

COMMON IMPLEMENTATION FRAMEWORK – ORIENTATIONS

VERSION: AFTER NATURE DIRECTOR MEETING

Summary

This paper outlines the governance structure for the Common Implementation Framework (CIF) to underpin the effective delivery of the EU Biodiversity Strategy to 2020. It includes the governance aspects related to the coherent framework for monitoring, assessing and reporting on progress towards reaching the EU targets and streamlining this work as far as possible with monitoring, assessment and reporting obligations under the CBD (notably the Aichi Targets).

The purpose of the CIF is to:

- facilitate implementation of the EU 2020 Biodiversity Strategy by putting in place a clear and logical EU level governance framework that is as efficient and effective as possible;
- create ownership for the implementation of the Biodiversity Strategy across all relevant policy areas by involving representatives from a wide range of services, ministries and institutions in implementation of the Strategy;
- ensure the involvement of all relevant stakeholders at the appropriate level of policy making, beyond the traditional biodiversity community. The scope of current stakeholder representation should be broadened, as appropriate;
- minimise duplication of effort and maximise synergies between efforts undertaken at different levels and by different actors and stakeholders; share information and best practice and address common challenges.

The finalised CIF structure has been validated by the Biodiversity and Nature Directors at their May meeting, in 2012.

Background and mandate for the CIF

The Commission's Communication 'Our life insurance, our natural capital: an EU biodiversity strategy to 2020'¹ underlines the need for close coordination between authorities at all levels – EU, national, sub-national – responsible for ensuring implementation of the Strategy as well as stakeholders' involvement in implementation. Since the Strategy covers a 9 year timeframe, is interlinked with several sectors and intends to involve numerous stakeholders, a governance structure is needed to ensure effective and efficient co-ordination and that progress is being made towards reaching the EU biodiversity targets. Section 4.3 of the Communication refers specifically to the establishment of a common implementation framework. In its Conclusions of 21 June and 19 December 2011, the Council supported the Commission's commitment to developing and agreeing, with Member States, such a framework, involving representatives of all relevant actors, sectors and institutions concerned at all levels. Such a governance structure should support a co-ordinated and streamlined approach for the implementation of the Strategy, including a coherent framework for monitoring, assessing and reporting on progress in implementing the Strategy.

¹ COM 2011/244 final.

Proposed structure and functions of the CIF

In developing its proposal for the CIF, the Commission has been guided by experience in implementing previous biodiversity strategies, especially the 2006 Biodiversity Action Plan and existing implementation frameworks of other policy areas, such as those developed for the Water Framework and Marine Strategy Framework directives. It has also taken into account views expressed by different stakeholders on the implementation process.

With this in mind, the Commission has screened existing fora, including those falling within the remit of other Commission Directorates-General and of the Council, which could be relevant for the implementation of actions under one or more target(s) of the Strategy (see Chart). It was found that these vary in many respects, e.g.:

- with regard to their mandate (i.e. some groups work on the basis of an agreed mandate, with or without legal basis, whereas others determine tasks on an ad hoc basis);
- with regard to the nature of the group (e.g. working group, expert group, advisory body, steering group);
- with regard to the group's purpose (e.g. drafting guidance);
- with regard to its time horizon (e.g. open-ended or temporary).

The screening process led to a number of findings:

1. Many working groups or other bodies already exist that could serve as ideal platforms for addressing the implementation of a given target or action. Some overlaps exist, however.
2. In some cases, working groups will need to be permanent (i.e. for the duration of the Strategy) while in others they will be only temporary or set up on an ad hoc basis.
3. For some targets the relevant forum is already straightforward (e.g. Target 1 on implementation of the EU Nature legislation), whereas for others none appear to exist (e.g. Target 2 on ecosystem assessment, mapping and restoration).
4. In principle, co-chairmanship from DG ENV and other DGs should be favoured for groups charged with overseeing implementation of targets the achievement of which clearly depends on other sectoral policies and integration (e.g. Target 3 on sustainable agriculture and forestry; Target 4 on fisheries).
5. As a general principle, all working groups should be open to stakeholders, unless the mandate and/or legal status of the group excludes this possibility (e.g. existing comitology committees, Council Working Party meetings).
6. Groups function best when their representatives are experts on the issue addressed by the group.

This proposal reflects in particular the following considerations:

- the need to synchronise the various meetings in an optimal way both in terms of timing and agenda;
- the need to move towards a more collaborative, operational, adaptive and responsive and results-oriented approach to implementation;
- the need to provide a dedicated forum for Member States and the Commission to exchange views and address issue of a more political nature;
- the need to keep the implementation structure as light as possible and streamline existing processes and working groups insofar as feasible;
- the need to fully respect existing legal comitology provisions included in e.g. the EU Birds and Habitats Directives as well as Council working groups.;
- the need to identify core working groups that are instrumental to implementing the six targets;
- the need to ensure that decisions making remains with the Member States, through the appropriate Council formation.

Format and composition of groups comprising the CIF structure

1) Biodiversity and Nature Directors' meeting (formerly known as Nature Directors meeting)

Mandate: The Biodiversity and Nature Directors meeting shall guide the implementation work to be undertaken under the CIF and provide an informal forum for open discussion on issues of priority interest on the one hand, and adoption of recommendations by consensus on policy and strategic issues related to the implementation of the Biodiversity Strategy on the other hand. On biodiversity and nature policy issues that directly fall under its authority, the Biodiversity and Nature Directors meeting will agree on orientations (e.g. setting priorities for action to be undertaken at technical level). On matters for which it does not have full responsibility, the Biodiversity and Nature Directors meeting will supply recommendations to be forwarded to the relevant fora (e.g. Committees or working parties of the Council). Biodiversity and Nature Directors will agree by consensus on the multi-annual work plan for implementation, developed by the Commission, in conjunction with Member States. Longer-term programming (e.g. Trio Presidency) of priority discussion items will be foreseen. The underpinning material for the main discussion items shall be validated and put forward to the Biodiversity and Nature Directors meeting by the Co-ordination Group for Biodiversity and Nature (CGBN) on the basis of the input of the working groups. When preparing for the meeting, Commission and the Member States shall take into consideration the work of the Council and the Parliament providing through their conclusions and resolutions, guidance and identifying key areas of work.

