



Virtual Meeting of the Consortium of Scientific Partners
30 June 2021
7:00 – 9:00, Montreal Time

MEETING REPORT

Introduction

The Consortium of Scientific Partners (CSP) usually holds its coordination meetings in the margins of CBD meetings. Due to the postponement of COP15, the CSP could not yet organize a meeting in the margins of the COP. Besides, as the meetings of the CBD Subsidiary Bodies were held virtually, it was not feasible to organize a CSP meeting in the margins of SBSTTA 24 or SBI 3 meetings. Therefore, under the circumstances, a virtual CSP meeting was organised shortly after the virtual meetings of SBSTTA 24 and SBI 3.

This meeting provided an opportunity for CSP members to reflect on how the Consortium could further contribute to the implementation of the CBD in a post-pandemic era, when we reach that point, especially considering the forthcoming adoption of the post-2020 global biodiversity framework at COP 15. It was also a timely occasion to reflect *inter alia* on a greater participation of the CSP members in the second part of the fifth Science Policy Forum for Biodiversity.

1. Opening of the meeting and welcome remarks

Mr. Erie Tamale, Senior Programme Management Officer, Capacity Building and Knowledge Management Unit of the Convention on Biological Diversity, gave welcome remarks and opened the meeting. He reminded participants how timely this meeting was, especially in view of the framework to be adopted at COP 15. He highlighted that much was accomplished despite the multiple challenges in the past year. He also took the opportunity to introduce Mr. Claudio Chiarolla, Programme Management Officer responsible for Technical and Scientific Cooperation.

The co-chairs of the CSP, Ms. Britta Garfield and Mr. Rodrigo Moreno, also gave their welcome remarks and introduced the agenda of the meeting. They thanked participants for their efforts to join the meeting from different parts of the world, despite the time difference, and acknowledging the fact that everyone was busy with various priorities.

2. Adoption of the agenda

The Members of the CSP considered the provisional agenda for adoption and agreed on the proposed organization of work.

3. Report of the CSP co-chairs and CSP members

The co-chairs reported on the activities undertaken since the last CSP meeting and highlighted actions to be implemented before the end of their term. One of the biggest accomplishments of the CSP was the co-organization of the Science Forum. A successful virtual segment of the Science Forum was organized online, from 13 to 23 April 2021, and attended by more than 2000 participants, from about 140 countries. More than 50 speakers contributed to this forum. The results of the virtual forum have

been submitted to SBSTTA 24 and SBI 3 and contributed to draft CRP documents. The co-chairs continue the planning, with partners, of the organization of the second part of the forum which will be organized in the margins of COP 15 and whose modalities are still to be confirmed. CSP members were encouraged to continue bringing their contributions to this event.

Subsequently, CSP members were invited to introduce themselves and share relevant updates about their work and highlight their priorities and potential upcoming opportunities for collaboration.

Several contributions were reported, for example, **Ms. Maïte Delmas, Natural History Museum (Muséum national d'Histoire naturelle) of France**, explained that they coordinated several projects within the Botanic Garden Community. Among them, they have worked on the Global Partnership for Plant Conservation, in partnership with the Missouri Botanical Gardens (Mr. Peter Wyse Jackson) which is working on the future of the Global Strategy for Plant Conservation. They prepared a 10-year report which has contributed to GBO-5, this report raised the profile of this strategy at the international level; and they were working on presenting more details at COP 15, possibly as a stand-alone capacity building strategy or an action strategy for the conservation and sustainable use of plants. They are also involved in the preparation of an online course for the management of Botanical Gardens, with many other partners, including Botanic Garden Conservation International and the French Network of Botanic Gardens. The course will be launched by the end of 2021, on the museum MOOC platform. The museum is also involved in Clearing-House Mechanism capacity building, with RBINS, (Mr. Han de Koeijer) especially in Francophone Africa. They also have been working on another project “Sud Expert Plantes” involving 22 French speaking countries and funded by the French Agency for Development. It consists of, among others, an online course on the management of botanical gardens, access to a master’s degrees course for professionals of the involved countries, massive online courses, and a mobility programme.

