



Operationalizing the biodiversity Global Review to strengthen CBD effectiveness: Priorities for COP17 and beyond

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The first Global Review of the Kunming-Montréal Global Biodiversity Framework (GBF) is an important milestone for the Convention on Biological Diversity (CBD). While collective ambition has been agreed upon, it remains uncertain whether implementation of national targets, strategies and actions will, in aggregate, be sufficient to achieve the GBF. The Global Review is therefore an important opportunity to take stock and inform future action. However, as this is its first iteration, uncertainties remain regarding how the process will unfold in practice and how it will be translated into political decision-making.

This *Study* aims to clarify how the Global Review can be further operationalized, and articulates a long-term vision for the Global Review, while identifying concrete entry points to make its first iteration useful for Parties and other stakeholders.

KEY MESSAGES

The Global Review is not merely a technical reporting exercise, but a mechanism aimed at assessing whether the GBF is delivering tangible outcomes towards agreed action targets and long-term goals and identifying the enablers to be implemented and the obstacles to be overcome. As such, it should be conceived as a multi-stakeholder, evidence-based and outcome-oriented process, and a key lever for strengthening the effectiveness of the CBD, grounded in national implementation realities and built through a bottom-up and inclusive approach.

The first Global Review will benefit from over 120 national reports provided by Parties as an important evidence base for the global report, complemented by additional sources provided by stakeholders. This provides a strong foundation for stocktake. However, important methodological and data limitations remain and need to be acknowledged transparently. These limitations highlight both the complexity of assessing progress and the need to strengthen the CBD's monitoring and reviews over time.

COP17 will be key to translate the diagnosis into momentum and levers for transformation. Even as a first exercise, its findings can help identifying barriers to GBF implementation and informing prioritization of where support and reforms are most needed. Parties and stakeholders should seek to highlight these levers while avoiding two risks: formulating overly general findings that would fail to support action, and more explicit attribution of roles and responsibilities which may lead to political deadlocks.

Dedicated dialogues ahead of and at COP17 (across levels, sectors or thematic priorities) will be essential to clarify expected outputs and the results they should trigger post-COP17. This should be complemented by clear stages of high-level engagement from decision-makers, to translate findings into political signals, coordinated action and follow-up within CBD and beyond.

The Global Review should be seen as part of a longer-term cycle. As such, it should evolve into a permanent mechanism for collective responsibility and accountability mechanism. For this to materialize, the first iteration at COP17 must already demonstrate its ability to inform action and cooperation.

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INTRODUCTION: WHY THE GLOBAL REVIEW IS A CRUCIAL MOMENT FOR THE GBF

The adoption of the GBF marked an important milestone for international biodiversity governance. Parties collectively agreed on a comprehensive set of global goals for 2050 and action targets for 2030 to halt and reverse biodiversity loss. Yet agreeing on ambition is only the first step. Whether this ambition will translate into effective national implementation, sufficient resources allocated to biodiversity, and desired outcomes remains uncertain. In this context, the Global Review, understood as the mechanism to assess collective progress in the implementation of the GBF, adopted at COP15, with key political moments at COP17 and then at COP19, operationalizes the GBF transparency and responsibility mechanism, and is both an opportunity and a challenge. While its modalities as a facilitative review mechanism have been adopted at COP16 ([Landry, 2025](#)), different expectations and uncertainties persist regarding what the Global Review will be able to assess, what it will produce or trigger, and what opportunities it provides for Parties. Despite the mandate adopted by COP16, there is a lack of clarity on how the Global Review will be organized in practice, how different inputs will be combined and, above all, how political discussions will be structured around its findings. Capacity and resource constraints, and an overall tight timeline risk undermining the robustness and inclusiveness of the process.

Against this backdrop, this *Study* seeks to contribute to ongoing discussions among Parties and stakeholders on what an effective Global Review mechanism could look like, and how it could work in practice to realize its full potential. Rather than treating the review only as a technical reporting exercise, this paper approaches it as a core element of international environmental governance, with potentially important implications for long-term cooperation.

The objectives of this *Study* are threefold: (1) articulating a positive long-term vision of what the Global Review could become and the benefits it could offer to Parties and stakeholders if designed as a meaningful process; (2) proposing a set of short and medium-term options to make this vision and role as operational as possible, including choices related to process, formats and follow-up; (3) exploring the role the review could

play in enhancing national and international implementation while also preparing the ground for the post-2030 framework. This paper is intended as a contribution to collective reflection; it does not aim to provide definitive answers but rather offers recommendations and analytical insights to inform ongoing and future discussions and negotiations.

BOX 1. METHODOLOGY

This *Study* draws on a qualitative and explorative research approach utilizing dialogues, interviews and literature review.

- A backcasting approach was used, developing a long-term vision of what an effective review could deliver and working backwards to identify short- and medium-term actions and enabling conditions to realize the vision.
- Three online global workshops were organized with Parties and stakeholders (with representatives of 23 Parties—11 developing countries and 12 developed countries—and of more than 20 organizations from civil society, academia, international organizations, private sector, development cooperation, etc.).
- Five regional and stakeholder small-group meetings were held during SBSTTA-27 (more than 30 participants in total), complemented by 10 bilateral interviews conducted during and after the SBSTTA meeting. Many of the participants were already involved in the negotiations around planning, monitoring, reporting and review or were responsible for producing national reports.
- A targeted literature review was carried out focusing on accountability and review mechanisms in international conventions, as well as recent work on trust, partnerships, and implementation-oriented multilateralism.
- In addition, a range of informal and iterative inputs have contributed to shaping the analysis, including another dialogue in Rome (on the sidelines of SBI-6), written comments, and feedback on this document as a *Working Paper* prior to publication.

1. UNDERSTANDING THE PROCESS: WHAT THE GLOBAL REVIEW IS

The CBD Global Review is explicitly designed as a Party-driven, sequenced process to link assessment of the progress made through the global report with interpretation through dialogue and shared learning. This happens through subsidiary bodies (SBSTTA and SBI), additional technical and informal

meetings, and subsequent decision-making at COP. This approach reflects lessons learned from past, but also review cycles from other regimes: without an embedded governance and follow-up process (linking assessment to decision-making), even robust global assessment exercises struggle to support implementation (Qi & Beauchamp, 2024). Below, we explain what has been agreed upon regarding the Global Review and what aspects remain open or uncertain and require further attention.

TABLE 1. Expectations vs. uncertainties and risks for the first Global Review

ELEMENT	WHAT IS DEFINED	KEY UNCERTAINTIES AND IDENTIFIED RISKS
Purpose	Assess collective progress towards the GBF, inform cooperation and action until 2030, no ranking or evaluation of individual Parties or regional groups	Uncertain how findings will concretely inform political and collective prioritization and follow-up at COP17
Nature of the process	Party-led, transparent, facilitative, non-punitive, inclusive, designed to avoid undue burden	How inclusiveness will be ensured in practice given time and resource constraints
Legal mandate	Established under decision 15/6 and operationalized through decision 16/32; two reviews before 2030 (COP17 and COP19). The COP19 review is not defined yet.	Risk of limited guidance on the second Global Review, and no legal mandate for post-2030 Global Reviews yet
Global Review vs. global report	The review is the overall process, the global report is the analytical basis for the process	Risk of conflating the report with the review as a whole, thereby limiting the role of political dialogue, or conversely, sidelining the analytical strength of the report in favour of negotiated outcomes
Governance	AHSTAG (advisory role for the global report, supporting the work done by 3 consultants), SBSTTA (scientific review), SBI (process oversights and recommendations), COP (political decisions)	Very tight sequencing between the national report, development of the global report, and then SBSTTA and SBI may constrain deliberation
Primary inputs	National reports, GBF indicators, global analysis of ambition in national targets and National Biodiversity Strategy and Action Plans (NBSAPs), IPBES and other assessments, multilateral environmental agreements (MEAs), non-state submissions; all feeding into the global report	Uncertain how divergences across sources will be handled, how the process and methodology will adapt and deal with gaps or missing data
Focus of the assessment	Ambition, progress in implementation, and outcomes for biodiversity More than 120 reports included as primary inputs	Analysis of impact of GBF actions on the state of biodiversity limited in the first cycle due to time lags, not all NBSAPs were updated/renewed, several missing reports
Timeline of the first global report and review	National reports submission by end of February, drafting global report March-May, peer-review starting on 1 June, leading to SBSTTA-28/SBI-7 July-August, COP17 October	Extremely compressed timeline for synthesis, digestion, and the decision-making process afterwards
COP17 outputs	Regarding the format: one or several COP decisions, possible high-level declaration Regarding the content and its follow-up: fully open	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Uncertain degree of specificity (e.g. thematic focus, level of detail in guidance) • Uncertain scope of mandates and responsibilities assigned or called to actors • Uncertain how clearly decisions articulate expectations for implementation • Risk of overly general or purely declaratory outcomes with limited operation guidance • Risk of imbalanced framing (e.g. overly focused on constraints and lack of resources, without insufficient attention to efforts, and vice-versa)

