Selection criteria for TG-BC membership

To ensure a transparent, balanced, and effective selection process for the Thematic Group on Biodiversity Conservation (TG-BC), the following criteria will guide the evaluation and nomination of members:

1. Technical expertise in biodiversity conservation (broken into sub-criteria)

Candidates will be assessed across three dimensions to reflect the thematic breadth of biodiversity conservation:

- **1.1 Species conservation expertise** – Demonstrated knowledge and experience related to species conservation (e.g. mammals, birds, reptiles, amphibians, invertebrates, vascular plants, fungi, etc.).

- **1.2 Ecosystem or habitat-level experience** – Proven engagement in the conservation, restoration, or management of specific ecosystems or habitat types (e.g. freshwater, marine, forest, wetland, grassland, karstic, or agro-ecosystems).

- **1.3 Contribution to policy and planning** – Active involvement in the development or implementation of biodiversity-related strategies, action plans, Red Lists, protected area networks, or monitoring and evaluation frameworks.

Each sub-criterion will be scored individually to reflect both depth and breadth of expertise. Candidates with focused specialization and/or broader policy-level contributions will be equally considered.

2. Sectoral diversity

The group will reflect diversity in professional backgrounds, ensuring participation from:

- Academia and research institutions

- Civil society organizations (CSOs/NGOs)

- Governmental or intergovernmental bodies

- Private sector entities involved in biodiversity or environmental management

- International or regional organizations active in the Western Balkans

Preference will be given to candidates who have experience working across sectors or in collaborative, cross-sectoral initiatives.

3. Geographical representation

Membership will aim for balanced representation across the Western Balkan economies (Albania, Bosnia and Herzegovina, Kosovo*, Montenegro, North Macedonia, and Serbia), as well as ecological sub-regions (e.g., coastal zones, mountain systems, river basins, etc.).

As a guiding principle, the Biodiversity Task Force of the Western Balkans will strive to ensure that each Western Balkan economy is represented by at least two members, subject to the availability of qualified candidates. A geographical representation matrix may be maintained to support monitoring of balance and guide future nominations.

4. Gender and inclusivity

Gender balance will be actively pursued in the selection process, alongside consideration of diversity in age, career stage, and background. Young professionals with demonstrated expertise are encouraged to apply.

5. Recognition and standing in the field

Candidates should be recognized professionals in biodiversity conservation at national, regional, or international levels. Evidence of professional reputation may include:

- Scientific publications or technical reports

- Participation in expert networks or scientific committees

- Endorsements or references from relevant institutions (optional but encouraged)

Selection process and principles

The selection process will be conducted in a structured and transparent manner:

- Each candidate will be evaluated and scored against the defined criteria using a standardized evaluation matrix.

- In cases where candidates receive similar total scores, priority may be given to those who contribute to better geographical, taxonomic, sectoral, or thematic balance.

- The BDTF WB may organize selection in **phases**, with an initial round aiming to establish a core group, and subsequent waves filling gaps in expertise, regional representation, or diversity.

- The recruitment process will remain **open-ended**, allowing for the invitation of additional members to address emerging needs or expertise gaps over time.

- Final selection and endorsement of members will be made by the Biodiversity Task Force, informed by the evaluation outcomes and the overall balance of the group.

This approach ensures that the TG-BC is both technically competent and regionally inclusive, while remaining flexible and responsive to evolving biodiversity priorities in the Western Balkans.

To support the application of the proposed selection criteria in a transparent, consistent, and practical manner, the Annex I includes a set of evaluation tools and tables. These tools are intended for use by the Biodiversity Task Force (BDTF WB) during the nomination and selection process for members of the Thematic Group on Biodiversity Conservation (TG-BC).

The annex includes:

1. **Individual evaluation matrix** – to assess candidates against each criterion and sub-criterion, with space for scores and justifications.

2. **Candidate comparison table** – to allow side-by-side scoring and comparison of multiple candidates.

3. **Geographical representation monitoring table** – to track representation across Western Balkan economies and help guide decisions in achieving balanced national and ecological participation.

These tools ensure that both the **technical merit** of candidates and the **strategic needs** of the TG-BC (e.g. geographic balance, sectoral diversity) are considered in the selection process. They also provide a framework for iterative, open-ended recruitment, allowing the group to evolve in response to emerging priorities and gaps.

1. TG-BC membership evaluation matrix (candidate assessment)

Criterion	Sub-criteria	Score (0–5)	Comments / justification
1. Technical expertise	1.1 Species management expertise		*[Insert notes]*
	1.2 Ecosystem or Habitat Experience		*[Insert notes]*
	1.3 Contribution to Policy and Planning		*[Insert notes]*
2. Sectoral diversity	Sector of origin and cross-sector experience		*[Insert notes]*
3. Geographical representation	Based in or working on relevant national/ecoregional contexts		*[Insert notes]*
4. Gender and inclusivity	Gender, age, career stage, background		*[Insert notes]*
5. Recognition and standing	Visibility, influence, networks		*[Insert notes]*
	Total score (max 35)		

2. Candidate overview table

This version allows the evaluators to compare multiple candidates side-by-side.

Candidate name	Country / economy	1.1	1.2	1.3	2	3	4	5	Total score	Comments / justification
[Candidate A]	[e.g. Albania]									[Summary of rationale]
[Candidate B]	[e.g. Serbia]									[Summary of rationale]
…	…	…	…	…	…	…	…	…	…	…

3. Geographical representation matrix (monitoring balance)

This is a strategic tool to track representation across economies and guide future selections:

Country / economy	Target minimum	Currently selected	Gap / notes
Albania	2		
Bosnia and Herzegovina	2		
Kosovo*	2		
Montenegro	2		
North Macedonia	2		
Serbia	2		