



Strasbourg, 8th March 2022

T-PVS(2022)04

CONVENTION ON THE CONSERVATION OF EUROPEAN WILDLIFE
AND NATURAL HABITATS

Standing Committee

42nd meeting
Strasbourg, 29 November - 2 December 2022

WORKING GROUP
ON DEVELOPING A VISION AND STRATEGIC PLAN
FOR THE BERN CONVENTION FOR THE PERIOD TO 2030

4th meeting (*online*)
Tuesday 22nd February 2022, 10:30am – 1:30pm (CEST)

Meeting Report

Document prepared by
the Secretariat of the Bern Convention

1. Opening of the meeting and welcome of participants by the Chair, Mr Simon Mackown

The Chair opened the meeting, welcomed all participants, and thanked those who had contributed to the first consultation of the year on the Strategic Plan. The agenda was adopted with no changes.

2. Update on outcomes of the 41st Standing Committee

The Chair recalled the decision of the 41st Standing Committee which had adopted the Vision for the Bern Convention for the period to 2030, with several amendments. These changes had been carried over into a 6th draft of the Strategic Plan, involving only some amendments to the wording of the four goals. The Committee had agreed with the recommendation of the Working Group to continue working on the Strategic Plan, and in particular its targets and indicators, during 2022, thus the mandate of the Working Group had been extended for a further year.

The Chair also presented the roadmap document which detailed the timeline of the process throughout 2022. Notably, the strategic targets were to be discussed during the present meeting and agreed by mid-March ahead of the 1st Bureau meeting in April, then in June indicators would be discussed. By the end of the Summer and ahead of the 2nd Bureau meeting, it was hoped that a final draft would be ready to submit to the Standing Committee.

Following some questions, it was reassured that the Plan would be consulted alongside the Global Biodiversity Framework (GBF) of the CBD, in particular as regards a harmonisation of strategy and terminology. It was also mentioned that, while there were separate meetings planned for the discussions on targets and indicators, the two aspects were closely connected so negotiations should remain flexible. Following Working Group discussions, the Consultant would be charged with providing a draft of the indicators. These should remain concise and manageable. Finally, the debate on the emphasis of the Plan as mainly a monitoring tool or mainly a guidance tool was mentioned, and it was agreed this would become clearer following further discussions.

3. Presentation of the results of the consultation on the draft targets for the Strategic Plan

The Group went through each target and the feedback received during the consultation (see compilation of comments in Appendix II). Some of the main points raised are summarised below:

- In **Target 1.1**, the reference to “national targets” was raised, and some members feared this could lead to additional burdens at national level. The Consultant recalled that this Target was not aimed at pushing States to adopt new internationally-determined national targets, but rather to allow national discretion in setting targets that were appropriate to each country’s context and ambitions. The wording may be adapted slightly to highlight this.
- In the same Target, a debate on the terminology of “Restoration and rehabilitation” ensued- it was agreed that GBF terminology would most likely be used.
- Finally, on this Target, it was agreed that the proposal to include “Maintaining existing ecosystems” as a core point should be followed up.
- On **Target 1.2**, it was recalled that the Group of Experts on Protected Areas and Ecological Networks was tasked with developing “sufficiency” targets for the post-2020 Work Plan for the Emerald Network, and that information on this should emerge soon.
- It was also recalled that EU Member States contribute automatically to the Emerald Network through their Natura 2000 obligations.
- On **Target 1.3**, there was a debate on the terminology to be used; “Favourable conservation status”, as used by the EU (and for migratory species by the Convention on Migratory Species), or “satisfactory

conservation status” as used in Emerald Network texts. It was generally agreed that these terminology concerns could be resolved by including a glossary in the Strategic Plan.

