Strasbourg, 1st December 2023 **T-PVS(2023)18**

CONVENTION ON THE CONSERVATION OF EUROPEAN WILDLIFE
AND NATURAL HABITATS

Standing Committee

43rd meeting
Strasbourg, 27 November - 1 December 2023

Strategic Plan for the Bern Convention for the period to 2030

Adopted by the Standing Committee, December 2023

and aligned with the Vision for the Convention adopted by the Standing Committee in December 2021

Contents

This Strategic Plan contains the following:

- An introductory section, including:
  - a brief background to the Bern Convention, including its statement of Vision;
  - the purpose of the Strategic Plan;
  - the context, explaining the need for intensified efforts to address a crisis of declines in European wildlife, as a contribution to urgent global biodiversity conservation actions.
- Four strategic **goals**, and eleven specific **targets** to be achieved by 2030.
- An overview of the regime for monitoring and evaluating the achievement of the goals and targets, including sixteen **indicators** of progress.
- Three Annexes, including:
  1. Linking actions to outcomes through a "theory of change" for the Plan, and a set of assumptions that underpin its expected operation.
  2. Key aspects of implementation, covering "ownership" of the action agenda and responsibilities for implementing it; the need to promote awareness and use of the Plan; and the capacity and resources available.
  3. A glossary, providing definitions and interpretations of some key terms used in the text.

A. About the Bern Convention

The Council of Europe's Convention on the Conservation of European Wildlife and Natural Habitats (1979), or Bern Convention, is a binding international legal instrument covering most of the natural heritage of the European continent and extending to some States of Africa. It is the only regional Convention of its kind in the world, and was the first to protect both species and habitats.

The Convention promotes strong political commitment through implementation mechanisms in which all citizens are represented by politicians, NGOs, civil society organisations and scientists, collaborating to take action for the conservation of biodiversity at the genetic, species and ecosystem levels. The central aim is the conservation of Europe's wild flora and fauna[1] and their natural habitats, including vulnerable and migratory species.

The 51 Contracting Parties (including four African States and the European Union) commit to:

- promote national conservation policies;

[1] References throughout this document to "flora and fauna" reflect the text of the Bern Convention and other documents adopted in the context of the Convention. "Flora" had originally in these contexts been understood to embrace fungi, but fungi (or "funga") is now recognised (by the IUCN Species Survival Commission, among others) as a separate kingdom (see for example https://faunaflorafunga.org/). Without changing wordings that derive from formal Convention texts, therefore, references to "flora and fauna" in this Strategic Plan should be read as including fungi.

- consider the environmental impact of planning and development;
- promote education and public awareness on conservation;
- share practice and expertise on biodiversity management;
- provide legal protection for biodiversity sufficient to ensure that obligations under the treaty are fulfilled; and
- coordinate environmental research.

Policy tools and standards evolved under the Convention include:

- guidance documents and Codes of Conduct;
- conservation strategies;
- action plans for threatened species;
- a pan-European network of protected areas (the Emerald Network);
- specific Resolutions and Recommendations adopted by the Parties;
- monitoring mechanisms, including implementation reports and a transparent "case file" system open to engagement by civil society (including individual citizens and NGOs).

The Bern Convention is guided by the core values of the Council of Europe, and by engaging multiple sectors of society in nature conservation, it strengthens democratic participation.

In 2021 the Standing Committee agreed a statement of Vision for the Convention for the period to 2030, affirming that the Parties expect in this period to see that:

> *By 2030, declines in biodiversity are halted, leading to recovery of wildlife and habitats, improving the lives of people and contributing to the health of the planet.*

B. The purpose of the Strategic Plan

This Plan provides a guiding framework for the programmes and activities that are needed to achieve the Vision. It does not itself detail those activities, but it explains why they are needed, indicates the main lines of action, and defines the overall levels of ambition required in key areas. It is a practical tool for mobilising support, driving progress and assessing results.

The core of the Plan is a set of agreed goals and 11 targets to be achieved by 2030. Indicators for measuring the achievement of these are also defined. Progress should be reviewed in each year of the Plan's life, enabling adaptive adjustments to be made where necessary to ensure the targets are met.

The Plan also serves as a communication tool, demonstrating the Bern Convention's relationship to Council of Europe priorities and its contribution to other international agendas on nature conservation, environmental protection and sustainable development. It provides an important formal basis for productive synergies with these.

C. Context

The Council of Europe has a Strategic Framework for 2021-25[2], in which "the fight against environmental degradation" has a new prominence as one of the key strategic priorities for this period. The Council's Programme and Budget 2022-25[3] identifies a focus on supporting Member States to protect and expand cultural, natural and landscape diversity, noting that this is "vital for sustainable development and the well-being of our societies", and it highlights the Bern Convention as a key mechanism for monitoring, cooperation and technical assistance to this end.

The present document is the first Strategic Plan to be adopted for the Bern Convention as a whole. Over the Convention's 40-plus years of existence it has been supported by a range of guiding frameworks and strategic instruments on particular issue areas. Given the growing importance of its role and the need for escalated efforts in response to the global environmental crisis, and drawing on the experiences and lessons from the past four decades, the Parties have committed to a new level of ambition for the period to 2030, with a clear Vision and a focused set of action priorities.

Wildlife and natural habitats are vital for all life. They underpin human food, water and energy security, health and well-being, and they are critical to the regulation of climatic cycles and the quality of our air, water and soil. Biodiversity however is in serious decline. Changes in land and sea use, overexploitation, climate change, pollution, and invasive alien species have made ecosystem collapse one of the biggest threats facing humanity in the next decade. According to the latest global assessment, "goals for conserving and sustainably using nature and achieving sustainability cannot be met by current trajectories, and goals for 2030 and beyond may only be achieved through transformative changes across economic, social, political and technological factors"[4].

The challenge is therefore stark. Cause for hope and optimism however can be found in progressive forms of international cooperation, public support, and policies backed by sound science. The Bern Convention specialises in these, and it continues to be well placed to offer an achievable agenda for the region it covers[5] and a model for the wider world. Its mechanisms for international cooperation, stable frameworks of norms and standards, effective and adaptive mechanisms for monitoring, assessment and accountability, and its tradition of governments, civil society and businesses working together, all offer a positive foundation for the future.

This foundation now needs to be translated into more intensified and effective action "on the ground" if current trends are to be reversed. The costs of inaction will be more severe than anything seen to date, and will far outweigh the costs of implementing the actions required.

The Strategic Plan has been developed in harmony with related strategies at other scales, and it makes an explicit and vital pan-European contribution to (among others) the Kunming-Montreal Global Biodiversity Framework, the UN Sustainable Development Goals, and

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[2] See *https://rm.coe.int/CoERMPublicCommonSearchServices/DisplayDCTMContent?documentId=0900001680a07810* .

[3] See *https://rm.coe.int/0900001680a4d5de* .

[4] IPBES (2019). Summary for policymakers of the global assessment report on biodiversity and ecosystem services of the Intergovernmental Science-Policy Platform on Biodiversity and Ecosystem Services.

[5] The Convention covers almost the entire European continent and several African States.

efforts for synergy among biodiversity-related Multilateral Environmental Agreements in general.

D. Goals and targets

➢ GOAL 1: 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.

Target 1.1: Natural and semi-natural ecosystems are maintained and where possible restored or rehabilitated, leading to an overall increase in area, connectivity, integrity and resilience of the natural habitats referred to in the Convention and in Resolution No. 4 (1996).

Target 1.2: Coverage of natural habitats by the Emerald Network[6] meets the sufficiency targets set for 2030 in the post-2020 Work Plan for the Network.

