

Policy cycle requirements for National Implementation Plans addressing the biodiversity–climate nexus

Draft 13 May 2025

UNEP

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1. Introduction

1.1 Objective

This paper outlines the key obligations across the policy cycle—development, implementation, reporting, and review— of national implementation plans (NIPs).¹ This paper covers National Biodiversity Strategies and Action Plans (NBSAPs) under the Convention on Biological Diversity (CBD), as well as Nationally Determined Contributions (NDCs) and National Adaptation Plans (NAPs) under the Paris Agreement of the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change (UNFCCC).

The aim is to identify opportunities to align policy cycles in order to improve the integrated development, implementation, reporting, and review of NIPs. This paper forms section 2 of the draft report “Advancing the biodiversity-climate nexus through MEAs - National implementation plans as catalysts for integrated action” prepared for UNEP.

1.2 Overview of the policy cycle for NIPs

Drawing from existing literature, the report will outline four policy cycles, summarizing their role in enhancing synergies across the climate and biodiversity agendas at the global level. The phases include NIP development, implementation, reporting, and review (see Figure 1). All the phases feed into each other, including the final review phase that is intended to inform NIP updates, making it a full policy cycle. The following definitions apply to the terms:

- **National implementation plans:** Plans and strategies developed and adopted by governments aimed at enhancing national implementation of a given multilateral environmental agreement (MEA).
- **Implementation:** Execution of policies and actions outlined in national plans to achieve MEA objectives, commitments and targets.
- **Reporting:** Standardized information disclosed by individual states about the national implementation process.
- **Review:** Evaluation of collective performance on a regional or global scale coordinated under the overall responsibility of the COP or the secretariat.

¹ The term National implementation plan (NIP) is used in this study in a general sense to refer to plans and strategies adopted by governments to support the implementation of the CBD, UNFCCC and Paris Agreement. It should not be confused with NIPs developed specifically under the Stockholm Convention on Persistent Organic Pollutants, which serve a different purpose

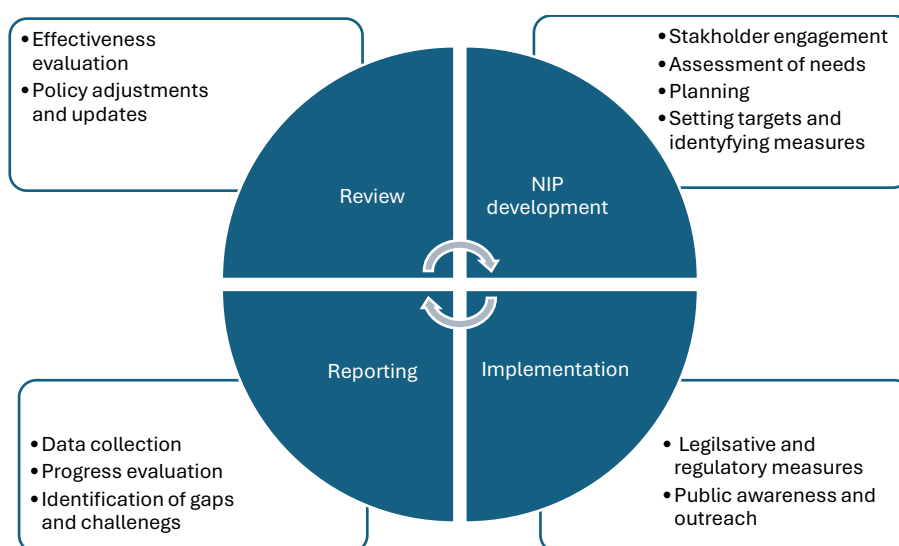


Figure 1. Policy cycle in MEAs with a NIP mechanism.

This policy cycle is a recognized framework in global environmental governance (Jann & Wegrich, 2017; Urho, 2018). It also aligns with CBD's enhanced planning, monitoring, reporting and review mechanism, where NBSAPs are expected to be a key component (Decision 15/6, Annex 1, para 1). In addition, the UNFCCC and the Paris Agreement both follow a similar cycle through the development of NDCs and NAPs, regular reporting, and a structured review process known as the Global Stocktake. Table 1 provides a summary of key dates and activities for NIP development, reporting and review in the CBD, UNFCCC and Paris Agreement.

Table 1. Summary of key dates for NIP development, implementation, reporting and review.

Agreement	NIP development	Implementation	Reporting	Review
CBD	NBSAPs to be submitted By Oct 2024, aligned with KM-GBF, with a deadline extended to Dec 2025	KM-GBF targets to be implemented by 2030 across various areas (e.g. Targets 1–3, 6–7, 13, 16, 18–19)	7th National Report due 28 Feb 2026 8th National Report due 30 June 2029	- Global analysis of NBSAPs at COP-16 and subsequent COPs - Global review at COP-17 (2026) and COP-19 (2030).
UNFCCC	NAPs expected by end of 2025, in line with the Global Goal on Adaptation (GGA)	No target dates provided, but implementation is guided by Art. 2: stabilization of GHG concentrations to avoid dangerous interference	9th NCs expected by 31 Dec 2026 for Annex I Parties (required every 4 years), and from non-Annex I Parties subject to available support and national circumstances	No formal review mechanism, but the Global Stocktake includes adaptation as a key component, and NAPs may contribute as inputs
Paris Agreement	3rd NDCs due by 10 Feb 2025 4th NDCs expected in 2030 (5-year cycle)	- Implementation guided by Art. 2 that sets a target to limit global temperature increase to well below 2°C, pursuing efforts for 1.5°C - The Glasgow Climate Pact (2021) recognized the urgency to reduce global CO₂ emissions by 45% by 2030 and to net zero around midcentury	1st BTRs are due by 31 December 2024 from all Parties, followed by submission every two years	1st Global Stocktake concluded in 2023 2nd Global Stocktake in 2028 followed by subsequent 5-year cycles

Figure 2 provides a schematic timeline for NIP development, implementation, reporting and review. The following observations regarding alignment can be made:

- **NIP development** offers significant opportunities to align biodiversity and climate measures from the outset. NBSAPs and NAPs are both expected by the end of 2025, while the 3rd NDCs are due in early 2025, creating a clear window for coordination. As the timing of a second post-2020 NIP cycle remains undecided, aligning it with the submission of the 4th NDCs could yield further co-benefits.
- **Implementation** provides a significant opportunity for aligning activities for achieving climate-relevant KM-GBF targets set for 2030 and emissions reduction targets aiming for 45% by 2030 in accordance with the Glasgow Climate Pact.²
- **Reporting** schedules for the CBD and UNFCCC/PA have been set for the coming years. While these schedules diverge to some degree, more coherent reporting should be pursued. Harmonizing data collection and indicator frameworks can help to reduce the administrative burden on countries, leading to more integrated and comparable progress assessments.
- **The review processes** of the CBD and UNFCCC/Paris Agreement are not aligned in timing, with the 2nd Global Stocktake occurring between the 1st and 2nd global reviews of the CBD. However, opportunities for integration remain—for example, the 1st global review of the KM-GBF, particularly Target 8 on climate change, can inform the 2nd Global Stocktake.

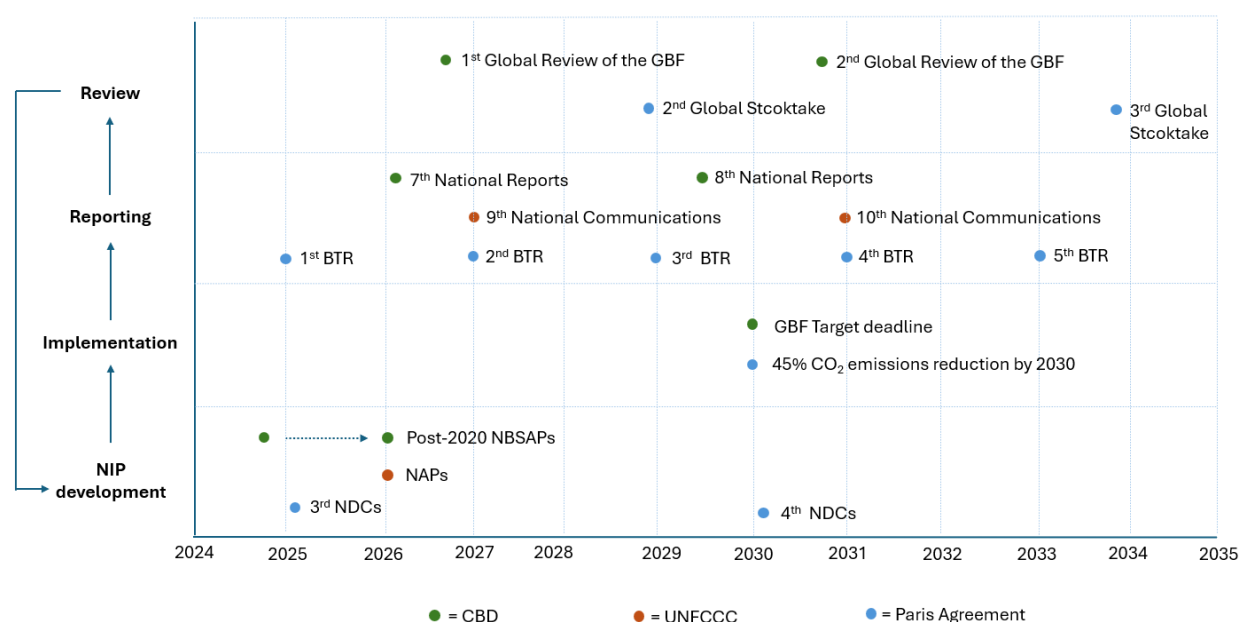


Figure 2. Timeline for NIP development, implementation, reporting and review.

2. NIP development

Countries are obliged to prepare NIPs, encouraging them to set goals and define measures to implement MEAs. Table 2 provides a summary of the NIPs that are intended to meet international commitments to stem biodiversity loss and climate change.

² Decision 1/CP.26 (para 22)

Table 2. Overview of NIPs for addressing biodiversity and climate concerns.

Name	Obligation	Number of NIPs ³	Applicability	Bindingness	Website of the registry
National Biodiversity Strategies and Action Plans (NBSAPs)	CBD Art. 6a: Each Contracting Party shall, in accordance with its particular conditions and capabilities develop national strategies, plans or programmes for the conservation and sustainable use of biological diversity or adapt for this purpose existing strategies, plans or programmes which shall reflect, inter alia, the measures set out in this Convention relevant to the Contracting Party concerned	52 post-COP15 NBSAPs (26.5% of all Parties)	Applies to all Parties.	Defined as a legally binding commitment.	https://www.cbd.int/nbsap https://ort.cbd.int/nbsaps
Nationally determined Contributions (NDCs)	Paris Agreement Art. 4.2: Each Party shall prepare, communicate and maintain successive nationally determined contributions that it intends to achieve. Parties shall pursue domestic mitigation measures, with the aim of achieving the objectives of such contributions.	19 NDCs 3.0 (9.6% of all Parties)	Applies to all Parties.	Defined as a legally binding commitment.	https://unfccc.int/NDCREG See also WRI's NDC tracker: https://www.climatewatchdata.org/ndc-tracker
National Adaptation Plans (NAPs)	UNFCCC Decision 1/CP.16 (para 15): Decides to hereby establish a process to enable least developed country Parties to formulate and implement national adaptation plans, building upon their experience in preparing and implementing national adaptation programmes of action, as a means of identifying medium- and long-term adaptation needs and developing and implementing strategies and programmes to address those needs. Paris Agreement Art. 9d: Each Party shall, as appropriate, engage in adaptation planning processes and the implementation of actions, including the development or enhancement of relevant plans, policies and/or contributions, which may include the process to formulate and implement national adaptation plans.	63 NAPs	Decision 1/COP.16 applies only to least developed countries. However, Art 7.9 of the Paris Agreement broadens the NAP process to all Parties.	There is no legally-binding commitment to submit a NAPs, but all Parties must engage in adaptation planning in some form.	https://napcentral.org/submitted-naps

³ As of 9 April 2025

2.1 CBD and KM-GBF

2.1.1 NBSAP development

Art. 6a mandates Parties to develop plans or programmes for the conservation and sustainable use of biological diversity or adapt for this purpose existing strategies, plans or programmes to reflect the measures set out in the convention. This should be done in accordance with its particular conditions and capabilities to develop national strategies.

