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Ms. Astrid Schomaker
Executive Secretary
Secretariat of the Convention on Biological Diversity
United Nations Environment Programme
E-mail: secretariat@cbd.int

December 12, 2025

Dear Ms. Astrid Schomaker,

In response to CBD Notification 2025-135, Canada would like to submit the following views to support the strategic review and analysis of the Programme of Work on Protected Areas (POWPA) to support implementation of the Kunming-Montreal Global Biodiversity Framework (KMGBF).

This process provides an opportunity to reflect on key actions in the context of protected and conserved areas that can be taken to accelerate progress toward 2030.

Thank you for your continued work on this topic in preparation for further discussions at SBSTTA-28 and COP-17.

Best regards,
Carolina Caceres

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CBD Notification 2025-135: Views to support the strategic review and analysis of the Programme of Work on Protected Areas (POWPA) to support implementation of the Kunming-Montreal Global Biodiversity Framework (KMGBF)

Canadian Submission

1. What aspects should be incorporated or reinforced in the current review of the Programme of Work to improve alignment with the Kunming-Montreal Global Biodiversity Framework?

The following table outlines the specific elements of the current Programme of Work on Protected Areas (POWPA) that in our view could be improved to align with the KMGBF. We have also proposed additional activities within the existing structure of the POWPA that would also support and align with the KMGBF.

Element of the current Programme of Work	Views and suggested changes to improve alignment with the KMGBF
Goal 1.1: "To establish and strengthen national and regional systems of protected areas integrated into a global network as a contribution to globally agreed goals"	Revise Goal 1.1 to specifically focus on contributing to the KMGBF and add the qualitative elements of Target 3 into Goal 1.1 to ensure PAs are well-connected, ecologically representative, and protect areas of importance for biodiversity and ecosystem services. Suggested activity: Develop tools, guidance and case studies to enhance ecological connectivity and identify ecological corridors to support ecological connectivity between protected and conserved areas and unprotected natural habitats, including criteria and mapping tools. Consistent criteria/common approaches and evidence-based mapping tools to inform priority areas for connectivity conservation and restoration would be globally beneficial.
Goal 1.2: To integrate protected areas into broader land- and seascapes*, the ocean* and sectors so as to maintain ecological structure and function	Revise Goal 1.2 to incorporate the "ocean" to align with Target 3. Under Goal 1.2 add an activity for land use planning to align with Target 1 of the KMGBF. Suggested specific activity: Develop a national land use planning process, integrating conservation.

Target: By 2015, all protected areas and protected area systems are integrated into the wider land- and seascapes, the ocean and relevant sectors, by applying the ecosystem approach and taking into account ecological connectivity [70]/ and the concept, where appropriate, of ecological networks.	Revise to incorporate the "ocean".
Goal 1.3: To establish and strengthen regional networks, transboundary protected areas (TBPAs) and collaboration between neighbouring protected areas across national boundaries	Goal 1.3 should be revised to enable scientific and technical cooperation under the CBD and other relevant instruments to inform the establishment and management of protected and conserved areas in areas beyond national jurisdiction. Newly-established mechanisms for scientific and technical cooperation, including regional centers established under the CBD, should be taken into account.
Goal 1.4: To substantially improve site-based protected area planning and management	Under Goal 1.4 we would suggest adding an activity related to sustainable/durable funding for establishment/management of protected areas. Specific proposed Activity: Develop a process for attracting private investment into conservation. An adequate level of resources is required to administer protected area regulations, to manage and monitor existing areas, to account for and address climate change impacts, and to support the participation of Indigenous peoples. We would also suggest adding an activity to provide clarity on the line between PA/OECM and sustainable management. While sustainable management of an area does not inherently preclude recognition as a PA/OECM (and can further support the biodiversity outcomes) there are also cases where it is not compatible with the conservation of biodiversity. For example: • In the agriculture sector - grazing on native prairie grass can be compatible if managed appropriately.