Target 1.3: All sites included in the Emerald Network are effectively managed and subject to formal protection and other effective area-based conservation measures.

Target 1.4: The habitats that the Emerald Network aims to conserve are being maintained at, or progressing towards, a satisfactory conservation status.

Target 1.5: Specific recommendations arising from individual Case Files are followed up and acted upon; and cases are resolved and closed within a reasonable timeframe, taking account of any advice provided by the Standing Committee[7].

➢ GOAL 2: The conservation status of threatened species is improved, abundance of native species has increased, and human-induced extinctions have been halted.

Target 2.1: The species listed in the Appendices to the Bern Convention and in Appendix 1 to Resolution No. 6 (1998) are at or are recovering towards a satisfactory conservation status.

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[6] The Emerald Network is an ecological network made up of Areas of Special Conservation Interest and designed to ensure, on a common basis shared by all European countries, the long-term survival of internationally important species of wild flora and fauna and their habitats. Launched in 1989, it is considered to be one of the main tools for Contracting Parties to comply at national level with their obligations under the Bern Convention. In EU Member States the Emerald Network consists of sites designated for the Natura 2000 Network (under the Directives on Birds and on Natural Habitats).

[7] Individual Case Files may have a focus on species, or habitats, or both. Target 1.5 is positioned under Goal 1 on the basis that "ecosystems" include species as well as habitats; but this is a pragmatic choice, and the target is relevant both to Goal 1 and to Goal 2.

Target 2.2: Anthropogenic causes of actual or potential negative effects on the conservation status of species of wild flora and fauna[8] are reduced as far as possible to levels that are not detrimental to the conservation and recovery of those species, through targeted measures enacted in legislation, policy and/or management.

➢ **GOAL 3: The contributions of wild flora and fauna and their natural habitats to a safe, clean, healthy and sustainable environment are valued, maintained and enhanced.**

Target 3.1: The natural environment thrives, thereby benefiting people's livelihoods, food and water security, community resilience, well-being and quality of life.

Target 3.2: Conservation and sustainable use of nature contributes positively to measures relating to human rights, democracy, landscape management, cultural heritage and physical and mental health, and to the prevention and mitigation of major hazards.

Target 3.3: Nature-based solutions and ecosystem-based approaches implemented by Bern Convention Parties contribute to the mitigation of climate change and the adaptation to its effects[9].

➢ **GOAL 4: Sufficient resources are available and are used efficiently to achieve all goals and targets in this Plan.**

Target 4.1: Sufficient 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.

E. Monitoring and evaluation

A monitoring and evaluation regime is essential for reviewing progress, assessing whether the Strategic Plan is achieving what it set out to do and demonstrating its impact. Although the detailed methods for this are set out elsewhere, the whole regime should be regarded as an integral part of the Plan.

Results at interim stages will inform a process of learning and adaptive management, to keep the Plan "on course" for the achievement of its targets and goals.

A key principle is to make as much use as possible of information from existing processes in the Bern Convention and in other related biodiversity monitoring systems, mindful that reporting can involve significant work for Parties and that no unnecessary burdens should be

[8] Including in particular (though not limited only to) habitat loss and degradation, including loss of connectivity; illegal killing, taking and trade; unsustainable use; toxins and pollution, including micropollutants; barriers to migration, disturbance, light pollution, invasive alien species; and climate change.

[9] This target does not offer a choice between mitigation/adaptation measures and positive biodiversity outcomes. It must be emphasised that nature-based solutions and ecosystem-based approaches in this context are not in any way an alternative or compensation for the measures defined in other fora (notably the UN Framework Convention on Climate Change) to make urgent reductions in greenhouse gas emissions and other climate change mitigation measures.

created. The purpose of a monitoring framework is to assess progress in achieving *the Plan*, not to assess the achievements of individual Convention Parties or other contributors to the Plan's delivery.

The alignment of the goals and targets in this Plan with the Kunming-Montreal Global Biodiversity Framework (GBF) allows a close correspondence to be made with the Monitoring Framework for the GBF and the indicators defined there[10]. This in turn reflects connections with the work of the Biodiversity Indicators Partnership and with indicators used for monitoring the implementation of the Sustainable Development Goals. Duplication across these processes will therefore be avoided.

Although there is no mandatory system of national implementation reporting for the Bern Convention (apart from the narrow issue of exceptions under Article 9), reporting under Resolution No. 8 (2012) on the conservation status of species and habitats, the "Scoreboard" for assessing progress in combating illegal killing, taking and trade of wild birds, the Emerald Network "barometer", and thematic reporting in response to questionnaires organised through the Convention's Groups of Experts will all make contributions to the monitoring and evaluation regime for the Strategic Plan. Programmes of Work and Action Plans adopted under the Convention may have their own indicators and reporting processes, and these will feed in as appropriate.

Indicators that will (to varying degrees[11]) track progress towards the individual targets in the Plan are listed below. Some of these are available for use from the outset; others will require development/refining before being fully operable. Emphasis has been given to those which play a role in monitoring the corresponding targets in the GBF, those which lend themselves to updating during the time period covered by the Strategic Plan, those which have been or are likely to be agreed through a scientific or intergovernmental process, and those which have an identified body that can be responsible for operating the indicator on a day-to-day basis.

Indicators and reports need to be able not only to generate data, but to provide pertinent "storylines" on the success or otherwise of the Plan in securing genuinely strategic outcomes and real impacts for wildlife and habitats.

Further detail on the individual indicators and their method of operation is provided in the accompanying Monitoring & Evaluation Guide.

[10] Monitoring Framework for the Kunming-Montreal Global Biodiversity Framework. Annex I to Decision 15/5 of the 15th meeting of the Conference of Contracting Parties to the Convention on Biological Diversity, Montreal, Canada, 7-19 December 2022.

[11] (Indicators are only ever designed to be an "indication", they do not purport to provide a comprehensive assessment).

Target	Indicator(s)	Approach
GOAL 1: 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.		
1.1 Natural and semi-natural ecosystems are maintained and where possible restored or rehabilitated, leading to an overall increase in area, connectivity, integrity and resilience of the natural habitats referred to in the Convention and in Resolution No. 4 (1996).	• 1.1.a Trends in extent and condition of selected habitat and ecosystem types. • 1.1.b Extent of degraded ecosystems under restoration (by ecosystem type).	Principal sources for proposed indicator 1.1.a include reporting on conservation status under Bern Convention Resolution No. 8 (2012) and under the EU Nature Directives (Birds Directive Article 12, Habitats Directive Article 17), accounts compiled for the UN SEEA Ecosystem Accounting process and associated indicators for the Global Biodiversity Framework. Extent and condition will each be assessed separately, but the "headline" result can be presented in terms of overall "favourable"/ "unfavourable" status for both components together.
1.2 Coverage of natural habitats by the Emerald Network meets the sufficiency targets set for 2030 in the post-2020 Work Plan for the Network.	• 1.2 Emerald Network Sufficiency Index.	This indicator uses the index developed for the Emerald Network Monitoring Framework, based on sufficiency assessments that are already provided for under the Emerald process.
1.3 All sites included in the Emerald Network are effectively managed and subject to formal protection and other effective area-based conservation measures.	• 1.3 (a) Extent to which protected areas and other effective area-based conservation measures (OECMs) cover Emerald Network sites. • 1.3 (b) Proportion of adopted Emerald Network sites with implemented management plans.	The first indicator compares spatial data on Emerald Network sites with progressively updated spatial datasets on protected areas and OECMs. Inclusion of OECMs (in the target) means that relevant measures are not limited to legal protection designations. The intent of the first indicator is to focus specifically on *coverage*, as the most readily measurable and comparable element of the target. The second indicator similarly focuses on coverage by management plans, but requires that in order to be counted, such plans must not merely exist, but must demonstrably be being implemented in practice. Where possible it will also be desirable to collect any existing information on assessments of the effectiveness of such implementation, and there are