The convention has not prescribed a fixed interval for updating NBSAPs. However, under the KM-GBF, Parties are required to revise or update their NBSAPs to align with the KM-GBF's goals and targets and submit them by COP-16 organized in 2024⁴. As of COP-16, only 44 Parties had submitted updated NBSAPs,⁵ prompting the COP to urge remaining Parties to do so as soon as possible.⁶ An extension has been granted, with the new deadline set for December 2025.

NBSAPs function as the main vehicle for implementation of the KM-GBF Targets.⁷ They should be seen as an umbrella process under which all national targets and actions relevant to the KM-GBF can be planned, implemented, monitored, reviewed and enhanced.⁸

COP-15 adopted guidance for revising and updating NBSAPs.⁹ The guidance provides flexibility to the revision or updating of NBSAPs to align with the KM-GBF, including the corresponding national targets, by allowing Parties to self-determine them according to specific national conditions and capabilities.¹⁰ The guidelines define the following common elements for NBSAP development¹¹:

- Align national targets with global targets to the extent possible.
- Accompany targets with actions, policies and programmes, as well as financing and capacity support.
- Include headline indicators as well as component, complementary and other national indicators.

Additionally, the following actions are recommended¹²:

- Assess opportunities to align existing NBSAPs with the new framework.
- involve a national coordination mechanism, including key government ministries and other authorities.
- Enhance synergies among NBSAPs and the planning and implementation mechanisms of other MEAs.

⁴ Decision 15/6 (paras 1a and 6)

⁵ Decision 16/1 (Annex I)

⁶ Decision 16/1 (para 3)

⁷ Decision 15/6 (para 1a)

⁸ Decision 15/6 (Annex 1, para 2)

⁹ Decision 15/6 (para 5)

¹⁰ Decision 15/6 (Annex 1, para 4)

¹¹ Decision 15/6 (Annex 1, paras 6 and 8)

¹² Decision 15/6 (Annex 1, paras 7-9)

NBSAPs should promote synergies and integrated planning across other MEAs.¹³ This is especially important as the KM-GBF targets explicitly address climate change. Two KM-GBF targets are particularly aligned with climate change objectives (UNEP, 2024; FEBA, 2023):

- **Targets 8:** Minimize the impact of climate change and ocean acidification on biodiversity and increase its resilience through mitigation, adaptation, and disaster risk reduction actions, including through nature-based solutions and/or ecosystem-based approaches, while minimizing negative and fostering positive impacts of climate action on biodiversity.
- **Target 11:** Restore, maintain and enhance nature's contributions to people, including ecosystem functions and services, such as the regulation of air, water and climate, soil health, pollination and reduction of disease risk, as well as protection from natural hazards and disasters, through nature-based solutions and/or ecosystem-based approaches for the benefit of all people and nature

Additional KM-GBF targets relevant to climate change include (UNEP, 2024):

- Targets 1, 2, and 3 on management and conservation of natural ecosystems,
- Targets 7, 10 and 16 on sustainable food production and consumption,
- Targets 18-19 on incentives and financial resources,
- Target 21 on communication, awareness-raising, education, monitoring, research and knowledge management, and
- Targets 22-23 on IPLCs and gender equality.

The CBD highlights the critical role of cross-fertilization of NIPs, including NBSAPs and NDCs. Parties are encouraged to:

- Integrate nature-based solutions and ecosystem-based approaches into their revised NBSAPs when working towards KM-GBF Targets 8 and 11, as well as related targets, to align biodiversity planning with climate mitigation and adaptation¹⁴
- Integrate ecosystem-based approaches into NDCs and NAPs, including involving CBD NFPs in the planning and implementation processes.¹⁵

2.2 UNFCCC and Paris Agreement

2.2.1 NDC development

Under the Paris Agreement, Parties are required to prepare, communicate, and maintain successive NDCs that they intend to achieve (Art. 4.2). Each Party must update or submit a new NDC every five years (Art 4.9), guided by the principle of progression and reflecting enhanced ambition over time (4.3).

Unlike the CBD, the Paris Agreement establishes a fixed cycle for submission, with updates expected to align with the outcomes of the Global Stocktake, which informs efforts to close the ambition gap (see

¹³ Decision 15/6 (Annex 1, para 2)

¹⁴ Decision 16/22 (para 3d)

¹⁵ Decisions 14/5 (para 5b) and XIII/4 (para 2)

section 2.4). This cycle is designed to drive continuous improvement over time, informed by the outcomes of the Global Stocktake (Art. 14). Updated NDCs, due in early 2025, are expected to incorporate findings from the first Global Stocktake concluded at COP-28 (2023).

