

Recommended Terms of Reference for National KBA Coordination Groups (NCGs)

The following recommendations may be adapted according to national circumstances.

Background

Key Biodiversity Areas (KBAs) are ‘sites that contribute significantly to the global persistence of biodiversity’. Over 15,000 have been identified worldwide in terrestrial, freshwater and marine environments.

In April 2016, *A Global Standard for the identification of KBAs* was adopted by International Union for the Conservation of Nature (IUCN). The KBA Standard seeks to harmonise existing approaches to the identification of important sites for biodiversity, support identification of important sites for elements of biodiversity not considered in existing approaches, and provide an objective, standard, consistent, repeatable, transparent and rigorous system. Each is a discrete area of land or water that meets the KBA criteria and thresholds and is manageable as a single unit.

In 2016 the KBA Partnership was launched, comprising BirdLife International, IUCN, World Wildlife Fund, Conservation International, Wildlife Conservation Society, Global Environment Facility, Critical Ecosystem Partnership Fund, NatureServe, Amphibian Survival Alliance, Global Wildlife Conservation and the Royal Society for the Protection of Birds. The Partnership’s purpose is to develop and maintain an up-to-date, fully documented list of sites identified against the KBA Standard, and to communicate, promote and position this information to enable the achievement of the KBA vision. Data will be held in the World Database of Key Biodiversity AreasTM and accessible online via the KBA Website (www.keybiodiversityareas.org).

The KBA Standard contemplates the KBA identification process to be largely driven by local organisations and experts to secure buy-in and ownership, which are essential for the future safeguard and conservation of these sites. National KBA Coordination Groups are proposed as key structures to fulfil the role of coordinating the KBA identification process at the national level to bring together relevant stakeholders and data in a bottom-up, participatory and efficient way. The aim of the current ToR is to aid the establishment of these groups where resources and capacities allow. Note also that the establishment of NCGs assumes that there are relevant data held at the national or sub-national level which are dispersed between various organizations and experts and therefore bringing them together has a significant added value. The NCG could also have a role in the application of regional KBA criteria.

Purpose

To coordinate the process to identify, document and delineate KBAs at the national level. In many countries, the NCG has an important role in promoting the conservation, management and protection of KBAs in-country. It is understood that the structure and composition of the NCGs will vary according to the needs of the country.

Membership

The membership of the NCG may include representatives of the following organizations and stakeholder groups:

- National representatives of the KBA Partners
- Other organizations and scientific institutions holding relevant data or expertise
- Relevant government departments and agencies
- Private sector organizations holding relevant data on KBAs
- Representatives of indigenous peoples and local communities.

Roles and responsibilities

The main roles of the NCG are proposed as the following:

- Establish contact with the relevant KBA Regional Focal Point (details available via the KBA Secretariat and the KBA Website <http://www.keybiodiversityareas.org/home>) and Regional Representative of the KBA Community
- Compile and maintain a list of relevant stakeholders at the national level who can play a role in the KBA Programme
- Ensure that members of the NCG follow The World Database of Key Biodiversity Areas™ Terms and Conditions of Use <http://www.keybiodiversityareas.org/info/dataterms>
- Compile or review supporting data for the application of the KBA Standard (e.g. data regarding potential trigger species and/or ecosystems, most appropriately-scaled human footprint maps and biotic integrity information and available systematic conservation plans, existing KBA inventories).
- Set up a user account in the WDKBA.
- Request training on the KBA Standard from the Regional Focal Point, KBA Secretariat or KBA Partners, if needed
- Support the application of the KBA Standard to review existing KBAs and identify new ones by the relevant experts. This can include the organization of one or more national or sub-national workshops of experts.
- Coordinate the formal KBA proposal and up-dating process (proposal, review, nomination) at the national level through the WDKBA
- Ensure consultation among relevant experts of KBAs proposed by external experts.

Recommended additional roles of the NCG are the following (when feasible):

- Develop a national strategy to encourage the conservation and sustainable management of KBAs. This could include research, monitoring, advocacy, policy, awareness-raising and capacity building aspects of the KBA initiative.
- Collaborate with the national focal points of the relevant international Conventions (e.g. CBD, Ramsar, CMS, World Heritage) to ensure that KBAs are taken into consideration in national implementation plans and strategies
- Coordinate these activities between the institutions that are members of the NCG.
- Promote the use of KBA data and national KBA list nationally and internationally to support conservation and sustainable development planning and implementation.

- Coordinate fundraising efforts and allocation of funds for priority tasks identified in the national KBA strategy, including the engagement with donors and development actors active in their countries supporting conservation and economic development (e.g. World Bank, regional development banks, etc.).

Recommended rules and procedures

- Elect a coordinator for a specified period from among its members
- Meet regularly and keep a record of the decisions made at its meetings
- Organize national or sub-national workshops to analyze available information on existing and potential KBAs and agree on a list of proposed KBAs
- Agree on how institutions should be represented on the group (e.g. maximum number of representatives), if necessary
- Appoint one or more focal points for being the focal point for providing input to the WDKBA

Recommended principles of operation

- Follow and help other parties to follow the decisions and guidance issued by the KBA Committee (including its KBA Technical Working Group) and the Standards and Appeals Committee
- Be inclusive, representative and transparent
- Have a democratic (ideally consensus-based) decision-making procedure agreed by all of its members
- Be guided by the best available scientific data
- Take into consideration traditional ecological knowledge in the identification process.

Expected results

- Up-to-date and comprehensive national inventory of KBAs developed by the NCG, held in the WDKBA and disseminated through the KBA Website
- Broad stakeholder and government buy-in to the KBA Programme at the national level
- Regular exchange of information with the relevant KBA Programme structures (KBA Secretariat, KBA Committee, KBA Community, other NCGs).