

# ANNEX

## Summaries of the individual regional consultations on nature-based solutions

### Africa<sup>1</sup>

*Task one: Compile examples of best practice in nature-based solutions, based on the best available science;*

Many representatives agreed that both a common understanding, as well as criteria, standards, and guidelines (Task 2) are prerequisites to the identification of best practices.

Several Member States are undertaking studies, stocktakes, or analyses of NbS activities underway in their countries. These might include ecotourism, wildlife economy, conservation, reforestation, and looking at the country's specific adaptation needs.

#### *Best Practices*

Interventions on best practices generally agreed that this should constitute people centred NbS approaches which prioritise the rights and participation of local communities, the preservation of essential resources, the integrity of ecosystems, and constructive collaboration and relationship building between scientists, technical experts, and local stakeholders. Several interventions noted that African communities have been managing their lands for centuries, and that incorporating these traditional and indigenous practices and knowledge into NbS implementation is a key good practice. These approaches include and support: the promotion of agro-ecological farming systems, food sovereignty, the support for community-based renewable energy, and community conservation of biodiversity, the protection and advancement of people's rights, self-sufficiency, and accountability for corporations and governments.

Many best practice examples also highlighted gender balance in their implementation, as well as co-benefits stemming from female participation, including improved levels of schooling and healthcare. One Member State highlighted the recent creation of a National Agency for Afforestation and Reforestation and various policies to support NbS.

Best practice examples presented included: afforestation & reforestation; growing fruit trees in schools; beekeeping; co-planting complementary crops together, e.g., banana trees in cacao plantations to store water and provide shade.

#### *Bad Practices*

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<sup>1</sup> 56 participants registered for this meeting, of which 14 were Member States

The examples of bad practices cited involved the displacement of local communities for the creation of conservation areas, and 'greenwashing' by corporations disguised as NbS, often involving large-scale, ecologically poor practices with negative social impacts.

*Task two: Assess existing and discuss potential new proposals, criteria, standards and guidelines to address divergences, with a view to achieving a common understanding among Member States for the implementation of nature-based solutions, including to support Member States in designing, implementing and evaluating nature-based solutions, building on existing work, initiatives and platforms, as appropriate, and without prejudice to existing efforts and initiatives of and new proposals from individual Member States;*

Several interventions espoused the view that an agreement on criteria, standards and guidelines would contribute significantly to building a common understanding of NbS and what activities do and do not constitute NbS. It was noted that scientific knowledge gaps remain as NbS is a relatively new concept, and that the process of filling these gaps and developing a common standard could be mutually supportive. It was also recommended that criteria, standards, and guidelines should recognize and differentiate the various social, economic and environmental challenges which NbS can address.

Suggestions on how to move this task forward differed:

- Some participants felt that there is a need for Member States to agree on a single set of standards/guidelines to govern all NbS activities.
- Another suggestion was that Member States should be responsible for developing a set of guidelines and setting their mode of implementation;
- There was a suggestion to conduct a systematic assessment of proposals, criteria, standards and guidelines, focusing on their strength to ensure that the NbS in question addresses social, economic, and environmental challenges effectively and adaptively, as required by the Resolution definition.
- Some interventions requested that the process of developing standards and guidelines follow the model of the guidelines set for Ecosystem-based Approaches under the CBD
- On the other hand, some participants felt that Resolution 5/5 sets a clear direction for NbS.
- This question was reflected by IUCN, who recognized that, even though their Global Standard has been designed to guide NbS implementation holistically through social, ecological, and economic dimensions, many implementers in the region face challenges in implementing the standards in practice and often require technical assistance.
- The question was reiterated regarding whether standards and guidelines should be broad, allowing for flexible implementation but with less guidance, or more detailed and prescriptive, but running the risk of being difficult to implement.

*Task three: Identify options for supporting sustainable investment in nature-based solutions and share information on bilateral and multilateral sources of finance to enable developing countries to develop and deploy nature-based solutions;*

It was noted by several participants that this was the least thoroughly addressed of the three tasks for the consultations. Nonetheless, numerous participants made requests and suggestions on how this task might be approached.