The Information to facilitate Clarity, Transparency and Understanding (ICTU) guidance outlines how Parties should structure their NDCs.¹⁶ While not mandatory for first submissions, the guidance must be followed for second and subsequent NDCs submitted under the Paris Agreement.¹⁷ The ICTU guidance does not currently require Parties to specify how mitigation or adaptation actions might affect biodiversity. However, section 4 on planning processes of the ICTU guidance provides the following requests of implicit relevance to biodiversity:

- Information to be submitted on specific projects, measures and activities that contribute to mitigation co-benefits, including adaptation plans, particularly in sectors such as energy, water resources, coastal resources, agriculture and forestry - all of which are closely linked to biodiversity outcomes.¹⁸
- Information on how the Party's NDC preparation was informed by the outcomes of the global stocktake¹⁹, which in its first iteration (concluded at COP-28) emphasized nature-based solutions and biodiversity as critical to both adaptation and mitigation (see section 2.4).
- Information on engagement with local communities and indigenous peoples – key actors in the CBD and KM-GBF.²⁰

Furthermore, recent Paris Agreement decisions increasingly recognize nature-based solutions and ecosystem approaches. These include:

- The Glasgow Climate Pact (2021) explicitly recognizes the importance of protecting, conserving and restoring ecosystems, including forests and other terrestrial and marine ecosystems, to deliver crucial services and acting as carbon sinks, as well as supporting sustainable livelihoods, including for indigenous peoples and local communities.²¹
- The Sharm el-Sheikh Implementation Plan (2022) acknowledges the role of nature-based solutions and ecosystem-based approaches in climate resilience, highlighting the role of forests, oceans, water-related ecosystems (such as river basins, aquifers and lakes) and other terrestrial and marine ecosystems.²²

These developments signal a growing convergence between the CBD and the Paris Agreement and provide further opportunities for aligning NDCs with KM-GBF Targets. Parties are therefore encouraged to reflect biodiversity co-benefits and ecosystem-based approaches in their upcoming NDC updates.

2.2.2 NAP development

¹⁶ Decision 4/CMA.1 (Annex I)

¹⁷ Decision 4/CMA.1 (para 7)

¹⁸ Decision 4/CMA.1 (Annex, para 4.d.ii)

¹⁹ Decision 4/CMA.1 (Annex, para 4.c)

²⁰ Decision 4/CMA.1 (Annex, para 4.a.i)

²¹ Decision 1/CP.26 (paras 21 and 53)

²² Decision 1/CP.27 (paras 11, 18, 24 and 48)

In 2010, the UNFCCC established the Cancun Adaptation Framework, initiating the process for developing countries – particularly least developed countries (LDCs) - to formulate and implement NAPs.²³ The framework emphasizes that adaptation should be country-driven, gender-sensitive, participatory, and fully transparent, taking into account vulnerable groups, communities and ecosystems.²⁴ It further specifies that adaptation action includes building the resilience of socio-economic and ecological systems, including through sustainable management of natural resources.²⁵

In 2011, COP-17 adopted Decision 5/CP.17, which further elaborated on the NAP process, outlining its core objectives: reducing vulnerability to climate change by building adaptive capacity and resilience, and integrating adaptation into national development planning.²⁶ The COP also adopted initial guidelines for NAP formulation,²⁷ encouraging countries to consider other relevant multilateral frameworks in adaptation planning.²⁸ Additionally, it calls for the assessment of climate change impacts and the prioritization of actions based on vulnerability and risk - factors which may include impacts on ecosystems.²⁹

NAPs differ from NDCs in two ways. First, they are voluntary but strongly encouraged under the Cancun Adaptation Framework. Second, the NAP process is not structured in cycles like NDCs. However, NAPs have acknowledged the role of ecosystems and natural resources in adaptation from the outset and have since become a central element of the UNFCCC's adaptation architecture.

3. NIP implementation

3.1 CBD and KM-GBF

3.1.1 NBSAP implementation

To date, 185 Parties (94%) have submitted at least one NBSAP, and 178 Parties (91%) have submitted a post-COP10 NBSAP. A total of 52 Parties have submitted post-COP15 NBSAPs, with the submission deadline extended to the end of 2025.

According to the CBD Clearing-House Mechanism (CHM), 117 Parties have established at least one national target to support KM-GBF target 8 on climate change, with 77 (66%) reporting high alignment with the

²³ Decision 1/CP.27 (paras 15-16)

²⁴ Decision 1/CP.16 (para 12)

²⁵ Decision 1/CP.26 (para 14d)

²⁶ Decision 5/CP.17 (para I.1)

²⁷ Decision 5/CP.17 (para II.6)

²⁸ Decision 5/CP.17 (Annex, Para 4e)

²⁹ Decision 5/CP.17 (Annex, paras 2b and 3a)

global target (CBD, 2025a).³⁰ However, a formal assessment of updated NBSAPs aligned with the KM-GBF has not yet been made. Nonetheless, at least 50% of NBSAPs explicitly emphasize the importance of nature-based solutions in addressing the vulnerability of species and ecosystems to climate change and other anthropogenic pressures (UNEP, 2021).

The CBD encourages Parties to make use of relevant tools and guidance to support the implementation of the KM-GBF³¹. Specifically, Parties are encouraged to use the tools and information available under the CBD, including the *Voluntary Guidelines for the Design and Effective Implementation of Ecosystem-based Approaches to Climate Change Adaptation and Disaster Risk Reduction*.³² The Executive Secretary has been requested to update these guidelines - expanding their scope beyond adaptation to include mitigation - and to develop specific guidelines and tools for conservation and restoration in a changing climate.³³

The development of new tools and guidance will build on key concepts to promote coherent implementation of the climate and biodiversity goals, summarized in box 1. Particularly, nature-based solutions provide a practical entry-point for integrated action. However, it will be important to move beyond an ecosystem-centric perspective and also consider the potential ecological impacts of climate mitigation strategies, including decarbonization technologies. The CMS has led the way in developing decisions and guidance to protect migratory species from the adverse impacts of renewable energy development, including wind, solar, ocean energy, geo-energy, and hydropower. These efforts could be expanded and adapted to the CBD context to broaden the scope of climate action.

