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CONVENTION ON THE CONSERVATION OF EUROPEAN WILDLIFE
AND NATURAL HABITATS

Standing Committee

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Strategic Plan for the Bern Convention for the period to 2030

EIGHTH DRAFT

**Aligned with the [Vision](#) for the Convention adopted by
the Standing Committee in December 2021,
and incorporating input from Working Group consultations
during 2021 and 2022**

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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 make decisions 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 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;
- consider the environmental impact of planning and development;
- promote education and information on conservation;
- share practice and expertise on biodiversity management;
- harmonise legislation on biodiversity protection; 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, hence its overarching aim is entwined with the promotion and protection of human rights and democracy. Through the protection of natural heritage, the Convention safeguards basic human rights, including rights to life,

health, food, livelihood, water, housing and culture. By engaging multiple sectors of society in nature conservation and accepting complaints from concerned citizens, it also strengthens democratic participation.

In 1994 a joint international symposium affirmed in the Monaco Declaration that the Council of Europe has a fundamental role to play in the implementation at regional level of the principles and obligations adopted at global level, and that the objectives of the Bern Convention are largely in line with the objectives of the Convention on Biological Diversity and Agenda 21¹.

In 2009, on the occasion of the 30th anniversary of the signing of the Convention, the Standing Committee adopted a “Declaration on the conservation and sustainable use of biodiversity in Europe: 2010 and beyond”², which reaffirmed the critical role played by the Bern Convention in facilitating the coordinated implementation of global biodiversity obligations in Europe, including relevant parts of the Convention on Biological Diversity, the Convention on Migratory Species and related agreements and the Ramsar Convention; recognised the role of the Bern Convention in promoting coherence in biodiversity policies across the Pan-European region and the African countries involved; and urged Parties to use the Convention as a fundamental instrument for implementing the global post-2010 biodiversity targets. It also in particular urged them to pursue the setting up of the Emerald Network of Areas of Special Conservation Interest.

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. Assessment of progress should be a continuing process 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.

¹ Council of Europe (1994). Monaco Declaration on the role of the Bern Convention in the implementation of worldwide international instruments for the protection of biodiversity. Adopted by the Intergovernmental Symposium on the United Nations Conference on Environment and Development, the Convention on Biological Diversity and the Bern Convention, Monaco, 26-28 September 1994.

² Standing Committee of the Bern Convention (2009). Declaration on the conservation and sustainable use of biodiversity in Europe: 2010 and beyond. Adopted by the Standing Committee at its 29th meeting, Bern, 23-26 November 2009.

C. Context

The Council of Europe has a Strategic Framework for 2021-25³, 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 2022-25⁴ 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 assessments, goals for conserving nature and achieving sustainable use cannot be met by current trajectories, and they may only be achieved through changes at a “transformative” scale, across economic, social, political and technological fields⁵.

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 covers⁶ 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 post-2020 Global Biodiversity Framework, the UN Sustainable Development Goals, and efforts for synergy among biodiversity-related Multilateral Environmental Agreements in general.

D. 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

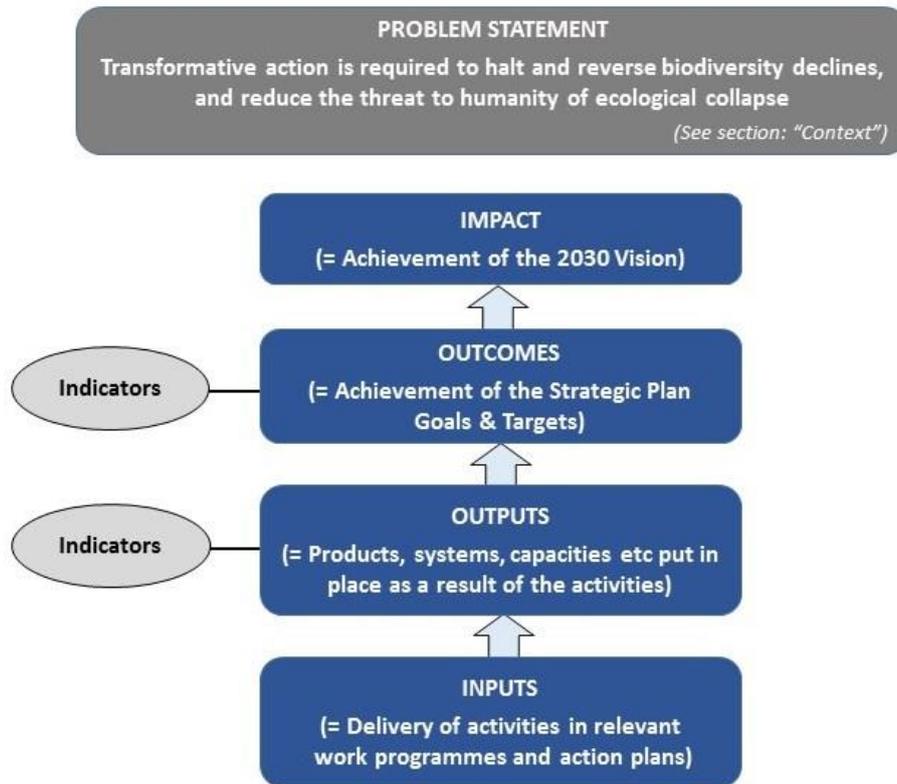
³ See <https://rm.coe.int/CoERMPublicCommonSearchServices/DisplayDCTMContent?documentId=0900001680a07810>.

⁴ See <https://rm.coe.int/0900001680a4d5de>.

⁵ 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.

⁶ The Convention covers almost the entire European continent and several African States.

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 good 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.

E. 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 [ecosystems][habitats] by the Emerald Network⁷ meets the sufficiency targets set for 2030 in the post-2020 Work Plan for the Network⁸.

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

Target 1.4: The species and 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 Committee⁹.

⁷ 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 fauna and flora 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).

⁸ Available at <https://rm.coe.int/evaluation-of-the-2011-2020-emerald-network-workplan-and-proposal-of-a/1680a040a9>.

⁹ 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.

➤ **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: Threatened species are at or are recovering towards a satisfactory conservation status.

Target 2.2: Anthropogenic causes of actual or potential negative effects on the conservation status of wild species of fauna and flora¹⁰ are reduced as far as possible to levels that are not detrimental to the conservation 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 where appropriate to the mitigation of climate change and the adaptation to its effects¹¹.

➤ **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.

¹⁰ 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.

¹¹ This target expects a net gain in climate change mitigation and adaptation, supported by positive biodiversity outcomes. It does not offer a choice between these two things, and it must be emphasised that the Bern Convention's encouragement of nature-based solutions and ecosystem-based approaches in this context is 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. See also the Glossary included in this Plan, which indicates the "nature positive" conditionality in the globally adopted definition of "nature-based solutions".

F. 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 created. Fundamentally also the purpose 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 post-2020 Global Biodiversity Framework (GBF) allows a close correspondence to be made with the Monitoring Framework for the GBF and the indicators defined there¹². 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 has thus been 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 degrees¹³) 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.

¹² [To add a cross-reference to the final version of the GBF Monitoring Framework once it is adopted].

¹³ (Indicators are only ever designed to be an “indication”, they do not purport to provide a comprehensive assessment).

Target	Indicator(s)	Approach
<p>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.</p>		
<p>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).</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> 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). 	<p>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.</p>
<p>1.2 Coverage of natural [ecosystems][habitats] by the Emerald Network meets the sufficiency targets set for 2030 in the post-2020 Work Plan for the Network.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> 1.2 Emerald Network Sufficiency Index. 	<p>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.</p>
<p>1.3 All sites included in the Emerald Network are effectively managed and subject to formal protection or other effective area-based conservation measures.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> 1.3 Extent to which protected areas and other effective area-based conservation measures (OECMs) cover Emerald Network sites. 	<p>The 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 indicator is to focus specifically on <i>coverage</i>, as the most readily measurable and comparable element of the target. There are however various existing tools available for assessing management effectiveness (e.g. METT, R-METT, RAPPAM, PAME), and results of these, in cases where they have been used, could be reported alongside the coverage data. It may also in future become possible to record information on the coverage of Emerald Sites by management plans.</p>
<p>1.4 The species and habitats that the Emerald Network aims to conserve are being maintained at, or progressing towards, a satisfactory conservation status.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> 1.4 Contribution of the Emerald Network to the conservation status of species and habitats. 	<p>The indicator would be expressed as the overall contribution of the Emerald Network to the conservation status of key species and 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”).</p>
<p>1.5 Specific recommendations arising from individual Case Files are followed up and acted</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> 1.5.a [Indicator based on statistics concerning Case File recommendations (e.g. 	<p>Operation based on reports provided to the Standing Committee, and resulting decisions of the Committee.</p>

<p>upon; and cases are resolved and closed within a reasonable timeframe, taking account of any advice provided by the Standing Committee.</p>	<p>proportion implemented, partially implemented, not yet implemented)].</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 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)]. 	
<p><i>GOAL 2: The conservation status of threatened species is improved, the abundance of native species has increased, and human-induced extinctions have been halted.</i></p>		
<p>2.1 Threatened species are at or are recovering towards a satisfactory conservation status.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 2.1.a Conservation status of species, as reported under Resolution No. 8 (2012). • 2.1.b Red List Index for selected species in the Bern Convention area. • 2.1.c Living Planet Index for selected species in the Bern Convention area. • 2.1.d Wild Bird Index for selected species in the Bern Convention area. 	<p>The first of these four indicators 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 are possible.</p> <p>The other three indicators will operate as a specific “cut” of the existing indices referred to, tailored to Bern Convention relevance. Again, a variety of aggregation/ disaggregation options are possible.</p>
<p>2.2 Anthropogenic causes of actual or potential negative effects on the conservation status of wild species of fauna and flora¹⁴ are reduced as far as possible 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"> • 2.2 Trends in frequency and intensity of key anthropogenic pressures impacting on wild species of fauna and flora, including as reported under Resolution No. 8 (2012) and the EU nature Directives. 	<p>To be drawn principally (but not exclusively) 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 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).</p> <p>Other sources may also feed in, including related indicators operated under the Global Biodiversity Framework. (The concept for this indicator is that it will operate as a “composite” or “synthesis” of a variety of source inputs, and this can be open-ended to accommodate new ones as they become operable).</p>
<p><i>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.</i></p>		
<p>3.1 The natural environment thrives, thereby benefiting people’s livelihoods, food and water security, community resilience, well-being and quality of life.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 3.1.a Nature-based quality of life assessment (qualitative summary overview). • 3.1.b Trends in air quality. 	<p>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</p>

¹⁴ 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.

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> 3.1.c Trends in water quality. 	<p>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.</p> <p>The air and water quality indicators are based on the indicator approaches for these issues developed by the OECD and the European Commission.</p>
<p>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.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> 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. 	<p>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.</p> <p>Target 3.2 could potentially be achieved by a positive result for 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.</p> <p>The scope of the assessment should include not only the ways in which/ the extent to which conservation and sustainable use contribute positively to the issues listed, but also the ways in which/ the extent to which they apply safeguards to prevent unintended negative impacts on these same issues.</p>
<p>3.3 Nature-based solutions and ecosystem-based approaches implemented by Bern Convention Parties contribute where appropriate to the mitigation of climate change and the adaptation to its effects.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> 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. 	<p>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.</p> <p>“Nature-based solutions” is interpreted in accordance with the definition adopted by the UN Environment Assembly (UNEA Resolution 5.5, 2022), and “ecosystem-</p>

		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.
<i>GOAL 4: Sufficient resources are available and are used efficiently to achieve all goals and targets in this Plan.</i>		
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.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> 4.1 Resources and capacity available at international level for implementing the Strategic Plan, as assessed for each financial planning period by the Standing Committee. 	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 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.

G. 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 (see Section F above) 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.

H. Relationship to action plans and other instruments for implementation

[To be added]

I. 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.

J. 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. Glossary of terms

Alien species

Case File

Degraded ecosystems

(Ecological) connectivity

(Ecological) integrity

(Ecological) resilience

Ecosystem-based approaches

Emerald Network

Invasive species

Major hazards

Nationally Determined Contribution

Native species

Natura 2000

Natural habitats/ ecosystems

Nature-based solutions

Other effective area-based conservation measures (OECMs)

(Post-2020) Global Biodiversity Framework

Protected area

Recovery

Rehabilitation

Restoration

Satisfactory conservation status

Semi-natural habitats/ ecosystems

Sustainable Development Goals

Sustainable use

Threatened species

Further information about the Bern Convention and the Strategic Plan is available from the Convention Secretariat, Council of Europe, Avenue de l'Europe F-67075 Strasbourg Cedex, France. Tel: +33 (0)3 88 41 20 00. Email: Bern.Convention@coe.int . Web: <https://www.coe.int/en/web/bern-convention>.