The suggestions largely fell into three groups:

1. Both public and private sector funding is important. To date, the public sector has disproportionately funded NbS activities. It is critical to engage the private sector in NbS funding in a meaningful way that remains people-centred and avoids greenwashing. The question that remains, and was raised multiple times, is how to engage private sector finance, especially in the African context, when NbS is a relatively new concept with a long return on investment timeline, and many barriers to private investment exist.
2. Finance stakeholders should be brought together for a forum or consultation. This could fulfil the following tasks:
  - Discuss responsibilities.
  - Establish the global capacity and the exact funding needed to implement NbS
  - Investigate ways to mitigate the risks of investing in NbS, to facilitate private funding.
  - Develop mechanisms to generate revenue for NbS and identify the contributions of each party.
  - Conduct a global stock-take to evaluate the existing possibilities and their real capacities to know how much these mechanisms could generate.
  - Identify options for accessing available sources of private and public finance.
3. To strengthen and leverage synergies with MEAs, especially the Rio Conventions (UNFCCC, UNCCD, UNCBD) to channel existing funding towards NbS, including the Loss & Damage fund developed under the UNFCCC.
  - One intervention suggested developing a joint funding mechanism across these Conventions which could be used to fund NbS activities which support the aims of these Conventions.
  - Several participants agreed that, as NbS can be framed as a tool to implement these conventions, integration with these Conventions and policy coherence at the national level will naturally open more funding to flow to NbS.
  - It was further noted that Tasks 1 and 2 play an important role in this process and one Member State suggested that increased funding would naturally follow successful treatment of these first two Tasks.

#### *Other issues*

- *Common Understanding.* Many participants emphasized the importance of and need for a common understanding of NbS. It was noted that, although there are divergent opinions on NbS across the continent, overall, NbS is expected to improve environmental livelihoods and biodiversity. However, there were concerns that the potential of NbS in Africa is not being maximised because of a lack of understanding of what activities do and do not constitute NbS. Several participants expressed the view that many activities are being carried out at the grassroots level which do constitute NbS, but this terminology is not known by the implementers at the community level, and these activities are therefore not being recognised or supported as NbS. This runs the risk of underuse of NbS, lack of monitoring and evaluation of NbS projects, and even of perverse outcomes from unguided NbS implementation. Participants expressed that it is therefore important to foster a regionally relevant understanding of NbS, supported by

science and technical expertise and experience, which can be shared from national to community level, in a way that would expand, rather than limit, people's use of NbS.

- *Terminology.* Integral to this is the issue of terminology: many participants made mention of related concepts, such as 'Ecosystem-based Approaches' and 'Ecosystem-based adaptation' and raised the need for a clear expression of how these concepts align, overlap, and complement each other. Some participants highlighted this need especially in the context of the definition of Ecosystem-based Approaches developed under the CBD. A participant suggested that communication around these issues should be a key objective of the consultations.
- *Synergies.* The synergies with MEAs and especially Rio Conventions were highlighted. Participants noted that the Consultations are critical to guide how NbS will be used in the implementation of the Conventions, and to inform the 7<sup>th</sup> cycle of the IPCC.

One participant emphasized the need to frame the concept of NbS to reflect the expectations of African countries in modifying specific aspects of these Conventions of particular significance to the African continent, such as the issue of benefit sharing, the sharing of biological resources, adaptation, and desertification. The participant suggested building a holistic approach for the continent, that encompasses all MEAs and is not based on one specific aspect. It was emphasized that NbS should be cross-cutting and not focused on one specific challenge.

- *IPLC issues.* The points made regarding Indigenous People and Local Communities encompassed the following two topics:
  - Indigenous and traditional knowledge and practices should be integrated into and respected in NbS approaches and implementation. African communities have been using indigenous knowledge for many years, and these socio-cultural traditions can deepen understanding of NbS, e.g., interspersing banana and cassava crops in cacao plantations, offering water storage, shade, and improved nutrient cycling leading to better yields and decreased land degradation.
  - IPLC rights and sovereignty should be a cornerstone of all NbS implementation – approaches should empower communities to implement their own projects, meaningfully engage and involve local stakeholders in outside-led implementation, and protect the land rights, livelihood, and resources of IPLCs as a foundational criterion.
- *Policy.* It was generally agreed that more policy promoting, incentivising and supporting NbS is necessary at the national level, including in response to MEAs such as the Rio Conventions (see *Synergies* above). Interventions noted that capacity building is needed for governments to support this, and that supporting NbS initiatives at the local level is essential to creating a conducive political environment to allow for awareness creation and implementation of NbS.

Several NGOs called for more policy support on NbS at the national level and stronger commitment from governments. While one MS reported having created a Ministry for Reforestation and multiple national programmes in support of NbS, other governments reported that they have not yet incorporated NbS into policy and planning processes because it is a new

concept, and that improved understanding of the concept (See *Common Understanding*) would help facilitate this.

- *Concerns.* The concerns expressed largely related to the misuse of the NbS concept for ‘greenwashing’ activities. These include both carbon offsetting replacing meaningful reduction of fossil fuel use by corporations and developed countries, and ecologically and socially harmful practices which ignore the need to conserve and/or restore ecosystem function, such as land grabbing, monoculture plantations of invasive and/or alien species, and the exploitation of natural resources.

## Asia-Pacific<sup>2</sup>

*Task one: Compile examples of best practice in nature-based solutions, based on the best available science;*

Several Member States expressed an intention to present best practice examples at the final round of consultations in Nairobi in October. ICLEI South Asia recently published a compendium providing NbS best practice examples for each of the categories identified in the IUCN Global Standard for NbS. In addition, ICLEI and IUCN reported collaborating to collect a compendium of best practice examples from all regions on NbS for environmental management and ecosystem restoration.

Interventions agreed that all NbS good practice should be sensitive to context, time, and scale. Furthermore, there was consensus that NbS should be cross-sectoral and should engage and protect and promote the rights and knowledge of IPLCs.

The types of NbS intervention mentioned in the meeting included:

- Agriculture, food and water security
  - Agroforestry
  - Floating agriculture
  - Climate-smart agriculture
  - Flood-based agriculture in the Mekong Delta for food and livelihood security and water management, and to reduce the use of chemical fertilisers and pesticides.
  - Using biopesticides and biofertilisers to reduce chemical use.
  - Rotational grazing based on ancestral practices.
  - Food system transformation to a plant-based paradigm, aligning with NbS
  - A fog condensation project using water collected from mist drops for tree planting during the drought season.

It was noted that agricultural NbS should seek to improve ecosystem function at a landscape scale over a long timeline, delivering multiple benefits. They should take a multidisciplinary approach and reflecting the experience and priorities of local communities and farmers and

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<sup>2</sup> 99 participants registered for this meeting, of which 20 were Member States

using indigenous knowledge and seeds. Japan reported that it is collaborating with the Asian Development Bank and national banks to summarise NbS best practice.

- Coastal
  - Mangrove restoration and plantation, with co-benefits of climate change mitigation and improving fish stocks.
  - Nature-based / Eco Seawalls to reduce coastal erosion.
  - Using “Biorock” synthetic coral reefs (green-grey intervention) to reduce coastal erosion and for biodiversity benefits, bringing back the locally extinct dugong to the area.
  - Planting vetiver grass on shorelines and establishing locally managed Marine Protected Areas to restore marine biodiversity and recover fish stocks, with socio-economic co-benefits including job creation.
- Forestry
  - Reforestation and afforestation using native species, to combat climate change, biodiversity loss and desertification.
  - Community forest management, including one initiative collectively managing a community forest through law enforcement based on Buddhist principles, which demonstrates the power of integrating traditional knowledge and beliefs into conservation approaches.
  - It was noted that in at least one Member State, community forestry practices face challenges from policy.
- Flooding
  - Swamp forest restoration
  - Flood plain restoration accompanied by transition to flood-based cropping and reintroduction of appropriate biodiversity.
- Livelihood security
  - Income diversification, e.g., through wildlife-related tourism
  - Additional income through crop diversification
  - China’s ‘Grain for Green’ initiative
- Urban
  - Urban water management through green-blue infrastructure to manage waterlogging and urban heat islands.
  - Building green spaces and walls in buildings for water and heat management and to improve air quality.
- Biodiversity
  - Biodiversity parks along floodplains
  - Reintroducing native species of fauna
  - Biodiversity corridors
- Policy & Capacity building
  - Many interventions noted the importance of mainstreaming NbS into national policies, aligning NbS policy with existing commitments such as under the Rio conventions, and for greater policy support for existing NbS projects.
  - It was also commonly recognised that many governments in the region require capacity building to enable these critical policy improvements.

- IUCN providing training and capacity building to governments and donors in South Asia on NbS, including both sector-specific and national-level NbS, and aiming to promote NbS over the exclusive focus on grey infrastructure.
- Assessment and scientific basis
  - Many interventions highlighted that NbS design should be informed by rigorous prior assessment, and its impacts monitored and evaluated closely.
  - Thailand is conducting a collaborative project with the World Bank and Australian Government, valuing the benefits of NbS for Integrated Urban Flood Management, and aiming to integrate NbS into watershed management to improve urban flood management and urban climate resilience.
  - Japan is drawing up information maps to inform the implementation of Eco-DRR and conservation.

#### Bad practices

A small number of examples were cited of socially and ecologically harmful NbS interventions, including monocropping, non-native plantation forestry, inappropriate afforestation, projects which neglected the rights of IPLCs, especially women, and the negative social impacts of some REDD+ projects on smallholder farmers and indigenous communities.

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Interventions largely recognised the importance of NbS standards and guidelines as a way to foster a common understanding of what constitutes NbS, to differentiate NbS from other similar and traditional approaches, to support capacity building, to help promote NbS among local governments and communities, to institutionalise NbS in national contexts, and to assess the benefits and impacts of NbS and ensure robust social and ecological safeguards. However, many participants noted the challenges of balancing the need for a universal standard with the need to localise NbS design and implementation to local contexts. FAO reported that they have created a sector-specific framework for conceptualising NbS options in agricultural landscapes and are developing practical tools to support the design and monitoring of NbS.

A small number of Member States reported that they are moving towards alignment with the IUCN Global Standard for NbS.

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Task 3 was the least commonly addressed task. Of the interventions that approached it, all agreed that financing for NbS is an important issue for implementing and scaling up NbS and that current funding levels are insufficient, but few concrete suggestions were made.

Priority areas for financing were suggested as: technology, innovations, and capacity building, including for accessing financial support. Some stakeholders also called for targeted investment in solutions and policies at scale to meet sustainability challenges and 2030 commitments – and beyond. The need for collaboration across sectors and ministries and to leverage the multiple benefits of NbS to secure and mobilise finance was also highlighted.

Challenges identified were that NbS projects often require long-term investment but might not yield returns for some time, and that different countries have different needs which require different responses in terms of capacities and expertise required to develop viable, impactful NbS projects. A concern was voiced as to how to incentivise finance, with one participating organisation making efforts to understand NbS incentive measures and how they could be applied at scale for broader action in the region.

Potential pathways forward suggested and actions underway included:

- Interest was expressed in cooperating with developed countries, the UN, and other global institutions.
- Programmes are underway in some Member States to enable policy and institutional investment.
- One participant suggested that UNEP create a mechanism to leverage and monitor the commitments made by countries and corporations to invest in land and NbS, as well as net zero commitments, and to allow finances to be seen to encourage accountability and fulfilment of these commitments.
- Multiple interventions emphasised the importance of policy alignment, such as between NBSAPs, NDCs and NAPs, to leverage the multifaceted potential of NbS and channel existing resources towards NbS implementation, including through grant financing and multi- and bi-lateral agencies.
- FAO & ICEM are developing a programme to inform future investment design and policy processes linked to the global sustainable development agenda.
- IUCN Oceania and the KIWA initiative (funded by EU, AFD, Australia, Canada, France, and New Zealand) are establishing a “one-stop shop” for funding NbS projects
- IUCN Oceania is also managing a portfolio of grants directly, while IUCN is using blended finance for some projects.
- Some best practice examples presented included REDD+ financing.
- Fiji launched a Sustainable Bond Framework at COP27 and is due to raise its first Blue Bond towards NbS projects.
- Pakistan and WWF recently secured \$77 million USD for NbS for climate change adaptation in Pakistan.

*Other issues*



- *Common Understanding.* Numerous interventions agreed on the need for a stronger common understanding of what constitutes NbS and how it differs from other similar approaches. The FAO noted that they are working with ICEM to better define NbS in agricultural landscapes in the region, to better respond to the interest of Member States and donors in NbS and to help explain how the concept relates to FAO's work in the region.
  
- *NbS Needs in the Region.* The following were identified as key needs in the Asia Pacific region which NbS initiatives aim to address:
  - Disaster risk reduction (DRR)
  - Climate resilience, especially in agriculture
  - Security of water, food, and livelihoods
  - Glacial retreat
  - Flood prevention and management, and siltation
  - Biodiversity protection
  - Air pollution
  
- *Scaling up NbS* It was noted that a common challenge faced in the region is how to move from project-based interventions to mainstreaming NbS in planning and development policy.
  
- *Policy.* Policy emerged as a popular concern for the Asia Pacific region. Although the concept of NbS is widely recognised and accepted in many Member States to address a range of challenges, interventions noted that policy and plans are still lacking for better implementation of nature-based solutions. Some opined that authoritative mandates or legal instruments were required for capacity building and M&E to write stronger policies. Others suggested that sometimes policy follows action, rather than exclusively vice versa.

The question arose through the range of interventions as to whether it is preferable to have a dedicated NbS policy or plan, or to mainstream NbS through sectoral policies. The issue of policy mainstreaming was mentioned frequently, with participants proposing that this is necessary to draw governments away from an exclusive focus on grey infrastructure towards appreciating the benefits of NbS, as well as for capacity building on NbS. A participating organisation reported working with Ministries to mainstream NbS into policy on environment, agriculture, waterways, and infrastructure, and to establish Communities of Practice in Pacific Islands. Furthermore, it was noted that many policies which do support NbS might already be in existence, but not explicitly labelled as such.

The imperative to align NbS with existing policies and commitments, such as MEAs, to leverage synergies was also emphasised across interventions, with NBSAPs, the Kunming-Montreal GBF, NDCs and NAPs mentioned frequently as key areas for alignment and synergies. Thailand reported developing a new NBSAP to align with the GBF and its National Adaptation Plan, while Fiji has actively incorporated NbS into its NAP, which it is currently updating to strengthen the role of NbS, and Japan has integrated NbS into its climate policy and NBSAP and Cambodia has integrated NBS into its biodiversity laws and NAP.

A point of concern that arose noted that policy alignment is also important across borders, as conflicting policies within the region can undermine the impacts of a country's national policy.

- *Research.* Many interventions underlined the importance of robust science, data, and assessments in NbS design and implementation, and noted that knowledge gaps remain to be filled. One intervention made a specific call for further research into the contested climate change potential of NbS. Multiple NGOs noted undertaking work to conduct climate vulnerability assessments and identify appropriate NbS adaptation measures, review scientific publications on NbS, and mainstream NbS through developing scientific assessments and knowledge. WWF also reported developing an NbS hub for implementation.
- *Collaboration.* The need for collaboration, as well as a common understanding of NbS, across sectors, levels, scales, and the region emerged as a key consideration for success and scaling up of NbS. Indeed, it was expressed that NbS provides an opportunity for inter-country collaboration and learning. An ASEAN working group has been created on climate change, the UNFCCC and GEF projects, which could be a key partner for NbS measures.

The UN Social and Economic Commission for West Asia (ESCWA) is building a multi-stakeholder platform for biodiversity in the Arab region, based on knowledge management and sharing and developing bankable NbS projects and supporting NbS financing. IUCN is creating regional partnerships for NbS implementation.

- *Capacity Building.* Capacity building emerged through the consultation as an important factor of many aspects of NbS – both as a prerequisite and a key outcome. Many NGOs as well as governments called for capacity building, with policy, collaboration, capacity, and institutional environment highlighted as key areas for this work. The technical and institutional capacities of all stakeholders, including governments, NGOs, and local communities, was identified as a key success factor for NbS projects. IUCN highlighted that their training programme on the IUCN Global Standard for NbS is available for governments, with a shorter version available for CSOs.
- *Challenges & Concerns.* There were two major categories of challenges and concerns that arose during the consultation:
  - Developing countries have competing priorities and NbS may be seen to conflict or create trade-offs with some development priorities. To counter this barrier to NbS uptake and scale-up, a shared understanding of NbS, as well as robust monitoring mechanisms and cost-benefit analyses, are required.
  - Harmful impacts from poor NbS practices. These can be ecological, social, economic, or all and might include the introduction of invasive or non-native species, monoculture plantations, eviction, or other rights transgressions to IPLCs.
  - In addition, one intervention raised a concern around the cited 37% of necessary climate change mitigation that NbS could achieve and called for further research on this.

## Eastern Europe<sup>3</sup>

*Task one: Compile examples of best practice in nature-based solutions, based on the best available science;*

Several best practices were put forward related to Forest restoration, wildlife conservation, freshwater management, agriculture including on implementation on the ground, capacity building, development of knowledge materials, as well as mainstreaming NbS into national policies and planning documents. The PANORAMA solutions platform was introduced which includes case studies uploaded and could be a useful tool for exchange of knowledge between stakeholders.

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Two stakeholders introduced their ways of approaching criteria, standards and proposals.

- IUCN's global standard on NbS (published in 2020) which has 8 criteria aligned with UNEA definition.
- FAO is working on methodology to be soon published, including various ecosystem types, as well as piloting series of stakeholder consultation methodologies: how to engage in development process, how to define optimal solutions.

Points highlighted included:

- the importance of scale and perspective, biodiversity net gain and inclusion of governments
- standards and guidelines are particularly important for measuring impacts.

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- Noted that the European Investment Bank has published a report on financing NbS
- It was highlighted that most of the finance for NBS comes from public finance resources.

## Latin America and Caribbean<sup>4</sup>

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<sup>3</sup> 17 participants registered for this meeting, of which 2 were Member States

<sup>4</sup> 57 participants registered for this meeting, of which 14 were Member States

*Task one: Compile examples of best practice in nature-based solutions, based on the best available science;*

The majority of interventions included reference to best practices. Examples provided of good practice included:

- Implementation of activities included: mangroves in coastal areas, restoration of coastal areas, forest carbon credits, sustainable forest management, integrated water management, mangrove restoration and conservation, biodiversity conservation and restoration of ecosystems, reintroduction of native insects to reproduce naturally and regenerate the chain of life, green infrastructure.
- Policies: At least three member States are integrating NbS into policies, for example the National Blue Carbon Strategy of Costa Rica, National Plans for Adaptation to Climate Change in Chile, the National Restoration Landscape Strategy (also Chile) and on Biofertilizers in Brazil.
- Development of guidance documents, e.g., to guide policy making to include ecosystem services so local populations can benefit from them.

Many interventions highlighted the importance of also considering bad practices as a means of contributing to and enriching the discussion. An example of a bad practice would be the use of invasive exotic species in cities, which undermines indigenous biodiversity, or applying agricultural practices that are successful in one biome to a different biome, without consideration of the differences.

Brazil shared an example of bad practice: in 1970 Brazil instituted a policy that entailed undertaking agricultural practices in the southern Amazon, which was a failure. The lessons learned were that nature and ecosystems must be respected when identifying and implementing solutions to societal challenges.

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- Standards were emphasised as having a fundamental role in ensuring the solidity and integrity of NbS
- There was a difference of opinion as to whether additional criteria required for NbS.
- Request for criterion and guidelines to ensure that MS and stakeholders know clearly what NbS is and what it is not when implementing and to avoid “false solutions”, though some interventions stated that the text of Resolution 5/5 should guide the work.
- Many interventions highlighted the importance and need for indicators to be able to monitor the effectiveness of NbS.
- Some NbS stated the need for a global standard that is accepted by the majority of relevant institutions and agencies, serving as a tool for guidance, uptake and promotion of NbS

*Task three: Identify options for supporting sustainable investment in nature-based solutions and share information on bilateral and multilateral sources of finance to enable developing countries to develop and deploy nature-based solutions;*

- Funding opportunities should recognise the complexity of different ecosystems.
- Funding should not be solely based on NbS to solve complex challenges.
- Funding should be based on the ecosystem-based approach as there are multilateral frameworks in place to protect biodiversity, flora and fauna.

#### *Other issues*

- There was consensus that:
  - consultations were relevant to the region and timely.
  - consultations were an opportunity for regions to share their country's experiences regarding nature-based solutions.
  - Member States and stakeholders wanted to see progress in NbS (discrepancy from one country who feels that the concept of NbS is erroneous)
  - NbS need to be context specific as there are states with different visions and approaches, and ecosystems are different requiring different interventions.
- *Several MS*
  - highlighted the importance of integrating / embedding NbS into policies, whether as stand-alone or as part of others, e.g., climate and how many of their national policies (either completed or under development) supported or were synergistic with NbS
  - raised ecosystem-based approaches and how NbS is considered underneath the umbrella of ecosystem-based approaches by some, or synergistic by others, or simply the same. It was stated that common ground needed to be found between the two concepts. It was felt that the Convention on Biological Diversity (CBD) provided a mandate for ecosystem-based adaptation.
  - Highlighted the need to either refine or to broaden the definition and focus of NbS
  - Urged the development of indicators for NbS as this will enable the monitoring and evaluating of the impact of policies and this will enable to have proper sustainable development and sustainable financing options.
- *The importance of the following was raised.*
  - Respect for nature is critical and need for environmental safeguards: introducing “natural” elements has not always been beneficial for all the ecosystems, and ecological functionality.
  - Synergies with MEAs
  - That NbS are not limited to climate change, e.g., restoring mangroves provide many benefits not just climate change adaptation, but also social, livelihoods, food.
  - False solutions should be disregarded, as they are linked to green washing.
  - Working in collaboration and in partnerships is essential for this.
  - Concerns of the impacts of NbS in indigenous people, youth, women, afro-descendant and the voices of communities affected by these bad practices should be included in subsequent consultations for a comprehensive and interconnected perspective.
  - Local ownership is necessary to make NbS effective and publicly accessible. “It is the local people who raise their voices in defense of these ecosystems. The power lies with the

people who recognize the significance of ecosystems.” Recognition and integration of local knowledge is of great importance.

- Importance of a gradual approach to nature-based solutions. Improvement and progression towards excellence should be pursued incrementally, rather than attempting to achieve everything at once.
- Importance of monitoring throughout the process.

## Western Europe and Others<sup>5</sup>

*Task one: Compile examples of best practice in nature-based solutions, based on the best available science;*

The following points were made:

- Six Member States submitted examples of best practice and a seventh Member States provided a link to a compilation of examples, prepared by the government, with an emphasis on the social and environmental benefits of NbS.
- Regarding the classification of examples there was support for classifying examples by ecosystem type, cross-referenced with the type of challenge that the NbS is addressing, while also recognizing that often a nature-based solution will address more than one challenge.
- It would be worthwhile to identify the key success factors for the examples of best practice.
- Important to have criteria for which examples count as cases of best practice.
- Useful to include case studies which were not successful.
- It is important to communicate examples of best practice.
- The range of examples of best practice shows that NbS involves a range of terrestrial and marine ecosystems. NbS is not restricted to forests.
- When compiling examples of best practice, it is useful to include contact information for the case study authors.

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The following points were made. They have been grouped under national policies; standards and criteria; and guidelines and guidance.

*Proposals, including national policy.*

- Several Member States noted the national policy instruments that they had adopted. These included:
  - Germany noted the Federal Action Plan on Nature-based Solutions for climate and biodiversity and drew attention to the actions related particularly to forests and peatlands.
  - USA noted the Nature-based Solutions Roadmap that had been released by the White House (full title: *Opportunities to accelerate nature-based solutions: A Roadmap for climate progress, thriving nature, equity, and prosperity*).

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<sup>5</sup> 58 participants registered for this meeting, of which 14 were Member States

- France described how nature-based solutions have been integrated into several sectoral plans and legal frameworks, including for biodiversity, wetlands, stormwater management and climate adaptation.
- Finland noted that the role of nature-based solutions is emphasized in their new National Adaptation Policy.
- The new initiative, *Enhancing Nature-based Solutions for Accelerated Climate Transformation (ENACT)*, launched at UNFCCC COP 27, and co-chaired by Egypt and Germany was noted.

#### *Standards and criteria*

- Some participants expressed explicit support for the IUCN Global Standard for Nature-based Solutions; others indicated that the IUCN Global Standard should feed into discussions around criteria and indicators; and some expressed general support for having guidelines and standards.
- The importance of standards and criteria respecting the definition of nature-based solutions found in Operative Paragraph 1 of UNEA Resolution 5/5 was emphasized.

#### *Guidelines and guidance*

- Australia indicated that they are developing guidance materials on how to measure and account for the diverse benefits of nature-based solutions. This guidance will draw on the System of Environmental Economic Accounting.
- Canada noted the importance of having good technical guidance to inform the implementation of nature-based solutions. Canada is developing a climate toolkit platform to offer tailored tools.
- Attention was drawn to the European Union's handbook of assessing the impacts of nature-based solutions.

*Task three: Identify options for supporting sustainable investment in nature-based solutions and share information on bilateral and multilateral sources of finance to enable developing countries to develop and deploy nature-based solutions;*

The following points were made.

- The European Investment Bank Report *Investing in nature-based solutions: State of play and way forward for public and private financial measures in Europe* was noted.
- The Nature Value Explorer is an online tool that focuses on pragmatic methods that value ecosystem services and helps planners, land managers and policy makers to map nature's socio-economic importance.
- The UK's newly established Centre on Biodiversity and Climate funds research focused on developing countries.
- Germany noted that its International Climate Initiative continues to provide funding for nature-based solutions.
- Canada is seeking to scale up nature-based solutions domestically, including through the Natural Climate Solutions Fund and the Natural Infrastructure Fund.



- Several participants expressed the wish to learn more about the experiences of different countries in financing nature-based solutions.
- Nature-based solutions should be embedded in major finance pathways.
- In addition to finance for nature-based solutions, it is important to also address other types of support, such as capacity building.
- It is worthwhile to compare the costs of Nature-based Solutions with solutions using grey infrastructure.
- A manual that provides guidance on quantifying and valuing the socio-economic importance of nature and ecosystems would be helpful.
- Important to get a good understanding of the barriers to funding nature-based solutions. One of the barriers is that the benefits of NbS are distributed more widely than for traditional types of solution.

#### *Other issues*

- *Barriers – measuring benefits.*
  - The difficulty of measuring the multiple benefits of nature-based solutions is one of the barriers to scaling up NbS
  - Some benefits may be realized at a significant distance from the intervention site.
  - Some benefits from nature-based solutions are only realized after a significant passage of time.
  - One way forward is to assess the multiple benefits of nature-based solutions comprehensively and systematically. The Finnish Environment Institute (Syke) has applied Multi-Criteria Decision Analysis in several water management and urban planning cases and the experiences have been positive.
- *Barriers – policy*
  - One barrier to scaling up, is the misalignment of policies that are both relevant to nature-based solutions. In some cases, climate and biodiversity may not be aligned.
  - Good regulatory frameworks are essential for supporting nature-based solutions.
  - Nature-based solutions need to be systematically considered throughout the decision-making process by both public and private actors.
- *Barriers - Lack of capacity and awareness*
  - There is still relatively little knowledge of nature-based solutions at the local and practitioner level.
  - The training of, e.g., land-use planners needs attention.
- *Terminology*
  - CBD COP Decision 14/5 adopted guidance for design and implementation of ecosystem-based approaches for adaptation and disaster risk reduction. Does this guidance apply to nature-based solutions as well?
  - We need to be careful to avoid re-opening the discussion of the definition of nature-based solutions in UNEA Resolution 5/5.
- *Indigenous Peoples and Local Communities*
  - The participation and leadership of IPLCs in nature-based solutions should be promoted.