Box 1. Key concepts for promoting integrated action to halt biodiversity loss and climate change

- **Ecosystem-based approach**, defined in the CBD COP Decision V/6 (2000) as “a strategy for the integrated management of land, water and living resources that promotes conservation and sustainable use in an equitable way” (para A1). CBD COP Decision VII/15 further notes that “its application could facilitate the formulation of climate change mitigation and adaptation projects that also contribute to biodiversity conservation and sustainable use” (para 8).
- **Ecosystem-based adaptation** defined by CBD’s 2nd Ad Hoc Technical Expert Group on Biodiversity and Climate Change as “the use of biodiversity and ecosystem services to help people adapt to the adverse effects of climate change”. This definition was further elaborated by the CBD COP Decision X/3 (2010) as including “sustainable management, conservation and restoration of ecosystems, as part of an overall adaptation strategy that takes into account the multiple social, economic and cultural co-benefits for local communities” (para 8j). Since then, it has been acknowledged by UNEA through Resolution 1/8 (2014) and by the Paris Agreement in the Outcome of the First Global Stocktake (Decision 1/CMA.5, 2023) as a key approach for climate adaptation.
- **Nature-based solutions** defined in UNEA Resolution 5/5 (2022) as “actions aimed at protecting, conserving, restoring, and sustainably managing natural or modified terrestrial, freshwater, coastal, and marine ecosystems, which address social, economic and environmental challenges effectively and adaptively, while simultaneously providing human well-being, ecosystem services, resilience and biodiversity benefits” (para 1). The concept was originally championed by IUCN, which played a pioneering role in its development and formalized its definition through a motion adopted at the IUCN World Conservation Congress in 2016 (WCC-2016-Res-069). The concept has been integrated into the CBD through Targets 8 and 11 of the KM-GBF (Decision 15/4, 2022) and acknowledged under the UNFCCC in the Sharm-El Sheikh Implementation Plan (Decision 1/CP.27, 2022) as part of efforts to address biodiversity and climate change in a coherent manner.

³⁰ Note: This number is significantly lower and will need to be double-checked as the website is showing targets for many countries, but when you open the country profile it shows that targets do not exist.

³¹ Decision 16/12 (para 3)

³² Decision 14/5 (Annex)

³³ Decision 16/22 (paras 17-18)

Moreover, the following guidelines have been developed by the CBD:

- Guidance on enhancing positive and minimizing impacts on biodiversity of climate change adaptation activities (CBD, 2016).
- Voluntary Guidelines for the Design and Effective Implementation of Ecosystem-based Approaches to Climate Change Adaptation and Disaster Risk Reduction and supplementary information (CBD, 2019).

The CBD calls for using guidance developed under other biodiversity-related MEAs.³⁴ Examples include:

- Guidance for addressing the implications for wetlands of policies, plans and activities in the energy sector (Ramsar Convention, 2012).
- Renewable Energy Technologies and Migratory Species: Guidelines for Sustainable Deployment (CMS, 2014).

3.2 UNFCCC and Paris Agreement

3.2.1 NDC implementation

To date, 18 countries had submitted their third NDCs (NDC 3.0), while 164 Parties (83%) had submitted first NDCs and 161 Parties (81%) had submitted second NDCs (WRI, 2025). As of 2022, 102 nations – representing 84% of updated NDCs – have committed to some degree of restoring or protecting ecosystems, or implementing nature-friendly agriculture such as agroforestry, up from 66% in the first round of NDCs (2015-2020) (FEBA, 2024).

Common guidelines and information requirements for preparing and submitting NDCs under the Paris Agreement were adopted at COP 24 as part of the Katowice Climate Package.³⁵ These “Katowice guidelines” aim to enhance the clarity, transparency, and understanding (CTU) of NDCs, thereby facilitating the assessment of collective progress toward global climate objectives. The guidelines outline broad requirements - such as providing quantifiable information on reference points, time frames and periods of implementation, and scope and coverage - but do not mandate the inclusion of specific thematic content, such as biodiversity, adaptation, or sectoral targets.

3.2.2 NAP implementation

To date, 63 countries – primarily developing countries - have developed a NAP.³⁶ More than half of countries - including over 90% of LDCs - have added elements of nature-based solutions into the adaptation components of their NDCs (UNEP, 2021). However, most of these commitments remain broad,

³⁴ CDD COP Decision XVI/22

³⁵ Decision 4/CMA.1

³⁶ As NAPs are intended only for developing countries, their submission rate is not directly comparable to NDCs and NBSAPs.

and fewer than one-third include measurable targets. Those that do primarily focus on restoring mangroves and floodplains to mitigate flooding, drought, and sea level rise (UNEP, 2021).

In 2010, the UNFCCC established the Adaptation Committee (AC) to provide technical support and guidance to Parties to facilitate implementation of adaptation activities.³⁷ The Committee has developed guidance relevant to ecosystems that place importance on ecosystem-based adaptation. These include:

- The Technical Paper entitled *Opportunities and options for enhancing adaptation planning in relation to vulnerable ecosystems, communities and groups*, which explores methods to integrate ecosystem-based adaptation into adaptation planning highlights the need to include ecosystem-based adaptation in NDCs, NAPs, adaptation communications, and national development strategies (UNFCCC, 2018).
- The *Draft supplementary guidance for voluntary use by Parties in communicating information in accordance with the possible elements of and adaptation communication*, which includes considerations for ecosystems and their services in the context of adaptation communications (UNFCCC, 2022)

Other relevant guidance include:

- *Guidelines for Integrating Ecosystem-based Adaptation into National Adaptation Plans: Supplement to the UNFCCC NAP technical Guidelines* (UNEP, 2021), which provides practical steps for mainstreaming Ecosystem-based adaptation into NAP processes, including assessing ecosystem vulnerabilities, identifying measures and integrating them into sectoral planning and budgeting.

4. Reporting on NIPs

Table 3 provides a summary of reporting relevant to the biodiversity-climate nexus. This is followed by more detailed description of the requirements and possibilities to enhance integrated reporting.

Table 1. Summary of reporting relevant to the biodiversity-climate nexus.

