



**European Committee
of the Regions**

**Commission for
the Environment,
Climate Change and Energy**

ENVE

**Contribution of EU local
and regional authorities to
the 14th meeting of the UN Convention
on Biodiversity
(CBD COP 14)**



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Summary

This report aims to inform the work of the European Committee of the Regions (CoR) in the drafting of an Opinion as Contribution of EU local and regional authorities (LRA hereafter) to CBD COP 14 (Nov. 2018, Sharm El Sheikh, Egypt). It is based on desk research and the review of relevant literature. It presents the role of the LRA in achieving a successful implementation of the Aichi Biodiversity Targets (ABTs) of the CBD Strategic Plan for Biodiversity 2011-2020 and proposes recommendations on the main negotiations area for the post-2020 framework to be agreed in 2020 at CBD COP 15 in Beijing. The contribution of the CoR to the preparation of the EU positions for these negotiations is essential to shape ambitious yet realistic proposals grounded in sound multilevel governance approaches that will guarantee better implementation and effective delivery on the ground.

The determining role of LRA for the implementation of EU policies and legislation to achieve the Aichi Biodiversity Targets has been largely recognised by CBD decisions and EU action plans, in particular with the direct association of the CoR through inter-institutional cooperation with the EC for the elaboration and implementation of the new Action for Nature, People and the Economy. The ABTs are closely interlinked with the Sustainable Development Goals (SDG), including objectives for climate change mitigation and adaptation. The implementation of the 2030 agenda at the local and regional level with the process of “Localising the SDGs” and the yearly Voluntary National Review to the UN High Level Political Forum can thus provide important opportunities for synergies, in particular for mainstreaming of biodiversity and ecosystem protection requirements in sectoral policies. It also creates new momentum for mobilisation on a broader basis and for awareness raising, including of policy decision makers, at all levels of governance.

The alarming conclusions from IPBES¹ 6 (March 2018) call for all parties to step up efforts towards achieving the ABTs. The run up to CBD COP 14 and COP 15 present multiple opportunities for LRA and their networks to engage, mobilise and contribute effectively to the process, including the preparation of national and European implementation reports to the CBD, regional conferences for the development of post-2020 proposals and the prospect to build on the experience of the preparation for UNFCCC COP 21 National Determined Contributions process. Shortcomings, delays and challenges in the multilevel governance approach for the implementation of the current Strategic Plan in the EU need to be addressed for the next period. The EU high level political agenda

¹ Intergovernmental Science-Policy Platform on Biodiversity and Ecosystem Services (IPBES).

should clearly integrate and prioritise the biodiversity and sustainable development objectives in the scenarios for the Future of Europe.

Recommendations proposed to the CoR in preparation for the EU contributions for the post-2020 CBD framework and CBD COP 14 relate to the following points: addressing the state of urgency and increasing mobilisation to take urgent, bolder actions building on partnerships with LRA; strengthening dialogue and formal inter-institutional cooperation with LRA; fostering stronger coherence among the biodiversity, SDGs and climate action agendas; updating and consolidating the CBD Plan of Action on Subnational Governments, Cities and other Local Authorities; enhancing multilevel governance and synergies to support efforts for SDG 11; making the resource mobilisation strategy an integral part of the new plan; promoting and strengthening the CBD Communication Education and Public Awareness work program with particular attention to LRA needs; taking into consideration the development of Locally Determined Contributions in the preparation of NDCs for biodiversity.

1. Context of the Study

The Strategic Plan for Biodiversity 2011–2020 adopted at the 10th Conference of the Parties (COP 10) to the Convention on Biological Diversity (CBD), is a ten-year framework for all contracting parties and stakeholders to take coherent and urgent actions to halt the loss of biodiversity, ensure sustainable use of natural resources, and to ensure fair and equitable sharing of the benefits arising from the use of genetic resources². It comprises a Vision for 2050, five strategic goals and twenty targets, known as the Aichi Biodiversity Targets (ABT). CBD COP 15 will consider in 2020 in Beijing (People’s Republic of China) the final assessment of the implementation of the Strategic Plan and achievement of the twenty ABT. It will also have to agree on the follow up to the 2020 Plan and related means of implementation, including resource mobilisation³. The preparatory work for the follow up to the 2020 Plan started in 2017 with the launch of a comprehensive and large participatory process to include contributions from a large spectrum of stakeholders, and other Rio Conventions to develop proposals for the post-2020 framework. The assessment reports of the Intergovernmental Science-Policy Platform on Biodiversity and Ecosystem Services (IPBES) presented on 26 March 2018 points at the urgent need to step up efforts to halt and reverse the unsustainable use of nature in order to limit the dramatic consequences for people’s well-being in all parts/regions of the world⁴. CBD COP 14 (10 to 22 November 2018, Sharm El Sheikh, Egypt) will be an important step to generate renewed commitments for the implementation of the current Strategic Plan and to progress in the preparation for the post-2020 framework.

The role of the LRA in this participatory process is critical for the Committee of the Regions (CoR hereafter), as an advisory body representing the interests of regional and local authorities in the EU and whose mission is to involve regional and local authorities in the European decision-making process encouraging greater citizen participation⁵.

² <https://www.cbd.int/undb/media/factsheets/undb-factsheet-sp-en.pdf>

³ CBD/COP/DEC/XIII/1, para. 32, 16 December 2016.

⁴ IPBES Press release, Human well-being at risk. Landmark reports highlight options to protect and restore nature and its vital contributions to people” <https://www.ipbes.net/news/media-release-biodiversity-nature%E2%80%99s-contributions-continue-%C2%A0dangerous-decline-scientists-warn>, 26 March 2018.

⁵ Mission Statement of the Committee of the Regions:
<http://cor.europa.eu/en/about/Documents/Mission%20statement/EN.pdf>

The determining role of LRA in the implementation of policies and legislation to achieve the biodiversity objectives has been largely recognized by CBD decisions and EU action plans. The contribution of the CoR to the preparation of the EU positions for these negotiations is essential to shape ambitious proposals grounded in sound multilevel governance approaches that will guarantee better implementation and effective delivery on the ground.

2. Methodology and structure of the report

According to the Terms of Reference, the methodology for the preparation of this report is based on desk research and the review of relevant literature. The structure of the report follows the format recommended by the specifications of the contract, namely:

- Part 1 EU regional and local authorities' role in implementing the Strategic Plan for Biodiversity 2011-2020
- Part 2 Implementing biodiversity-related targets under Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) at regional and local levels
- Part 3 Regional and local authorities in the global post-2020 framework
- Part 4 How to facilitate and strengthen implementation by regional and local authorities of the policies to implement the follow-up to the Strategic Plan for Biodiversity 2011-2020?
- Part 5 Recommendations on the main negotiation area for the post-2020 policy framework at the UN CBD COP 14

In the context of this report the term 'Local and Regional Authorities' in its abbreviation (LRA) is generally used to cover other terms with similar meanings such as "subnational governments" and "cities and regional governments" that are used in relevant policy documents. However, the use of these terms is respected when citing those individual reference policy documents.

Part 1: EU regional and local authorities' role in implementing the Strategic Plan for Biodiversity 2011-2020

The Strategic Plan for Biodiversity 2011-2020 adopted by the Conference of the Parties to the CBD in 2010 aims to ensure that by '2050, biodiversity is valued, conserved, restored and wisely used, maintaining ecosystem services, sustaining a healthy planet and delivering benefits essential for all people'⁶. Parties have agreed to implement it through measures at national and subnational level.

The numerous CBD decisions over the last decade⁷ referring directly to actions to be undertaken at the subnational level by LRA illustrates the increasing recognition of their roles as key actors to reach the CBD biodiversity goals. Likewise, in the EU, LRA's engagement through multilevel governance approaches is crucial to the effective delivery of most objectives of the European Biodiversity Strategy to 2020⁸. However, depending on the territorial organisation of EU Member States and the degree of decentralisation, regionalisation or federalism, LRA's competencies to implement the global and European biodiversity agenda vary⁹. At the EU level, through direct association of the CoR for the elaboration and implementation of the new Action Plan for Nature, People and the Economy¹⁰, LRAs have been reinforced in their role as strategic partners for these objectives

In order to give an overview of the wide extent of LRA's role in implementing SPB 2011-2020, Section 1.1 reviews the actions foreseen under the CBD decisions focussing on subnational and local governments' actions. Section 1.2 considers EU LRA's role in relation to the EU Biodiversity Strategy to 2020 and new initiatives set up following its mid-term review.

⁶ <https://www.cbd.int/undb/media/factsheets/undb-factsheet-sp-en.pdf>

⁷ See CBD Decision IX/28 on Promoting Engagement of Cities and Local Authorities; UNEP/CBD/COP/DEC/IX/28 9 October 2008.

⁸ See for example European Parliament Resolution of 20 April 2012 on Our life insurance, our natural capital: an EU Biodiversity Strategy to 2020 Para. 31, P7 TA(2012)0146; as well as Committee of the Regions' Outlook. Opinion 'Multilevel governance in promoting the EU Biodiversity. Strategy to 2020 and implementing the international Aichi Targets' (CoR. 2013/8074), adopted 26 June 2014.

⁹ See Para. 4 in Opinion of the Committee of the Regions — Multilevel governance in promoting the EU Biodiversity Strategy to 2020 and implementing the international Aichi Targets, 2014/C 271/09. <http://eur-lex.europa.eu/legal-content/EN/ALL/?uri=CELEX%3A52013IR8074>

¹⁰ See Communication from the Commission to the European Parliament, the Council, the European Economic and Social Committee and the Committee of the Regions "An Action Plan for Nature, People and the Economy", COM(2017) 198 final.

Section 1.1 CBD decisions on subnational and local governments actions for the implementation of SPB 2011-2020

The CBD Strategic Plan 2011–2020 provides a ten-year framework for all contracting parties and stakeholders to take effective and urgent action to halt the loss of biodiversity in order to ensure that by 2020 ecosystems are resilient and continue to provide essential services for nature, human well-being and poverty eradication¹¹.

