

# For an effective implementation of the post-2020 global biodiversity framework: what is needed at CBD COP15 and beyond

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Negotiations leading to the adoption of the so-called “post-2020 global biodiversity framework” (GBF) have been characterized by successive delays because of Covid-19, and, lately, have been held in a context of a multidimensional crisis thereby resulting in fluctuating levels of political will and weak visibility for the biodiversity agenda. However, in December 2022 at the 15<sup>th</sup> Conference of the Parties (COP15), and after the failure of the Convention on Biological Diversity (CBD)’s 2011-2020 Aichi targets<sup>1</sup>, countries are expected to reach consensus on an international framework guiding transformative change and action to prevent further biodiversity loss.

Calls to reinforce global biodiversity governance by strengthening the credibility of the CBD and its ability to catalyze actions to halt biodiversity loss have increased. The GBF remains the opportunity of the decade to reform one of the most important spheres of the multilateral environmental regime and ultimately deliver much-needed impacts on the ground. Effective implementation of new goals and targets can only be carried out through a robust “transparency and responsibility framework”. Besides facilitating implementation (thus making it easier for Parties to achieve their targets), such a framework is bound to support all Parties on the basis of their specific needs and circumstances, by enhancing availability and readiness of finance and developing capacity. Furthermore, it aims to provide Parties with guidance on how to progressively enhance their ambition over time. For COP15 to emerge as a key milestone for biodiversity and become the foundation of an implementation period of transformative change, the deal should include the foundational building blocks of this transparency and responsibility framework.

Based on an analysis of the state of negotiations a few weeks before COP15, this *Policy Brief* highlights key recommendations for an effective implementation of the future GBF by CBD Parties. These recommendations aim to identify not-to-be-missed opportunities at COP15 and during the decade to follow.

<sup>1</sup> IPBES (2019). Summary for policymakers of the global assessment report on biodiversity and ecosystem services of the Intergovernmental Science-Policy Platform on Biodiversity and Ecosystem Services

## KEY MESSAGES

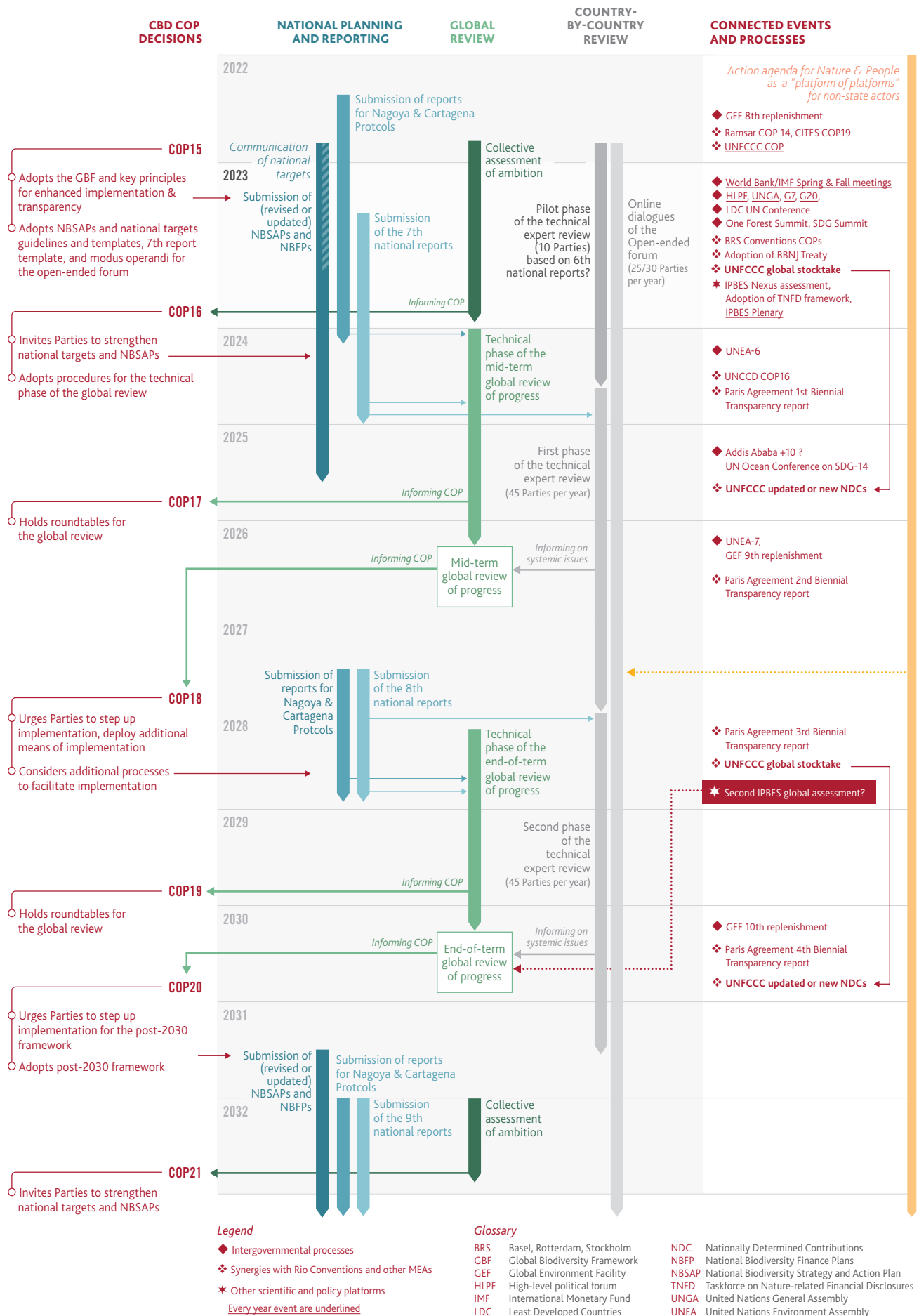
We propose a package of key interconnected elements for an Enhanced Implementation Cycle, revolving around planning, implementation, monitoring & reporting, review and stepping up of implementation.

