



Supporting Parties to the Convention on Biological Diversity (CBD) to Prepare for Updating the National Biodiversity Strategies and Action Plans (NBSAPs)

“Technical Support for the Global Biodiversity Framework Early Action Support”

Whole-of-society approach to implementing the Kunming-Montreal Global Biodiversity Framework

1. Introduction

Review of NBSAPs for updates are expected to be in line with the GBF via an inclusive whole-of-government and whole-of-society processes. This guidance note aims to elaborate on what the “whole-of-society-approach” means to the Parties to the CBD that have been applying it in meeting the Convention objectives of the conservation of biological diversity, the sustainable use of its components and the fair and equitable sharing of the benefits arising out of the utilization of genetic resources. In the associated appendices, there is a checklist for the integration of the whole-of-society approach in the implementation of the GBF and its targets through the updating and revising of NBSAPs (Appendix 1), followed by a step-by-step guide to use of the whole-of-society approach when revising or updating NBSAPs (Appendix 2). The guidance note makes use of plans and strategies associated with the GBF to target monitoring, resource mobilization, capacity development, gender, and indigenous peoples and local communities.

The Kunming-Montreal Global Biodiversity Framework (GBF), that provides the framework for countries’ efforts to meet the objectives of the Convention on Biological Diversity (CBD) for the period 2022-2030 recognizes *“This is a framework for all - for the whole of government and the whole of society. Its success requires political will and recognition at the highest level of government and relies on action and cooperation by all levels of government and by all actors of society”*¹ supported by recommendations from its subsidiary bodies calling for “a

¹ <https://www.cbd.int/doc/decisions/cop-15/cop-15-dec-04-en.pdf>

participatory and inclusive whole-of-society approach that engages actors beyond national Governments, including subnational governments, cities and other local authorities (including through the Edinburgh Declaration),² intergovernmental organizations, non-governmental organizations, indigenous peoples and local communities, women's groups, youth groups, the business and finance community, the scientific community, academia, faith-based organizations, representatives of sectors related to or dependent on biodiversity, citizens at large, and other stakeholders.”³

The importance of whole-of-society (WoS) approach to achieving sustainable development is well recognized in the international community. The 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development, for example, declares that *“Our journey will involve Governments as well as parliaments, the United Nations system and other international institutions, local authorities, indigenous peoples, civil society, business and the private sector, the scientific and academic community – and all people.”⁴*

1.1 Understanding the whole-of-society approach - a brief for policy makers

The whole-of-society (WoS) approach, literally interpreted, refers to an approach in which all levels of government and all actors of society, (including children⁵, the elderly, youth, women, private sector, and IPLCs, participate and contribute to a given process. More formally, *“The WoS approach is an approach to governance, which aims for society wide mobilisation of actors and resources towards shared goals of responding to a crisis, deploys measures aiming for inclusivity, and is led by facilitative and polycentric coordination with an integrated and holistic approach.”⁶* As indicated in this definition, the WoS approach has been primarily deployed in responding to crises, such as peacebuilding, disaster risk management and health-related challenges.⁷

² Convention on Biological Diversity, Subsidiary Body on Implementation, *The Edinburgh Process for Subnational and Local Governments on the Development of the Post-2020 Global Biodiversity Framework: Edinburgh Declaration: note by the Executive Secretary*, CBD/SBI/3/INF/25 (22 February 2021).

³ Convention on Biological Diversity, Open Ended Working Group on the Post-2020 Global Biodiversity Framework, [First Draft of the Post-2020 Global Biodiversity Framework: note by the Co-Chairs](#), CBD/SG2020/3/3 (5 July 2021), paragraph 15.

⁴ General Assembly resolution 70/1, *Transforming our world: the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development*, A/RES/70/1 (25 September 2015), paragraph 52.

⁵ Better to use children as opposed to youth. The UN defines youth as those persons between ages 15 and 24. Microsoft Word - YOUTH_Definition_2013-1-23.docx (un.org). Since this will exclude children in primary schools (approximately 820 million UN calls for urgent action to address education crisis as global primary school-age population peaks in 2023 | United Nations), perhaps we should say, children to elderly. Access to primary education is a basic right of every child.

⁶ Maatta, S. (2021). [Rethinking collaborative action and citizen empowerment: Characterising a Whole-of-Society approach to the energy transition](#). *Energy Research & Social Science*, 81.

⁷ Ibid.

For example, in 2009, the World Health Organization (WHO) issued guidelines for pandemic preparedness and response entitled “Whole-of-Society Pandemic Readiness”, specifying governments, businesses and civil society as key actors. When declaring COVID-19 outbreak as a pandemic on 11 March 2019, the Director-General of the WHO stated that “it is a crisis that will touch every sector – so every sector and every individual must be involved in the fight... countries must take a whole-of-government, whole-of-society approach.”⁸

Now, there is a need for using the WoS approach in defining and implementing the global biodiversity framework. By definition, a problem in society turns into a crisis when it affects most people and becomes personalized. The extent of biodiversity loss around the world has triggered such a massive domino effect in the way it knocks down livelihoods and development opportunities that it has become a crisis requiring equally massive reactions from the whole-of-society. In fact, the Global Environment Outlook 6 declares, “Biodiversity is in crisis. There is well-established evidence indicating an irrevocable and continuing decline of genetic and species diversity, and degradation of ecosystems at local and global scales.”⁹ GBF Decision 15/4 calls for the enhancing of communication, education, and awareness on biodiversity, including among other things, improving sustainable livelihoods and poverty eradication efforts.

The WoS resonates with the principle of “leaving no one behind”, which forms the crux of the 2030 Agenda and the Sustainable Development Goals. According to the United Nations Development Program (UNDP), “People get left behind when they lack the choices and opportunities to participate in and benefit from development progress”; and one way to counteract this is to “Empower those who are left behind... including by ensuring their meaningful participation in decision making and establishing safe and inclusive mechanisms for their civic engagement.”¹⁰ In fact, GBF Target 22 speaks to ensuring the full, equitable, inclusive, effective and gender-responsive representation and participation of vulnerable groups in decision-making.

⁸ <https://www.who.int/director-general/speeches/detail/who-director-general-s-opening-remarks-at-the-media-briefing-on-covid-19---11-march-2020>

⁹ United Nations Environment Programme (2019). *Global Environment Outlook 6*, page 142.

