

Summary of Asia Pacific regional consultations, 9-10th October 2023

This summary is not negotiated nor developed with full consensus and thus does not necessarily represent the views of individual Member States.

Co-facilitators:

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It was a privilege for Tajikistan and the Republic of Korea to be appointed as Co-Facilitators for Intergovernmental consultations on nature-based solutions within the Asia Pacific Regional Group. During the previous two days we discussed the mentioned 6 agenda items between the member states and observers for our region - **the region that encompasses a vast and diverse array of countries**, spanning from the easternmost borders of Asia to the Pacific Islands. Our countries collectively house over 4.5 billion people, making it the most populous region in the world.

The region showcases immense cultural, linguistic, and environmental diversity, making it a **unique and vibrant part** of the global community.

I would like to present a summary of the Asia Pacific regional intergovernmental consultations on Nature-based Solutions (NbS) covering the first 3 items we discussed on following topics:

- Best Practice in Nature-based Solutions
- Proposals, Criteria, Standards and Guidelines in Nature-based Solutions
- Measuring Benefits and Costs of Nature-based Solutions

The rest 3 items will be covered by my distinguished Co-Facilitator from the Republic of Korea.

Our report represents the **collective voices and perspectives** of the whole region.

During the consultations, various countries shared **their experiences and insights** on implementing NbS, as well as their concerns and aspirations for scaling up these solutions. A common theme that emerged was the need for technical guidance on how to **effectively** scale up NbS across different sectors.

It was recognized that NbS is a powerful tool for sustainable development, but there **is a need for capacity building** and guidance on how to design and implement these solutions.

Countries also highlighted the **importance of considering safeguard measures** when applying NbS. Social safeguards and the participation of stakeholders were emphasized as vital components in ensuring the successful implementation of NbS.

Furthermore, **financing** was identified as a critical aspect. Countries expressed the need to create financial incentives and mobilize resources to facilitate the implementation of NbS.

Several best practices were shared by countries during the consultations. Countries introduced its successful ecosystem-based, disaster risk reduction and traditional knowledge, which has been utilized in various projects. Also our countries showcased its community forestry and agroforestry practices, which have contributed to the restoration of forests and increased productivity. Various other countries highlighted their experiences with bioengineering practices, protected area regimes, and the promotion of green spaces in urban landscapes.

However, it was **also acknowledged** that there is a need to examine and address bad practices. Some activities, such as industrial tree plantations, were noted to have negative impacts on the environment and biodiversity. It was suggested that a thorough evaluation of specific activities should be conducted to determine their alignment with NbS and best practices.

The consultations also highlighted the need for criteria, standards, and guidelines for NbS. While there were differences in understanding the definition of NbS among delegates, it was recognized that these concepts can complement each other in fulfilling common objectives. To ensure effective implementation, countries emphasized the importance of having global standards **while also allowing flexibility** at the national level. The IUCN's work in developing standards was recognized as a valuable tool for implementing NbS. The inclusion of civil society and indigenous groups in the development of these standards was emphasized.

In terms of **financing NbS**, the importance of sustainable finance was acknowledged within our AP Group. Countries recognized the need for sustainable financing of NbS projects and the creation of financial mechanisms to enable their implementation. The importance of evaluating the benefits and costs of NbS projects was also highlighted. Countries shared their experiences in evaluating these aspects and emphasized the need for **clear guidelines**, data availability, and long-term solutions.

In conclusion for my part, the Asia Pacific regional intergovernmental consultations on NbS **provided a platform for countries** to share their experiences, challenges, and aspirations. The discussions highlighted the potential of NbS for sustainable development and the importance of technical guidance, capacity building, safeguard measures, and financing. Our report also showcases various best practices and emphasizes the need to address bad practices. Moving forward, countries emphasized the importance of criteria, standards, **and development of guidelines** for NbS with consideration to the national circumstances and the need for sustainable finance to enable their implementation.

I stop here and kindly request Madam Co-Chair to give the floor to my colleague Ms. Co-Facilitator to present on the second part of our report.

It is a summary of Asia-pacific regional consultation on the three items; sustainable finance, opportunities and obstacles of NbS on climate mitigation, and policy for NbS. We have diverse and valuable inputs from the member states of Asia-Pacific regions.

1. For the issue of sustainable finance, most member states have been developing funding sources for the NbS actions from diverse sources including both public and private sectors. Some states are actively developing and searching the sustainable finances of NbS but others are not yet. Thus, we emphasize the need of robust finance mechanism especially for developing countries at domestic and international levels, encouraging financial flow from the developed to developing countries.
 - Parties have ongoing projects including investments that contribute to the finance of Nature-Based Solutions. Some parties have projects, especially with private partners in the country for the mechanism of NBS projects. Other parties have been developing diverse financial sources from the public and private sectors at the domestic and international levels. An example of International Finance for NBS is the Green Climate Fund. The domestic sources include the government, the local community, and commercial banks. However, the private sector sees it from a business perspective. Some parties also get funding for the NbS related activities established under the public sectors, but they need to differentiate NbS from other activities. Other parties currently need to develop the sustainable finance for the NbS projects.
 - NGOs addressed the need to finance and develop funds to fill the gap at the local scale, it requires thinking out financing cycles in long-term solutions. Some NGOs state several examples including providing funds to local enterprises based on ILK and eco-friendly methodologies. NGOs also emphasized that investment was also required to build the capacity of various stakeholders to understand longer investment strategies for NBS.
2. For the issue of opportunities and obstacles of NBS on climate mitigations, most parties addressed NbS could provide good opportunities, but there are critical obstacles including the lack of understanding of NbS, sustainable financing and capacities of various stakeholders. Thus, we need a special guideline for building capacities of various stakeholders. We also notice ongoing debates on NbS and climate mitigation under the CBD meetings following the consultation.
 - Parties mentioned NBS can be bridge to work on biodiversity, but lack of understanding can be obstacle to NBS. Some parties are making self-assessment tool, such as accountability tool for actors, to access the impact of NbS actions. Other parties also stated the benefits of NbS actions to climate mitigations such as the conservation and restoration of mangrove forests and the obstacles including financial constrain and knowledge gap. Parties also mentioned the obstacles of lack of financing for the NbS programs.
 - Several NGOs stressed the NBS should have clear strategies and exact estimates of the contribution of NBS to our societies.

3. For the issue of policies for NBS, in Asia-Pacific region, most member states don't have the appropriate and coherent policy at the national level. Their NbS activities have been implemented under existing related policies such as the NbS programs within NDCs and NBSAPs. We believe capacity building and knowledge sharing are crucial for the national and regional level policy-making.
- Parties stated that they are implementing the NbS projects under existing related policies. Some member states have been aligning other nature-related policies to the NbS policies and reorganizing related policies under the umbrella of NbS, but most member states still need the appropriate and coherent policy at the national level. Some parties have been working on the development of the national level NbS policy and making incorporating NbS into specific policies such as national climate change adaptation measures and NBSAP.
 - Additionally, parties and NGOs stressed the strong alignment between climate change policies with the policy for NbS. NGOs also stress the comprehensive approach in developing the policy for NbS including finance, health benefits, job creation, etc.

My distinguished co-facilitator and I thank all member states of the Asia-Pacific regional group for their valuable contributions to the important discussions of six items and also we express our gratitude to Co-Chairs and staffs for organizing and supporting for intergovernmental regional consultations.