments and opportunities;

(iii) According to national need, review existing action plans for implementation to include implementation of the other biodiversity-related conventions;

(c) In revising or updating other related strategies and action plans, make use of the Aichi Biodiversity Targets and prepare Target-driven work plans for all biodiversity-related conventions;

(d) Make use of indicators of other relevant conventions in implementing measures towards the Aichi Biodiversity Targets and, as appropriate, prepare relevant national indicators for other biodiversity-related conventions to track effective implementation and monitoring of actions and also to feed into national actions related to the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development and the Sustainable Development Goals;

(e) Ensure the appropriate participation of all relevant stakeholders and of indigenous peoples and local communities in the finalization and implementation of the NBSAP for better articulation and planning to achieve synergies;

(f) Provide for linkages between the NBSAP and other relevant national implementation plans and strategies, for example those related to the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development, as well as to the national clearing-house mechanism and/or other information-sharing hubs.

2. Institutional arrangements and coordination mechanisms

Rationale

10. Coordination mechanisms and coordinated actions serve as the foundation for enhancing coherence and synergies in the implementation of the biodiversity-related conventions across all issue areas.

11. Consideration of coordination mechanisms needs to take account of: (a) the great variation in national circumstances, including the conventions to which a country is a Party, which has a bearing on the need; (b) the fact that institutional and coordinative arrangements are made at the discretion of the Party; and (c) differences between the conventions in their requirements of national authorities.

12. Consideration could be given to building or enhancing coordination mechanisms around national focal points and equivalent authorities of the conventions at the individual and the institutional levels. Advantage should be taken of relevant existing institutions to work on common issues under biodiversity-related conventions.

Options for action

13. Parties are encouraged to establish or strengthen a formal coordination mechanism for efficient coordination among national focal points and relevant authorities of biodiversity-related conventions and

to consider further strengthening such coordination mechanisms by providing for meaningful engagement of other stakeholders, including women, young people and indigenous and local people.

14. Such national coordination mechanisms could/should:

(a) Facilitate collaboration and coordination between national focal points or equivalent authorities of biodiversity-related conventions, including to exchange information on priorities with regard to actions for implementation and resource needs so that there is a common understanding;

(b) Potentially oversee or advise national priority-setting, including funding options, for action on areas of common interest and to achieve synergies;

(c) Facilitate coordinated needs assessments, for example on joint actions for implementation of biodiversity-related conventions in the framework of NBSAPs, and for targeted capacity-building;

(d) Facilitate a national coordination process related to national reporting to the various biodiversity-related conventions to, inter alia:

(i) Harmonize data collection and reporting;

(ii) Link focal points and institutions to meet reporting requirements;

(iii) Supervise quality control, consistency of reporting and adherence to reporting deadlines;

(iv) Ensure proper standards for databases.

(e) Facilitate enhanced coordination among the conventions at national level with respect to communications, information-sharing and awareness-raising, that would:

(i) Enable the national entities responsible for the various biodiversity-related conventions to collaborate in the development of communications and awareness-raising, including through the international observances that relate to the conventions, in conducting joint information and awareness campaigns; and to integrate and coordinate messages related to the various biodiversity-related conventions to which they are a Party;

(ii) Enable preparation of a national biodiversity-related communication and awareness strategy and implementation plan, mindful of synergies and mutual benefit;

(f) Facilitate coordination among the conventions at the national level with regard to resource mobilization and utilization that would:

(i) Enable development of a joint resource mobilization strategy, taking into account the strategic plans of individual biodiversity-related conventions and mainstreaming of biodiversity into different sectors;

(ii) Improve and ensure collaboration between the national focal points of biodiversity-related conventions and the operational focal point of the Global Environment Facility (GEF), as well as the focal points for other conventions for which GEF serves as a financial mechanism, as appropriate, with the goal of having relevant priorities addressed in GEF projects;

(iii) Enable the GEF operational focal point to share information with the national focal points of the biodiversity-related conventions on accessing funds through the GEF biodiversity focal area;

(iv) Facilitate consultation among the national focal points of biodiversity-related conventions in discussions on the utilization of the national GEF funding allocation for biodiversity;

(v) Enable the consideration of conducting pilot projects for promoting synergies on thematic areas, such as plant and animal health to support food security, food safety and environmental protection, including designing innovative projects for funding by the GEF to contribute to synergistic action;