- A proposal to split the Target into two was widely supported.
- On **Target 2.1**, there was a debate on whether to use the current terminology “Threatened and vulnerable species” or “species listed in the Appendices to the Convention and in Resolution Nr. 6 (1998)”.
- On **Target 2.2**, it was widely agreed that anthropogenic pressures cannot be completely avoided, therefore a wording to make the Target more realistic should be developed.
- On **Target 3.1**, it was agreed that further reflection may be needed on how measurable this Target can be, which would become clearer during deliberations on the indicators.
- On **Target 3.2**, it was suggested that the “positive” contribution of nature should be emphasised, to avoid a potential misunderstanding with regard to the major hazards aspect.
- On **Target 3.3**, there was a debate on the usage of the terms “nature-based solutions” or “ecosystem-based approaches”. There were varying opinions, but again, it was agreed that the glossary would be used to clarify definitions.
- On **Targets 4.1 and 4.3**, it was suggested that they might not belong within the targets section of the Strategic Plan, and could be removed to elsewhere in the document, e.g. under Section J (Capacity and resources).
- On **Target 4.2**, the meaning of “necessary resources” was questioned. It was agreed to change this to “sufficient resources” (to match the wording in the goal), but that the meaning of this would still require further reflection.
- Finally, on **Target 4.4**, there was a proposal to move this Target elsewhere, as it was different in character from the others included under Goal 4. It was also recalled that this target should be considered in parallel with the ongoing case-file reflection process.

4. Next steps

The Consultant was satisfied at having enough content to draft revised wording of the targets where necessary, and in some cases providing annotations for further consideration and/or different options for the Group to choose from. The Chair recalled again that although a draft with these revisions would be shared with the Bureau in April, the targets would remain fluid until the end of the process, as discussion on indicators would be necessary before some of them could be finalised.

Following this, the Consultant would be tasked with elaborating a first draft of possible indicators to complement each target. This would be opened for a written consultation ahead of discussion at the next Working Group meeting in June (date to be decided). During that meeting, the rest of the text of the Strategic Plan might also be considered.

5. Any other business

There was no other business.

Appendix I – List of Participants

Contracting Parties	Name and Function
Czech Republic	<p>Ms Eliška ROLFOVÁ Unit of International Conventions Department of Species Protection and Implementation of International Commitments, Ministry of the Environment</p> <p>Mr Jan BROJÁČ Ms Lenka VANOVA Ms Sylva SCHACHERLOVÁ</p>
Estonia	<p>Ms Merike LINNAMÄGI Senior Officer Nature Conservation Department Ministry of the Environment</p>
France	<p>M. Charles-Henri DE BARSAC Chargé de mission "accords internationaux et européens faune sauvage" sous-direction de la protection et de la restauration des écosystèmes terrestres Ministère de la Transition Ecologique et Solidaire</p>
Norway	<p>Mr Andreas SCHEI Senior Advisor Norwegian Environment Agency</p>
Sweden	<p>Ms Linnea SUNDBLAD Senior technical advisor, biodiversity Swedish Environmental Protection Agency</p>
Switzerland	<p>Mr Norbert BÄRLOCHER Head of Rio Conventions (climate, biodiversity) International Affairs, Federal Office for the Environment</p>
United Kingdom	<p>Mr Simon MACKOWN (Chair) Head of Species Recovery and Reintroductions Policy National Biodiversity and Ivory Team Wildlife Division, Defra</p>
Observers	Name and Function
CEE Bankwatch Network	<p>Mr Andrey RALEV Biodiversity Campaigner Czech Republic</p>
FACE European Federation for Hunting and Conservation	<p>Ms Sabrina DIETZ Wildlife Policy Officer Belgium</p>
Planta Europa	<p>Ms Erika PENZESNE KONYA Vice-Chair France</p>

<p>Pro Natura - Friends of the Earth</p>	<p>Mr Friedrich WULF Head, International Biodiversity Policy Switzerland</p>
<p>Independent consultant</p>	<p>Name and Function</p>
	<p>Mr David E. PRITCHARD United Kingdom</p>
<p>Secretariat, Council of Europe</p>	<p>Name and Function</p>
	<p>Mr Gianluca SILVESTRINI Head of the Biodiversity Division</p> <p>Ms Ursula STICKER Secretary of the Bern Convention</p> <p>Mr Eoghan KELLY Bern Convention Project Assistant</p>

