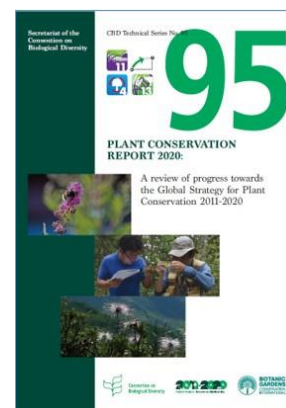


Plant Conservation Report 2020:

A review of progress towards the Global Strategy for Plant Conservation 2011-2020



Executive Summary

Introduction and background to the GSPC

The Global Strategy for Plant Conservation (GSPC) with its 16 outcome-oriented targets aimed at achieving a series of measurable goals by 2010, was originally adopted by the Conference of the Parties to the Convention on Biological Diversity at its sixth meeting (COP-6) in 2002. At COP-7 in 2004, the Global Partnership for Plant Conservation (GPPC) was established to support national implementation of the GSPC. The GPPC now includes over 50 institutional members. Also in 2004, the CBD established a GSPC coordination mechanism. The GSPC targets were updated in 2010 and a set of revised targets for 2020 were agreed at COP-10 in 2010, with a decision that implementation of the GSPC should be pursued as part of the broader framework of the Strategic Plan for Biodiversity 2011-2020.

Key features of the GSPC

In agreeing to the development of a specific strategy for plant conservation in the framework of the CBD, Parties acknowledged and recognised the special importance of plants as the basis of all life on earth and providing the building blocks of all terrestrial ecosystems.

The development of the strategy followed a broad-based stakeholder approach involving CBD Parties and many representatives of the botanical community. In bringing together the wider stakeholder community, the GSPC has helped to broaden the base of plant conservation activities worldwide and has built consensus around the key issues and priorities. The targets have provided clear, stable, long-term goals that have been adopted at all levels and by a wide range of stakeholders.

Implementation success

The GSPC has played a pivotal role in ensuring significant progress in plant conservation in recent years. Implementation has stimulated collaboration and synergies and provided an entry point for governments, as well as many smaller, non-governmental organisations into plant conservation and the implementation of the CBD. The GSPC has also encouraged the development of target-specific support groups and champions, which are linked together through the GPPC.

Wide engagement has been a key element for successful implementation and has resulted in the development of a broad-based, multi-stakeholder, united community, committed to ensuring the conservation and sustainable use of plant diversity into the future. It has also engaged thousands of plant conservationists in the CBD process.

Progress towards the GSPC's objectives

Information and documentation

Several new initiatives have been developed specifically to address the information and documentation targets of the GSPC. These include the establishment of the World Flora online Consortium, bringing together over 40 institutions to prepare a World Flora on-line (Target 1) - an open-access, web-based compendium of the world's flora. Another new initiative is the Global Tree Assessment, which aims to have completed Red List assessments for all the world's tree species by 2020 as a major contribution to Target 2 (conservation assessments for all plant species). A range of new data sets have been developed that allow threatened plants to be identified and monitored in conservation programmes both *in situ* and *ex situ* and conservation gaps can now be identified and prioritised. The impressive progress that has been made in generating and sharing information on the world's plant diversity makes a significant contribution to **Aichi Target 19**, and demonstrates the value of clear, unequivocal targets.

Conservation of plant diversity

Clear, measurable targets, new information, tools and the sharing of experiences has helped many countries to make good progress in conserving threatened and socio-economically important plants through both *in situ*, *ex situ* and integrated approaches. Mechanisms and indicators to track progress have been put in place and such species-based programmes contribute to the achievement of **Aichi Target 12**.

At the habitat-level much research has been carried out on the scientific basis for achieving long-term sustainable ecological restoration, and an increasing number of such programmes are now including a mix of appropriate native species and providing support for the implementation of **Aichi Targets 11 and 15**.

Sustainable use of plant diversity

A range of initiatives, such as the launch of the FairWild Standard provide valuable tools to measure progress towards Target 12 (Sustainable use of plant diversity). The FairWild Standard is being used by a growing number of companies for products sourced in countries around the world. Implementation, monitoring and review of Target 11 (international trade) of the GSPC is through linkages with the Convention on International Trade in Endangered Species of Wild Fauna and Flora (CITES) under its Plants Committee. This represents an important area of cooperation between the CBD and CITES and contributes to the achievement of **Aichi Target 4**.

Capacity building, education and public awareness

These targets of the GSPC are considered cross-cutting and relevant to all other targets, and although progress is sometimes difficult to measure, there is evidence that capacity building initiatives are having an impact. Similarly, education and public awareness programmes are reaching ever larger numbers of people, especially through the increasing participation of the public in plant-based citizen science programmes and through the use of social media, thus contributing to the achievement of **Aichi Target 1**.

National implementation

At the national level, a number of countries have developed national responses to the GSPC, including many of the world's most biodiverse countries (e.g. Brazil, China, Colombia, Indonesia, Mexico, Philippines and South Africa). These biodiverse countries collectively include more than 50% of the world's plants within their borders. Other countries are implementing the GSPC – explicitly or implicitly - through their National Biodiversity Strategies and Action Plans (NBSAPs). While reporting on progress towards the GSPC targets is voluntary, 46 countries (36%) of those countries that had submitted 6th National Reports to the CBD by October 2019, provided an indication of national progress towards the GSPC, with the majority reporting against the global targets. Most countries report at least some progress towards all the targets, with Targets 1, 2 and 14 (e-floras, red listing and public awareness of plant diversity) being most likely to be achieved at the national level.

Challenges to GSPC implementation

Implementation of the GSPC has resulted in some significant successes in plant conservation, but has also presented a number of challenges. These are particularly notable in relation to reporting and data management. Due to lack of alignment between the GSPC and Aichi targets, national CBD reports rarely capture the progress that has been made in plant conservation, while mechanisms to feedback data from global datasets to national partners are not well developed.

Lessons learned

It is clearly important to ensure that future plant-specific targets are closely embedded in the post-2020 biodiversity framework and well aligned with the higher level post-2020 biodiversity targets. However, it will also be important for the plant targets to have certain degree of visibility within this framework to ensure the continued commitment of the botanical community.

Future targets will need to be SMART and have well identified indicators and means of measuring progress and it will be important to recognise inter-dependencies between targets and use data generated for one target to support the implementation of other targets.

At the national level, good progress has been associated with having dedicated champions for each target driving the work forward, as well as active NGOs and public support through citizen science programmes with dedicated plant conservation volunteers.

Future plans

Strong support for a continued GSPC beyond 2020 has been expressed by a number of Parties and organisations, with agreement that this should be clearly within the framework of the post-2020 biodiversity framework. At the request of a CBD GSPC Liaison Group meeting (Cape Town, South Africa in 2018), a draft set of GSPC targets for 2021-2030 have been prepared by the Global Partnership for Plant Conservation. These were discussed at the Global Forum on the GSPC which was held in China from 28-30 October, 2019, organized by the China Wild Plant Conservation Association (CWPCA) and further consultations on the post-2020 targets are on-going.

New elements included in the draft 2021-2030 targets include:

- Ecological restoration – focussing on the use of appropriate native plant species in order ensure resilience and biodiversity in restored areas so that they can provide the required ecosystem services;
- Species recovery plans, as a prerequisite for successful conservation;
- Plant conservation and sustainable use clearly supporting poverty alleviation and economic development, including in urban areas;
- Compliance with the Nagoya Protocol, but focusing on ensuring access to plants for conservation, science and sustainability.