CBD COP 10 with Decision X/22 including the Plan of Action on Subnational Governments, Cities and Other Local Authorities for Biodiversity (2011-2020)¹² marks an important step in formalising the importance of LRA’s engagement for the delivery of the objectives of the Convention. The Action Plan provides an overarching framework and guidance to foster multilevel cooperation for the implementation of the Strategic Plan at the subnational level and focusses on LRA as “governmental key stakeholders for ultimately implementing the CBD and mainstreaming biodiversity actions¹³. It includes an indicative list of measures to support subnational governments in their actions to reach the ABTs. These activities refer to the different roles LRA can undertake to implement the Strategic Plan at their level, in partnership with national governments and other entities. They can be presented through a typology of five categories, namely “local and regional authorities’ involvement by their national/regional governments in governance processes”; “national/regional legislative enabling frameworks planning and support for regional biodiversity strategic action plans (RBSAPs) and local biodiversity strategic action plans (LBSAPs) and implementation measures; national/regional funding/financing support”; “LRA cooperation on biodiversity issues” including organising/supporting networks, cross border cooperation; LRA key actions, including development of RBASP, LBSAP, awareness raising and communication, involvement in research and key stakeholders partnerships¹⁴. This list of actions reflects the wide diversity of roles that LRA can undertake to ensure a comprehensive, coherent and coordinated implementation of the Strategic Plan at their levels. It also reflects the important roles the LRA are expected to take for raising awareness, mainstreaming biodiversity across policy areas, bringing technical expertise and

¹¹ <https://www.cbd.int/undb/media/factsheets/undb-factsheet-sp-en.pdf>

¹² UNEP/CBD/COP/DEC/X/22, Plan of Action on Subnational Governments, Cities and Other Local Authorities for Biodiversity, 29 October 2010.

¹³ McKenna Davis and Holger Gerdes (Ecologic Institute) and Pamela Muehlmann (ICLEI), Multilevel-governance of our natural capital: the contribution of regional and local authorities to the EU Biodiversity Strategy 2020 and the Aichi Biodiversity Targets, Part A June 2014, p. 4. <https://www.ecologic.eu/sites/files/publication/2014/deliverablea.pdf>

¹⁴ Ibid, p. 20

promoting an active involvement of the public and key economic sectors in the implementation of the Strategic Plan for Biodiversity.

Decision XI/8 adopted at COP 11¹⁵ puts the emphasis on actions for national governments to undertake in partnership with LRA along the five categories:

- developing guidelines and capacity-building initiatives;
- developing, enhancing or adapting local and subnational biodiversity strategies and action plans,
- mainstreaming biodiversity into sustainable development, in line with the national frameworks;
- supporting initiatives by networks of local and subnational governments that contributes directly to the achievement of the Aichi Targets;
- ensuring the inclusion of major civil society groups, including workers and trade unions, as well as youth fully in all relevant processes, in particular in the implementation of the Strategic Plan (Section B & C of decision XI/8)

Decision XII/9 on Engagement with subnational and local governments adopted at COP 12 in 2014 focusses on urbanisation, land use planning and better integration. Eight other decisions out of thirty-five, including on resource mobilisation, poverty eradication, scientific and technical needs, enhancement of capacity building and identification of needs, refer to the subnational and local levels to assess progress and enhance implementation.

At COP 13, the 5th Global Biodiversity Summit of Cities and Subnational Governments presented the Quintana Roo Communiqué on Mainstreaming Local and Subnational Biodiversity Action 2016¹⁶, illustrating the relevance of LRA to progress on mainstreaming as foreseen under CBD Decision XIII/3.

This overview of the main CBD decisions for which LRA's engagement is required illustrates the broad scope of LRA's role in the multilevel governance approach necessary for the effective implementation of the CBD Strategic plan¹⁷.

¹⁵ UNEP/CBD/COP/DEC/XI/8 Engagement of stakeholders, major groups and subnational authorities, 5 December 2012.

¹⁶ UNEP/CBD/COP/13/INF/49 Quintana Roo Communiqué on Mainstreaming Local and Subnational Biodiversity Action 2016, 31 January 2017.

¹⁷ See UNEP/CBD/COP/11/INF/32 Report of the Executive Secretary on the Implementation of Decision X/22: Progress made by National, Subnational and Local Governments, October 2012.

Section 1.2 Role of EU LRA in relation to EU Biodiversity Strategy to 2020

At the European level, the EU Biodiversity Strategy to 2020 is the reference policy framework to implement the CBD Strategic plan in the EU. Its main objective is to halt the loss of biodiversity and the degradation of ecosystem services in the EU by 2020 and restoring them in so far as feasible while stepping up the EU contribution to averting global biodiversity loss. It acknowledges the importance of multilevel governance for biodiversity and the complementary role of the European, national, regional and local level engagement stating that "*...the shared EU and CBD targets need to be pursued through a mix of sub-national, national, and EU-level action*" and that the European Commission (EC) seeks to build effective long-lasting partnerships with "*...stakeholders involved in spatial planning and land use management in implementing biodiversity strategies at all levels*".

There are already good examples showing how the involvement of stakeholders support the implementation of key targets of the EU Biodiversity Strategy that can be used as models and be replicated elsewhere. For example, in Spain, SEO/Birdlife (Spanish NGO) developed a project to promote the use of ‘Natura 2000 product’ as a label of origin based on criteria related to proper site management and providing a marketing tool for labelled products in supermarkets in the cities of Zaragoza and Barcelona. The results showed that a majority of participants in customer surveys were prepared to pay more for the same product if it had the “Natura 2000 Product” label, with actual sales of the same product with the label being significantly higher than without it¹⁸. This initiative implements Target 6 “to provide the right market signals for biodiversity conservation, and work to reform, phase out and eliminate harmful subsidies at both EU and Member State levels, and to provide positive incentives for biodiversity conservation and sustainable use”.

Existing initiatives where LRA lead on the implementation of those targets can also be replicated and promoted. For example, the ‘Green belt’ project in the Barcelona Metropolitan Region (LIFE00 ENV/ E/000415) illustrates a successful implementation of a local plan to develop ecosystem restoration actions and promote a model for sustainable land-use planning with “non-development” land in order to limit the impact of urban sprawl from the city, preserving sustainable farming practices and promoting education.¹⁹. This

¹⁸ Milieu, IEEP and ICF, *Evaluation Study to support the Fitness Check of the Birds and Habitats Directives*, March 2016.

¹⁹ LIFE Focus, LIFE and local authorities: Helping regions and municipalities tackle environmental challenges http://ec.europa.eu/environment/life/publications/lifepublications/lifefocus/documents/local_authorities.pdf, p.50.

example is directly linked with the implementation of Target 2 on the maintenance and restoration of ecosystems and Target 3 on integrating biodiversity targets into rural development strategies.

Furthermore, the role of LRA in increasing stakeholder awareness and involvement, and improving implementation of the Birds and Habitats Directives (Target 1, Action 3) has been successfully developed by the French authorities, which have designed an awareness raising and information scheme for the establishment of the Natura 2000 network²⁰. The scheme was based on the empowerment of local facilitators linked to the LRA to raise awareness about the meaning of Natura 2000 and meet with local stakeholders to facilitate agreements and encourage best practice behaviours²¹. It is recognised that this system has led to an increase in the acceptance of the Nature Directives²².

The 2015 mid-term review of the EU Biodiversity Strategy refers specifically to the role of LRA to make steady progress to reach the 2020 targets. This concerns, in particular, Targets 1 and 2, for which the assessment points at the need for “further investments, coupled with capacity building and the integration of green infrastructure into national and sub-national planning frameworks”; and Target 3 with the need to “Increase the contribution of agriculture and forestry to maintaining and enhancing biodiversity” for which the assessment points at the role of LRA together with national governments to make the choice to take up on the options offered by the Common Agricultural Policy (CAP) to make use of the opportunities for “biodiversity favourable” schemes.

There is an increasing recognition of LRA’s role at the EU level to deliver on the European Biodiversity Strategy to 2020²³, in particular following on the conclusions of the Fitness Check of the EU Nature Directives and the adoption of the new EU Action Plan for Nature, People and the Economy²⁴.

This recognition draws from existing initiatives of collaboration between LRA and local stakeholders to promote the integration of biodiversity and ecosystem requirements in the implementation of sectoral policies. For example, the Bükk

²⁰ National description of the implementation process related to site designation and management approaches (Articles, 6(1) and 6(2) of the Habitats Directive), L’Atelier, technique des espaces naturels, available at: www.eurosite.org/files/natura_FRdescription_en.doc.

²¹ L414-1-III and R414-3 of the French Environmental Code.

²² National description of the implementation process related to site designation and management approaches (Articles, 6(1) and 6(2) of the Habitats Directive), L’Atelier, technique des espaces naturels, available at: www.eurosite.org/files/natura_FRdescription_en.doc

• ²³ Communication from the Commission: [Our life insurance, our natural capital: an EU Biodiversity Strategy to 2020 \(COM\(2011\) 244\)](#)

²⁴ Communication from the Commission to the European Parliament, the Council, the European Economic and Social Committee and the Committee of the Regions An Action Plan for Nature, People and the Economy, COM(2017) 198 final.

National Park Directorate in Romania and the NGO CEEweb jointly developed a networking event on the impact of the CAP on grassland habitats in continental, pannonian and steppic ecoregions (October 2017). In these ecoregions, the lack of good agriculture practices often results in undergrazing and overgrazing with significant effects for the local biodiversity. This event brought together experts working on habitats impacted by agriculture, provided a platform to exchange views on the impact of the current CAP on Natura 2000 habitats, national Rural Development Programmes and their relevant measures for Natura 2000 and to exchange experiences on relevant habitat management²⁵.

Other initiatives promote the integration of biodiversity requirements in the maritime policy. In the Brittany region (France), representing roughly one third of the country's total coastline, the Life project 'Archipelago and islands of Brittany' was set up to address the lack of knowledge about the local marine environment (absence of information from the red data book for marine species at stake) and to establish the basis for coastal and marine conservation. It also helped to build awareness among local communities, stakeholders and politicians of the value of the ecosystem, species and habitats with the view to find sustainable solutions for their preservation while pressure from human activities is increasing. It also allowed for the selection of possible Natura 2000 sites in a consultative process²⁶. LRA and the CoR are now further mobilised for the implementation of the new Action Plan for Nature People and the Economy²⁷ to support increased efforts for the full implementation of the Nature Directives in response to the recommendations for Target 1 and the results of the Fitness Check of the EU Nature Directives. Through the direct association of the CoR as partner for the elaboration and implementation of the Action Plan, LRA are jointly responsible for the achievement of four out of the fifteen actions of the Plans, namely: improving guidance and knowledge and ensuring better coherence with broader socioeconomic objectives; building political ownership and strengthening compliance and better communication and outreach, engaging citizens, stakeholders and communities. In addition, all the actions presented under the priority to strengthen investment in Natura 2000 will in practice require LRA's engagement as key partners to inform, facilitate access, and promote utilisation of the funding opportunities as well as to mobilise new sources of financing. This Action Plan with the direct association of the CoR for its elaboration and implementation is a good example of the progress made to effectively mainstream LRA engagement as essential partners to deliver on the biodiversity targets.