The agenda will be prepared by the Presidency and the Commission and clearly identify where recommendations from the Biodiversity and Nature Directors would be required. The circulation of discussion papers three weeks in advance of the meetings will enable Member States to co-ordinate across their own Departments/Ministries and therefore enable Biodiversity and Nature Directors attending these meetings to make recommendations and steer the strategic direction of implementation.

Format: The core meeting will be limited to representatives of Member States and the Commission with a view to enabling an open and frank exchange of views and discussion on experiences and challenges encountered in implementing the Strategy. A 'public' session is foreseen to involve stakeholder and broaden the scope of the discussion. This session could further discuss topical issues in an open format and/or showcase good practice in nature conservation in the host country. On specific issues, other overarching fora (e.g. Water, Marine or Forest Directors), could be invited to take part to a dedicated in-depth discussion

Composition: The level of representation in the meeting should, as the group's name suggests, be that of director or equivalent, i.e. a person authorised to make policy commitments on behalf of his/her national authority. The meeting will be co-chaired by the Presidency and the Commission.

Frequency, location and duration of meetings: Biodiversity and Nature Directors should meet twice yearly – i.e. once per Presidency, either in the Member State holding the Presidency or in Brussels. Consideration should be given to ease of access when selecting the location in order to facilitate participation. Meetings should be limited to no more than 2 meeting days (a voluntary field trip could be added) including a dedicated event involving stakeholders for no more than one day, again with a view to facilitating participation. The Biodiversity and Nature Directors meetings will be sequenced to take place after each meeting of the Coordination Group for Biodiversity and Nature, with a reasonable amount of time between these meetings to enable documents to be prepared and circulated to Biodiversity and Nature Directors ahead of their meetings. The coordination of the agendas of both meetings will be ensured by the Commission who is involved in the preparation of both meetings.

Expected output: Biodiversity and Nature Directors should approve or validate deliverables related to implementation by consensus, taking into account the views and recommendations expressed by the Co-ordination Group for Biodiversity and Nature. As indicated above, Biodiversity and Nature Directors are expected to decide on orientations with regards to issues falling completely under their responsibility. On other matters they are expected to adopt recommendations to be forwarded to the relevant fora. The Commission, together with the Presidency, will draft a report of each Biodiversity and Nature Directors Meeting outlining conclusions reached. It will be submitted to Directors for their approval before being made available to members of the Co-ordination Group for Biodiversity and Nature and core working

groups. The report should be finalised and transmitted to the CGBN within 10 working days after the meeting. The Commission will forward recommendations falling under the responsibility of other sectors and institutions, approved by the Directors to the relevant fora as necessary (e.g. Council formations, advisory or working groups of other sectors).

2) Coordination Group for Biodiversity and Nature (CGBN)

Mandate: The Coordination Group for Biodiversity and Nature will function as the operational steering group for the implementation of the Strategy. Its primary task will be to review outputs of the technical working groups (e.g. reports, guidance, methodological tools and other deliverables), ensure that linkages between them are made, and discuss cross-cutting issues such as financing, communication/awareness and the outcomes of the work under the coherent framework for monitoring, assessing and reporting, discuss and take decision upon issues as needed and appropriate. It will give its views on issues that require strategic decisions or guidance from the Biodiversity and Nature Directors, and communicate discussions and decisions taken by the Biodiversity and Nature Directors back to the working groups, as appropriate. Its work will be guided by a multi-annual work plan developed by the Commission, in conjunction with Member States and adopted by consensus and issued to the CGBN in light of the implementation deadlines for actions set out in the Strategy and with consideration of what was agreed at Council in June and December 2011. The first multi-annual work plan will cover the period 2012-2014, i.e. up to the mid-term review of the Strategy. The work plan will also include regular stock-taking of progress in implementing the Aichi Targets of the global Strategic Plan for Biodiversity 2011-2020 that are not covered under the EU Biodiversity Strategy to 2020. This could be included on the agenda of the Working Party on International Environment Issues – Biodiversity. Finally, the CGBN will serve as a forum for exchanging information and national experience on the process of revising and/or updating national biodiversity strategies, as required under the global Strategic Plan for Biodiversity 2011-2020.

Format: The meeting format is divided into 2 parts: 1) a closed session (Member States and Commission) to be extended to maximum a half day, followed by 2) an open session involving a broader range of stakeholder representatives. The agenda of the closed and open sessions should not be similar. The total length of the meeting may need to increase depending on the stage of implementation. Working Group chairs/co-chairs will be invited to report to the members on work undertaken by their group. Chairmanship of the meeting will continue under the same arrangements. The meetings are chaired by the European Commission and CIRCA will serve as the platform for making documentation and information available to the group. Meeting documents will be available two weeks in advance of the meeting to allow for internal consultation of and co-ordination with competent authorities.

Composition: Representation in the CGBN shall be determined by the Biodiversity and Nature Directors and stakeholders concerned. Representatives may differ from one meeting to another depending on the agenda points to be discussed, but to ensure continuity it is advisable that each Member State and stakeholder group identify one permanent member who will serve as the key contact person. Based on the evolution of EU Biodiversity Policy and increased focus on integration, stakeholder involvement shall be revisited and reconsidered by end 2012 in order to ensure a more balanced representation of all stakeholder groups concerned.

Frequency, location and duration of meetings: The CGBN shall meet on average twice per year in Brussels for no more than 2 days depending on the agenda. Meetings will be sequenced to take place before each meeting of the Biodiversity and Nature Directors, but with a reasonable amount of time between these meetings to enable documents to be prepared and circulated to Biodiversity and Nature Directors ahead of their meetings. As already noted, this will require coordinating the agendas of both meetings. This will be ensured by the Commission who is involved in the preparation of both meetings.

Expected output: The CGBN will review the outputs of Working Groups regarding the implementation of the strategy, set out its views on them, formulate questions and identify different options/solutions for the consideration of Biodiversity and Nature Directors, as appropriate. The Commission will produce a report of

each meeting of the CGBN, including these recommendations, and reflecting the range of views expressed by representatives of the group. These reports will be shared with members of the CGBN for approval before being made available as background information to the Biodiversity and Nature Directors for consideration at their meeting. Also, the CGBN shall transfer outputs (e.g. recommendations) of the Biodiversity and Nature Directors to relevant working groups as appropriate for consideration or implementation.