Mr. Tim Hirsch, Global Biodiversity Information Facility (GBIF), explained that they have doubled the number of recorded species since the last report in Sharm el Sheik, Egypt, to 1.9 billion now; gathering data does not stop even with the pandemic. Mr. Hirsch, deputy director of GBIF, also reported that they have launched a new round of projects, funded by the European Union (EU), under GBIF’s Biodiversity Information for Development Programme. This new round will provide grants to support projects in Africa, the Caribbean, and the Pacific to obtain data from collections and other data holding institutions and networks. That will allow them to share data using a common format and open license through GBIF and to work on projects to apply a vitalization of decision making. Already 19 projects have been selected in Sub-Saharan Africa and they will soon announce the ones of the other regions. GBIF is continuously discovering new partners and institutions to work with in mobilizing data. GBIF was also one of the co-organizers of the virtual forum, it co-organized and chaired a roundtable session on Biodiversity monitoring data, with strong support and involvement of colleagues from GEO BON. The need of using Biodiversity data to support the Framework came out very strongly, especially through polling of participants. They succeeded in getting some of the language included in a draft recommendation of SBI 3 which was very encouraging even though it still has to be adopted by COP 15.

Mr. Christoph Häuser, Natural History Museum in Berlin, reported that they are still making a lot of efforts to maintain strong cooperation with overseas partners, but many of their planned projects involving overseas partners had to be postponed or cancelled. With support from the German Federal Office, they had been able to start a new programme together with partners to train young museum professionals from Africa which they hope to continue over the next few years. Even though the training is not only about biodiversity it has some very important modules on the importance of biodiversity, especially on biodiversity knowledge, data, and information. One other major event he shared about was that the Museum co-hosted the Forum of the Global Taxonomy Initiative which took place in December 2020, originally planned to be hosted in person in Berlin which was not possible due to the pandemic. The conclusions highlighted the importance of taxonomic knowledge for achieving the CBD goals. An information document on the future perspectives of the GTI is being published and made available as a separate issue on the technical series of the Secretariat and it was shared with the SBSTA participants. It was the main outcome of the GTI forum in support of the post

2020 global biodiversity framework. Its main content speaks to the future not only of the GTI but also the post 2020 agenda in respect to GTI.

Mr. Antonio Saraiva, University of Sao Paulo, explained that the university participated in many activities, but he would talk about only a few of them. Many online activities have been developed as covid made it impossible to organize field work. There have been calls for proposals from the university, and its friends, on SDGs where Biodiversity has a strong presence in projects that have been selected. The connection between the health pandemic and biodiversity made many people more aware of the importance of protecting biodiversity, which has had a positive impact in raising awareness on the issue. The University has been part of the Planetary Health Alliance, which was created in 2015 related to studying and dealing with the impacts of humans on the natural systems and the impacts it has on our health and well-being. Last April they organized the first meeting of this alliance, which took place online. It was a big success as it had more than 5000 participants from 103 countries. As a follow-up to that meeting, the “Sao Paulo Declaration on Planetary Health” is being written, it will be released in the third quarter of 2021, with the support of UNDP.

Mr. Mahlodi Tau, South African National Biodiversity Institute (SANBI), explained the leadership role his organization plays in generating biodiversity information, coordinating research, interpreting the knowledge and evidence and to translate it for use in relevant decision-making processes. SANBI has recently launched the National Biodiversity Assessment (NBA), a primary tool for monitoring and reporting on the state of biodiversity in South Africa. Equally important was the launch of the Alien and Invasives Species Status Report that provides a comprehensive national-scale assessment of the status of biological invasions in the country and management responses. SANBI is also an accredited direct access entity of the Green Climate Fund (GCF) and efforts are ongoing to establish consortiums and identify strategic developmental projects for the benefit of biodiversity and people. As an accredited agency for the GCF, it provides an opportunity to work with various consortia and finding synergies across the three main Rio Conventions (UNFCCC; CBD; UNCCD). The GEF funded projects are ongoing and provide valuable resources for the implementation of mainstreaming of biodiversity into a range of sectors including water sector, forestry, rural development and at local government level. As South Africa is a very dry and water scarce country, national efforts are underway to develop a Strategic Water Source Areas RoadMap aimed at securing mountain catchments for the benefit of biodiversity, people and sustainable supply of water. SANBI has recently published a report reflecting on South Africa’s contributions to the global Strategic Plan for Biodiversity 2011 – 2020.