The importance of local and regional cooperation is enhanced with the specific scale of implementation of Natura 2000 and other legislation such as the Water

²⁵ Natura 2000 Biogeographical process newsletter, August 2017.

²⁶ <https://www.bfn.de/fileadmin/MDB/documents/natura2000marin.pdf>, p.37

²⁷ COM (2017) 198 final

Framework Directive with the river basin management plans or the Marine Strategy Framework Directive. Challenges in their implementations at the local level are highlighted in the EIR reports²⁸. However, there are examples where the integration of nature objectives and the WFD are carried out at a local level. The SMURF project (LIFE02 ENV/UK/000144) for the renovation of a stretch of the River Tame in Perry Hall Park, in Birmingham, was developed with the objective to ensure the involvement of local focus group in the planning decision and define the targets of the project. The heightened awareness generated by the project prompted the local council to appoint a park ranger after LIFE²⁹.

Policies based on particular geographic/biogeographic scales highlight the importance of seeking solutions at the subnational level and through cross-border cooperation when relevant. Border areas in the EU and neighbouring countries features such as the Alps, the Carpathian Mountains, the Mediterranean or the Baltic Sea are in many places outstanding areas for nature conservation. Projects on Natura 2000 sites undertaken through the European Grouping of Territorial Cooperation (EGTC) (see presentations during the 2017 European Week of Regions and Cities) are crucial in this respect³⁰. Cross-border cooperation is also essential for the protection of migratory species as illustrated with the cross-border networking award for a project between Bulgaria, Finland, Greece, Hungary, and Norway for the protection of Europe's rarest waterbird³¹.

This overview of the different measures and policies in which LRA have to engage from their own initiative, or along with other institutional and socioeconomic actors at different levels, illustrates the importance and extent of their roles for the implementation of the 2020 SPB. At the EU level, the recent inter-institutional cooperation between the EC and the CoR for the elaboration and implementation of the Action Plan for People, Nature and the Economy marks a new step in effective multilevel governance for better delivery on biodiversity objectives.

²⁸ Communication from the Commission to the European Parliament, the Council and the European Economic and Social Committee and the Committee of the Regions, The EU Environmental Implementation Review: Common Challenges and How to Combine Efforts to deliver better results, COM (2017) 63 final p.12.

²⁹ LIFE Focus, LIFE and local authorities: Helping regions and municipalities tackle environmental challenges http://ec.europa.eu/environment/life/publications/lifepublications/lifefocus/documents/local_authorities.pdf, p. 41.

³⁰ <https://portal.cor.europa.eu/egtc/Events/Pages/EGTCs-and-nature-protection-in-cross-border-areas.aspx>

³¹ http://ec.europa.eu/environment/nature/natura2000/awards/2016-edition/winners/networking-and-cross-border-cooperation/index_en.htm.

Part 2 Implementing biodiversity-related targets under Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) at regional and local level

The SDGs encompass and reinforce the Aichi targets, placing them at the heart of the broader sustainable development agenda³². The Gangwon Ministerial Declaration on Biodiversity for Sustainable Development³³ underlined the contributions of the Strategic Plan and ABT to the post-2015 development agenda and called on the international community to recognise and link the two processes³⁴. CBD Decision XIII/1 on Progress in the implementation of the Convention and the Strategic plan calls on Parties in the process of the up-dating of their national biodiversity strategies and action plans to consider the indicators for the 2020 CBD Strategic plan and those for the SDGs³⁵.

At the European level, the Opinion of the CoR on “Next Steps for a Sustainable European Future – European Action for Sustainability”³⁶, highlights the key role that LRA play in “protecting and developing urban environments, rural areas and the common heritage” and makes recommendations for LRA to be proactive and committed to a series of eleven recommendations which are also important pre-requisites to enhance synergies for the joint implementation of ABT and SDG at the subnational level. These include “improving LRA’s own strategic management capacity, fostering a civil society that is aware and has high expectations, developing integrated urban and territorial planning, promoting regional sustainable development plans/strategies, linking the SDGs to policy objectives, and revising and adapting programs so that they respond to the challenges of sustainable development”, “guiding the transition towards a low-carbon economy and towards resilient cities and regions”, encouraging broad participatory process for the elaboration of plans and initiatives to meet the SDGs, promoting educational programs for sustainable development in schools and cultural activities which address the problem of sustainability, including “fair and sustainable well-being indicators” in the regional law-making cycle and regional budgets”.

³² Biodiversity and the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development. Technical Note from CBD, FAO, The World Bank, UNEP and UNDP.

³³ COP 12/MOP7/MOP 1, The Gangwon Ministerial Declaration on Biodiversity for Sustainable Development, Pyeongchang, Korea 2014.

³⁴ Lauren Anderson, Biodiversity and Land in the SDGs: A Forward Looking Review, IISD/SDG Knowledge Hub, 18 February 2016. <http://sdg.iisd.org/commentary/policy-briefs/biodiversity-and-land-in-the-sdgs-a-forward-looking-review/>

³⁵ CBD/COP/DEC/XIII/1, 11 Dec 2016, para.11.

³⁶ Opinion of the Committee of the Regions on “Next Steps for a Sustainable European Future – European Action for Sustainability”, COR-2017-00137-00-02-PA-TRA (IT) , 12 July 2017. .

Section 2.1 presents the interlinkages between the SDGs and the ABT and the opportunities to build on the SDGs implementation framework to give a new impetus to the implementation of ABT, in particular for the mainstreaming requirements (Section 2.2). Section 2.3 focusses on the framework for the implementation of the SDGs at the local level, the so-called “Localising the SDGs” process. The Roadmap for “Localising” the SDGs highlights key steps for important synergies in the implementation of the ABT and the SDGs at the subnational level.

Section 2.1 Interlinkages and synergies between the SDGs and the Aichi Targets

Research from the Stockholm Resilience Centre³⁷ shows how sustainable management of natural resources is relevant to achieving all the SDGs. The analysis uses a scoring system based on whether the ABT elements are directly, indirectly or not considered across all SDG Goals and Targets. The conclusions are as follows:

- Three of the ABT (2, 16 & 20) are fully covered under the SDGs, while only Target 17 is not covered at all.
- All elements of Targets 3, 5, 6, 12 & 18 are indirectly considered in the SDGs,
- Elements of Target 11 (System of protected areas and management) are either indirectly covered or absent.
- The elements of each of the remaining nine Targets are either directly or indirectly considered.

The analysis highlights that ABT14 (Ecosystems essential services/water/health) has the greatest relevancy to the SDG Goals and Targets, followed by ABT19 (Improvement and sharing of knowledge, science and technologies relating to biodiversity). ABT15 (Contribution of biodiversity to carbon stocks, restoration of degraded ecosystems) has also strong linkages to the SDG at the goal level. The analysis points at the indirect but important links between ABTs 7 (Sustainable management of agriculture, aquaculture and forestry) and 11 (Protected areas and management) with elements of sustainable consumption and production in the SDGs. From the other perspective, SDGs 14 (Conserve and sustainably use the oceans, seas and marine resources) and 15 (Sustainably

³⁷ Schultz, M., Tyrrell, T.D. & Ebenhard, T. 2016. The 2030 Agenda and Ecosystems - A discussion paper on the links between the Aichi Biodiversity Targets and the Sustainable Development Goals. SwedBio at Stockholm Resilience Centre, Stockholm, Sweden – See also: <https://www.cbd.int/development/doc/biodiversity-2030-agenda-technical-note-en.pdf>

manage forests, combat desertification, halt and reverse land degradation, halt biodiversity loss) have the strongest linkages with the ABTs.

It also points at horizontal aspects under the Aichi Targets, such as awareness raising about the benefits that nature and ecosystems bring, effectively addressing perverse incentives, the importance of the sustainable use of ecosystems and biodiversity, addressing pollution which are also actions required to achieve the 2030 Agenda.

Finally, large responsibilities lie specifically upon cities for the protection of biodiversity and ecosystems with SGD 11 (Make cities inclusive, safe, resilient and sustainable) and with the targets to strengthen efforts to protect and safeguard the world's cultural and natural heritage and to reduce the adverse per capita environmental impact of cities. At the European level, Eurostat analysis of progress towards two of the objectives of these targets points at negative trends: the indicator for “change in artificial land cover” is reported with “significant movement away from SD objective” and “artificial land cover per capita” is reported with “moderate movement away from the SD objective”³⁸.

The coordination between the two processes is reinforced with the series of common indicators for the 2020 Biodiversity Strategic Plan³⁹ and the SDGs. Furthermore, SDGs' implementations benefit from yearly national reporting processes with the Voluntary National Review (VNR)⁴⁰ at the UN High Level Political Forum (HLPF). This can help promote greater attention from a wider audience to the required efforts and progress being made⁴¹ on a more regular basis than the CBD reporting system.

This is illustrated with the identification of SDGs regional priorities in Central and Eastern Europe and awareness raising of decision makers. In April 2016, the Regional Environmental Centre for Central and Eastern Europe organised “Europe's Regional Consultation on the Implementation of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development” for representatives from national governments and LRA to identify regional sustainable development priorities, to prepare

³⁸ See SDG 11 in “How has the EU progressed towards the SDGs” <http://ec.europa.eu/eurostat/web/sdi/key-findings> as consulted on 2018/04/04.

