

# CONSERVATION INTERNATIONAL POLICY RECOMMENDATIONS FOR SBSTTA25

*Convention on Biological Diversity (CBD)*

*Subsidiary Body on Scientific, Technical and Technological Advice – Twenty-fifth meeting*

*Nairobi, Kenya | 15-19 October 2023*

As countries gather for the first time following the adoption of the Kunming-Montreal Global Biodiversity Framework (GBF) at COP15, Conservation International proposes the following high-level recommendations:

## KEY RECOMMENDATIONS

- **MAINTAIN MOMENTUM:** To halt and reverse nature loss by 2030, encourage rapid implementation of commitments made at COP15.
- **MONITORING FRAMEWORK:** To facilitate immediate monitoring and reporting on the goals and targets in the GBF, encourage timely delivery of the full monitoring framework.
- **GLOBAL REVIEW OF PROGRESS:** To be effective, the Global Review of Progress that will be conducted at COP17 must result in ratcheting up of ambition, be inclusive, and include the status of means of implementation deployed to deliver on the GBF.
- **BIODIVERSITY & CLIMATE CHANGE:** This program of work should focus on advancing the linkages between biodiversity and climate change at the national level to ensure that efforts on biodiversity and climate are mutually reinforcing.

## Maintain Momentum

After four years of effort, including substantial COVID-19-related delays, the GBF was successfully agreed last December in Montreal. By adopting the GBF, countries agreed to carry out ambitious actions commensurate with the scale of the biodiversity crisis. **Now it's time to rapidly implement the GBF and ensure that biodiversity loss is halted and reversed by 2030.**

Conservation International recommends that the cover decision encourages timely delivery on the commitments made in Montreal and encourages discussions at SBSTTA that consider how countries can best align their National Biodiversity Strategies and Action Plans (NBSAPs) with the GBF for national implementation. This is the first convening of CBD Parties since COP15 – one of two that will occur before COP16 in 2024 – making it a key moment for catalyzing action on the ground.

## Monitoring Framework

**Agenda Item 3. Facilitating the implementation of the Kunming-Montreal Global Biodiversity Framework and the monitoring of its progress.**

*(a) Monitoring framework for the Kunming-Montreal Global Biodiversity Framework*

Relevant Documents: 15/5. Monitoring framework for the Kunming-Montreal Global Biodiversity Framework

([CBD/COP/DEC/15/5](#)); Monitoring framework for the Kunming-Montreal Global Biodiversity Framework ([CBD/SBSTTA/25/2](#))

The lack of a clear monitoring framework and guidance to align national implementation with the global goals at the time of adoption of the Aichi targets contributed to the world's failure to achieve those targets. Recognizing that challenge, countries adopted a preliminary monitoring framework at the same time as the GBF, with a clear trajectory for completion by 2025 through the work of an Ad Hoc Technical Expert Group (AHTEG) on indicators. Conservation International welcomes the progress AHTEG has made on the monitoring framework for the GBF. However, to facilitate immediate monitoring and reporting on the goals and targets in

the GBF, countries need the full monitoring framework. Therefore, Conservation International recommends the timely delivery of a monitoring framework with headline indicators for all 23 targets, by COP16 at the latest.

Specifically, the monitoring framework adopted at COP15 ([CBD/COP/DEC/15/5](#)) does not contain a headline indicator for target 8, which constitutes a **critical gap in recognizing and reporting on synergistic biodiversity-climate change action**. Conservation International encourages the AHTEG to develop **indicators on the GBF targets that relate to climate to foster synergies with international climate policy processes**. The proposed binary indicator for target 8 ([CBD/SBSTTA/25/2](#), page 7) should also include a component to track if, and how, countries have aligned their national biodiversity and climate policies (i.e., Nationally Determined Contributions and National Adaptation Plans). This will help foster synergies with global scientific assessments and stocktaking processes that are planned under both Conventions.

Further, if possible, the component and complimentary indicators for target 8 should aim to **measure nature's quantified contributions to climate mitigation**. Given the binary indicator methodology proposed for target 8, the following component and complementary indicators in the monitoring framework adopted at COP15 will be even more essential for monitoring nature's contributions to climate mitigation:

- Total climate regulation services provided by ecosystems by ecosystem type (System of Environmental Economic Accounts); National greenhouse inventories from land use and land use change; Above-ground biomass stock in forests (tonnes/ha); and Carbon stocks and annual net GHG emissions, by land-use category, split by natural and non-natural land cover.

## Global Review

### Agenda Item 3. Facilitating the implementation of the Kunming-Montreal Global Biodiversity Framework and the monitoring of its progress.

