Technical Note

Assessing and reporting on the effectiveness element of Target 3 of the Global Biodiversity Framework

May 2024

Purpose of this document

The global community has developed a wide array of frameworks, tools, reporting systems, and guidance materials to help protected area and OECM managers assess the effectiveness of their areas and systems. These resources have been developed over time in response to CBD commitments and work has accelerated in light of efforts to achieve Target 3 of the Kunming-Montreal Global Biodiversity Framework.

The variety of systems and approaches has led to some confusion regarding these materials. IUCN WCPA, through this document, seeks to provide guidance to enhance clarity and recommendations on the way forward. In particular, IUCN WCPA is working with partners[1] toward a disaggregation of the Target 3 headline indicator by level of effectiveness, which would provide significantly more meaningful data than data on protected area and OECM coverage alone. Further, we aim to enhance clarity on the use of IUCN WCPA Green List Standard (hereafter GL Standard) in comparison with other effectiveness frameworks and tools, and with the IUCN Green List of sites certified against the GL Standard.

Indicators for Target 3: Reporting on the effectiveness element

Target 3 of the Kunming-Montreal Global Biodiversity Framework calls for at least 30 per cent of terrestrial, inland water, and coastal and marine areas to be *effectively* conserved and managed in protected areas and other effective area-based conservation measures, <u>with the aim of achieving positive outcomes for biodiversity</u> (CBD Guidance on Target 3).

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[1] Page 157 in CBD, 2024a: *Partners of the Protected Planet Initiative are developing a method for disaggregating PA and OECM coverage by 'level of effectiveness'. The proposed approach (UNEP-WCMC et al 2023), subject to change, is designed to bring together results from existing protected area effectiveness assessment methods and frameworks (including some listed as component and complementary indicators in CBD/COP/DEC/15/5 and listed in the Global Database on Protected Area Management Effectiveness). ...The proposed method follows a 'phased approach', which would allow data providers to submit data to Protected Planet at different levels of detail, according to their capacity to report and the availability of data. The indicator can already be disaggregated to show coverage of protected areas and OECMs for which a management effectiveness assessment has or has not been conducted, based on data submitted to the Global Database on Protected Area Management Effectiveness.*

For Target 3, the Headline Indicator[2] in the Monitoring Framework is (3.1) *Coverage of protected areas and other effective area based conservation measures*[3].

Coverage by protected areas and OECMs with different levels of effectiveness (Protected Area Management Effectiveness) is suggested as one of six disaggregations of the Headline indicator 3.1. The Headline indicator enables tracking of the '30 per cent' element, while the following disaggregation enables tracking of other elements: (1) coverage of protected areas versus OECMs, (2) coverage of realms, biomes, and ecosystems, (3) coverage of areas of particular importance for biodiversity, (4) coverage by protected areas and OECMs with different levels of effectiveness (Protected Area Management Effectiveness), (5) coverage by governance type, and (6) coverage by Indigenous and Traditional territories (CBD, 2024a; 2024c).

IUCN WCPA is working with partners (UNEP-WCMC) to bring together results from existing management effectiveness and governance assessment methods and frameworks rather than creating a new methodology. This collaborative effort is examining the most well-known and peer-reviewed management effectiveness assessment methods around the world to create a common reporting language, consistent with IUCN Standards and Categories, and with CBD Decisions.

A. Clarification on the IUCN Green List Standard and other effectiveness frameworks and tools

- The **IUCN WCPA Green List (GL) Standard Version 1.1** is formally approved by the IUCN Council through Decision C/93/6.
- Decision XIII/2 of the CBD directs CBD Parties in section (c) '*To endeavour to undertake more systematic assessments of management effectiveness and biodiversity outcomes of protected areas, and where possible, other effective area-based conservation measures, to improve the management effectiveness by addressing the gaps, and to provide, on a voluntary basis, information on the results to the Global Database on Protected Areas Management Effectiveness, maintained by the United Nations Environment Programme's World Conservation Monitoring Centre, as appropriate and to promote the IUCN Green List of Protected and Conserved Areas **as a voluntary standard** to promote and encourage protected area management effectiveness*'
- The Global Database on Protected Area Management Effectiveness (GD-PAME) is the most comprehensive global database for management effectiveness

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[2] Within the GBF, there are four types of indicators: headline, binary, component, and complementary indicators. Headline indicators capture the overall scope of the goals and targets of the Framework and are used for planning and tracking progress towards them. Reporting on headline indicators is included in the national reporting under the Convention and all Parties are legally obligated to complete national reports. Component and complementary indicators provide more in-depth information on progress but are not required for reporting.

