

# IUCN position paper on selected issues

**Convention on Biological Diversity  
Twenty-sixth meeting of the Subsidiary Body on Scientific, Technical  
and Technological Advice (SBSTTA26)  
13-18 May 2024, Nairobi, Kenya**

## IUCN's Main Messages

### **Monitoring framework for the Kunming-Montreal Global Biodiversity Framework (Agenda item 3)**

- ✓ IUCN commends the Ad Hoc Technical Expert Group on Indicators on their work in further operationalising the monitoring framework and the prioritised focus on tracking its headline indicators.
- ✓ IUCN urges SBSTTA to recommend the COP the adoption of a robust and comprehensive monitoring framework that maximises the guidance and options available to Parties when assessing progress in the implementation of the KMGBF.
- ✓ IUCN strongly encourages the utilisation of the Global Ecosystem Typology level 3 to ensure a consistent approach to monitoring ecosystems across the framework.
- ✓ IUCN supports the approach proposed to generate five disaggregations of Indicator 3.1, which are essential for tracking progress towards the diverse elements of Target 3.
- ✓ IUCN supports maintaining the framework under review to fill gaps among the headline indicators, and a continuing role for the Biodiversity Indicators Partnership.

### **Scientific and technical needs to support the implementation of the Kunming-Montreal Global Biodiversity Framework (Agenda item 4)**

- ✓ In the absence of dedicated Programmes of Work, formal or informal support groups and initiatives are well placed to identify issues and develop guidance to address gaps and support the implementation of the 2030 Targets. In this regard, IUCN suggest establishing partnerships or “Friends” of specific targets, involving the Secretariat of the Convention, and interested Parties and experts.
- ✓ IUCN recommends better alignment of the agenda items of the Conference of the Parties and its subsidiary bodies with the goals and targets of the KMGBF.

### **Marine and Coastal Biodiversity (Agenda item 8)**

- ✓ IUCN welcomes efforts to ensure the EBSA process continues based on the most up-to-date science, with the full participation of relevant experts and knowledge holders and supports the proposed modalities to (re-)describe these important areas.
- ✓ IUCN stands ready to support the Executive Secretariat in identifying opportunities for the scientific and technical work conducted under the Convention to inform the implementation of the High Seas Treaty.

### **Biodiversity and health (Agenda item 9)**

- ✓ IUCN welcomes the general actions proposed in the Global Action Plan and urges Parties, other Governments and stakeholders to adopt and implement them.

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## Monitoring framework for the Kunming-Montreal Global Biodiversity Framework (Agenda item 3)

IUCN commends the Ad Hoc Technical Expert Group on Indicators, the Technical Expert Group on Financial Reporting, the Working Group on Article 8(j) and the Informal Advisory Group on Technical and Scientific Cooperation on their work in further operationalising the monitoring framework and in identifying and providing technical advice to fill critical gaps in order to improve it.

IUCN particularly welcomes the gap analysis, and the guidance on using the indicators, including on monitoring section C of the Kunming-Montreal Global Biodiversity Framework (KMGBF) as presented in documents CBD/SBSTTA/26/2 and CBD/SBSTTA/INF/14.

Recognising the short time remaining until 2030, stressing the importance of assessing progress in the implementation of the KMGBF, while acknowledging the remaining gaps of the monitoring framework at this stage, IUCN:

- ✓ Urges SBSTTA to recommend the COP the adoption of a robust and comprehensive monitoring framework that maximises the guidance and options available to Parties when assessing progress in the implementation of the KMGBF.
- ✓ Suggests retaining complementary indicators for live coral cover, hard coral cover and composition, and global coral reef extent, under Goal A<sup>1</sup>, and as endorsed by the International Coral Reef Initiative (ICRI). While supporting the efforts by the AHTEG to make the list of component and complementary indicators a useful resource, IUCN notes that the coral indicators in question are derived through local measurements, and are not disaggregations of headline indicator A2, and therefore should remain in the monitoring framework.
- ✓ Strongly supports the recommendation to use national disaggregations of the Red List Index, derived from the IUCN Red List of Threatened

Species, to generate Indicator A3, in synergy with SDG Indicator 15.5.1, complementary to Red List Indices derived from repeat national red list assessments for those countries for which such data are available, and accessible via the IBAT Country Profiles<sup>2</sup>.

