



Key messages from the Science forum

These key messages have been submitted to the COP-14 plenary on 26/11/18 (CBD/COP/14/INF/xx).

1. On engaging with society:

- Robust science is one of the drivers that influence policy making. Developing policies based on the best scientific knowledge available is a complex process with many interactions. However, science-based solutions are a hope to change things for better. It is important to have scientific presence in policy fora, with a strong interaction through science-policy-society interfaces.
- Biodiversity as term remains difficult for parts of the public and policymakers, and science should help in remediating this. Boundaries created by the different “languages” spoken can be overtaken by using the language of the audience addressed. Effective communication is key!
- We need to transform the way we produce and transfer knowledge. Outreach to the broader public, the business sector and all relevant stakeholders, is the precondition to making people aware and to engage them in transformative changes for biodiversity.
- We need to invest in understanding on how requested changes can be translated into governance and changing mindsets at all levels. The way how local governments implement legislation directly effects public opinion. It is equally important that people assume responsibility of their daily activities that can influence change.

2. On disentangling the 2050 vision:

- The 2050 vision is multidimensional across scales and across sectors, with three possible approaches: nature for nature, nature for society (natural capital) and nature as culture, the latter which is close to “living in harmony with nature”.
- We need to ‘bend the curve’ of biodiversity decline. Therefore, we need positive visions to mobilize short-term action and long-term enhanced national ambition and to ensure that we reach a wider audience. Positive nature futures through participatory scenarios can help developing such positive interpretations of the 2050 vision.
- Various regional interpretations of the 2050 vision emerged in discussions. They mirror a variety of approaches, with varying priority setting on poverty alleviation, nature for nature, awareness raising, enhancing social responsibility, limiting damage, strengthening national capacities and trans-disciplinarity (mainstreaming).

3. On actions to achieve the 2050 vision

- Main principles for actions emerged in discussions. The following set of statements is not representative for all group discussions but gives indications on main issues discussed:
 - Reduce inequalities and ensure equal and sustainable access to environmental resources.
 - Embed environmental awareness and understanding at all levels of education.
 - Enable access to and connection of all people with nature.
 - Implement multi-stakeholder public awareness strategies and capacity building efforts.
 - Develop a “green”, sustainable economy.



- Reduce consumption and invest in recognizing and adopting alternative systems of consumption and production that are respectful for biodiversity.
- Intensify work on science-policy interfaces, for more effective biodiversity policies.
- Connect discussions on biodiversity and climate and underline their interconnections in policy, scientific and society domains.
- Develop greener cities and implement urban nature based solutions.
- Ensure wide coverage of biodiversity data with open access for use in science and policy.

4. On priority areas for target settings

- Developing scenarios can help in identifying possible multiple pathways, exploring synergies and trade-offs with other domains. They inform targets for 2030 and 2040 towards the 2050 vision.
- Setting targets is a social and political undertaking, but science can and should inform these decisions. Social sciences should be integrated in this transdisciplinary effort, to identify what is necessary to move towards a world of better biodiversity to support a better life of people.
- Diverging views emerged on which path to follow: Should we focus on preventing extinctions, reversing decline and retain intactness according to urgency criteria, building on existing efforts to achieve a minimum safeguarding area for biodiversity? Or should we prioritise the need for massive transformational changes in societal behaviour to address the main drivers for biodiversity loss, which are outside the mandate of biodiversity policy settings, and which are often coming from different places than where the impacts are felt?
- Targets need to be more quantitative to ensure they are effective. Targets need to be responsive to geographical locations and the variety of distributions of biodiversity elements. There is need for few basic targets, with wide applicability, and the development of sub-targets, in different operational and geographical levels, to assist implementation.

5. On the potential role of nature-based solutions (NBS)

- NBS, ecosystem-based approaches, green and natural infrastructure are terms coined in different contexts, but share the same rationale: working with nature for people with people.
- NBS comply and fit well with the CBD agenda and objectives, bring prosperity, and are inclusive. Implementing NBS leads to mainstreaming biodiversity in other sectors. They support good governance by involving different actors and institutions, requiring responsibility to each of them.
- Introduction of NBS into any action setting for the post-2020 framework will provide solutions to allow nature and its benefits to take the lead in delivering transformational change for improved biodiversity, human health and livelihoods at a time where urgent action is required.
- The overwhelming scientific evidence provided during 2018 assessments and reports (IPBES, IPCC, UNESCO, WWF etc.) requests urgent action for implementing NBS to deliver systemic approaches across the Sustainable Development Goals, and for linking the three Rio Conventions.

6. On ecosystem degradation and restoration:

- Science supports the need to implement the African summit declaration to fight degradation and strategic guidance for African priorities in future work programmes. Africa's biodiversity priorities within the pan-African action agenda on ecosystem restoration are linked to all three Conventions.



- The list of priorities for restoration which will only be successful if they are integrated into economic sectors and complemented by means of implementation (including research), stakeholder engagement, implementation arrangements, monitoring and evaluation. Integrated sectoral planning is required to achieve key targets and milestones.
- It is very important to define a baseline, prepare monitoring and provide reliable data for successful restoration. This must be integral part of all restoration activities.
- We need to understand the interaction between land degradation and economic migration.

7. On transitions and transformational changes:

- We need to understand the drivers of change to define transformations. Understanding the relationship between global actions which improve conditions for nature and local action is critical in understanding transformations and transitions to inform the global vision.
- We need a transformation of mind sets. It is a challenge to develop policies that operate across sectors to reduce the negative influence of different decisions which may be taken by different sectors operating in isolation. We need policy which encourages sectors to work together for transition and transformational changes.
- Innovation, both social and technological, is key to achieve transformations from global to local level. It is critical for translating science into policy, and to implement mainstreaming.

8. On the knowledge base for baseline setting and monitoring:

- We need to ensure that scientific data and results are publicly available, in a form useable by policy makers, other researchers and society. This must include local and traditional knowledge, which can inform solutions for biodiversity conservation, sustainable use and recovery of ecosystems. Information availability is key to managing uncertainty.
- We need to monitor progress at multiple scales. There is a need for intermediary milestones to ensure effective tracking and assessments of the impact of the proposed changes.

9. On calls for research priorities:

- More transdisciplinary research is needed to identify and fill the gaps in understanding governance for transformational change. There is a need for research informing policies on how to develop effective legislation for conserving biodiversity. We need to evaluate progress on addressing the previously identified knowledge gaps.
- We need to understand trade-offs between development and conservation and to identify thresholds for sectors to stay within sustainable use of biodiversity, including relevant indicators.