

Bern III Conference on Cooperation among the biodiversity-related conventions for the implementation of the Kunming-Montreal Global Biodiversity Framework

Bern, Switzerland, 23-25 January 2024

Briefing Note for UNEA-6 *Bern III Conference – Preliminary Highlights*

The Bern III Conference brought together representatives of parties and secretariats of 16 multilateral environmental agreements (MEAs), and a range of other stakeholders, organizations and individual experts and with financial support of Switzerland. The candid exchange on cooperation to implement the Kunming-Montreal Global Biodiversity Framework resulted in concrete ideas for increased collaboration among MEAs at global, regional and national levels. While the conference report is being finalized, this briefing for UNEA-6 shares a preliminary sample of the spirit and types of ideas debated at the conference.

- With support from parties, secretariats of several MEAs have already reflected on how they can contribute to achieving goals and targets of the Framework and to creating synergies that accelerate progress on biodiversity overall. It is crucial for parties to continue to explicitly encourage and fund this work.
- There is a rich body of knowledge among parties and secretariats about effective, inclusive and collaborative approaches to achieving targets of the Framework. The conference provided an excellent opportunity for mutual learning, but significant support and continued momentum is needed for both in-person and online platforms to continue this work.
- There is great potential for individual MEAs and especially thematic clusters of MEAs to serve as champions or custodians in partnerships for specific targets, drawing on their own expertise and data sources. Similar partnerships on the SDGs can provide a model for how this might be done and what to avoid.
- Monitoring and reporting for the Framework can benefit significantly from using existing data sources, including many maintained by other MEAs. Tools such as the Data and Reporting tool for MEAs (DaRT) can play a key role in this, but coordination is crucial to ensuring that parties and secretariats are aware of available data and interpret them in consistent ways. Coordination on indicator work across conventions is needed; one opportunity identified is collaboration in indicators for the Framework and the Global Goal on Adaptation.
- At the national level, effective implementation of the Framework requires inclusive processes that support sustained dialogue across government agencies, with the private sector, and with rightsholders and other stakeholders. This is essential for the development of national biodiversity strategies and action plans (NBSAPs) consistent with other plans and strategies such as Nationally Determined Contributions (NDCs) and National Adaptation Plans (NAPs), for implementation, and for accountability.
- Sustained and inclusive dialogue across sectors and with rights-holders and civil society -- from the local to the global level -- is also crucial for integrating the targets into development strategies, to promote synergistic (and avoid non-synergistic) actions, address potential conflicts, and ensure the most vulnerable are not left behind.
- National leaders have a central role to play in the success of the Framework and the achievement of synergies, by championing biodiversity, explicitly linking it to other environmental challenges, development objectives and human well-being, and promoting collaboration across MEAs including through national focal points.

The Conference

The Bern III Conference on Cooperation among Biodiversity-related Conventions for the Implementation of the Kunming-Montreal Global Biodiversity Framework was held at the Universal Postal Union in Bern, Switzerland from 23-25 January 2024. It was convened by the United Nations Environment Programme (UNEP) with support from the Government of Switzerland, and was chaired by Clarisse Kehler Siebert from Sweden and Camila Isabel Zepeda Lizama from Mexico.

The conference was organized following an invitation to UNEP by the Conference of the Parties to the Convention on Biological Diversity, in its [decision 15/13](#), to build on the Bern Process. Information on the Bern Process, including the Bern I and Bern II consultations, is provided on the [conference webpage](#). Attendance was by invitation only, and the 133 conference participants, from 69 countries, included representatives of parties and secretariats to 16 MEAs, as well as stakeholders, organizations and individual experts.

The objectives of the conference were to: identify opportunities to strengthen cooperation and collaboration within and among Parties to the biodiversity-related conventions, Rio conventions and other relevant MEAs in implementing the Kunming-Montreal Global Biodiversity Framework at all appropriate levels; share practical experiences of cooperation and collaboration in implementation; and make recommendations on further steps that could be taken to strengthen cooperation and collaboration, while recognizing and respecting the roles and mandates of each MEA.

Two webinars were organized before the conference to help participants prepare, inform them on key issues likely to be discussed and help build common understanding. A number of key inputs were presented in the webinars and made available on the [conference webpage](#). Among these were a [co-chairs paper](#) with options for enhanced collaboration to strengthen the policy, engagement and implementation of the Kunming-Montreal Global Biodiversity Framework and an [information paper](#) cross-mapping MEA strategies and identifying key entry points for cooperation amongst MEAs in implementing the Framework. In advance of the conference participants were also invited to submit [case studies](#) on good collaborative practice at national, regional or global levels (45 were received), and during the conference there was opportunity to share stories, recognizing that sharing and scaling up of practical experience is key to future practical action.