	CBD National Reports	UNFCCC/PA National Communications	PA Biennial Transparency reports
Reporting	• Parties are required to report on climate-biodiversity interlinkages where relevant, including through Target 8 (climate resilience) and Target 11 (Nature contribution to people) of the KM-GBF, which refer to nature-based solutions and/or ecosystem-based approaches	• Annex I Parties have mandatory reporting on expected impacts of climate change (such as integrated coastal zone management, water resources, and agriculture) and voluntary reporting on environmental vulnerabilities or risks related to climate change impacts. • Non-Annex I Parties have voluntary reporting on vulnerability and adaptation in key climate-sensitive sectors	• Voluntary reporting under Section IV of the MPGs may cover environmental vulnerabilities, adaptation priorities (e.g. integrated plans for coastal management, water and agriculture), resilience-building efforts, nature-based solutions to adaptation.

³⁷ Decision 1/CP.16 (para 20a)

Indicators	• Reporting on GBF targets 8 and 11 is linked to the KM Monitoring Framework that includes several mandatory headline and binary indicators, along with optional component and complementary indicators	• The reporting guidelines for both Annex I and non-Annex I Parties do not mention the use of indicators.	• The MPGs do not prescribe specific indicators. However, Parties are required to identify indicators they use to track implementation and achievement of NDCs.
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4.1 CBD and KM-GBF

4.1.1 National Reports

Under Art. 26, Parties are obligated to report on measures taken for the implementation of the provisions of the Convention and their effectiveness in achieving its objectives. **COP Decision 15/6** reinforces this obligation by underscoring the critical role of national reports in evaluating the implementation and effectiveness of NBSAPs.³⁸

Reporting under the CBD has generally been strong, with the 5th National Report in 2014 reaching 192 submissions (97%). Participation declined in the 6th round (2018) to 103 reports (52%). Earlier rounds also had high submission rates: 179 (90%) in 2009, 153 (77%) in 2005, 137 (69%) in 2003, and 151 (76%) in 1998. (CBD, 2025b)

The reporting interval is established by the COP, which is typically around every four years. The current reporting timeline sets the 7th National Report due by 28 Feb 2026, and 8th National Report by 30 June 2029.³⁹

The new reporting template, initially adopted in COP-15⁴⁰ and subsequently revised at COP-16,⁴¹ requires Parties to assess and report on progress towards their national targets using indicators set out in the Monitoring Framework adopted at COP-15.⁴² The reporting template and Monitoring Framework are therefore closely interlinked: Parties are required to report on headline indicators, while the use of component and complementary indicators remains optional.⁴³

The KM-GBF Monitoring Framework serves as the backbone for reporting on the KM-GBF targets. Table 3 presents the full set of indicators for Target 8 on climate change, drawn from the Monitoring Framework.⁴⁴ At COP-16, Parties endorsed an update to the Monitoring Framework that supplemented the Headline Target 8 with nine additional binary indicators.⁴⁵ Moreover, in preparing their national reports,

³⁸ Decision 15/6 (para 12)

³⁹ Decision 15/6 (para 11)

⁴⁰ Decision 15/6 (para 10)

⁴¹ Decision 16/32 (Annex I)

⁴² Decision 15/5

⁴³ Decision 15/6 (paras 1b and 13)

⁴⁴ Decision 15/5

⁴⁵ Decision 16/31

governments are encouraged to include information about how the implementation of their national targets contributes to progress under related agreements.⁴⁶

Table 3. KM-GBF indicators for Target 8 on climate change (Decisions 15/5 and 16/31).

Headline or binary indicator	Optional disaggregations	Component indicator	Complementary indicator
<u>Headline indicator:</u> - Number of countries with policies to minimize the impact of climate change and ocean acidification on biodiversity and to minimize negative and foster positive impacts of climate action on biodiversity <u>Binary indicators:</u> - Does your country's national biodiversity strategy and action plan include actions to prevent or minimize the impacts of the following? - Do your country's climate change policies address the impacts of climate change on biodiversity? - Do your country's other policies address the impacts of climate change on biodiversity? - Do your country's other policies address the impacts of ocean acidification on biodiversity? - Are the impacts of climate change on biodiversity monitored and reported on? - Are the impact of ocean acidification on biodiversity monitored and reported on? - Do your country's policies or action plans on the impact of climate change and ocean acidification contain the following types of actions designed to increase biodiversity resilience or reduce impacts? - Are measures included in your country's policies or actions plans to minimize the negative impacts of climate actions on biodiversity? - Are measures included in your country's policies or actions plans to foster positive impacts of climate actions on biodiversity?	Disaggregation: Total climate regulation services provided by ecosystems and by ecosystem type	- Total climate regulation services provided by ecosystems by ecosystem type - Number of countries that adopt and implement national disaster risk reduction strategies in line with the Sendai Framework for Disaster Risk Reduction 2015–2030 that include biodiversity - National greenhouse inventories from land use and land use change - Bioclimatic Ecosystem Resilience Index (BERI)	- Above-ground biomass stock in forest (tons/ha) - National greenhouse gas inventories from land use, land-use change and forestry - Proportion of local governments that adopt and implement local disaster risk reduction strategies in line with national disaster risk reduction strategies - Index of coastal eutrophication - Average marine acidity (pH) measured at agreed

Coordinating reporting with the UNFCCC and the Paris Agreement will be essential to better capture linkages and reducing administrative workload. Promisingly, Parties are encouraged to align and coordinate their reporting efforts with other relevant MEAs, including through the voluntary use of modular data reporting tools such as DaRT (see box 2).⁴⁷

Box 2. Data Reporting Tool for MEAs (DaRT)⁴⁸

The DaRT tool is hosted on the United Nations Information Portal on MEAs (InforMEA) and developed and rolled-out by UNEP in collaboration with the secretariats of the CBD and other biodiversity-related conventions, with financial support from the EU, Switzerland (FOEN), the Global Environment Fund (GEF), and Sweden (SIDA). The concept of the tool was initiated in 2016 in response to UNEA Resolution 2/17 on enhancing the work of UNEP in facilitating cooperation, collaboration, and synergies among biodiversity-related conventions. DaRT provides a single secure and private workspace where NFPs, reporting officers, and biodiversity experts, collect, organize, share and reuse biodiversity knowledge for national reporting. DaRT helps to harmonize and standardize data and reports for all conventions, thus it could develop into a tool for integrated action on climate change and biodiversity. (CBD, 2024)

⁴⁶ Decision 15/6 (para 12)

⁴⁷ Decision 15/6 (para 12)

⁴⁸ <https://dart.informea.org/>

4.2 UNFCCC and Paris Agreement

4.2.1 National Communications

Under Art. 12 of the UNFCCC, Parties are obliged to submit information related to implementation in form of a National Communication (NC). The NC must include national greenhouse gas inventories, general descriptions of steps taken or envisaged to implement the Convention and any other relevant information. While some countries use their NCs to expand on or support the implementation of their NDCs or NAPs, there is no specific decision that explicitly mandates a direct linkage between these instruments.