Appendix II – Comments received on the suggested targets

Suggested target	Comments
Adopted Goal 1: <i>“The area, connectivity, integrity and resilience of natural and semi-natural ecosystems is increased, including through protected areas and other effective area-based conservation measures covering at least 30% of the land and of the sea areas”.</i>	
1.1: Restoration and rehabilitation of natural ecosystems is increased, leading to an overall increase in area, connectivity, integrity and resilience of the habitat types specified in national targets to be set by each country.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • “Restoration and rehabilitation” is tautology. Wouldn't this be better framed as restoration and creation? [UK]. • Suggest "restoration and rewilding". [Planta Europa]. • Maintaining existing ecosystems needs to be mentioned as a first and priority element. This target only talks about restoration, not about retaining valuable ecosystems. This should be added as a first point, e.g. <i>“Natural and semi-natural habitats have been retained, and their restoration and rehabilitation is increased, leading to an overall increase in area, connectivity, integrity and resilience of the habitat types specified in national targets to be set by each country”.</i> Many habitats as peatlands and old-growth forest have taken decades to millennia to develop and their restoration is not easy to achieve and takes a long time. Therefore, preserving existing valuable areas must have priority before restoring habitats - which must be additional, as requested by the EHF. Add footnote with text <i>“https://eeb.org/library/restoring-europes-nature-ngo-position-paper/”</i> . [Pro Natura. Text of the proposed wording is as amended by CEE Bankwatch. Pro Natura’s original is no longer visible]. [Slovenia agrees 1st sentence of this comment].
1.2: Coverage of natural ecosystems by the Emerald Network meets the sufficiency targets set for 2030 in the post-2020 Work Plan for the Network.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Is this realistic/achievable? How far away from this are we now? [UK]. • Wasn't this planned already for 2020? [Pro Natura]. • What is the situation with countries which are not part of Emerald Network? We must refer to them. [Planta Europa].
1.3: All sites included in the Emerald Network are subject to formal protection or other effective conservation measures, and their species and habitats are being maintained at or progressing towards a favourable conservation status.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • This is a tricky one to decide upon as the wording may well need to be tweaked depending on negotiations/decisions in the legal framework for EN. [UK]. • Sites are not assessed for FCS, but the resource as a whole. Raises questions about links with the reporting work. [UK]. • "Favourable conservation status" is an EU-centric term, as evidenced in footnote 5, that should be replaced in this context by "satisfactory conservation status", as this is the term that is used in Resolution No. 8 (2012) on the Emerald network, Para 2.1 "The national designation of the adopted Emerald sites will ensure [...] achieving a satisfactory conservation status of the species and natural habitats listed in...". Footnote 5 should be deleted or rewritten to limit its scope to guidance on interpreting “satisfactory conservation status” in the EU setting. [Norway].

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The wording juxtaposes protection and OECMs as if those approaches are equivalent. This may not serve the purpose of the Emerald Network well. In terms of EU approaches, it also seems to deviate clearly from the framework under development there, re. discussions in the Habitats Committee, especially 22.9.21 on “Protected Area Targets” – Draft note on PA v4. In Natura 2000, there seems to be clear terms that areas should have real protection. In EN, protection should have primacy. [Norway]. • The scope of the assessment of the conservation status of the relevant species and habitats is their entire biogeographic regions. As this target currently stands, it looks like EN is responsible for species and habitats reaching satisfactory/favourable conservation status - it is not. The purpose of the Emerald Network is to contribute to improving this conservation status. To avoid confusion on this, as we have had before, these two aspects could be separated into two targets 1.3 and 1.4. Proposed edit: 1.3: “All sites included in the Emerald Network are subject to formal protection, alternatively other effective conservation measures”. 1.4: “The species and habitats covered by the Emerald Network are being maintained at or progressing towards a satisfactory conservation status”. [Norway]
<p>Adopted Goal 2: “The conservation status of threatened species is improved, abundance of native species has increased, and human-induced extinctions have been halted”.</p>	
<p>2.1: Threatened and vulnerable species are at or are recovering towards a favourable conservation status.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • "Favourable conservation status" as a term, has clear links towards the EU Nature Directives, as evidenced in footnote 5 and 6, which weakens its relevance for non-EU countries. The link to CMS definitions does not in itself strengthen it in the Bern Convention setting, if such links are not already established by earlier decisions, furthermore, the question will arise on the applicability of CMS definitions for non-migratory species. In order to have more generally relevant language, this would seem like a place where we could use the opportunity to seek interlinkages and harmonization with the CBD Global Biodiversity Framework, as principle (i) above guides us to do. Specifically, wording from the GBF 2050 Goal A ("The integrity of all ecosystems is enhanced (...) supporting healthy and resilient populations of all species") could be effectively used here. Proposed edit: 2.1: “Threatened and vulnerable species occur in or are recovering towards healthy and resilient populations”. [Norway]. • Suggest: "The species listed in the Appendices to the Convention and in Resolution Nr. 6 (1998) are at or are recovering towards a favourable conservation status". Rationale: these are the species identified and agreed by the Bern Convention. [Pro Natura].