2. A SHARED VISION: WHAT THE GLOBAL REVIEW CAN BECOME

The following shared vision emerged in the above-mentioned dialogues, reflecting perspectives from Parties and a broader range of stakeholders, pointing to a review intended to inform both.

In principle, the Global Review needs to demonstrate the (lack of) collective progress in the collective realisation of the GBF action-targets towards 2030 and support the transformative changes the GBF suggests are necessary to achieve its goals. The analysis in the global report will provide the basis to inform and encourage future action and to provide guidance to Parties and non-state actors in making their action more effective.

The review will be retrospective and forward-looking to understand trends and direction of travel. Carefully calibrating the balance between these two dimensions will be key, especially where forward-looking elements relate to questions of ambition, responsibilities and means of implementation.

The Global Review can serve as a mirror to Parties and non-state actors by “putting a thermometer” to show ambitions and the state of progress in implementation. It provides insight on whether, collectively, action-targets towards 2030 will be realized with current national targets, where effective action is taken, positive lessons can be learned and where additional action may be needed to meet the global targets and how. It will also provide a basis for reflecting on the next strategic framework of the CBD, beyond 2030.

In this vision, the analysis of aggregate ambition¹ and of progress in implementation (the global report) is the starting point of the exercise and, taken together with the other components of its process (dialogues, recommendations, see decision 16/32), the Global Review becomes an evidence-based exercise that ultimately is intended to help enhance political will for biodiversity action at the national level as well as at other levels of decision-making and within society.

To be able to realize this, it is indeed important to go beyond the idea of the “Global Review as a report and a technical process”. While the challenges for Parties to report on progress were broadly recognized, a clear view was expressed to understand the Global Review as a mechanism that provides opportunities for improving the effectiveness and scale of biodiversity action at the international level and national level. The identification of key challenges and barriers in the global report will ideally be followed up in a meaningful way in the COP process to enable timely and targeted support and guidance for Parties, as well to help in setting regional and thematic priorities for further action throughout the various elements of the GBF and the CBD-agenda towards 2030 and beyond.

Since the Global Review is currently in its early stages, accepting the challenges and opportunities of a learning-by-doing approach, it can help improve trust and learning and create a culture of collective accountability within CBD and beyond, for both Parties and non-state actors in line with the ambition that the GBF is the biodiversity plan for the world. This way, the Global Review can become an effective and permanent mechanism, that also can be further adapted over time to enhance its workings.

While on a general level participants in the dialogue shared this common vision, areas of divergence emerged, including to what extent this process, and especially the technical assessment (the global analysis of ambition and the global report), needs to be an exclusively and fully Party-driven process. Some Parties and representatives of stakeholder groups envisioned a stronger role for non-state actors, to strengthen the role of the ‘whole of society’ approach in the review and make it relevant to all. Various suggestions were made to have more independent and varied forms of reporting to inform the Global Review. Related to this, several CBD Parties indicated a willingness to go beyond the assessment of collective progress to for example address regional or national progress, and others are not. Lastly, different opinions were expressed on how explicit or specific the Global Review needs to address the question of stepping up efforts if ambition or implementation gaps arise (called ‘ratchet’ by some),² and whether the review needs to address the question of what constitutes a fair contribution for Parties to this stepping up of efforts.

It will be important to keep these concerns by Parties into account in further developing the positive vision outlined above. The “facilitative approach” taken by the CBD and often mentioned in COP decisions may help to overcome these concerns and barriers. A facilitative approach, in this context, refers to a process designed to support Parties (and actors) in identifying challenges, sharing experiences, and accessing support, and not assessing gaps in a punitive manner. At the same time, a facilitative approach still needs to provide clarity on the most important issues related to GBF implementation, however doing so in ways that do not undermine collective action.

¹ The “global analysis”, in the CBD COP language, which is conducted by the Secretariat for every COP since the adoption of the GBF in Montreal.

² Paragraph 20 “recognizes that Parties may take the outcome of the global review into account in future revisions and implementation of their national biodiversity strategies and action plans, including the provision of means of implementation to developing country Parties, with a view to improving actions and efforts, as appropriate” of the decision 15/8.

3. THE GLOBAL REVIEW AS A LONG-TERM ARCHITECTURE-BUILDING MECHANISM FOR CONTINUOUS IMPROVEMENT

This section provides a short overview of academic literature on responsibility and accountability mechanisms, including lessons learned from other environmental agreements. Building on the vision outlined above, it adds an analytical layer to clarify the functions the Global Review could fulfil over time.

In principle, three options exist for strengthening accountability mechanisms: 1) increase the effectiveness of current, usually facilitative mechanism in the short term; 2) increase the use of 'coercive' informal and formal accountability mechanisms outside the regime, such as through trade sanctions; and 3) convince States to agree on stronger sanction-based compliance mechanisms (Karlsson-Vinkhuyzen and Dahl, 2025). While this *Study* focuses on the Global Review as a facilitative mechanism, as agreed by Parties, it is important to remind that indeed other, stronger institutional or compliance options are possible and could be considered for the post-2030 period (Wemaëre *et al.*, 2018). However, currently, in a context where many Parties remain cautious about delegating authority, accepting stronger forms of accountability or engaging in compliance mechanisms, expectations regarding approaches to responsibility and transparency should remain realistic. We aim to help overcome resistance amongst Parties and strengthen the facilitative approach chosen by Parties, while ensuring that it remains operational.

This paper positions the Global Review as a mechanism for long-term architecture building. This reflects a broader gap in the current CBD framework, as existing processes often remain fragmented, short-term or disconnected from decision-making. The notion of long-term architecture building mechanism refers to the continued contribution the Global Review can make to improve the effectiveness of the CBD and the improvements it can induce in national and international implementation as well as in the machinery of the CBD itself (decisions, workplans, guidance, support, capacities, data, etc). For a responsibility and transparency mechanism to indeed have that function of architecture building and stabilize the GBF regime beyond 2030, several conditions need to be met. The process will need to be perceived as fair and legitimate to support ownership, with whole-of-government and whole-of-society approaches being part of the process and all stakeholders having the opportunity to participate meaningfully. The process also needs to be honest, both in terms of its methodological foundations and in the way it reflects successes and challenges, and ultimately be effective in supporting national, non-state action and the CBD process.

Based on an analysis of five global review processes,³ Beuermann *et al.* (2020) identify three governance functions a global

review can fulfil to help improve the workings of an environmental regime. This includes (1) aligning participants ("guidance and signal") to the course of action that is desired and necessary, (2) ensuring transparency ("transparency and accountability") and providing relevant data in a stocktaking process to identify and address progress and problems in implementation, and (3) providing a means for the regime and regime participants to grow over time ("knowledge and learning").