		various existing tools available for this (e.g. METT, R-METT, RAPPAM, PAME, MEPCA).
1.4 The habitats that the Emerald Network aims to conserve are being maintained at, or progressing towards, a satisfactory conservation status.	• 1.4 Contribution of the Emerald Network to the conservation status of habitats.	The indicator would be expressed as the overall contribution of the Emerald Network to the conservation status of key habitats, in categories used for reporting under Bern Convention Resolution No. 8 and EU Nature Directive reports under Article 12 (Birds Directive) and Article 17 (Habitats Directive), in (based on status categories such as "satisfactory stable", "stable but at risk", "unsatisfactory improving" or "unsatisfactory declining").
1.5 Specific recommendations arising from individual Case Files are followed up and acted upon; and cases are resolved and closed within a reasonable timeframe, taking account of any advice provided by the Standing Committee.	• 1.5.a [Indicator based on statistics concerning Case File recommendations (e.g. proportion implemented, partially implemented, not yet implemented)]. • 1.5.b [Indicator based on statistics concerning numbers of Case Files (e.g. numbers per country; number of years each case has been on Standing Committee agendas)].	Operation based on reports provided to the Standing Committee, and resulting decisions of the Committee.
GOAL 2: The conservation status of threatened species is improved, the abundance of native species has increased, and human-induced extinctions have been halted.		
2.1 The species listed in the Appendices to the Bern Convention and in Appendix 1 to Resolution No. 6 (1998) are at or are recovering towards a satisfactory conservation status.	• 2.1 Conservation status of species, as reported under Resolution No. 8 (2012).	This indicator will draw directly on a synthesis of information provided through the process operated under Resolution No. 8 (2012). (For Parties that are Member States of the European Union this is accomplished via the reports they submit to the European Commission under Article 17 of the EU Habitats Directive and Article 12 of the EU Wild Birds Directive). A variety of aggregation/ disaggregation options is possible.
2.2 Anthropogenic causes of actual or potential negative effects on the conservation status of species of wild flora and	• 2.2 Trends in frequency and severity of key anthropogenic pressures impacting on species of wild flora and fauna, as reported under Resolution No. 8	To be drawn from the information that Parties are already expected to assess and report under Resolution No. 8 (2012). (For Parties that are Member States of the European

fauna[12] are reduced as far as possible to levels that are not detrimental to the conservation and recovery of those species, through targeted measures enacted in legislation, policy and/or management.	(2012) and the EU nature Directives.	Union this is accomplished via the reports they submit to the European Commission under Article 17 of the EU Habitats Directive and Article 12 of the EU Wild Birds Directive).
GOAL 3: The contributions of wild flora and fauna and their natural habitats to a safe, clean, healthy and sustainable environment are valued, maintained and enhanced.		
3.1 The natural environment thrives, thereby benefiting people's livelihoods, food and water security, community resilience, well-being and quality of life.	• 3.1.a Nature-based quality of life assessment (qualitative summary overview). • 3.1.b Trends in air quality. • 3.1.c Trends in water quality.	The first indicator will be based on national overview narratives self-reported by each Party, extracted from relevant findings of national ecosystem assessments where applicable, or from the national environmental-economic accounts compiled for the UN Statistical Commission and used for monitoring the related targets in the Global Biodiversity Framework. "Nature-based quality of life" in this sense is a proxy or "umbrella" measure for the individual components referred to in Target 3.1. Although a qualitative indicator, it would be generated at periodic intervals and include a commentary on trends (improvement/ deterioration) from time to time. This addresses some new measurement issues for the Bern Convention, so it will be helpful to review this indicator after an initial phase of operating it, to assess its utility. The air and water quality indicators are based on the indicator approaches for these issues developed by the OECD and the European Commission.
3.2 Conservation and sustainable use of nature contributes positively to measures relating to human rights, democracy, landscape management, cultural heritage and physical and mental health, and to the prevention and mitigation of major hazards.	• 3.2 Single review assessment of the contribution made by the conservation and sustainable use of nature under the Bern Convention to other fields of action under the Council of Europe.	To remain within the scope of the target, the "other fields of action" referred to in this indicator are limited to those relating to human rights, democracy, landscape, cultural heritage, health, and the prevention and mitigation of major hazards. Target 3.2 could potentially be achieved by a positive result for

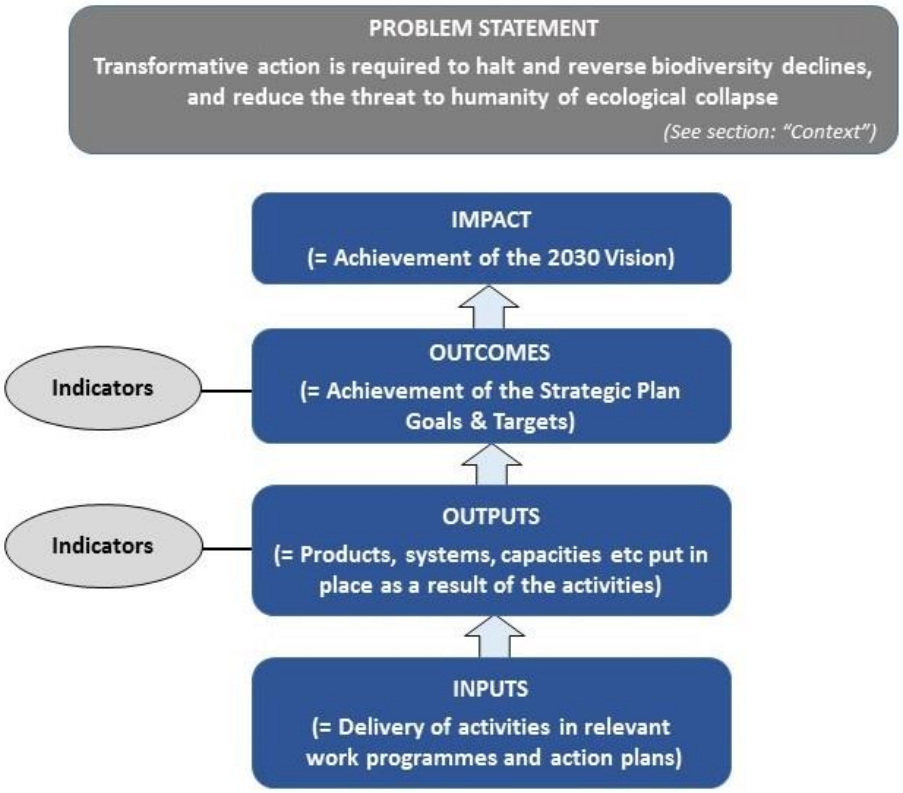
[12] Including in particular (though not limited only to) habitat loss and degradation, including loss of connectivity; illegal killing, taking and trade; unsustainable use; toxins and pollution, including micropollutants; barriers to migration, disturbance, light pollution, invasive alien species; and climate change.

