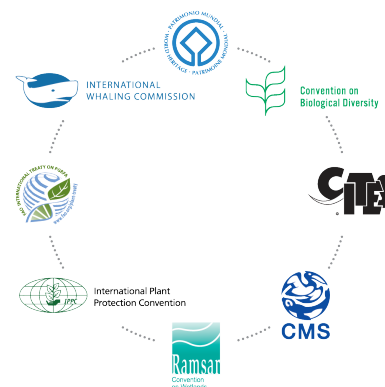


## Modus Operandi for the Liaison Group of Biodiversity-related Conventions Updated 2019



### Introduction

The Liaison Group of Biodiversity-related Conventions (BLG) currently comprises the secretariats of the following conventions:

- Convention concerning the Protection of the World Cultural and Natural Heritage (World Heritage Convention)
- Convention on Biological Diversity (CBD);
- Convention on International Trade in Endangered Species of Wild Fauna and Flora (CITES);
- Convention on the Conservation of Migratory Species of Wild Animals (CMS);
- Convention on Wetlands of International Importance especially as Waterfowl Habitat (Ramsar Convention on Wetlands);
- International Plant Protection Convention (IPPC)
- International Treaty on Plant Genetic Resources for Food and Agriculture (ITPGRFA); and
- International Whaling Commission (IWC)<sup>1</sup>.

### Mandate

The mandate for establishing the Liaison Group of Biodiversity-related Conventions was set out by the Conference of the Parties to the CBD in decision VII/26 (paragraphs 1 and 2), by which the Conference of the Parties (COP):

*“Recognizing the role of the Joint Liaison Group in supporting cooperation between the Rio conventions, and the role of the Collaborative Partnership on Forests in enhancing cooperation and coordination on Forest issues, where the Secretariat of the Convention on Biological Diversity is the focal agency on forest biodiversity and traditional forest-related knowledge,*

1. *Urges* further enhanced cooperation between the Convention on Biological Diversity and all relevant international conventions, organizations and bodies, strengthening and building on existing cooperative arrangements to enhance synergies and reduce inefficiencies in a manner consistent with their respective mandates, governance arrangements and agreed programs, within existing resources;
2. *Requests* in this context, the Executive Secretary, to invite the secretariats of the other four biodiversity conventions (CITES, Ramsar, CMS and World Heritage Convention) to form a liaison group to enhance coherence and cooperation in their implementation, and to report on progress made to the eighth meeting of the Conference of the Parties;”

This mandate has been further supported by several follow-up decisions of the governing bodies of the conventions represented in the Liaison Group, namely:

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<sup>1</sup> The International Whaling Commission is the intergovernmental body established by the International Convention for the Regulation of Whaling

- CBD Decisions VIII/16, IX/27 and X/20 (excerpts are given below);
- CITES Resolutions 10.4 and 14.2;
- CMS Resolutions 8.11 and 9.6;
- Ramsar Resolutions IX.5; X.1 and X.11;
- World Heritage Committee Decisions 30 COM 6 and 33 COM 5C; and
- International Treaty on Plant Genetic Resources for Food and Agriculture (IT/GB-1/06/Report and Resolution 8/2011)  
IWC Resolution 2014-2 seeking enhanced collaboration with other intergovernmental organisations, Chair's Report of the IWC66 Biennial Meeting Section 18.1 and document IWC/66/04

Through CBD decision IX/27 (paragraphs 3 and 4), the Conference of the Parties to CBD underlined the important role of the Liaison Group of Biodiversity-related Conventions, encouraged more regular meetings and invited the Liaison Group to identify options for improved implementation of, and cooperation among, the biodiversity-related conventions. Through decision X/20 the CBD COP then sought a strengthening of the effectiveness of the Liaison Group, enhanced cooperation and a coherent approach on cross-cutting issues; through paragraphs 4, 8 and 9 of this decision, the COP:

“4. *Requests* the Executive Secretary to prepare, in consultation with the executive heads of the other biodiversity-related conventions, proposals on ways to strengthen the effectiveness of the Liaison Group of Biodiversity-related Conventions, its relevance to the needs of Parties, and its linkages to the Joint Liaison Group of the Rio conventions;

8. *Invites* the Liaison Group of the Biodiversity-related Conventions to continue giving consideration to the harmonization of national reporting and, in this context, welcomes the progress made in the GEF Project on Facilitating National Reporting to Rio Conventions (FNR-Rio), as well as the project to streamline reporting by Pacific island countries to the biodiversity related multilateral environmental agreements;

9. *Invites* the scientific advisory bodies of the biodiversity-related conventions and the Liaison Group of the Biodiversity-related Conventions to address at their future meetings options for enhanced cooperation, inter alia, with regard to work on cross-cutting issues, such as climate change, scientific criteria for the identification of ecologically or biologically significant areas in need of protection, and invasive alien species, in a manner consistent with their respective mandates, governance arrangements and agreed programmes of work and with a view to developing a coherent approach on these matters;”

## Guiding Principles

The following principles guide the work of the BLG:

**Principle 1:** The BLG is a platform to exchange information and to enhance implementation at the national level of the objectives of each respective convention whilst also promoting synergies at the national level.