- ✓ Welcomes and supports the recommendation to use of the Global Ecosystem Typology level 3 to ensure a consistent approach to monitoring ecosystems across the framework.
- ✓ Further supports the approach proposed to generate five disaggregations of Indicator 3.1, which are essential for tracking progress towards the diverse elements of this target.
- ✓ Supports maintaining the framework under development and review to fill gaps among headline methodologies and a continuing role for the Biodiversity Indicators Partnership.
- ✓ Emphasizes that consistency with indicators used in other international processes, especially the SDG monitoring framework<sup>3</sup>, remains extremely important in order to reduce national reporting burdens and avoid duplication of efforts. For example, for Indicator 6.b on invasive alien species policy response and its application as SDG indicator 15.8.1.
- ✓ Highlights the importance of a long-term strategy for the monitoring framework, for which it will be essential to strengthen investment in the maintenance of existing indicators and the information which underpin them and to strengthen, and where needed, build capacity at the national level for monitoring and reporting.
- ✓ Encourages Parties to make use of the disaggregation of headline indicators to fill some of the gaps identified by the AHTEG (many of which are also listed in their own right as component or complementary indicators). For example, using the Red List Index disaggregation by impacts of invasive alien species to address one of the 2 gaps

<sup>1</sup> [IUCN Resolution 7.105](#): Conserving and protecting coral reefs through the post-2020 global biodiversity framework

<sup>2</sup> [https://www.ibat-alliance.org/country\\_profiles](https://www.ibat-alliance.org/country_profiles)

<sup>3</sup> <https://unstats.un.org/sdgs/indicators/indicators-list/>

associated with the headline indicators for Target 6.

- ✓ Concurs with the gap analysis in that for Target 4 the headline indicator (the Red List Index) measures an outcome and as such is appropriate as a headline indicator for Goal A and not the action necessary to achieve that outcome. Further disaggregation of the Red List Index could be explored to develop such an action indicator. The IUCN SSC Human-Wildlife Conflict & Coexistence Specialist Group has also been convening a Working Group consisting of technical experts and CBD Parties for the development of a HWC indicator framework – proposed metrics and methodology are forthcoming.
- ✓ Notes with some concern the use of monetary value of biodiversity offsets as a source of private funding. While biodiversity offsets can contribute to positive conservation outcomes<sup>4</sup>, they must only be considered after rigorous application of the mitigation hierarchy. Misuse of offsets to fund existing biodiversity conservation commitments could lead to ‘cost shifting’ and to an erosion of conservation funding, including a reduction in public budgets. Funding for conservation should not be dependent on the destruction of biodiversity elsewhere.
- ✓ Puts forward and encourages Parties to use the IUCN Global Standard for Nature-based Solutions as a tool to identify and implement climate actions that avoid or minimize negative impacts on biodiversity and that help build resilience of ecosystems, and thus support monitoring of Indicator 8.b. The Standard is also useful for Target 11, which is currently a gap in the monitoring framework.
- ✓ Recommends linking Target 23 to the Gender Plan of Action, by including the latter as a question in the binary indicator, possibly amending the proposed question 23.3 to read:  
*“23.3 Does your country explicitly recognise and consider gender in its implementation of the Global Biodiversity Framework through its national reports, or—national biodiversity*

### **strategy action plan or implementation of a Gender Plan of Action?”**

However, IUCN stresses the need to continue working on assessing the extent to which a gender-responsive approach is implemented, including through monitoring of the implementation of the Gender Plan of Action.

- ✓ Highlights that Target 22 of the KMGBF is to ensure the full, equitable and gender-responsive representation and participation and emphasises the protection of environmental human rights defenders, including women. Addressing gender-based violence and ensuring the protection of women environmental defenders is a critical issue. Objective 1.5 of the GPA also emphasises the identification, prevention and response to all forms of gender-based discrimination and violence.

For decades, IUCN has mobilised biodiversity and conservation standards that underlie headline indicators and their disaggregation and stands ready to support Parties in their monitoring efforts.

### **Scientific and technical needs to support the implementation of the Kunming-Montreal Global Biodiversity Framework (Agenda item 4)**

The rapid analysis in CBD/SBSTTA/25/INF/1 and the over 1200 tools and guidance submitted and compiled in CBD/SBSTTA/26/INF/16 clearly demonstrate there is a considerable amount of existing guidance to support the implementation of the Framework. IUCN concurs that a major challenge is ensuring the information is accessed and used by relevant decision-makers, and stresses that implementation should not be delayed.

- ✓ The IUCN Commission on Education and Communication has contributed in the past to the Communication, Education & Public Awareness, and could support the Secretariat of the Convention in exploring ways and means for improving access to, and dissemination of, tools and guidance.

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<sup>4</sup> IUCN Policy on Biodiversity Offsets ([WCC-2016-Res-059](https://www.iucn.org/our-work/policy-on-biodiversity-offsets))

Regarding the potential new work areas under the Convention:

- ✓ IUCN supports the proposal for further work on pollution and biodiversity. IUCN is advancing a proposal to include a specific article on “Biodiversity aspects” in Part IV.8ter of the International Legally Binding Instrument (ILBI) on plastic pollution<sup>5</sup>. The proposed article would, among others, facilitate the coordination of obligations under existing Multilateral Environmental Agreements (MEAs) to reflect the alignment with the Global Biodiversity Framework (GBF) Targets (especially its Target 7) and advance the interlinkages between plastic pollution and biodiversity in the context of circular economy solutions and international trade law.
- ✓ IUCN also acknowledges the importance of a human rights-based approach for the implementation of the Framework and notes that any new area of work on this should complement the proposed new programme of work on Article 8(j) and related provisions. This complementarity would need to be reflected in the proposed scope of the work plan developed for the consideration of the Conference of the Parties.

