

A CBD checklist for botanic gardens

The following checklist may help to define an individual botanic garden's policy and procedures and enable more active contribution to national CBD implementation.

National context

Contact your CBD National Focal Point (NFP), find out about your country's National Biodiversity Strategy and Action Plan and consider how your garden can actively contribute to national CBD implementation.

- Offer information on your garden's activities on conservation, sustainable use, access and benefit sharing to the NFP for inclusion in National Reports.
- Urge your garden's overseas partners to inform their CBD National Focal Points about collaborative contributions to national CBD implementation.
- Consider ways to improve communication with government and other CBD stakeholders, for example by hosting visits and participating in stakeholder meetings.
- Take opportunities to participate in the national delegation to CBD meetings (such as SBSTTA).
- Does your country have a GSPC National Focal Point? If not, and your garden is very active in plant conservation measures at a national level, consider offering to become the GSPC NFP.
- Does your country have a GTI National Focal Point? If not, and your garden has a strong taxonomic research programme, consider offering to become the GTI NFP. Consider how to contribute information and skills to national and international taxonomic initiatives.

Garden engagement

- Find out about and participate in regional and national botanic garden network initiatives for GSPC implementation.
- Publicise the value and obligations of CBD and your role in its implementation through plant conservation and sustainable use displays, exhibits, educational materials and leaflets, and press releases.
- Distribute information about CBD and related institutional policies to all your staff, volunteers and members of your governing board (e.g. Board of Directors) and ensure they understand what is required of them. Consider a staff training programme.

Access and benefit sharing

- For plants and specimens collected post-CBD (Dec 1993): always obtain the appropriate documents showing prior informed consent and mutually agreed terms (e.g. collecting permits, export permits, letters of permission from landholders and/or material transfer agreements) – in addition to any necessary CITES and/or plant health documentation.
- Ensure that no illegally collected or acquired plants come into your collections 'through the back door'.
- Assess the range of your garden's collections (living and preserved; from *in situ* and/or *ex situ* sources), activities and research interests, and the principal users of the collections, as a first step towards developing an institutional policy on access and benefit-sharing.
- Develop and implement a policy that addresses how your garden will acquire, use and supply plants, how benefits will be shared, how your garden will treat pre- and post-CBD material, and your garden's position on commercialisation.
- Adapt existing procedures or develop new procedures so that information on prior informed consent and terms of use (from permits and agreements) is kept linked with plants and specimens as they are used and transferred between users. Assign clear staff responsibility for curation and tracking issues.
- Check terms on plants from your collections before you supply or sell them to others outside the garden, to ensure that you are legally able to do so.
- Use an institutional Material Transfer Agreement (MTA) when supplying plants from your collections to research/commercial users outside the garden, to set out terms for use and benefit-sharing.
- Ensure that public plant sales only include plants whose terms allow for sale and that any restrictions (e.g. non-commercialisation) are communicated to buyers, for example on seed packet labels.
- Consider buying in plants from commercial sources to sell in public plant sales.
- If your garden contains collections in the public domain that are covered by the International Treaty on Plant Genetic Resources for Food and Agriculture, use the ITPGRFA Standard MTA for supplying specimens when appropriate. Consider what benefits your garden generates from its use of plants, and how these can be shared with countries of origin, for example through sharing information, skills, protocols and tools. Consider endorsing the Principles on Access to Genetic Resources and Benefit Sharing (the Principles) and joining the International Plant Exchange Network (IPEN).

Traditional knowledge

- If your institution collects and works with traditional knowledge, ensure that researchers are aware of and comply with relevant codes of practice and national and customary laws, and that research is carried out with the approval and involvement of local communities. Agree on whether and how information can be disseminated and what benefits can be shared.
- When working with traditional knowledge in the public domain, consider opportunities for acknowledgement of the original knowledge-holders, and benefit-sharing.

Invasive species

- Find out about relevant international and national laws and policies in your area and establish precautionary measures to avoid introducing invasive species.
- Develop a policy towards invasive species that addresses display, supply, plant disposal and plant sales.
- Consider risk-assessment procedures when accepting new plants; consult relevant international and national invasive species databases or lists.
- Avoid planting known invasive species except for public awareness or scientific purposes (e.g. for research on control measures).
- If known invasive species are planted for such purposes, take suitable measures to avoid their spread.
- Look out for signs of potentially invasive behaviour in established plants, and share your experiences, e.g. by informing other botanic gardens and your national authorities.
- Build public awareness of invasive species, for example through interpretation, exhibits and education modules, and consider how your garden can work with stakeholders such as local nurseries and landscapers to promote non-invasive alternatives for public use.

Sustainable use

- Ensure that all plant-based products used in the garden come from sustainable sources.
- Consider using the retail outlets (café, restaurant, shops etc.) to market sustainably-produced products (including fair-trade products) that support local livelihoods.
- Develop programmes with local communities that make use of the garden's horticultural expertise to support the sustainable use of local plant diversity.

Communication, education and public awareness

- Develop interpretation materials that provide information about the importance of biodiversity for all visitors.
- Develop linkages with local schools and provide opportunities for children to experience nature first-hand.
- Try to influence national education departments to include biodiversity education in national curricula – and develop supporting materials for such courses.
- Consider celebrating International Biodiversity Day (May 22nd) at your garden.