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## Proposals for incorporating imperatives for international cooperation and connectivity into the post-2020 global biodiversity framework

**Biodiversity knows no borders. In an increasingly globalised and interconnected world, the environmental footprint of individuals, companies and countries can extend way beyond national boundaries. Therefore, international cooperation is critical to safeguard large-scale connectivity of species, habitats and the ecological processes on which we all rely.**

### CONTEXT

Biodiversity conservation depends on safeguarding the large-scale **connectivity** of habitats and ecological processes, simultaneously delivering a whole host of other ecosystem services (nature's contributions to people). In particular, migratory species connect peoples, ecosystems and nations and are critical indicators of the state of the environment and global life-support systems. Conservation throughout ecologically-connected systems such as flyways, forests, rivers, coasts and oceans therefore epitomises the sort of **international cooperation** we urgently need, across nations, conventions, policy processes and sectors, to conserve nature as a critical global public good and achieve wider biodiversity, climate and sustainable development goals.

This is echoed in the **Rio Declaration** on Environment and Development's Principle 7<sup>i</sup>, which requires that *"States shall co-operate 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"*.

However, despite the Convention on Biological Diversity (CBD)'s Preamble *"Stressing the importance of, and the need to promote, international, regional and global cooperation among States and intergovernmental organizations and the non-governmental sector for the conservation of biological diversity and the sustainable use of its components"*, the **Aichi Targets of the current 2011-2020 Strategic Plan for Biodiversity lack an imperative for international cooperation**, and **CBD implementation has so far largely focused on national delivery**, via National Biodiversity Strategies and Action Plans (NBSAPs), without explicit encouragement of international cooperation and with national level targets failing to add up – or be able to be added up – to meet global targets (one partial exception is the Global Partnership on Target 11).

This contrasts with several other Multilateral Environmental Agreements. For example, the **UNFCCC's** Paris Agreement 1.5°C target illustrates the power of a global target that can be achieved only through

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coordinated international cooperation and clear, accountable nationally determined contributions. Likewise, the entire basis and strategies of the **Convention on Migratory Species (CMS)**<sup>ii</sup> and **CITES**<sup>iii</sup> are predicated on international concerted and cooperative action, and under the **Sustainable Development Goals**, SDG17 commits to “*Strengthen the means of implementation and revitalize the global partnership for sustainable development*”, while SDG12 is coordinated through the One Planet Network of the *10-Year Framework of Programmes on Sustainable Consumption and Production*.

**Connectivity** is currently mentioned only in **Aichi Target 11** as being necessary for area-based conservation. However, these connectivity corridors<sup>iv</sup> fall outside the current protected and conserved percentage coverage targets of 17% for terrestrial and freshwater areas and 10% for coastal and marine areas included in Aichi Target 11. ‘Wider landscapes and seascapes’ are also mentioned in Target 11, but there is no indication of scale or explicit mention that this should extend beyond national boundaries. That said, connectivity as a concept is or should be implicit within several other Aichi Targets, such as Target 2 (on development strategies and planning processes), Target 5 (to reduce loss, degradation and fragmentation of natural habitats), Target 7 (to sustainably manage areas under agriculture, aquaculture and forestry), Target 10 (to minimise anthropogenic impacts on vulnerable ecosystems), Target 12 (to improve the status of threatened species), Target 13 (to maintain genetic diversity), Target 15 (to restore degraded ecosystems<sup>v</sup>) and Target 17 (to develop and implement NBSAPs). **Delivery of many of the SDGs** (e.g. SDGs 2, 6, 7, 9, 11, 13, 14, 15, 17) also requires biodiversity-related connectivity and international cooperation.

Methodologies for **conservation throughout ecologically-connected systems** such as flyways, river catchments, coasts and large marine ecosystems, and **concerted population management of species that cross national boundaries**, embody the sort of cooperation for connectivity that is urgently needed, within and across nations, treaties, policy processes and sectors, and between national ministries, to lead to transformative change in terms of achieving nature conservation targets, as a critical global public good, to deliver biodiversity, climate, anti-desertification, water and sustainable development goals often beyond national level.