The conference focused on maximizing discussion amongst participants. Sessions were professionally facilitated, and plans evolved as the sessions progressed in order to maximize participation, build on the preceding discussion and respond to the interests and energies of participants. Effort was made throughout to get participants to identify practical actions and to specify the next steps that needed to be taken, in order to help ensure practical outcomes. Participants were invited to propose key activities on a timeline from 2024-2030 and to provide feedback on elements of the cross-mapping paper.

The conference report is currently being prepared by the rapporteur and will be reviewed by the co-chairs and conference planning team and then by the participants. The report will identify the key elements and options for action discussed during the conference, together with information on the context. It will include key elements of the roadmap developed by participants to show actions and milestones at appropriate levels. It will also include the suggested options for next steps for the Bern Process that were discussed.

Options for action

During the concluding session of the conference, the co-chairs invited participants to consider a range of concrete actions, which drew heavily on the discussions that had taken place over the preceding three days. These actions are briefly expanded on below, linking them to some of the related conference discussions. Further context will be added in the full report, which will also include detail of the earlier sessions.

- a) Where a need has been identified, enhance **cooperation among relevant MEA secretariats** as a basis for sharing of information and experience, planning activities, and communicating relevant decisions of governing bodies. Such cooperation could be formal or informal, depending on circumstances and needs, and as appropriate would extend to briefing and engaging parties to the relevant MEAs.

- b) Start a **“Bern III chapter” or platform at the national level**, bringing together relevant focal points, governmental implementing agencies, stakeholders, etc. This is a key step not only with respect to the effective update, review and implementation of national biodiversity strategies and actions plans (NBSAPs), but also for achieving the whole of government and whole of society approaches advocated in Section C of the Kunming-Montreal Global Biodiversity Framework together.
- c) Contribute effectively as MEAs to the **global review of collective progress** in implementation of the Kunming-Montreal Global Biodiversity Framework, which the CBD COP has already decided will be considered at COP-17 in 2026 and COP-19 in 2030. The detailed procedures will need to be addressed at upcoming CBD meetings in 2024 discussing process and format of the global review.
- d) Both individually and collectively, MEAs should enhance **outreach on the benefits of cooperation and synergies**, so as to increase understanding and to increasingly share ideas and experiences. This ranges from communication of the outputs of this conference, to talking about cooperation and synergies in consistent ways across MEAs, to sharing of case studies.
- e) Where this is not already the case, include a **standing agenda item at all MEA governing body meetings** on the contribution of the respective MEA to implementation of the Kunming-Montreal Global Biodiversity Framework. This relates to both implementation and the global review of collective progress.
- f) **Keep the Bern III dynamic, spirit, and network alive** through activities such as webinars on key topics. This would be linked to discussion on the future of the Bern Process, as participants had welcomed the discussions and progress made during the Bern III Conference, and made a range of suggestions about possible future meetings and opportunities.
- g) Propose a decision at CBD COP-16 for an **expert group or committee on synergies among MEAs**, building on the experience of the Informal Advisory Group on Synergies established through CBD COP [decision XIII/24](#). This would ideally be raised under the agenda item on cooperation at the meeting of the CBD Subsidiary Body on Implementation in May 2024, where there would also be a review progress in addressing [decision 15/13](#) on cooperation. Building on discussions at the Bern III Conference, COP-16 could also have an MEAs day focused on mutual interest in implementing the Kunming-Montreal Global Biodiversity Framework.
- h) Use **upcoming events as opportunities to enhance collaborative action**, including the United Nations Environment Assembly meeting in February/March 2024, the Annual Adaptation Forum under the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change meeting in March 2024, and the COPs of the Rio conventions which all take place in the last quarter of 2024.
- i) Draw on the **cross-mapping of MEAs against the targets** in the Kunming-Montreal Global Biodiversity Framework as a basis for identifying potential areas for increased cooperation in supporting implementation, or for identifying “champions” and contributors for particular targets. The cross-mapping is illustrated in the Annex, where MEA representatives have ‘scored’ the relevance of the targets to their work and interests, building on work done in advance of the conference.
- j) Consider how to most effectively establish **“partners” or “friends” of specific targets or activities** in the Kunming-Montreal Global Biodiversity Framework, building on experience relating to the partnerships for targets 2 and 3 which have already been established, and/or the experience of groups such as the [Collaborative Partnership on Sustainable Wildlife Management](#).
- k) Actively seek to make the mantra **“collect once, use many times”** more of a reality in MEA-related monitoring and reporting at both global and national levels, through: increased alignment in use of indicators; further exploration of opportunities for harmonizing reporting; enhanced sharing of data and information; and encouraging and facilitating the use of tools such as the [Data Reporting Tool for MEAs](#) (DaRT).