To further unpack the notion of responsibility and transparency, three alternatives, and largely complementary approaches can be identified in the literature on institutional design and accountability (Karlsson-Vinkhuyzen and Dahl, 2025). *Shared accountability* is the companion to shared responsibility. Instead of finger-pointing which State is most culpable or capable in addressing an issue, it emphasizes the ethical allocation of responsibility, driven by concern for people and nature. Within CBD, this is highly relevant as the Global Review mechanism could provide a space to collectively reflect on how efforts and responsibilities should evolve over time to achieve the 2050 goals. Closely related is the concept of *broad accountability*, which relates to the question of what actors are held to account for. In this approach, accountability mechanisms and the information flows to them should not be narrowly focused on (measurable) targets, as is often the tendency of global review processes, nor should they only consider process obligations such as reporting, which is common in MEAs. Rather, it could better capture broader conditions shaping implementation. The Global Review provides an opportunity to operationalize this by going beyond indicators and reporting obligations, and reflecting a wider set of actions, outcomes, views, etc. Lastly, *dynamic accountability* considers learning as an outcome of engaging in accountability mechanisms. It includes evaluating the right actions beyond simple, technical compliance with rules and regulations. The accountability process can then function as a mirror to the organization, compelling organizations and authorities to reflect on their actions or policies and stimulating their learning capacities. Ideally, public organizations should do this alongside relevant stakeholders (Landry *et al.*, 2024). Again, the Global Review can support this by creating iterative feedback loops between the assessment, dialogues and decision-making, enabling Parties and stakeholders to adjust their approaches over time.

A core capacity for creating responsibility and transparency, and an important step in trust building, is indeed the reflexivity of actors involved (Karlsson-Vinkhuyzen and Dahl, 2025) which they can exercise through three key capabilities: recognizing the impact of their actions on the interconnected environmental and social systems and their dependence on those systems; rethinking their core values and practices in light of such recognition; and responding by adapting those values and practices in appropriate ways.

In further operationalizing the Global Review, and making the CBD Global Review a facilitative but still practical mechanism, several lessons from different regimes and literature (Beuermann *et al.*, 2020; Karlsson-Vinkhuyzen and Dahl, 2025; Landry *et al.*, 2024; Qi & Beauchamp, 2024; Widerberg *et al.*, 2021) point out the need to:

³ The Global Stocktake (UNFCCC), the Talanoa Dialogue, the Agenda 2030 High-level Political Forum, Review processes under the UN human rights system, the Review processes of the Montreal Protocol.

- **Create linkages between the outcomes of global review processes to the formulation of national policies and actions** as reviews do not “travel” on their own, while recognizing that such linkages may take diverse forms;
- **Strengthen broad accountability by encouraging state and non-state**, formal and informal, technical and political actors to monitor inputs, process, and outcomes;
- **Strengthen learning and ownership**, through informal and technical dialogues, country peer-to-peer review, non-state action reviews;
- **Provide or support relevant and sufficient capacities** at national, regional and international levels, creating a diverse multi-actor, and multi- knowledge base review landscape.

These elements illustrate how the Global Review can function as a mechanism that progressively structures interactions, learning and accountability over time. This is why it can be understood as a long-term architecture-building tool for continuous improvement within the CBD, and the following sections outline possible options to operationalize these functions.

4. WHAT CAN WE EXPECT FROM THE FIRST GLOBAL REVIEW?

4.1. A pragmatic view on the first review

Expectations regarding the first Global Review need to be carefully aligned with what the process can realistically deliver at this stage. The timing of the exercise is particularly challenging: Parties were expected to submit the primary inputs, the national report, by end of February 2026. Positively, over 120 countries did submit their National Report by the deadline. But that same deadline has left little time for Parties (1) to take a step back on the state of implementation, as many countries submitted their national targets and/or NBSAPs only a few years or even sometimes months ago and some are still working on it—their national reports might be incomplete and not capture progress made under the GBF; and is leaving little time for (2) synthesis and analysis ahead of COP17. Information will likely remain incomplete and uneven, as reporting capacities differ significantly across countries.

Moreover, nearly all Party representatives (both developed and developing countries) that were part of the dialogues or were interviewed underlined the difficulty of reporting on all elements of the GBF and applying the monitoring framework. This also reflects a broader challenge in linking ambition, action, and outcome: while information on national commitments, and national actions is increasingly available, assessing their outcomes for biodiversity remains complex and time lagged. Changes in the state of biodiversity (in relation to the 2050 goals) as a result of actions taken under the GBF take time to materialize. At best some progress in achieving the 2030 action-targets can be reported in the first review cycle.

The first Global Review will then primarily provide insights into levels of ambition, the range of actions undertaken and emerging challenges, and its value will lie in offering an initial picture of how the GBF is being implemented in practice. The second Global Review will take place in a different context; it should benefit from more complete and mature reporting and implementation, and the availability of the global IPBES assessment that will be published in 2028 and which will provide the latest insights in the state of biodiversity and ecosystems, indirect and direct drivers of biodiversity loss, and the effectiveness of actions taken. This could allow for a more integrated analysis.⁴

The first global report will thus provide a reference point for evaluating progress in implementation of action-targets for reviews to come and over time. As countries strengthen their reporting systems (through greater ownership, improved capacities, better access to data, etc.), future reviews are expected to provide a more solid basis for assessing progress on the determinants of transformative change targeted by the GBF.

These limitations are an inherent feature of a first review cycle in a complex multilateral setting. Importantly, they also already carry valuable information: they reveal where GBF implementation is progressing, where it is lagging (including in the application of the transparency framework), and where structural bottlenecks persist in practice. The assessment of uneven reporting, data gaps, and capacity constraints point to underlying challenges in governance, coordination and resource mobilization that are directly relevant for follow-up at the CBD.

In this realistic view on the first Global Review, the question becomes how to provide usable intelligence. Its primary contribution will not be the production of a “perfect” global report, combining the data of thousands of national targets, 196 NBSAPs and national reports, and the resulting improvements in the state of biodiversity collectively. Rather, the first Global Review can still help identify what appears to work to protect biodiversity, what does not and why, drawing not only on national reports, but also on complementary sources of information (technical assessments, scientific inputs, qualitative submissions on challenges and opportunities, etc.). In this sense, it can function less as an evaluation of whether the GBF is on track, and rather as a diagnosis tool to inform collective decision-making. While the global report may rely largely on the monitoring framework and indicators, providing usable information also requires other adequate methodologies for analyzing national reports, that go beyond the progress on indicators. It may also emerge through the interpretation of findings in technical and political dialogues. Indeed, given the breadth and diversity of information (including qualitative insights) there remains significant analytical potential. Over time, such practices could help strengthen the methodological foundations of future review cycles.

⁴ Noting that the second IPBES global assessment will consider trends up to 2025. It will also consider options to strengthen the implementation of the GBF.

As a first exercise, the Global Review must also strike a careful balance between different inputs. It is essential that the process remains clearly Party-led (a lesson learnt from previous assessments like the Global Biodiversity Outlooks) to ensure political ownership and relevance. However, would it rely exclusively on national reports, the global report would limit the capacity of the exercise to capture implementation realities, emerging challenges and enabling conditions across contexts. The challenge is therefore to ensure Parties retain oversight of the process through the main governance body (SBI), while opening the Global Review process to a diversity of inputs and to trigger the necessary conversations. This will foster ownership beyond delegations and for a wider set of stakeholder groups beyond CBD Parties (see 5.c).

Finally, and in connection with this, transparency regarding methodological choices and limitations will be critical. Being explicit about what the Global Review can and cannot assess at this stage is a prerequisite for learning and adjustment in future cycles. And it is also essential for building trust among Parties, particularly in the context of strained multilateralism. Openness about uncertainty can contribute to a more constructive negotiation environment, by shifting the focus from blaming to problem-solving.

4.2. Outcomes: Ambition and implementation

A recurring source of confusion in current discussions around the Global Review relates to the distinction between ambition and implementation. While closely linked, these two dimensions play different roles and must be handled with care if the review is to remain credible and useful.

