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A new global report brings biodiversity governance to a moment of choice

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The first global report around the Kunming-Montreal Global Biodiversity Framework (GBF) marks an important milestone halfway to 2030, within the "Global Review of collective progress" process. Drawing primarily on national reports and other available sources of evidence, it represents the first collective attempt to assess progress towards the GBF's goals and targets and identify implementation challenges and opportunities. While the draft report was released for peer review and will still evolve towards its final version to be examined by the Convention on Biological Diversity (CBD) subsidiary bodies in late

July, it already raises important questions about how progress should be interpreted, which challenges deserve collective attention, and what forms of cooperation and follow-up may be needed. This blog post examines what the first global report is, what it tells us, and the choices it now opens for biodiversity governance.

National realities, to be complemented by global insights and other perspectives?

The first global report will inevitably disappoint those expecting a perfectly measured and comprehensive assessment of global progress. Reporting remains uneven, many updated National Biodiversity Strategies and Action Plans (NBSAPs) have not yet been submitted, data availability varies significantly across targets and countries, and several methodologies and indicators are still being refined. Information remains limited on issues such as the effectiveness of policy measures, and cross-cutting dimensions of the GBF, including whole-of-society approaches. For example, information relating to Indigenous Peoples and local communities (IPLCs) remains fragmented and with considerable variation across targets and countries (see IDDRI's latest brief on IPLCs). These limitations should not be mistaken for the report's central message, however. They are, to a large extent, the realities of biodiversity implementation itself, four years after the adoption of the GBF.

The Global Review (Landry *et al.*, 2026) was deliberately designed as a Party-led exercise that starts primarily from national reports and experiences. This gives a heavy weight for the report's legitimacy: the report reflects where countries stand, showing different capacities, different information systems, varying levels of implementation, and in some cases, important knowledge gaps. In biodiversity governance, the absence of information is often itself seen as one of the implementation challenges. Seen from this perspective, the first global report is a first collective diagnosis grounded in the conditions under which countries are attempting to implement the GBF. This makes the exercise politically credible and useful for the next steps.

At the same time, grounding the global report in national reports does not preclude complementary perspectives. Assessments produced by the IPBES (including recent assessments on transformative change, the nexus approach, or business and biodiversity), other international organizations (e.g. FAO, 2026), civil society, IPLCs (e.g. Local Biodiversity Outlook 3, forthcoming), lessons from projects (e.g. BIODEV2030), and independent analyses (e.g. Immerzeel *et al.*, forthcoming), can help provide broader benchmarks, identify long-term trends and bring into view issues that may not yet be fully reflected in national reporting. Not replacing the report's findings, these complementary perspectives could enrich the conversation.

Narrative, key messages, findings and possible opportunities for action

As agreed by Parties in Panama in 2025, the first global report assesses and aggregates national reports and other available evidence, mostly institutional reports. Drawing on national reports from 129 countries, 3,700 targets from 163 countries, and updated national strategies by 85 Parties, it attempts to organize a large and highly differentiated body of information, identify patterns and suggest where collective attention may increasingly be needed. Not surprisingly, the report resists a simple overall conclusion. It highlights **significant and "unprecedented" momentum and engagement around the GBF**. At the same time, collective ambition does not match the full scope of the GBF, implementation remains highly uneven and **progress is not yet occurring**

at the pace or scale required to achieve its ambitions. Financial, technical and institutional support is not yet commensurate with implementation needs.

The global report therefore proposes several ways of reading collective progress. In its detailed chapters, it examines ambition and implementation for each of the 23 targets, and then for each of the 4 goals, alongside specific considerations related to means of implementation. This level of detail matters as it reveals that different targets and even different elements within targets face different bottlenecks and may require **different forms of support and cooperation**, which may be challenging to address comprehensively in one general message. For instance, the analysis on target 1 reveals significant efforts to reform spatial planning frameworks and deploy new mapping and decision-support tools, while also showing that integrated, participatory and biodiversity-inclusive planning remains far from universal. At the same time, limited data availability and methodological challenges make it difficult to establish a complete global picture of progress towards the target of “100%” or all areas under biodiversity-inclusive spatial planning.

