CONSERVATION INTERNATIONAL POLICY RECOMMENDATIONS FOR SBSTTA26 & SBI4

Convention on Biological Diversity (CBD)
Twenty-sixth meeting of the Subsidiary Body on Scientific, Technical & Technological Advice (SBSTTA26 13-18 May 2024)
Fourth meeting of the Subsidiary Body on Implementation (SBI4 21-29 May 2024)
Nairobi, Kenya

As countries gather before COP16 for SBSTTA26 and SBI4 – the last intersessional negotiation before updated National Biodiversity Strategies and Action Plans (NBSAPs) and/or national biodiversity targets aligned with the Kunming-Montreal Global Biodiversity Framework (GBF) are due – Conservation International proposes the following high-level recommendations:

KEY RECOMMENDATIONS

- **MONITORING FRAMEWORK (SBSTTA):** To facilitate immediate monitoring and reporting on the goals and targets in the GBF, we continue to encourage timely delivery of the full monitoring framework, with an indicator for target 8 that allows for reporting on synergistic biodiversity-climate action.
- **BIODIVERSITY & HEALTH (SBSTTA):** Encourage adoption of the global action plan to mainstream biodiversity and health and associated key messages to enable effective cross sectoral work at the national level.
- **MAINTAIN MOMENTUM (SBI):** To halt and reverse nature loss by 2030, we encourage timely delivery by all countries of updated NBSAPs and/or national biodiversity targets aligned with the GBF for consideration at COP16. SBI negotiations on agenda item 2 (review of implementation) should emphasize the deadline for national targets prior to COP16.
- **REPORTING & REVIEW (SBI):** The global review of collective progress must be comprehensive, inclusive, and reflect the resources mobilized to deliver on the GBF.
- **RESOURCE MOBILIZATION (SBI):** Ensure resources commensurate with the ambition of the GBF are mobilized through 2030, including the interim commitment of US$20 billion in international financing from developed countries and identification of harmful subsidies by 2025, along with increasing direct access to resources for IPLCs.
- **BIODIVERSITY & CLIMATE (SBI):** Enhanced collaboration between the CBD and UNFCCC is needed to advance the linkages between biodiversity and climate change at the national level to ensure that efforts on biodiversity and climate are mutually reinforcing.

Monitoring Framework

SBSTTA26 Agenda Item 3. 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); 25/1. Recommendation adopted by the Subsidiary Body on Scientific, Technical and Technological Advice on 19 October 2023 (CBD/SBSTTA/REC/25/1); Note by the Secretariat. Monitoring framework for the Kunming-Montreal Global Biodiversity Framework (CBD/SBSTTA/26/2); Advice from the Ad Hoc Technical Expert Group on Indicators for the Kunming-Montreal Global Biodiversity Framework on the wording of the binary questions in the monitoring framework (CBD/SBSTTA/26/2/Add.1)

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 COP16 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 continues to recommend 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 and countries were unable to agree on a global indicator for that target at SBSTTA25 (CBD/SBSTTA/REC/25/1, page 5). This constitutes a **critical gap in the ability for countries to explicitly recognize and clearly report on synergistic biodiversity-climate change action**.

There is clear scientific evidence that biodiversity loss and climate change are interconnected, and nature-based solutions and/or ecosystem-based adaptation to protect, restore, and sustainably manage nature can address both crises.[1] High carbon terrestrial, coastal, and marine ecosystems – such as peatlands, mangroves, wetlands, forests, and marshes – are often the same places essential for maintaining biodiversity.[2] Certain ecosystem types that are critical for biodiversity are more vulnerable to the impacts of climate change (e.g., coral reefs), and ecosystem attributes, such as integrity and connectivity, influence their global climate regulation services and their localized resilience to climate impacts.[3,4]

Already, countries are developing their new national biodiversity targets in line with the GBF with some prioritizing action in high carbon ecosystems to maximize biodiversity and climate benefits.[5] **Robust indicators that capture nature's quantified contributions to climate mitigation and adaptation are needed 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**. There are several component and complementary indicators for target 8 that, if used, will allow for reporting on the state of ecosystems important for climate,[6] but countries have been unable to agree on a **required** indicator capturing nature's quantified contribution as a climate solution to report on national action to achieve several GBF targets (including 8 and 11).