The Global Review is not designed to renegotiate ambition in the narrow sense of prescribing how ambitious individual Parties' national targets should be. Such political choices remain the prerogative of Parties, and attempts to turn this mechanism into an arena for ranking national ambition(s) risk undermining ownership and trust in the mechanism. At the same time, the Global Review is not blind to ambition. The global report explicitly includes the "global analysis" of NBSAPs and national targets, which provides a collective picture of how current national commitments add up to the global goals and targets. The Global Review thus inevitably sheds light on collective ambition, not by attributing responsibility to individual countries but by identifying aggregate patterns, gaps and trends (see the [SBI-6 document](#)).

Importantly, decision 15/6 recognizes that Parties may take the outcomes of the Global Review into account when revising or updating their commitments "with a view to improving actions and efforts". This suggests that the Global Review could contribute, over time, to higher levels of ambition. However, translating collective findings into national revisions will be politically and analytically challenging. Without an explicit discussion on questions of fairness, effort-sharing and differentiated capacities, it will remain difficult to interpret what "insufficient ambition" means in practice or to determine who should

do more, how and under which conditions ([Lehmann et al., 2025](#)). In the absence of an agreed discussion on how to fairly share GBF implementation or any mandatory individual review or compliance committee under the CBD ([Maljean-Dubois et al., 2022](#)), questions of individual ambition can also legitimately be put forward by civil society and other stakeholders, drawing on information made publicly available through the online reporting tool, or by encouraging countries to engage in the Voluntary Peer Review (VPR) process, which has proven effective in strengthening the quality of NBSAPs ([Ulloa, 2018](#)).⁵ All in all, the first Global Review may serve as a basis to make these underlying questions visible, and initiate a more structured discussion in subsequent COP cycles. But some Parties could choose to engage more proactively with the findings through coalitions on specific themes or targets, or voluntary initiatives.

Our analysis of interviews and dialogues, as well as analysis of national targets and NBSAPs ([Secretariat of the CBD, 2025; Immerzeel et al., 2026, forthcoming](#)) shows a very heterogeneous situation. Some have submitted ambitious targets including several elements on implementation, others have announced high levels of ambition but do not precise policies or needs. Many have submitted targets that only partially cover all the elements of the GBF, while others have not been able to submit updated targets at all. These differences reflect both political choices and structural constraints related to data, institution capacity, cross-sectoral coordination and access to resources, as described above. By making visible where implementation is enabled or blocked, the Global Review can help create an enabling and peer-driven dynamic that supports learning, targeted cooperation and progressive convergence. The level of specificity at which such findings are presented will be key. If framed too narrowly, or attributed too directly, they may risk undermining agreement. The challenge is to ensure it provides sufficiently granular insights to inform action, while framing them in a way that highlights systemic patterns, shared challenges and enabling conditions.

If the Global Review reveals significant quantitative or qualitative ambition gaps for certain targets or themes, understanding the underlying implementation constraints will be essential, to help mobilize momentum (for instance through existing tools or partnerships such as coalitions of willing Parties, see section 5). This assumes that insufficient ambition often reflects unresolved implementation challenges or lack of political visibility.

⁵ Several countries have recently decided to voluntarily engage in this mechanism.

5. HOW TO MAKE THE FIRST GLOBAL REVIEW MEANINGFUL AT COP17?

Making the first Global Review meaningful at COP17 requires addressing both the substance of the discussions it enables and the processes through which its findings are interpreted and translated into decision-making and follow-up. At the core of this is the need to shape a credible overarching narrative, which frames how findings are interpreted and what they are expected to deliver.

In a context of incomplete information, the credibility of the exercise will depend as much on how its findings are framed as on what they contain (or not). The Global Review will function as a signal-setting exercise, shaping how progress, gaps and priorities are understood and taken up. What is emphasized and how it is communicated will influence perceptions of progress and the direction of future action.

A recurring concern is the importance of showcasing the achievements of the GBF, which is key to promoting the necessity of international cooperation. As a matter of fact, there may already be evidence of the effects of the GBF—even if it is only on stated ambition as of now. However, an overly selective narrative risks weakening, rather than strengthening the credibility of the process. Rather than asking whether the “glass is half full or half empty”, the Global Review should help assess whether it is filling up or draining, and along which trajectory. Importantly, such a **dynamic reading of progress** also opens space for discussions on differentiated contributions (see above): understanding not only whether collective efforts are sufficient, but whether some countries can or should realistically do more, in light of what others are already implementing. The review will be scrutinized not only by governments, but also by a wider set of actors who expect consistency between commitments, evidence and political choices. A credible narrative must therefore combine the demonstration of progress with an honest account of remaining gaps and implementation challenges, and clearly explain how these challenges are being addressed, or where progress remains difficult, and why.

Discussions across dialogues also point to a more political question related to the narrative: to what extent should the Global Review explicitly highlight sectors and economic drivers most responsible for biodiversity loss. In particular, some actors have raised the question of whether the CBD should develop an equivalent narrative to the “phasing-out” or “transitioning away from fossil fuels” framing seen in the climate regime. While some see value in clearly naming sectors and transitions to guide action and finally tackle these difficult conversations somewhere, others caution that doing so may introduce political tensions that could hinder consensus over time. Navigating this will be key, as a credible narrative does not necessarily require prescriptive or confrontational language, but should provide sufficient clarity on where change is needed and in which systems. The Global Review can help progressively build a shared understanding of **priority transitions**, even where agreement remains difficult.

5.1. Framing the conversations: What substance?

Making the first Global Review meaningful at COP17 (and beyond) requires moving beyond the assessment of progress and gaps, towards the use of findings to inform choices. Without becoming prescriptive, the Global Review can still help orient discussions by highlighting where approaches appear promising, where structural challenges persist, and where collective attention could be focused. At this stage, its value does not lie in exhaustiveness (see limits in Section 4), but in its ability to function as a **diagnosis tool**—to open space for coordinated responses.

While the thematic areas mentioned below do not seek to prejudge the content or conclusions of the forthcoming global report and are not intended as prescriptive, they illustrate how insights could be translated into decision-making. These options are grounded in existing and recent scientific and technical literature on biodiversity governance and implementation, analysis of national targets (CBD, 2026, forthcoming; Immerzeel *et al.*, 2026, forthcoming), as well as in signals or key implementation challenges emerging from interviews and dialogues with Parties and other stakeholders.

Several complementary ways of structuring these “results” can be envisaged, presented below. The Global Review can reveal different types of progress and gaps, requiring different types of responses: ambition gaps, structural gaps, capacities and data gaps, and responsibilities gaps.

5.1.1. Sectoral drivers of biodiversity loss

A central contribution of the Global Review can be to help focus political attention on areas where biodiversity loss is structurally occurring and help grow over time in learning how to deal with these issues. The scientific literature is clear on this point: the IPBES reports (including the Nexus Assessment and Transformative Change, 2024) consistently identify a few economic sectors as the main drivers of biodiversity loss. These include: (1) agriculture and livestock, (2) fisheries, (3) forestry, (4) infrastructure development, (5) mining, and (6) energy systems (in particular, fossil fuel-based energy production) through their impacts on land-use change, climate change, resource extraction, pollution etc. Importantly, findings suggest that biodiversity loss cannot be addressed through isolated measures—meaningful progress depends on the systematic integration of biodiversity through a variety of levers across sectoral policies and actions, levels of governance (IPBES, 2024; Cardona Santos *et al.*, 2023). The Global Review offers an opportunity to create space for structured conversations with sectoral ministries, economic planners, development banks and other actors shaping economic systems. Illustrations of such cross-sectoral transformation spaces are provided in **Box 2**.

