Strasbourg, 17th April 2024 **T-PVS(2024)2**

CONVENTION ON THE CONSERVATION OF EUROPEAN WILDLIFE
AND NATURAL HABITATS

WORKING GROUP ON OVERSEEING IMPLEMENTATION OF THE STRATEGIC PLAN FOR THE BERN CONVENTION FOR THE PERIOD TO 2030

1st meeting
10th April 2024
Online meeting, 10:00 – 12:00 CET

- Meeting Report –

1. Opening of the meeting and adoption of the agenda

[Vision]
[Strategic Plan]
[List of members of the WG]

Mr Mikaël Poutiers, Secretary of the Bern Convention, welcomed members to the newly formed Working Group on Overseeing Implementation of the Strategic Plan for the Bern Convention for the period to 2030. He recalled that the 40th Standing Committee in 2020 had decided to develop a Vision and Strategic Plan for the Bern Convention for the 2021-2030 decade - a first for the Convention. The work had taken place over the following years through a dedicated Working Group leading to the adoption of the Vision at the 41st Standing Committee in 2021 and the Strategic Plan at the 43rd meeting of the Standing Committee in 2023. At the latter meeting, the Committee had also mandated the establishment of a new Working Group to oversee the implementation of the Strategic Plan to 2030, including further advancement of certain indicators, improving synergies both between the Plan and other activities carried out within the framework of the Bern Convention and between fellow organisations/processes, and mid/end reviews. The aim of today's meeting would be to decide how to launch these tasks during 2024.

Following a Tour de Table, the agenda was adopted with no amendments.

2. Election of the Chair

The Secretariat announced that only one candidature for the post of Chair of the Working Group had been received, that of Mr Jan Plesnik, from the Czech Republic. With no further candidates, the Working Group congratulated Mr Plesnik on taking on the role as Chair. It was also noted that a vice-Chair could also be nominated.

3. Follow-up of implementation of the Strategic Plan – Workplan for 2024:

[Draft Workplan - T-PVS/Inf(2024)4]

The Secretariat presented to the members the draft Workplan for 2024, which had already been shared with them in February. The processes during the first months of the year were recalled, and the draft timeline with associated tasks for 2024 was outlined. It was highlighted that Objectives 1-5 from the Terms of Reference of the Working Group featured as work could begin on them immediately, whereas the other objectives were for a later implementation - this was agreeable to the Group. The Chair noted that the Group would come back to possible revisions to the Workplan under Point 4 of the Agenda, after more detailed discussions on each Objective and its tasks had taken place.

a. further advancing technical work on the Monitoring Framework and indicators for the Strategic Plan;

[Advancing work on indicators for the Strategic Plan - T-PVS/Inf(2024)10]

Mr. Dave E Pritchard, independent consultant for the Working Group, introduced the document, explaining that it was an updated version of detailed suggestions for operating the indicators that had been considered by the previous Working Group on the Strategic Plan in 2022. He drew attention to five specific questions that invited input from the present Working Group, in particular on the relative state of operational readiness of each of the 16 indicators and on the concrete next action steps required.

The general consensus of the Working Group was that members would need some time to look through this document in detail and respond to the 5 questions mentioned above. Mr Pritchard proposed a process for a post-meeting written consultation that would include provision of a simple response template. A timeframe of roughly three weeks was suggested for receiving responses.

It was also noted that it was good to have complementarity with the GBF indicators, but that these should not necessarily be further customised for Bern Convention related reporting.

b. considering linkages between the Strategic Plan and other instruments of the Bern Convention for implementation, including action plans;

The Chair underlined the importance of mainstreaming the Strategic Plan across all activities of the Bern Convention, and likewise integrating activities of other Working Groups, Groups of Experts, etc. into the work of the Plan. On that note, the Secretariat listed the thematic meetings scheduled for 2024, and informed that it intended to include a point on the agenda of each meeting dedicated to the Strategic Plan and how each Group could relate its activities towards achievement of the Plan. The point was also made that this could be an easier task for certain groups, e.g. the Group of Experts on Protected Areas and Ecological Networks meeting in Vaduz the following week and the Working Group on Reporting also meeting in April had strong and clear linkages to specific targets, whereas for some other groups, the link was less direct to the targets, and so members would need to be creative and demonstrate ownership in identifying activities for implementation of the Plan.

The technical and scientific groups of experts should, to the extent possible, support Contracting Parties in collecting relevant data and information to measure progress and report against the targets of the Strategic Plan, which would optimise the work and reduce burden on Contracting Parties (e.g. by identifying existing monitoring tools).

The Group of Specialists on the European Diploma for Protected Areas had expressed particular interest in the Strategic Plan, and thought would be given to the role of the Diploma process in contributing to perspectives on site management effectiveness (for Target 1.3) and to general awareness of the Plan (see agenda item 3e below).

c. ensuring ongoing complementarity of the Strategic Plan with other relevant international instruments and strategies;

The Chair recalled to the members that the CBD will discuss indicators for the Kunming-Montreal Global Biodiversity Framework during the 26th Meeting of the Subsidiary Body on Scientific, Technical and Technological Advice (SBSTTA) in Nairobi on 13-18 May 2024 to be adopted at the 16th Meeting of the Conference of the Parties to the CBD in Cali, Colombia, 21 October – 1 November 2024. He also highlighted the Rome Strategic Plan on IKB.