- (vi) Enable the national focal points of biodiversity-related conventions to coordinate their funding efforts for synergies among the conventions by engaging with donor country representatives in their countries.
 - (g) Facilitate coordination among the conventions at the national level with regard to capacity-building, for example the training of national focal points, the conducting of joint workshops on common areas of responsibility among the conventions, such as national reporting and resource mobilization, the identification of common areas of capacity-building needs and the delivery of coordinated capacity-building for implementation of the conventions (see subsection 6 of this section);
 - (h) Help to facilitate the holding of national preparatory meetings before the meetings of the governing bodies of biodiversity-related conventions, involving officials and stakeholders associated with the other biodiversity-related conventions.
 - (i) Enable the national focal points, or equivalent authorities, of biodiversity-related conventions to collaborate with other sectors, as appropriate (e.g. climate change, inter-ministerial dialogue)
15. Informed and benefiting from such national coordination mechanism, Parties are encouraged:
- (a) To take into account mutual supportiveness of biodiversity-related conventions in developing national policies;
 - (b) To undertake an assessment of national needs for coordination and synergy of commitments under the biodiversity-related conventions;
 - (c) To undertake an assessment of the capacity-building needs and institutional arrangements for coordinated and synergistic efforts or approaches for effective implementation of biodiversity-related conventions;
 - (d) To develop a strategic plan for coordinated, synergistic implementation of biodiversity-related conventions;

Actions in specific areas

16. In addition to the options for actions that would be facilitated by enhanced coordination mechanisms, described in sub-section 2, above, the following sections outline specific options for action in the areas of: the management of information and knowledge, national reporting, monitoring and indicators; communication and awareness-raising; the science-policy interface; capacity-building; and resource mobilization and utilization.

3. Management of information and knowledge, national reporting, monitoring and indicators

Rationale

17. Collaboration in information-sharing and knowledge-management can provide mutual benefits in the implementation of the biodiversity-related conventions, particularly with regards to reporting and monitoring. Opportunities to reduce reporting burdens may lie in overlapping data requirements, and accessing relevant data from shared sources. The development and refinement of indicators for the Sustainable Development Goals will have implications for biodiversity-related conventions.

Options for action

18. Parties are encouraged:
- (a) To develop thematic national databases, or strengthen existing databases, that are open and interoperable between conventions, while having adequate appropriate safeguards;
 - (b) To exchange information and experience across conventions on tools, mechanisms and best practices for data collection and reporting as well as information and knowledge management;

(c) To undertake an inventory of their datasets to better understand the availability of information and approaches across conventions and identify commonalities of data across some or all of the conventions;

(d) To update clearing-house mechanisms to streamline reporting under the different biodiversity-related conventions;

(e) To ensure that reporting under each biodiversity-related convention benefits from the input of other biodiversity-related conventions;

(f) To contribute mutually to discussions regarding biodiversity-related indicators under each of the conventions and to discussions on development and refinement of indicators for the Sustainable Development Goals;

(g) To establish linkages of the national focal points with the agency designated for reporting on achievement of the Sustainable Development Goals (national statistical agency in many countries) to harmonize information on the Aichi Biodiversity Targets and Indicators;

(h) To explore linkages of the databases of member countries of biodiversity-related conventions to the national statistical database;

(i) To make use of global tools including UNEP Live and InforMEA.

4. *Communication and awareness-raising*

Rationale

19. Understanding of the social and economic importance of the objectives of the biodiversity-related conventions and their mutually supportive relationship is essential to enhance synergies in their implementation.

Options for action

20. Parties are encouraged:

(a) To take measures to improve understanding of the specific and related objectives of each of the biodiversity-related conventions;

(b) To take measures to ensure that the national entities responsible collaborate on the various international observances relevant to and promoted by the biodiversity-related conventions to which they are a Party in order to increase awareness of the conventions, the issues they address and their interrelationship.

(c) To utilize information from all the biodiversity-related conventions and not work in silos;

(d) Develop web-based communication tools for national audiences relevant to all the biodiversity-related conventions, their objectives and synergies between them, which could include a single entry point to channel users to the information sought and other related information and interactive features including for sharing success stories.

5. *Science-policy interface*

Rationale

21. The conventions have a common objective to base the advancement of policy and assessment of progress on the best available science and, in areas of overlap, draw from shared bodies of science. The work of the Intergovernmental Science-Policy Platform on Biodiversity and Ecosystem Services (IPBES) can contribute to each of the conventions.

Options for action

22. Parties are encouraged:

- (a) To establish and make use of a national roster of experts across all biodiversity-related conventions;
- (b) To enable the collaboration and involvement of national scientists engaged in the processes of the biodiversity-related conventions in the science–policy interface, for example that related to IPBES;
- (c) To enable the biodiversity-related conventions to contribute jointly to the development of assessments, scenarios and models, and other tools catalysed by IPBES;
- (d) To establish a science–policy platform or coordination mechanism at national level, involving all relevant institutions, to: ensure use of the best available knowledge; interact with IPBES in a timely, coherent manner and; strengthen implementation;
- (e) To assess the needs of the seven biodiversity-related conventions from the national perspective in order to provide input to the next IPBES work programme;
- (f) To establish institutional arrangements to enable interface between scientists and the national officials responsible for the development and implementation of policy related to the biodiversity-related conventions;

6. *Capacity-building*

Rationale

23. Strengthening national capacity for implementation is of common concern to each of the biodiversity-related conventions. This includes the need to strengthen knowledge and skills, including on synergies among the biodiversity-related conventions; increase coordinated capacity-building and awareness-raising efforts among the biodiversity-related conventions; increase human and financial resources dedicated to the implementation of the biodiversity-related conventions and towards greater cohesion in their implementation, and; strengthen the sustainability of capacity-building.

Options for action

24. Parties are encouraged:

- (a) To prioritize skills and capacities of human resources, including national focal points of biodiversity-related conventions, and assign or delegate roles and responsibilities appropriately;
- (b) To provide common training and other learning opportunities to the national focal points of the biodiversity-related conventions and other relevant staff to build capacity and mutual understanding of:
 - (i) Each of the biodiversity-related conventions, including their specific objectives, with a view to promoting synergies, pooled resources, and the retention of skills and knowledge;
 - (ii) The role of indigenous and local knowledge for coordinated integration in the implementation of biodiversity-related conventions;
 - (iii) Communication methods to raise awareness on the value of biodiversity and ecosystem services with their respective high-level policy decision-makers;
 - (iv) Technical knowledge on synergy and coordination.
- (c) To conduct joint capacity-building workshops for entities with responsibilities for the biodiversity-related conventions on common areas of responsibility among the conventions, such as national reporting and resource mobilization;
- (d) To identify common areas of capacity-building needs through a synergistic approach;
- (e) To conduct coordinated capacity-building for implementation of biodiversity-related conventions;

(f) To undertake measures designed to ensure the sustainability of national capacity-building, including through:

- (i) Training trainers for the biodiversity-related conventions including scientists and policy-makers;
- (ii) Creating, updating and/or improving databases and platforms for information-sharing to ensure institutional memory and consolidation of human resources available for implementation of biodiversity-related conventions;
- (iii) Developing a curriculum on biodiversity and advocating its inclusion in relevant university faculties to support and ensure sustainability in capacity-building and synergistic implementation of biodiversity-related conventions;
- (iv) Conducting targeted community capacity-building for effective assimilation and coordinated implementation of biodiversity-related conventions at site and national level.

25. Parties should take advantage of existing networking opportunities for capacity-building to help synergistic implementation of biodiversity-related conventions.

7. Resource mobilization and utilization

Rationale

26. Opportunities to strengthen synergies among the conventions in the areas of resource mobilization and utilization include measures to promote coordination in resource mobilization, including through relevant international financial mechanisms and instruments; and to increase the sharing of relevant information across conventions.

Options for action

27. Parties are encouraged:

(a) To ensure adequate staffing dedicated to the biodiversity-related conventions for their effective and synergistic implementation and leverage appropriate financial support for effective implementation of the conventions through advocacy and by demonstrating benefits;

(b) To utilize some of the national Global Environment Facility (GEF) funding allocation to implement aspects of the NBSAP that serve common objectives of biodiversity-related conventions;

(c) To collaborate regionally to explore regional opportunities for fund-raising to foster synergies among the biodiversity-related conventions and to share, at regional and subregional levels, best practices and lessons learned from successful access to the GEF biodiversity focal area.

Annex 2

**ENHANCING SYNERGIES AMONG THE BIODIVERSITY-RELATED CONVENTIONS:
INTERNATIONAL LEVEL**

1. The measures outlined in this annex are aimed at enhancing synergies among the biodiversity-related conventions, in a manner consistent with the mandates of the conventions, their secretariats and the international organizations concerned. It groups needs and actions identified by the workshop on synergies among the biodiversity-related conventions into three areas:

Enhancing coordination mechanisms;

Enhancing the provision of capacity-building and guidance;

Enhancing convergence in the management of information and knowledge, national reporting, monitoring and indicators

2. The annex further provides a road map in the form of ordering steps to implement the actions set forth in these three areas between 2017 and 2020.

A. Coordination mechanisms

3. Many options for action to enhance synergies would be based on or require coordination mechanisms. Efforts would therefore be taken to enhance coordination mechanisms at the international level.

Enhancing inter-secretariat coordination

1. Enhancement of the Liaison Group of the Biodiversity-related Conventions

4. The Biodiversity Liaison Group (BLG) of the convention secretariats serves an important function in facilitating cooperation among the biodiversity-related conventions. One area for enhanced synergies is to enhance the work of the BLG, including through the establishment of working groups to address specific areas such as resource mobilization, capacity-building and internet technology. Areas for additional common work could include communications, reporting, including through the exchange of information on reporting experience and lessons learned, and indicators, including those related to the Sustainable Development Goals. Such work would also include the preparation of guidance materials for Parties outlined in the relevant section below.

2. Establishment of a wider inter-agency coordination group on biodiversity

5. Relevant international organizations have an important role to support Parties in the implementation of the biodiversity-related conventions and to enhance synergies in their implementation. In order to enhance efficiencies, there are opportunities to enhance coordination among such organizations, build on existing initiatives where possible, and to avoid duplication.

6. Such consultation and coordination could be provided through the development of an inter-agency consultative group or network of relevant international organizations, focusing on matters related to biodiversity. The aim of such a group would be to serve as a coordination mechanism. It would not implement activities; on the contrary, among its outcomes might be to enhance the role of a particular organization in a particular niche or the role of an ongoing partnership or joint work plan between two or more such entities. Its establishment would take account of and be complementary to other relevant mechanisms such as the United Nations Environment Management Group and the Aichi Biodiversity

Targets Task Force. It could take the form of similar coordination mechanisms that exist in the UN system, such as UN-Water (along the lines of a “UN Biodiversity”), or be more informal in nature.

7. Such a group would comprise the secretariats of the biodiversity-related conventions and international organizations that have a mandate in addressing biodiversity-related matters. These include the Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations, the International Union for the Conservation of Nature, the United Nations Development Programme, the United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization and the United Nations Environment Programme. They also include the Secretariats of the Global Environment Facility and Intergovernmental Science-Policy Platform on Biodiversity and Ecosystem Services (IPBES).

8. One of the functions of the group could be for coordinating system-wide action on capacity-building to facilitate cooperation in implementation of the biodiversity-related conventions and identify opportunities across conventions. Another would be to help clarify roles and responsibilities in mutually-supportive activities. Such a group would also be able to provide links with appropriate processes related to the Sustainable Development Goals.

9. In addition to the benefits that could be gained through such a coordination mechanism, the secretariats of the conventions could further explore with relevant organizations opportunities for the strengthening of collaboration and support provided by regional organizations and mechanisms to Parties, including in the areas of communications and awareness-raising, resource mobilization and utilization, capacity-building and synergies at the science-policy interface. In addition, relevant regional organizations play an important role in regional strategies and initiatives and could also contribute to ensuring that discussions and options for enhancing effective implementation and cooperation among the biodiversity-related conventions extend also to relevant regional agreements and conventions.

Enhancing coordination among the governing bodies

3. Establishment of a joint working group among representatives of the Parties to the conventions

10. Establishing a joint informal working group across the conventions would build on the experience gained in implementing decision XII/6 in which an informal advisory group was created and a forum with regionally-balanced representation of the Parties to each of the seven global biodiversity-related conventions was convened (the workshop). The joint working group could comprise members of the bureau, standing committee or equivalent body of each of the conventions or other national officials designated by the members of those bodies. It could serve in an informal advisory capacity to the governing bodies of the conventions.

B. Management of information and knowledge, national reporting, monitoring and indicators

11. Convergence in the management of information and knowledge and alignment in national reporting, monitoring and indicators, where relevant, would serve as an important foundation to enhancing synergies and efficiencies among the biodiversity-related conventions. Actions aimed to support capacity-building in this regard are outlined in this section rather than in section C on capacity-building and guidance. Actions would be required of the secretariats of the biodiversity-related conventions, including in the framework of the BLG and by relevant organizations, including the United Nations Environment Programme through the Multilateral Environmental Agreement Information and Knowledge Management (MEA-IKM) Initiative and the UNEP World Conservation Monitoring Centre

(WCMC). The important role of the MEA-IKM and InforMEA⁵ to the Convention and to enhancing synergies among the biodiversity-related conventions would be emphasized and supported by Parties and other Governments. Such actions could include the following measures:

(a) Advance and make use of relevant case studies on information management, such as those described in the UNEP Sourcebook (UNEP-WCMC, Convention Secretariats);

(b) Provide guidance on national databases, data access and use, and share experience in national database development and use, taking into account and utilizing relevant initiatives including those under the Clearing-House Mechanism of the CBD, MEA-IKM/InforMEA and the Global Biodiversity Information Facility (GBIF) (UNEP MEA-IKM/InforMEA and the UNEP WCMC, in collaboration with the secretariats of the biodiversity related conventions);

(c) Provide guidance to assist national efforts in national reporting, monitoring and indicators, building on the work of InforMEA and the mapping exercises identified in the Sourcebook (Convention Secretariats, BLG, in collaboration with UNEP);

(d) Ensure and enhance links between the data systems of the conventions and relevant global knowledge products; ensure harmonization, links and interoperability of all relevant biodiversity-related data initiatives (Convention Secretariats, BLG and relevant reciprocal organizations);

(e) Contribute to the ongoing processes on indicators for the Sustainable Development Goals, including their refinement, and to the discussion of biodiversity-related indicators under each of the other conventions (Convention Secretariats, BLG);

(f) Provide at regional and subregional level, capacity-building related to data management and national reporting that would among other things provide training on database systems and help to build capacity to international standards;

(g) Keep under review opportunities for cooperation in reporting under the conventions, in line with the recommendation 1/10 of the Subsidiary Body on Implementation (BLG).

12. Relevant organizations, including UNEP and the United Nations Development Programme, could also provide capacity-building support to countries at the national level in the area of information and knowledge management, for example:

(a) Provision of appropriate provision of tools and technology for database development;

(b) Pilot studies on database planning and management, for example in two countries per region.

C. Capacity building and guidance

13. Many options for action by international organizations, including the convention secretariats, focus on capacity building, or the provision of guidance, to support synergies in the implementation of the conventions. These include a number of basic guidance materials that could be prepared or made more readily available through immediate action as well as capacity-building initiatives/mechanisms that may involve preparatory actions and process. Such actions could include the measures set out below.

⁵ InforMEA is the Internet platform of the Multilateral Environmental Agreement Information and Knowledge Management (MEA-IKM) Initiative

Guidance materials

14. Aimed at a target audience of the national focal points and authorities and other relevant national actors involved in the implementation of the biodiversity-related conventions, make existing materials more widely known and readily available or prepare new materials to address any gaps, as follows:

- (a) A guide and other communications material about the biodiversity-related conventions, their relationships and synergies among them (BLG);
- (b) Guidance on synergies in implementing the national biodiversity strategy and action plan and similar strategies and action plans of other biodiversity-related conventions (BLG);
- (c) Guidance document on emerging opportunities for a coordinated approach to funding from the GEF and other multilateral systems including the Green Climate Fund (CBD Secretariat in collaboration with the GEF and GCF secretariats and consultation with the Secretariats of other biodiversity-related conventions)
- (d) Success stories of synergies in the implementation of the biodiversity-related conventions (CBD Secretariat, BLG and GEF).

Capacity building

15. The secretariats of the conventions and international organizations have an important role to support national capacity-building across the various relevant areas. Benefiting from the enhanced coordination mechanism outlined above, this could include actions by the secretariats of the conventions and relevant organizations as follows:

- (a) Identify common areas of national capacity-building needs, across the conventions;
- (b) Share information on ongoing, planned and upcoming capacity-building programmes, projects and initiatives relevant to the biodiversity-related conventions in order to facilitate a coordinated approach, avoid duplication, maximize their utilization and enable cooperation in implementation where relevant;
- (c) Deliver coordinated capacity-building, including through regional and subregional mechanisms, taking advantage of existing networking opportunities for capacity-building and addressing common needs and areas of two or more conventions and including building capacity for synergistic implementation of the conventions;
- (d) Conduct webinars, regional workshops and other activities for the national focal points of biodiversity-related conventions on accessing funds in the GEF biodiversity focal area;
- (e) Design and facilitate a multi-stakeholder initiative or forum to enable sharing of experience among Parties and involving international organizations, relevant non-governmental organizations and convention secretariats. Such an initiative could complement the coordination mechanisms outlined in section A and contribute to the identification of priorities and review of needs.

D. Roadmap

16. This section aims to briefly outline a possible sequence of actions from 2017 to 2020. Some actions, including many activities outlined in sections B and C would not require new mandate and, subject to the availability of resources, could be initiated immediately and implemented on an ongoing basis. Other possible measures to enhance synergies at the international level may require a decision by the Conference of the Parties to the CBD and, in some cases, by the governing bodies of other

biodiversity-related conventions and international organizations. There may also be financial and human resource implications related to some of the options.

17. *Phase 1:* This phase would include initiation of activities, including those outlined in sections B and C of this annex, for which no new mandate would be required. It could also involve the development of an inter-agency consultative group or network of relevant international organizations addressing matters related to biodiversity, as described in section A, paragraphs 5 to 8 of this annex, involving dialogue among the relevant secretariats outlined in paragraph 7. It could also involve preparation for a joint informal working group across the conventions as described in paragraph 9 and a multi-stakeholder forum described in paragraph 15(e). Further work as may be requested by the COP would be conducted by the Executive Secretary. This phase could include relevant gap analysis and needs assessment, with consultation among the BLG and relevant organizations.

18. *Phase 2:* This phase would include the regular meetings of the BLG as well as initial meetings of the consultative group and the joint working group. It could include actions of the BLG and relevant organizations to provide capacity building and guidance among those described in sections B and C of this annex, including the development of a coordinated approach for capacity building.

19. *Phase 3:* This phase would include further delivery of supportive actions, including capacity-building activities, by relevant organizations and the consideration by the governing bodies of other biodiversity-related conventions and organizations.

20. Consideration could be given to these matters by the governing bodies of each of the biodiversity-related conventions between 2017 and 2020, taking into account the calendar of their meetings as follows:

- The General Assembly of States Parties to the World Heritage Convention meets every two years (21st session, 2017) during the sessions of the General Conference of UNESCO; and the World Heritage Committee meets once a year (40th session, 10-20 July 2016 to resume 24-26 October 2016; 41st session, 2017, etc.).
- The Conference of the Contracting Parties to the Ramsar Convention on Wetlands meets every 3 years (COP 13, 2018) and its Standing Committee meets once a year (52nd session, 13-17 June 2016; 53rd session, 2017, etc.).
- The Governing Body of ITPGRFA holds its regular sessions at least once every two years (7th session, 2017).
- The Commission on Phytosanitary Measures (CPM) meets once a year (11th session, 4-8 April 2016; 12th session, 2017, etc.).
- The Conference of the Parties to CMS meets every three years (COP 12, 2017; COP 13, 2020); and during the intersessional period its Standing Committee usually meets once a year (45th session, 9-10 November 2016; 46th session, 2017, etc.), as well as immediately before and after each COP.
- The Conference of the Parties to CITES meets every three years (CoP 17, 24 September to 5 October 2016; CoP 18, 2019); and during the intersessional period its Standing Committee meets twice, as well as immediately before and after each CoP.
- The Conference of the Parties to CBD meets every two years (COP 13, 4-17 December 2016; COP 14, 2018; COP 15, 2020).

21. Work undertaken by the Executive Secretary during the intersessional period and progress in implementation, could be reported to the Subsidiary Body on Implementation at its second meeting and to COP 14 in 2018.