BOX 2. CROSS-CUTTING MAINSTREAMING – AGRICULTURE AND FOOD SYSTEMS AS A TRANSFORMATION SPACE

Agriculture and food systems are among the most significant drivers of biodiversity loss globally, while also being central to food security, rural livelihoods and economic development. As such, agriculture cuts across multiple GBF targets covering threats and opportunities, and direct and indirect drivers, including those related to land-use change (T1), pollution (T7), sustainable use and management (T10), ecosystem services (T11), sustainable consumption and footprint (T16), harmful subsidies and incentives (T18) and many others. This makes agriculture and food systems an important mainstreaming challenge for the GBF.

Our hypothesis: progress on agriculture-related dimensions is likely to remain difficult. Agriculture is a politically sensitive and economically strategic sector, closely linked to development models, sovereignty, trade. Recent global shocks (food price volatility, geopolitical tensions, extreme weather events) have further reinforced risk-averse positions and short-term priorities.

Implications for the Global Review: the Global Review could make visible cross-target inconsistencies (for instance where progress on protected areas coexists with continued pressure from agriculture expansion or use of inputs). It could surface the advantages of nature-inclusive forms of agriculture, systemic bottlenecks such as misaligned incentives, tradeoffs difficulties, and global obstacles

Possible follow-up: the Global Review could help catalyze coordinated dialogues on agriculture supported by coalitions and bring together partner countries in key value chains or countries facing similar challenges or willing to explore reform pathways. These dialogues could focus on specific levers (subsidy reform, land-use planning, transition support, etc.), and where relevant, explore interactions between producer and consumer countries and stakeholders (e.g. demand-side shifts and their implications for supply chains). Existing initiatives such as the FAO-led support to "Agri-NBSAPs", trade-related sustainability provisions or emerging disclosure/risk-management frameworks could support these conversations through multilateral or ministerial (a group of countries) cooperation. Here, the Global Review could help in legitimizing difficult conversations on agriculture as a cross-cutting transformative space.

5.1.2. Structural challenges regarding resources, capacities and other systemic risks

At the same time, the review is likely to reveal that many implementation challenges are rooted in structural constraints, understood here as the underlying conditions that shape countries and stakeholders' ability to act across targets and sectors. Across interviews and dialogues, these issues consistently emerged as central. These structural dimensions include, first, constraints in financial resources and access to finance, ranging from the availability and access of international support to constraints in domestic public budgets and fiscal space (debt). The challenges are often compounded by fragmented funding architectures and difficulties accessing finance aligned with national needs (see the illustration in **Box 3**).

Challenges and barriers to implementation also relate to institutional and governance capacities, including coordination across ministries and levels of governance, as well as beyond governments. A recurring point raised in the dialogues concerns the practical implementation of a whole-of-government and whole-of-society approach. In this context, the Global Review can play a role in making these structural dimensions more visible, helping to distinguish different types of challenges and opportunities, and to identify coordinated responses and peer-learning opportunities.

This dimension can also be considered in conjunction with the focus on sectoral drivers of biodiversity loss, as many stakeholders underline that effective responses may be integrating sector-specific transitions with discussions on enabling conditions, including financing, capacities and equity (just transition) considerations (as also expressed in **Box 2**).

In addition, many emphasized the importance of reflecting systemic risks that biodiversity loss poses to economic stability, security, resilience and development, as well as opportunities associated with more sustainable pathways, thus strengthening the relevance of the Global Review for a larger set of decision-makers, including those operating in other international arenas or organizations beyond the CBD.

BOX 3. RESOURCES, CAPACITIES AND FINANCIAL CONSTRAINTS: ENABLING IMPLEMENTATION

Across targets and sectors, a recurring constraint relates to limited resources and access to finance, especially for developing countries. These constraints affect the ability to design ambitious strategies, to implement them effectively and to report consistently on progress.

Our hypothesis: evidence may suggest that gaps are often closely intertwined with resource and capacity constraints. Limited fiscal space, fragmented access to international finance, weak institution coordination can lead countries to adopt cautious targets, prioritize short-term deliverable or delay implementation. A key challenge may be the translation of needs into financing decisions and international cooperation

Implications for the Global Review: the review can play a role by elevating country needs as a central object of international deliberation, including beyond purely financial dimensions. Needs are increasingly documented but appear to rarely be used to guide financing decisions at the international level (Landry, 2026, forthcoming). The review can help make this visible and orient development banks, donors, and funds toward more coordinated approaches based on nationally defined needs, for instance by supporting the establishment of country platforms to coordinate the identification of the country's development needs—including those related to biodiversity protection—as well as the various donors and funding sources or targeted partnerships. A COP decision could also invite stronger alignment with other international institutions and organizations, to better reflect and respond to country-defined needs in financing strategies, providing them with more precise recommendations.

A key issue is the methodological challenge of how to clearly identify country needs in the global report. While this is likely to remain limited in the first iteration because of many constraints, it raises an important question for the second cycle: how to more systematically integrate insights on needs (those identified in national reports but also in processes such as BIOFIN or others), and how to trigger a conversation around needs.

5.1.3. A target-based perspective

In parallel, the results can also be approached through a target-based lens, examining how progress and challenges manifest across specific GBF targets. This perspective can help identify where gaps are most pronounced “within targets” and what types of more specific responses may be supported. Certain targets already offer well-defined entry points for collective action. An illustration of such a target-based result is provided in **Box 4**.

One key advantage of this approach is that it remains closely anchored in the structure of the GBF and its 2030 targets, providing a concrete basis for assessing progress and identifying priorities. Drawing on lessons from the Aichi period, where progress was uneven within targets (their elements), this perspective can help focus attention on the elements where implementation remains limited. It can therefore support the identification and exchange of good practices, emerging solutions, practical pathways for implementation. By making this more visible, it may also create space for voluntary adjustments or strengthening of national targets and actions plans, in line with Parties' capacities and priorities.

BOX 4. TARGET-BASED ILLUSTRATION

Target 3 on protected areas is one of the most visible and politically salient. It combines a clear quantitative objective (30% of land and seas under protection) with strong qualitative dimensions (management effectiveness, rights of IPLCs, etc.). Target 11 on Nature's Contributions to People is less politically prominent and not quantified, however being central to the framework as it links biodiversity outcomes to human well-being, livelihoods and development.

Our hypothesis: if the Global Review identified significant quantitative and qualitative gaps, this is likely to reflect ambition constraints, but also challenges like land-tenure issues, governance capacity, financing and trade-offs with development priorities, food security and infrastructure.

Implications for the Global Review: it could help structure differentiated cooperative responses by clarifying the nature of gaps and framing priority questions for the follow-up to be taken through targeted dialogues and partnerships.

Illustrations:

- Target 3: at the CBD, the Global Review may highlight where gaps are most pronounced such as marine vs. terrestrial coverage, quality of protected areas, connectivity, rights of indigenous peoples and local communities, and where international support is most needed. This could help catalyze momentum through existing coalitions (such as the High Ambition Coalition for Nature & People) combined with financing announcements, technical assistance and policy support.
- Target 11: here the Global Review may highlight the coverage of the elements such as the contributions that are prioritized, actions undertaken to restore them and for the benefit of whom, as well as systemic challenges related to cross-sectoral coordination and data availability and signal the need for closer alignment with other planning processes. Follow-up action could be driven through mixed dialogues with different types of actors to explore how ecosystems services and nature's contributions to people are reflected in sectoral decision-making and investment priorities (for instance through ecosystem accounting).

5.1.4. Strengthening capacities and reviews over time

For the Global Review to be meaningful, it must also be workable in practice and avoid burdensome processes. It could then be seen as some kind of “return on investments”. Across interviews and dialogues, a consistent message emerged from national focal points, delegates and technical teams: capacity constraints and data-related challenges remain a major bottleneck, not only for reporting, but for sustained engagement with the review process itself. Many actors are operating under significant time (and resource) pressure, especially as the GBF is an 8-year framework, with limited human and analytical resources to compile, interpret and synthesize information across ministries and sectors.