A way through this lack of consensus could be a required indicator to assess whether national climate policies, like Nationally Determined Contributions (NDCs), include activities related to resilience or minimizing negative impacts on biodiversity. Aligning national biodiversity and climate policies will help foster synergies with reporting and stocktaking processes that are planned under both Conventions. The draft global indicators for target 8 discussed at SBSTTA25 (CBD/SBSTTA/REC/25/1, 8.2, 8.4, 8.4bis, 8.4ter) can be improved to better capture how action towards achieving target 8 is linked to the delivery of national climate policies, as well as to take into account the latest advice from Ad Hoc Technical Expert Group on Indicators (CBD/SBSTTA/26/2/Add.1). **Conservation International proposes the following target 8 indicators.**

Proposed indicator text: Number of countries with agreed policies to minimize the impact of climate change and ocean acidification on biodiversity and to minimize negative and foster positive impacts of climate action on biodiversity.	
8.1 Does your country's national biodiversity strategy and action plan include actions to prevent or minimize the impacts of the following? (Select all that apply)	(a) Climate change (b) Ocean acidification, if relevant (c) None
8.2 Do your country's climate change policies employ nature-based solutions and/or ecosystem-based approaches to address	(a) No (b) Developing

[1] 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.

[2] 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.

[3] 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.

[4] 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.

[5] Guidance on how to prioritize high carbon ecosystems through GBF implementation is available in English, Spanish and Portuguese.

[6] **Component indicators** include total climate regulation services provided by ecosystems by ecosystem type (System of Environmental Economic Accounts) and national greenhouse inventories from land use and land use change. **Complementary indicators** include above-ground biomass stock in forests (tonnes/ha), national greenhouse inventories from land use and land use change, and Carbon stocks and annual net GHG emissions, by land-use category, split by natural and non-natural land cover.

the impacts of climate change and of ocean acidification on biodiversity? (Select all that apply)	(c) Yes, partially (d) Yes, fully
8.3 Is the implementation of policies to address the impacts of climate change and/or ocean acidification on biodiversity monitored and reported on? (Select all that apply)	(a) No (b) Developing (c) Yes, on climate change (d) Yes, on ocean acidification
8.4 Do your country's climate change policies contain the following types of actions designed to increase biodiversity resilience? (Select all that apply)	(a) Mitigation (b) Adaptation (c) Risk Reduction (d) None
8.5 Are measures in place to minimize negative impacts and foster positive impacts of climate actions on biodiversity?	(a) No (b) Developing (c) Yes, partially (d) Yes, fully

The table below presents Conservation Internationals' proposed target 8 indicator text in the context of the draft text discussed at SBSTTA25.

Proposed indicator text: Number of countries with agreed policies to minimize the impact of climate change and ocean acidification on biodiversity and to minimize negative and foster positive impacts of climate action on biodiversity.	
8.1 Does your country's national biodiversity strategy and action plan include actions to prevent or minimize the impacts of the following? (Select all that apply)	(a) Climate change ~~[~~(b) Ocean acidification, if relevant~~]~~ ~~[~~(c) None~~]~~
8.2 Do~~[es]~~ your country's ~~[national strategy on~~ climate change ~~[~~policies~~]~~ ~~(nationally determined contributions)]~~ ~~[~~and employ nature-based solutions and/or ecosystem-based approaches~~]~~ **TO** address the impacts of climate change and of ocean acidification~~[, where relevant,]~~ on biodiversity? (Select all that apply.)	(a) No (b) ~~No, but under~~ Develop**ING** (c) Yes, partially (d) Yes, fully
8.3 ~~Is the implementation of policies to address~~ ARE the impacts of climate change and/or ocean acidification on biodiversity monitored and reported on? (Select all that apply)	(a) No (b) ~~No, but under~~ Develop**ING** (c) Yes, on climate change (d) Yes, on ocean acidification
8.4 Do~~[es]~~ your country's ~~[national strategy on~~ climate change ~~[~~policies~~]~~ ~~(nationally determined contributions) or][action plans]~~ ~~[on the impact of climate change and ocean acidification]~~ contain the following types of actions designed to increase biodiversity resilience? (Select all that apply)	(a) Mitigation (b) Adaptation (c) Risk Reduction (d) None
~~[8.4 bis~~ **8.5** Are measures in place to minimize ~~the~~ negative impacts **AND** ~~including in the nationally determined contributions?]~~ ~~[8.4 ter Are measures in place to~~ foster positive impacts of climate actions on biodiversity~~, including in nationally determined contributions?]~~	(a) No (b) ~~No, but under~~ Develop**ING** (c) Yes, partially (d) Yes, fully

Biodiversity & Health

SBSTTA26 Agenda Item 9. Biodiversity and health

Relevant Documents: 15/29. Biodiversity and health (CBD/COP/DEC/15/29); Note by the Secretariat. Biodiversity and health (CBD/SBSTTA/26/8)

At SBSTTA26, countries will discuss the draft global action plan to mainstream biodiversity and health linkages into national policies that was requested at COP15 (CBD/COP/DEC/15/29). This action plan represents an opportunity to advance efforts to jointly promote biodiversity and human health.