3) Working Groups

The number of Working Groups will be limited to those that are needed.

Mandate: In some cases, the working group will serve to assist the Commission in operationalising the actions within its mandate and sharing information about related Member State activities. In others, it will primarily provide a platform to set in place actions to deliver targets within the Strategy. This will be determined in part by the mandate of each group. Where an existing group has no legal basis, it may be possible to modify the mandate to suit the purposes of implementation of a given Target or action of the Strategy. It is clear that some groups will be operational from the outset and for the full duration of the Strategy, whereas others will have shorter term mandates or mandates that will evolve over time (e.g. working groups on invasive alien species).

The technical outputs (e.g. reports, guidance, methodological tools and other deliverables) of the working groups identified under the Common Implementation Framework (CIF) will be reviewed by the Coordination Group for Biodiversity and Nature (CGBN), as the operational steering group for implementation of the EU Biodiversity Strategy to 2020. The CGBN will ensure that linkages are made, and discuss cross-cutting issues such as financing, communication/awareness and the outcomes of the work under the coherent framework for monitoring, assessing and reporting, discuss and take decision upon issues as needed and appropriate. The CGBN will give its views on issues that require strategic decisions or guidance from the Biodiversity and Nature Directors (through the CGBN) back to the technical groups, as appropriate. Members of the CGBN will be copied to meeting invitations of WG experts and will be provided access to respective restricted sites. Meetings of technical groups will be included in the calendar for CGBN that will be updated regularly, published on circa and members notified.

Format: The working groups will be chaired by the Commission (this could be a representative from DG ENV and if need be, co-chaired by another DG or Member State depending on the group and the target/action addressed) or depending on the mandate and legal basis of the group, will be co-chaired by the Presidency or a lead Member State (noting that Council Working Groups cannot, under EU Treaties, be chaired by the Commission) or stakeholders.

Composition: Membership in working groups should be kept to a manageable size so as to enable a real 'working' environment. Where specific expertise is required, experts may be selected directly by the Commission on the basis of expression of interest (e.g. No Net Loss). On implementation issues, Member States' representatives will be nominated by the Biodiversity and Nature authorities, and if needed also by the sectoral authorities and relevant stakeholders. Unless otherwise defined by existing mandates or decided by Biodiversity and Nature Directors, groups will be composed of one technical expert from each Member State, experts of the Commission and, insofar as possible², and as appropriate stakeholder groups³. All members are expected to actively contribute to the debate and to the content, providing input and expertise on a number of elements or agenda topics.

Frequency, location and duration of meetings, yearly scheduling: This will depend on the nature and mandate of the group. It will not be possible, nor would it be desirable, to have a one-size-fits-all approach. While there will generally not be a pre-determined location for working group meetings, unless where there

² Participation in some working groups is restricted by the mandate and/or legal status of the group.

³ If necessary, depending on the issue, more than one representative from the Commission, Member State or stakeholder group may participate (e.g. one each from the environment and agriculture ministries).

is already established practice, they should be organised so as to coincide with other events so as to minimise costs and enable the participation of the most members possible. This would imply that most meetings take place in Brussels, for instance back-to-back with Council Working Party meetings, conferences, and other events where possible. The use of new technologies, such as Web conferencing (e.g. WEBEX, GoToMeeting, MS Office Live Meeting) should also be explored and used, especially once work reaches a more technical stage. These technologies are readily accessible and do not require extensive IT know-how and enable participants to take part, give presentations and exchange views, all from the comfort of their own offices!

Expected output and deliverables: Outputs will depend on the nature of the group and its mandate, but will include e.g. methodological tools, guidance, interpretative documents, assessments, detailed work plans for delivering specific actions or targets that link into the overall multi-annual work plan, etc.

Duplication of working groups and other structures should be avoided, and new ones created only when absolutely necessary for advancing on a given work stream. The CIF should make use of existing structures to the maximum possible extent.

Where two or more groups focusing on similar issues exist, led by different services (e.g. an agriculture & environment group run by ENV and another by AGRI), the possibility of merging them will be explored and, if this is not feasible, better links – including consultation - should be established so that both are aware of and involved in the work on implementing relevant biodiversity targets and actions. Ideally, work on integration-related actions should be governed under a co-chairmanship system to ensure balanced debates, decisions and ownership. This could, for instance, involve deciding in advance which group should take the lead and establishing co-chairmanship for that or those meeting(s) and allowing enough time for the other group to discuss and feed into the process through 'its' co-chair.

Existing working groups established under the EU Birds and Habitats Directives will remain to report back to the Habitats and Ornithology Committees which will take overall responsibility for the implementation of Target 1 of the 2020 Biodiversity Strategy. The Co-ordination Group for Biodiversity and Nature will be regularly informed about the work undertaken under these Committees and some issues related to the implementation of the EU 2020 Biodiversity Strategy might be discussed at both Coordination Group and the Biodiversity and Nature Directors meeting in order to promote a coherent implementation of the whole Strategy, without prejudice to the legal mandates of the Committees.

The Commission has identified the most relevant groups to serve as the platform for implementing and monitoring the various targets with a focus on identifying core working groups and most relevant fora for each target and defining their various mandates as appropriate (see annexes).

It is anticipated that some groups may need to be reorganised or their mandates redefined or extended to accommodate the work envisaged under the CIF. Where two groups exist with only minor differences in terms of issues addressed and representation, there may be scope for rationalising and/or merging them into one. Where there are gaps, new groups have been established (e.g. Mapping and Assessment of ecosystems, No Net Loss).

Some groups, such as the Natura 2000 thematic ad hoc groups and groups under the Common Implementation Strategy for the Water Framework Directive, are relevant for most targets and synergies on specific issues will need to be developed.

Common framework for monitoring, assessing and reporting on progress in implementing the strategy: As part of the CIF, the Commission will undertake with the Member States and the European Environment Agency technical work to link existing biodiversity data and knowledge systems with the implementation and monitoring of the EU 2020 Biodiversity Strategy and to streamline EU and global monitoring, reporting and review obligations under environmental and other relevant legislation as well as to avoid duplication and increase of reporting and administrative burden.