Effective conservation of migratory species is impossible without **international cooperation**, as is conservation of many non-migratory species, for example those that depend on transboundary ecosystems such as river catchments or that are the subject of international trade.

Not all **international cooperation** is about achieving **connectivity**, at least not spatial connectivity related to large landscapes, transboundary areas or site networks, and not all work to achieve connectivity is international, as often it can be achieved at subnational level. Nonetheless, because of the profound synergies between them, they are addressed together in this paper.

## RECOMMENDATIONS FOR THE POST 2020 FRAMEWORK

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There is an urgent need for the post-2020 framework to encompass the following proposals.

### INTERNATIONAL COOPERATION

We propose the post-2020 framework should include components requiring international cooperation:

- An **imperative for international cooperation** (concerted and cooperative action, which should be well-coordinated) in order to deliver the highest global priorities for biodiversity conservation (which is *inter alia* essential for truly delivering ecological connectivity).
- The **explicit inclusion of international cooperation in relevant target(s)**. This could be a new, stand-alone, ‘enabling condition’ target similar to that of SDG17, or integrated into the successors of Aichi Target 2 (on national development policies and planning) and/or Target 17 (on NBSAP development

and implementation), as well as elements of other relevant targets such as Target 3 (on perverse incentives), Target 4 (on sustainable production and consumption) and Target 20 (on resource mobilisation) as well as capacity building and monitoring.

- An **indicator of the success of international cooperation** as a key measure of wider success of the post-2020 framework. This can be provided by the conservation status of migratory species (as defined by CMS<sup>vi</sup>) and at least for some taxa, e.g. birds, could readily be provided by disaggregation from the indicator for a new species-focussed target as proposed in BirdLife's separate information paper on a new species-focussed target for the post-2020 global biodiversity framework<sup>vii</sup>, which also proposes related milestones and baselines.

## CONNECTIVITY

We propose the post-2020 framework should include components requiring connectivity:

- A **definition of connectivity** first needs to be agreed by Parties, which BirdLife proposes should be international, national and subnational in scope, and include both spatial and non-spatial aspects in relation to both area and species.
- The **embedding of connectivity within many of the new targets**, including:
  - (i) spatially explicit site-based and species targets
    - **conserving connected natural habitats**, by gazetting and effectively managing Key Biodiversity Areas and other sites important for biodiversity and ecosystem services in networks of protected and conserved areas, buffered and integrated into wider sustainably managed and/or restored landscapes, at ecologically-relevant scale (e.g. water catchments, coasts and large marine ecosystems), and
    - **safeguarding mobile species** by incorporating ranging and migration patterns into land use planning (including through sensitivity mapping, environmental risk screening and strategic environmental assessment, for example of energy infrastructure and industrial scale agriculture and forestry, and other types of land use planning);
  - (ii) non-spatially explicit species targets
    - **concerted, cooperative management of species**, across sectors, nations, treaties and other processes (including species action plans and adaptive harvest management plans);
  - (iii) **ecosystem services and nature-based solutions** targets such as pollination, seed dispersal and pest regulation provided by migratory species, and more resilient, connected ecosystems providing clean water, food, climate mitigation and adaptation, and recreation;
  - (iv) **governance** targets relating to international cooperation as above.
- The **indicator** proposed above, related to conservation status of migratory species, could also provide a measure of some elements of connectivity delivery, alongside others such as a genetic diversity target, a proxy measure of habitat quality, extent and connectivity, and a measure of ecosystem service delivery.

## DELIVERY OF CONNECTIVITY AND INTERNATIONAL COOPERATION IN THE POST-2020 FRAMEWORK

MEAs and international organisations such as BirdLife have a unique role to play in supporting Parties, in an internationally coordinated and connected way, to develop joint strategies and mechanisms to ensure the successful implementation of the post-2020 biodiversity framework, including as follows:

- Because most of the biodiversity-related Multilateral Environmental Agreements (MEAs) operate through consensus-based decision-making and soft law / peer-pressure in terms of implementation, collaboration and cooperation between countries is even more important to ensure that this structure functions. Hence it could be argued that a key role of MEA Secretariats should be to find ways to facilitate Parties to do this, not least through supporting **exchange of expertise** between Parties on particular practical implementation issues.
- Relevant **commitments of other biodiversity-related conventions and international policy processes** should be included in the post-2020 framework, alongside a clear strategy for their

implementation (by those signatory Parties) at international and national levels, so that we can more adequately account for efforts and outcomes via these other processes.

- Coordination should be improved at the **UN level**, for example by better integrating the post-2020 framework into the **SDGs** and by improving the harmonisation and implementation of the strategies of the MEAs and related conventions and policy processes. This could be facilitated by the UN **Environment Management Group** (EMG) and has already been proposed by the EMG.
- Cross-government and multi-stakeholder **national biodiversity committees** should be encouraged, to implement truly cross-government NBSAPs which are integrated into wider policy and planning.
- **International financial institutions** should consider and plan investments at ecologically-relevant scale and coordinate this with all relevant countries.

The **BirdLife Partnership** seeks to support Parties to fulfil their biodiversity obligations under various international conventions and policy processes, in particular the 8 biodiversity-related conventions<sup>viii</sup>, the Rio Conventions<sup>ix</sup> and the 2030 Agenda on Sustainable Development. We have particular expertise on topics that relate to enhancing (international) cooperation and facilitating landscape-level connectivity, for example through:

- [BirdLife](#)'s unique local to global structure and approach, including national partners in over 100 countries and global and regional offices of the BirdLife International Secretariat.
- The [BirdLife Global Flyways Programme](#), closely aligned with the UN Convention on Migratory Species and its daughter agreements, focusing on:
  - enforcing national laws on illegal killing of wildlife, sharing experience between countries;
  - minimising the impact of energy infrastructure on biodiversity, working closely with the energy sector;
  - sustainably managing coasts, especially through networks of protected areas;
  - ensuring sustainable land use, especially preventing landscape destruction in the southern continents that has already happened in northern ones, through synergies with sustainable development, anti-desertification and climate change agendas;
  - bringing range states together to deliver concerted conservation action for threatened species and to ensure adaptive harvest management of legal quarry species, etc.
- The [Key Biodiversity Areas \(KBAs\)](#) Partnership to map, monitor and conserve the most important places for life on earth.

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

<sup>ii</sup> CMS Preamble: CONVINCED that conservation and effective management of migratory species of wild animals require the concerted action of all States within the national jurisdictional boundaries of which such species spend any part of their life cycle;

CMS Article II.1: The Parties acknowledge the importance of migratory species being conserved and of Range States agreeing to take action to this end whenever possible and appropriate, paying special attention to migratory species the conservation status of which is unfavourable, and taking individually or in co-operation appropriate and necessary steps to conserve such species and their habitat.

CMS Article IV.1: Appendix II shall list migratory species which have an unfavourable conservation status and which require international agreements for their conservation and management, as well as those which have a conservation status which would significantly benefit from the international co-operation that could be achieved by an international agreement.

<sup>iii</sup> CITES Preamble: *Recognizing*, in addition, that international co-operation is essential for the protection of certain species of wild fauna and flora against over-exploitation through international trade;

<sup>iv</sup> <https://www.iucn.org/theme/protected-areas/wcpa/what-we-do/connectivity-conservation>

<sup>v</sup> This links to the Bonn Challenge (<http://www.bonnchallenge.org/content/challenge>), which in turn supports the UNFCCC [REDD+ goal](#), and the UNCCD/Rio+20 [land degradation neutrality goal](#).

<sup>vi</sup> 'Migratory species' means the entire population or any geographically separate part of the population of any species or lower taxon of wild animals, a significant proportion of whose members cyclically and predictably cross one or more national jurisdictional boundaries

<sup>vii</sup> Available on the CBD post-2020 website: <https://www.cbd.int/api/v2013/documents/A5293A77-EE99-22B4-E179-216A0355B5BB/attachments/BirdLife-2.pdf>

<sup>viii</sup> <https://www.cbd.int/brc/>

<sup>ix</sup> <https://www.cbd.int/rio/>