³⁹ See for the EU SDG Indicator Set 2018 Result of the Review in Preparation of the 2018 Edition of the EU SDG Monitoring Report 3 April 2018 and for the CBD <https://www.cbd.int/doc/strategic-plan/strategic-plan-indicators-en.pdf> and <https://www.cbd.int/sp/indicators/>

⁴⁰ United Nations, Division for Sustainable Development (DSD), Department of Economic and Social Affairs (DESA) *Synthesis of Voluntary National Reviews 2017*: https://sustainabledevelopment.un.org/content/documents/17109Synthesis_Report_VNRs_2017.pdf

⁴¹ See for example D. Demailly E Hege IDDRI Blog, *Mise en oeuvre des ODD, La France accélère* <http://blog.iddri.org/fr/2018/02/28/mise-oeuvre-odd-france-accelere/>

recommendations to the EC to strengthen EU implementation of the 2030 Agenda, and to inform the 2016 HLPF⁴².

It is therefore important for LRA to take advantage of the momentum for the SDGs implementation processes to foster synergies and integration between the two agendas with the view of achieving enhanced implementation of both⁴³. The extent of the interlinkages between the Aichi Targets and the different SDGs can be used to give a new impetus to foster greater mainstreaming of biodiversity and ecosystem protection across policies and decision making, taking advantage of efforts to raise awareness on the 2030 sustainable development agenda, to draw attention to the importance of the biodiversity requirements underpinning it, promoting tools such as biodiversity proofing of budgets and relevant policy sectors and new approaches to decision making with more horizontal and vertical integration.

Section 2.2 Mainstreaming biodiversity in the implementation of SDGs at the subnational level

With the wide array of roles and competencies LRA have for the implementation of the Aichi Targets⁴⁴, mainstreaming of biodiversity in the implementation of the SDG at subnational level can take multiple forms. Tools to promote cross sectoral mainstreaming include integrated landscape and seascape management, education, communication and awareness raising measures, the use of environmental economic accounting and natural capital accounting, the promotion of market-based instruments such as Payment to Ecosystem Services (PES) and biodiversity offsets or public procurement policies, phasing out harmful subsidies and introducing financial incentives for conservation and sustainable use, promoting sustainable consumption and production patterns⁴⁵.

⁴² ISSD, SDG Knowledge Hub, *Central and Eastern Europe Identify Priorities for SDG Implementation*, (May 2016) <http://sdg.iisd.org/news/central-and-eastern-europe-identify-priorities-for-sdg-implementation/>

⁴³ **Mirna Ines Fernández, Global Youth Biodiversity Network, Sustainable Development Goal 15 and the Aichi Biodiversity Targets, 8 March 2018, <https://sustainabledevelopment.un.org/hlpf/2018/blog#8mar>**

⁴⁴ See UNEP/CBD/COP/11/INF/32, Report of the Executive Secretary on the Implementation of Decision X/22: Progress Made by National, Subnational and Local Governments, p. 2.

⁴⁵ See CBD/COP/DEC/XIII/3, Strategic Actions to Enhance the Implementation of the Strategic Plan for Biodiversity 2011-2020 and the Achievement of the Aichi Biodiversity Targets, Including with Respect to Mainstreaming and Integration of Biodiversity Within and Across Sectors; and UNEP/CBD/COP/13/INF/30, Identification of Best Practices and Lessons Learned on How to Integrate Biodiversity, Poverty Eradication, and Sustainable Development; Summary of Submissions Received and Synthesis of Lessons Learned, Note by the Executive Secretary.

It also requires sector specific mainstreaming, in particular in tourism, aquaculture and fisheries, agriculture, forest management, energy and mining, infrastructure, manufacturing and processing industry, and health.

Linking ecosystem management to the adaptation and the mitigation of climate change and engaging key actors to enhance mainstreaming, such as business operators, indigenous people/local communities, and scientific communities are also identified as effective actions to enhance the implementation of the Strategic Plan for biodiversity.

A definition of mainstreaming biodiversity, from “Mainstreaming biodiversity and development: Tips and tasks from African experience”⁴⁶.

Biodiversity mainstreaming is more than applying ‘safeguards’ to ensure development processes do no harm to biodiversity; it is principally about recognising the potential of biodiversity to achieve desirable development outcomes. It is a complex, long-term, iterative process that entails integrating biodiversity concerns into national, local and sector plans, policies and budgets and then supporting their implementation. It involves working with a range of stakeholders – government, private sector, civil society organisations (CSOs), non-governmental organisations (NGOs), politicians, general public, communities, media and academia – to create changes in values, attitudes, knowledge, policy, procedures and behaviours towards biodiversity. It is as much a political issue, requiring a process of institutional change, as it is a technical one”.

The Global Taskforce of Local and Regional Governments, UNDP and UN Habitats developed the concept of “localising” the SDG. Presented as “The Roadmap for Localising the SDGs: Implementation and Monitoring of the SDGs at Local Level”⁴⁷ this concept is described as “the process of taking into account subnational contexts in the achievement of the 2030 Agenda”. It therefore offers a very suitable format to integrate local and regional biodiversity and ecosystem requirements in the implementation of the SDGs at the different levels of governance.

Each detailed step of the Roadmap (raising awareness; advocacy to include a subnational perspective in national SDG strategies; implementation; and monitoring), can be the opportunity to promote and seek synergies with the implementation of LBSAP and RBSAP. Taken in a joint approach, the SDG

⁴⁶ IIED and UNEP-WCMC (2015) Mainstreaming biodiversity and development: Tips and tasks from African experience. IIED, London.

⁴⁷“Roadmap for Localizing the SDGs: Implementation and Monitoring at Subnational Level”
https://www.uclg.org/sites/default/files/roadmap_for_localizing_the_sdgs_0.pdf

“localisation” process can also be an incentive to update the strategies and action plans and integrating them in the context of the SDG implementation at the subnational level.

For the awareness raising phase, the Roadmap stresses the following elements which could be particularly helpful for a win-win approach to biodiversity mainstreaming:

- the importance of local and regional government associations and networks to carry out awareness raising campaigns and efforts to “increase the knowledge and sense of ownership of the SDGs by all subnational governments, regardless of their size or level of resources, with the support of national governments and international organisations”;
- the nomination of local and regional champions for their active involvement in the achievement of the SDGs, as a potential powerful awareness raising and mobilisation tool for local and regional government associations;
- the close association of NGOs to ensure broad representation of interests.

Similar synergies can be developed in the implementation and monitoring phases in particular with the choice of some common indicators and milestones and using SDG indicators to monitor and assess local and regional plans.

More information on the implementation of this approach will be available with the forthcoming report of the Network of Regional Governments for Sustainable Development (nrg4SD) and research partners about “General efforts and modalities adopted by regions in the pursue of the SDGs in their territories, with a special attention to the goals being reviewed in 2018”⁴⁸ including Goal 15 (Sustainably manage forests, combat desertification, halt and reverse land degradation, halt biodiversity loss). This report will be presented in July 2018 at the UN HLPF.

The implementation of the 2030 development agenda provides a new impetus to foster efforts on the achievement of the ABT. Research clearly shows how restoration and sustainable management of natural resources and ecosystem services is essential to achieving all the SDGs. The implementation framework for subnational level with the process of “Localising the SDGs” details key steps which are opportunities for mainstreaming biodiversity requirements and establishing an integrated policy framework for nature protection and sustainable development at the subnational level.

⁴⁸ See for more information <http://www.nrg4sd.org/regions-sdgs/>

Part 3: Regional and local authorities in the global post-2020 framework

This section first highlights the commitments of LRA to the global sustainable agenda (Section 3.1). It then presents the CBD framework for the preparation of the post-2020 plan (Section 3.2), highlighting the opportunities for regional and local authorities to best engage and mobilise awareness and involvement of the wider public and key sectors in the run up to COP 15 based on current initiatives that have been identified as examples of what could be the future role of LRA to these aims.

Section 3.1 Local and regional authorities committed to the global sustainable agenda

With their active engagement in the implementation of the Rio Conventions, the Paris Climate Agreement, the 2030 Sustainable Development agenda, and the New Urban Agenda⁴⁹, cities and subnational governments have asserted their place in the global framework for sustainable development. This is reflected in the outstanding development of international networks and partnerships such as the Cities Biodiversity Summits, ICLEI—Local Governments for Sustainability, the Network of Regional Governments for Sustainable Development (nrg4SD), United Cities and Local Governments (UCLG), the World Mayors’ Council on Climate Change (WMCCC) and its biodiversity component, or the C40 Climate Leadership Group. These networks foster capacity building, support exchange of best practices, mobilise resources, engage key stakeholders including businesses and ensure representation in international fora.

The Local Authorities Major Group (LAMG) position paper for the 2017 UN High Level Political Forum reaffirms the commitment of local and regional governments to these global development agendas and their “political will to turn these global goals into localised objectives”⁵⁰. LAMG points at the new stage of its strategy, “shifting from the development of the global agendas to their implementation, localisation, monitoring and reporting”. However, it also stresses the need for coordination and support to be provided to LRA to undertake the simultaneous implementation of these global agendas.

⁴⁹ See SDG New Urban Agenda <https://www.un.org/sustainabledevelopment/blog/2016/10/newurbanagenda/>

⁵⁰ Local Authorities Major Group (LAMG) Position Paper for the High Level Political Forum 2017 https://sustainabledevelopment.un.org/content/documents/14950LocalAuthoritiesMG_HLPFpositionpaper_2017.pdf

Through their experience of institutional work at different levels, on the ground implementation of action plans, strategies and measures to reach the targets of the different policy frameworks, their direct contacts to socioeconomic forces, key stakeholders, citizens and the diversity of their responsibilities, LRA bring a wealth of experience that needs to be presented and effectively considered in the deliberations to strengthen the post-2020 biodiversity framework. The CBD preparatory process for the post-2020 biodiversity framework outlines key principles and opportunities for LRA and their networks to engage.

Section 3.2 A comprehensive and participatory process to shape the post-2020 biodiversity framework

In its Decision XIII/1 (paragraph 34), the Conference of the Parties “recognises the need for a comprehensive and participatory process to develop proposals for the follow-up to the Strategic Plan. The EU and its Member States also “underline the importance of full stakeholder involvement at the subnational, national, regional and global level[s]”⁵¹ as well as the importance of giving stakeholders the opportunity to contribute at different stages of the process: at the initial stage for determining the overall approach, and at later stages for seeking views on more concrete proposals. They call for particular attention to “the involvement of IPLCs and the contributions from women, youth and those who directly rely on and manage biodiversity”. The preparation for the post-2020 framework should therefore be an opportunity for thorough and coordinated multilevel consultation in each EU Member State and at the EU level in order to prepare both national and EU contributions to this process. Furthermore, LRA should be provided with the necessary guidelines and tools to raise awareness of the importance of the issue and organise efficient and constructive consultations, possibly in association with ongoing processes for the implementation of the 2030 agenda.