While the present document aims at providing clarification on the functional links between the groups within the CIF, it is important to note that the CIF governance structure is not meant to function purely as a hierarchical pyramid.

Important remark

In the case of existing Comitology groups and Council working parties, the mandates cannot be modified because they are defined in legislation (e.g. Habitats and Ornis Committees) or are institutionalised structures (e.g. Council Working Party formations). Also, decisions taken by groups having a legal basis or institutionalised structure take precedence over recommendations provided by the Coordination Group and/or Biodiversity and Nature Directors.

Annex: List of core groups identified for each target of the EU Biodiversity Strategy to 2020

(Chair in bracket)

Target 1: Nature Conservation

Core groups:

- Habitats Committee (ENV.B3)
- Ornis Committee (ENV.B3)

Other relevant fora:

- Natura 2000 Management Working Groups (ENV.B3)
- Natura 2000 Seminars (ENV.B3)
- Natura 2000 ad hoc groups (e.g. inland waterways, agriculture, forest, marine, aquaculture)
- Reporting expert group under the Nature Directives (ENV.B3)
- Streamlining of Biodiversity Indicator Team - SEBI (EEA, ENV)

Target 2: Green Infrastructure / Restoration

Core groups:

- Mapping and Assessment of Ecosystems and Services Working Group (ENV.B2)*
- Green Infrastructure Working Group, including prioritised restoration framework (ENV.B2)*
- No net loss working group (ENV.B2)*

Other relevant fora:

- European Network of Environmental Authorities and Managing Authorities – Working Group on 2014-2020 Cohesion Policy and Biodiversity (ENV, REGIO)
- Natura 2000 ad hoc groups (e.g. inland waterways) (ENV.B3)
- Natura 2000 Seminars (ENV.B3)
- Natura 2000 Management Working Groups (ENV.B3)
- Marine Strategy Framework Directive Working Group on Economic and Social Assessment (ENV.D2)
- Environmental Impact Assessment / Strategic Environmental Assessment Expert Group (ENV.A3)
- Adaptation Steering Group (CLIMA)
- Reporting expert group under the Nature Directives (ENV.B3)
- Streamlining of Biodiversity Indicator Team - SEBI (EEA, ENV)

Target 3: Agriculture and Forestry

Core groups:

- Expert Group on Agriculture and Environment (ENV, AGRI)*
- Standing Forestry Committee (AGRI, ENV)

Other relevant fora:

- Agri-environment Correspondent's group (ENV.B1)
- Advisory Group on Agriculture and Environment (AGRI)
- Natura 2000 ad hoc group on Agriculture (ENV.B3)
- Natura 2000 ad hoc group on Forest (ENV.B3)
- Advisory Group on Forestry & Cork (AGRI)
- Evaluation Network on Rural Development (AGRI)
- Reporting expert group under the Nature Directives (ENV.B3)
- Streamlining of Biodiversity Indicator Team - SEBI (EEA, ENV)

* new groups

Target 4: Sustainable use of fisheries resources (MSY) and GES

Core groups:

- Marine Strategy, Working Group on Good Environmental Status (ENV.D2)

Other relevant fora:

- Marine Strategy Framework Directive Coordination Group (ENV.D2)
- Marine Strategy Framework Directive Working Group on Economic and Social Assessment (ENV.D2)
- Natura 2000 ad hoc group on Aquaculture (ENV.B3)
- Natura 2000 Marine Expert Group (ENV.B3)
- COMAR for marine biodiversity in areas beyond national jurisdiction (MARE)
- Marine Data Information Knowledge Evaluation DIKE (ENV.D2)/ICES/EMODNET (MARE)
- Reporting expert group under the Nature Directives (ENV.B3)
- Streamlining of Biodiversity Indicator Team - SEBI (EEA, ENV)

Target 5: Invasive Alien Species

Core groups:

- MS Consultation group on Invasive Alien Species (ENV.B2)
- Standing Committee on Invasive Alien Species (ENV.B2)**
- Scientific Review Group on Invasive Alien Species (ENV.B2)**

Other relevant fora:

- Reporting expert group under the Nature Directives (ENV.B3)
- Streamlining of Biodiversity Indicator Team - SEBI (EEA, ENV)

Target 6: Global biodiversity

Core groups:

- Biodiversity and Development Cooperation Platform (ENV, DEVCO)***

Other relevant fora:

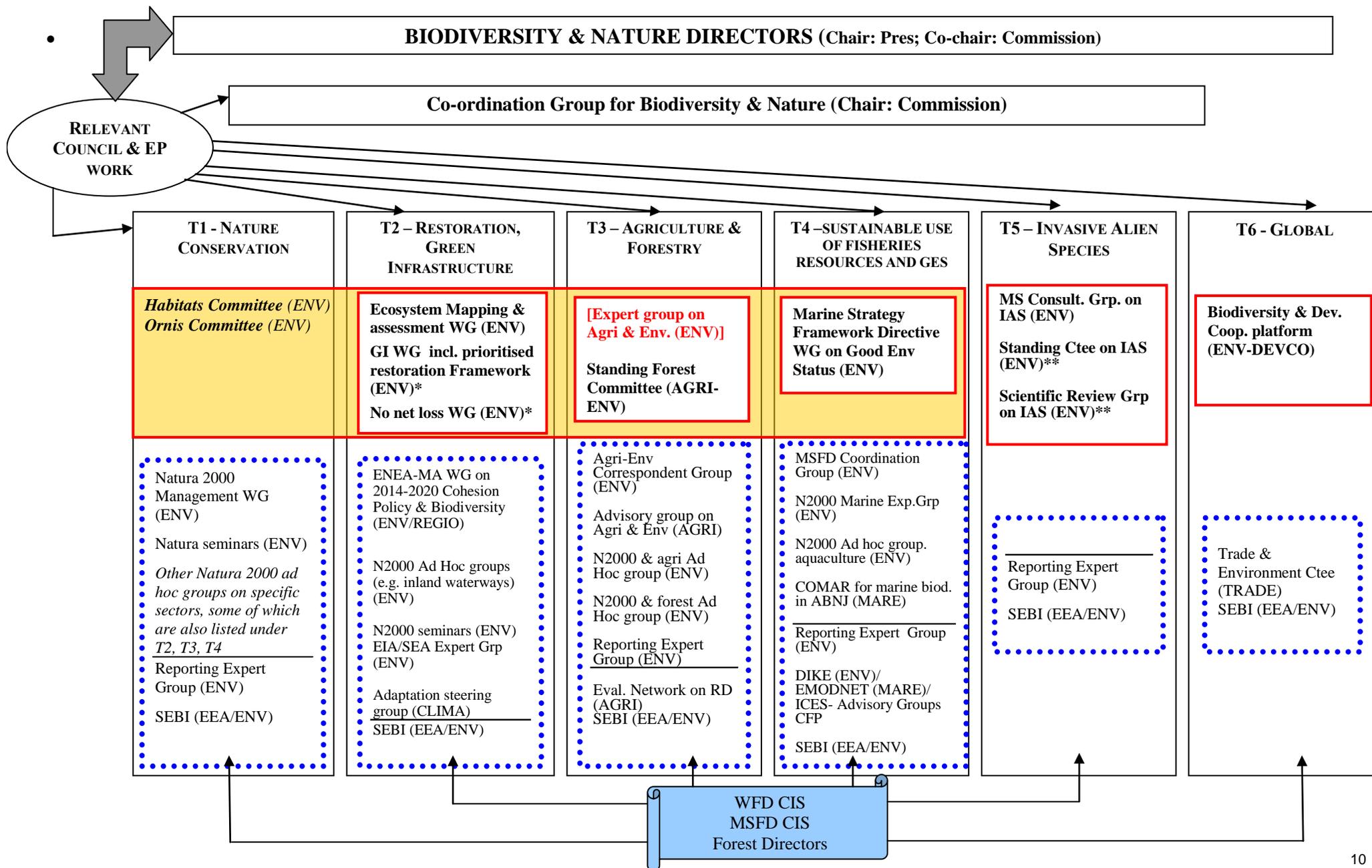
- Trade and Environment Committee (TRADE)
- Streamlining of Biodiversity Indicator Team - SEBI (EEA, ENV)

* new groups

** under consideration as part of the dedicated legislative instrument on Invasive Alien Species

• *** To be set up

CIF GOVERNANCE CHART



Legend: Current chairmanship in brackets, Core groups in bold, * group to be created, ** group under consideration as part of the legislative proposal
 NB: The group listing in boxes shows the core groups and those others identified as most relevant and is not intended to be a comprehensive list of all existing groups.

COMMON IMPLEMENTATION FRAMEWORK – CORE GROUPS

MANDATES, MEMBERSHIP AND OTHER DETAILS OF CORE GROUPS

Warning: This is a working document, providing additional information on the core groups identified in the common implementation framework.

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1. TITLE: Informal Meetings of Biodiversity and Nature Directors

Participants: Biodiversity and Nature Directors of Member States or equivalent, i.e. a person authorised to make policy commitments on behalf of his/her national authority, plus their equivalent from the Commission with interest groups such as NGOs participating in some of the discussions (to be decided on a case by case basis).

Frequency of Meetings: Twice yearly – i.e. once per Presidency, either in the Member State holding the Presidency or in Brussels. Consideration should be given to ease of access when selecting the location in order to facilitate participation. Meetings will be limited to no more than 2 meeting days (a voluntary field trip could be added) including a dedicated event involving stakeholders for no more than one day, again with a view to facilitating participation. The Biodiversity and Nature Directors meetings will be sequenced to take place after each meeting of the Coordination Group for Biodiversity and Nature, but with a reasonable amount of time between these meetings to enable documents to be prepared and circulated to Biodiversity and Nature Directors ahead of their meetings. This will require coordinating the agendas of both meetings and will be ensured by the Commission who is involved in the preparation of both meetings.

Chair: Co-chaired by Member State holding the Presidency and the European Commission DG ENV Director B

Mandate: The Biodiversity and Nature Directors meeting shall guide the implementation work to be undertaken under the CIF and provide an informal forum for open discussion on issues of priority interest on the one hand, and adoption of recommendations by consensus on policy and strategic issues related to the implementation of the Biodiversity Strategy on the other hand. On biodiversity and nature policy issues that directly fall under its authority, the Biodiversity and Nature Directors meeting will decide on orientations (e.g. setting priorities for action to be undertaken at technical level). On matters for which it does not have full responsibility, the Biodiversity and Nature Directors meeting will supply recommendations to be forwarded to the relevant fora (e.g. Committees or working parties of the Council). Biodiversity and Nature Directors will agree by consensus on the multi-annual work plan for implementation, developed by the Commission, in conjunction with Member States. Longer-term programming (e.g. Trio Presidency) of priority discussion items will be foreseen. The underpinning material for the main discussion items shall be validated and put forward to the Biodiversity and Nature Directors meeting by the Co-ordination Group for Biodiversity and Nature (CGBN) on the basis of the input of the working groups. When preparing for the meeting, Commission and the Member States shall take into consideration the work of the Council and the Parliament providing through their conclusions and resolutions, guidance and identifying key areas of work.

Secretariat: Presidency with support of the Commission

Agenda: The agenda is prepared by the Presidency and the Commission and clearly identify the where recommendations from the Biodiversity and Nature Directors would be required. The circulation of discussion papers well in advance of the meetings will enable Member States to co-ordinate across their own Departments/Ministries and therefore enable Biodiversity and Nature Directors attending these meetings to make recommendations and steer the strategic direction of implementation.

Format: The meeting is divided into 2 parts: 1) a core meeting limited to representatives of Member States and the Commission with a view to enabling an open and frank exchange of views and discussion on experiences and challenges encountered in implementing the Strategy; 2) a 'public' session involving stakeholder to broaden the scope of the discussion and further discuss topical issues in an open format and/or showcase good practice in nature conservation in the host country. On specific issues, other overarching fora (e.g. Water, Marine or Forest Directors), will be invited to take part to a dedicated in-depth discussion.