With regards to the discrete and specific gaps under existing work areas and recognizing that these are not exhaustive:

- ✓ IUCN draws attention to the guidance and the glossary developed by the AHTEG on Indicators for the monitoring framework (CBD/SBSTTA/26/INF/14) that could be used to address certain gaps concerning definitions identified for Targets 1, 2, and 3, by adopting the Global Ecosystem Typology at level 3 as a common ecosystem framework.
- ✓ IUCN recommends the addition of ecological connectivity and “ecological networks and corridors” as an area to be further developed when considering other area-based

conservation measures and the “well-connected” aspect of Target 3<sup>6</sup>. A rapid update of the Voluntary Guidance on Equitable Governance adopted in Decision 14/8 to address new language in Target 3, could also be foreseen.

IUCN recognizes that formal or informal support groups and initiatives are well placed to identify issues and develop guidance to address gaps and support the implementation of the 2030 Targets. The [Global Species Action Plan \(GSAP\)](#), for example, provides important guidance to integrate species conservation actions across all GBF targets and was developed by IUCN and its Members, Commissions and Partners in consultation with the secretariats of the biodiversity-related conventions, in the absence of a dedicated programme of work on species conservation and observing the weak progress towards Aichi Target 12.

It is important however, that efforts to develop further guidance for implementation are ‘tethered’ to the work of the Convention for example, coordinated through a Secretariat Focal Point, or through expert working groups, to, among other things, avoid duplication of work, leverage synergies and facilitate uptake by Parties.

In relation to the implications for the adjustment of work undertaken under the Convention, some of the existing guidance provided will need to be updated and gaps addressed.

- ✓ IUCN recommends that the agendas of the Conference of the Parties and its subsidiary bodies are better aligned with the areas of work of the KMGBF.

IUCN and its 7 expert Commissions are already working in developing new and updating existing guidance for the implementation of the GBF Targets, including but not limited to Targets 2, 3, 4, 6, 8, and 11<sup>7</sup>. IUCN stands ready to engage with Parties and the Executive Secretary in this endeavour.

<sup>5</sup> [A global plastics treaty and biodiversity: converging or conflicting regimes?](#)

<sup>6</sup> [IUCN Resolution 7.073](#): Ecological connectivity conservation in the post-2020 global biodiversity framework: from local to international levels.

<sup>7</sup> Notably, the roadmap for implementation of Target 2 with FAO, various guidance by the IUCN World Commission on

Protected Areas and the Target 3 Partnership, the IUCN SSC Human-Wildlife Conflict and Coexistence Specialist Group is working on an indicator for Target 4, while an expert group of the Friends of Ecosystem-based Adaptation (FEBA) co-chaired with the CBD Secretariat is developing resources on national target setting and implementation of Targets 8 and 11. IUCN is also a partner in NBSAP Accelerator partnership and the NBSAP Forum.

## Marine and coastal biodiversity (Agenda item 8)

### (a) *Further work on ecologically or biologically significant marine areas*

IUCN welcomes the progress achieved during the technical and legal expert workshops for modifying and describing new Ecologically or Biologically Significant Areas (EBSAs) in November 2023, and accordingly, welcomes SBSTTA recommendation to adopt the modalities included in Annex 1.

IUCN supports efforts to ensure the EBSA process continues based on the most up-to-date science, with the full participation of relevant experts and knowledge holders. In this regard, IUCN:

- ✓ Considers the distinction between the EBSA repository and the information sharing mechanism a useful way to express the two-fold process that distinguishes EBSAs that have been considered by SBSTTA/COP and those that reflect the outcomes of internal national processes.
- ✓ Welcomes the suggestion of issuing notifications of intent and to inform of a new submission and encourages inviting comments from Parties, competent and relevant organizations, and stakeholders for strengthening the scientific credibility and transparency of the process – whether for inclusion in the repository or the information sharing mechanism.
- ✓ Is ready to contribute knowledge and expertise for the identification of marine Key Biodiversity Areas (KBAs), on Important Marine Mammal Areas (IMMAs) and other relevant knowledge and tools that can provide valuable input into the EBSA process, including with respect to informing marine protected areas and other area-based management tools identification,

<sup>8</sup> [IUCN WCPA Technical Note : FAQs on Establishing Marine OECMS under the CBD](#)

<sup>9</sup> Le Gouvello, R., Brugere, C. and Simard, F. (2022). Aquaculture and Nature-based Solutions. Identifying synergies between sustainable development of coastal communities, aquaculture, and marine and coastal conservation. Gland, Switzerland: IUCN. <https://doi.org/10.2305/IUCN.CH.2022.02.en>

as well as strategic direction and priorities to the development of other effective conservation measures.