**Principle 2:** The BLG recognizes the distinct and specific objectives of each convention and their different Parties, as well as the individual mandates and independent status of their treaty bodies and Secretariats.

**Principle 3:** The aim should be to maximize effectiveness and efficiency and avoid duplication of effort in joint activities of BLG members.

**Principle 4:** Activities on the ground are contingent upon the availability of financial and other resources.

## **History**

On establishment, the Liaison Group comprised representation of CBD, CITES, CMS, the Ramsar Convention and the World Heritage Convention. ITPGRFA joined the BLG at its fifth meeting in September 2006. IPPC joined as a member at its tenth meeting in September 2015. IWC joined in 2017 and participated for the first time as a member at the thirteenth meeting, in September 2018.

The BLG held seven regular meetings between 2004 and 2009, and a special meeting in April 2011. In addition, a retreat was held in September 2010 and a second retreat was held on 4 September 2011, at which the modus operandi was agreed and signed by the members. The BLG meeting of 16 August 2004 agreed upon modalities for the operation of the BLG, which form the basis of this modus operandi.

The Liaison Group held six regular meetings between 2013 and 2018, and a special meeting in September 2013. At its thirteenth meeting, held in 2018, the members agreed updated text of the modus operandi to reflect addition to its membership and meetings since 2011. A record of all of these meetings (and future meetings, once held) can be found at: [www.cbd.int/blg](http://www.cbd.int/blg).

## **Areas of Activity**

Cooperative activities will include, but not be limited to, the following areas:

- Provide support for achieving the objectives of the Strategic Plans of its members, including the Strategic Plan for Biodiversity 2011-2020 and its follow-up post-2020, in line with respective mandates;
- Explore practical ways that identify and reinforce mutual coordinated support for the implementation of relevant decisions adopted by the respective governing bodies;
- Support Parties in the revisions and implementation of updated National Biodiversity Strategy and Action Plan (NBSAPs);
- Support Parties' activities in public awareness and education, including the respective International Days of the conventions;
- Support Parties in capacity-building activities and other forms of technical assistance; and
- Assist Parties with any future priorities identified by the respective governing bodies of the BLG members.

## **Modus Operandi**

### *Secretariat*

The CBD will act as the secretariat for the BLG.

### *Officers*

The meetings of BLG will be chaired by rotation amongst the Executive Heads of the conventions being a member of the BLG on an annual basis unless otherwise agreed.

### *Date and Place of Meeting*

An annual face-to-face BLG meeting will be held at a date and venue agreed by the members, usually in September. Arrangements for any additional BLG meetings, can be proposed and agreed by the BLG members, and may involve video conferencing.

#### *Membership and Participation*

BLG members are the Executive Heads (or their deputies or representatives, in the absence of the Executive Head) of the following conventions: CBD, CITES, CMS, IPPC, ITPGRFA, IWC, Ramsar Convention and World Heritage Convention, plus any other biodiversity-related conventions which may be adopted in the future and invited by BLG to join as a member. Supporting staff may attend meetings as necessary. Others (e.g. subsidiary body chairs, other convention secretariats) may be invited to participate in BLG meetings at the invitation of the Chair, as mutually agreed with the other members.

#### *Agenda and Documentation*

The provisional agenda and documentation for BLG meetings will be prepared by the Chair in consultation with, and with support from, the CBD as the secretariat for the BLG. The documentation will be circulated for comments of other BLG members, finalized and distributed at least four weeks in advance of any meeting. Agenda items will be mutually agreed by the members and include matters of mutual or common interest emanating from governing body decisions, subsidiary body recommendations and other items proposed by the members. Documentation prepared for a meeting will not normally be available publicly unless mutually agreed by the members.

#### *Conduct of Business*

BLG meetings will normally not be open to the public unless mutually agreed by the members.

#### *Decision-making*

Decisions will be taken by consensus.

#### *Reports of meetings*

BLG meeting reports will be prepared by the Chair in consultation with the CBD as the secretariat in consultation with other BLG members, and finalised and distributed to members within 30 days of the meeting's closure. Meeting reports will be archived and available at [www.cbd.int/blg](http://www.cbd.int/blg) and may also be made available through hyperlinks on the websites of the other BLG members. Reports on the activities of the BLG will be submitted to the respective meetings of the COP of the members for their information and attention. Members will also bring the issues discussed at the meetings to the attention of the respective subsidiary bodies such as standing committees, scientific councils/committees, as well as to national focal points, as appropriate, with a view to promoting synergies and coordination in the implementation of the conventions.

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