

BirdLife international's response to the peer-review of
Revision and Updating of the Strategic Plan: Possible Outline and Elements of the
New Strategic Plan (UNEP/CBD/SP/PREP/2)

BirdLife supports the general direction that the process of revision and updating of the CBD's strategic plan is taking. We believe that the proposed outline and elements of the new strategic plan are a marked improvement on the 2010 target in several ways. However we have a number of comments as well as general and specific suggestions, set out below.

1 GENERAL COMMENTS

We support the way in which the main focus of the vision and target clearly express the desired positive change in the state of biodiversity while making clear the links between biodiversity and ecosystem services and human well-being. We also think that the vision statement and both options for the 2020 target have struck about the right balance between ambition and realism by aiming to stop biodiversity loss as well as including restoration. At the same time, the accompanying text should do more to convey the urgency and scale of the task of halting and reversing biodiversity loss. It should also more clearly express the point that though the challenge is large, it is not insurmountable – with concerted effort (but NOT with business as usual), enormous progress is possible in the next ten years.

Further, we agree with the timelines of 2050 for the vision and 2020 for the medium-term target, or mission (though the need for *immediate* action to achieve the mission by 2020 needs to be clear).

Regarding the specific targets (Targets 1-20), we would strongly suggest that they are organized according to the Pressure-State-Benefits-Response (P-S-B-R) framework as recommended by the Experts Workshop held in Reading, UK (6-8 July 2009). This will address the problem in the existing 2010 framework where it is not clear how everything fits together to tell a coherent story. We suggest that grouping the targets under these headings will also eliminate the need for specifying higher-level goals, which create a confusing extra layer of nomenclature.

2 SPECIFIC COMMENTS

2050 Vision Statement

We support the proposed statement.

“Living in harmony with nature – biodiversity is conserved, restored and wisely used, sustaining a healthy planet and delivering benefits essential for all people”.

2020 Target

Option 1 is weak, has limited ambition and is not outcome-oriented. It only aims to **‘take action to reduce threats’** and **‘start to restore ecosystems’**. The wording is also long and unwieldy. Further, it is not certain whether the reference to MDGs will remain relevant after 2015. Option 2 on the other hand is outcome-oriented and aims to stop biodiversity loss, achieve restoration and enhance ecosystem capacity. However, it does not specify the need for urgent and concerted action, which is important to express in the Mission. It also refers to a vague concept of ‘ecologically sound levels’, which will be difficult to understand or define. The last sentence appears awkwardly placed here, and this aim is better reflected (and actually is) in the ‘Response’ section of the specific targets (Targets 1-20).

So we support a version of Option 2, modified to read

“By 2020, through urgent and concerted action, to halt the loss of biodiversity and begin its restoration, enhancing the capacity of ecosystems to provide vital services, while equitably sharing the benefits and contributing to human wellbeing and poverty reduction.”

Strategic Objectives and Specific Targets

As mentioned in the general comments section above, we strongly recommend the re-structuring of this section into a P-S-B-R framework to provide a more coherent flow. This restructuring also helps to show up gaps in the framework under the State heading.

We further suggest that, wherever sensible and where the data is available, 2015 milestones be identified for the specific targets (Targets 1 – 20). Below we reproduce these elements with suggested P-S-B-R section headings in blue text, suggested amendments to the targets in red text and possible 2015 milestones (in italics) – these are by way of example, not a comprehensive set.

Pressure: Take strategic and effective actions to address the direct and indirect drivers of biodiversity loss

Target 1. By 2020, Everyone is aware of the value of biodiversity and what steps they can take to protect it.

Comment: This is not a SMART target as it is not measurable (and possibly not fully achievable). It could perhaps be tightened up via a set of specific milestones or indicators that guide particular actions (eg incorporation of biodiversity into school curriculums).

Target 2. By 2020, The value of biodiversity, ~~and the~~ opportunities derived from its conservation and sustainable use, and the fair and equitable sharing of benefits arising from the use of its genetic resources, are ~~recognized and reflected~~ **integrated** by all countries in their national development and poverty reduction policies and strategies, national accounts, economic sectors and spatial planning processes at all levels of government, and by the private sector, applying the ecosystem approach.

2015 milestone: All countries have begun the process of fully integrating biodiversity into their national accounting, plans and processes.

Target 3. By 2020, Subsidies harmful to biodiversity are eliminated.

Target 4. By 2020, Governments and stakeholders at all levels have formulated and begun to implement ~~sustainability plans~~ **comprehensive policies** to increase efficiency, reduce waste and maintain the use of resources within ecological limits;

Target 5. By 2020, ~~Deforestation and forest degradation~~ **Destruction and degradation of natural forests** and ~~the rate of loss and degradation of~~ other natural habitats is ~~halved~~ **halted**.

2015 Milestone: Deforestation and degradation of natural forests and other natural habitats is halved.

Target 6. By 2020, Pressure on marine ecosystems through overfishing ~~halved~~ **removed with all fish stocks within sustainable limits**, and destructive fishing practices are eliminated.