Expected outcomes: Biodiversity and Nature Directors will approve or validate deliverables related to implementation by consensus, taking into account the views and recommendations expressed by the Co-ordination Group for Biodiversity and Nature. Biodiversity and Nature Directors are expected to decide on orientations with regards to issues falling completely under their responsibility. On other matters they are expected to adopt recommendations to be forwarded to the relevant fora. The Commission, together with the Presidency, will draft a report of each Biodiversity and Nature Directors Meeting outlining conclusions reached. It will be submitted to Directors for their approval before being made available to members of the Co-ordination Group for Biodiversity and Nature and core working groups. The report should be finalised and transmitted to the CGBN within 10 working days after the meeting. The Commission will forward recommendations falling under the responsibility of other sectors and institutions, approved by the Directors to the relevant fora as necessary (e.g. Council formations, advisory or working groups of other sectors).

Web link: *to be set up*

2. TITLE: Coordination Group for Biodiversity and Nature

Participants: Representation in the CGBN shall be determined by the Biodiversity and Nature Directors and stakeholders concerned. Representatives may differ from one meeting to another depending on the agenda points to be discussed, but to ensure continuity it is advisable that each Member State and stakeholder group identify one permanent member who will serve as the key contact person. Based on the evolution of EU Biodiversity Policy and increased focus on integration, stakeholder involvement shall be revisited and reconsidered by end 2012 in order to ensure a more balanced representation of all stakeholder groups concerned.

Frequency of Meetings: The CGBN shall meet on average twice per year in Brussels for no more than 2 days depending on the agenda. Meetings will be sequenced to take place before each meeting of the Biodiversity and Nature Directors, but with a reasonable amount of time between these meetings to enable documents to be prepared and circulated to Biodiversity and Nature Directors ahead of their meetings. This will require coordinating the agendas of both meetings and will be ensured by the Commission who is involved in the preparation of both meetings.

Chair: Commission DG ENV.B2 & B3

Mandate: The Co-ordination Group for Biodiversity and Nature will function as the operational steering group for the implementation of the Strategy. Its primary task will be to review outputs of the technical working groups (e.g. reports, guidance, methodological tools and other deliverables), ensure that linkages between them are made, and discuss cross-cutting issues such as financing, communication/awareness and the outcomes of the work under the coherent framework for monitoring, assessing and reporting, discuss and take decision upon issues as needed and appropriate. It will give its views on issues that require strategic decisions or guidance from the Biodiversity and Nature Directors, and communicate discussions and decisions taken by the Biodiversity and Nature Directors back to the working groups, as appropriate. Its work will be guided by a multi-annual work plan developed by the Commission, in conjunction with Member States and adopted by consensus and issued to the CGBN in light of the implementation deadlines for actions set out in the Strategy and with consideration of what was agreed at Council in June and December 2011. The first multi-annual work plan will ideally cover the period 2012-2014, i.e. up to the mid-term review of the Strategy. The work plan will also include regular stock-taking of progress in implementing the Aichi Targets of the global Strategic Plan for Biodiversity 2011-2020 that are not covered under the EU Biodiversity Strategy to 2020. This could be included on the agenda of the Working Party on International Environment Issues – Biodiversity. Finally, the CGBN could serve as a forum for exchanging information and national experience on the process of revising and/or updating national biodiversity strategies, as required under the global Strategic Plan for Biodiversity 2011-2020.

Secretariat: Commission

Agenda: The agenda for each meeting would be the responsibility of the Commission taking into account the suggestions made by participants. The meetings will be divided into restricted sessions during which only the Member States, Commission and EEA take part and full sessions during which all invited groups/organisations can take part.

Format: Meetings are divided into 2 parts: 1) a closed session (Member States and Commission) to be possibly extended to maximum a half day, followed by 2) an open session involving a broader range of stakeholder representatives. The agenda of the closed and open sessions will not be similar. The total length of the meeting may need to increase depending on the stage of implementation. Working Group chairs/co-chairs will be invited to report to the members on work undertaken by their group. Meeting documents will be available two weeks in advance of the meeting to allow for internal consultation of and co-ordination with competent authorities.

Expected outputs: The CGBN will review the outputs of Working Groups regarding the implementation of the strategy, set out its views on them, formulate questions and identify different options/solutions for the consideration of Biodiversity and Nature Directors, as appropriate. The Commission will produce a report of each meeting of the CGBN, including these recommendations, and reflecting the range of views expressed by representatives of the group. These reports will be shared with members of the CGBN for approval before being made available as background information to the Biodiversity and Nature Directors for consideration at their meeting. Also, the CGBN shall transfer outputs (e.g. recommendations) of the Biodiversity and Nature Directors to relevant working groups as appropriate for consideration or implementation.

Web link: Restricted http://circa.europa.eu/Members/irc/env/biodiversity_nature/library

3. TITLE: ORNIS Committee as established under Article 16 of the Birds Directive

Participants: Representatives nominated by the Member States.

Frequency of Meetings: As required. Generally at least once per year

Chair: Commission

Mandate: To support implementation of the Birds Directive⁴, acting on proposals from the Commission in accordance with Article 17 of the Birds directive and in relation to the delegated powers foreseen in the directive (Article 15). To also provide a consultative forum between Commission and Member States on implementation of Directive

Secretariat: Commission DG ENV.B3

Agenda: Set by the Commission or items discussed upon the request of a Member State in accordance with the standard operating rules and procedures according to Article 17 of the directive.

Relationship to Other Committees and Groups: In practice may be possible to hold joint meetings or back to back meetings with the Habitats Committee. It may also be supported by a technical Ornis Scientific Working group

Web

link:

http://circa.europa.eu/Members/irc/env/wild_birds/library?l=/ornis&vm=detailed&sb=Title

⁴ [Directive 2009/147/EC](#) of the European Parliament and of the Council of 30 November 2009 on the conservation of wild birds (codified version of Directive 79/409/EEC as amended)

4. TITLE: Habitats Committee as established under Article 20 of the Habitats Directive
Participants: Representatives nominated by the Member States.
Frequency of Meetings: As required, usually twice per year.
Chair: Commission
Mandate: To support implementation of the Habitats Directive ⁵ , acting on proposals from the Commission in accordance with Article 21 of the Habitats directive and in relation to the delegated powers foreseen in the directive (Articles 4.2, 9, 17.2, 17.3 and Article 19 para. 2). To also provide a consultative forum between Commission and Member States on implementation of Directive
Secretariat: Commission DG ENV.B3
Agenda: Set by the Commission or items discussed upon the request of a Member State in accordance with the standard operating rules and procedures according to Article 21 of the directive.
Relationship to Other Committees and Groups: In practice may be possible to hold joint meetings or back to back meetings with ORNIS Committee. In supported by expert technical groups
Web link: http://circa.europa.eu/Public/irc/env/habitats/home

⁵ Council Directive of 92/43/EEC on the conservation of natural habitats and of wild fauna and flora, OJ L 206, 22.7.1992, p. 7

5. TITLE: Expert Group on Reporting under the Nature Directives

Participants: Experts nominated by Member States, representatives of the European Environment Agency (EEA) and its Topic Centre on Biological Diversity (ETC/BD), the nature-NGO community (via the European Habitats Forum), the land-users community (via the Natura 2000 Users Forum) and the European Commission (DG ENV plus other services depending on the topic, e.g. DG Research, DG DIGIT, JRC, ESTAT/GISCO).

