



**Convention on  
Biological Diversity**

Joint Meeting of the Bureaux of the Conference of the Parties and the Subsidiary Body on Scientific, Technical and Technological Advice

20 February 2016, 10h00 to 17h00, Kuala Lumpur Convention Centre , Kuala Lumpur

**STRENGTHENING IMPLEMENTATION OF THE CONVENTION THROUGH REPORTING, ANALYSIS AND REVIEW**

**Informal Background Note**

The review of progress in the implementation of the Convention is a core element of the work under the CBD. The COP, recalling that its role is to keep the implementation of the Convention under review, decided in decision X/2 that at its future meetings it would review progress in the implementation of the Strategic Plan for Biodiversity 2011-2020, share experiences relevant for implementation and make recommendations in line with the principle of adaptive management through active learning to strengthen the mechanisms to support implementation, monitoring and review to overcome obstacles encountered.

While currently the COP, through the Global Biodiversity Outlook and other analyses, is able to assess the global progress towards the Aichi Biodiversity Targets, there are only limited opportunities for its work to be truly informed by the national experiences of individual Parties, and the opportunities for mutual learning and adaptive management are constrained accordingly.

Many other fora have established processes for reviewing implementation, which take different forms. Such practice is reviewed in UNEP/CBD/SBI/1/10/Add.3. Recently review mechanisms have been established under the UNFCCC: the Monitoring, Reporting and Verification system to review reports on the status of greenhouse gas emissions and removals by sinks, as well as on actions taken by individual parties to reduce emissions or enhance sinks, known as “international assessment and review” and “international consultation and analysis”, respectively. In addition are the review mechanisms that focus on review by peers of policy frameworks including: the Environmental performance review under the Organization for Economic Cooperation and Development, the World Trade Organization Trade Policy Review Mechanism, and the United Nations Human Rights Council Universal Periodic Review.

These review mechanisms provide a forum for parties or members to engage in a dialogue on their different actions taken in response to common commitments and they can facilitate learning among them about effective policy practice, design and implementation. In the course of a review process, best practices and readily-usable policy-relevant information may be provided by parties. Where the structure of the review is an open, dialogue-oriented process, in contrast to a compliance procedure-oriented mechanism, parties may also be willing to engage in more candid dialogue with each other. Such mechanisms provide parties involved with transparency about the activities undertaken by other parties. In particular processes where parties agreed to submit their national targets, plans and other commitments for activities can benefit from such transparency. In processes where global goals and targets are established for consecutive time periods, the information generated through the review can inform subsequent rounds of negotiation. Furthermore, in fora where a robust review mechanism has

been established, the technical capacity at the national level to monitor and report has also reportedly increased.

Under the Convention, the focus of review for the coming years will be progress in the implementation of the most recent strategic plan. This requires, as reflected in existing mandates provided by the Conference of the Parties, the review of national targets, plans and actions, as well as their outcomes. Therefore, the establishment of a review process that is conducive to the assessment of comprehensive policy frameworks (in the form of national strategies and action plans) and that facilitates constructive mutual learning among Parties appears most appropriate.

### **Subject of reviews**

The review of implementation can include:

1. a review of the targets and commitments;
2. a review of the status of implementation of actions taken to implement the targets; and
3. a review of the outcomes achieved.

These three elements can be reviewed along different dimensions (including a target by target analysis of progress towards the achievement of the Aichi Biodiversity Targets):

- A. at the global level;
- B. in the form of a synthesis of actions taken, targets set and outcomes achieved at the national level across all Parties;; and
- C. at the national level for individual Parties.

Together, the different dimensions of review of implementation constitute a coherent system that enables the evolution of the implementation of the CBD based on latest science and building on the experiences made by Parties.

### **A multi-dimensional review system under the Convention**

Existing mandates and practice have created a multi-dimensional review system under the Convention. While it has become practice under the CBD to review progress from a global perspective, there is potential to strengthen other dimensions of the review of implementation.

#### *Review of the aggregate progress of Parties and the contribution of aggregate national targets towards global targets*

The review at the global level mainly focusses on global outcomes and the aggregate of actions taken by individual Parties, as well as actions taken on the global level to foster implementation – currently in the form of a review of progress in the achievement of the Aichi Biodiversity Targets. Such a review was recently undertaken, for example, through the mid-term review at COP 12 in 2014, based on the fourth edition of the Global Biodiversity Outlook.

The review at the global level makes use of data from various sources, including spatially explicit time series information on ecosystem change from remote sensing. As the spatial and temporal resolution of this information continues to improve, it can be increasingly used by the Convention to support monitoring of biodiversity change at the national level.

Based on the work of SBSTTA 19 (Recommendation XIX/5), the Conference of the Parties is expected to launch work on the fifth edition of the Global Biodiversity Outlook, which will draw heavily on the global assessment of the Intergovernmental Science-Policy Platform for Biodiversity and Ecosystem Services,

and provide a final assessment of the implementation of the Strategic Plan for Biodiversity 2011-2020 and the achievement of the Aichi Biodiversity Targets, as well as the basis for an update of the Strategic Plan beyond 2020.