¹⁰ United Nations Development Programme (2018). *What does it mean to leave no one behind: a UNDP discussion paper and framework for implementation*.

In other words, people who are (or at risk of) being left behind (indigenous peoples and local communities, women and girls, children and youth, and persons with disabilities), themselves can be empowered to join the development trajectory through civic engagement. By leaving no one behind in its efforts to address a crisis at hand, the WoS approach could be a powerful tool to “leave no one behind” in the full sense of the term. To facilitate meaningful civic engagement, efforts must be made not only to provide for inclusive mechanisms but also for grassroots education and information-sharing so that those most affected would be able to voice their concerns and explore win-win solutions. This is in keeping with Principle 10 of the Rio Declaration that is “...now widely accepted as ‘three cornerstones’ of a healthy democratic governance system in which the individuals and communities of civil society are able to access information relating to environmental issues at the national and international level; to be comprehensively involved in the decision making process at all levels; and to receive adequate access to an open and fair justice system that will enable them to hold governments to account.”¹¹

One of the key elements of the WoS approach is to also consider the whole-of-government (WoG) approach, which “*Involves collaboration between the different public bodies that extends beyond their respective fields of competence with a view to providing the public with a combined response from a single body*”.¹² The WoG approach fosters collaboration both horizontally across different line ministries and agencies and vertically between national and local governments and plays a key role in ensuring policy coherence and synergies while minimizing trade-offs. The Rio+20 outcome document, “The future we want”, captures this idea when it “*reaffirm(s) the key role of all levels of government and legislative bodies in promoting sustainable development*.”¹³

The Kunming-Montreal Global Biodiversity Framework sets out an ambitious plan to implement broad-based action to bring about a transformation in our societies’ relationship with biodiversity by 2030, in line with the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development and its Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs). The WoG approach is particularly important in the context of sustainable development, in which economic, environmental, and social goals need to be achieved simultaneously. In fact, SDG 17 to “Strengthen the means of

¹¹ <https://sustainabledevelopment.un.org/content/documents/1127rioprinciples.pdf>

¹² https://knowledge4policy.ec.europa.eu/glossary-item/whole-government-approach%C2%A0_en

¹³ General Assembly resolution 66/288, *The future we want*, A/RES/66/288 (27 July 2012), paragraph 42. General Assembly resolution 70/1, *Transforming our world: the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development*, A/RES/70/1 (25 September 2015), paragraph 52.

implementation and revitalize the Global Partnership for Sustainable Development” includes target 17.14.1 that measures the “Number of countries with mechanisms in place to enhance policy coherence of sustainable development”. The methodology for SDG 17.14.1 emphasizes the WoG approach, probing whether a country has coordination mechanisms that bring together different ministries and different levels of authorities to advance the implementation of the SDGs. Decision 15/6 call for synergies among NBSAPs and the planning and implementation mechanisms of the other biodiversity-related conventions, Rio conventions and other relevant multilateral environmental agreements, and the Sustainable Development Goals should be identified and utilized to maximize efficiency and coherence. The WoG approach bolstered by strong political commitment, enables a country to effectively mobilize the WoS to tackle any crisis confronting it.

Box 1: Increasing calls for whole-of-government and whole-of-society approaches.

“Our efforts to leave no one behind will be a test of our common vision, resolve and ingenuity. A whole-of-government and whole-of-society approach must become our new norm. Meaningful multi-stakeholder partnership will be fundamental in the design, implementation, financing and evaluation of development solutions.”

- Amina Mohammed, UN Deputy Secretary-General (February 2018)¹⁴

“For [the post-2020 global biodiversity] framework to succeed, governments must ensure broad participation in its formal processes. Non-state actors – sub-national governments, business and the financial sector, academia, civil society, youth and indigenous peoples and local communities – have a critical role to play in delivering biodiversity outcomes.

- Elizabeth Mrema, Executive Secretary of Convention on Biological Diversity, and Manuel Pulgar-Vidal, former Minister of the Environment of Peru (February 2021)¹⁵

“Bold leadership and urgent actions across the whole of government and society, together with an inclusive and networked multi-governance approach. Such action can address the direct and underlying causes of biodiversity loss and the degradation of ecosystems, while shifting the course towards a nature positive future.”

- UN Chief Executives Board for Coordination (April 2021)¹⁶

¹⁴ <https://www.un.org/press/en/2018/dsgsm1131.doc.htm>

¹⁵ https://wwf.panda.org/wwf_news/?1520941/CBD-nature-everyone

¹⁶ A common approach to integrating biodiversity and nature-based solutions for sustainable development into the UN’s policy and programme planning and delivery, available from <https://unsceeb.org/un-common-approach-biodiversity>

1.2 Actors in the Whole-of-Society Approach

In the UN system, there are nine categories of major groups, which purport to represent the broad spectrum of society:

- women,
- children and youth,
- indigenous peoples,
- non-governmental organizations (NGOs),
- local authorities,
- workers and trade unions,
- business and industry,
- scientific and
- technological community and farmers.

These major groups were formalized through the Agenda 21 adopted at the UN Conference on Environment and Development (Earth Summit) held in Rio de Janeiro, Brazil, in June 1992.

The 2002 World Summit on Sustainable Development held in Johannesburg, South Africa, and the 2012 UN Conference on Sustainable Development (Rio+20) held again in Rio de Janeiro, subsequently reiterated the importance of engagement by the major groups. For the purposes of streamlining the WoS approach, the major groups can be considered “civil society”, in line with WHO’s WoS approach to pandemic management and with the Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development (OECD), which has also recommended a WoS approach to promoting public integrity, with concrete actions suggested respectively for individuals, companies and civil society.¹⁷

At the 14th meeting of the Conference of the Parties to the Convention on Biological Diversity (CBD), held in Sharm El-Sheik, in November 2018, Egypt and China, together with the CBD Secretariat, launched the “Sharm El-Sheikh to Kunming Action Agenda for Nature and

¹⁷ Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development (2020), [OECD Public Integrity Handbook](#).

People: Reversing Biodiversity Loss and Promoting Positive Gains to 2030”, as a platform for non-state and sub-national actors, including cities and businesses, to make a voluntary commitment to achieve the objectives of the Convention.¹⁸ The launch of the platform can be seen as an institutionalization of political commitment to the WoS approach, while the 426 commitments currently showcased in the Action Plan¹⁹ demonstrate that various actors and sectors actively contribute towards biodiversity conservation and sustainable use. The starting point for accelerating the WoS approach in the context of the CBD should then be to provide conceptual clarity on the WoS to further systematize it, which the present guidance note aims to do.

Box 2: Different conceptualizations of WoS within CBD.

The official CBD website²⁰ identifies the following groups as key constituents in biodiversity discourse, which differs to the major groups as categorized in the context of the General Assembly:

- Business
- Women
- Youth
- Other stakeholders
- Indigenous peoples and local communities

In the commitments page²¹ for the Sharm El-Sheikh to Kunming Action Agenda, the following stakeholders are specified:

- Academic and research institute
- Government
- Individual
- Indigenous peoples and local communities
- Non-governmental organization
- Private sector
- UN system
- Youth

¹⁸ <https://www.cbd.int/cop/cop-14/annoucement/nature-action-agenda-egypt-to-china-en.pdf>. Accessed on 28 June 2022.

¹⁹ <https://www.cbd.int/portals/action-agenda/>. Accessed on 28 June 2022.

²⁰ <https://www.cbd.int/topic/business-women-youth-and-other-stakeholders>. Accessed on 28 June 2022.

²¹ <https://www.cbd.int/action-agenda/statistics/#STA>. Accessed on 28 June 2022.

On its “Key partners” page²² on the other hand, the following categories are listed:

- The Rio Conventions
- The biodiversity-related conventions
- Other relevant conventions
- United Nations and other intergovernmental organizations
- Non-governmental organizations and civil society
- Indigenous organizations
- Scientific and technical research and assessment bodies
- Industry and the private sector

In this context, it would facilitate assigning roles and responsibilities and monitoring their impact, as in the case of WHO which identifies governments, businesses and civil society and in OECD which identifies individuals, companies and civil society as key actors in the WoS approach to resolving a crisis. It is also important to understand the role of WoG in promoting policy coherence for biodiversity and catalysing the WoS to act in a concerted manner. One possible configuration²³ could be the following:

- Government, encompassing all levels, from national to local, in the spirit of the WoG.
- Civil Society, including all the different, sometimes overlapping manifestations of stakeholders or non-state actors, such as indigenous peoples and local communities, women, youth and academia (also assuming that indigenous peoples and communities encompass individuals, consumers, women, youth, students, etc.).
- Private sector, including industries and businesses, which could also be referred to as stakeholders or non-state actors depending on the context.

Box 3. Example of WoS at work

Nepal (2023): Nepal Indigenous Nationalities Preservation Association (NINPA) has been working with Indigenous peoples and local communities to promote sustainable land use

²² <https://www.cbd.int/cooperation/about/partners.shtml>. Accessed on 28 June 2022.

²³ The Global Assessment Report on Biodiversity and Ecosystem Services (2019) prepared by the Intergovernmental Science-Policy Platform on Biodiversity and Ecosystem Services identifies the following “decision makers”: 1) global and regional (inter)governmental organizations (UN, MEA secretariats, etc.), 2) national, sub-national and local governments, 3) private sector, 4) civil society, including citizens (households, consumers), community groups, farmers and NGOs (e.g., environmental, human development, consumer, trade unions), 5) indigenous peoples and local communities, 6) donor agencies (public and private) and 7) science and educational organizations.

practices and conservation in Solukhumbu. The Solukhumbu case study focuses on conserving and revitalizing Socio-Ecological Production Landscapes and Seascapes (SEPLS) in the Solukhumbu district of Nepal. The case study highlights the efforts of local communities, NGOs, and government agencies to promote sustainable natural resource management practices and preserve the traditional way of life in the region. Among the lessons learned are the following: (i) Partnerships between government, NGOs, and local communities can be highly effective in promoting SEPLS conservation and revitalization. By working together, stakeholders can share knowledge, resources, and expertise to achieve common goals; (ii) Policy supports and government incentives are critical to promoting SEPLS conservation and revitalization. When policies are put in place that incentivize sustainable land management practices, it becomes easier for communities to prioritize environmental conservation while also meeting their economic needs.²⁴

Brazil: The Atlantic Forest Restoration Pact is a bottom-up, multi-stakeholder movement to restore 15 million hectares of degraded and/or deforested lands by 2050. Through the Pact, one million hectares were also pledged as a contribution to the Bonn Challenge. It is estimated that 673,510–740,555 hectares of native forests were under recovery from 2011 to 2015 in the Atlantic Forest, and it is expected that a total of 1.35–1.48 million hectares will be under recovery by 2020. The success of the Pact has been attributed to efforts to engage and connect multiple stakeholders, the establishment of effective monitoring systems combining remote sensing and field data, and the promotion of a vision and strategies to inform public policies and actions. The Atlantic Forest Law, which among other things prohibits deforestation of secondary Atlantic forest, provided an important enabling environment.

Source: Global Biodiversity Outlook 5.

2. National Biodiversity Strategy and Action Plans (NBSAPs)

Article 6 of the Convention on Biological Diversity (CBD) mandates that “Each Contracting Party shall, in accordance with its particular conditions and capabilities: (a) develop national strategies, plans or programmes for the conservation and sustainable use of biological

²⁴ https://satoyama-initiative.org/case_studies/biodiversity-conservation-sustainable-land-use-practices-agroforestry-community-based-conservation-ecotourism-and-the-challenges-faced-in-promoting-sustainable-development-in-the-solukhumbu-regio/.

diversity...” This mandate was encapsulated in Aichi Biodiversity Target 17, which reads, “By 2015, each Party has developed, adopted as a policy instrument, and has commenced implementing an effective, participatory and updated national biodiversity strategy and action plan.”

As a policy instrument, NBSAPs necessitate political endorsement and engagement by civil society and the private sector, with ample evidence that NBSAP process is considered successful if it adopted a participatory, bottom up approach.²⁵ Like WoG and WoS approaches, political endorsement and stakeholder engagement go hand-in-hand, with political leadership raising awareness and catalysing civil society and the private sector (henceforth referred to as “stakeholders”) to act, while stakeholders in turn push for political attention and resources to be devoted to issues that matter to them.

With the adoption of the GBF, countries would need to develop new or update their NBSAPs. It would be important to integrate WoG and WoS approaches – in other words, secure political commitment and stakeholder engagement – in the NBSAP planning process from the outset. In assessing the overall progress of implementation of the Strategic Plan for Biodiversity 2011-2022, Global Biodiversity Outlook 5 concluded that NBSAPs were limited in their effectiveness because “few countries have adopted NBSAPs as whole-of-government policy instruments” and because there was “insufficient involvement of women, indigenous peoples and local communities, and a broad set of stakeholders in the design and implementation of NBSAPs”.²⁶ By involving all levels of government and society in a coordinated and coherent manner, WoG and WoS approaches can help pave the way for holistic approaches to biodiversity governance and contribute effectively to achieving the Sustainable Development Goals, which are “integrated and indivisible”.

Box 4: Participative methodology used to prepare the second NBSAP of Cabo Verde

Second generation NBSAPs generally include limited information on preparation and who was involved in it. While the lack of information does not preclude the existence of a participatory process with many stakeholders, it implies that there was none.

²⁵ Pisupati, B. & Prip, C. (2018). *Assessment of post-2010 National Biodiversity Strategies and Action Plans*. United Nations Environment Programme.

²⁶ United Nations Environment Programme (2019). [Global Environment Outlook 5](#), Page 136.

One of the countries that reported on a multi-stakeholder process in its NBSAP was Cabo Verde. The process involved the various entities associated with the conservation and use of biodiversity, including government institutions, decentralized services, municipalities, civil society organizations, research institutions and the private sector.

The methodology used is summarized as follows:

- i. Collection and review of available documentation.
- ii. Meetings with actors on the field and conduct of surveys.
- iii. Preparing the diagnosis on the status, causes and consequences of biodiversity loss.
- iv. Holding of regional workshops to provide feedback on the diagnosis of the causes and consequences, and identification of national priorities, goals and actions.
- v. Preliminary validation workshop with representatives of key institutions on priorities and targets for biodiversity conservation in Cabo Verde.
- vi. Drafting of the NBSAP paper
- vii. National workshop to present the NBSAP and gather contributions.

Source: *Pisupati & Prip, 2018*

3. Operationalizing the whole-of-society approach during NBSAPs revision process

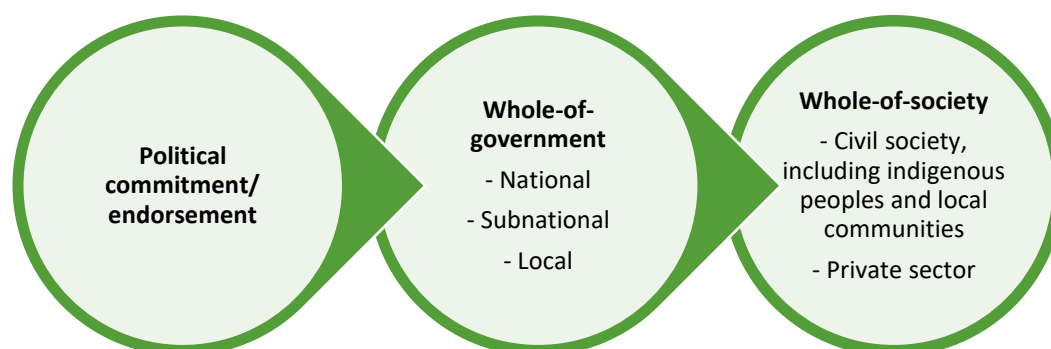
The Kunming-Montreal Global Biodiversity Framework calls for the raising of awareness among all sectors and actors of the need for urgent action to implement the Framework, while enabling their active engagement in the implementation and monitoring of progress towards the achievement of its goals and targets. While there is no one-size fits all solution, there are generally four different levels of stakeholder engagement, namely informative, consultative, empower and partnership.²⁷ The informative level encompasses mechanisms to share information across society, while the consultative level allows for feedback from stakeholders. The empowering level strengthens their capacity to participate in policymaking process and the partnership level sees government and non-state actors working together towards common agenda (Figure 1).²⁸ However, these levels are not linear and can overlap or even occur simultaneously under certain circumstances. The key take-

²⁷ Cázarez-Grageda, K. (2018). [*The Whole of Society Approach: Levels of engagement and meaningful participation of different stakeholders in the review process of the 2030 Agenda*](#) [Discussion paper]. Partners for Review (P4R).

²⁸ Ibid.

away for governments should be to create a mechanism that enables all these levels to be fulfilled based on mutual trust and facilitated by an open exchange of information in a timely manner.

Figure 1: Whole-of-government and whole-of-society approaches



Source: Cázares-Grageda, 2018 (modified)

As argued in the earlier sections, effective WoS approach requires strong political commitment and WoG approach. With continual dire warnings from the scientific community on the rate of biodiversity loss and environmental deterioration and concomitant rise in the frequency and severity of natural disasters that affect both developing and developed countries, government leaders are increasingly investing their political capital on environmental protection. Preparation of NBSAPs for the GBF should take place in this broader context of sustainable development and be mainstreamed into different national policies and sectors to the extent possible.²⁹

Many countries have already indicated through the voluntary national reviews presented at the High-level Political Forum on Sustainable Development that central coordination mechanisms for sustainable development have been created, often under the leadership of

²⁹ United Nations Environment Assembly resolution 3/2 on “Pollution mitigation by mainstreaming biodiversity into key sectors” adopted in December 2017 also invited countries “To strengthen their efforts to mainstream conservation and the sustainable use of biodiversity within and across sectors, such as agriculture; fisheries and aquaculture; tourism; extractive industries such as oil, gas, mining and energy; infrastructure; and the manufacturing and processing industries” (paragraph 1a).

the head of government, that obligate stakeholder engagement. For example, in Finland, the National Commission on Sustainable Development led by the Prime Minister has established a multi-stakeholder Network for National Follow-up and Review on the implementation of the 2030 Agenda.³⁰ Given the crosscutting nature of NBSAPs, these comprehensive coordination mechanisms could offer a practical platform to develop or refine NBSAPs, in which the channels embedded in these mechanisms to promote partnership with stakeholders could also be utilized.

Decision 15/6 encourages Parties “to enable the full and effective participation and engagement of women, indigenous peoples and local communities, youth, civil society organizations, academia, the private sector, all levels of government and stakeholders from all other relevant sectors, in all levels of development and implementation of the national biodiversity strategies and action plans, as well as in the preparation of the seventh and eighth national reports.” Governments should also help build and strengthen stakeholders’ capacity to contribute effectively to sustainable development, while stakeholders themselves must focus on building their capacity, including how they organise among themselves to engage constructively with the government and to hold governments accountable.³¹ Building stakeholders’ capacity necessarily entails provision of predictable and adequate financial resources, which in turn requires high political commitment and innovative funding mechanisms, for which the private sector and foundations could be tapped on.

Stakeholders would also be motivated to contribute more productively, if governments fostered a culture of transparency and accountability by making policy or development progress reports public.³² This point relates to the final recommendations made in a report by the International Union for the Conservation of Nature (IUCN) after researching societal participatory processes in the NBSAPs in 10 countries: namely to “Measure progress and publicize success” and to “Communicate regularly” to create collective ownership and accelerate further implementation of NBSAPs.³³ Once stakeholders see that the government is monitoring and reporting on progress, they will be more likely to develop trust in the

³⁰ Finland (2020). [Report on the implementation of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development](#). Voluntary national review.

³¹ Ibid.

³² Ibid.

³³ Moreno, S., & Mueller, M. (2015). *Societal participatory processes in the revision of National Biodiversity Strategies and Action Plans (NBSAPs)*. International Union for Conservation of Nature.

government, which is one of the prerequisites for forging strong partnerships to achieve collective goals.³⁴

4. Evaluating the WoS approach

The WoS approach encompasses various levels of activities, from raising public awareness about the GBF to soliciting and incorporating inputs from women, indigenous peoples and local communities, youth, civil society organizations, academia, the private sector, all levels of government and stakeholders from all other relevant sectors in the formulation of NBSAPs. Moving forward, it would be equally important to ensure that the commitments from stakeholders based on shared vision are formally captured in the implementation plans, monitored and reported on as appropriate.

Analysis of experiences from the post-2010 NBSAPs show that while Parties have made considerable efforts to include stakeholders in various national processes to realize the Aichi targets, limited efforts were made to consolidate their commitments and monitor and report on the impact of their actions in the implementation of the NBSAPs.³⁵ This could potentially detract from fully leveraging the value-added of the WoS approach and undermine transparency and accountability.

The implementation framework of the GBF should consider how to ‘count’ as well as assess the content of the contributions of stakeholders in formal reporting if stakeholders are to become meaningful partners in realizing the CBD objectives. Such reporting could provide the basis for developing indicators that can comparably measure the extent and effectiveness of stakeholder engagement in the development and implementation of NBSAPs across countries and regions.

5. Conclusions

The Kunming-Montreal Global Biodiversity Framework will require a whole-of-society approach to deliver on its ambitious goals and targets (see Appendix 1 for a check list to ensure the WoS approach to NBSAPs). This WoS approach in turn requires a whole-of-government approach in which all levels of government, from national to local authorities,

³⁴ OECD & UNDP (2019).

³⁵ Pisupati, B. & Prip, C. (2018).

act and speak with a common voice in keeping with the 'common future' theme in the Brundtland Report (1987). Strong political commitment is essential to operationalizing the WoS and WoG in the context of sustainable development. Governments should make focused efforts to create mechanisms that would strengthen stakeholder capacity and engage them meaningfully, including by incorporating their commitments into NBSAPs and reporting on their impact.

APPENDIX 1

Checklist for integrating WoS approach to NBSAPs.

	Yes	No
Institutional arrangements		
Is there a regular mechanism in place that enables participation and engagement of women, indigenous peoples and local communities, youth, civil society organizations, academia, the private sector, all levels of government and stakeholders from all other relevant sectors about national, regional and global biodiversity issues by government authorities?		
Is there a regular mechanism in place that enables the private sector stakeholders to be informed about national, regional and global biodiversity issues by government authorities?		
Is there a national coordination mechanism (involving government, civil society and private sector) to conduct a preliminary review of the national biodiversity targets or priorities?		
Is there an agency, department or ministry responsible for leading coordination of the various entities engaged in alignment of national targets with the GBF?		
Policy coherence for biodiversity and catalysing the WoS to act in a concerted manner.		
Has there been analysis of national policies, plans and strategies across different sectors and levels of government to avoid the undermining of biodiversity benefits?		
Has there been analysis of national policies and programs related to the Rio Conventions, the legal frameworks that guide their implementation and the synergies they promote?		
Has there been analysis of vertical and horizontal coherence ³⁶ (synergy and efficiency), as well as inter-organizational and inter-donor coherence in setting national biodiversity targets or priorities?		

³⁶ Decision 15/4. "The Framework promotes coherence, complementarity and cooperation between the Convention on Biological Diversity and its Protocols, other biodiversity related conventions, and other relevant multilateral agreements and international institutions, respecting their mandates, and creates opportunities for cooperation and partnerships among diverse actors to enhance implementation of the Framework."

Has there been identification of capacity needs for coherent national action across MEAs, including options for data sharing technology to support reporting processes?

Voice, participation and communication.

Is there a regular mechanism in place that enables stakeholders to engage in exchange of views and other consultative processes with government authorities?

Is there a regular mechanism in place that ensures that inputs from stakeholders that systematically considered in central decision-making process related to NBSAPs?

Is there a regular mechanism in place that provides feedback to stakeholders when their inputs are not/ cannot be captured?

Are the commitments of stakeholders reflected in the revised or updated NBSAP? Is there a process to enable participation at all levels of government, with a view to fostering the full and effective contributions of women, youth, indigenous peoples and local communities, civil society organizations, the private and financial sectors, and stakeholders from all other sectors?

Is there a regular mechanism in place, or plans to put in place a mechanism, to periodically review the progress of implementation of NBSAPs with the participation of stakeholders?

Is there a mechanism in place, or plans to put in place a mechanism, to monitor and report on the impact of stakeholder contributions to the implementation of NBSAPs?

Means of implementation.

Has there been identification of financing and capacity gaps and the development of national finance plans, or similar instruments, as well as capacity-building and development plans?

Are additional means of implementation needed for the attainment of the national targets?

Has an assessment been undertaken of targets and actions that can be implemented with available resources, identifying those that will only be achieved or implemented with additional support?

Has there been a determination of which national targets, if any, are capable of leveraging commitments made under other intergovernmental processes and relevant multilateral environmental agreements, including the Rio conventions?

APPENDIX 2

Step-by-step guide for using WoS approach.

Suggested steps for implementing the Key Components of WoS approach to align the NBSAP with the GBF.

Decision 15/4 considers that the success of implementing a WoS approach requires political will and recognition at the highest level of government and relies on action and cooperation by all levels of government and by all actors of society. The following potential steps could be used to assess alignment of existing NBSAPs and national targets with the Global Biodiversity Framework:

1. Developing a common understanding of the WoS approach.
2. Adherence to key principles and elements of an enabling environment.
3. Simplify and adopt key messages.
4. Identify roles and responsibilities.
5. Creating positive incentives.

Step 1: Developing a common understanding of the WoS approach.

The standard operating procedures (SOPs) set out guiding activities to aid a common understanding of and coordinated implementation of the WoS approach. Decision 15/4 establishes that the success of the GBF requires political will and recognition at the highest level of government and relies on action and cooperation by all levels of government and by all actors of society. The Framework promotes coherence, complementarity and cooperation between the Convention on Biological Diversity and its Protocols, other biodiversity related conventions, and other relevant multilateral agreements and international institutions, respecting their mandates, and creates opportunities for cooperation and partnerships among diverse actors to enhance implementation of the Framework.

National coordination mechanism: Decision 15/6 states that Parties may involve a national coordination mechanism in the process to revise or update, implement and review their NBSAPs. The mechanism may include “representatives of key government ministries and other authorities at all levels, national gender and biodiversity focal points, traditional knowledge focal points, national focal points for the Cartagena and Nagoya Protocols, national focal points of the biodiversity-related conventions and the Rio conventions and for the Sustainable Development Goals, representatives of national statistical institutes and other data holders, indigenous peoples and local communities, non-governmental organizations, women’s groups, youth groups, the business and finance community, the scientific community, academia, faith-based organizations, representatives of sectors related to or dependent on biodiversity, citizens at large, and stakeholders.”

Two groups are envisaged: a Government Coordination Body to coordinate government agencies, departments and ministries, and a non-State actors Body to coordinate commitments from civil society, and the private sector. The national biodiversity coordination committee comprising the two groups shall be appointed by the competent Minister of Government and given the following responsibilities:

- To identify opportunities for strong political commitment and the adoption of a WoG/WoS approach to reversing biodiversity loss and halting environmental deterioration.
- To ensure that the preparation of NBSAP for the GBF take place in the context of sustainable development and that it is capable of being mainstreamed into different national policies and sectors to the extent possible.

Roles and responsibilities: The proposed national biodiversity coordination committee shall have responsibility to provide strategic guidance to the overall process to align the NBSAP to the GBF and to indicate adequate means of implementation in keeping with the country context. Other roles include:

- Identification of a small expert group to conduct a preliminary review of the national biodiversity targets. This group shall comprise key representatives from the Government Coordination Body and non-State actors Body.
- Promote cooperation among stakeholders at national and sub-national levels.
- Determine simplified rules of procedure for its work.

Step 2: Adherence to key principles and elements of an enabling environment.

The second step is to develop and/or adopt key principles and elements of an enabling environment for the WoS approach to work, such as for an enhanced multidimensional approach to planning, monitoring, reporting and review of the Kunming-Montreal Global Biodiversity Framework.

CBD COP Decision 15/4 states that the “The Framework recognizes that reversing the loss of biological diversity, for the benefit of all living beings, is a common concern of humankind. Its implementation should be guided by the principles of the Rio Declaration on Environment and Development.”

CBD COP Decision 15/4 states that “in order to minimize the time and resources required to revise or update NBSAPs, the alignment of existing NBSAPs and their targets with the new framework could be assessed. This assessment should consider, according to national circumstances, elements³⁷ such as:

- implementation gaps,
- existing goals, targets and indicators,
- the effectiveness of past actions,
- monitoring systems (including any data and/or knowledge systems and gaps),
- sectoral and cross-sectoral policies,
- finance and other means of implementation, and
- an assessment of how stakeholders, indigenous peoples and local communities, women and youth were involved in the revision and implementation.”

³⁷ These elements are separate from the common elements to ensure the utility of NBSAPs in the enhanced implementation, monitoring, reporting and review mechanism, while retaining their flexibility and their principal role as national implementation vehicles, and outlined in the same decision text.

Box 5: Rio Principles³⁸

Principle 1

Human beings are at the centre of concerns for sustainable development. They are entitled to a healthy and productive life in harmony with nature.

Principle 2

States have, in accordance with the Charter of the United Nations and the principles of international law, the sovereign right to exploit their own resources pursuant to their own environmental and developmental policies, and the responsibility to ensure that activities within their jurisdiction or control do not cause damage to the environment of other States or of areas beyond the limits of national jurisdiction.

Principle 3

The right to development must be fulfilled so as to equitably meet developmental and environmental needs of present and future generations.

Principle 4

In order to achieve sustainable development, environmental protection shall constitute an integral part of the development process and cannot be considered in isolation from it.

Principle 5

All States and all people shall cooperate in the essential task of eradicating poverty as an indispensable requirement for sustainable development, in order to decrease the disparities in standards of living and better meet the needs of the majority of the people of the world.

Principle 6

The special situation and needs of developing countries, particularly the least developed and those most environmentally vulnerable, shall be given special priority. International actions in the field of environment and development should also address the interests and needs of all countries.

Principle 7

³⁸ <https://www.cbd.int/doc/ref/rio-declaration.shtml>

States shall cooperate in a spirit of global partnership to conserve, protect and restore the health and integrity of the Earth's ecosystem. In view of the different contributions to global environmental degradation, States have common but differentiated responsibilities. The developed countries acknowledge the responsibility that they bear in the international pursuit of sustainable development in view of the pressures their societies place on the global environment and of the technologies and financial resources they command.

Principle 8

To achieve sustainable development and a higher quality of life for all people, States should reduce and eliminate unsustainable patterns of production and consumption and promote appropriate demographic policies.

Principle 9

States should cooperate to strengthen endogenous capacity-building for sustainable development by improving scientific understanding through exchanges of scientific and technological knowledge, and by enhancing the development, adaptation, diffusion and transfer of technologies, including new and innovative technologies.

Principle 10

Environmental issues are best handled with the participation of all concerned citizens, at the relevant level. At the national level, each individual shall have appropriate access to information concerning the environment that is held by public authorities, including information on hazardous materials and activities in their communities, and the opportunity to participate in decision-making processes. States shall facilitate and encourage public awareness and participation by making information widely available. Effective access to judicial and administrative proceedings, including redress and remedy, shall be provided.

Principle 11

States shall enact effective environmental legislation. Environmental standards, management objectives and priorities should reflect the environmental and developmental context to which they apply. Standards applied by some countries may be inappropriate and of unwarranted economic and social cost to other countries, in particular developing countries.

Principle 12

States should cooperate to promote a supportive and open international economic system that would lead to economic growth and sustainable development in all countries, to better address the problems of environmental degradation. Trade policy measures for environmental purposes should not constitute a means of arbitrary or unjustifiable discrimination or a disguised restriction on international trade. Unilateral actions to deal with environmental challenges outside the jurisdiction of the importing country should be avoided. Environmental measures addressing transboundary or global environmental problems should, as far as possible, be based on an international consensus.

Principle 13

States shall develop national law regarding liability and compensation for the victims of pollution and other environmental damage. States shall also cooperate in an expeditious and more determined manner to develop further international law regarding liability and compensation for adverse effects of environmental damage caused by activities within their jurisdiction or control to areas beyond their jurisdiction.

Principle 14

States should effectively cooperate to discourage or prevent the relocation and transfer to other States of any activities and substances that cause severe environmental degradation or are found to be harmful to human health.

Principle 15

In order to protect the environment, the precautionary approach shall be widely applied by States according to their capabilities. Where there are threats of serious or irreversible damage, lack of full scientific certainty shall not be used as a reason for postponing cost-effective measures to prevent environmental degradation.

Principle 16

National authorities should endeavour to promote the internalization of environmental costs and the use of economic instruments, taking into account the approach that the polluter should, in principle, bear the cost of pollution, with due regard to the public interest and without distorting international trade and investment.

Principle 17

Environmental impact assessment, as a national instrument, shall be undertaken for proposed activities that are likely to have a significant adverse impact on the environment and are subject to a decision of a competent national authority.

Principle 18

States shall immediately notify other States of any natural disasters or other emergencies that are likely to produce sudden harmful effects on the environment of those States. Every effort shall be made by the international community to help States so afflicted.

Principle 19

States shall provide prior and timely notification and relevant information to potentially affected States on activities that may have a significant adverse transboundary environmental effect and shall consult with those States at an early stage and in good faith.

Principle 20

Women have a vital role in environmental management and development. Their full participation is therefore essential to achieve sustainable development.

Principle 21

The creativity, ideals and courage of the youth of the world should be mobilized to forge a global partnership in order to achieve sustainable development and ensure a better future for all.

Principle 22

Indigenous people and their communities and other local communities have a vital role in environmental management and development because of their knowledge and traditional practices. States should recognize and duly support their identity, culture and interests and enable their effective participation in the achievement of sustainable development.

Principle 23

The environment and natural resources of people under oppression, domination and occupation shall be protected.

Principle 24

Warfare is inherently destructive of sustainable development. States shall therefore respect international law providing protection for the environment in times of armed conflict and cooperate in its further development, as necessary.

Principle 25

Peace, development and environmental protection are interdependent and indivisible.

Principle 26

States shall resolve all their environmental disputes peacefully and by appropriate means in accordance with the Charter of the United Nations.

Principle 27

States and people shall cooperate in good faith and in a spirit of partnership in the fulfilment of the principles embodied in this Declaration and in the further development of international law in the field of sustainable development.

Step 3: Simplify and adopt key messages.

Develop communication tools that are short, brief and to-the-point relating key elements of the post 2020 GBF to varied stakeholder groups, especially youth, children, women, private sector, financing institutions, civil society organizations, journalists and media, parliamentarians, various ministries, academia, donor agencies, UN country teams and others.

Decision 15/4 states that “enhancing communication, education, and awareness on biodiversity and the uptake of the Kunming-Montreal Global Biodiversity Framework by all actors is essential to achieve its effective implementation and behavioural change, and to promote sustainable lifestyles and biodiversity values”. It further states that one of the ways in which this can be done is by “facilitating understanding of the Framework, including by targeted communication, adapting the language used, level of complexity and thematic content to relevant groups of actors, considering their socioeconomic and cultural context, including by developing material that can be translated into indigenous and local languages.”

Examples of key messages:³⁹

- Nature is essential for human existence and good quality of life. Most of nature’s contributions to people are not fully replaceable, and some are irreplaceable.
- Human actions threaten more species with global extinction now than ever before.
- Climate change is a direct driver that is increasingly exacerbating the impact of other drivers on nature and human well-being.
- Economic incentives have generally favoured expanding economic activity, and often environmental harm, over conservation or restoration. Incorporating the consideration of the multiple values of ecosystem functions and of nature’s contributions to people into economic incentives has, in the economy, been shown to permit better ecological, economic and social outcomes.

³⁹ Extracted from the 2019 Global Assessment Report on Biodiversity and Ecosystem Services of the Intergovernmental Science-Policy Platform on Biodiversity and Ecosystem Services and Decision 15/4.

- Nature managed by indigenous peoples and local communities is under increasing pressure. Nature is generally declining less rapidly in indigenous peoples' land than in other lands, but is nevertheless declining, as is the knowledge of how to manage it.
- Nature is essential for achieving the Sustainable Development Goals.
- The global environment can be safeguarded through enhanced international cooperation and linked, locally relevant measures.
- The full implementation of the Framework will require the provision of adequate, predictable and easily accessible financial resources from all sources on a needs basis. It further requires cooperation and collaboration in building the necessary capacity and transfer of technologies to allow Parties, especially developing country Parties, to fully implement the Framework.
- The mechanisms recognize the specific challenges faced by developing countries and the need for international cooperation to support them accordingly.

Step 4: Identify roles and responsibilities

CBD COP Decision 15/4 states the following:

- "Urges Parties and other Governments, with the support of intergovernmental and other organizations, as appropriate, to implement the Kunming-Montreal Global Biodiversity Framework, and, in particular, to enable participation at all levels of government, with a view to fostering the full and effective contributions of women, youth, indigenous peoples and local communities, civil society organizations, the private and financial sectors, and stakeholders from all other sectors, to that end"
- "The Framework acknowledges the important roles and contributions of indigenous peoples and local communities as custodians of biodiversity and as partners in its conservation, restoration and sustainable use. The Framework's implementation must ensure that the rights, knowledge, including traditional knowledge associated with biodiversity, innovations, worldviews, values and practices of indigenous peoples and local communities are respected, and documented and preserved with their free, prior and informed consent, including through their full and effective participation in decision-making, in accordance with relevant national legislation, international instruments, including the United Nations Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples,⁸ and human rights law."

- “Means of implementation, including capacity-building and development, and technical and financial support will be provided to Parties, especially to developing country Parties, to enable the implementation of these mechanisms for responsibility and transparency, including information on transparency of the support provided and received, and provide a full overview of aggregate support provided.”
- “The full implementation of the Framework requires adequate, predictable and easily accessible financial resources.”

State obligations at the intersection of human rights and biodiversity⁴⁰

- Address biodiversity and habitat loss and prevent their negative impacts on human rights. Because of their negative impact on human rights, states must take urgent action to address biodiversity loss, habitat loss and species extinction. This includes ending deforestation; protecting and conserving lands and oceans; moving to sustainable patterns of production and consumption; combatting climate change and pollution; preventing the introduction of invasive alien species; and protecting land tenure and resource use of indigenous peoples, local communities, women and girls.
- Protect the rights of indigenous peoples. Because of their close relationship to nature, indigenous peoples are both heavily affected by biodiversity loss and among those best-positioned to prevent it. The UN Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples (UNDRIP) affirms the right of indigenous peoples to conserve and protect their lands, territories and resources. This means that conservation actions with potential impact on human rights should be taken in consultation with indigenous peoples and with their free, prior and informed consent, and should support their participation in the management and ownership of corresponding efforts.

⁴⁰ <https://www.unep.org/news-and-stories/story/states-have-these-13-duties-when-it-comes-biodiversity-and-human-rights>

- Ensure equity in actions to address biodiversity loss and in the use of the benefits of biodiversity. Actions must take into account the needs of children, youth and future generations – who have played little or no part in driving biodiversity and habitat loss but have no choice but to live with its consequences. The CBD and the Nagoya Protocol emphasize that the benefits of biodiversity should be shared in a way that is equitable, transparent, and accountable. That takes into account the equal rights and differing needs of indigenous peoples, local communities and all persons, regardless of their gender.
- Protect against business-related human rights harms from biodiversity loss. As reflected in the UN Guiding Principles on Business and Human Rights, all business enterprises have a responsibility to respect human rights. This includes avoiding their infringement through biodiversity loss and facilitating remediation of any harms caused or contributed to in this way. Under international law, states are obligated to protect against human rights abuses by businesses and should require assessment of all social, environmental and human rights impacts of proposed projects that may affect biodiversity. When human rights abuses do occur – including those resulting from biodiversity and habitat loss – states must hold businesses accountable and ensure that those affected have access to effective remedy.
- Effectively mobilize adequate resources to prevent human rights harms caused by biodiversity loss. The International Covenant on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights (ICESCR) requires states to devote maximum available resources to the realization of economic, social and cultural rights. This includes the protection of biodiversity, because biodiversity is necessary to ensuring healthy ecosystems, and healthy ecosystems are necessary to ensuring the rights to life, health and livelihoods of billions of people around the world. States are obliged to act both individually and collectively, making international cooperation and financial assistance imperative.
- Respect and protect nature for all its values. Living in harmony with nature by 2050 requires the total transformation of humanity's relationship with nature. The diverse values of nature and the relationship between biological and human cultural and linguistic diversity must be better understood and duly reflected in policy. A thriving natural environment along with human diversity is not only the best long-term recipe for resilience and human survival. It is a prerequisite to living with dignity and the full realization of human rights.

Step 5: Creating positive incentives.

Incentives, including subsidies, harmful to biodiversity are an important underlying driver of biodiversity loss. Substantial and widespread changes to subsidies and other incentives that are harmful to biodiversity are required to ensure sustainability. Eliminating, phasing out or reforming harmful incentives is a critical and necessary step that would also generate net socioeconomic benefits.

The creation or further development of positive incentives for the conservation and sustainable use of biodiversity would also help reach the 2050 Vision for biodiversity by providing financial resources or other motives to encourage actors to undertake actions that would benefit biodiversity.

Article 11 of the Convention calls, on Parties to adopt, as far as possible and as appropriate, economically and socially sound measures that act as incentives for the conservation and sustainable use of biodiversity. The COP has recognized since its fifth meeting that implementing Article 11 needs to include action on those measures that generate incentives harmful for biodiversity; estimates indicate that harmful subsidies generate significant damage to biodiversity and that the amounts spent on these are substantially higher than those spent on positive incentive measures.

Positive incentives are economic, legal or institutional measures designed to encourage activities beneficial to biodiversity. Positive incentives can include such things as public or grant-aided land purchases or conservation easements.

Guiding questions for national target setting:⁴¹

- What incentives, including subsidies, harmful to biodiversity exist in the country? How are they affecting biodiversity? Which are particularly harmful?
- What are the opportunities and constraints to eliminating, reforming or phasing out harmful incentives? What are the potential ecological, economic, and social costs and benefits of addressing harmful incentives?
- What biodiversity-related problems could be addressed with the help of biodiversity-positive incentives? How could incentives be used to address the main threats to biodiversity? How could incentives encourage actions in support of biodiversity?

⁴¹ <https://www.cbd.int/gbf/targets/18/>

- Who are the stakeholders that may be affected? How can they be involved, and their needs addressed? What are the trade-offs to consider? Are there stakeholders who could also act as champions for the removal, phase out, or reform of harmful incentives?
- What additional resources (financial, human and technical) will be required to reach the national target that is set? How can additional resources be raised? What are the possible sources for these resources?

FOR FURTHER INFORMATION

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