LRA, with the support of their network organisations, their representation in international fora, and through contributions to national processes, have a suite of opportunities to contribute to the definition of the post-2020 framework. Regional and global workshops in the preparation for CBD COP 15 will be organised to allow for “regional (Africa, Asia, Europe etc.) and global consultations as well as the sharing of experiences. These workshops would be informal and be open to Parties, indigenous peoples and local communities and

⁵¹ Submission by the European Union and its Members States to CBD Notification 2017-052 on the preparatory process for the follow-up to the Strategic Plan for Biodiversity, 15 Sept. 2017 <https://www.cbd.int/doc/strategic-plan/Post2020/EU.pdf>

stakeholders. An adequate level of participation of experts with experience in matters related to the two Protocols would be actively promoted⁵².

At the EU level, it could be anticipated that the CoR be closely associated in an inter-institutional cooperation process to prepare the updated EU contribution. This would mirror the process for the elaboration of the 2017 Action Plan to enhance the implementation of the Nature Directives (See Section 1) which is an example of a new and stronger inter- institutional cooperation towards this common goal. For the first time, the CoR joined the project team of EU Commissioners in its preparation.

To ensure broader delivery across EU policies and high level political commitments, the CoR should also be encouraged to up hold these priorities in the debate on the Future of Europe⁵³ (see Part 4 for more details). Furthermore, this approach to step up efforts to reach the ABT should also be effectively mirrored at the national level in EU Member States.

Section 3.3 Building on the momentum for CBD COP 14 and COP 15 to intensify efforts towards targets

The run up to COP 14 and COP 15 should also be used to mobilise key stakeholders with the view of enhancing and speeding up implementation at all levels in the upcoming years and beyond. Sir Robert Watson, Chair of the IPBES declared on 26 March 2018, “Biodiversity and nature’s contributions to people sound, to many people, academic and far removed from our daily lives”⁵⁴. This highlights the tremendous work still to be done to raise awareness and engage citizens, socioeconomic actors including the corporate sector, and policy makers in the far reaching changes that need to be undertaken. LRA, through their closer connections to citizens, their responsibilities in education, health, planning, economic development, in their choices for public procurements and public investments (70% of public sector investments in Europe come from local and regional governments)⁵⁵ are uniquely placed to organise and implement this mobilisation in coordination with all relevant stakeholders (civil society, business, young people, academia, trade unions, faith groups etc), thus also stepping up their contributions to 2030 SDGs. With equivalent consequences at stake, the mobilisation envisaged should be commensurate to the efforts undertaken in the run up to UNFCCC COP 21.

⁵² <https://www.cbd.int/doc/strategic-plan/Post2020/post2020-process-draft-en.pdf> Para 40 b.

⁵³ See <http://cor.europa.eu/en/news/Pages/Future-of-Europe-cities-and-regions-want-a-reinvented-European-Union-based-on-solidarity-multi-level-governance-and-proxim.aspx>

⁵⁴ IPBES Press release, Supra, note 3 at p. 2

⁵⁵ http://www.ccre.org/img/uploads/piecesjointe/filename/CEMR_structures_and_competences_2016_EN.pdf , p.4.

As reminded in Decision XIII/1 and in application of the CBD Plan of Action on Subnational Governments, Cities and Other Local Authorities for, Parties to the Convention should facilitate these efforts at subnational level⁵⁶. There is a broad call for updating, implementing, reviewing and increasing the scope and level of ambition of national or regional biodiversity strategies and action plans as soon as possible, and to consider in this process the indicators for the 2020 CBD Strategic plan as well as those for the SDGs. All these steps can be the opportunity for LRA to:

- Organise specific or broader consultative and participatory processes;
- Strengthen consultative and advisory bodies (For example in France, the region of New Aquitaine set up in January 2017 a regional scientific platform for biodiversity to assess the impact of biodiversity loss at the regional level and its socioeconomic implications for the region⁵⁷);
- Raise awareness on values of biodiversity and ecosystem services, mobilise new partners, develop broader awareness raising activities and education (e.g. IUCN and Lacoste partnership⁵⁸);
- Review the institutional set up in place (e.g. in France, as a result of the new law for “Reconquering Biodiversity, Nature and Landscape” which reorganised competencies for biodiversity, eight regions have decided in October 2017 to set up their respective regional agencies for biodiversity⁵⁹);
- Seek avenues to maximise mainstreaming;
- Review local and regional integrated strategic planning;
- Build political ownership with the appointments of cross border biodiversity ambassadors or champions;

⁵⁶ CBD/COP/DEC/XIII/1, 12 Dec. 2016, para. 10, 11, 12, 14.

⁵⁷ Un projet scientifique inédit autour de la biodiversité, January 2017 <https://www.nouvelle-aquitaine.fr/toutes-actualites/projet-scientifique-inedit-autour-biodiversite.html>

⁵⁸ <https://www.iucn.org/news/species/201802/lacoste-and-iucn-join-forces-champion-cause-threatened-species>

⁵⁹ Biodiversité, le rôle de chef de file des régions réaffirmé, 24/10/2017 <https://www.caissedesdepotsdesterritoires.fr/cs/ContentServer?pagename=Territoires/Articles/Articles&cid=1250279956156>

- Focus on accelerating implementation, for example working with businesses through the business and biodiversity platform;
- Identify champions/ambassadors for biodiversity and sustainable development;
- Contribute to the elaboration of national contributions to international processes such as “national determined contributions” for biodiversity⁶⁰.

⁶⁰ See WWF NDCs a force for nature Nov. 2017 [http://awsassets.panda.org/downloads/NDCs - a force for nature \(1\).pdf](http://awsassets.panda.org/downloads/NDCs_-_a_force_for_nature_(1).pdf) and https://www.iddri.org/sites/default/files/import/publications/ib0516_yl-et-al_sfn_indc.pdf

Part 4: How to facilitate and strengthen implementation by LRA of the policies to implement the follow-up to the SPB 2011-2020?

This part presents recommendations in relation to main horizontal measures identified as being key to facilitate and strengthen the implementation of EU policies in the follow up to the Strategic Plan.

At the European level, a mosaic of existing legislative instruments and policies contributes towards the achievements of the Aichi Targets and beyond 2020. The 2017 EU Action Plan for Nature, People and the Economy lists four groups of priority actions to be undertaken before 2019 in order to strengthen the implementation of the Nature Directives and improve on the delivery of the Aichi Targets No.11 and 12 but also 1, 5, 6, 7, 9, 14 and 15. These actions will need to be pursued beyond 2020 and adjusted. In addition, they need to be complemented with reforms and intensified implementation efforts for biodiversity mainstreaming in other policy sectors such as sustainable production and consumption, trade, development policy, energy policy, maritime policy, the CFP, the CAP, the EU Strategy and Multiannual Financial Framework to address the broader scope of the 2020 biodiversity agenda and the new level of ambition required to face the alarming trend of biodiversity loss. Furthermore, IPBES Regional Assessment for Europe and Central Asia highlights that “the impact of climate change on biodiversity and nature’s contributions to people is increasing rapidly and is likely to be one of the most important drivers in the future⁶¹”. LRA can have a powerful advocacy role at the national and European levels to promote the necessary changes and propose solutions based on experiences of implementation.

A comprehensive and updated assessment of the priority issues to be addressed in the EU, and best options to foster current improvements in the implementation of the Strategic Plan for Biodiversity 2011-2020, will only be available with the 6th national and EU reports to the CBD due by 31 December 2018. However, some key elements are recurrent in the different analysis of factors hampering the implementation of the EU nature protection policy. Considering the four groups of priority actions of the EU Action Plan for

⁶¹ IPBES. Summary for policymakers of the regional assessment report on biodiversity and ecosystem services for Europe and Central Asia of the Intergovernmental Science-Policy Platform on Biodiversity and Ecosystem Services. M. Fischer, M. Rounsevell, A. Torre-Marín, A. Mader, A. Church, M. Elbakidze, V. Elias, T. Hahn, P.A. Harrison, J. Hauck, B. Martín-López, I. Ring, C. Sandström, I. Sousa Pinto, P. Visconti, N.E. Zimmermann and M. Christie (eds.). IPBES secretariat, Bonn, Germany. 2018, p.4.

Nature, People and the Economy to strengthen the implementation of the Nature Directives, the conclusions of the mid-term assessment of the EU Biodiversity Strategy⁶², the conclusions of the EIR report on the root causes for insufficient implementation of EU environmental law and the Contribution from Local and Subnational Authorities to the 2017 UN HLPF, the following horizontal measures can be proposed as priority issues to be addressed at EU level to facilitate and strengthen implementation of biodiversity policies at subnational level now and beyond 2020:

- Improving policy coherence;
- Facilitating and increasing funding;
- New EU initiatives to strengthen compliance;
- Raising awareness, better communication and outreach, engaging decision makers, citizens, stakeholders and communities;
- Improving guidance and knowledge;
- Facilitating cross-border cooperation;
- Measuring, monitoring, evaluating, and strengthening the knowledge base.

Section 4.1 Improving policy coherence

Improving policy coherence is fundamental to avoid undermining biodiversity measures and creating perverse incentives at all levels. The approaching negotiations of the new MFF, CAP and CFP reforms will be a test case to assess the seriousness and determination of all stakeholders, EU institutions, national governments and LRA to uphold their commitments to increase efforts to catch up with the delay in achieving the Aichi targets.

The position paper on Cohesion policy published in June 2017 by the Council of European Municipalities and Regions (CEMR) makes a clear request to this end: “We demand a secured budget for cohesion policy, based on shared EU development objectives post-2020, grounded on the targets already set out for 2030 for some EU policies and in international agreements which the EU has signed, such as the Agenda 2030 and the Sustainable Development Goals, Paris Climate Agreement and Habitat III Agenda”⁶³.

The sustainability agenda and its priorities for halting biodiversity loss and restoring ecosystems should be enshrined in the **Scenarios for the Future of**

⁶² Mid-Term Review of the EU Biodiversity Strategy to 2020, COM (2015) 0478 final.

⁶³<https://goo.gl/LjXh2L>

Europe⁶⁴. A group of 257 civil society organisations has made joint proposals to this end with “Scenario No 6, Sustainable Europe for its Citizens”⁶⁵. A number of these proposals coincide with the results of a recent survey commissioned by the CoR to contribute to the debate on the Future of Europe⁶⁶. The results of the wide consultation of local and regional authorities' representatives, including CoR members, regional parliaments and associations of local and regional authorities at the national and European levels indicate that “their favoured path for a reformed EU would be through strengthened "multi-level governance" and a greater focus on areas relevant to citizens' daily lives. The unprecedented rate of 500 000 citizens participating to the on-line public consultation for the Fitness Check on the Nature Directive highlights the relevance of nature protection in this respect.

Furthermore, it will be crucial to ensure effective follow up on Council Conclusions calling “on the European Commission and Member States to more effectively integrate Natura 2000 and wider biodiversity with the Common Agricultural Policy, cohesion policy, common fisheries policy, integrated maritime policy and research and innovation policy”. Council asks for the “establishment of **cross-cutting Natura 2000 indicators for all relevant EU funds** for the next programming period, as well as for the requirement for Member States to include indicators and targets for the relevant funds specific to Natura 2000 to allow for more precise and accurate tracking of the results generated by Natura 2000 funding”⁶⁷. This is also an important element to improve mainstreaming and policy coherence.

It will be important for LRA to engage in this process and ensure that their experience of practical implementation is effectively considered. Furthermore, recommendations are made to expend “these procedures of tracking biodiversity-related expenditures to national and subnational budgets in order to estimate more accurately the integration of biodiversity in programming”⁶⁸.

⁶⁴ Scenario 6 Sustainable Europe for Its Citizens, June 20, 2017. <https://goo.gl/rMGjSQ>

⁶⁵ <https://www.birdlife.org/sites/default/files/sustainable-europe-for-citizens-6th-scenario.pdf>

⁶⁶ <https://goo.gl/bP7imN>

⁶⁷ Council Conclusion on EU Action Plan for Nature People and the Economy, 19/06/2017.

<http://www.consilium.europa.eu/en/press/press-releases/2017/06/19/conclusions-eu-action-plan-nature/>

⁶⁸ Kettunen *et al.*, Integration approach to EU biodiversity financing: evaluation of results and analysis of options for the future. Final report for the European Commission (DG ENV) (Project ENV.B.3/ETU/2015/0014), Institute for European Policy (IEEP), Brussels/London, January 2017, p 147.

Section 4.2 Raising awareness, better communication and outreach, engaging decision makers, citizens, key stakeholders and communities

As illustrated with many of the LIFE projects such as the one for the European Capitals of Biodiversity⁶⁹ or initiatives such as the conference on “Biodiversity in Regions and Cities” during the 2017 EU Week of Regions and Cities⁷⁰, LRA working in multi-stakeholder partnership approaches have been at the forefront of numerous initiatives to inform and involve citizens and stakeholders on the importance of preserving natural heritage. However, a lot remains to be done to effectively engage citizens, economic actors and decision makers on the path of more ambitious changes that are required to implement an effective agenda for nature protection and sustainable development. For example, “the EIR report on Slovenia stated that the lack of integration between nature protection issues and other policy areas is mainly due to the lack of awareness of some stakeholder groups and sectors about the requirements and the benefits of EU nature legislation and the lack of willingness of authorities to support effective integration⁷¹”.

A coordinated approach between different levels of governance, support for better exchange of best practices, innovative approaches and synergies between the biodiversity, climate and SDGs agendas will promote enhanced synergy and higher impact. The strengthening of the CBD work programme on Communication Education and Public Awareness (CEPA) with a focus on implementation challenges for LRA should be given high priority, as well as its EU counterpart.

Effective tools to support LRA in their initiatives have been developed and could be better promoted, replicated, enhanced or adapted to facilitate their use in the different countries (for instance with translation, workshops, and online tools). Examples of that kind include:

- At the global level, the database of Case Studies and Best Practices in Communication, Education and Public Awareness developed in the framework of the CBD CEPA programme;

⁶⁹ European Capitals of Biodiversity: <http://www.capital-biodiversity.eu/2.html>

⁷⁰ <http://www.europarc.org/news/2017/10/biodiversity-regions-eu-week-2017/>

⁷¹ Milieu, Effective multi-level environmental governance for a better implementation of EU environment legislation, 2017, p. 28.

- The European campaign including with social networks “We are all in this together”⁷² for the launch of the UN decade for biodiversity;
- Education programs for school and young people such as the Eco-schools or Young reporters for the environment;
- At the European, national, regional or local levels the development of citizen science projects⁷³ helping to connect scientists and citizens (such as bird counting or other species inventory) and the development of digital tools and events such as Innovate for Nature⁷⁴;
- The nomination of local champions and regional leaders who are actively involved in the achievement of projects for nature conservation and ecosystem restoration;
- Making stronger references to the importance of ecosystem services for mitigating and adapting to climate change (See for example ICLEI LAB Biodiversity and Climate change⁷⁵);
- Building on EU platform to engage corporate sector; e.g. the Business and biodiversity platform and developing equivalent initiatives at regional level in Member states.

Section 4.3 New EU initiatives to support strengthening of compliance

The results of the Fitness Check on the EU Nature Directives emphasised the importance of ensuring the full implementation of the Nature Directives for them to realise their full potential. Other EU legislation such as the WFD, MSFD, SEA, EIA are also key in relation to the competencies of LRA and the achievement of the EU Nature Directives and the Aichi targets. Supporting LRA in their responsibilities of rule-making, land planning, strategic planning, issuing permits, etc., for the implementation of these instruments, and for better enforcement will be important to improve on the delivery of environmental outcomes.

⁷² <https://goo.gl/AVhiu8> and <https://goo.gl/U4s92L>

⁷³ CREAL Europe evaluates its citizen science and biodiversity projects: <https://goo.gl/f2sB8s>

⁷⁴ http://ec.europa.eu/environment/biodiversity/business/news-and-events/news/news-38_en.htm

⁷⁵ <https://cor.europa.eu/en/documentation/studies/Documents/overview-LRA-global-climate-change-process.pdf>

The new “**Environmental Compliance Governance Forum**” composed of Member State representatives and representatives of the EU networks of judges, prosecutors, police officers, inspectors, and environment agencies⁷⁶ together with the Action Plan to improve environmental compliance and governance⁷⁷ are positive developments to address some of the compliance issues encountered by LRA. It will be important however for LRA to ensure that the Forum will give due consideration to the concrete challenges they are facing. Following on the first meeting of the Forum in January 2018, LRA are invited to take an active involvement in its work through the CoR⁷⁸. LRA could also benefit from having equivalent platforms at national level.

Following on the adoption of the new Action Plan for People, Nature and the Economy, two strategic tools to support LRA in their efforts for improved compliance are promoted: the new **Environmental Implementation Review (EIR) Process** to which LRA will be associated through the CoR⁷⁹, and a renewed mandate for the **Technical Platform for Cooperation on the Environment**⁸⁰ set up by the CoR and EC Directorate-General for the Environment. The CoR’s Opinion on the EIR gives recommendations to increase the relevance of the process for LRA with a call for “developing a common methodology for the national EIR dialogues and guidelines to ensure the full participation of local and regional authorities throughout the process”⁸¹.

The CoR Opinion— EU environment law: improving reporting and compliance,⁸² -- lists a series of measures to support and strengthen compliance, in particular with the view to improve environmental monitoring and reporting (M&R), including INSPIRE (Infrastructure for Spatial Information in the European Community), and to improve compliance assurance of EU environmental law⁸³.

The next round of reporting on the implementation the EU Biodiversity Strategy and CBD Strategic Plan will be the opportunity to assess progress on the delivery of these tools, their use and the adjustments to be made. It will be important for the CoR to give a timely opinion on the effectiveness of these tools to be taken into consideration in any review process. In addition **LRA should be closely associated to Member States’ reporting through effective bottom-up participatory processes** giving them the opportunity to indicate and

⁷⁶ Environmental Compliance: New high-level expert group to improve application of environmental rules in Member States, 13 March 2018: http://ec.europa.eu/environment/pdf/13_03_2018_news_en.pdf

⁷⁷ COM (2018) 10 final.

⁷⁸ Letter from European Commission, DG ENV: <https://goo.gl/n4UoQ6>

⁷⁹ COM(2017) 63 final.

⁸⁰ http://ec.europa.eu/environment/legal/platform_en.htm

⁸¹ CoR Opinion on EU Environmental Law : Improving Reporting and Compliance : <https://goo.gl/LMscmt>

⁸² Ibid.

⁸³ See http://ec.europa.eu/environment/legal/platform_en.htm

update their needs in terms of support for compliance. This process could feed into the regular updating of national action plans for biodiversity as suggested under CBD decision XIII/3.

Section 4.4 Facilitating and increasing funding

Insufficient financing was a major factor in the successful achievement of 2010 biodiversity targets and all recent assessments confirm the need for substantial increase in funding for the EU to meet its biodiversity commitments⁸⁴. EU funding instruments are an essential source of financing for LRA actions for biodiversity and facilitating access and use is a key finding of the EIR report for nature legislation⁸⁵. However, additional, new and innovative sources of funding also need to be mobilised and LRA have a key role to play in engaging to assess the funding needs and to identify new sources of financing.

The new EU Action Plan for Nature, People and the Economy, in its section No 8 “Strengthen investments in nature”, lists several actions at the European level that should also support and facilitate local and regional authorities in their engagement. These actions at the EU level would need to be mirrored by equivalent support at the national level to facilitate an effective participation of regional and local authorities in their application.

Furthermore, the call by the European Parliament in its resolution on the next Multiannual Financial Framework (MFF) for an increased budget of the LIFE programme should be seconded by the CoR⁸⁶.

Strengthening and facilitating access to EU funds

European LRA are key actors in the use of EU funding instruments, identifying projects, fostering synergies and innovation, acting as partners in these projects, facilitating their elaboration, undertaking their implementation, etc. Recent research on EU biodiversity financing through the different EU funding instruments available recommends the following actions to facilitate access and use of EU funds at subnational level to finance Natura 2000⁸⁷:

- A consolidated effort to reduce the complexity of application and implementation processes across all EU funds.

