

Policy Brief

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An Implementation Mechanism for the Post 2020 Global Biodiversity Framework – Inspirations from the UN Paris Agreement

This Policy Brief addresses the necessity and design for an **implementation structure** for the post-2020 Global Biodiversity Framework.

It explains:

1. Why is an implementation structure needed?
2. How could it look like?
3. Which procedural steps are necessary?

1. Why is it needed?

The IPBES Global Assessment Report (2019) states that the Aichi Targets **will not be achieved**, and that this situation undermines other goals, such as those specified in the Paris Agreement and the 2050 Vision for Biodiversity.

The mandate for CBD COP15 is to consider the implications of the IPBES report and to adopt a “post-2020 Global Biodiversity Framework”.

So far, there has been a focus on **new targets**. While it is important that there are new targets which are commensurate with the transformational change required to address biodiversity loss and achieve the 2050 Vision, simply setting new targets is **not enough**.

The problem with the Aichi targets were not the targets, but that they **did not translate into necessary and effective action**.

It is therefore important to **strengthen and enhance the implementation** of the Convention and the post-2020 targets, once they are agreed.

There is a need for a more coordinated and concerted **implementation structure**. Such structure could help **guide** parties in their national implementation efforts and actions and to improve parties’ individual and collective performance.

2. How could an implementation structure look like?

Inspiration could be drawn from the Paris Agreement, adjusted to fit the context of the CBD.

a) *Why the Paris Agreement?*

One reason is that the Paris Agreement is **purpose-built** to increase parties' ambition and to enhance implementation, over time. Its catalytic and facilitative nature seeks to create conditions under which parties progressively reduce their greenhouse gas emissions through coordinated, repeated policy shifts. Another reason is that it provides an example of how to address a **complex** challenge, similar to biodiversity loss. This example is the result of 10 years of negotiation and is accepted by 185 UN member states. Drawing inspiration from this model might simply **save time**.

b) *How does the Paris Agreement work?*

The Agreement has several building blocks that when **seen together** set up a "logic of change".

First, it combines agreed **global long-term goals** with national flexibility. The global goal of holding temperature increases to well below 2 degrees C and to pursue efforts to limit temperature increase to 1.5 degrees C gives a "**direction of travel**". It unites parties on *where* they need to go; but is not prescriptive on *how*.

Second, each Party decides its own climate change mitigation target reflected in a so-called "**Nationally Determined Contribution**" (NDC), taking into account its unique national circumstances. These targets are **not legally binding**, meaning it is **not a violation** of the Paris Agreement if a Party does not meet its target.

Third, the Paris Agreement guides Parties in a principled way: it sets out the expectation that NDCs should reflect each party's **highest possible ambition** and the principle of **progression**.

Fourth, and importantly, the Agreement sets up strong requirements for **transparency**: frequent (bi-annual) reporting on the level of emissions and on progress of implementation, as well as review of those reports by independent experts.

Fifth, there are regular **global stocktakes** to assess how the world is doing collectively. Those stocktakes are informed by science and synchronized with IPCC Assessment Reports.

Sixth, the **processes are iterative, synchronized and coordinated**: new NDCs are to be submitted every five years, reporting has to happen every other year, a Global Stocktake takes place every five years and its outcome informs the next round of NDCs. This keeps climate change **continuously** on the political agenda.

These six aspects together establish a framework to enhance ambition over time and to strengthen implementation.

c) Inspiration for the post 2020 Global Biodiversity Framework

The post 2020 Global Biodiversity Framework might be in need of a similar structure to ratchet-up individual and collective ambition and effective implementation. And, indeed, some elements are already in place or being currently discussed.

How could such structure look like when **tailored to the CBD** and the new post 2020 Global Biodiversity Framework?

First, similar to the Paris Agreement, **the new post-2020 global biodiversity targets** together with the 2030 mission and the 2050 Vision “Living in harmony with nature” would provide the “direction of travel” and serve as guidance for individual action.

Second, similar to NDCs, the duty contained in art. 6 CBD to develop **national biodiversity strategy and action plans (NBSAPs)** already provides a basis for national commitments, to be informed by the global biodiversity targets. NBSAPs could be communicated and updated every 5 years, as is the case for the Paris Agreement NDCs. There should also be more detailed guidance on the content of those plans in order to increase comparability and enable aggregation, but this could be developed later.

Third, there could be **principled guidance on ambition**: A principle of no-backtracking or non-regression from current levels of ambition could help to secure an “ambition-floor”. Better even, Parties should be required to go forward and **enhance** their level of ambition every time they submit a new NBSAP. The inclusion of the **principle of progression** could spur Parties into such upward action.

Fourth, **reporting on progress** towards implementing and achieving the NBSAPs could be **improved, both in frequency, detail and transparency**. The reports should also undergo a technical expert review for their consistency with guidance for reporting. Parties may also consider how the voluntary review mechanism could be integrated and potentially scaled-up to become a part of this structure.

Fifth, an important new element would a **Global Biodiversity Stocktake**, where Parties and non-Party stakeholders can get together every 5 years to assess the collective progress towards the post 2020 Global Biodiversity Targets and the 2050 Vision. The Stocktake should be informed by inputs from the IPBES, as well as national reports. The outcome would inform the next round of NBSAP, as well inspire non-state actions.

Sixth, the processes under the CBD need to be **repetitive and occur in coordinated and synchronized cycles** in order to “ratchet-up” parties’ ambition and in effectively addressing the drivers of biodiversity loss – but most importantly to keep the issue of biodiversity loss high on the political agenda.

3. How to get there?

a) Mandate

First, the development of such implementation structure would **fall within the mandate** for CBD COP15. The mandate is to adopt the follow-up to the 2011-2020 *Strategic Framework*. The post-2020 Framework is therefore expected to contain various elements additional to new targets, which implies the inclusion of elements to enhance implementation.

b) Process

There could be a **procedural sequence**:

At COP15:

- Agreement on **new global post 2020 goals**;
- Agreement on the **main elements** of an implementation framework e.g. post 2020 goals to inform NSBAPs, basic elements of enhanced transparency framework, possibility for review, and establishment of a regular stock take;
- Agreement on **guiding principles**, e.g. such as progression and highest ambition,
- Agreement on **mandate a 2-year work program** on developing more specific, detailed guidance, modalities and procedures (a "Rule Book").

At COP16:

- Adoption of the "Rule Book" (a set of COP decisions)
- Facilitative Dialogue on "Where we are/where we need to be"

| Paris Agreement | Post 2020 Global Biodiversity Framework |
|---|---|
| 1. Global goals 2 degrees C/1.5 degrees C, GHG neutrality | 1. Post-2020 Targets, 2030 Mission, 2050 Vision |
| 2. Nationally Determined Contributions | 2. National Biodiversity Strategies and Action Plans (NBSAPs, Art. 6 CBD) |
| 3. Principles for Ambition Progression, Highest Possible Ambition | 3. Guiding principles for Ambition Non-regression, Progression, Highest Ambition |
| 4. Transparency Biennial Progress Reports, independent technical review | 4. Enhanced Transparency Increased frequency and detail, technical expert review |
| 5. <u>Global Stocktake</u> Collective progress, informed by IPCC reports | 5. Global Biodiversity <u>Stocktake (GBS)</u> Collective progress, informed by IPBES reports |
| 6. Iterative processes/Cycles 5 year cycles, synchronized | 6. Synchronized, iterative processes for NBSAPs, Reporting, Review and GBS |

Figure: Comparison between Paris Agreement and Post 2020 Global Biodiversity Framework; indicating (in bold) the elements that could complement the Post 2020 Global Biodiversity Framework