Additional experts may be invited on an ad-hoc basis.

Frequency of Meetings: 2-3 times per year in Brussels

Chair: Commission DG ENV. B3

Mandate: To streamline and modernise the reporting tasks under the Habitats⁶ and Birds⁷ directives, including the dataflow on the Natura 2000 network. This involves the standardisation, synchronisation and modernisation of dataflow (use of IT-tools) as well as proposals for the presentation of these data & their analysis via the internet in order to be available and relevant to a wide range of users.

Secretariat: Commission. For the distribution of papers and presentations, a public CIRCA-platform site is used. Copies of all mails are sent to the Habitats and Ornis Committee members for information.

Agenda: Set by the Commission according to agreed work packages or items discussed upon the request of a Member State in accordance with the standard operating rules and procedures

Relationship to Other Committees and Groups: regular reports to the Habitats and Ornis Committee members and Co-ordination Group for Biodiversity and Nature.

Web link: Public

http://circa.europa.eu/Public/irc/env/monnat/library?l=/expert_reporting&vm=detailed&sb=Title

⁶ Council Directive of 92/43/EEC on the conservation of natural habitats and of wild fauna and flora, OJ L 206, 22.7.1992, p. 7

⁷ [Directive 2009/147/EC](#) of the European Parliament and of the Council of 30 November 2009 on the conservation of wild birds (codified version of Directive 79/409/EEC as amended) OJ L 20, 26.1.2010, p. 9

6. TITLE: Working Group on Mapping and assessment of ecosystems and their services

Participants: Experts from Member State nominated by the representatives of the Coordination Group for Biodiversity and Nature, from the European Environment Agency (EEA) and its Topic Centre on Biological Diversity (ETC/BD), and from relevant Services of the European Commission (DG ENV, the Joint Research Centre, Eurostat, DG Research & Innovation). The Working Group also includes a limited number of experts and stakeholders with direct technical experience in ecosystem assessments, selected on the basis of concrete contributions offered to the work. The aim is to keep the Working Group to a manageable size, to allow for active participation from all members.

Additional / thematic experts may be invited on an ad-hoc basis depending on the theme to be addressed (e.g. DG REGIO, DG AGRI, MARE). These could also include selected representatives from the scientific community, nature-NGO community, the land-users community and international organisations. Access to documents will be provided to them through circabc.

Frequency of Meetings: 3-4 times per year (e.g. March, June and September), in DG Environment premises in Brussels. These will be preceded by half-day meeting of the Steering Group. A broader stakeholder workshop will be organised once a year in autumn (e.g. October).

Chair: Commission DG ENV.B2.

Mandate: The objective of the Working Group on Mapping and Assessment of Ecosystems and their Services is to support Member States in undertaking the work necessary for the 2014 delivery, with the assistance of the European Commission and expert contribution. This involves discussions on the methodological framework to be used, the streamlining and integration of the reporting dataflows under the Habitats⁸ and Birds⁹ directives, the Water Framework¹⁰ and the Marine Strategy Framework¹¹ Directives including the mapping of relevant dataflow (use of ICT-tools) as well as proposals for the presentation of these data & their analysis via the internet in order to be available and relevant to a wide range of users.

Secretariat: Commission. For the distribution of papers and presentations, a restricted CIRCABC-platform site is used. Copies of all mails will be sent to the Coordination Group for Biodiversity and Nature members for information.

Agenda: Set by the Commission according to agreed work streams or items discussed upon the request of a Member State in accordance with the standard operating rules and procedures.

Format: The work and discussions of the Working Group will be guided by a small Steering Group of members of the Working Group, involving representatives of the Commission (DG ENV, JRC, ESTAT, RTD), the EEA experts from selected MS, international organisations (UNEP-WCMC) and research community (Oxford University, University of Lisbon, Royal Netherlands Institute for Sea Research). Meetings will be held in English. Stakeholders who have expressed an interest and are not members of the Working Group will be able to access the main meeting documents and provide comments in writing through circabc.

Expected outcomes: Working Group members, experts and stakeholders are expected to contribute actively in the Working Group, and to the development of documents as outputs of discussions. The Commission will

⁸ Council Directive of 92/43/EEC on the conservation of natural habitats and of wild fauna and flora, OJ L 206, 22.7.1992, p. 7

⁹ Council Directive 79/409/EEC on the conservation of wild birds, OJ L 103, 25.4.1979, p. 1

¹⁰ Directive 2000/60 of European Parliament and Council establishing a framework for Community action in the field of water policy

¹¹ Directive 2008/56 of European Parliament and Council establishing a framework for Community action in the field of marine environmental policy

support the Working Group by providing information on past and ongoing relevant studies and make publications publically available on the ecosystem assessment platform (<http://biodiversity.europa.eu/ecosystem-assessments>) of the Biodiversity Information System for Europe (BISE). Working Group members, experts and stakeholders are also expected to share any useful information and their experiences on local or national relevant initiatives and publish them on BISE. The outputs of the working group (e.g. reports, guidance, methodological tools and other deliverables) will be reviewed by the Coordination Group for Biodiversity and Nature, ensure that linkages are made, and discuss cross-cutting issues such as financing, communication/awareness and the outcomes of the work under the coherent framework for monitoring, assessing and reporting, discuss and take decision upon issues as needed and appropriate. It will give its views on issues that require strategic decisions or guidance from the Biodiversity and Nature Directors, and communicate discussions and decisions taken by the Biodiversity and Nature Directors back to the working groups, as appropriate

The Commission will produce a report of each meeting of the working group that will be made available to all on **circabc** together with all meeting and information documents that will be provided ahead of the meetings. Working Group members, experts and stakeholders will be given access. Working Group members will be able to provide comments in writing up to two weeks after the meeting. The composition of the Working Group will also be published on this site.