A second dimension of review extends beyond the aggregate progress and reviews the progress of Parties within the aggregate total. Without identifying individual Parties, the review considers the distribution of Parties on a scale of progress made and identifies trends. For example, in the context of the fourth edition of the Global Biodiversity Outlook, the percentage of Parties was indicated that, based on their fifth national reports, (i) have not made progress, (ii) made progress but at an insufficient rate, (iii) are on track to meet the Aichi Biodiversity Targets, or are (iv) on track to exceed them. Cases of individual countries and their best practices were used as illustrations and examples. In the future, such analysis could also be undertaken for regional and sub-regional levels.

This dimension of review also considers the contribution of the aggregate of national targets communicated by Parties towards the global targets. Such analysis will, for the first time, be provided to SBI at its first meeting. SBI will be invited to consider an update and analysis of national biodiversity strategies and action plans received after the adoption of the Strategic Plan for Biodiversity 2011-2020 (document UNEP/CBD/SBI/1/2/Add.1), and an analysis of the contribution of targets established by Parties and progress towards the Aichi Biodiversity Targets (document UNEP/CBD/SBI/1/2/Add.2).

Drafts of these documents are available at: <https://www.cbd.int/sbi/sbi-01/SBI-1-2-Add.1-180116.pdf> and [https://www.cbd.int/sbi/sbi-01/NBSAP\\_NR\\_assessment180116-for\\_review-en.pdf](https://www.cbd.int/sbi/sbi-01/NBSAP_NR_assessment180116-for_review-en.pdf)

#### *Review of progress by Parties in achieving their national targets and actions*

The third dimension of review, a review of progress by individual Parties, has not been a focus under the Convention yet. Cases of individual countries and their best practices were only used as illustrations and examples, for example in the Global Biodiversity Outlook.

This dimension of review could assess progress in implementation by individual Parties of the setting and achievement of their national targets and actions as well as the outcomes of these actions. This dimension of review would complement the existing elements of review and support Parties in further enhancing the implementation of the Convention and the Strategic Plan for Biodiversity.

A review process under the Convention would aim to harness the benefits experienced in other fora:

- To increase transparency with regard to the actions undertaken by parties and to give confidence to Parties with regard to the contribution of each Party towards the achievement of global goals and targets.
- To facilitate mutual learning among Parties through, among other things, identifying, sharing and giving recognition for good practices.

By further strengthening the overall review of information, the review process would also enable SBI to identify strategic actions to overcome obstacles in national implementation

To allow Parties to the Convention to benefit most effectively from this dimension of review, and to provide them with a structured way to consider the wealth of information that a review of individual Parties will produce, a specific process could be established under SBI.

The review process should build upon relevant experience under the Convention, including of the voluntary peer review process.

Further information is available in UNEP/CBD/SBI/1/10 and UNEP/CBD/SBI/1/10/Add.3 available at: [https://www.cbd.int/sbi/sbi-01/sbi-modus-operandi-01-10-draft\\_050216.pdf](https://www.cbd.int/sbi/sbi-01/sbi-modus-operandi-01-10-draft_050216.pdf) and [https://www.cbd.int/sbi/sbi-01/sbi-review-mechanisms-01-10-add3\\_draft\\_050216.pdf](https://www.cbd.int/sbi/sbi-01/sbi-review-mechanisms-01-10-add3_draft_050216.pdf)

### **Links to reporting**

The success of any review mechanism largely depends on the quality and completeness of the information reviewed. The guidelines for the sixth national report and other developments in the context of national reporting that SBI will consider at its first meeting, are aimed to improve the information basis for the review. As part of the draft guidelines for the sixth national reports, Parties are requested to focus their reports on progress made and outcomes achieved in implementing national targets and to assess the effectiveness of the measures undertaken as part of NBSAP implementation. Parties are also invited to assess scientific and technical needs related to implementation of each target. This proposed format is expected to facilitate the future review of implementation, while promoting technical and scientific cooperation and assessments of effectiveness of types of measures taken in accordance with the provisions of the Convention.

### **Links to support mechanisms**

Besides the benefits of mutual learning and exchange that the review setting will provide, the outcomes of the review should be linked to further support measures. The results of the review could feed into a process to channel Parties' expressed needs through the Convention's Clearing House Mechanism to be met with implementation support - capacity building and technical and scientific cooperation - from various sources including, the Biobridge Initiative, the Japan Biodiversity Fund's pilot project programme, the implementing agencies, other matchmaking facilities, among others. These processes could use the results of the review, coupled with implementation needs expressed by Parties in various forms, as a basis to provide targeted support to Parties.

### **Discussions**

The Friends of the CBD workshop, to be hosted by Switzerland in March will provides an opportunity for further discussions in an informal setting among experts from governments and other partners of possible approaches to enhance review of implementation. The Swiss meeting will address the question:

“What existing or new mechanisms under the Convention could be used to strengthen implementation of the Convention by enhancing review?” More specific questions include:

1. What can we learn from the experience of other processes in this regard?
2. How can we build upon existing processes under the Convention?
3. What further elements for a review process could be developed?
4. How can Parties further strengthen review of implementation at the national level? Experiences of Parties in audits and related national processes will be reviewed.