### (b) *Conservation and sustainable use of marine and coastal biodiversity.*

IUCN concurs with the identified gaps and areas in need of additional focus to support the GBF with regards to marine and coastal biodiversity annexed to CBD/SBSTTA/26/7. Acknowledging some of these gaps, IUCN has produced a technical brief on marine OECMs<sup>8</sup>, a publication considering sustainable development of coastal communities, aquaculture, and marine and coastal conservation<sup>9</sup>, as well as a guide on gender and fisheries<sup>10</sup>, highlighting their role on sustainable management of fisheries.

Regarding areas of collaboration and cooperation with relevant global and regional organizations in the context of the High Seas Treaty, IUCN offers [An Introduction to the Agreement under the United Nations Convention on the Law of the Sea on the conservation and sustainable use of marine biological diversity of areas beyond national jurisdiction](#)<sup>11</sup> to complement the information provided in CBD/SBSTTA/26/7. This report focuses on what the different parts of the agreement were written to accomplish, the key provisions and how they work together, and what will be important considerations moving towards implementation, including suggested next steps.

- ✓ IUCN welcomes the SBSTTA recommendation and stands ready to support the Executive Secretary in advancing work under this agenda item.

## Biodiversity and health (Agenda item 9)

The actions proposed in the Global Action Plan on Biodiversity and Health are well received, and IUCN would welcome its adoption to support the

<sup>10</sup> J. Siles, et al. (2019). [Advancing Gender in the Environment: Gender in Fisheries - A Sea of Opportunities](#). IUCN and USAID. Washington, USA: USAID. 68pp

<sup>11</sup> Kachelriess, D. (2023). The High Seas Biodiversity Treaty: An Introduction to the Agreement under the United Nations Convention on the Law of the Sea on the conservation and sustainable use of marine biological diversity of areas beyond national jurisdiction. In M. Epps & C. Chazot (Eds.), (vi+33p). IUCN.



implementation of the KMGBF. In particular, IUCN highlights the need to:

- ✓ Consider health from all perspectives – human, domestic and wild animals and plants, and ecosystems – using a One Health approach when implementing the Global Action Plan on Biodiversity and Health, and the KMGBF.
- ✓ Promote the active participation of wildlife and environment authorities in multisectoral (e.g., One Health) coordination platforms and decisions to ensure the mainstreaming of biodiversity across assessment, planning, implementation, and evaluation, and recommends One Health coordination in the revision and implementation of NBSAPs, including targets 5 (spillover prevention) and 14 (valuing and protecting health-benefitting ecosystem services).
- ✓ Monitor and mitigate impacts of zoonotic and other disease events (e.g. Highly Pathogenic Avian Influenza) as a threat to wild animal populations and highlights the need for coordinated spillover and outbreak prevention, detection and response that considers wildlife health in addition to human and domestic animal health.
- ✓ Incorporate disease and health considerations into land and sea use planning and impact assessment, including for projects that drive as environmental degradation as well as for biodiversity- and climate-positive approaches like restoration, to ensure trade-offs and co-benefits are adequately captured<sup>12</sup>.

In addition to the resources listed in CBD/SBSTTA/26/INF/3, IUCN invites Parties to consider the case studies and guidance on positive lessons and approaches to wildlife and human health presented in [Solutions in Focus: Wildlife Health and Zoonotic Disease Risk Reduction](#), that serve as examples of actions to implement the Global Action Plan on Biodiversity and Health, and a brief on [Promoting Human Health through the Global Biodiversity](#)

### [Framework: Linking Forests and Human Health in National Biodiversity Strategies and Action Plans](#)

Forthcoming WOAHI-IUCN guidance on surveillance for wildlife disease, pathogens, and toxic agents can support countries in strengthening their surveillance capacity and contribute to wildlife health and One Health initiatives.

IUCN also notes that Nature-based Solutions can support improved health outcomes, such as the reduction of diseases, better nutritional health, food security, and improved mental health. A brief<sup>13</sup> and forthcoming publication by WHO-IUCN-FEBA expert group on Biodiversity, Climate, One Health and Nature-based Solutions underscore the critical relationship between human health and the environment, emphasising the reciprocal impacts of the triple planetary crisis on human health and the adverse effects of poor health on ecosystems.

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<sup>12</sup> [IUCN Resolution 7.135](#): Promoting human, animal and environmental health, and preventing pandemics through the One Health approach and by addressing the drivers of biodiversity loss

<sup>13</sup> [Designing Nature-based Solutions for Human Health](#)