#### *(b) Mechanisms for planning, monitoring, reporting and review*

Relevant Documents: 15/6. Mechanisms for planning, monitoring, reporting and review ([CBD/COP/DEC/15/6](#)); Mechanisms for planning, monitoring, reporting and review ([CBD/SBSTTA/25/3](#))

The **global review of collective progress is a critical component** of the implementation mechanism for the GBF. It should assess whether aggregated national actions and means of implementation, based on revised NBSAPs, are indeed leading to the achievement of the mission, global goals, and targets of the GBF, and encourage enhanced and/or increased action if progress is insufficient. The decision adopted at COP15 frames this global review as a standalone stocktaking report, similar to the Global Biodiversity Outlook, rather than a key part of the implementation of the GBF.

Conservation International welcomes the [views](#) from Parties and observers and offers the following comments to inform the recommendations for the GBF implementation mechanism that will be discussed at SBSTTA25 and that will inform the related deliberations of the Subsidiary Body on Implementation (SBI) at its next meeting in May 2024. The global review should:

- Be **stepwise** to allow for a **technical phase** to measure the gap between progress made to date, and progress required for the timely achievement of the GBF, followed by a **political phase** to bring the assessment of progress to the attention of the highest levels. Currently, the mechanism for Parties “to improve actions and efforts” based on the outcome of the global review is **only voluntary** in the GBF and COP decision 15/6 (paragraph 20). If the global review shows that implementation is not on track, improving actions and efforts should be an **obligation** rather than just a voluntary step. The COP can support this by providing (1) a high-level response to the outcomes and recommendations of the global review, (2) a mandate to spur action at national level, and (3) the mobilization of further resources where necessary. Similar phased approaches were proposed by the EU, Switzerland, and New Zealand.<sup>1</sup>

<sup>1</sup> See <https://www.cbd.int/notifications/2023-069>.

- Be **comprehensive** to include target-by-target analysis, assessment of the means of implementation and enabling conditions provided, and how the 2030 mission and section C on considerations for GBF implementation have been reflected in the actions taken to implement the framework.
- Be **informed by a wide range of inputs** including national reporting, science (such as the Intergovernmental Science-Policy Platform on Biodiversity and Ecosystem Services (IPBES) assessment reports), and additional inputs from Parties and non-Party stakeholders. The call for non-Party input to the global review of progress was referenced by the EU, New Zealand and Türkiye.<sup>2</sup>
- Provide opportunities for Parties to **share best practices**, and identify obstacles, gaps, challenges, and ways to address them.
- Have clear **expected outcomes**. If progress is insufficient towards the achievement of the GBF, the **global review should stimulate Parties to ratchet up<sup>3</sup> the ambition and implementation of their NBSAPs**. Improving actions and efforts should be **accompanied by the provision of additional resources** towards the implementation of GBF, based on the identification of specific implementation gaps during the global review of collective progress. Emphasis must be provided to developing country Parties, least developed countries (LDCs), small island developing States (SIDS), and countries with economies in transition, and to areas of high priority on biodiversity and ecosystem services globally. Special consideration must also be given to COP decision VIII/1 ([UNEP/CBD/COP/DEC/VIII/1](#)) on Island Biodiversity to address poverty alleviation and sustainable development. Several Parties highlighted the need to adopt processes following the global review to encourage the ratcheting up of ambition in their submissions on this topic, including the EU, Norway, Switzerland, and New Zealand.<sup>4</sup>

Overall, raised ambition following the global review should be **encouraged at the highest levels**. Entities responsible for providing the guidance on raising ambition should be made clear, as responsibilities are currently split between SBSTTA and SBI.<sup>5</sup>

## Biodiversity & Climate Change

### Agenda Item 7. Biodiversity and climate change

Relevant Documents: 15/30. Biodiversity and climate change ([CBD/COP/DEC/15/30](#)); Review of findings from the Sixth Assessment Report of the Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change and their implications for the work undertaken under the Convention ([CBD/SBSTTA/25/9](#)); Biodiversity and climate change ([CBD/SBSTTA/25/12](#))

There is clear scientific evidence<sup>6</sup> that **biodiversity loss and climate change are two sides of the same coin, and their solutions can often be found in the same places**. “High carbon” terrestrial, coastal, and marine ecosystems such as peatlands, mangroves, wetlands, forests, and marshes are often the same places that are essential to maintaining biodiversity.<sup>7</sup> Further, certain ecosystem types that are critical for biodiversity are more vulnerable to the impacts of climate change (e.g., coral reefs), and attributes of many ecosystems, such as their integrity and connectivity, influence their global climate regulation services and/or their localized resilience to climate impacts.<sup>8,9</sup>

<sup>2</sup> See <https://www.cbd.int/notifications/2023-069>.

<sup>3</sup> Ratchet is a term used to describe improving or increasing the ambition of countries’ national targets in line with the progress needed to achieve the GBF, based on the status of implementation described in the global review of progress.

<sup>4</sup> See <https://www.cbd.int/notifications/2023-069>.

<sup>5</sup> Conservation International understands that SBSTTA holds responsibility for collecting the inputs for the global review, and SBI is responsible for developing the procedures of that review.