Ms. China Williams, Kew Royal Botanical Gardens, informed the members that the institution has a new director, Mr. Alexandre Antonelli. He might be able to join future CSP meetings. Kew has just started working on a new 10-year science strategy. The aim is to stop biodiversity loss and scale up sustainable nature-based solutions, with a big focus on digital translation. They are planning to be very involved in COP 15 and as UNFCCC COP 26 will take place in Glasgow, they are looking forward to enhancing synergies and linkages between the two conventions and are ready to work with other CSP members.

Mr. Han de Koeijer, Royal Belgian Institute of Natural Sciences (RBINS), stated that due to the pandemic they have not been able to do some of their international planned work, instead they worked with local NGOs and other institutions on public awareness about biodiversity and they developed a two-year programme to inform about the post 2020 global biodiversity framework which successfully involved more than 70 organizations. The EU contributed to that programme. They also continued online trainings on the Bioland tool for the francophone partner countries together with GBIF and the Natural History Museum of Paris. Only one of the planned in-person trainings could take place in RDC on Ebola and covid related diseases. Unfortunately, the Belgian scientists who went to the field got stuck due to the pandemic crisis. They are currently planning a workshop on DNA to take place in September, in Rabat, Morocco.

Ms. Manuela da Silva, Fiocruz, presented her institution as a public health research centre linked to the Brazilian Ministry of Health, it is very involved in the fight against Covid-19, and most of their

recent initiatives are related to this fight. As Fiocruz has several biodiversity collections it has been working in digitalization of data and images. They have also taken other actions related to biodiversity and health, including the building of a new biobank which works with human and non-human samples related to Covid 19, which forms a first virus collection of the two they are planning on having. One other involvement of Fiocruz is in the discussions on access and benefit sharing with the Brazilian Government and international fora where they represent the academia.

Ms. Juanita Chavez, Alexander von Humboldt Institute, explained that they are supporting the launch of the national biodiversity assessment which is a huge project. Its preparations took three years, and they are expecting significant impacts on the country's future. She expressed interest in learning from SANBI's experience on how to translate the scientific message to decision making instruments, which is the aim of the institute. Currently the institute is in the process of strengthening its work on city and biodiversity with collaboration from ICLEI and the Government of Colombia. One other contribution to report on was the involvement of the institute in the last plenary session of IPBES for which the Institute is the National Focal Point.

Mr. Vince Fleming, Joint Nature Conservation Committee (JNCC), started by introducing his new colleague, Ms. Ella Wooden. They are working on various projects, one they highlighted, as it is coming to completion, is the Nature based solutions project which looks into how they might achieve triple wins for biodiversity, climate change, both for mitigation and adaptation, and human well-being and livelihoods. In this sense it is important to outline the synergies and interactions both in what we do for biodiversity conservation and what we do for climate change, with COP 26 being a high priority. Having now a bigger biodiversity team, will make it easier for them to contribute to CSP work in the future, which they are looking forward to.

Mr. Pete Hollingsworth, Royal Botanical Garden of Edinburgh, explained that they recently launched a new 10-year strategy, highlighting their plan for science and biodiversity, which summarizes many of their activities. It is an alignment of the institution to face the biodiversity crisis and the climate emergency. It will allow them to energize and get real synergies from trainings and capacity building. They are looking for collaborative opportunities particularly in the interests of conservation, multi-culture and aligning multi-culture science for the conservation and restoration of threatened species. They also have numerous projects concerning biodiversity, genetics, and genomics; that involves a recently developed approach to tackle the conservation of genetic diversity of wild species, towards addressing Aichi Target 13. They are also contributing to the Edinburgh Declaration of COP 15 which will highlight the importance of action at the sub-national levels and the collaboration between scientists and local authorities in delivering conservation and restoration projects.

Mr. Maximilian Weigend, Bonn University Botanical Garden, said that their research agenda spans across micro morphologies, and they follow genetics and floristics. They are at the receiving end of local, federal and EU legislations, especially when it comes to the Nagoya Protocol. Their work is heavily impacted by digital sequence information on genetic resources, which has great effects on their research outputs. In 2019 they started a professional training course on the conservation of multi-culture, in collaboration with the Association of Botanical Gardens, an association of more than 80 members. This successful course familiarizes multi-cultural practitioners with all the various relevant aspects of the conservation of multi-culture, from the legal framework to seed harvesting and conservation. They also have a two-year course for practitioners of botanical gardens, dedicated to the German speaking world. They are interested in doing more work in South America, especially in the Andean parts where they have been involved in various floristic projects.