processes should evolve towards an exercise that facilitates and progressively improves implementation without imposing additional burden on Parties but rather providing appropriate support to them.

Processes for enhanced transparency and responsibility should not only avoid to be unavailing efforts by being too burdensome but must, on the contrary, yield beneficial results for biodiversity. It is in this perspective that these

The Enhanced Implementation Cycle should be adopted at COP15 with improvements incorporated in it in subsequent COPs to support the timely delivery of the GBF’s goals and targets.

**FIGURE.** Timeline of key interconnected elements for an Enhanced Implementation Cycle of the post-2020 global biodiversity framework



## 1. BUILDING AN ENHANCED IMPLEMENTATION CYCLE: A KEY FACTOR FOR EFFECTIVENESS

Since the adoption of the Convention in 1992, the COP established new institutional mechanisms, in line with Article 23(4) of the Convention which empowers the COP to create new bodies or “undertake any additional action that may be required for the achievement of the purposes of this Convention in light of experience gained in its operation”.<sup>2</sup> Despite that, transparency and accountability processes under the CBD have, as of now, been fragile and limited when it comes to increase transparency, regularly review actions, promote cooperation, and set up a cycle with political discussions to progressively ramp up action and ambition.<sup>3</sup>

Having acknowledged the poor implementation of the Convention and the failure to fully deliver the Aichi Targets,<sup>4</sup> Parties have agreed to negotiate an enhanced “transparency and responsibility framework” as part of the post-2020 GBF, to be complemented by a more detailed COP decision establishing monitoring, planning, reporting and review processes. Nevertheless, many Parties do not see the benefits of an implementation mechanism, falsely believing that it would only generate additional administrative burdens; and more complex reporting and reviewing modalities would—consequently—force them to divert funds that would have otherwise been allocated to the delivery of the GBF. It is however largely through an enhanced implementation mechanism, using harmonized procedures and standardized formatting, that such burden risks could be minimized. If well managed, it could even help to mobilize more resources by consolidating stable long-term and mid-term objectives.

The post-2020 transparency and responsibility framework and associated processes could have many benefits, if designed properly, to foster collective, individual, and mutual responsibility, to rebuild trust between global North and South:

- **Shared (or collective) responsibility** – *via* the assessment of collective ambition, tracking and reviewing progress against global ambition, sending signals to and involving non-state actors, thus strengthening biodiversity's positioning as a “common concern of mankind”;
- **Individual responsibility** – *via* the encouragement to undertake domestic measures, including participatory and inclusive processes at the national level, and to communicate on those measures, thus building trust between Parties

<sup>2</sup> For instance, the creation of the Subsidiary Body on Implementation (SBI) in 2014 (Decision XII/26) or the adoption of successive guidelines for reporting.

<sup>3</sup> Maljean-Dubois, S., Wemaëre, M., Landry, J., Deprez, A., Chabason, L., Rochette, J., Gaddari, D., Rankovic A., (2022). Towards a better review mechanism under the post-2020 Biodiversity framework: legal options and possible institutional arrangements. Study N°03/22, IDDRI, Paris, France, 28 p.

<sup>4</sup> CBD, COP-14 Decision 14/1. *Updated assessment of progress towards selected Aichi Biodiversity Targets and options to accelerate progress as well as documents CBD/COP/14/5/Add.1 (Update on progress in revising/Updating and implementing national biodiversity strategies and action plans, including national targets) and CBD/COP/14/5/Add.2 (Analysis of the contribution of targets established by parties and progress towards the Aichi biodiversity targets)*

as well as supporting the identification of specific national challenges, and facilitating the sharing of lessons learnt;

- **Mutual responsibility** – *via* the identification of priorities and needs (especially for developing and vulnerable countries), the assistance provided to meet those needs, and the identification of systemic issues to build greater mutual solidarity, to relieve the burden of reporting by simplifying and strengthening monitoring, and harnessing synergies with reporting processes under other fora, and eventually to provide tailored policy recommendations.

Hereinafter, the term “Enhanced Implementation Cycle”, proposed by the authors,<sup>5</sup> will be used to refer to the whole implementation mechanism of the CBD and the GBF. It includes the processes covering planning (2), implementation (3), monitoring & reporting (4), review (5) and enhanced ambition and action (6) of the CBD and the GBF, discussed under the Subsidiary Body on Implementation (SBI) Agenda Item 9 and Section J of the GBF. It is, however, neither *limited by* nor *dependent* on those processes, nor does it seek to prejudice the outcome of the negotiations. In other words, it is meant to include everything from the conceptualization of national targets in a measurable manner to the concrete actions included in the National Biodiversity Strategies and Action Plans (hereinafter NBSAPs) as contributions to the GBF goals and targets, to the provision of additional means of implementation, as well as the procedural and substantive interlinkages between all individual elements and processes of the cycle.

## 2. NATIONAL PLANNING

### 2.1. Context

Article 6 of the CBD states that each Party shall develop an NBSAP which is widely recognized as the main instrument for implementing the Convention. However, Parties generally failed or struggled to align their NBSAPs with the Aichi Targets, and current NBSAPs are not comparable due to a lack of standardized formatting and irregular periodicity of submissions. During the preparation process of the GBF, most Parties have agreed that NBSAPs should be updated or revised following the adoption of the framework, and that national targets contributing to global targets could be communicated prior to NBSAPs. Ongoing negotiations however stall on:

- A feasible and joint timeline for aligning NBSAPs with the GBF, as Parties underline the lengthy NBSAP development process and that national timelines differ from a country to another, as well as the periodic revision of NBSAPs;

<sup>5</sup> Authors' Note: We have chosen this working term rather than “multi-dimensional approach to review” or “mechanisms for monitoring and reviewing implementation” (which are terms used in decisions 14/29 and 14/34 respectively), since we believe that it better addresses the cyclical, holistic, stepwise, facilitative and continuous process of implementation occurring at national level and facilitated by global level decision-making.

- The development of a standardized template for NBSAPs (in addition to the template prepared for national targets), given the flexibility provided to Parties by Article 6. One key element of discussion is the difficulty to provide information on the degree of alignment of national targets with global goals and targets, given the different national circumstances;
- The development of national biodiversity finance plans (NBFs) to identify financial needs, resources, and priorities, and facilitate allocation, in view of implementing NBSAPs;
- A feasible and joint timeline for submitting “national targets” contributing to global goals and targets.

## 2.2. Operationalization at national level

The draft GBF underlines the whole-of-society and whole-of-government approaches in its theory of change to achieve its Vision and Mission. Regarding planning, experience has shown that effective planning requires the involvement of rights holders and other actors at all levels, including subnational (such as local governments) and sectoral (namely, relevant ministries, but also land users).<sup>6</sup> NBSAPs represent mainstreaming and synergy-seeking opportunities which should not be missed. The instrument follows a “bottom-up” logic from an international perspective, as each Party adapts its national strategies and plans to reflect the obligations deriving from the Convention (while there is no clear communication on the degree of contribution of each NBSAP to collective goals). In addition to the benefits from the participatory process which strengthen a sense of shared ownership, sectoral actors and ministries are more likely to integrate environmental concerns, including biodiversity, in their decision-making and relevant sectoral plans, programmes, and policies,<sup>7</sup> if the main implementing instrument has a robust legal anchoring in national legislation going beyond the limited mandates of the environmental authorities and ministries.

As a central instrument for Parties to comply with their obligations deriving from the CBD and to meet the GBF goals and targets, Parties should prioritize updating their NBSAPs directly after COP15 to ensure they are aligned with the GBF; as a corollary to that process, they should develop national targets, whose function shall be to “domesticate” all components of the global goals and targets to the national context, but also be translated into actions that will represent Parties’ (quantified) contribution to the global goals and targets.

During the alignment exercise, Parties will need to opt for the most appropriate legal form for their NBSAPs, ensuring that they function as a multi-sectoral policy instrument informing all governmental activities to ensure effective implementation of national targets aligned with global targets, as well as an improved integration of biodiversity targets in other sectors.

Parties will have to identify financial needs for each national target and relevant actions listed in their NBSAPs in their NBFs as well as the availability of financial resources, including those already secured through funding streams (both domestic and

international) as well as gaps. For developing countries, GEF-7 and GEF-8 funds may support developing countries to conduct this process of developing NBFs—being a catalytic tool for channeling and yielding further resources.

## 2.3. Recommendations at global level

At COP15, the COP decision based on SBI/3/11 recommendations must adopt the guidelines and template for submitting revised or updated NBSAPs and the template to communicate national targets. The guidelines will include the timeline for the submission or update of NBSAPs, as well as the submission of national targets, which will depend on the date of the next COP. With a view to fostering implementation and following a 4-year period without any COP, we recommend COP16 to be organized one year after COP15, in late 2023. If such an option is adopted, Parties would have to communicate their national targets for consideration by COP16. NBSAPs, which take longer to revise and update, could then be submitted in time for consideration for COP17 and, in any case, no later than 2025. Such timeline may pose certain challenges to Parties, yet it is necessary, considering the remaining implementation time frame (8 years). GEF-7 and GEF-8 funds are and will be available for developing countries to support this process.<sup>8</sup>

The template for communicating national targets should include:

- The degree of alignment of national targets with all global goals and targets, including a justification of alignment;
- The identification of financial needs and priorities for each target and relevant actions linked to it, especially for developing countries, specifying for which action they require immediate support given the non-development of NBFs at this stage;
- A reference to an online repository-registry, where national targets are communicated. The existing Clearing-House Mechanism could be used for this purpose.

The guidelines for submitting NBSAPs should include:

- An NBSAP template,<sup>9</sup> specifying at least a minimum content and standardized formatting, to allow for comparability;
- The legal form the NBSAP will take at the national level, explaining their legal nature, scope and effects, as well as relations to other policy instruments;
- A NBF to be attached to the NBSAPs, to better assess financial resources and needs for implementing the NBSAPs.

<sup>6</sup> To ensure the full and coordinated involvement of such actors in the national planning process

<sup>7</sup> As state in Articles 6(b) of the Convention on biological diversity

<sup>8</sup> Landry, J., Rochette, J., Wemaère, M., Treyer, S., (2022) Implementing the Post-2020 Global Biodiversity Framework: financial mechanism. Lessons learned from the Global Environment Facility and the Green Climate Fund. Study N°07/22, IDDRI, Paris, France, 18 p.

<sup>9</sup> We would recommend that *Draft guidance for updating or revising national biodiversity strategies and action plans in light of the post-2020 global biodiversity framework* (Annex A) CBD/SBI/3/11/Add.4, which currently only includes a template for national targets, introduces a template for NBSAPs

## 3. IMPLEMENTATION

### 3.1. Context

Implementation is an ongoing process, just as NBSAPs are "living documents", in the sense that they should evolve and be updated in an adaptive manner, in line with what is needed to deliver the GBF's goals and targets (cf below: 5.2 and 6.2). Furthermore, both planning and implementation should form a continuum. Implementation requires resources, financial flows, capacities, but also an adapted facilitation process *via* transparency and accountability processes at the global level. When it comes to the former, developing country Parties have expressed their concerns during the last rounds of negotiations, noting that a lack of resources prevented them from delivering the Aichi Targets. The Enhanced Implementation Cycle should function as a "support system" to identify and resolve implementation challenges in a timely manner (see Section 5).

### 3.2. Operationalization at national level

One important step towards implementation is to decentralize as far as possible and break down actions at sub-national levels, since this is where actual implementation takes place for the delivery of most of the targets. NBSAPs shall, thus, identify and assign roles, actions, and responsibilities to public authorities at all levels, seeking opportunities for the mutually supportive implementation of Multilateral Environmental Agreements (MEAs) and other processes (such as the SDGs). This should engender a whole-of-society approach that builds on existing and incentivizes new actions by non-state actors, particularly focusing on the full and effective engagement of rightsholders and seeks to transform biodiversity governance.

Resource mobilization represents a key lever for implementing the CBD and the GBF. A paradigm shift is needed, adopting a more holistic approach that seeks to optimize use of existing resources and domestic investments in key sectors such as agriculture, forestry, tourism, and mining, redirect harmful subsidies (alignment of financial flows) and generate new resources. NBSAPs, based on the BIOFIN approach for instance,<sup>10</sup> represent great tools to sustain the continuum between planning and implementation. Capacity-building and development should also be reinforced, with a view to promote ownership and more efficient use of resources.

It is developing Parties' responsibility to identify their financial, capacity, technical and technological capacities and needs, an exercise that—in turn—will enable developed countries and financial institutions to tailor their support in line with national priorities and circumstances.

### 3.3. Recommendations at global level

Implementation is linked with the GBF as a whole and associated COP decisions, given its wide extent (various action plans, strategies, instruments and processes for capacity building, review of progress, resource mobilization, financial mechanism, knowledge management, cooperation with other MEAs, mainstreaming,

engagement with non-state actors and subnational governments, etc.). As part of the Enhanced Implementation Cycle, we identify key conditions for success and consistency, especially to facilitate implementation of the GBF at the Party level:

- The principle of alignment of all financial flows should be included in the GBF and the CBD's Strategy for Resource Mobilization to support long-term transformation of economic systems, while it should not substitute to the discussion on access to international flows to developing and vulnerable countries. Aligning financial flows should be defined further however, and should, at least, be complemented by a reference to optimizing resource allocation.<sup>11</sup> Indeed, Parties shall ensure that resources deployed under other policy sectors do not hamper or compromise the achievement of the actions listed in their NBSAPs and, where possible, are biodiversity-positive.
- Programmatic capacity-building and development remains a crucial condition for effective implementation, especially for developing countries. COP15 should adopt a long-term strategic framework for capacity-building and development based on SBI/3/8 recommendation<sup>12</sup> and establish an ongoing process at the international level for its follow-up and ensuring consistency and continuity.<sup>13</sup>
- As a parallel process, international Party-led platforms or initiatives driving action and transformative change would represent a significant opportunity to complement CBD processes, building linkages between planning and concrete delivery on the ground, while considering national priorities for sustainable development. This should support matching resources to demands—in terms of capacity-building and development, finance, technology transfer, knowledge management, etc. — but also to guide sectoral and tailored transformations.

## 4. MONITORING AND REPORTING

### 4.1. Context

Article 26 of the CBD requires countries to prepare national reports on the implementation of the Convention and the measures taken to achieve its objectives. These national reports are indispensable tools not only for tracking Parties' progress and needs, but also for filling crucial knowledge gaps and assessing the effectiveness of existing actions taken to meet the Convention's objectives. Yet, it is imperative that they be improved in terms of content and format to properly assess the implementation of NBSAPs.

<sup>11</sup> The best placement of such modalities would be the COP decision on resource mobilization, building upon SBI's Recommendation 3/6

<sup>12</sup> Following a process initiated by COP/XIII/23 and COP/XIV/24

<sup>13</sup> Challenges for capacity building and development include: lack of common understanding of the meaning and scope of capacity-building; use of "project" approach while requiring sustained financial and technical support and coherent programmes, lack of strategic approach at the national level and strategic guidance at the international level, high staff turnover, lack of country ownership, lack of adequate mechanisms for monitoring and evaluation, etc. (See: Guaras, D., Harrison, J., & Mapendembe, A. (2020). Biodiversity-related capacity-building: Informing the preparation of a long-term strategic framework for capacity-building beyond 2020. UNEP-WCMC. And CBD/POST2020/WS/2020/2/INF/2)

<sup>10</sup> [www.biofin.org](http://www.biofin.org)

## 4.2. Operationalization at national level

Reporting is intertwined with monitoring. Parties will have to monitor all components of the post-2020 goals and targets, through headline indicators, and—when necessary and relevant—, particularly in the absence or insufficiency of headline indicators—other indicators. When other indicators are used (component, complementary, national indicators), Parties should ensure that these are reported in a standardized and comparable manner, in line with the templates and modalities adopted at COP15. Furthermore, Parties should conduct monitoring in a scientific manner, ensuring that methodologies followed for their assessments are duly included in their national reports; progressively this could assist other Parties' strengthening their knowledge base on the Monitoring Framework.

National reports should include detailed reference of implementation gaps and shortcomings per GBF target, including an assessment of the means of implementation available and the additional capacity and funding needs that would need to be allocated for the timely achievement of the national targets (as contributions to the GBF Targets). It should be noted that in the potential absence of a comprehensive country-by-country review at national level (see Section 5.3.a. below), this is the *only* source of information on the Parties' needs for additional means of implementation. Simultaneously, comprehensive reporting will enable a more focused allocation of funds, where they are most needed, and increase the efficiency of their use. It is thus in the best interest of Parties to concretize information included in financial reporting, linking it directly to their NBFs, to facilitate access to adequate finance and operate country-specific allocation of additional resources, capacity development and technical assistance and/or technological support, tailored to their needs and priorities.

It is the Parties' responsibility to minimize reporting burdens and optimally use resources earmarked for monitoring and reporting. This can—among others—be achieved by using a standardized reporting format and identifying reporting synergies with other national reporting processes; where feasible, Parties should collate existing relevant information.<sup>14</sup>

Civil society and non-state actors' early, effective, and equitable involvement in the preparation of national reports can be another means of reducing administrative burdens and increasing the accuracy and methodological credibility of the national reports. The obligation of the national authorities to, at the very least, duly consider the outcomes of stakeholder consultations should guide the entire monitoring and reporting process. In addition, Parties shall also, as a minimum, dedicate a chapter of their national reports to inputs by specific stake- and right-holders, as a first step towards pluralistic multi-source reports.

## 4.3. Recommendations at global level

COP15 should adopt a timeline for reporting, with specific deadlines for the submission of the 7<sup>th</sup> and 8<sup>th</sup> national reports, allowing for the optimization of reporting processes in an integrated manner and following a standardized format to alleviate burden on Parties. Despite Article 26 of the CBD enshrining Parties' reporting obligation, it is under the COP's mandate to specify this obligation, including in relation to its timing, with a view to coordinating with the rest of the elements of the enhanced implementation cycle (see **Figure**, p. 2).

The alignment of reporting cycles (to the greatest extent possible) within the CBD and GBF reporting, with other reporting obligations for other MEAs and processes is recommended; this should entail:

- Simplified joint use of information (as a minimum), if synchronization of reporting cycles is not possible;
- A standardized report format and associated tools for reporting with pre-filled data and use of information from other national reporting instruments, as a first step towards integrated reporting;
- Alignment of reporting cycles and, where possible, synchronization:
  - This is especially crucial for reporting under Nagoya and Cartagena Protocols;
  - The frequency of national reports shall allow them to inform and be informed by every other biennial transparency report under the UNFCCC Paris Agreement and other reporting processes under the UNCCD and other MEAs.

The Monitoring Framework should be adopted alongside the GBF, during COP15, and all indicators included therein shall be fully functional at the time of its adoption.

## 5. REVIEW

### 5.1. Context

Review of implementation covers both country-by-country review (namely the review of progress of individual Parties) and collective review (namely the collective global progress made towards the GBF's goals and targets as an aggregation of individual Party progress). The COP is responsible for reviewing the implementation of the Convention, together with the Subsidiary Body on Implementation (SBI) since 2014, based on information provided through national reports. The Voluntary Peer-Review (VPR) process which includes an in-depth analysis has been initiated but remains optional and has—thus—been rarely used, despite the positive results it has generated to date.<sup>15</sup> Regrettably, no Parties from the Global North have ever participated

<sup>14</sup> See also Bern II Consultation Workshop of Biodiversity-Related Conventions on the Post-2020 Global Biodiversity Framework, Final Report (Chapter 7) (2021); Bern II Consultation Workshop of Biodiversity-Related Conventions on the Post-2020 Global Biodiversity Framework, Co-leads paper "*Moving the synergies -agenda forward in the context of the negotiations on the post-2020 global biodiversity framework*" (Chapter 2.1) (2021); Existing tools: [www.dart.informea.org](http://www.dart.informea.org)

<sup>15</sup> See the relevant chapters in Voluntary Peer Review (VPR) of The Revision And Implementation of the National Biodiversity Strategy and Action Plan 2015-2025 (NBSAPII) Of Uganda, (CBD/SBI/3/INF/40); Voluntary Peer Review of The Revision And Implementation of the National Biodiversity Strategy and Action Plan 2016-2022 OF SRI LANKA (CBD/SBI/3/INF/4); Voluntary Peer Review of the preparation and implementation of the National Biodiversity Strategy and Action Plan of Montenegro (CBD/COP/14/INF/19)

in the VPR. In addition, the VPR methodology does not include a technical review of national reports, only using those as background documents.

Besides, an open-ended forum pilot was launched to initiate discussions between Parties but is entirely based on Parties self-reviews. There is, thus, no country-by-country review except for those Parties who voluntarily participate in the VPR, and no technical expert review of NBSAPs and national reports. In the absence of a country-by-country (peer and/or technical) review, it is not possible for Parties to get tailored advice for enhancing or facilitating implementation, keeping in mind that such country-by-country review would provide a robust source of information for identifying implementation gaps and stepping up action through peer learning and even recommendations by civil society and non-state actors.

Thus, mandatory technical review (verification) of both NBSAPs and national reports should be considered for future establishment at the earliest possible stage for facilitating subsequent implementation phases.

## 5.2. Operationalization at national level

**First step – the “self-reviews” of ongoing implementation (from 2023 onwards):** The drafting of the national reports serves as a first self-reviewing exercise of Parties’ implementation progress, which in turn will lead to Parties’ involvement in the open-ended forum. The online dialogues of the open-ended forum will provide them with an opportunity to present the outcomes of their “self-review”, including their implementation experience and challenges encountered, but also to receive recommendations and solutions on them.

**Second step – in addition to their participation in the open-ended forum, which has clear limitations as a sole reviewing mechanism, all Parties shall benefit from an individual in-depth review** of NBSAPs and national reports which would help Parties to reflect on post-2020 implementation, longer-term strategies and post-2030 frameworks. As the in-depth review presupposes an additional cost for the Secretariat (regardless of whether it is expert or peer based), developed-country Parties would be encouraged to increase funding.

## 5.3. Recommendations at global level

### a. Country-by-Country review

COP15 should adopt an improved version of *modus operandi* of the open-ended forum,<sup>16</sup> to kick start the online dialogues in 2023. The open-ended forum should provide every Party with the opportunity to participate in it at least once until 2030. COP15 should also encourage Parties to participate in the VPR, changing the VPR’s “voluntary” nature by COP16.<sup>17</sup> More importantly, it should adopt a mandatory technical expert review additional and appropriate procedure for reviewing national reports, and ask the Secretariat and SBI to explore opportunities

for enhancing the review procedure. In that respect, it should include a provision to improve the review process in subsequent COP decisions, such as “consider and develop further processes to support implementation in a non-punitive, non-coercive, facilitative, manner for adoption at COP16”. Given the large number of Parties to the CBD, it is proposed that this review be conducted on an ongoing basis by reviewing around 40 countries designated by the SBI each year, possibly in the form of an online review session one or more times per year, to allow for a review of all countries every 4 to 5 years, before the submission of the 9<sup>th</sup> national report, at the beginning of the next decade.

### b. Global review

COP15 should also decide on the global review process. The global review process should be two-fold:

- **Collective assessment of ambition:** based on the assessment of national targets (as expressed in NBSAPs), for consideration by Parties at COP16.
- **Global review of progress (or global biodiversity stocktake)<sup>18</sup>:** the technical phase of this review should be based on national reports, and other relevant sources of information such scientific assessments and thematic reports, regional or subnational reviews, as well as the outcomes of the different country-by-country review mechanisms (particularly the VPR and subsequently the mandatory technical expert review). The global review of progress should aim to identify gaps in implementation (incl. analyzing the gap between the outcomes of the collective assessment of ambition and the actual progress that has been made collectively) and inform the stepping up process (Section 6.). COP15 should establish a precise timeline, with a mid-term and an end-of-term global review of implementation.

## 6. STEPPING UP AMBITION AND ACTION

### 6.1. Context

Pursuant to the global review of progress (or global biodiversity stocktake), the COP would need to adopt necessary decisions, outlining enhancements and additional actions needed for the timely delivery of the GBF (or its potential successors depending on the timing of adoption of such decision). Such enhancements shall entail actions at global level, including the direct mobilization and expedited deployment of additional means of implementation, as well as policy responses at national level, with the decision urging Parties to enhance their NBSAPs. As anticipated, these enhancements shall be predominantly action-oriented (leading to enhanced implementation), but—when relevant—may also require the increase of Parties’ ambition, as this is expressed via their national targets.

<sup>16</sup> Suggestions on how the open-ended forum can be enhanced can be found in our advanced comments on Annex D (see *References* below)

<sup>17</sup> Amending its methodology set out in UNEP/CBD/COP/13/INF/2 on the basis of available resources

<sup>18</sup> In current negotiations the term “global biodiversity stocktake” is preferred by some Parties, as is shown in the OEWG4’s Draft recommendation submitted by the Co-Chairs on Sections A to E and H to K (CBD/WG2020/4/CRP.7)

## 6.2. Operationalization at national level

As a crucial step of the Enhanced Implementation Cycle, Parties shall update their NBSAPs as a response to the global review of progress, the country-by-country reviews and, also, on the basis of their own self-review of their national reports. Parties' success in the timely delivery of the GBF's 2030 action targets will depend on their adaptive management and their commitment to revise their NBSAPs, whenever it becomes apparent that their current implementation trajectory is inadequate or unfit-for-purpose. By restricting such revision to the specific shortcomings and additional implementation needs identified, Parties can ensure that they can be provided with the optimal means of implementation, in a timely manner, minimizing unnecessary burden for both developing and donor countries.

## 6.3. Recommendations at global level

The above process, which has also been called "ratcheting up" in some multilateral discussions to date, should be enshrined in Section J of the GBF and be further detailed in the COP decision that will serve as a successor to decision 14/29.

Such process is fully aligned with the COP's mandate to review the progress of implementation in line with CBD Article 23(4).

It is crucial that two fundamental principles guide all actions adopted in line with the above process:

- All subsequent COP decisions and NBSAPs shall be progressively more ambitious to their direct predecessors, as a continuous process of incremental improvements in collective and national ambition and action;<sup>19</sup>
- All improvements made shall constitute a direct response to the global review of progress; in other words, they should address the gaps and shortcomings identified therein and be commensurate (quantitatively and qualitatively) to what is needed to effectively address those gaps and shortcomings, with a view to ensuring timely delivery of targets.

<sup>19</sup> Similar to the way the principle of progression is applied in the context of the UNFCCC Parties' submission of Nationally Determined Contributions, in line with Article 4(3) of the Paris Agreement

**Enhancing ambition:** Pursuant to the collective assessment of ambition based on the evaluation of national targets (see above "5. Review"), the outcomes of which shall be presented at COP16, Parties will be invited to strengthen their national targets accordingly and communicate their improvements through the online registry used for the submission of national targets.

**Enhancing action:** Pursuant to the mid-term and final global review of progress, the COP shall adopt a decision in which it takes any type of proactive or remedial action within its powers prescribed by Art 23(4) of the Convention, to ensure the full and timely implementation of the GBF. Essential components of this decision shall be to:

- urge Parties to step up their national-level implementation, based on the outcomes of the global review of progress, as well as on the findings of their national reports and the results of the country-by-country review;
- deploy additional means of implementation for Parties in need of implementation assistance;
- adopt improvements and additions to the mechanisms listed in Section J, with a view to strengthening responsibility and transparency in Parties' implementation of the post-2020 GBF.

### REFERENCES

Advanced comments on four annexes mentioned in CBD/SBI/3/CRP.5 (SBI-3tem 9) – Observers (ClientEarth, RSPB, Friends of the Earth Europe, BirdLife International, WWF)

Report of the workshop on options to enhance planning, monitoring, reporting and review mechanisms to strengthen the implementation of the Convention and the post-2020 global biodiversity framework (June 2022)

Report "How to enhance planning, reporting and review mechanisms to strengthen implementation of the post-2020 Global Biodiversity Framework and the CBD" based on discussions in four informal workshops in 2021 (March 2022)

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