<sup>6</sup> Pörtner, H.O., et al. 2021. IPBES-IPCC co-sponsored workshop report on biodiversity and climate change; IPBES and IPCC. DOI:10.5281/zenodo.4782538. [https://www.ipbes.net/sites/default/files/2021-06/20210609\\_workshop\\_report\\_embargo\\_3pm\\_CEST\\_10\\_june\\_0.pdf](https://www.ipbes.net/sites/default/files/2021-06/20210609_workshop_report_embargo_3pm_CEST_10_june_0.pdf).

<sup>7</sup> Noon, M.L., Goldstein, A., Ledezma, J.C. et al. Mapping the irrecoverable carbon in Earth’s ecosystems. *Nat Sustain* **5**, 37–46 (2022). <https://doi.org/10.1038/s41893-021-00803-6>.

<sup>8</sup> Grantham, H.S., Duncan, A., Evans, T.D. et al. Anthropogenic modification of forests means only 40% of remaining forests have high ecosystem integrity. *Nat Commun* **11**, 5978 (2020). <https://doi.org/10.1038/s41467-020-19493-3>.

<sup>9</sup> Schmitz, O.J., Sylvén, M., Atwood, T.B. et al. Trophic rewilding can expand natural climate solutions. *Nat. Clim. Chang.* **13**, 324–333 (2023). <https://doi.org/10.1038/s41558-023-01631-6>.

The CBD has acknowledged the synergies between biodiversity and climate change in several key decisions<sup>10</sup> – including the GBF<sup>11</sup> – that can be operationalized with a large body of existing evidence and guidance.

At SBSTTA25, CBD Parties can provide input on this topic and will negotiate a draft decision on this agenda item for COP16. This is an **opportunity to advance the linkages between biodiversity and climate change at the national level** to ensure that efforts on biodiversity and climate, including efforts to monitor actions and impacts, are **mutually reinforcing**, to help **ensure efficient policies and maximize scarce resources for nature**.

Conservation International welcomes the note by the Secretariat on biodiversity and climate change ([CBD/SBSTTA/25/12](#)), highlighting the importance of the proposed SBSTTA recommendation to COP16 on pages 8-9 as the basis for how the CBD will support the implementation of GBF targets 8 and 11, as well as the other targets that contribute to this topic. As such, Conservation International recommends the following additions:

- Request the Secretariat to develop **operational guidance to support national implementation** of the GBF, in line with the submissions on this topic from Canada, China, the European Union, Japan and the United Kingdom. This guidance can include the identification of opportunities and activities that have biodiversity and climate benefits. Guidance is also needed on prioritizing action in ecosystems with high mitigation and adaptation potential such as high carbon ecosystems like mangrove forests, salt marshes, and seagrass as highlighted in [CBD/SBSTTA/25/9](#), and as suggested by the United Kingdom. This would help countries prioritize the nature-based solutions (NBS) and/or ecosystem-based approaches they should include in their NBSAPs and national targets as contributions to the achievement of target 8.
- Request the **Executive Secretaries of CBD and UNFCCC to work more closely together** to maximize synergies and minimize trade-offs in implementing both Conventions. The call for enhanced collaboration between these two entities was supported by Canada, the European Union, Japan, and the United Kingdom, and supported by the [finding](#) that achieving the GBF requires effective climate action in line with the Paris Agreement and the UNFCCC. Collaboration can include the establishment of formal channels for knowledge sharing, discussions on the joint action needed to achieve the 2050 vision of living in harmony with nature, and development of technical guidance on how to optimize co-benefits and synergies of finance targeting the biodiversity and climate crises. Collaboration would also be helpful to develop guidance on mainstreaming biodiversity into national climate change policies and plans and adaptation plans on climate change, including Nationally Determined Contributions (NDCs) under the UNFCCC, as highlighted by the European Union and Japan. As noted in the [draft recommendation](#), the Joint Liaison Group of the Rio Conventions is a good place for these discussions to start.
- Request further discussions amongst Parties on **safeguards for NBS** that would be useful as they implement target 8 to ensure that they are minimizing negative impacts and fostering positive benefits of climate action on biodiversity. This can also include the identification of efforts to address climate change that can lead to biodiversity loss. For example, the draft decision for COP15 ([COP/15/2](#), page 238) referenced the potential negative impact of specific approaches such as “large-scale deployment of intensive bioenergy plantations, replacing natural forests and subsistence farmlands, subsidies harmful to agriculture and other sectors.” Clear identification of these potentially harmful approaches can improve spatial planning, legislative and regulatory approaches, etc. during GBF implementation.

<sup>10</sup> See annex here: <https://www.cbd.int/doc/notifications/2023/ntf-2023-043-climate-en.pdf>

<sup>11</sup> GBF targets at the biodiversity-climate nexus include target 8 (minimize impact of climate change on biodiversity), target 11 (restore, maintain, and enhance nature’s contributions to people), target 14 (ensure integration of biodiversity across policies and processes), and target 19 (optimize co-benefits and synergies of finance targeting the biodiversity and climate crises).