⁸⁴ Kettunen *et al.*, 2017. p.147 and <https://goo.gl/eg9xsQ>

⁸⁵ EC EIR report, *Supra* note 78, p 5, 6.

⁸⁶ European Parliament resolution of 14 March 2018 on the next MFF post-2020 at <https://goo.gl/crRvRN>

⁸⁷ Kettunen *et al.* 2017. p. 143.

- Continued efforts towards awareness raising of the multiple benefits of nature and how financing biodiversity conservation helps reach socioeconomic objectives. This is required to further improve legitimacy of conservation measures among sectoral stakeholders and also to broaden the group of stakeholders coming forward with project ideas for multipurpose projects.
- Earmarking expenditures for biodiversity priorities under sectoral EU funds.
- Addressing eligibility gaps and increasing support – both political and technical - to the development and implementation of multifaceted and/or multi-functional projects
- Simplifying and improving the effectiveness of the Prioritised Action Framework (PAF) for the financing of Natura 2000 as a coordination tool, and securing a better integration of the PAF into the national and regional process - with a view to create shared ownership between sectors and to increase their influence.

Increasing Funding; the following recommendations are made:

- A 10% increase in the LIFE budget dedicated to projects supporting the conservation of nature and biodiversity (Action Plan for Nature, People and the Economy);
- Improving awareness of cohesion policy, CAP, CFP and the integrated maritime policy funding opportunities, improving synergies, and the more effective use of financing opportunities available (Action Plan for Nature, People and the Economy);
- LRA are encouraged to keep developing and testing innovative non-EU financing instruments such as ecological fiscal transfers (EFT), Ecological capital accounting, tax reliefs, marketed products and fees and charges. The place of these instruments will have to keep growing under the new strategy to match the increasing funding needs. It will be important for all level of governance working with networks such as ICLEI or nrg4SD to keep facilitating exchange of information, experiences, guidelines to promote the use of these instruments. For example, the Netherlands is identified as leader in the area of natural capital accounting with a large natural capital programme⁸⁸ The Netherlands also tested local level ecosystem accounts. In the framework of EIR work, NGOs, companies and governmental

⁸⁸ <http://www.atlasnatuurlijkkapitaal.nl/en/home> and EC EIR report p. 6.

organisations have agreed to collaborate on the valuation of natural and social capital.

- For Member States and regions to establish, advance and maintain financial support programmes and incentives for LRA to sustain and enhance their biodiversity action. This includes the provision of co-funding schemes for LRA to match EU grants.
- For Member States and regions to support LRA in identifying, piloting and applying innovative financing schemes, including partnerships with businesses, funding from private associations, tax incentives, crowd-funding schemes and further innovative approaches.⁸⁹
- For LRA to use existing and creatively seek new funding in related policy areas, such as environment, agriculture, regional and urban development, energy, resource efficiency and similar fields. LRA should continue developing proposals for innovative biodiversity actions and set up and maintain appropriate programme management procedures to qualify for existing EU and national funding programmes.⁹⁰
- Stimulating private sector investment in nature projects, including with the Natural Capital Financing Facility (NCFE).

As important beneficiaries of EU financing for the implementation of nature conservation and transition to sustainable development, the implementation of these recommendations would support and facilitate LRA access to EU financing for these actions. It will be particularly important to promote their application in the forthcoming reform of the MFF. The NGO BirdLife makes more comprehensive and ambitious proposals for the reform of the MFF establishing “a ‘Nature and Biodiversity Instrument’ of 15 billion EUR per annum, supported through a new European Food and Land-use Policy; Priority Trans-Boundary Green Corridors (TENGG) to maintain ecological connectivity at landscape level; a Sustainable Ocean Fund for a healthy marine environment; and, the elaboration of a new forward-thinking EU Research Policy”⁹¹:

⁸⁹ McKenna Davis and Holger Gerdes (Ecologic Institute) and Pamela Muehlmann (ICLEI), Multilevel-governance of our natural capital: the contribution of regional and local authorities to the EU Biodiversity Strategy 2020 and the Aichi Biodiversity Targets - Part B: Recommendations, 2014 , Page 19, https://www.ecologic.eu/sites/files/publication/2014/2612-03-multilevel-governance-of-our-natural-capital-part-b-2014_0.pdf

⁹⁰ Ibid.

⁹¹ BirdLife Partners in the European Union, For an EU budget serving nature and people, Sep 2017, p.2 https://www.birdlife.org/sites/default/files/birdlife_europe_position_mff_post2020.pdf

Section 4.5 Improving guidance, capacity and knowledge

The Environmental Implementation Report conclusions point at the limited administrative capacity of local and regional authorities and the lack of (access to) data and unreliable data as two of the root causes hindering better implementation of EU nature legislation⁹². Furthermore LRA are facing the implementation of increasingly complex and overlapping agendas for sustainability, climate action or biodiversity without increased resources or capacity to set the necessary reforms in motion. The Global task force of local and regional governments recommends developing training modules for LRA, and developing a toolbox on the joint implementation of the post-2020 agendas. The EC, as part of the EIR conclusions, propose to set up structured implementation dialogue with each Member State and to provide tailored support to Member States' experts directly by their peers in other Member States.

The Action Plan for Nature, People and Economy foresees the updating of guidelines for the Nature Directives in relation to integrating ecosystem services considerations in decision making, site permitting procedures and their implementation, species protection and management and sector specific guidance. The Action Plan specifies that these will be made available in all EU languages, a must to allow for effective use by practitioners in all Member States and at all levels. A regular and systematic assessment of these needs should be foreseen at the national and EU levels as part of the EIR follow up. Furthermore, as part of the follow up to the EIR assessment, the EC will explore with Member States and the European Environment Agency how to strengthen policy knowledge and to better target it to the specific requirements of EU environmental *acquis*.

Section 4.6 Measuring, monitoring, evaluating

Integrated approaches for the implementation of the post-2020 agenda require further efforts for the development of common indicators that can also translate to subnational level and streamlining of reporting including with view to facilitate contributions from local level. The SDG implementations in the EU call for support in technical knowledge, coordination and resources to enable LRA to be able to contribute effectively and in an integrated and coordinated manner to the National Voluntary Review process⁹³.

⁹² COM (2017) 63 final p.12.

⁹³ ICLEI *Briefing Sheet Measuring, Monitoring and Evaluating the SDGs-* Urban Issues, No. 06, November 2015.

Furthermore the prospect in the post 2020 framework to strengthen synergies between the NDCs and biodiversity conservation actions requires “to develop appropriate common indicators for reporting between UNFCCC, CBD and UNCCD and to provide guidance/recommendations on reporting for countries on how to include in their NDCs whether and how mitigation and adaptation actions are contributing to achieving the SDGs and biodiversity targets⁹⁴”. All these tools need to be tailored also for competent services at subnational level to be able to use them, in particular with the plans of developing locally or regionally determined contributions⁹⁵.

The results of the Fitness Check on Environmental Monitoring and Reporting are expected to help develop a more effective and efficient monitoring and reporting system. It will be essential for LRA/ CoR to be associated to these developments to ensure that they are tailored to LRA needs.

Section 4.7 Facilitating cross border cooperation for nature protection

The EU Action Plan for Nature People and the Economy includes provisions to address cross border issues at the biogeographical level. Given the importance of cross border cooperation for nature protection (see Part 1.2) and the large experience of LRA through EGTC work, facilitation of cross border cooperation should also be effectively included in the actions foreseen under the European Communication on Boosting Growth and Cohesion in EU Border Regions.

The 'Cross-Border Review' process⁹⁶ carried out by the European Commission between 2015 and 2017 identified that some policy areas were more impacted than others by persisting negative effects of administrative and legal difficulties. In this study, policy planning and the provision of public services came in fifth position of the policy areas impacted, and environmental policy came in the sixth position⁹⁷.

While the European Communication on Boosting Growth and Cohesion in EU Border Regions⁹⁸ focusses on the first five policy areas identified in the review process and does not cover specifically environmental policies nor climate

⁹⁴ WWF, NDCs a Force for Nature?, November 2017.

⁹⁵ See <http://cor.europa.eu/en/news/regional/Pages/local-contributions-for-COP21-targets.aspx>.

⁹⁶ Cross Border Review http://ec.europa.eu/regional_policy/en/policy/cooperation/european-territorial/cross-border/review/

⁹⁷ COM(2017) 534 final, pp.10 and 15.

http://ec.europa.eu/regional_policy/sources/docoffic/2014/boosting_growth/swd_boosting_border_en.pdf

⁹⁸ COM (2017) 534 Final, pp.14-15.

change adaptation and mitigation, some actions proposed for these policies would also be relevant to support LRA from border regions in their efforts to better achieve SDG and biodiversity goals. These include recommendations for “Member States and the European institutions to engage early in a dialogue to explore how future funding programmes can make a more strategic contribution to the prevention and resolution of border obstacles and the development of cross-border public services”⁹⁹; addressing the need to build evidence of cross-border interaction to inform decision making; noting that “only limited resources are invested in collecting and analysing information on border difficulties and complexities”¹⁰⁰ or the **promotion of territorial research linked to border regions** with the European Observation Network for Territorial Development and Cohesion (ESPON). It could be strategic to promote in these research efforts the effective consideration of the policies and trans-border tools such as the EGTC and Priority Trans-Boundary Green Corridors (TENGG) to achieve the updated biodiversity and ecosystem objectives as well as SDGs and Climate action priorities.

The CoR could assist by working with the Natura 2000 platform and promote tools to systematically record and share case studies, record support the promotion of good examples such as these:

- The Prespa Park trans-border international agreement signed in 2000 and renewed in 2017 between Greece, Albania and FYROM for the protection and sustainable management of the Prespa Park Area, and to ensure the integrated protection of the ecosystem and sustainable development of the Prespa Lakes, in compliance with the requirements of the EU Water Framework Directive, Nature Directives and EU biodiversity policy. Local communities from the Prespa Region, and local protected area management authorities, in both cases from each of the State Parties, are represented in this international management committee with representatives of the ministries of environment from each country. The establishment of this local level management system was originated at the national level¹⁰¹;
- Protected Areas for Nature and People in the Dinaric Arc region aims to promote sustainable use of natural resources in the Dinaric Arc region (8 countries concerned) as a foundation for the socioeconomic development of the area. The project includes the development of an interactive database to illustrate the socioeconomic benefits offered by protected areas and

⁹⁹ Ibid.