		each of its components being recorded once during the timespan of the Strategic Plan, since it does not express a trend or "maintenance" objective. The "single assessment" method has therefore been chosen as the most cost-effective indicator for this target. The Council of Europe's reporting on the Bern Convention's contribution to the UN Agenda for Sustainable Development will form one input to this. The "contribution" to be assessed by this indicator would include both the promotion of benefits and the prevention or mitigation of harms.
3.3 Nature-based solutions and ecosystem-based approaches implemented by Bern Convention Parties contribute to the mitigation of climate change and the adaptation to its effects.	• 3.3 Number of initiatives involving nature-based solutions or ecosystem-based approaches as reported in Nationally Determined Contributions under the UNFCCC, with ecosystem extent data where available.	To be synthesised from data reported as part of the Nationally Determined Contributions (NDCs) submitted by countries to the Secretariat of the UNFCCC (United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change). In the timespan of the Bern Strategic Plan, submission of these NDCs will occur only once; hence the indicator is formed from a single assessment. "Nature-based solutions" is interpreted in accordance with the definition adopted by the UN Environment Assembly (UNEA Resolution 5.5, 2022), and "ecosystem-based approaches" is interpreted in accordance with the definition included in the Glossary to the Global Biodiversity Framework. The analysis of NDC data, in line with the UNEA definition, will treat as eligible only those "nature-based solutions" that are beneficial for biodiversity.
GOAL 4: Sufficient resources are available and are used efficiently to achieve all goals and targets in this Plan.		
4.1 Sufficient 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.	• 4.1 Resources and capacity available at international level for implementing the Strategic Plan, as assessed for each financial planning	This indicator only partially covers the various components required for achievement of the target, but it focuses on the most feasible way of generating a relevant and consistently repeatable measure. (Clearly for

	period by the Standing Committee.	example the goals and targets of the Strategic Plan cannot be achieved by actions only at the international level; but measurement beyond this is challenging). Summary data on the overall total budgets for operating the Convention, and available capacity in terms of the Secretariat, Groups of Experts, training initiatives and other resources can be generated by the Secretariat, but these will mainly be reported via other existing processes rather than specifically within the context of the Strategic Plan.

ANNEX 1. How change will happen: the assumptions

Expressing a desired set of results does not, in itself, map the route to be taken to achieve them. Strategic plans sometimes address this through a "theory of change", which summarises the way in which defined actions will lead to the intended outcome. An overview of this for the Bern Convention is illustrated in the simplified diagram below:



The expectation of change is based on the following further assumptions:

- Parties will maintain their commitment to the legal obligations defined for them by the Convention.
- Parties are free to exercise their discretion as to the manner in which they contribute to the objectives in this Plan according to their own national circumstances and capabilities, providing that the objectives are achieved.
- Achievement of the Strategic Plan's overall goals will result from a combination of efforts made within national jurisdictions (at multiple levels of governance), at transboundary/international level, by non-Party stakeholders and contributors, and in synergy/complementarity with other relevant Multilateral Environmental Agreements and related international processes.
- Biodiversity outcomes cannot be achieved by the "biodiversity sector" alone, and achievement of the Plan's goals will require this agenda to be "mainstreamed" into other policy sectors and across society as a whole.
- International standards defined under the Convention play an important role in fostering a minimum common level of attainment necessary to achieve the goals in this Plan.
- Formal reflection of the objectives of this Plan in policies at transnational, national, subnational and local levels is important for catalysing requisite practical actions and allocation of financial and other resources.
- Implementation of this Plan will conform to principles of inclusivity, equity (socioeconomic, intergenerational, gender), participation, human rights and democratic accountability. These are important in their own right but are also vital for maintaining public confidence and support.
- Public opinion and political will are two sides of the same coin; hence communication and outreach efforts to the widest audiences in support of the 2030 Vision and the goals of this Plan are an essential part of its implementation.
- Changes in public behaviour can be led by example and by communication, capacity building, education, participation and awareness (CEPA), but incentives (including economic incentives) also play an important role, and should be considered among the tools that countries may wish to consider in promoting the implementation of this Plan.
- All technical processes operated through the mechanisms of the Convention in support of the implementation of this Plan will be evidence-led and based on appropriate scientific and technical knowledge, making effective use of existing systems, the Bern Convention's Groups of Experts and other qualified networks as appropriate, and adding no unnecessary reporting burdens on Parties.

ANNEX 2. Implementation

Ownership and responsibilities for implementation

At international level, the Strategic Plan guides the overall direction of work by the institutions of the Convention, including the Standing Committee, Bureau, Secretariat and Groups of Experts, supported by partnerships with other organisations and programmes including other Conventions, UN agencies and NGOs. The Standing Committee has overall responsibility for ensuring that the Plan as a whole is delivered.

At a practical day-to-day level however, this delivery will fall to a variety of other operational contexts. In relation to Contracting Party governments this will in all cases involve national-level action; but often will also involve action within different tiers of local government, as well as cooperation between governments in bilateral or regional arrangements, for example in the European Union.

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.

It is vital that implementation of the Plan is not left only to the Ministries or agencies that have lead responsibility for nature conservation. To succeed, the agenda here must be "mainstreamed" across all areas of sectoral responsibility, including for example agriculture, forestry, fisheries, energy, transport, infrastructure planning, water resources management, industry, urban development, climate change and finance, with education also playing a role. Nature conservation departments will have an important role in promoting understanding of the issues and coherent action across these sectors, but leadership and authority on this is expected to come from the highest levels of government.

In relation to the "increase in habitat area, connectivity, integrity and resilience" Target 1.1, each Party is expected to set a target for this at national level that will be defined according to the particular scale of opportunity available in the country.

Parties may find it valuable on a voluntary basis to set other national targets and milestones, which express (in a quantified way where possible) the specific contribution the country will make to each of the targets in the Strategic Plan. Parties are invited to communicate the details of any such targets to the Secretariat, including arrangements for monitoring progress and the results of such monitoring, so that this may contribute to a collated overview of progress overall. National strategies and action plans are likely to be helpful tools to use.

The Strategic Plan is applicable throughout the area covered by the Convention, and Non-Party governments are invited to implement it in the same way as described above for Parties. Those wishing to accede to the Convention in particular will be given every encouragement in this regard.

While governments have the formal accountability for achieving the Convention's aims, implementation in practice occurs through a combination of efforts by them and by many other stakeholders, including non-governmental organisations, scientific institutions, private sector interests and concerned citizens of all ages. The Strategic Plan is "owned" by all of these together - they all have an important role to play, and success depends on their combined contributions. Particular efforts should be made to engage Indigenous peoples, local communities, young people, women and girls in this, and to recognise their needs and support their participation.

The Monitoring & Evaluation Guide which accompanies this Plan details particular lead responsibilities in relation to individual indicators for the listed targets. Other stakeholders who are in any way contributing to the achievement of these targets are also invited to provide information as systematically as possible on the specific progress made, so that a more complete monitoring overview can be maintained.

Promoting awareness and use of the Plan

The Strategic Plan is an important part of, and added stimulus for, communication and outreach activities in the ambit of the Bern Convention. This means that it is a key vehicle for expressing the importance of wildlife and natural habitats in the area covered by the Convention, and also that the action priorities it defines need to be promoted to all who may affect the outcomes, whether by direct delivery or by shaping the climate of public and political opinion in support of the goals.

Specific activities to generate media coverage, raise awareness of the existence and value of the Plan and promote its practical uptake and use, can usefully be tailored to differentiated target audiences, including "political", "technical", "educational" and "popular" segments. Summary illustrated "brochure"-style publications and social media output will be developed in support of this where possible.

Central efforts of this kind will meet part of the need. National and NGO communication and outreach efforts are indispensable also, however, for translating the Plan into different operating contexts and reaching more specifically-defined audience groups, including local communities.

Capacity and resources

This Strategic Plan helps to guide the mobilisation and effective deployment of adequate resources at a variety of levels within and between countries, to address each of the listed targets, to undertake the requisite monitoring and evaluation, and to promote awareness and use of the Plan. "Resources" in this sense includes not only finance but also institutional and human capacity, information and knowledge.