	• In the managed forest context – to preserve endangered ecosystems (Garry Oak), selective harvest of encroaching native/non-native plants and prescribed burn is often necessary. While this distinction is often context dependent, general guidance is needed to provide clarity on when an activity better aligns with KMGBF Target 3 or Target 10. Specific proposed Activity: Develop guidance for defining where sustainable management is considered sufficient to be recognized as aligning with PA/OECM criteria and when they do not (particularly in the forestry and agriculture context). We would suggest an additional activity to develop sustainability standards, targeting industry. For example, social license/certification, no-go zones (Key Biodiversity Areas), and requirements for biodiversity offsetting.
Goal 1.5: To prevent and mitigate the negative impacts of key threats to protected areas	Under Goal 1.5, we would suggest adding language on minimizing the impacts of climate change and climate action on biodiversity and on building resilience, to align with Target 8 of KMGBF. Climate change is one of the main direct drivers of biodiversity loss. Climate change impacts and elements of target 8 related to mitigation and disaster risk reduction are not addressed in the POWPA and should be updated to reflect latest knowledge and understanding of climate change impacts. Specific proposal: Address knowledge gaps, mitigation, adaptation, and disaster risk reduction actions, including through nature-based solutions and/or ecosystem-based approaches.
Programme Element 2: Governance, Participation, Equity and Benefit Sharing	General comment: The gender responsive approach of the KMGBF, and the Free, Prior and Informed Consent of Indigenous Peoples should be incorporated into Programme Element 2. Other elements of KMGBF Targets 22 and 23 should also be better reflected in a future POWPA including representation and participation of women and girls, children and youth, and persons with disabilities-also should incorporate considerations related to the protection of environmental human rights defenders.

Goal 2.2: To enhance and secure involvement of indigenous and local communities and relevant stakeholders	Goal 2.2 should be updated to strengthen the participation of Indigenous Peoples and to support cooperative management of protected areas with their Free, Prior and Informed Consent, aligned with the KMGBF, should be incorporated into a future POWPA. Suggested specific activities could include: • Develop approaches for supporting and recognizing IPCAs • Share best practices and case studies for the co-stewardship of protected areas and for stewardship plans that advance shared governance and stewardship of protected and conserved areas. • Develop guidance and tools for increasing cultural competency of protected and conserved area administrators and managers • Develop guidance, best practices and case studies on how to integrate / complement implementation of the *United Nations Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples.*

2. How could the approach to implementing the Programme of Work be revised to better contribute to achieving Target 3 of the Kunming–Montreal Global Biodiversity Framework?

General comments and views on how the POWPA could better contribute to achieving Target 3 of the KMGBF:

- Incorporate other effective area-based management tools (OECMs) following guidance contained in decision 14/8 given the complementarity between protected areas and OECMs, particularly in establishing and managing marine conservation networks.
- Incorporate specific elements of KMGBF Target 3 that have not been adequately addressed in POWPA, particularly recognition of Indigenous and traditional territories, and recognition of and respect for Indigenous rights.
- Develop enhancements to the current EBSA criteria to further guide identification of areas of particular importance for ecosystem functions and services, with emphasis on ecosystem services and indicators to measure ecosystem functions and services, as well as broader benefits associated with PAs and OECMs (e.g. socio-economic and cultural benefits).
- Develop materials and tools to aid Parties in communicating the importance of protected areas and OECMs with a focus on both nature conservation and ensuring healthy ecosystems to support human well-being and sustainable human uses over time.
- Develop additional guidance for Parties seeking to advance protected areas and OECMs and ensure their effectiveness in data poor, hard to access areas, including in the Arctic and offshore deep waters.

- Support the exploration of innovative financing to mobilize private and other non-public financing to support the conservation of 30% of the global ocean by 2030, including Indigenous-led establishment, governance and managements of marine protected areas and OECMs.
- Reinforce the need to focus on conservation and management effectiveness as well as equitable and inclusive governance, following existing international guidance and best practices, as appropriate.
- Integrate climate change considerations, including adaptive management and resilience measures in the planning, design, establishment, implementation and review of protected areas and their networks, applying existing international guidance and best practices, where applicable.
- Develop and share best practices / guidance / case studies for the establishment of transboundary protected and conserved areas, and for transboundary connectivity of existing protected and conserved areas, in ways that are compatible with national approaches, based on international examples, including mapping tools to inform planning.

3. Which goals, targets, or activities of the Programme of Work should be prioritized to support national implementation of the Framework by 2030?

Prior to identifying which goals, targets or activities of POWPA are to be prioritized, perhaps they need to be revised/updated first. In the meantime, we would consider the following general areas of work priorities to support implementation of the Framework:

- Participatory and inclusive planning and management, ecological integrity and connectivity, and respect for the rights of Indigenous Peoples would help to support the implementation of Targets 1, 2 and 3.
- Climate-informed protected areas planning and management can also support implementation of Targets 8 and 11 of the KMGBF.
- Activities related to mainstreaming biodiversity and the integration of multiple values of biodiversity into protected area planning and management can also contribute to Targets 14 and 21.
- Innovative financing to mobilize private and other non-public funding for protected areas can also support implementation of Targets 18 and 19.