- l) Consider the most effective ways to **review progress on the Bern III roadmap** to 2030, so that the many ideas contributed by conference participants are not lost, but are followed up on in the most appropriate manner.















A range of other issues were also discussed during the conference, including the suggestion that a common COP or conference be held in 2030 to substantially increase attention on biodiversity issues and the need to work together to address them. There were also substantive discussions relating to strengthening support at regional and subregional levels, and more effective engagement of rights holders and other stakeholders.

It was recognized that each MEA would report on the Bern III Conference discussions within its own advisory and governing bodies, and follow up as appropriate with respect to support for implementation of the Kunming-Montreal Global Biodiversity Framework at all appropriate levels. Individual MEAs are already considering the relevance of the Framework to their work and mandates and it is therefore important to recognize and build on what is already being done by MEAs to promote and facilitate cooperation.

Feedback on the conference was positive, in particular given the breadth of issues addressed and the diverse nature of the participating MEAs, and participants felt that there was value in continuing the “Bern process”. It is to be hoped that the conference also resulted in a strengthened network of “friends of the Bern process”, championing the related issues of cooperation and synergies and support for implementation of the Kunming-Montreal Global Biodiversity Framework within their respective MEA negotiations.

Sixteen MEAs were represented at the Bern III Conference: Basel Convention on the Control of Transboundary Movements of Hazardous Wastes and their Disposal; Convention Concerning the Protection of the World Cultural and Natural Heritage; Convention on Biological Diversity; Convention on International Trade in Endangered Species of Wild Fauna and Flora; Convention on the Conservation of Migratory Species of Wild Animals; Convention on Wetlands of International Importance especially as Waterfowl Habitat; Framework Convention on the Protection and Sustainable Development of the Carpathians; International Plant Protection Convention; International Treaty on Plant Genetic Resources for Food and Agriculture; International Whaling Commission; Minamata Convention on Mercury; Montreal Protocol on Substances that Deplete the Ozone Layer; Rotterdam Convention on the Prior Informed Consent Procedure for Certain Hazardous Chemicals and Pesticides in International Trade; Stockholm Convention on Persistent Organic Pollutants; United Nations Convention to Combat Desertification; United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change. In addition, the Regional Seas Programme represented perspectives of the regional seas conventions.

Annex – Indicative cross-mapping of targets and MEAs

														
Target 1 (spatial planning)		✓✓		✓✓		✓✓✓		✓✓						
Target 2 (restoration)						✓✓✓		✓✓						
Target 3 (protected areas)		✓✓				✓✓✓	✓✓✓	✓✓						
Target 4 (species conservation)	✓✓	✓✓✓		✓✓✓	✓✓✓	✓✓	✓✓							
Target 5 (sustainable use of species)	✓✓✓	✓✓✓		✓✓										
Target 6 (invasive alien species)			✓✓✓			✓✓								
Target 7 (pollution)										✓✓✓	✓✓✓	✓✓✓	✓✓✓	✓✓✓
Target 8 (climate change)						✓✓			✓✓✓					
Target 9 (species management)	✓✓	✓✓✓		✓✓	✓✓									
Target 10 (other key sectors)				✓✓✓		✓✓								
Target 11 (nature's contributions to people)						✓✓	✓✓		✓✓✓					
Target 12 (urban nature)														
Target 13 (access and benefit sharing)				✓✓✓										
Target 14 (mainstreaming)		✓✓												
Target 15 (business and biodiversity)				✓✓✓										
Target 16 (sustainable consumption)										✓✓				
Target 17 (biosafety)														
Target 18 (incentives and subsidies)														
Target 19 (financial resources)				✓✓✓										
Target 20 (capacity-building)				✓✓						✓✓	✓✓			
Target 21 (data, information, knowledge)				✓✓										
Target 22 (IPLCs)								✓✓					✓✓	
Target 23 (gender equality)								✓✓					✓✓	

✓✓✓	Potential 'champion' or partner	✓✓	Contributing 'champion' or partner		Also relevant to the MEA
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