The tragic consequences of environmental degradation on human health have become increasingly clear in recent years, as evidenced by devastation caused by recent spillovers of viruses from animals to humans (such as mpox virus, Ebola virus and likely the virus that causes COVID-19), toxic exposures, and millions of premature human deaths each year from air pollution.[7] Further, scientific models show that the frequency of major epidemics and pandemics driven by spillovers of viruses between animals and humans will increase

[7] WHO. (2022). Ambient (outdoor) air pollution. https://www.who.int/news-room/fact-sheets/detail/ambient-(outdoor)-air-quality-and-health.

several-fold in the coming decades if the current pace of environmental degradation—including biodiversity loss—continues.[8]

Highlighting the interlinkages between biodiversity and human health offers a compelling motivation to invest in protection of biodiversity, which will ultimately support implementation of the GBF. Therefore, **Conservation International encourages countries to adopt this action plan to enable cross-sectoral work on biodiversity and health at the national level.**

Review of Implementation

SBI4 Agenda Item 2. Review of implementation: progress in national target setting and the updating of national biodiversity strategies and action plans
Relevant Documents: 15/6. Mechanisms for planning, monitoring, reporting and review (CBD/COP/DEC/15/6); Note by the Secretariat. Review of implementation: progress in the preparation of revised and updated national biodiversity strategies and action plans and the establishment of national targets in alignment with the GBF (CBD/SBI/4/2)

After four years of effort, including substantial COVID-19-related delays, the GBF was successfully agreed in December 2022. By adopting the GBF, countries agreed to carry out ambitious actions commensurate with the scale of the biodiversity crisis. **Now it is time to rapidly implement the GBF.**

Conservation International recommends that the final decision on this item reemphasizes timely delivery on the commitments made at COP15. To do this, CI encourages discussions at SBSTTA26 and SBI4 that focus on fostering understanding of the options countries have for submitting national biodiversity targets ahead of COP16. To best enable the first review of implementation at COP16, NBSAPs and/or national biodiversity targets **should be submitted by August 2024**. Countries unable to complete the full update of their NBSAPs before COP16 have the alternative option of submitting **only national biodiversity targets and their corresponding indicators** on the online reporting tool established in Annex 1 of decision 15/6. **Clarity on this point should be emphasized in the final decision on this item to foster understanding among all countries.** Global momentum commensurate with the scale of the biodiversity loss crisis will be challenging to achieve without a strong showing characterized by the majority of countries having submitted their national targets and/or revised NBSAPs prior to COP16.

CI also recommends the final decision emphasizes the importance of the whole-of-government and whole-of-society approach to the development and implementation of updated NBSAPs and/or national targets, as well as the need for full, equitable, inclusive, effective and gender-responsive representation and participation in decision-making by Indigenous peoples and local communities (IPLCs) included in GBF target 22. This demands support from all levels of government and relies on action and cooperation from all actors in society, particularly the contributions of IPLCs. Given the fundamental role that IPLCs play in conservation, restoration, and sustainable use of biodiversity, their participation in these policy processes must be prioritized.

Reporting & Review

SBI4 Agenda Item 3. Mechanisms for planning, monitoring, reporting and review.
Relevant Documents: 15/5. Monitoring framework for the Kunming-Montreal Global Biodiversity Framework (CBD/COP/DEC/15/5); 15/6. Mechanisms for planning, monitoring, reporting and review (CBD/COP/DEC/15/6); Scientific, technical and technological inputs that should inform the global review of collective progress in the implementation of the Kunming-Montreal Global Biodiversity Framework (CBD/SBSTTA/25/3); Note by the Secretariat. Mechanisms for planning, monitoring, reporting and review (CBD/SBI/4/4) Note by the Secretariat. Procedures for the global review of collective progress in the implementation of the Kunming-Montreal Global Biodiversity Framework (CBD/SBI/4/4/Add.2)

The implementation mechanism adopted at COP15 provides an enhanced approach to planning, monitoring, reporting and review, culminating in a global review of collective progress at COP17 and COP19. At SBI4,

[8] Marani, M., Katul, G. G., Pan, W. K., & Parolari, A. J. (2021). Intensity and frequency of extreme novel epidemics. *Proceedings of the National Academy of Sciences of the United States of America*, *118*(35), e2105482118. https://doi.org/10.1073/pnas.2105482118.

countries are expected to make recommendations on several aspects of the implementation mechanism, including voluntary country review,[9] and national reporting templates.

Overall, the global review of collective progress 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. Conservation International recommends that the final decision includes the contributions of non-state actors towards GBF implementation so that the **global review of progress allows for standardized, participatory, and impactful review from both state and non-state actors**.

Resource Mobilization

SBI4 Agenda Item 4. Resource mobilization and financial mechanism: (a) Resource mobilization; (b) Financial mechanism.