Addressing these constraints should therefore be seen as an integral part of making the Global Review an effective exercise. Strengthening capacities (institutional and analytical) is essential to enable broader and more meaningful participation in the review, and to avoid reinforcing existing asymmetries between Parties. This includes targeted support for national coordination, guidance on reporting expectations, and opportunities for peer learning to reduce duplication of effort and reporting fatigue. Greater support for the analytical and research community could help strengthen the interpretation of findings and their translation into decision-making. Qualitative inputs (on actions, challenges, success stories) may remain under-analyzed in the global report, despite their importance for learning and policy relevance and deserve more attention.

In addition, while Parties are increasingly expected to report on progress across a wide range of targets, data availability, lack of baseline information, and usability of international indicators nationally remain uneven. For some focal points, the difficulty lies less in the absence of data than in the fragmentation of information across sources and institutions, or impossibility of accessing these data because of confidentiality. Investing in supporting mechanisms is not only about improving the quality of reporting in the short term. It is also a key condition for strengthening ownership of the Global Review as a collective exercise. When Parties are better supported in navigating reporting requirements and data challenges, the Review is more likely to be perceived as a useful diagnosis tool (at the national and regional level) rather than an additional burden. This, in turn, creates the conditions for more consistent engagement, richer submissions, and more constructive dialogue and learning over time.

In this perspective, one important avenue could be to better align the follow-up of the Global Review with the emerging network of regional and subregional Technical and Scientific Cooperation support Centers (TSCC) nominated by the COP. These centers could play a role in supporting data collection, analysis and reporting and facilitating knowledge exchanges, provided that adequate resources are mobilized. The period between COP17 and COP18 represents a critical window to operationalize such support, synchronizing with the "capacity-building" agenda item. Early results in terms of strengthened capacities, improved data systems and targeted assistance could help ensure that Parties are better equipped to engage with the second Global Review cycle. At the same time, this phase could provide an opportunity for collective reflexivity, allowing Parties and stakeholders to identify and address methodological gaps, refine approaches, and progressively strengthen the robustness and usefulness of the Global Review.

5.1.5. Integrating justice and differentiation

Finally, structuring meaningful discussions also requires engaging with questions of justice and differentiation. There is broad agreement that achieving the 2050 goals requires transformative change at the scale of entire economic systems. However, recent debates have also shown that transformative change cannot remain an abstract or generic objective. For such

change to be meaningful, it must engage with questions of what is being transformed, for whom, and at whose expense (Fransen *et al.*, 2025).

This is precisely where questions of justice come to the front, and where differentiation is essential to ensure that transformative change is not only economy-wide but also fair, feasible and context-sensitive. Rather than opposing concepts, justice and differentiation operate at different levels of governance: the Global Review can frame collective challenges and responsibilities, and complementary dialogues are needed to unpack differentiated realities, needs and response options. Indeed, while the global report can provide a consolidated picture of collective progress (and challenges), it is neither designed nor mandated to differentiate findings by regions, development profile or biomes/ecological context. Attempting to do so within a single global synthesis would risk oversimplification and undermining the exercise (criticism to go over mandate). At the same time, differentiation is essential if the findings of the Global Review are to inform meaningful responses, as biodiversity challenges, costs of implementation and trade-offs vary widely across ecological and socio-economic contexts. Encouragingly, differentiated analyses are already emerging through other channels, including scientific assessments, regional platforms, and from other sectoral or financial actors, which can complement the Global Review, and be included in the targeted conversations (or not).

Rather than overloading the global report, a key opportunity lies in articulating how its aggregate findings can be taken up and further unpacked through regionally or ecologically relevant dialogues, partnerships, and analytical work, as illustrated in boxes 2,3,4. This would allow differentiation to inform targeted political responses without becoming prescriptive, punitive or undermining the collective and facilitative nature of the Global Review.

Although the first Global Review is not mandated to resolve these issues, it can play an important role in making them more visible and legitimate within the CBD. Recognizing these questions explicitly at COP17, as a result of the Global Review, would already represent a meaningful step forward, signaling that implementation challenges cannot be addressed without engaging with differentiated responsibilities, effort-sharing and justice. COP17 could initiate a structured discussion toward subsequent COP cycles, particularly at COP18, where Parties will be expected to start shaping the post-2030 framework, as it will also mark the start of the second Global Review cycle.

5.2. How to operationalize?

Based on the experience of other similar processes, especially the UNFCCC Global Stocktake (Landry, *et al.* 2024), the translation of the assessment into decisions and follow-up processes does not happen automatically. It requires deliberate choices on how discussions are organized until COP17, how decisions are framed and how follow-up is structured beyond COP17. These suggestions are also relevant to consider for the second review.

Note: the authors are mindful of the significant resource, time and capacity constraints and options listed below are not intended

as a checklist to be implemented in full. This is a menu of possible pathways, some of which could be explored incrementally, selectively or in combination, depending on priorities and available resources. Importantly, these are not limited to COP17 and are relevant for shaping the architecture and effectiveness of subsequent global review cycles.

5.2.1. Preparing decisions through structured dialogues in 2026

The first condition for meaningful outcomes is early and structured preparation, following a logical sequencing. The process is expected to build on the open peer review of the draft global report starting in June, followed by its consideration by SBSTTA and SBI (July-August 2026, Nairobi), formulating recommendations to COP17. Rather than concentrating discussions during subsidiary bodies in Nairobi and then at COP itself, there is a strong case for organizing complementary and supporting dialogues until and at COP17, building on the first draft of the global report and on complementary analytical and stakeholder inputs. These dialogues can serve different but complementary purposes. Additionally, differentiation could be explored through informal thematic, regional, or biome-relevant dialogues rather than through the global report itself.

— **Technical dialogues**, including those mandated under existing decisions, can help unpack evidence in the global report, act as an exercise to enable peer-review and ownership, underlining methodological choices and data limitations. For the mandated "technical dialogues", lessons from the UNFCCC GST technical dialogues suggest that the credibility of such exchanges depends on careful process design: combining formal plenary moments that allow Parties and non-state actors to state positions with smaller, moderated thematic sessions that enable genuine peer learning and deeper engagement with evidence. A transparent "learning-by-doing" approach, supported by advance information notes, iterative adjustments based on feedback, and clear protocols for how informal discussions are captured, helped build buy-in while managing concerns over mandate and balance (Winkler & Akhtar, 2024). However, procedural innovations alone are insufficient to advance equity, and resources are necessary to ensure participation. Inclusive dialogues enhanced participation and peer-learning but their influence on outcomes remained limited within UNFCCC due to weak articulation between technical and political phases (Klinsky, et al. 2026). Several limits were also highlighted: time and logistical constraints, burden on smaller delegations, risk of siloed discussions. Technical dialogues can also play a more operational role by structuring the interpretation of findings and identifying ways forward. This could involve organizing additional discussions along the different entry points (by type of gap, thematic or sectoral issues, actor, bringing together relevant communities to reflect on their respective roles). Such configurations can help move beyond a purely descriptive reading of the report and support a more targeted understanding of "what needs to change and by whom". To maximize their impact,

the outcomes of these dialogues will ideally be clearly articulated with COP17 negotiations.

