

**IUCN post 2010 options paper
Consultation: Options for a new vision for biodiversity**

A RESPONSE BY WILDLIFE AND COUNTRYSIDE LINK

September 2009

Wildlife and Countryside Link (Link) brings together voluntary organisations in the UK concerned with the conservation, enjoyment and protection of wildlife, countryside and the marine environment. Our members practice and advocate environmentally sensitive land management and food production practices and encourage respect for and enjoyment of natural landscapes and features, the historic environment and biodiversity. Taken together our members have the support of over 8.3 million people in the UK and manage over 690,000 hectares of land.

Link is fully supportive of the establishment of a CBD post-2010 biodiversity target and framework for implementation. We believe that this is essential to secure attention on the conservation of biodiversity at the global level. It is imperative that the momentum gained by the 2010 target is not lost as biodiversity continues to decline, rather the global community must act with urgency to safeguard biodiversity, ecosystems and the human well-being reliant on a healthy natural environment.

This response is supported by the following 10 organisations:

- Amphibian and Reptile Conservation Trust
- Badger Trust
- Butterfly Conservation
- Bat Conservation Trust
- The Grasslands Trust
- Hawk and Owl Trust
- The Mammal Society
- Plantlife International
- Royal Society for the Protection of Birds
- Wildfowl & Wetlands Trust

Link welcomes the IUCN consultation on options for a post-2010 vision and targets, and the opportunity to submit our comments. At the beginning of 2009 Link produced an initial outline of ideas and principles around the notion of a post-2010 target, which we shared with the UK Government. This paper can be found in Annex A. We also support the work of the European Habitats Forum and specifically the priorities and options expressed in their paper to the Athens conference. Additionally we outline below a series of specific comments on the discussions with the IUCN paper and options presented.

We support the 'characteristics' outlined in the IUCN paper for a post-2010 biodiversity target. Although we do not believe that the current target is negatively focused, since the cessation of biodiversity loss would be a wholly positive achievement. Accountability for delivery of measures to halt and reverse biodiversity loss is essential, therefore we welcome acknowledgement that responsibility should be shared across governments, civil society and the private sector.

Options

It is our opinion that a combination of recommendations put forward in the options presented, rather than any single option, should form the basis of IUCN's policy position on an optimal post-2010 biodiversity target and framework. An overarching principle which we should wish to see clearly embedded in IUCN's position is the need to move beyond halting loss towards recovery of biodiversity.

Whilst the lack of a clear and comprehensive baseline from which to measure progress towards a target aimed at halting biodiversity loss is a cause for concern, this should not halt action on addressing known drivers of biodiversity loss. Action on drivers of change can be undertaken whilst simultaneously establishing adequate and appropriate surveillance and monitoring of all components of biodiversity.

The concept of expressing a post-2010 target in terms of biodiversity, as expressed in option 2, provides the focus needed to ensure that action is taken to ensure the conservation of components of biodiversity and builds on considerable activity undertaken in the run up to 2010. However, the challenge must be to strengthen (i.e. reverse biodiversity loss) and we recognise the need to explicitly tackle both the drivers of biodiversity loss and the need to express the challenge in terms of the ecosystem based approach (components of option 3 and 4 respectively).

The options presented for a post-2010 target clearly recognise the importance of integrating biodiversity across sectors and is supported by significant progress in this field. Equally, much work has been completed on defining biodiversity so as to make it relevant to different sectors, therefore such definitions must be ready from the outset of new targets to avoid time being wasted on definitions post-2010.

Success in relation to halting biodiversity loss must clearly be linked to activity which has addressed the cause of decline, rather than simply associated with a demise in a species or habitat beyond which no further loss can be detected (a failure).

Option 3 offers considerable scope for cross-sectoral engagement and immediate action. Although the threats outlined must be acted upon and measured with the explicit goal of reducing their impact on biodiversity. It would not be acceptable for generic action to tackle climate change or pollution, for example, to be considered adequate action for halting and reversing biodiversity loss. Action must be targeted to address the specific link between threat and biodiversity loss on the ground.

Climate change is now widely accepted as a critical environmental issue. The post-2010 target should characterise biodiversity loss as of equal importance since its demise impoverishes the natural environment and its ability to sustain life on earth.

The same argument can be applied to option 4, for which the greatest challenge is to ensure that a focus on biodiversity is not diluted by inclusion within a framework to address ecosystem services and human well-being. Specifically, caution is urged in an over-reliance on the use of the valuation of biodiversity as this can create an imbalance in priorities for action. Similarly, and as with option 3, activity to address the drivers of human suffering (e.g. access to safe drinking water) must include specific reference to tackling biodiversity damage and loss, rather than an assumption that any action to tackle human health issues will also address impacts on biodiversity.

Timescale and format

We agree with the concept of a hierarchy of goals, results and targets, however we share concern that an overarching goal with a distant deadline could sideline action in the short to medium term and as such any targets and sub-targets are equally important and progress towards these needs to be properly assessed.

Whilst 8 years (from 2002 to 2010) may be considered by some an inadequate time period within which the 2010 target to halt biodiversity loss could be achieved, this cannot be used as an excuse for failure to act. Indeed significant progress can be made in addressing threats to biodiversity during such a timescale, which in the UK is effectively equivalent to two political terms.

We also agree with the need for the target and framework to be relevant at country level to support the establishment of national implementation.

We agree that the post-2010 implementation framework must be linked to other CBD programmes such as the Global Strategy for Plant Conservation and the Programme of Work on Protected Areas.

**Wildlife and Countryside Link
September 2009**

ANNEX A

Wildlife and Countryside Link's Biodiversity Working Group Ideas for Defra on a post-2010 biodiversity target January 2009

Wildlife and Countryside Link (Link) brings together 39 voluntary organisations concerned with the conservation and protection of wildlife and the countryside. Our members practise and advocate environmentally sensitive land management, and encourage respect for and enjoyment of natural landscapes and features, the historic environment and biodiversity. Taken together, our members have the support of over 8 million people in the UK.

An initial discussion on ideas for a post-2010 biodiversity target was held at the Defra/ Natural England / Link liaison meeting in December 2008. Link agreed to collate principles and ideas for the setting of a post-2010 target from Link's Biodiversity Working Group.

These ideas are supported by the following 10 organisations:

- Badger Trust
- Bat Conservation Trust
- Buglife – The Invertebrate Conservation Trust
- The Grasslands Trust
- Herpetological Conservation Trust
- The Mammal Society
- Plantlife International
- Royal Society for the Protection of Birds
- The Wildfowl & Wetlands Trust
- The Wildlife Trusts

Suggested global headline target

Halt and reverse global biodiversity loss by 2020

We believe that implicit in this is the need to help biodiversity to adapt to climate change, both for its own sake and so that it continues to provide benefits and enjoyment for humans.

The headline target should be underpinned by a number of sub-targets. These should be measurable and should be capable of adaptation to regional and national levels. We advocate the approach of setting sub targets broadly under the CBD's focal areas and we include some illustrative examples.

Possible sub-targets

Note that where we have included numbers within sub-targets this is to illustrate that they can be measurable, however such figures should be subject to detailed analysis and negotiation.