Current levels of funding for biodiversity conservation are insufficient and need to be increased. This includes international and domestic funding from public, private and other sources. Efforts will be required to enhance the necessary flows to achieve the goals and targets in the Strategic Plan, including assistance for low and middle income countries and countries with economies in transition. Parties are encouraged also to specify their own national actions in this regard.

In prevailing economic circumstances, funding availability over the period of the Strategic Plan is expected to continue to pose challenges.

Financial resourcing in the present context does not only involve the generation of new funds, but also enhanced effectiveness and efficiency of resource use, "in kind" support, and the reduction or redirection of spending that harms the environment. Policy choices that reduce pressures on biodiversity will reduce the costs of protecting and restoring it.

Institutional and human capacity can be strengthened by various forms of support by, and for, government and non-government actors at all levels, including enhancing understanding about biodiversity conservation in non-biodiversity sectors. Guidance documents, manuals, training programmes and events, advice mechanisms and other tools may all have a role to play. 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 all offer structured forms of contribution to the efforts required. Cooperative partnerships are important for enabling institutions and networks to support each other.

Knowledge and information are resources too, and sharing, critical review and lesson-learning are important forms of capacity. The Bern Convention promotes an open and collaborative approach to the development of research (including "citizen science"), education, innovation, information technology, monitoring, documentation and community-based knowledge to this end.

ANNEX 3. Glossary of terms

Note: This Glossary is not a comprehensive dictionary of all the technical terms used in the Strategic Plan. It aims instead to provide accepted guiding interpretations of a selection of terms where there may be particular ambiguity, where usage is emerging, or where some interpretation may otherwise be helpful. Entries are presented in alphabetical order. Usage of some terms and the science underpinning some concepts may continue to evolve, and definitions in other fora may be adapted from time to time – where necessary therefore this Glossary may be updated in the future.

Where "GBF Glossary" is given as a source, this refers to the Updated Glossary for the Kunming-Montreal Global Biodiversity Framework - *https://www.cbd.int/doc/c/c3ab/388d/950ddc02586468a814120acf/wg2020-05-04-en.pdf* (provided for the Global Framework while it was being negotiated as a draft, but not further updated, and not formally adopted).

Terms used in the Strategic Plan	Interpretation
Alien species	Alien species, also referred to as non-native, non-indigenous, introduced or "exotic" species, are animals, plants and fungi that are introduced accidentally or deliberately into a natural environment where they are not normally found. Conservation concern arises usually when such species are invasive (see separate "invasive species" interpretation below), but not all alien species are necessarily invasive. Whether or not a species is regarded as "alien" or "native" to a given area depends on the circumstances (see separate "native species" interpretation below).
Case File	The Case File is a monitoring tool specific to the Bern Convention. Individual Files may be initiated when there is a complaint about a possible breach of the Convention, which can be submitted by a government, an NGO or even private citizens. Complaints are processed by the Secretariat according to a standard system, and when the Standing Committee or its Bureau considers that further information is needed, they can arrange for on-the-spot visits by independent experts, who report to the Standing Committee. The Case File system was not created by provisions in the Convention text, but by decisions agreed by the Standing Committee, dating from 1984. It has since become a central and extensively used solution-finding mechanism for the Convention. *https://www.coe.int/en/web/bern-convention/case-files* .
Degraded ecosystems	Environmental degradation is any change or disturbance to the environment that is perceived to be deleterious or undesirable (Johnson et al., 1997). Ecosystem degradation is any process or activity that removes or lessens the viability of ecosystem processes and hence biodiversity (Dunster and Dunster, 1996). It may also be manifest as a persistent reduction in the ecosystem's capacity to provide ecosystem services (Plesnik, Hosek and Condé, 2011).

	The GBF Glossary provides the following for "degraded ecosystems": "Land degradation can occur either through a loss of biodiversity, ecosystem functions or services. From an ecological perspective, land degradation may include complete transformation in the class or use of the ecosystem, such as the conversion of natural grassland to a crop field, delivering a different spectrum of benefits, but also degradation of the 'natural' or 'transformed' system. Natural ecosystems are often degraded prior to being transformed. The transformed ecosystem that results from this conversion can, in turn, be degraded and see a reduction in the delivery of its new functions (e.g. an agricultural field where soil degradation and reduced soil fertility leads to reduced crops). The same concepts are applicable to the degradation of marine and freshwater ecosystems. It may take the form of changed trophic structures in a marine community (through fishing pressure and selective removal of species, transformation of the soft and hard benthos (through repetitive sweeps of contacting gears, such as trawls) or artificial reef construction, to cite only a few examples. In the case of aquatic freshwater ecosystems, the construction of dams and reservoirs over river courses or the conversion of natural wetlands into rice paddies are examples of ecosystem transformation".
(Ecological) connectivity	Ecological connectivity is the unimpeded movement of species and the flow of natural processes that sustain life on Earth (Convention on Migratory Species, Resolution 12.26, Rev.COP13 – see *https://www.cms.int/en/topics/ecological-connectivity*). The GBF Glossary further notes that it may also refer to continuous ecosystems often connected through ecological corridors; and that there are two types of connectivity: structural (in which the continuity between ecosystems is identified) and functional (in which the movement of species or processes is verified).
(Ecological) integrity	There are numerous different definitions of ecological (or more commonly "ecosystem") integrity in the literature, variously emphasising (e.g.) completeness, intactness, natural functioning and resilience. The GBF Glossary describes "ecosystem integrity" in the following terms: "An ecosystem is generally understood to have integrity when its dominant ecological characteristics (e.g. elements of composition, structure, function, and ecological processes) occur within their natural ranges of variation and can withstand and recover from most perturbations"; adding reference also to "species diversity and abundance, and communities of interacting species" (based on CBD/SBSTTA/24/3/Add.2/Rev.1 – see *https://www.cbd.int/doc/c/e823/b80c/8b0e8a08470a476865e9b203/sbstta-24-03-add2-rev1-en.pdf*). The GBF Glossary also notes that:

	"Indicators of ecosystem integrity may include the structure, function and composition of an ecosystem relative to the pre-industrial range of variation of these characteristics". The glossary for the IPBES Global Assessment Report on Biodiversity and Ecosystem Services (2019), defines "ecosystem integrity" as "the ability of an ecosystem to support and maintain ecological processes and a diverse community of organisms. It is measured as the degree to which a diverse community of native organisms is maintained, and [it] is used as a proxy for ecological resilience".
(Ecological) resilience	There are numerous different definitions of ecological resilience (or resilience in ecological systems) in the literature. A foundation for many of these is attributed to Holling (1973), who described the concept in terms of the persistence of natural systems in the face of changes in ecosystem variables due to natural or anthropogenic causes; the capacity of systems to absorb disturbances and to continue functioning; and the capacity of systems to adapt to disturbances by reorganising into new states that persist thereafter, while still maintaining essentially the same structures and functions as before. Other approaches invite a gauging of the degree of resilience in terms of the amount of disturbance that a system can withstand before its self-organised processes and structures alter, or the time taken for a system to return to its equilibrium state following a perturbation. The GBF Glossary, quoting the glossary for the IPBES Global Assessment Report on Biodiversity and Ecosystem Services (2019), defines "resilience" as: "the capacity of a system to absorb disturbance and reorganise while undergoing change so as to still retain essentially the same function, structure, identity, and feedbacks" (citing Walker *et al*., 2004).
Ecosystem-based approaches	The glossary for the IPBES Global Assessment Report on Biodiversity and Ecosystem Services (2019) defines "ecosystem-based approach" as: "a strategy for the integrated management of land, water and living resources that promotes conservation and sustainable use in an equitable way. An ecosystem approach is based on the application of appropriate scientific methods, focused on levels of biological organisation that encompass the essential structure, processes, functions and interactions among and between organisms and their environment. It recognises that humans, with their cultural diversity, are an integral component of many ecosystems". The GBF Glossary defines "ecosystem-based approaches" in a context of climate change adaptation, as:

	"the use of biodiversity and ecosystem functions and services as part of an overall adaptation strategy to help people adapt to the adverse effects of climate change. This term may refer to a wide range of ecosystem management activities to increase the resilience and reduce the vulnerability of people and the environment, including to climate change and disasters". It refers also to CBD COP Decision X/33 (2010) which invited implementation of: "ecosystem-based approaches for adaptation that may include 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".
Emerald Network	The Emerald Network is one of the main tools for Bern Convention Parties to comply with their obligations under the Convention. It is an ecological network made up of Areas of Special Conservation Interest, and was initiated by Recommendation No. 16 (1989) of the Convention's Standing Committee. Parties designate areas for the Network based on criteria of conservation interest, and are then expected to ensure that necessary and appropriate conservation measures are taken for each area. All sites proposed for inclusion in the Network are assessed at biogeographical level for their sufficiency to achieve the ultimate objective of securing the long term survival of species and habitats that have been identified (by Resolution No. 4 (1996) and Resolution No. 6 (1998)) as needing specific protection measures. In Member States of the European Union, the Emerald Network consists of sites designated for the Natura 2000 network under the EU's nature Directives (see separate Natura 2000 interpretation below). *https://www.coe.int/en/web/bern-convention/emerald-network* .
Invasive species	The glossary for the IPBES Global Assessment Report on Biodiversity and Ecosystem Services (2019), defines "invasive" (for a species) as: "tending to expand into and modify ecosystems to which it has been introduced". The expansion often involves organisms that can grow and reproduce quickly, spreading aggressively. The modification is usually assumed to be negative, and there are ever-increasing examples of invasive species causing major environmental, social and economic damage, including biodiversity loss. Conservation concern often focuses on species that are both invasive and non-native (see separate "alien species" interpretation above). The risk is high when a species is introduced into an area that does not have the predators or competitors that would otherwise (in its native area) keep its expansion in check.
Management plan	In the specific context of the Strategic Plan, this term applies to plans that frame objectives and guide actions for the (conservation) management of sites in the Emerald Network. Such plans are not a mandatory requirement

	under the Bern Convention, but the importance of the contribution they can make is acknowledged here in the indicators for Target 1.3, and previously in Resolution No. 8 (2012). A range of guidance publications and best practice standards for area management planning has been produced by various conservation organisations, but no single approach has been defined in the Bern Convention context as an expectation for Emerald Network sites. The scope, content, method of adoption and implementation of such plans is instead a matter for each individual Party to decide at its discretion. No particular degree of length or complexity need therefore be inferred from the word "plan", and some authorities may prefer to work with more streamlined instruments that could be characterised for example as "management statements" for a site. Where this is the case, these or similar alternative approaches are considered to be included within the interpretation of "management plan" for the purposes of Target 1.3.
Major hazards	In the Council of Europe context, and in this Strategic Plan, this term references the existence of a specific Council of Europe Open Partial Agreement known as the EUR-OPA Major Hazards Agreement, established in 1987 and now providing a platform for cooperation between the countries of Europe and those of the southern Mediterranean. The Agreement does not provide a definition, but refers simply to "major natural and technological disasters" and their prevention, protection against them, and organisation of relief when they occur. The term "hazard" has subsequently been used more commonly in this context, and has been interpreted as: "any set of dangerous circumstances that could lead to harm/ damage to living and non-living resources". Examples include catastrophic floods, wildfires, earthquakes and avalanches. "Technological" disasters may either be triggered by these, or may occur independently (for example major industrial accidents). *https://www.coe.int/en/web/europarisks* .
Nationally Determined Contribution	Nationally Determined Contributions (NDCs) are the national plans for climate change mitigation and adaptation actions that are developed by each Party to the UN Framework Convention on Climate Change (UNFCCC). Under the Convention's Paris Agreement (2015), Parties are required to submit their NDCs to the UNFCCC Secretariat and to update them every five years. The next updates are due in 2025 and 2030, with each one expected to represent a progression of ambition compared to the previous one. Enhancements can also be made between these formal updates, and the Convention's COP26 in 2021 called on countries to strengthen the targets in their NDCs in 2022. *https://unfccc.int/process-and-meetings/the-paris-agreement/nationally-determined-contributions-ndcs* .
Native species	A species is native to a given area if its occurrence is a result of only natural processes. Such species may also be referred to as "indigenous" or "autochthonous". The concept is only meaningful in relation to the area concerned

	being specified in each case. It is the opposite of the concept of "alien species" (see separate interpretation entry above for "alien species"). Species occurrences can vary over time as a result of purely natural processes, such as natural tectonic or climatic changes over geological time. Whether or not a species is regarded as "native" or "alien" to a given area therefore depends on the circumstances. In the UK, for example, "native" plant species are considered to be those that became established after the most recent glacial period, around 11,000 years ago (or continued to be present from an earlier time). Others that have colonised subsequently and have become self-sustaining may also be regarded as "native" if their arrival occurred without human assistance. Species that have been self-sustaining for hundreds or even thousands of years, but whose original presence was human-assisted, may be regarded as "naturalised", but not "native".
Natura 2000	Natura 2000 is a network of sites of conservation importance designated by Member States of the European Union. It comprises Special Protection Areas (SPAs) designated under the 1979 Wild Birds Directive and Special Areas of Conservation (SACs) designated under the 1992 Habitats Directive. Subject to meeting defined criteria, SPAs are designated directly by the Member States, whereas SACs are proposed by the Member States and approved by the European Commission. Protection obligations defined in the Directives then apply, and these must be reflected in national legislation. Natura 2000 sites form the European Union component of the Bern Convention's Emerald Network (see separate Emerald Network interpretation above).
Natural habitats/ ecosystems	As with the listing of this term here, the definition in the GBF Glossary is for "natural ecosystems (habitats)", in order to embrace both habitats and ecosystems, since it is the concept of naturalness that is being defined, rather than the concept of habitat or ecosystem (distinctions between the latter terms are given in the definitions contained in the text of the Convention on Biological Diversity). Both the GBF Glossary and the glossary for the IPBES Global Assessment Report cite the same definition of "natural habitats" provided by UNEP-WCMC, which in turn is derived from a World Bank standard, and defines such habitats as: "areas composed of viable assemblages of plant and/ or animal species of largely native origin and/ or where human activity had not essentially modified an area's primary ecological functions and species composition". *www.biodiversitya-z.org/content/natural-habitats* .