- **Political dialogues**. While the global report and technical dialogues, and subsequent negotiations, are essential to establish a shared evidence basis, some clarity on prioritization and direction of travel, they are not, on their own, sufficient to trigger political action. Experience from other multilateral review mechanisms shows that without dedicated political spaces to clarify priorities, interpret findings, and explore possible collective responses, especially to enable arbitrage, review exercises can lead to watered-down results (Herrera, et al. 2025). Political dialogues are therefore essential to translate aggregate findings into meaningful choices, manage tensions between ambition, implementation and equity, and prepare decisions upstream. They also help broaden ownership, critical to influence real-economy decisions and international cooperation. Different configurations of participation may be considered depending on the topic addressed, including regional or context-specific groupings (South-South, or North-North exchanges) as well as more diverse formats bringing together countries facing related challenges (North-South dialogues). These dialogues do not need to take the form of formal negotiations; several formats could be envisaged:
 - Presidency-led senior political dialogues, before and during the high-level segments at COP17. This could also be prepared through a "high-level" dialogue the margins of a technical dialogue, if it happens a few weeks before COP17, and after Nairobi sessions.
 - Targeted ministerial or cross-ministerial dialogues on a specific sectoral or finance issue (agriculture, infrastructure, etc.), with for instance couples of ministers or senior delegates involved before and at COP17.
 - Target-specific political dialogues or on a limited number of priority targets or systemic challenges (protected areas, restoration, harmful subsidies, etc.).
 - Regional or national dialogues to address specific political situations (before COP17).
- **Mixed dialogues** could bring together actors beyond governments and Parties on specific sectoral issues. These dialogues would not aim to negotiate formal outcomes but rather to build coalitions of the willing around concrete implementation pathways. They could translate aggregate Global Review findings into actionable cooperation opportunities and partnerships on key specific issues. In practice, such dialogues could be hosted and funded by a small number of leading non-state actors, Parties, coalitions, philanthropic or development partners. It could be supported by international organizations, and anchored in existing platforms (alliances, clubs, sectoral initiatives) where trust and operational capacity exist. Depending on the priorities and leadership of participating actors, they could take different forms (regional, biome-relevant, target-focused, or non-state actor or sector-specific) with a flexible geometry reflecting where momentum and resources are available. This would allow actors to pick up specific threads

from the Global Review and mobilize tailored responses. Crucially, these mixed dialogues can also become the place where Parties and non-state actors put weight behind the process, by exchanging views but also by committing enabling resources, functioning as “results-oriented bridges” between diagnosis and implementation. An example could focus on ecosystem restoration, where gaps that could be identified *via* the Global Review intersect with implementation demand and existing initiatives. Such a dialogue could be politically backed by a small coalition of interested Parties, with convening and technical support from organizations such as FAO, regional development banks or initiatives like the NBSAP Accelerator Partnership. This kind of approach would prioritize political and technical backing of existing initiatives, and alignment of existing efforts, rather than multiplying new ones.

Taken together, these spaces allow Parties to identify, in advance, areas where choices will be required and reduce the risk of last-minute negotiations. Importantly, such dialogues should not aim to converge prematurely on a single outcome, but rather clarify where consensus or divergence is likely to emerge and develop a portfolio of response options and decisions as an answer to the global report.

5.2.2. Choosing the right decision formats at COP17

The format of COP17 decisions will also play a critical role in shaping the signal and operational follow-up. Several options are possible, each serving different functions.

- A set of thematic or targeted COP decisions, accompanied by a cover decision, could combine political visibility and messages with operational guidance. This could be a longer process, requiring more negotiation time and strong leadership from the COP Presidency with other Parties leading as well.
- A single, consolidated COP decision on the Global Review could provide coherence, but may risk diluting specific follow-up mandates.
- A high-level political declaration adopted during the ministerial segment, could reinforce narrative and political momentum, while remaining complementary to more technical decision(s).

These formats should not be seen as mutually exclusive. What matters is less the choice of a single format than the clarity of the messages conveyed, and the mandates attached to them. In all cases, COP17 should articulate a set of response options, signalling how Parties intend to use the findings of the Global Review to guide further action. Importantly, the outcomes of the Global Review should not be understood as limited to formal COP decisions, they may also take the form of partnerships, coalitions, roadmaps or platforms emerging from the dialogues described above—contributing to implementation beyond the formal CBD process.

5.2.3. Ensuring structured follow-up beyond COP17

Finally, the credibility of COP17 outcomes will depend on what happens afterwards. Without a structured follow-up, even well-crafted decisions risk remaining symbolic. Ensuring continuity beyond COP17 requires clarity on mandates, timelines and responsibilities, as well as a shared sense of direction towards COP18 and COP19.

In the context of the CBD, follow-up will not take the form of binding requests for Parties to revise ambition. More realistic and potentially more effective pathways lie in voluntary mechanisms, building on the language already embedded in decision 15/6, which invites Parties to update or revise their national targets and NBSAPs after the Global Review. A possible avenue is the development of guidance on how Parties may use the findings of the Global Review to identify gaps, constraints and support needs. Such guidance would not prescribe outcomes but could help structure domestic reflections by clarifying what kinds of questions the Global Review is intended to inform. Regional dialogues (already mandated at the CBD) and VPRs could play a key role in supporting this process, by providing spaces for peer exchange, shared learning (while remaining fully voluntary and “supportive”). Beyond national planning, follow-up should also be understood as a strategic entry point for strengthening international cooperation. The Global Review can help surface shared challenges, systemic bottlenecks and collective priorities that are difficult for countries to address alone. For instance, linking these findings to cooperation-oriented mechanisms (including outside of CBD) can make the review directly useful for mobilizing support, aligning finance and fostering joint action. This could take the form of multilateral or minilateral partnerships, the Global Review being a coordination signal to orient international cooperation toward equitable, demand-driven partnerships where finance, technical assistance and policy support reinforce each other, e.g. reinforcing the establishment of **country platforms**. A growing body of literature on climate partnerships shows that such arrangements can be grounded in mutual trust, shared norms and process legitimacy. Lessons highlight the importance of sustained political dialogue and the need to decouple financial contributions from excessive conditionality ([von Lüpke, 2025](#)). In addition, follow-up in terms of international cooperation go beyond supporting provision of resources to developing countries. It can also create a space to reflect on collection action, for instance involving the development of thematic or sectoral roadmaps or coalitions, or others, to support more targeted implementation efforts.

TABLE 2. Options of follow up formats and functions

TYPE OF FOLLOW-UP	OPTIONS
National-level uptake	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Revision or update of NBSAPs and national targets • National or sectoral roadmaps • Use of findings in other planning or budgeting processes • Voluntary peer-review
International cooperation mechanisms	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Coalition of countries committing on specific results of the Global Review • Thematic or sectoral roadmaps (shared direction with milestones) • Joint initiatives or programmes (implementation-focused) • Other cooperation frameworks or partnerships: support to country platforms for instance
Mobilization frameworks	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • "Action agendas" to mobilize actors around common targets, beyond Parties • Revitalize the Action Agenda under CBD, together with UNFCCC and UNCCD
Targeted implementation "sprints"	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • On short-term, problem-focused efforts (for instance on specific elements of targets), with technical assistance programmes and support mechanisms.
Coordination and exchange platforms	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Knowledge-sharing platforms • Communities of practice • Regional coordination mechanisms (TSCC for instance)
Process follow-up	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Workshops or dialogues within CBD processes (target partnerships, regional dialogues, etc.) • The overall PMRR agenda item

6. BEYOND COP17: CONSOLIDATING THE REVIEW MECHANISM TOWARDS COP18 AND COP19

6.1. COP17 is understood as the place where the Global Review “ends” but is actually a starting point (2026)

Beyond COP17, the central challenge is to ensure that the Global Review evolves into a durable and effective mechanism. This requires early decisions at COP17 not only on immediate follow-up, but also on how the Review will be carried forward, adjusted and strengthened over time. Parties could adopt mandates that explicitly frame the review as an iterative mechanism with a view to learning, adjustment and consolidation, for instance with a study assessing the effectiveness of the first exercise (for more reflexivity, especially on methodological and procedural gaps). Such mandates could clarify expectations regarding follow-up discussions, future inputs, and the role of successive COPs in maintaining political momentum around the Global Review. COP17 could also help anchor supporting mechanisms, including the network of Technical and Scientific Cooperation support Centers (TSCC), as part of the broader review mechanism to ensure that capacities, data systems and

analytical support evolve in parallel with the review process itself.