Parties are required to prepare NCs every four years, although non-Annex I Parties have greater flexibility, contingent upon availability of financial and technical support.⁴⁹ The 9th NC is due 31 December 2026. The NCs have high reporting levels from Annex I Parties with all 43 countries reporting in the last three rounds. 154 Non-Annex I Parties have submitted at least one NC, but only 10 Parties have submitted their 5th and 2 Parties did their 6th NC (UNFCCC, 2025).

Reporting guidelines have been developed separately for Annex I⁵⁰ and non-Annex I Parties⁵¹ and do not explicitly mandate the inclusion of biodiversity-related information. However, the guidelines provide the following opportunities for integrated reporting:

- For Annex I Parties, section VII (vulnerability assessment, climate change impacts and adaptation measures) includes mandatory reporting on expected impacts of climate change, noting that Parties may refer to integrated plans for coastal zone management, water resources and agriculture.⁵² It further encourages reporting on environmental vulnerabilities or risks related to current and expected climate change impacts.⁵³
- For non-Annex I Parties, section IV (general description of steps taken to implement the convention) of the guidelines encourages reporting on vulnerability and adaptation in key climate-sensitive sectors.⁵⁴

Despite these openings, biodiversity-related action is neither systematically tracked nor well-documented in NCs. Opportunities for

4.2.2 Biennial Transparency Reports

⁴⁹ Decision 9/CP.16

⁵⁰ Decision 6/CP.25 (Annex I)

⁵¹ Decision 17/CP.8

⁵² Decision 6/CP.25 (Annex I, para 46)

⁵³ Decision 6/CP.25 (Annex I, para 47b)

⁵⁴ Decision 17/CP.8 (Annex, para 34)

The Paris Agreement established an Enhanced Transparency Framework (ETF), a universal framework for all Parties to report on progress and support (Art 13). The ETF requires all Parties to submit Biennial Transparency Reports (BTRs) every two years. The BTR replaces the previous biennial reports (BRs) for developed countries and biennial update reports (BURs) for developing countries. The first BTRs under the Paris Agreement are due by 31 December 2024, with subsequent submissions every two years. 96 Parties (48% of all) have submitted their first BTRs (WRI, 2025)

The modalities, procedures and guidelines (MPGs) for the transparency framework outline information requirements for BTRs. This includes reporting on progress towards implementing and achieving NDCs.⁵⁵

Unlike under the CBD, Parties are not required to include biodiversity-related information in their BTRs. However, voluntary reporting on interlinkages is possible under Section IV on climate change impacts and adaptation.⁵⁶ The MPGs highlight several entry points for joint reporting:

- Observed and potential impacts of climate change, including environmental vulnerabilities⁵⁷
- Adaptation priorities (e.g. integrated plans for coastal management, water and agriculture)⁵⁸
- Efforts to build resilience⁵⁹
- Nature-based solutions to climate change adaptation⁶⁰

Moreover, while the BTR reporting template does not prescribe specific indicators, Parties are required to identify the indicators they use to track NDC implementation and achievement.⁶¹ This provides an opportunity to integrate biodiversity-related indicators, such as those linked to ecosystem resilience, land use, or nature-based solutions.

The COP has requested the Subsidiary Body for Scientific and Technological Advice (SBSTA) to undertake the first review and update of the MPGs no later than 2028.⁶² The upcoming review presents a valuable opportunity to strengthen the integration of the biodiversity-climate nexus in BTR submissions. In particular, the review could build on existing references in the Paris Agreement decisions 1/CMA.5 (2023) and 3/CP.27 (2022), which acknowledge the role of nature-based solutions and ecosystem-based approaches in addressing climate change. To advance this integration, the MPG review could consider the following enhancements:

- 1) Introduce biodiversity-related guidance to section IV, encouraging Parties to report on ecosystem vulnerabilities to climate change, biodiversity-related co-benefits and nature-based solutions (also beyond adaptation)
- 2) Recommend optional biodiversity-related indicators for in section III to support progress tracking toward NDC implementation
- 3) Encourage cross-referencing with other MEAs where objectives align, such as ecosystem-based adaptation reported under the CBD and Ramsar Convention.

⁵⁵ Decision 18/CMA.1 (Annex, para 10b)

⁵⁶ Decision 18/CMA.1 (Annex, para 10bc)

⁵⁷ Decision 18/CMA.1 (Annex, para 107b)

⁵⁸ Decision 18/CMA.1 (Annex, para 109b)

⁵⁹ Decision 18/CMA.1 (Annex, para 109b)

⁶⁰ Decision 18/CMA.1 (Annex, para 109g)

⁶¹ Decision 18/CMA.1 (Annex, para 65)

⁶² Decision 18/CMA (para 2)

5. Review

5.1 CBD and KM-GBF

5.1.1 Global Review

At COP-15, Parties outlined two modalities for collective review:

- **A Global Analysis of NBSAPs** related to the KM-GBF will be provided at COP-16 and at each subsequent COP meeting.⁶³
- **A Global Review of Collective Progress** based on national reports and other sources will be provided at COP-17 and COP-19.⁶⁴ It will also draw from a **Global Report on Collective Progress** drawing from peer-reviewed scientific, technical and technological information, and traditional knowledge.⁶⁵

The global review is Party-led process guided by the Subsidiary Body on Implementation.⁶⁶ COP-16 established an Ad Hoc Scientific and Technical Advisory Group to support the preparation of the Global Report on Collective Progress.⁶⁷ The biodiversity-climate nexus will be assessed as an integral component of the GBF, reflected in particular in targets 8 and 11, as well as other interlinked targets.