¹⁰⁰ Ibid.

¹⁰¹ Agreement on the Protection and Sustainable Development of the Prespa Park Area, 19-20/02/2017

encourage decision-makers, the business sector and all stakeholders to use the key messages on these benefits to promote better protected area management and improve the status of nature in the region. The objective is to deliver on the “Big Win for Dinaric Arc” a contribution to achieving the CBD 2020 targets¹⁰².

¹⁰² http://croatia.panda.org/en/what_we_do/protected_areas/pa4np/

Part 5: Recommendations on the main negotiation area for the post-2020 policy framework at the UN CBD COP 14

Drawing conclusions from the analysis of the previous chapters, this section presents in the first part the formal context for the preparation of the CBD post-2020 biodiversity framework, and in the second part, a few recommendations on key items for LRA to promote in their contributions towards the post-2020 objectives.

Context for preparation of CBD post-2020 framework

At its fifteenth meeting in Beijing, CBD Conference of the Parties will consider the final assessment of the implementation of the Strategic Plan for Biodiversity 2011-2020 and the achievement of the Aichi Biodiversity Targets. It will also have to agree on the follow up to the Strategic Plan and related means of implementation, including resource mobilisation¹⁰³. Decision XIII/1 underlines the need for a “comprehensive and participatory process to develop proposals for the follow up”. As a result, the scope of the updating process shall cover the Convention and its Protocols, but also consider “options for fostering commitments and strengthening implementation”. CBD document “Approaches Post 2020” suggests the framework for the preparation of the updated plan (para 7, 13):

- The 2050 Vision of the Strategic Plan “Living in harmony with nature” will remain relevant after 2020;
- The five goals (which are broad and not necessarily time-limited) may also remain relevant;
- The time-bound Aichi Targets will need to be updated and/or replaced;
- The 2030 Agenda will be particularly relevant if a new strategic plan is to be developed under the Convention for the decade 2021-2030; however, many of the targets in the 2030 Agenda that are derived from the Aichi targets, still have a target date of 2020¹⁰⁴.

Furthermore, CBD COP 14 is expected to guide the setting of 2030 targets”, taking into consideration ongoing CBD work to strengthen both implementation

¹⁰³ CBD/COP/DEC/XIII/1, para. 32, 16 December 2016.

¹⁰⁴ CBD Executive Secretary, Approaches for the Preparation of the Post-2020 Global Biodiversity Framework, Information note 15 June 2017, <https://www.cbd.int/post2020/doc/Approaches-Post2020Biodiversity.pdf>

support mechanisms (resource mobilisation, technical and scientific cooperation, capacity building for national biodiversity strategies and action plans, etc.) and the review of implementation (biodiversity monitoring and indicators, national reporting, review of implementation by Parties). The process aims at seeking to secure high-level political engagement and considering to building on the experience of the “interim nationally determined contributions (INDC)” of the Paris Agreement under the UNFCCC, as well as developing mechanisms for enhanced multilateral review and transparency;

Proposals for recommendations

Drawing conclusions from the wide and determinant engagement of EU LRA in the implementation of both the Strategic Plan for Biodiversity and the 2030 Development Agenda, as well as LRA experience in implementing actions of other multilateral environmental agreements in particular the Paris Climate Agreement¹⁰⁵, the following recommendations are proposed for the CoR to promote in preparation of EU positions for CBD COP 14 and to contribute to CBD participatory process to define the post-2020 agenda:

1. Considering the alarming conclusions of the IPBES 6¹⁰⁶ and the urgent need to intensify efforts for the implementation of measures and policies already identified as well as new ones, the post-2020 Strategic Plan should in all its components address the current state of urgency and seek to mobilise all Parties and stakeholders to take bolder actions to halt and reverse the unsustainable use of nature and ecosystems. To this aim, call on Parties to recognise, value and mobilise LRA and cities’ great potential for innovation tools and solutions to address some of the pressing challenges of biodiversity and ecosystems loss;
2. Taking into consideration the regional conclusions and analysis of the IPBES 6, call on Parties to consider the inclusion of regional chapters in the post-2020 Strategic Plan, drawing attention on IPBES priority recommendations for these regions;
3. Recognising the role and impact of LRA in the joint implementation of global agendas for biodiversity, sustainable development and climate action, call on Parties to strengthen and formalise the dialogue and participation of LRA (and other non-Party stakeholders) for the

¹⁰⁵ See <https://goo.gl/U5kWez>, <https://goo.gl/JJZR9Q> and <https://goo.gl/2NX2UD>

¹⁰⁶ IPBES Press release: “Human well-being at risk. Landmark reports highlight options to protect and restore nature and its vital contributions to people”, 26 March 2018.

development and implementation of an ambitious, inclusive and effective post-2020 biodiversity framework;

4. Stressing the importance of maximising the potential for synergies, integration and most efficient use of resources for the implementation of the global agendas, call on Parties to take advantage of the updating process to foster stronger coherence among biodiversity-related actions, the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development, and climate action requirements aiming at alignment and complementarity of action plans, implementation, capacities, timelines, reporting mechanisms, and use of resources at all levels;
5. Considering the important role of the CBD "Plan of Action on Subnational Governments, Cities and other Local Authorities for Biodiversity (2011-2020)" to foster multilevel governance, progress and challenges for its implementation should be recorded with the view to update the Plan of Action in the 2030 perspective and later on, regularly, in the 2050 perspective. The gathering of information could be structured through an online database compiling best practices, and include examples of the role of LRA in implementing the CBD;
6. Considering the particular responsibility of cities and LRA to achieve SDG 11, and given the importance of biodiversity and healthy ecosystems to reach this goal, while being aware of the considerable impact of growing urbanisation on biodiversity and ecosystems, call on Parties to enhance the multilevel governance and coordination with cities and LRA to improve on synergies and delivery for this goal;
7. Drawing the lessons from the persistent and inadequate funding of the current Strategic plan, and recognising the important potential of LRA and other non-Party stakeholders to mobilise financial resources, including new and innovative sources of funding, call on the Parties to make the Resource Mobilisation Strategy an integral part of the new plan; in addition, call on Parties, in close cooperation with LRA and other non-Party stakeholders, to update their evaluations of needs and existing resources in light of current targets and perspectives for 2030;
8. Recognising the urgency of increasing political attention to the situation and intensifying efforts to address it across all relevant policy sectors in a multi-level governance approach, call on Parties to draw on experience and contributions of LRA and other non-Party Stakeholders to promote and strengthen resources for the Communication Education and Public Awareness (CEPA) work program with particular attention to the

necessary resources, including capacity building for its implementation at the subnational level;

9. Considering the proposal to build on the experience of INDC and to develop mechanisms for enhanced multilateral review and transparency, draw Parties' attention to the call to have Locally Determined Contributions recognized, and therefore plan directly to allow for the recognition of these subnational contributions in the development of the NDC scheme for biodiversity;
10. Stressing the importance of biodiversity and ecosystem preservation to tackle climate change, call on Parties to strengthen connections between the implementation of the Paris Agreement and the new Strategic Plan, including for the development of specific indicators, targets and milestones;
11. The updating of biodiversity targets for 2030 should, whenever possible, allow for a certain continuity with the framework set up for the 2020 Strategic Plan and 2030 Sustainable Agenda in order to ease continuity in implementation while setting ambition at the level required to address the seriousness of the situation;
12. Call on Parties to address the need for increased support to LRA to build capacity for the elaboration/updating of biodiversity and sustainable development strategies and action plans at the subnational level in the post-2020 framework.

In addition, recommendations developed in the CoR Opinion on “Next Steps for a Sustainable European Future – European Action for Sustainability”¹⁰⁷ should also be brought forward in the preparatory process.

Recommendations on EU policies and measures:

- Call on EC and Member States to address in the debates on Scenarios for the Future of Europe the status of urgency for biodiversity loss, its magnitude and implications for all aspects of European citizens' future;
- Call on EC and Member States to enhance policy coherence and mainstreaming of biodiversity and SDGs objectives in the forthcoming reforms of the MFF and in EU sectoral policies such as the CAP, the CFP,

¹⁰⁷ Opinion of the Committee of the Regions on “Next Steps for a Sustainable European Future – European Action for Sustainability”, COR-2017-00137-00-02-PA-TRA (IT), 12 July 2017.

the maritime policy (Blue Growth), climate action and energy policy, and the research and innovation policy in order to make up for the delays in the achievements of the Aichi targets and to increase ambition for the sustainability of these policies in the post-2020 framework;

- Call on EC and Member States to urgently address the status of implementation in the EU of Aichi Target 3 on elimination and phasing out by 2020 of incentives, including subsidies harmful to biodiversity and provide guidance for further LRA actions to this aim;
- Call on the EC to propose a comprehensive plan for coordinated awareness raising and engagement at the national and subnational levels in the run up to COP 14 and COP 15 so that the CoR and LRA can better identify opportunities for synergies and engagement of partners;
- Call on the EC to take into consideration the importance of cross border cooperation and the experience of LRA in working with the EGTC in the measures foreseen under the framework for Boosting Growth and Cohesion in EU Border Regions;
- Call on the EC to work with the Business and Biodiversity Platform to identify opportunities at all level of governance for enhanced corporate engagement to step up actions towards the achievement of the Aichi targets;
- Call on the EC and Member States to ensure effective consideration of LRA needs and constraints for the development of the cross-cutting Natura 2000 indicators for all the relevant EU Funds (Environment Council Conclusion June 2017);
- In application of the approach of “Localising” the SDG and given the interlinkages between the 2030 Agenda and forthcoming updated Biodiversity Strategy, ensure that national level monitoring effectively takes subnational data into account in the review of the evolution and concrete results of national plans;

- Call on the EC to associate the CoR in the elaboration of the proposal for the development of the Trans-European Network for Green Infrastructure (TEN-G);
- Call on Member States to ensure and or improve provisions for LRA involvement in setting up, reviewing and implementing National Biodiversity Strategies and Action Plans (NBSAPs);
- Call on EC and Member States to identify best options to address LRA needs for capacity building for the elaboration/updating of biodiversity and sustainable development strategies and action plans at subnational level.

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local representatives from all 28 Member States, representing over 507 million Europeans.

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