6.2. COP18 to consolidate the process and accelerate action (2027–2028)

COP18 could play a particularly important role as an intermediate political moment. Rather than reopening the substance of the Global Review, COP18 could provide a dedicated space to take stock of how the Review has been used in practice: how Parties have engaged with its findings collectively, how it has informed national or international action, and where its added value has been most evident. This would also be an opportunity to reflect on procedural aspects, such as the organization of different types of dialogues, the balance between different inputs, or the support provided to Parties, and to make targeted adjustments where needed for the next Global Review. COP18 may also be the moment where modalities for the second Global Review cycle will be adopted and started. Ensuring that these modalities build on the lessons learned will be key. COP18 could also provide a first structured space to advance discussions on questions of differentiation, effort-sharing and justice, which are likely to become central as Parties reflect on how to translate collective findings into national actions. In parallel, it will coincide with early stages of discussions on the post-2030 framework, making it a moment to connect lessons with long-term strategic orientations.

6.3. COP19 and the second Global Review (2029–2030)

Looking ahead to COP19, the second Global Review will take place in a markedly different context. By then, Parties and other stakeholders will have had more time to engage with the GBF, reporting capacities and ownership may have improved (especially if targeted support is adopted at COP17), and crucially, a new IPBES assessment on the state of biodiversity will be available (2028) and will inform the political discussion on the level of ambition for the post-2030 period. This will help combining stronger ambition and implementation signals with more robust outcome-level information. It will take place in a context where negotiations on the post-2030 framework are advancing, raising questions about how short-term implementation cycles (to 2030) connect with longer-term pathways towards 2050.

At COP19, it will be important to secure the Global Review as a standing element of the CBD architecture, with a permanent mandate, more precise timelines and responsibilities beyond 2030. This includes ensuring adequate support for analytical work, sustained engagement from Parties, and continuity across COP cycles. It will become an investment in the credibility and effectiveness of the CBD over time, to achieve the 2050 vision.

CONCLUSION: REFLECTIONS ON THE GLOBAL REVIEW — CONSOLIDATION RATHER THAN REINVENTION

In a broader sense, the importance of the Global Review extends beyond biodiversity governance alone. In a context of contested multilateralism, limited trust and competing global priorities, the ability to collectively assess progress, acknowledge limits, and organize political responses cannot be underestimated. The propositions highlighted in this *Study*, as part of the facilitative approach adopted by CBD, may help putting the Global Review to work and contribute to taking away concerns Parties may have.

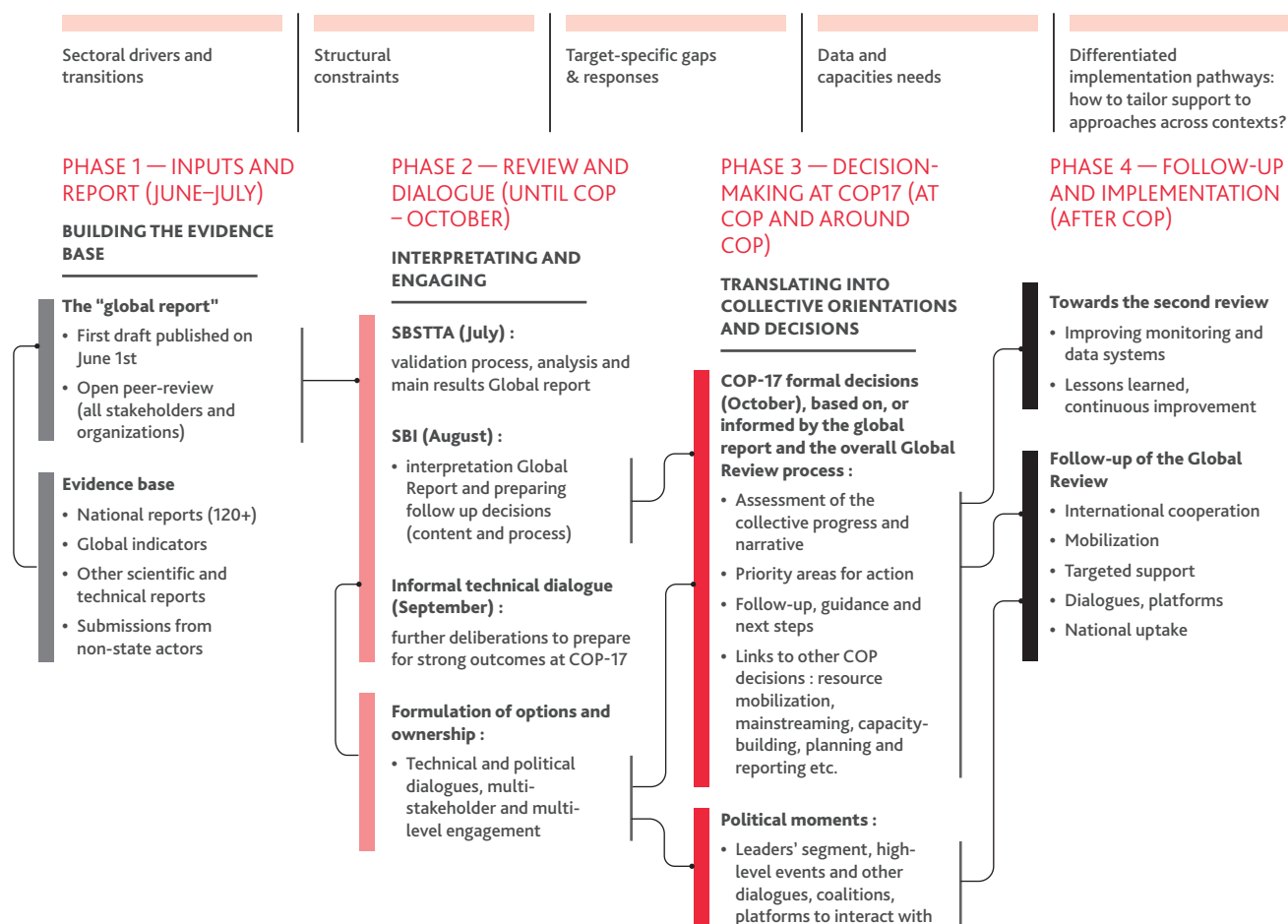
Reflecting on the post-2030 framework, several options can still be envisaged (e.g. designing a completely new framework or update a few elements). A strong signal we received from Parties and stakeholders for the future of the CBD is the need to avoid reopening negotiations on the overall structure

of the GBF. Both Parties and civil society actors emphasized that implementation and appropriation take time, and that frequent renegotiation (every 10 years) risks undermining ownership, coherence and political focus. In this context, consolidation rather than reinvention appears to be the dominant preference, to finally enter the “implementation era”.

At the same time, consolidation does not imply that the current framework is fully adequate. Levels of ambition of the 2030 global targets, although challenging to fully implement, are unlikely to be sufficient to meet the 2050 biodiversity goals (Kok, *et al.*, 2024) and will require additional efforts beyond 2030. This tension between the need for stability and the need for increased ambition poses a central governance challenge for the coming decade and for the CBD. The Global Review offers a potential way to navigate this tension. It can support incremental updating and refinement, while preserving the core architecture and shared commitments of the GBF. As discussions will unfold, the role of the Global Review could become increasingly central to the effectiveness and legitimacy of the CBD.

How the Global Review can inform action, key lenses for action and responses

These approaches are complementary and interacting ways to structure the Global Review's responses



Operationalizing the biodiversity Global Review to strengthen CBD effectiveness: Priorities for COP17 and beyond

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The Institute for Sustainable Development and International Relations (IDDRI) is an independent think tank that facilitates the transition towards sustainable development. It was founded in 2001. To achieve this, IDDRI identifies the conditions and proposes the tools for integrating sustainable development into policies. It takes action at different levels, from international cooperation to that of national and sub-national governments and private companies, with each level informing the other. As a research institute and a dialogue platform, IDDRI creates the conditions for a shared analysis and expertise between stakeholders. It connects them in a transparent, collaborative manner, based on leading interdisciplinary research. IDDRI then makes its analyses and proposals available to all. Four issues are central to the institute's activities: climate, biodiversity and ecosystems, oceans, and sustainable development governance.

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