Mr. David Middleton, Singapore Botanical Garden, explained that they have undertaken various cooperation projects with their neighbouring countries to which they send experts for training courses or from which they bring professionals to the Singapore Botanical Garden. They have worked with BGCI to open an office in Southeast Asia, and it will be based at the Singapore Botanical Garden; the process has been delayed because of the pandemic but they will resume as soon as possible.

Singapore being a very densely populated urban state, the remaining areas of natural vegetation are very precious, and managing them is often challenging, especially the human-wildlife relationship.

Decision/Action points: Members were invited to consider updating their contributions to the CBD Strategic Plan¹ to include relevant new aspects of the members' work and make available such updates (e.g. as an information document) to the resumed session of SBSTTA 24 and SBI 3.

4. Use of logo

In order to facilitate the proper use of the CSP logo for branding purposes and to increase visibility of the Consortium's activities, the co-chairs developed draft guidelines concerning the use of the logo. Members were invited to discuss and adopt these guidelines.

Decision/Action points: CSP members are encouraged to use the logo in accordance with the guidelines. Further suggestions for improvement, if any, should be sent as soon as possible, but no later than September 31, 2021.

5. Upcoming review of the MOU and the membership criteria

The initial memorandum of understanding (MOU) was first signed in 2006, and a number of developments have taken place since then. For example, Parties adopted the Nagoya Protocol on Access and Benefit-Sharing and the Strategic Plan for Biodiversity 2011-2020 and its Aichi Biodiversity Targets. Currently, the post-2020 global biodiversity framework is under preparation and is expected to be adopted at the fifteenth meeting of the Conference of the Parties (COP 15). Hence, the MOU needs to be updated in order to reflect the current work of the Convention. Against this backdrop, some minor factual updates were introduced to two MOUs signed most recently.

Following two meetings with the CSP co-chairs to consider possible updates to the membership criteria as well as possible revisions of the MOU in order to better support implementation of the post-2020 global biodiversity framework and its Protocols, a draft updated version of the MOU was presented to the CSP members for their consideration and inputs, and they shared their preliminary views on the draft updated MOU template.

There were questions about the fact that the membership criteria included the need for institutions to be national institutions. There was a suggestion, supported by other members, not to limit membership only to national institutions but to also involve regional ones. Some members thought that the number of staff of an institution should not be a criterion to become a member of the Consortium. Members also recommended caution to avoid bringing new members on an "open for all" basis but rather to consider and look for the expertise that current members might lack.

Decision/Action points: CSP members are invited to submit written comments on the draft updated MOU and the membership criteria via email, possibly by 30 of August 2021.

SCBD will circulate the updated drafts containing the suggested modifications in early September.

The draft MOU will then be finalized with a view to its adoption and signature at COP 15.

Once the new MOU is adopted, following a transitional period, as necessary, CSP members would renew their commitments to the CSP under the updated MOU, which would then supersede the previous versions.

¹ <https://www.cbd.int/cooperation/csp/contribution/>

6. Development of a new CSP Work Plan

Normally, the biennial CSP work plan spans from one COP to the next one. Thus, as the current workplan ended in 2020, it is necessary to develop a new CSP work plan for a two-year period starting at COP15.

The co-chairs invited CSP members to consider and jointly develop, as part of the new CSP workplan, concrete proposals for joint activities, projects and programmes related to capacity development, knowledge exchange, technical and scientific cooperation and technology transfer, as appropriate, and to engage in joint efforts to raise the necessary funds. Some of these proposals will be developed in the next few months and presented at COP15.

Members were invited to consider how to enhance the contribution of CSP members to the implementation of other CBD programmes and initiatives and identify what relevant aspects of synergetic work could be incorporated in the CSP workplan. For example, these might include the contributions of the Global Taxonomy Initiative, the Biodiversity Indicators Partnership, the Sustainable Ocean Initiative, the Global Plant Conservation Strategy, and others.