5.2 UNFCCC and Paris Agreement

5.2.1 In-Depth Review Reports

The UNFCCC Secretariat coordinates in-depth reviews of NCs submitted by Annex I Parties. These reviews are carried out by international expert teams and result in In-Depth Review Reports (IDRs) assessing each country's implementation of its commitments under the Convention. The latest cycle of NCs (NC8) was due by 31 December 2022, with corresponding IDRs published throughout 2024.

⁶³ Decision 15/6 (paras 1c and 15)

⁶⁴ Decision 15/6 (para 1d)

⁶⁵ Decision 16/32 (paras 13-15)

⁶⁶ Decision 16/32 (para 19)

⁶⁷ Decision 16/32

Despite the potential to include biodiversity-related information - particularly in sections on vulnerability and adaptation - there is no standardized approach or explicit requirement to report on biodiversity. As a result, biodiversity-related actions are neither systematically tracked nor consistently documented in IDRs.

The Paris Agreement established the Enhanced Transparency Framework (ETF) to ensure clarity, transparency, and accountability in the implementation of Parties' climate commitments (Art. 13). Under the ETF, the BTRs undergo Technical Expert Review (TER) to assess consistency and completeness of the information submitted against the MPGs.⁶⁸ TER also evaluates a Party's implementation and achievement of its NDCs.⁶⁹ However, since reporting on biodiversity is currently optional, the TER does not systematically assess biodiversity-related actions or interlinkages with climate goals.

5.2.2 Global Stocktake

The Paris Agreement also introduces the **Global Stocktake** as a collective assessment mechanism to evaluate progress of all Parties in implementing NDCs and achieving the Agreement's long-term goals on mitigation, adaptation, and means of implementation and support (Art. 14). The first Global Stocktake was finalized in 2023, and the next one is scheduled for 2028.

Although the biodiversity-climate nexus is not yet reflected in NDC reporting guidelines or the modalities, procedures and guidelines (MPGs) for reporting, the Global Stocktake offers a key opportunity to assess and enhance synergies between climate and biodiversity goals, reinforcing the importance of more integrated reporting approaches in future guidance. The first Global Stocktake outcome already highlights strong interlinkages, including⁷⁰:

- Conserving, protecting, and restoring ecosystems—such as forests and marine areas—as key to achieving the Paris Agreement goals (para 33).
- Scaling up ocean-based mitigation and restoring ocean and coastal ecosystems (para 35).
- Implementing integrated solutions like sustainable land use, agriculture, and nature-based solutions (para 55).
- Using ecosystem-based approaches, including ocean and mountain adaptation, to reduce climate risks and provide co-benefits (para 56).
- Reducing impacts on ecosystems and accelerating ecosystem-based adaptation and nature-based solutions across all ecosystems (para 63d).

These findings underscore the importance of more integrated reporting frameworks in future guidance under both the Paris Agreement and CBD processes.

⁶⁸ Decision 18/CMA.1

⁶⁹ Decision 18/CMA.1 (para 150).

⁷⁰ Decision 1/CMA.5

Conclusions and recommendations

National implementation plans (NIPs) form the backbone of country-level responses to the biodiversity and climate crises. Yet despite shared goals and growing recognition of the biodiversity–climate nexus, their planning, reporting, and review processes often remain fragmented. This review of policy cycle obligations reveals several important findings:

1. Aligning NIP development

The submission timelines for NBSAPs (by end 2025), NAPs (expected by end 2025), and 3rd NDCs (due in early 2025) provide a critical window to align national goals, actions, and co-benefits for biodiversity and climate. Realizing this opportunity requires coordinated institutional mechanisms, inclusive stakeholder processes, and shared science-policy inputs.

2. Advancing integrated implementation

Nature-based solutions and ecosystem-based approaches offer common ground across MEAs, notably through CBF Targets 8 and 11, as well as UNFCCC and Paris Agreement decisions from Glasgow and Sharm el-Sheikh. Parties should cross-reference NBSAPs in their NDCs/NAPs and vice versa. However, implementation tools and guidelines must continue evolving to capture the full range of biodiversity–climate interlinkages, noting that while ecosystem-based adaptation has gained traction, mitigation linkages remain underdeveloped, including mitigating decarbonization impacts. CMS has pioneered guidance to protect migratory species from renewable energy impacts, which could be adapted to the CBD context to broaden the scope of climate action. Another useful lesson comes from the Ramsar Convention, which has adopted decisions recognizing the role of wetlands in the climate context—an approach that could be adapted to other ecosystems as well. Joint technical guidance across MEAs on biodiversity safeguards for climate action is a critical next step (e.g., renewable energy impacts, ecosystem restoration standards).

3. Strengthening reporting synergies

Reporting frameworks are not yet aligned, but progress is possible. While the CBD has detailed indicators to capture climate linkages under the KM-GBF Monitoring Framework, the Paris Agreement reporting guidelines (e.g. BTRs and NCs) allow only optional biodiversity-related reporting. The first review of the Modalities, Procedures, and Guidelines (MPGs) by 2028 offers a chance to advocate for greater integration, including advocating for biodiversity-related indicators to be optionally included in BTRs. In the meantime, Parties can already take advantage of tools such as DaRT that has been endorsed by the CBD COP, offering promising pathways for harmonizing MEA reporting efforts.

4. Leveraging review cycles

Although the CBD and Paris Agreement review timelines differ, they can still inform one another. The 2nd Global Stocktake (2028) falls between the 1st and 2nd global reviews of the CBD. Outputs from the 2026 CBD global review, especially on climate-relevant targets, should feed into the Global Stocktake of the Paris Agreement. Joint dialogues or technical exchanges between MEA secretariats would help promote mutual learning and alignment.