<p>2.2: Anthropogenic pressures impacting on wild species of fauna and flora are reduced to levels that are not detrimental to the conservation of those species, through targeted measures enacted in legislation, policy and/or management.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Add "where possible". Some impact from anthropogenic pressures such as climate change are now inevitable and unavoidable. [UK]. • "Anthropogenic disturbance" may be better. [Anon]. • We prefer "pressures" - it's more comprehensive. [Pro Natura].
<p>Adopted Goal 3: <i>"The contributions of wild flora and fauna and their natural habitats to a safe, clean, healthy and sustainable environment are valued, maintained and enhanced"</i>.</p>	
<p>3.1: A thriving natural environment benefits people's livelihoods, food and water security, community resilience, well-being and quality of life.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Would that be measured through the state of the environment or the quality of the benefits? [Pro Natura].
<p>3.2: Conservation of nature contributes to measures relating to human rights, democracy, landscape, cultural heritage, health and major hazards.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • How would you assess success against this? [UK]. • "Forecasting" major hazards. [Planta Europa].
<p>3.3: Nature-based solutions and ecosystem-based approaches contribute widely to the mitigation of the causes of climate change and the adaptation to its effects.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Does this need to be a separate target or can it be wrapped up in target 3.1? [UK]. • We prefer "ecosystem based approaches". [Pro Natura]. • We suggest: <i>"Ecosystems are maintained and restored so that they contribute to the mitigation of climate change and the adaptation to its effects"</i>. Rationale: clearer wording, discussion about concepts avoided. Important to mitigate Climate change, i.e. make it less severe, rather than its causes. [Pro Natura]. [CEE Bankwatch opposes this proposal].
<p>Adopted Goal 4: <i>"Sufficient resources are available and are used efficiently to achieve all goals and targets in this Plan"</i>.</p>	
<p>4.1: The goals and targets in the Strategic Plan for the Bern Convention are achieved through a multi-governance, multi-stakeholder and cross-sectoral approach, in productive partnership with civil society, the scientific community, the private sector and other stakeholders, and in synergy with other relevant Multilateral Environmental Agreements and related international processes.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Covers every possible delivery mechanism. What's the purpose? Could it be more targeted? [UK]. • Agree [with UK] this is hardly measurable. Maybe the operative part is "The goals and targets are achieved"? [Pro Natura].

<p>4.2: The necessary resources and capacity, including scientific and technical cooperation, are available to achieve all the goals and targets in the Strategic Plan for the Bern Convention.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Define "necessary". [UK]. • [Target is] laudable. However, in reality given the need to balance multiple demands on national budgets (security, health, education etc) it may not be possible to deploy all the resources needed to deliver all the targets in full. Question is how we balance ambition with pragmatism. This will apply to a number of the targets. [UK]. • We support this - at least the means to allow the work of the Bern Convention are in a very low range and should not put other needs in question. [Pro Natura]. • It can be authentic if all the system parts are visible: in an organogram or in link collection. [Planta Europa].
<p>4.3: Bern Convention mechanisms including Action Plans, Strategies, Codes of Conduct, Groups of Experts, the Emerald Network, Case Files, On the Spot Appraisals and the European Diploma are widely known and supported, and are used effectively to enhance the implementation of the Convention's Strategic Plan.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • By whom? Bern is unlikely to ever get significant traction with the public more widely. Is this more about recognition by governments, policy/decision makers etc? [UK]. • Agree with UK, but is that what we want? Shouldn't it be "applied" rather than known? We suggest to replace "known" by "applied" – [the mechanisms] are there for being used for the sake of protecting nature, not for the sake of being well-known. [Pro Natura].
<p>4.4: Specific recommendations arising from individual Case Files are followed up and acted upon; and cases are resolved and closed within a reasonable timeframe.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • What is 'reasonable'? [UK]. • Suggest: "<i>Specific recommendations arising from individual Case Files are followed up and acted upon; and cases are resolved and closed within a reasonable timeframe, through corresponding action by the contracting parties</i>". Rationale: we agree that cases should be closed within a reasonable timeframe, however, this needs to happen because the contracting party has implemented the recommendations fully and not because the same discussions go on and on at every SC meeting, increasing the workload of the secretariat and the duration of the meeting. [Pro Natura].