Web link: Restricted <https://circabc.europa.eu/>

7. TITLE: Working Group on No Net Loss of Ecosystems and their Services

Participants: Member State representatives and stakeholders, selected with the aim of ensuring a geographical balance of Member State representatives; a balanced representation of different interests, with priority given to organisations representing the views of stakeholders at EU level. The Working Group also includes a limited number of experts with direct technical experience of NNL and offset projects. The aim is to keep the size of the Working Group to a manageable size, to allow for active participation from all members.

Frequency of Meetings: three times during 2012 (i.e. February, July and November), in DG Environment premises in Brussels. Further meetings may be held in 2013, depending on progress. Meetings will be held in English only.

Chair: Commission DG ENV.B2.

Mandate: The objective is to collect views from Member State representatives, stakeholders and experts on the way forward for the NNL initiative announced for 2015, within the mandate of the 2011 December Council conclusions, taking into account all relevant policies and instruments. The aim is to support the European Commission in its preparation of a NNL initiative.

Secretariat: Commission. For the distribution of papers and presentations, a restricted **CIRCabc**-platform site is used. Copies of all mails will be sent to the Coordination Group for Biodiversity and Nature members for information. Meeting documents will be uploaded on a Commission's Circabc dedicated site at least two weeks ahead of meetings, to which Working Group members will be given access. Working Group members will be able to provide comments in writing up to four weeks after the meeting. The composition of the Working Group will also be published on this site. Stakeholders who have expressed an interest and are not a member of the Working Group will also be able to access the main meeting documents and provide comments in writing.

Agenda: Set by the Commission.

Format:

Expected outcomes: The outputs of the working group (e.g. reports, guidance, methodological tools and other deliverables) will be reviewed by the Coordination Group for Biodiversity and Nature, ensure that linkages are made, and discuss cross-cutting issues such as financing, communication/awareness and the outcomes of the work under the coherent framework for monitoring, assessing and reporting, discuss and take decision upon issues as needed and appropriate. It will give its views on issues that require strategic decisions or guidance from the Biodiversity and Nature Directors, and communicate discussions and decisions taken by the Biodiversity and Nature Directors back to the working groups, as appropriate.

Web link: Restricted <https://circabc.europa.eu/>

8. TITLE: Standing Forestry Committee

Participants: Member States' representatives

Frequency of Meetings: 3-4 times/year

Chair: Commission -DG AGRI (DDG3.H4) and DG ENV (B1) - depending on the agenda

Mandate: The Standing Forestry Committee (SFC) was set up in 1989. The Committee represents forestry administrations of the EU Member States. The Committee has 27 members representing the Member States. The European Commission is the chairperson of the Committee. Members of the Committee are nominated by the governments of the EU Member States. The SFC has a three-fold role:

- it acts as an advisory and management Committee for specific forestry measures;
- it is also an ad-hoc consultation forum that provides expertise in connection with the development of forest-related measures in the framework of various Community policies, such as those on rural development and the environment;
- it provides a venue for exchange of information among Member States, and between Member States and the Commission.

Secretariat: DG AGRI

Rules/Procedures: http://ec.europa.eu/agriculture/fore/sfc_en.htm

Rules of procedure exist

Agenda: negotiated between AGRI and other Commission services

Relationship to Other Committees and Groups: no specific relationship. However, the SFC can create ad-hoc working groups (currently two, one on forestry strategy revision, another on forest information)

Web link: http://ec.europa.eu/agriculture/fore/sfc_en.htm

9. TITLE: Marine Strategy, Working Group on Good Environmental Status (WG GES)

Participants:

- European Commission and European Environment Agency;
- Member States;
- Representatives of regional sea conventions (Secretariats and/or specific Member States), other marine protection conventions;
- European stakeholder organisations and international marine scientific organisations.

Frequency of Meetings: In principle twice a year

Chair: DG ENV.D2, co-chaired by JRC and Germany

Mandate: From Marine Directors. Work plan 2012 – 2014 is in preparation, to be agreed upon in June by Marine Directors

Secretariat: DG ENV D2

Agenda: The Working Group will address, whenever appropriate, issues of application of the Directive by Member States, focussing on the aspects of 'consistency' and 'comparability' as provided for in the Marine Strategy Framework Directive Art. 5.2. In this activity, the Working Group will take account of MS activities in the Regional Sea Conventions, with particular focus on common approaches within and between marine regions, seeking synergies with respect to other obligations and the avoidance of duplication of efforts. The group also looks at fisheries related assessment and it supported by ad-hoc workshops e.g. the recent Workshop on Descriptor 3+ which agreed some follow up in these areas.

Relationship to Other Committees and Groups: WG GES is under the Marine Strategy Coordination Group (MSCG), which is under the Marine Directors. There are two other Working Groups under MSCG: Data and Information Knowledge Exchange (DIKE) and Economic and Social Analysis (ESA). Under WG GES are also technical groups and special thematic meetings which can be arranged as needed.

Web link: http://ec.europa.eu/environment/water/marine/implementation_en.htm

10. TITLE: Member States Consultation Ad Hoc Group on Invasive Alien Species

Participants: Representatives from the Member States.

Frequency of Meetings: Once in 2011 and once in 2012. No further meeting planned.

Chair: Commission

Mandate: This ad hoc group was consulted on the development by the Commission of a dedicated legislative instrument to combat IAS by 2012. The setting up of a Standing Committee on Invasive Alien Species and a Scientific Review Group on Invasive Alien Species is under consideration as part of the dedicated legislative instrument on Invasive Alien Species.

Secretariat: Commission DG ENV.B2

Agenda: Set by the Commission

Relationship to Other Committees and Groups:

Web

http://circa.europa.eu/Members/irc/env/ias/library?l=/general_information&vm=detailed&sb=Title

link: