

Report of the Informal Advisory Group on Technical and Scientific Cooperation on the assessment of entities and organizations under consideration to host the regional and/or subregional technical and scientific cooperation support centres

I. Background

1. In decision [15/8](#), the Conference of the Parties established a mechanism comprising a network of regional and/or subregional technical and scientific cooperation support centres to be coordinated by a global coordination entity. The overall goal of the mechanism is to promote and facilitate cooperation among Parties and relevant organizations to enable them to effectively utilize science, technology, and innovation to support the implementation of the Kunming-Montreal Global Biodiversity Framework.¹
2. In the same decision, the Conference of the Parties requested the Executive Secretary, in consultation with the Bureau and with the support of the Informal Advisory Group on Technical and Scientific Cooperation, to implement a process for selecting entities and organizations to host the regional and /or subregional support centres. The Informal Advisory Group was requested to consider the top shortlisted candidates and to provide advice on the most suitable entities and organizations, as well as the overall number of centres required.
3. This report describes the process undertaken to assess the entities and organizations that expressed interest in hosting a regional or subregional support centre and presents the results of the assessment and the advice of the Informal Advisory Group.

II. Selection process

4. During the first meeting of the Informal Advisory Group on Technical and Scientific Cooperation that took place on 14-16 June 2023, the Group recommended that the process to identify entities interested in hosting regional and/or sub-regional support centres be split into two stages.

A. First stage of the selection process

5. During the first stage, the Secretariat, with support from the Informal Advisory Group, developed a simple [expression of interest form](#) and an [assessment framework](#) for evaluating the applications based on the criteria listed in paragraph 4 of annex II to decision 15/8 focusing on technical aspects.²
6. The Secretariat issued notification [2023-080](#) on 27 July 2023 inviting entities and organizations interested in hosting a regional and/or subregional support centre to complete the expression of interest form online by 30 September 2023.
7. The Secretariat organized an informational webinar on 31 August 2023 to explain the criteria and the process for the selection of entities and organizations to host the regional and/or subregional support centres and to provide an opportunity for potential applicants to ask questions and seek clarifications on the process.

¹ A full description of the mechanism is provided in paragraphs 25 to 27 and annex II of decision 15/8.

² These included the criteria in sub-paragraphs 4(b), 4(c), 4(f), 4(g), 4(h) and 4(i) of annex II to decision 15/8.

Approximately 140 participants attended the webinar. A [background document](#) and [Frequently Asked Questions](#) document were also prepared and posted on the CBD website.

8. The Secretariat received a total of [42 submissions](#) (11 from the Americas, 12 from Africa, seven from Asia, 11 from Europe and one from Oceania). The Secretariat evaluated the expressions of interest using the assessment framework referred to above. Each criterion was assigned a specific weighted score and was assessed on a range from zero to the assigned maximum score under the following four assessment categories: does not meet, partially meets, meets or exceeds. The maximum total score was 100 points.

9. The Informal Advisory Group recommended that entities and organizations that scored 51 points and above be longlisted. Accordingly, the Secretariat issued notification [2023-126](#) announcing the [26 entities and organizations](#) that would be invited to participate in the second stage of the selection process.

B. Second stage of the selection process

10. For the second stage, the Secretariat, in collaboration with the Informal Advisory Group, developed a [questionnaire](#) and an [assessment matrix](#) based on the remaining criteria in decision 15/8, Annex II, para. 4, focusing on institutional capacity to provide technical advice and support to Parties, demonstrated ability to manage complex projects and programmes, capacity mobilize and manage financial resources, and active engagement and capacity to work with networks of collaborators.³ In addition to the above criteria, points were awarded based on the willingness of entities to dedicate technical and administrative staff, and the availability of infrastructure and facilities to support the operations of the centres.

11. In early December 2023, the 26 longlisted entities and organizations were invited to complete the questionnaire, specifying the regions and/or sub-regions where they are based,⁴ and to provide the supporting documentation by 15 January 2024. All the 26 entities submitted the requested detailed information in advance of the deadline.

12. As in the first stage, the applicants were awarded points depending on how well they met the selection criteria. Each criterion was assigned a specific weighted score and the maximum total score for all the criteria was 100 points. Each criterion was assessed with scores ranging from zero to the maximum score for that particular criterion. The criterion on resource mobilization was reassessed because the information received during the first stage of the process was insufficient.

13. The Secretariat conducted a thorough assessment of the detailed information submitted and allocated scores to each of the 26 entities. An average score was calculated for each entity or organization based on the combined scores from both stages of the process. A ranked shortlist of the entities and organizations per region or subregion was then prepared.

III. Results of the assessment

14. A summary of the results of the assessment with a ranked shortlist of entities from highest to lowest scores for all 26 entities per region is presented in Annex I. An analysis of the geographical coverage, including the gaps and overlaps, is presented in Annex II.

15. The top three shortlisted candidates per region, based on the assessment, are as follows:

- a. For Africa, the entity that received the highest score is the Central African Forest Commission (COMIFAC), followed by the South African National Biodiversity Institute (SANBI) and the Sahara and Sahel Observatory (OSS);
- b. For the Americas, the entity that received the highest score is the Alexander von Humboldt Biological Resources Research Institute (Humboldt Institute), followed by the Caribbean Community (CARICOM) and the Central American Commission on Environment and Development (CCAD);

³ These included the criteria in sub-paragraphs 4(a), 4(c), 4(d), 4(e) and 4(f) of annex II to decision 15/8.

⁴ Following the guidance provided by the Informal Advisory Group at its second meeting, the geographical regions and subregions as defined by the United Nations Statistics Division were used: <https://unstats.un.org/unsd/methodology/m49/>.

- c. In Asia, the entity that received the highest score is the ASEAN Centre for Biodiversity (ACB), followed by the International Union for the Conservation of Nature (IUCN) Asia Regional Office and the IUCN Regional Office for West Asia (IUCN ROWA);
- d. In Europe, the Joint Research Centre (JRC) of the European Commission received the highest score, followed by the IUCN Centre for Mediterranean Cooperation (IUCN Med) and IUCN's Regional Office for Eastern Europe and Central Asia (IUCN ECARO);
- e. For Oceania, there is only one candidate, the Secretariat of the Pacific Regional Environment Programme (SPREP).

16. The Informal Advisory Group considers all the above shortlisted entities and organizations as suitable to host a regional and/or subregional centre. Several organizations beyond this selection are also considered suitable.

17. Based on the above results, a total of 13 support centres could be established (three in Africa, three in Asia, three in the Americas, three in Europe and one in Oceania). However, considering the analysis of the geographic coverage of those 13 centres presented in Annex II, this scenario would result in several countries not being covered (five in Africa, two in the Americas, 14 in Asia and eight in Europe).⁵

18. To address this limitation, two additional scenarios could be considered. In the second scenario, 15 centres could be established (four in Africa, three in the Americas, four in Asia, three in Europe and one in Oceania), resulting in a more optimal coverage with fewer gaps (one in Africa, two in the Americas, six in Asia and eight in Europe) and less overlaps as follows:

- a. For Africa, the centres under this scenario would include: COMIFAC, SANBI, OSS and the Ecological Monitoring Center (CSE);
- b. For the Americas, the number would remain the same as in the previous scenario, with three centres being proposed: the Humboldt Institute, CARICOM and CCAD.
- c. In Asia, this scenario would include the ASEAN Centre for Biodiversity, IUCN Asia Regional Office, IUCN ROWA and the Regional Environmental Centre for Central Asia (CAREC). The Informal Advisory Group recommends that CAREC be considered as a possible fourth centre, despite receiving half a point less in the total average score than the next highest-scoring centre (the International Centre for Integrated Mountain Development or ICIMOD), because CAREC would cover five extra countries in Central Asia, namely Kazakhstan, Kyrgyzstan, Tajikistan, Turkmenistan, and Uzbekistan, while ICIMOD would cover only two extra countries (Afghanistan and Iran).
- d. In Europe, the number of centres under this scenario would remain the same, i.e., JRC, IUCN Med, and IUCN ECARO⁶;
- e. Finally, for Oceania, this scenario would include the Secretariat of the Pacific Regional Environment Programme (SPREP).

19. In the third scenario, 19 centres could be established (five in Africa, five in Asia, four in Europe, four in the Americas and one in Oceania) as follows:

- a. For Africa, this scenario would include COMIFAC, SANBI, OSS, CSE and the Regional Centre for Mapping of Resources for Development (RCMRD);
- b. For the Americas, the centres would include: the Humboldt Institute, CARICOM, CCAD and the International Center for Tropical Agriculture (CIAT);

⁵ **Africa:** Ghana, Guinea, Liberia, Sierra Leone, South Sudan and Togo.

Americas: Canada and the United States of America.

Asia: Afghanistan, Armenia, Azerbaijan, DPR Korea, Georgia, Iran, Kazakhstan, Kyrgyzstan, Tajikistan, Turkmenistan, and Uzbekistan.

Europe: Andorra, Belarus, Monaco, Republic of Moldova, Russian Federation, San Marino, Ukraine, and the United Kingdom.

⁶ IUCN's Regional Office for Eastern Europe and Central Asia (ECARO) has indicated they could only provide service to countries in Eastern Europe.

- c. In Asia, this scenario would include the ASEAN Centre for Biodiversity, IUCN Asia Regional Office, IUCN ROWA, CAREC and ICIMOD;
- d. In Europe, this scenario would include JRC, IUCN Med, IUCN ECARO and the Royal Belgian Institute for Natural Sciences;
- e. Finally, for Oceania, this scenario would include the Secretariat of the Pacific Regional Environment Programme (SPREP).

20. This third scenario would result in near complete coverage, with only two countries in the Americas, four in Asia and seven countries in Europe not being covered.⁷ However, there would be significant overlaps in coverage by different centres especially in Europe and Latin America (see Annex II).

IV. Advice on the most suitable entities and organizations and the number of centres required

21. Based on the above analysis, the Informal Advisory Group is of view that the second scenario with a minimum of 15 support centres, described in paragraph 18 above, would provide the most optimal coverage with minimal overlaps.

22. In addition to the scores and geographical coverage, the Informal Advisory Group recommends that the following factors be considered in determining the most suitable entities and organizations and the number of support centres:

- a. Type of organization (inter-governmental or regional economic integration organization, international organization with a regional office(s), non-governmental organization or national organization but supporting other countries in the region or subregion). The type of organization may affect different functions that the support centres are expected to carry out, such as ability to manage and disburse international funds;
- b. Flexibility or willingness of entities to cover additional countries beyond the official geographic scope of their work, as is in the case of inter-governmental organizations;
- c. Potential risk of dominance of the technical and scientific cooperation mechanism by one organization. Ideally, a diversity of organizations will form part of the network of support centres;
- d. Entities mandated to work in specific ecoregions, often straddling more than one continental region, which can generate overlaps with other regionally based entities being considered to host support centres;
- e. The potential and willingness of entities to enter into partnerships and/or collaborative arrangements to co-host the regional or subregional centre in delivering support to Parties.

23. The Informal Advisory Group considers that most of the entities that submitted an expression of interest possess valuable experience, expertise and skills that would be an asset to the technical and scientific cooperation mechanism. Some of them have very specialized expertise that may be required across different regions or subregions. The Group recommends that entities, especially those that participated in the second stage, be invited and encouraged to contribute to the implementation of the mechanism, for example by co-hosting a regional or subregional support centre with a selected entity; partnering with a regional or subregional support centre and/or working through the global coordination entity to provide specialized technical support to Parties in multiple regions.

⁷ **Americas:** Canada and the United States of America.

Asia: Armenia, Azerbaijan the Democratic People's Republic of Korea, and Georgia.

Europe: Andorra, Belarus, Monaco, Republic of Moldova, Russian Federation, San Marino, and Ukraine.

Annex I: Summary of the assessment results

Africa	Stage 1	Stage 2	Average	Countries covered
Central African Forest Commission (COMIFAC)	78	92	85	11
South African National Biodiversity Institute (SANBI)	78	83	80.5	16
Sahara and Sahel Observatory (OSS)	69.5	89	79.25	29
Ecological Monitoring Center (CSE)	68.5	89	78.75	16
Regional Centre for Mapping of Resources for Development (RCMRD)	69.5	81.5	75.5	24

Americas	Stage 1	Stage 2	Average	Countries covered
Alexander von Humboldt Biological Resources Research Institute	84	86.5	85.25	32
Caribbean Community Secretariat (CARICOM)	63	80.5	71.75	16
Central American Commission on Environment and Development (CCAD)	61.5	82	71.75	9
International Center for Tropical Agriculture (CIAT)	62	81	71.5	10
Organisation of Eastern Caribbean States Commission (OESC)	62	75.5	68.75	15
International Barcode of Life Consortium (iBOL)	51.5	73	62.25	2
Future Earth Canada	51.5	68.5	60	2

Asia	Stage 1	Stage 2	Average	Countries covered
ASEAN Centre for Biodiversity	83.5	94.5	89	11
IUCN Asia Regional Office	74.5	93	83.75	21
IUCN Regional Office for West Asia (ROWA)	63	84.5	73.75	11
International Centre for Integrated Mountain Development (ICIMOD)	60	82.5	71.25	11
Regional Environmental Centre for Central Asia (CAREC)	66	75.5	70.75	5
Nanjing Institute of Environmental Sciences (NIES)	52	83.5	67.75	13

Europe	Stage 1	Stage 2	Average	Countries covered
European Commission – Joint Research Centre (JRC)	76.5	85.5	81	35
IUCN Center for Mediterranean Cooperation	78	80.5	79.25	11
IUCN Regional Office for Eastern Europe and Central Asia (ECARO)	68.5	84.5	76.5	10
Royal Belgian Institute for Natural Sciences (RBINS)	60.5	82	71.25	32
Conservation of Arctic Flora and Fauna International Secretariat (CAFF)	72.5	67.5	70	6
Leibniz Research Network Biodiversity	62	67.5	64.75	43

National Academy of Sciences of Belarus, Institute of Genetics and Cytology (NASB)	51	74.5	62.75	10
Oceania	Stage 1	Stage 2	Average	Countries covered
Secretariat of the Pacific Regional Environment Programme (SPREP)	83.5	89.5	86.5	13

Annex II: Analysis of geographical coverage

Region: Africa

AFRICA	Regional coverage	Overlaps* between institutions	Regional gaps
<i>Scenario 1</i>			
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • COMIFAC (Yaoundé, Cameroon) • OSS (Tunis, Tunisia) • SANBI (Pretoria, South Africa) 	Angola, Comoros, Algeria, Benin, Botswana, Burkina Faso, Burundi, Cabo Verde, Cameroon, Central African Republic, Congo, Côte d'Ivoire, Democratic Djibouti, Egypt, Equatorial Guinea, Eritrea, Eswatini, Ethiopia, Gabon, Gambia, Guinea-Bissau, Kenya, Lesotho, Libya, Madagascar, Malawi, Mali, Mauritania, Mauritius, Morocco, Mozambique, Namibia, Niger, Nigeria, Rwanda, Sao Tome and Principe, Senegal, Seychelles, Somalia, South Africa, Sudan, Tunisia, Uganda, United Republic of Tanzania, Zambia, Zimbabwe	Angola, Cameroon, Central African Republic, Chad, Republic of the Congo, Namibia, Seychelles	Ghana, Guinea, Liberia, Sierra Leone, South Sudan, Togo
<i>Scenario 2</i>			
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • COMIFAC (Yaoundé, Cameroon) • OSS (Tunis, Tunisia) • SANBI (Pretoria, South Africa) + CSE (Dakar, Senegal)	<i>Same as above</i> + Ghana, Guinea, Liberia, Sierra Leone, Togo	<i>Same as above</i> + Benin, Burkina Faso, Cabo Verde, Côte d'Ivoire, Gambia, Guinea-Bissau, Mali, Mauritania, Niger, Nigeria, Senegal	South Sudan
<i>Scenario 3</i>			
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • COMIFAC (Yaoundé, Cameroon) • OSS (Tunis, Tunisia) • SANBI (Pretoria, South Africa) • CSE (Dakar, Senegal) + RCMRD (Nairobi, Kenya)	<i>Same as above</i> + South Sudan	<i>Same as above</i> + Angola, Botswana, Comoros, Djibouti, Eritrea, Eswatini, Ethiopia, Kenya, Lesotho, Madagascar, Malawi, Mauritius, Mozambique, Namibia, Rwanda, Seychelles, Somalia, South Africa, Sudan, Uganda,	None

		United Republic of Tanzania, Zambia, Zimbabwe	
		*Note: Additional overlaps with IUCN Med in Algeria, Egypt, Libya, Morocco, and Tunisia	

Region: Americas

AMERICAS	Regional coverage	Overlaps between institutions	Regional gaps
<i>Scenario 1</i>			
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Humboldt (Bogotá, Colombia) • CARICOM (Georgetown, Guyana) • CCAD (San Salvador, El Salvador) 	Antigua and Barbuda, Argentina, Bahamas, Barbados, Belize, Bolivia, Brazil, Chile, Colombia, Costa Rica, Cuba, Dominica, Dominican Republic, Ecuador, El Salvador, Grenada, Guatemala, Guyana, Haiti, Honduras, Jamaica, Mexico, Nicaragua, Panama, Paraguay, Peru, Saint Lucia, Saint Kitts and Nevis, Saint Vincent and the Grenadines, Suriname, Trinidad and Tobago, Uruguay, Venezuela	Antigua and Barbuda, Bahamas, Barbados, Belize, Costa Rica, Cuba, Dominica, Dominican Republic, El Salvador, Grenada, Guatemala, Guyana, Haiti, Honduras, Jamaica, Mexico, Nicaragua, Panama, Saint Lucia, Saint Vincent and the Grenadines, Suriname, Trinidad and Tobago	Canada, USA
<i>Scenario 2</i>			
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Humboldt (Bogotá, Colombia) • CARICOM (Georgetown, Guyana) • CCAD (San Salvador, El Salvador) 	<i>Same as above</i>	<i>Same as above</i>	<i>Same as above</i>
<i>Scenario 3</i>			
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Humboldt (Bogotá, Colombia) • CARICOM (Georgetown, Guyana) • CCAD (San Salvador, El Salvador) + CIAT (Palmira, Colombia)	<i>Same as above</i>	<i>Same as above</i> + Brazil, Colombia, Costa Rica, Ecuador, El Salvador, Guatemala, Honduras, Nicaragua, Panama, Peru	<i>Same as above</i>

Region: Asia

ASIA	Regional coverage	Overlaps* between institutions	Regional gaps
<i>Scenario 1</i>			
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • ACB (Los Baños, Philippines) • IUCN Asia (Bangkok, Thailand) • IUCN ROWA (Amman, Jordan) 	Cambodia, China, Bahrain, Bangladesh, Bhutan, Brunei Darussalam, India, Indonesia, Iraq, Japan, Jordan, Kuwait, Lao PDR, Lebanon, Malaysia, Maldives, Mongolia, Myanmar, Nepal, Oman, Pakistan, Philippines, Qatar, Republic of Korea, Saudi Arabia, Singapore, Sri Lanka, Syrian Arab Republic, Thailand, Timor-Leste, United Arab Emirates, Viet Nam, Yemen	Cambodia, Indonesia, Lao PDR, Malaysia, Myanmar, Philippines, Singapore, Thailand, Timor-Leste, Viet Nam	Afghanistan, Armenia, Azerbaijan, Cyprus*, DPR Korea, Georgia, Iran, Israel*, Kazakhstan, Kyrgyzstan, Tajikistan, Turkmenistan, Türkiye*, Uzbekistan
<i>Scenario 2</i>			
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • ACB (Los Baños, Philippines) • IUCN Asia (Bangkok, Thailand) • IUCN ROWA (Amman, Jordan) + CAREC (Almaty, Kazakhstan)	<i>Same as above</i> + Kazakhstan, Kyrgyzstan, Tajikistan, Turkmenistan, Uzbekistan	<i>Same as above</i>	Afghanistan, Armenia, Azerbaijan, Cyprus*, DPR Korea, Georgia, Iran, Israel*, Türkiye*
<i>Scenario 3</i>			
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • ACB (Los Baños, Philippines) • IUCN Asia (Bangkok, Thailand) • IUCN ROWA (Amman, Jordan) • CAREC (Almaty, Kazakhstan) + ICIMOD (Kathmandu, Nepal)	<i>Same as above</i> + Afghanistan, Iran	<i>Same as above</i> + China, Bangladesh, Bhutan, India, Maldives, Nepal, Pakistan, Sri Lanka	Armenia, Azerbaijan, Cyprus*, DPR Korea, Georgia, Israel*, Türkiye*
	*Note: IUCN Asia also covers Australia and New Zealand (part of the Oceania region)	*Note: Additional overlaps with IUCN Med in Lebanon and Syrian Arab Republic	*Note: Cyprus and Türkiye covered by JRC Cyprus and Israel covered by IUCN Med