	The idea, in this definition, of origins being "largely" native, and ecology being "essentially" unmodified, acknowledges the reality that few environments can be completely devoid of any human influence. This is reflected also in the European Union's Habitats Directive which defines "natural habitats" as: "terrestrial or aquatic areas distinguished by geographic, abiotic and biotic features, whether entirely natural or semi-natural". (See also separate interpretation of "semi-natural habitats" below).
Nature-based solutions	Drawing on earlier work by IUCN (*https://portals.iucn.org/library/node/46191*), the UN Environment Assembly at its 5th session in 2022 adopted a Resolution (5/5) which defines nature-based solutions (NbS) as: "actions to protect, conserve, restore, sustainably use and manage 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". The GBF Glossary uses this same definition. In the context of the Bern Convention Strategic Plan, it is emphasised (a) that this definition requires that nature-based solutions must always be "nature-positive" (i.e. "simultaneously providing biodiversity benefits"), and (b) such solutions should not in any way be treated as an alternative for the measures defined in other fora (notably the UN Framework Convention on Climate Change) to make urgent reductions in greenhouse gas emissions and to implement other climate change mitigation measures. *https://wedocs.unep.org/bitstream/handle/20.500.11822/39864/NATURE-BASED%20SOLUTIONS%20FOR%20SUPPORTING%20SUSTAINABLE%20DEVELOPMENT.%20English.pdf?sequence=1&isAllowed=y* .
Other effective area-based conservation measures (OECMs)	Parties to the Convention on Biological Diversity at their 14th COP (2018) in Decision 14/8 adopted a definition of "other effective area-based conservation measure" as follows: "a geographically defined area other than a Protected Area, which is governed and managed in ways that achieve positive and sustained long-term outcomes for the *in situ* conservation of biodiversity, with associated ecosystem functions and services and where applicable, cultural, spiritual, socio–economic, and other locally relevant values". Guiding principles, common characteristics and criteria for identification of OECMs were agreed in the same Decision. In slightly adapted forms, this definition has also been used in the glossaries of the GBF and the IPBES Global Assessment Report.

	OECMs may be managed for many different objectives but they must deliver effective conservation. They may be managed with conservation as a primary or secondary objective, or long-term conservation may be the ancillary result of management activities. OECMs are generally regarded as different from and complementary to formally/ legally designated "protected areas"; although there is some conceptual overlap with the type of protected area characterised in IUCN's protected area management categories as "Category V", in which ecological, biological, cultural and scenic values are linked to human activities such as traditional agricultural or forestry systems. A clearer distinction in this respect may emerge as experience and thinking evolve in future. In the marine environment also the concept remains to be fully explored and elaborated. *https://www.cbd.int/doc/decisions/cop-14/cop-14-dec-08-en.pdf* . *https://portals.iucn.org/library/node/48773* .
Kunming-Montreal Global Biodiversity Framework	The Kunming-Montreal Global Biodiversity Framework (GBF) is an intergovernmentally adopted successor to the Global Strategic Plan for Biodiversity 2011-2020. Delays occasioned by the Covid pandemic caused the negotiation of the GBF to be concluded only in December 2022, when it was adopted at the 15th meeting of the COP of the Convention on Biological Diversity. The Framework contains four goals to be achieved by 2050 and 23 targets to be achieved by 2030, and it is accompanied by other frameworks for monitoring, resource mobilisation and capacity building. There is a strong motivation among all biodiversity-related multilateral environmental agreements, including the Bern Convention, to undertake their own planning and implementation work in ways that reinforce, and are reinforced by, the GBF. *https://www.cbd.int/gbf/* .
Protected area	Two broadly similar definitions of "protected area" are commonly recognised, and both are included in the Glossary for the Global Biodiversity Framework. Article 2 of the Convention on Biological Diversity defines it as: "a geographically defined area which is designated or regulated and managed to achieve specific conservation objectives". (*https://www.cbd.int/convention/articles/?a=cbd-02*). IUCN defines it as:

	"a clearly defined geographical space, recognised, dedicated and managed, through legal or other effective means, to achieve the long-term conservation of nature with associated ecosystem services and cultural values". At international level IUCN has also developed a widely-used typology defining six management categories and four governance types that characterise different types of protected area. – see *https://portals.iucn.org/library/node/30018* . At national level, whether an area is regarded as a protected area or not may be determined by provisions in national policy or legislation.
Recovery	The three terms included in this Glossary - "recovery", "rehabilitation" and "restoration" express similar ideas. Nuanced differences between them can be debated, but there is little technical basis for consistent hard distinctions, and normal usage tends to treat these three terms as largely interchangeable. "Recovery" tends more often to be used in relation to species or populations (with "restoration" being more often used for ecosystems). The GBF Glossary interprets "recovery" as follows: "The restoration of natural processes and genetic, demographic, or ecological parameters of a population or species, with regard to its state at the initiation of the recovery activities. It also refers to its past local abundance, structure and dynamics, to resume its ecological and evolutionary role, and the consequent improvement regarding habitat quality". The Glossary further cites IUCN's "Green Status" standard for measuring species recovery (*https://portals.iucn.org/library/node/49511*) which advises that: "a species is fully recovered if it is present in all parts of its range, even those that are no longer occupied but were occupied prior to major human impacts/ disruption; is viable (i.e. not threatened with extinction) in all parts of the range; and is performing its ecological functions in all parts of the range".
Rehabilitation	The three terms included in this Glossary - "recovery", "rehabilitation" and "restoration" express similar ideas. Nuanced differences between them can be debated, but there is little technical basis for consistent hard distinctions, and normal usage tends to treat these three terms as largely interchangeable. "Rehabilitation" is sometimes used for the treatment and re-release of injured or contaminated individual animals; but it can also be applied to habitats. The glossary for the IPBES Global Assessment Report includes a definition of "remediation" as: "any action taken to rehabilitate ecosystems after their degradation". The Society for Ecological Restoration refers to rehabilitation as:

	"reparation of ecosystem processes, productivity and services".
Restoration	The three terms included in this Glossary - "recovery", "rehabilitation" and "restoration" express similar ideas. Nuanced differences between them can be debated, but there is little technical basis for consistent hard distinctions, and normal usage tends to treat these three terms as largely interchangeable. The GBF Glossary cites the glossary for the IPBES Global Assessment Report which defines (ecological) restoration as: "any intentional activity that initiates or accelerates the recovery of an ecosystem from a degraded state", noting that: "this definition covers all forms and intensities of the degradation state and, in this sense, is inclusive of the definition adopted by the Society for Ecological Restoration" (the latter being: "an intentional activity that initiates or accelerates the recovery of an ecosystem's health, integrity and sustainability" and "the process of assisting the recovery of an ecosystem that has been degraded, damaged, or destroyed"). *www.ser.org/* . The GBF Glossary also refers to the Short-term Action Plan on Ecosystem Restoration adopted by CBD Parties at COP13 (2016) as the Annex to Decision XIII/5, which notes that: "ecological restoration refers to the process of managing or assisting the recovery of an ecosystem that has been degraded, damaged or destroyed, as a means of sustaining ecosystem resilience and conserving biodiversity". The GBF Glossary further refers to the UN Decade on Ecosystem Restoration (*www.decadeonrestoration.org/what-ecosystem-restoration*) which interprets ecosystem restoration as: "assisting in the recovery of ecosystems that have been degraded or destroyed, as well as conserving the ecosystems that are still intact", noting also that: "restoration can happen in many ways – for example, through actively planting or by removing pressures so that nature can recover on its own"; and:

	"it is not always possible – or desirable – to return an ecosystem to its original state". The Ramsar Convention's "Principles and guidelines for wetland restoration" (COP8 Resolution VIII.16, 2002 - *www.ramsar.org/sites/default/files/documents/pdf/res/key_res_viii_16_e.pdf*) noted that although the Convention's Strategic Plan at the time referred to both "restoration" and "rehabilitation", the difference between these two terms is not clear. The Ramsar Convention has not attempted to provide precise definitions of these terms. While it might be said that "restoration" implies a return to pre-disturbance conditions and that "rehabilitation" implies an improvement of wetland functions without necessarily returning to pre-disturbance conditions, these words are often used interchangeably both within Ramsar documentation and within the conservation literature. The principles and guidelines therefore used the term "restoration" in its broadest sense, to include both projects that promote a return to original conditions and projects that improve wetland functions without necessarily promoting a return to pre-disturbance conditions. This Ramsar approach helps to acknowledge the point noted in the UN Decade quotation above, namely that pure restoration to pre-existing conditions is either rarely ever really possible, or is only possible in respect of specified variables within specified limits of precision and specified limits of confidence.
Satisfactory conservation status	In the Bern Convention context, the term "satisfactory conservation status" appears in Resolution No. 8 (2012), in relation to species and habitats conserved through the Emerald Network. Paragraph 2.1 of the Resolution states: "The national designation of the adopted Emerald sites will ensure that they are protected from external threats and subject to an appropriate regime for achieving a satisfactory conservation status of the species and natural habitats listed in Resolutions No. 4 (1996) and No. 6 (1998) present on the site, involving, if and where appropriate, management plans, administrative measures and contractual measures". The term has not been defined further in the Bern Convention context. It may be seen however as linked to the obligation defined in Article 2 of the Convention, for Parties to: "take requisite measures to maintain the population of wild flora and fauna at, or adapt it to, a level which corresponds in particular to ecological, scientific and cultural requirements, while taking account of economic and recreational requirements [...]". The element of this obligation that concerns "adaptation to requirements" suggests that achieving "satisfactory" status may in appropriate cases involve activities for restoration of habitats and species populations, and not only their maintenance. The idea of "maintaining populations" can be considered to involve not only abundance, but also range of distribution (see below) and future population viability, linked to factors such as reproductive success and risks of extinction (the latter being assessed for example for groups of species by the well-established Red List Index).

	The concept of "satisfactory conservation status" has resonance with the related concept of "favourable conservation status" in the European Union context, where the latter is defined in the EU Habitats Directive (1992, Article 1) as follows: "The conservation status of a natural habitat will be taken as 'favourable' when: - its natural range and areas it covers within that range are stable or increasing, and - the specific structure and functions which are necessary for its long-term maintenance exist and are likely to continue to exist for the foreseeable future, and - the conservation status of its typical species is favourable as defined [below]. The conservation status of a species will be taken as 'favourable' when: - population dynamics data on the species concerned indicate that it is maintaining itself on a long-term basis as a viable component of its natural habitats, and - the natural range of the species is neither being reduced nor is likely to be reduced for the foreseeable future, and - there is, and will probably continue to be, a sufficiently large habitat to maintain its populations on a long-term basis". This reflects the earlier definition in the Convention on Migratory Species (1979, Art 1(c)) of favourable conservation status for migratory species, which includes the additional element of the distribution and abundance of the species approaching historic coverage and levels (to the extent that potentially suitable ecosystems exist). The greater detail in these EU and CMS definitions, albeit for the different term "favourable", may be helpful for interpreting "satisfactory" in the Bern Convention context, in particular to ensure that the latter accords with the level of ambition in Article 2 of the Convention.
Semi-natural habitats/ ecosystems	The listing of this term as "habitats/ ecosystems" embraces both habitats and ecosystems, since it is the concept of semi-naturalness that is being defined, rather than the concept of habitat or ecosystem (distinctions between the latter terms are given in the definitions contained in the text of the Convention on Biological Diversity). The glossary for the IPBES Global Assessment Report on Biodiversity and Ecosystem Services (2019) defines "semi-natural habitat" as: "an ecosystem with most of its processes and biodiversity intact, though altered by human activity in strength or abundance relative to the natural state". UNEP-WCMC gives a definition used by the European Investment Bank, as follows: "Semi-natural habitats have ecological assemblages that have been substantially modified in their composition, balance or function by human activities. They may have evolved through traditional agricultural, pastoral or other human activities and depend on their continuation to retain their characteristic composition, structure and function. Despite not being natural, these habitats and ecosystems often have high value in terms of biodiversity and the services they provide".

	https://www.biodiversitya-z.org/content/semi-natural-habitats . Other descriptions give examples rather than defining the concept, or address particular ecosystem types - for example the European Environment Agency refers to semi-natural forest as: "a stand which is composed predominantly of native trees and shrub species which have not been planted". The EU Habitats Directive acknowledges the reality that few environments can be regarded as totally "natural" in the sense of being completely devoid of any human influence, and its definition of "natural habitats" includes those that are semi-natural. (See also separate interpretation of "natural habitats/ ecosystems" above).
Severity (of pressures)	In the specific context of the Strategic Plan, this term applies to monitoring and evaluation associated with Target 2.2, and the corresponding indicator which draws on reporting under Resolution No. 8 (2012) and the EU nature Directives. The term is an expression of the relative significance of the actual or potential negative effects of an anthropogenic pressure on the conservation status of the species that are covered by the Convention. Significance in this sense may involve parameters of spatial scale, temporal duration, and impacts on population biology or ecological functioning, relating *inter alia* to mortality, morbidity, life expectancy, productivity, body condition, behaviour change, likelihood of recovery, and other factors. The guidelines on using the provisional format for reporting under Resolution No. 8 (*https://rm.coe.int/explanatory-notes-and-guidelines-for-the-period-2013-2018-part-1-the-r/16808d336f*) offer two categories in which to judge this, namely: "High importance/ impact: Important direct or immediate influence and/or acting over large areas (a pressure is the major cause or one of the major causes, if acting in combination with other pressures, of significant decline of population size, range or habitat area or deterioration of habitat quality at the biogeographical scale; or pressure acting over large areas preventing the species population or habitat from being restored at favourable conservation status at the biogeographical scale); Medium importance/ impact: Medium direct or immediate influence, mainly indirect influence and/or acting over moderate part of the area/acting only regionally (other pressure not directly or immediately causing significant declines)". The guidelines also suggest that whether a pressure is "preventing species from reaching favourable [conservation] status" is another way to evaluate its actual/ potential severity. One other Multilateral Environmental Agreement takes a similar approach to simple categorisation of actual and potential impacts of pressures, namely the Convention on Migratory Species, the National Report Format for which asks respondents to characterise the "overall relative severity of impact" of identified pressures as "severe", "moderate" or "low".
Sustainable Development Goals	Seventeen Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) form the heart of the UN 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development ("Transforming our world"), adopted by the UN General Assembly in 2015. The Goals, with 169

	associated targets, are the successor to the previous Millennium Development Goals. They cover interlinked issues including poverty, health, education, equality and justice. Goals 14 ("Life below water") and 15 ("Life on land") particularly address nature conservation; but others (for example those relating to clean water, climate action and responsible consumption) are also relevant. *https://sdgs.un.org/goals* . In 2017, a global framework of 231 indicators for the SDGs was also agreed. *https://unstats.un.org/sdgs/indicators/indicators-list/* .
Sustainable use	The term "sustainable use" does not appear in the Bern Convention, but the concept is partly implied in the provisions for permitting "judicious exploitation of certain wild animals and plants in small numbers" in certain circumstances, subject to this "not be[ing] detrimental to the survival of the population concerned". Subsequently the Convention's role has become more broadly and explicitly described in terms of "conservation and sustainable use", including for example in the "Declaration on the conservation and sustainable use of biodiversity in Europe" adopted by the Standing Committee in 2009. The most widely used definition of "sustainable use" in the nature conservation context is that contained in Article 2 of the Convention on Biological Diversity, where it is defined as: "the use of components of biological diversity in a way and at a rate that does not lead to the long-term decline of biological diversity, thereby maintaining its potential to meet the needs and aspirations of present and future generations".
Threatened species	Threatened species are identified by the IUCN Red List of Threatened Species (*https://www.iucnredlist.org/*). The List is organised according to nine categories of assessed extinction risk, but although the overall title for the list is "threatened species", this term is usually used only to refer to those species in the three highest risk categories, of "Critically Endangered", "Endangered" and "Vulnerable". This approach is also reflected in the definition given in the glossary for the IPBES Global Assessment Report.

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