Relevant Documents: 15/7. Resource mobilization (CBD/COP/DEC/15/7); 15/15. Financial mechanism (CBD/COP/DEC/15/15); Work of the Advisory Committee on Resource Mobilization (link); Note by the Secretariat. Resource mobilization (CBD/SBI/4/5); Note by the Secretariat. Financial mechanism (CBD/SBI/4/6); Note by the Secretariat. Report of the Council of the Global Environment Facility to the fifteenth meeting of the Conference of the Parties to the Convention on Biological Diversity (CBD/SBI/4/6/Add.1)

GBF targets 18 and 19 reflect a holistic approach to closing the USD700 billion biodiversity financing gap through a combination of new resources (~USD200billion/year) and eliminating/redirecting negative financial flows and subsides (~USD500 billion/year). The corresponding resource mobilization strategy was adopted to enable quick-start resource mobilization and scale up and align resources for the implementation of the GBF to 2030. The Advisory Committee on Resource Mobilization was established to develop the strategy beyond 2024 and will report on their work at SBI4. This will include an analysis of the current biodiversity finance landscape and recommendations on how to strengthen, simplify and reform existing instruments to meet targets 18 and 19.

Conservation International recommends that the final decision on this item ensures that the **long-term resource mobilization strategy is on track for operationalization**, so resources commensurate with the ambition of the GBF are available to countries throughout the implementation period. In particular, the resource mobilization strategy should include clear guidance for the **timely delivery of (1) identification by 2025 and reformation/elimination by 2030 of US$ 500 billion per year of subsidies harmful for biodiversity** and **(2) the financial commitments made in target 19**, especially the **commitment to increase international financing from developed countries to US$ 20 billion by 2025.** SBI4 participants will receive an update on the establishment and operationalization of the Global Biodiversity Framework Fund (GBFF) that has been set up under the GEF. Conservation International recommends that the final decision on this item, and any guidance to the GEF, **maintains the aspirational percentage of direct access funds dedicated to IPLCs as well as the committed percentage allocation of funds to SIDS and LDCs**.[10] Lastly, Conservation International, in line with the International Indigenous Forum on Biodiversity (IIFB) and IPLC priorities, recommends that countries should establish national funds that provide direct funding and access to IPLCs. Mechanisms to support IPLCs financially, including from public sources, are needed to strengthen the role of IPLCs' collective actions and natural resource management.

Biodiversity & Climate

SBI4 Agenda Item 7. Cooperation with other conventions and international organizations.

Relevant Documents: 15/13. Cooperation with other conventions and international organizations (CBD/COP/DEC/15/13); 25/8. Biodiversity and climate change (CBD/SBSTTA/REC/25/8); Intersessional activities on biodiversity and climate change (SCBD/SSSF/JL/TT/AC/91588)

[9] See proposed modus operandi of an open-ended forum for the voluntary country review drafted at COP15 in decision CBD/COP/15/2, page 180.

[10] GBFF Council. (February 8-9, 2024) Policy on Allocation of Resources For The Global Biodiversity Framework Fund (GBFF). https://www.thegef.org/sites/default/files/documents/2024-02/EN_GEF.GBFF_.01.03.Rev_.03_Policy_Allocation_Resources_GBFF.pdf.

As detailed above, there is clear scientific evidence regarding the relationship between biodiversity loss and climate change, and their solutions can often be found in the same places using the same approaches.[11] The CBD has long acknowledged the synergies between biodiversity and climate change in several key decisions[12] – and now in the GBF. At COP15, countries emphasized the importance of collaboration to achieve the GBF and other global goals, including the Paris Agreement, and requested support from the Executive Secretary on fostering this alignment (CBD/COP/15/2, page 238). These synergies were also highlighted at UNFCCC COP28 in the COP28 Joint Statement on Climate Nature and People, and agreements under the UAE Consensus to align efforts with the GBF and reduce climate impacts on biodiversity.

In the recommendation to COP16 on cooperation with other conventions and organizations, the SBI4 decision can **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**. SBI4 is an important opportunity to advance these linkages considering the lack of consensus at SBSTTA25, where countries were unable to reach consensus on detailed guidance for ***how*** countries should act to address the dual crises of biodiversity loss and climate change, despite agreement on the need to address them (CBD/SBSTTA/REC/25/8).

Conservation International recommends that the final decision on this item includes calls for enhanced collaboration on the implementation of synergistic climate-biodiversity action with the UNFCCC. While cooperative efforts would require similar support from the UNFCCC, the SBI4 decision should send a clear signal on the need for cross-Convention collaboration to maximize synergies and minimize trade-offs in implementing both Conventions.

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[11] 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.
[12] See annex here: https://www.cbd.int/doc/notifications/2023/ntf-2023-043-climate-en.pdf.