GER submission for the NbS intergovernmental consultation following up on the UNEA Resolution 5/5 (UNEP/EA.5/Res.5) on Nature-based Solutions in reply to the co-chairs' invitation to provide input to the overall aim of the intergovernmental consultations and the three specific tasks for the consultations.

1) Overall aim of the intergovernmental consultations

We welcome that the intergovernmental consultations are now taking place as outlined in the UNEA Resolution 5/5. We want to express our gratitude to Nigeria and Costa Rica for co-chairing as well as to UNEP for organizing the consultations.

The agreement in UNEA Resolution 5/5 with its definition, and the multilateral agreement and common understanding of NbS need to be the basis for the consultations. The aim of the consultations should be in line with the mandate given in the resolution "to further support the implementation of nature-based solutions, as defined in the present resolution".

2) Three specific tasks for the consultations specified in the resolution (See OP5 (a)-(c) of the resolution).

OP 5 (a) Compile examples of best practice in nature-based solutions, based on the best available science

In addition to the examples compiled by the EU submission, the recently adopted German Federal **Action Plan on Nature-based Solutions for Climate and Biodiversity** can serve as an example for a national strategy on nature-based solutions that covers different sectors and ecosystems.

The Action Plan was formally adopted by the Federal Government on 29 March 2023. The Action Plan will protect, strengthen and restore ecosystems. It links climate action with nature conservation and ensures that degraded ecosystems regain their health, their resilience and their biodiversity through a variety of measures.

The plan comprises 69 measures in a total of ten fields of action, for example, peatlands, forest ecosystems, seas and coasts, settlement and transport areas or research and capacity building. Until 2026, four billion euros are earmarked for implementing the plan.

The Action Plan is the result of a comprehensive participatory process. The Federal Environment Ministry received around 120 opinions and more than 1,000 online comments. The content of every proposed improvement was reviewed. The plan met with a great deal of approval and support. It helped forge a broad alliance for implementation including landowners, nature conservationists and other local stakeholders.

Where possible and feasible, implementation will begin immediately. The first steps need to be launched quickly in coordination with other federal ministries. Some examples include:

- establishing a Centre of Competence for Nature-based Solutions for Climate and Biodiversity. This will provide interested parties like landowners with information about suitable funding opportunities in their region.
- the funding guideline on nature-based solutions in rural municipalities. Municipal projects need to deliberately use land to promote climate action and biodiversity, make rural areas more attractive and mitigate the impacts of climate change.

- the package of measures on urban nature. This package is intended, for example, to de-seal surfaces, support near-natural redesign of existing green spaces and encourage planting of urban trees. Urban green makes cities liveable, also under climate crisis conditions. Green spaces keep the air clean, promote cool air in summer via evaporation and store water like a sponge during rain.

Major climate effects often require long-term changes. This is true, for instance, in the case of peatlands and forests. They are important as habitats for animals and plants, for a functioning water balance and as carbon sinks. 53 million tonnes of greenhouse gas are released every year in Germany solely because drained peat soils cannot provide the ecosystem services they normally would.

Rewetting peatlands is a long-term project that will take decades, just like the conversion of coniferous forest plantations to near-natural mixed forests. The first step must be creating implementation structures in these areas. To some extent, existing structures can be used, but some must be built from scratch. With the Action Plan, we are ensuring that funding goes where it can best be used so that nature-based solutions can unfold their long-term benefits. A robust and resilient natural world is our insurance policy. With the Action Plan, we are going a long way towards achieving this.

We are open to share further information on the Action Plan during the consultations. Furthermore, the OECD Environmental Performance Review (EPR) 2023 for Germany features a dedicated chapter on the Action Plan. The focus of the EPR on Nature-based Solutions for climate and biodiversity was deliberately chosen to allow for an exchange of experiences and an independent input from OECD experts and peer-reviewing states (UK, France), which will be beneficial for the implementation of the Action Plan.

Internationally, Germany supports various projects that incorporate NbS, e.g. through the International Climate Initiative (IKI). The IKI webpage provides a broad array of information on past and ongoing projects and initiatives, in which biodiversity and climate action are addressed in an integrated manner. This includes the longstanding support for ecosystem-based adaptation (EbA), e.g. via the Friends of EbA (FEBA) network that has developed a qualification criteria framework for EbA.

OP 5 (b) Assess existing and discuss potential new proposals, criteria, standards and guidelines to address divergences, with a view to achieving a common understanding among Member States for the implementation of nature-based solutions, including to support Member States in designing, implementing and evaluating nature-based solutions, building on existing work, initiatives and platforms, as appropriate, and without prejudice to existing efforts and initiatives of and new proposals from individual Member States;

The EU submission provides a broad overview on various existing standards and guidelines and their role for NbS implementation. Furthermore, the UNEP publication "Nature-based Solutions: Opportunities and Challenges for Scaling Up", supported through the German Federal Ministry for the Environment and Consumer Protection, provides a detailed view on the current tasks to be addressed in order to scale up NbS implementation, including a common understanding on NbS and the application of standards, guidelines and safeguards.

The further development of existing instead of the creation of new criteria, standards and guidelines on NbS can be an important factor to create security for actors implementing NbS and to enable a swift upscaling of the implementation of NbS. The IUCN Global Standard is an important basis for the exchange on criteria, standards and guidelines. The Global Standard was developed to inform NbS

implementation and to help decision making on the ground. It represents a thoroughly developed standard in which the views of various stakeholders have been integrated.

Further safeguards, principles, criteria and standards for specific NbS approaches, like ecosystem-based adaptation (EbA) or ecosystem-based disaster risk reduction (Eco-DRR), have to be taken into consideration, as they can inform more specific interventions. This includes the "Voluntary guidelines for the design and effective implementation of ecosystem-based approaches to climate change adaptation and disaster risk reduction and supplementary information" (CBD Technical Series No. 93), which has been adopted at CBD COP 14 by 196 parties. In addition, the "Friends of Ecosystem-based Adaptation (FEBA) Framework for Qualification Criteria and Quality Standards – Making EbA effective" based on the CBD Definition of EbA needs to be taken into consideration.

OP 5 (c) Identify options for supporting sustainable investment in nature-based solutions and share information on bilateral and multilateral sources of finance to enable developing countries to develop and deploy nature-based solutions

Germany is financing nature-based solutions on the national as well as international level. Nationally, a total of four billion euros is budgeted up to 2026 for the Action Plan on Nature-based Solutions for Climate and Biodiversity.

Internationally, Chancellor Scholz pledged in September 2022 that Germany will increase its contribution to international biodiversity finance to 1.5 billion euros per year by 2025. The funds are part of an increase in the budget for international climate action to at least 6 billion euros per year by 2025 at the latest. This signifies doubling the contribution to biodiversity protection compared to the yearly average from 2017-2021 and taking decisive steps forward in financing nature-based solutions.

Through the International Climate Initiative (IKI), Germany supports various projects on NbS, including EbA.