Mr. Pritchard recalled the references in the monitoring section of the Plan and in the indicators document to relevant existing monitoring and reporting processes in the EU that are expected to make a contribution to assessment of progress with some of the Strategic Plan targets. He also described the process for development of a 5th Strategic Plan for the Ramsar Convention (and the expected adoption of this by Ramsar's COP15 in 2025), where additional synergies could usefully be sought.

d. providing proposals on how to translate priority goals of the Strategic Plan into the annual programme of activities of the Convention;

The Secretariat, reiterating that the Vision and Strategic Plan would be on the agenda of the technical and scientific groups of experts under the Bern Convention, informed that this would, on the one hand ensure the work of these groups of experts contribute to the achievement of the targets of the Strategic Plan and on the other hand ensure that activities identified as supporting the implementation of the Strategic Plan benefit from appropriate resources. At the 2nd meeting of this Working Group later in the year, the Secretariat, using the experience of the meetings during the year, could make proposals on how to translate these priority goals of the Plan into the programme of activities for the following year.

e. increasing the visibility of the Strategic Plan.

The Chair recalled that Parties were responsible for advocating the Strategic Plan across their administrations and broader national context, and for mainstreaming it in so far as possible in their national processes.

The Secretariat provided some updates and proposals of activities possible at the Secretariat-level, in order to increase visibility. Notably a dedicated webpage on the Bern Convention main website had been created (though there was one suggestion for enhancing this further); there was a possibility to transform the text into a more official appearing publication, which could be featured on national governments websites; and in line with the update and revision of the information leaflet prepared for the 40th anniversary of the Convention, the Vision and Strategic Plan would be highlighted.

Further ideas and feedback mooted by members included countries translating the Plan into their national languages (or at least key sections of the Plan); recalling that the members of this Group but more widely all focal points of Parties and Observers of the Convention are ambassadors of the Plan; and that when the Bern Convention is represented in other international fora and at other events, the Strategic Plan should be promoted. On this latter point and in line with what had been said under point 3.c, it was proposed to submit the Strategic Plan as an information document for the next CBD COP in October 2024.

4. Next steps and timeline

In terms of the Workplan, it was agreed to add a point on the consultation of the Indicators Note, whereby members would be provided with an easy-to-use template to provide their feedback within a deadline of about 3 weeks; as well as to send out the voluntary national questionnaire to Parties on any national progress with regard to the Strategic Plan a little earlier than initially envisaged, right after the 2nd meeting of the Group which was planned for the first week of September, in order to allow more time to complete the questionnaire. In this way, the Workplan was approved.

5. Any other business

There was no other business, and the meeting was closed.

Appendix – List of Participants

Contracting Party	Name
Czech Republic	**Ms Eliška ROLFOVÁ** Department of Species Protection and Implementation of International Commitments Ministry of the Environment *Chair of the Group of Experts on Amphibians and Reptiles* **Mr Jan PLESNIK** Adviser for International Relations Nature Conservation Agency *Chair of the Group of Specialists on the European Diploma* *Chair of the Working Group on Overseeing Implementation of the Strategic Plan* **Ms Helena KOSTOHRYZOVÁ** Ministry officer, Department of International Relations Ministry of the Environment
France	**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 *Chair of the Ad hoc Drafting Group of an Amending Protocol*
Monaco	**Ms Astrid CLAUDEL RUSIN** Chef de Section Direction de l'Environnement
United Kingdom	**Ms Kate BRICKETT** Senior Adviser Species Recovery, Defra **Ms Leah FARQUHARSON** International Biodiversity Advisor, JNCC
Honorary members- Chairs of Groups of Experts & Working Groups	**Name**
Estonia	**Ms Merike LINNAMÄGI** Chair of the Standing Committee **Ms Saskia SUURMETS** Trainee at the Ministry of the Climate
Observer	**Name**
CEE Bankwatch Network	**Mr Andrey RALEV** Biodiversity Campaigner Czech Republic
EUROPARC Federation	**Ms Sanna Kaisa JUVONEN** Policy Development Manager Germany

FACE **European Federation for Hunting and Conservation**	**Ms Sabrina DIETZ** Wildlife Policy Officer Belgium
International Council for Game and Wildlife Conservation **CIC Wildlife**	**Ms Alexandra KALANDARISHVILI** Policy Coordinator
IUCN	**Mr Oliver AVRAMOSKI** Director, Regional Office for Eastern Europe and Central Asia (ECARO)
Pro Natura - Friends of the Earth	**Mr Friedrich WULF** Head, International Biodiversity Policy Switzerland
Independent consultant	**Name**
	Mr Dave PRITCHARD
Bern Convention Secretariat	**Name**
	Mr Mikaël POUTIERS, Secretary of the Bern Convention **Ms Marta MEDLINSKA,** Administrator, Bern Convention **Mr Marc HORY,** Project Manager, Bern Convention **Mr Eoghan KELLY,** Project Officer, Bern Convention **Mr Michaël NGUYEN,** Administrative and Project Officer, Bern Convention **Mr Mark BARLOW,** Administrative assistant, Bern Convention