Region: Europe

EUROPE	Regional coverage*	Overlaps* between institutions	Gaps
<i>Scenario 1</i>			
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • JRC (Ispra, Italy) • IUCN MED (Málaga, Spain) • IUCN ECARO (Belgrade, Serbia) 	Albania, Austria, Belgium, Bosnia and Herzegovina, Bulgaria, Croatia, Czechia, Denmark, Estonia, Finland, France, Germany, Greece, Hungary, Iceland, Ireland, Italy, Latvia, Liechtenstein, Lithuania, Luxembourg, Malta, Montenegro, Netherlands, North Macedonia, Norway, Poland, Portugal, Romania, Serbia, Slovakia, Slovenia, Spain, Sweden, Switzerland	Albania, Bosnia and Herzegovina, Bulgaria, Croatia, France, Greece, Italy, Malta, Montenegro, North Macedonia, Portugal, Romania, Serbia, Slovenia, Spain	Andorra, Belarus, Monaco, Republic of Moldova, Russian Federation, San Marino, Ukraine, United Kingdom
<i>Scenario 2</i>			
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • JRC (Ispra, Italy) • IUCN MED (Málaga, Spain) • IUCN ECARO (Belgrade, Serbia) 	<i>Same as above</i>	<i>Same as above</i>	<i>Same as above</i>
<i>Scenario 3</i>			
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • JRC (Ispra, Italy) • IUCN MED (Málaga, Spain) • IUCN ECARO (Belgrade, Serbia) + RBINS (Brussels, Belgium)	<i>Same as above</i> + United Kingdom	<i>Same as above</i> + Austria, Belgium, Czechia, Denmark, Estonia, Finland, Germany, Hungary, Iceland, Ireland, Latvia, Liechtenstein, Lithuania, Luxembourg, Netherlands, Norway, Poland, Slovakia, Sweden, Switzerland	Andorra, Belarus, Monaco, Republic of Moldova, Russian Federation, San Marino, Ukraine
	*Note: JRC also covers Cyprus and Türkiye (part of the Asia region) IUCN Med also covers Cyprus and Israel (part of the Asia region)	*Note: Additional overlaps with IUCN Med in Algeria, Egypt, Libya, Morocco and Tunisia (part of the Africa region), as well as Lebanon and Syrian Arab Republic (part of the Asia region)	

Region: Oceania

OCEANIA	Regional coverage	Overlaps* between institutions	Regional gaps
<i>Scenarios 1, 2 and 3</i>			
SPREP	Fiji, Kiribati, Marshall Islands, Micronesia, Nauru, Niue, Palau, Papua New Guinea, Samoa, Solomon Islands, Tonga, Tuvalu, Vanuatu	N/A	Australia*, New Zealand*
			*Note: Australia and New Zealand covered by IUCN Asia