2015 Milestone: Number of fisheries being unsustainably harvested has been halved.

*2015 Milestone: 30% of the high seas agreed as no-take zones
[Note: this is a Response milestone but fits here under Target 6. This is a measure being argued for by marine scientists, based on our knowledge of marine ecology.]*

Target 7. By 2020, All areas under agriculture, aquaculture and forestry are managed ~~according to sustainability criteria~~ **sustainably**;

2015 Milestone: The percentage area of agriculture, aquaculture and forestry managed sustainably is doubled

Target 8. By 2020, Pollution from excess nutrients (nitrogen and phosphorus) has been brought below critical ecosystem loads.

Target 9. By 2020, **Harmful Invasive Alien Species and emerging infectious diseases of wildlife have been controlled, and the** introduction and establishment of **further** invasive species has been prevented.

2015 Milestone: Number of established Invasive Alien Species not under control are halved .

2015 Milestone: All countries have in place effective measures to prevent the introduction and establishment of further IAS.

Target 10. By 2020, The impacts of climate change and of ocean acidification on ecosystems have been reduced and responses to climate change that are not detrimental to biodiversity have been agreed **and are being implemented.**

2015 Milestone: Species population trends show reduced impacts from climate change.

State: Improve the state of biodiversity, initially by preventing further loss

Target 12. The **human-driven** extinction of known threatened species (~~vertebrates and higher plants~~) has been prevented ~~by ensuring that all such threatened species are protected in at least one site.~~

[Note: There have been suggestions to include reference to 'at least one site' in this Target. We think this is inappropriate as this may lead to the false impression that protecting a single site is sufficient to prevent species extinctions. It will not be, in many cases. There is also no need to confine the Target to vertebrates and higher plants, as the Red List process is becoming ever-more comprehensive.]

Target 12 bis. The population declines of species representative of key habitats reversed.

This is a gap in the present State targets, that deals with the conservation of biodiversity outside Protected Areas – an issue highlighted at the recent London consultative expert meeting. The concept of species representative of key habitats is well recognised in e.g. the European Wild Bird Indicator.

Target 13. By 2020, The status of crop and livestock genetic diversity in agricultural ecosystems and of wild relatives has been improved. (SMART target to be developed at global and national levels).

Benefits: Safeguard, restore and equitably share the benefits delivered by biodiversity, including through its role in underpinning ecosystem services and in climate change mitigation and adaptation

Target 14. By 2020, The contribution of biodiversity and terrestrial, freshwater and coastal ecosystems to sequestering and retaining greenhouse gases has been enhanced.

Target 15. By 2020, Terrestrial, freshwater and marine ecosystems that provide critical services, ~~especially for the poor and vulnerable, that build~~ **and** ecological resilience, or that contribute to local livelihoods and climate change adaptation, have been safeguarded or restored, **and adequate and equitable access to essential ecosystem services is guaranteed for all, especially indigenous and local communities and the poor and vulnerable.**

Target 17. By 2020, Access to genetic resources is enhanced, and substantial benefits are shared, consistent with the international regime on access and benefit sharing;

Target 18. By 2020, Traditional knowledge, innovations and practices and the rights of indigenous and local communities over these are protected ~~and adequate and equitable access to essential ecosystem services is guaranteed.~~

Response: Direct action taken to safeguard and restore biodiversity, and to enable implementation of this Strategic Plan

Target 11. By 2020, ~~At least 15% of land and sea areas, including~~ the most critical terrestrial, freshwater and marine **areas habitats, including all key biodiversity areas**, have been ~~protected~~ **conserved** through effectively managed protected areas and/or other means, and integrated into the wider land- and seascape.

[Note: This is a Response target, and a crucially important one. We do not believe that a blanket percentage area target is effective or useful. Because it takes no account of the spatial distribution of biodiversity, such a target could be met without contributing much to the Mission of this plan. Rather, it is vital to ensure that the most significant places for biodiversity are effectively conserved. The need to conserve key biodiversity areas (identified through scientific criteria as the most important places for biodiversity worldwide) has been highlighted in a number of consultations, including the recent London experts meeting.]

Target 16. By 2020, Each Party has an appropriate, up-to-date, effective and operational national biodiversity strategy, consistent with this Strategic Plan, based on adequate assessment of biodiversity, its value and threats, with responsibilities allocated among sectors, levels of government, and other stakeholders, and coordination mechanisms are in place to ensure implementation of the actions needed.

Target 19. By 2020, Knowledge, **monitoring** and technologies relating to biodiversity, its value and functioning, its status and trends, and the consequences of its loss, are improved and widely shared, and uncertainties concerning biodiversity change, ecosystem services and impacts on human well-being are reduced;

Target 20. By 2020, Capacity (human resources and financing) for implementing the Convention has been increased tenfold. (This target should be synchronized with the Strategy for Resource Mobilization)