The report also steps back from individual targets and proposes **6 cross-cutting messages on collective progress, alongside 2 additional messages related to planning and review processes**. These messages suggest that some dimensions of the GBF may increasingly deserve collective attention, because they appear to act as enabling conditions for change or recurring bottlenecks across multiple parts of the Framework. The report, for example, points to persistent data and implementation gaps in marine, coastal and inland water ecosystems; to targets and principles that play a cross-cutting role such as harmful incentives and subsidies, policy integration and mainstreaming, or participation and whole-of-society approaches. More broadly, it reveals the challenge of **accelerating action on the socio-economic aspects** of the GBF.

Interestingly, the report also identifies **possible “opportunities” moving forward**. Some may remain broad and are likely to trigger further political discussion, particularly around sensitive issues such as the reform of harmful incentives and subsidies under Target 18, or more generally the national and sectoral transitions that may be needed to accelerate implementation. Other opportunities are more operational and consensual and build on existing instruments and communities. The report points, for example, to the potential role of the new technical and scientific cooperation centres (TSCCs), as peer-learning spaces on implementation or supporting mechanisms to identify and communicate gaps and needs, while implicitly raising questions about the resources, mandates and capacities these mechanisms would require to effectively support implementation at scale. Not providing a single and easy response, the report points toward multiple avenues for action and suggests where cooperation and conversations could concentrate over the coming four years.

The political challenge: how should the global report be translated into action?

The global report generates a substantial amount of information and may require a common “reading grid” toward decision-making. Should collective attention focus on targets that appear to be lagging? Should the emphasis also be placed on transformative change and enabling conditions, in order to unlock barriers to implementation? Should Parties organise discussions around means of implementation, sectoral transitions or whole-of-society approaches? Is the report's proposed structure the most useful to take political action, or should

other reading grids be considered?

SBSTTA and SBI discussions[1] in Nairobi in July-August 2026 will be important as they will review the findings of the report and begin determining how the findings are interpreted and appropriated politically. The recently announced informal technical dialogue planned in Kunming in September may also become a valuable opportunity to bring additional technical insights and experiences into this process and to collectively explore what the findings imply for implementation, perhaps around pathways.

A report, dialogues and a COP decision can provide diagnosis and political direction. They cannot, on their own, be sufficient. What increasingly seems needed is an implementation agenda capable of maintaining attention on several priorities, creating milestones between the first and second Global Review, and connecting emerging findings with cooperation, support and learning opportunities.

Such an agenda need not replicate the structure of the 23 targets. Some pathways could focus on cross-cutting challenges such as finance and means of implementation, whole-of-society approaches and participation, or data and monitoring systems. Others could focus on sectors where transformative change is increasingly required, building on existing CBD work on mainstreaming in agriculture, forestry, fisheries and aquaculture, infrastructure, energy and mining, among others (COP12 and COP13 decisions). And others could focus on specific ecosystems and biomes, even at the regional level.

Importantly, these pathways need not all be negotiated or implemented directly under the Convention. Some could emerge from COP decisions, while others could be carried by coalitions of countries, communities of practice, scientific networks or other voluntary initiatives. Building on the readiness and willingness of some Parties and stakeholders to make progress on some aspects of the GBF, such initiatives could reinforce biodiversity multilateralism by creating spaces for experimentation, cooperation and learning while maintaining a shared diagnosis and political direction under the CBD. For example, on the topic of reforming harmful subsidies, Colombia, Fiji, Brazil and the Philippines could share their experience in partnership with civil society and local farmer stakeholders, while encouraging others to join the bandwagon. While it is intended to address Target 18, it also contributes to Target 2 on ecosystem restoration, Target 10 on sustainable agriculture and Target 14 on policy mainstreaming.

There are opportunities in the coming months within and outside the CBD to gather such coalitions around specific challenges, e.g. the meeting of the Coalition of Finance Ministers for Climate Action in October could address the topic of biodiversity finance. Such discussion spaces could use the Global Review as a backbone to: (1) discuss the collective priorities and responses on a given topic, and (2) connect those responses to an implementation process. The Global Review could provide a diagnosis and decision-making process at the multilateral level; what is still missing is an **enduring platform capable of turning this shared diagnosis into a living ecosystem to accelerate action** before 2030.

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[1] The subsidiary bodies of the CBD are the Subsidiary Body on Scientific, Technical and Technological Advice (SBSTTA) and the Subsidiary Body on Implementation (SBI).

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