The members of the CSP were invited to express their views on how to enhance possible synergies with other relevant MEAs with a view to develop appropriate activities for their integration into the CSP workplan. Questions were raised about the fact that the post-2020 framework is not yet adopted, and such framework should also guide the CSP work. Members thought it would be opportune to know what the post-2020 global biodiversity framework would look like before working on a CSP workplan. At the same time, other members highlighted that the CSP should not wait until the new framework is agreed because, in their view, it is important to start working on concrete proposals that can be later aligned with the framework. For example, several institutions expressed interest in collaborating on citizen science.

Decision: A dedicated meeting will be organized to elaborate the new CSP workplan.

7. Participation of CSP members in the second phase of the Science Forum

The fifth Science Policy Forum for Biodiversity, which was initially planned to take place in October 2020, prior to the fifteenth meeting of the Conference of the Parties (COP 15) to the CBD, had to be postponed due to the COVID-19 pandemic. In light of the postponement, the co-organizers decided to convene virtual sessions in order to maintain the momentum and to use the opportunity to provide science-based input to the development of the post-2020 global biodiversity framework. The joint virtual sessions of the fifth Science-Policy Forum for Biodiversity and the eighth International Conference on Sustainability Science were held from April 13 – 23, 2021.² The conclusions and recommendations were submitted to SBSTTA 24 and SBI 3 meetings.

The co-chairs provided updated information about the organisation of the sessions currently being planned in the margins of COP15 and sought additional inputs and ideas from CSP members on how they wish to contribute to the second part of this event. Many members of the CSP explained that in April they were too busy preparing for SBSTTA 24 and SBI 3 but expressed interest in contributing more to the next part of the fifth Science Policy Forum for Biodiversity.

Decision: In due course, once the modalities and timeline of the parallel events at COP 15 are determined, CSP co-chairs will provide more information regarding opportunities to get involved in the Science Forum and possibly organize a dedicated virtual meeting.

8. Election of the next co-chairs

The CSP co-chairs are usually elected for a term that runs from one COP to the next one. Since COP 15 is approaching, the CSP members were invited to express interest in serving as the next co-chairs

² <https://science4biodiversity.org/>

of the CSP. Some participants requested additional information about the role and responsibilities of the co-chairs, which they promised to share with the members. The elections of the new co-chairs of the CSP will be held in the margins of COP 15 and expressions of interest will be sent to the current co-chairs by e-mail possibly by 15 September 2021.

Decision: The co-chairs will send information about the role and responsibilities of the co-chairs, as requested, meanwhile interested institutions can start sending their expressions of interest to the CSP co-chairs.

9. Any other business

Participants thanked Mr. Sergio Andres Aranguren Zaldua, focal point of the Humboldt Institute, for his contributions to the CSP as he will move on to another institution.

10. Closure of the meeting

The co-chairs summarized the salient points and follow-up action items raised during the discussion and closed the meeting.

Annex I

List of Participants

No	Organization	Location	Contact Name
CORE CSP MEMBERS			
1	Botanische Gärten der Rheinischen Friedrich-Wilhelms - Universität Bonn	Germany	Mr. Maximilian Weigend
2	Fundação Instituto Oswaldo Cruz	Brazil	Ms. Manuela da Silva
3	Instituto Humboldt	Colombia	Ms. Juanita Chaves
4			Mr. Sergio Andrés Aranguren Zaldúa
5			Mr. Rodrigo Moreno Villamil
6	Joint Nature Conservation Committee	United Kingdom	Mr. Vincent Fleming
7			Ms. Ella Wooden
8	Muséum National d'Histoire Naturelle	France	Ms. Maïté Delmas
9	Royal Belgian Institute of Natural Sciences	Belgium	Mr. Han de Koeijer
10	Royal Botanic Garden Edinburgh	United Kingdom	Ms. Alexandra Davey
11			Mr. Peter Hollingsworth
12	Singapore Botanical Gardens	Singapore	Ms. Wendy Yap
13			Mr. David Middleton
14	Smithsonian Institution	USA	Ms. Britta Garfield
15	South African National Biodiversity Institute	South Africa	Mr. Mahlodi Tau
16	University of Sao Paulo	Brazil	Mr. Antonio Mauro Saraiva
OBSERVERS			
17	Global Biodiversity Information Facility	Denmark	Mr. Tim Hirsch
SCBD			
18	Secretariat of the Convention on Biological Diversity	Canada	Mr. Erie Tamale
19			Mr. Claudio Chiarolla
20			Ms. Claire Parois
21			Mr. Djessy Monnier