[3] There are three Component indicators (two on connectivity and one on species protection) and six Complementary indicators recognized in the updated Monitoring Framework: Rate of PADDD (Protected Area Downgrading, Downsizing and Degazettement) events; Green List Standard; proportion of Key Biodiversity Areas in favourable conditions; PA Isolation Index; PA Network metric (ProNet), and the number of protected areas that have completed a Site-level Assessment of Governance and Equity (SAGE).

assessments for protected areas. Since the 1990s, a range of methods have been developed and applied to assess PAME at both site and system levels. These methodologies vary in scope and content. Most PAME methodologies are based around the IUCN WCPA framework for PAME ([Hockings et al., 2006](#)).

- Currently, there are over 20,000 completed PAME assessments in the GD-PAME that use different management effectiveness frameworks and tools (METT, iMETT, SMART, and more). Additional assessments have been undertaken, including repeat assessments at the same sites, that have not been reported to the GD-PAME, but there is no accurate count of the number of such assessments. For practical reasons and to enable consistent tracking of effectiveness for their own purposes, many protected area agencies and governance bodies will continue to use the same PAME assessments for repeat assessments.
- WCPA distinguishes between *effectiveness frameworks,* which provide a standard for assessing effectiveness (e.g. PAME Framework, the IUCN WCPA GL Standard) and *effectiveness tools,* which provide assessment methodologies used to implement a given framework (e.g. Management Effectiveness Tracking Tool (METT v4.0), the IUCN Green List Certification Process, and the IUCN Green List Assessment Tool (IBEX)).
- The IUCN WCPA Green List Standard is **not** itself an assessment methodology, even when taken down to the level of indicators. The indicators indicate what to assess, but not how to make the assessment.

B. IUCN WCPA Green List Standard and the IUCN Green List of certified sites

- WCPA distinguishes between the **IUCN WCPA Green List Standard** and the **IUCN Green List of Sites**. The IUCN WCPA Green List Standard (listed as a complementary indicator in the GBF Monitoring framework) is a framework that can be used to benchmark area-based conservation measures to improve effectiveness. In contrast**,** the **IUCN Green List of Sites** is a *list* of sites certified against the **IUCN WCPA Green List Standard.**
- IUCN WCPA supports CBD [Decision XIII/2](#) in promoting the IUCN WCPA Green List Standard to improve the effectiveness of systems of protected and conserved areas without any expectation of certification. WCPA welcomes the use of the Green List Standard for certification but also recognises that many protected area administrations will not wish to pursue certification.
- The **IUCN WCPA Green List Standard** should remain open access and freely available for adoption and implementation even if certification has associated financial costs.

In summary, IUCN WCPA recognizes that:

- Many countries already have reporting frameworks and tools that are institutionalized and utilized for reporting. Many protected area systems are using existing systems for collecting and assessing performance data.
- Practicality is an essential consideration for reporting by countries, especially those with low capacities. Imposing any one system as an assessment framework is not

advisable as it is unlikely to be adopted in many cases, and would disrupt established and entirely adequate systems already in place.

- It is, therefore, also not advisable to oblige sites to use any specific assessment tool (e.g. iMET, MEPCA, METT, or IBEX) when they have appropriate systems already in place or have their own preference.
- At this stage, we recommend that the focus should be on
  ○ encouraging and enabling as many sites or administrations to report using the most appropriate method for them that meets the broad requirements of the UNEP-WCMC Protected Planet database,
  ○ providing guidance and information for sites and administrations who are not currently measuring effectiveness on the options for which framework and tools they can adopt that will provide the required information, and,
  ○ facilitating an emphasis on measuring and reporting on biodiversity outcomes as an important component of effectiveness.

Based on the above, IUCN WCPA:

- *Acknowledges* the work of the Ad Hoc Technical Expert Group on Indicators for the Kunming-Montreal Global Biodiversity Framework and supports the '*Guidance on using the indicators of the monitoring framework of the Kunming-Montreal Global Biodiversity Framework* (CBD, 2024a).

- *Supports* the agreed guidance and draft recommendations provided by the Expert Group for the consideration of the Subsidiary Body on Scientific, Technical and Technological Advice at its twenty-sixth meeting (CBD, 2024b).

- *Recommends*, through its partnership with the Protected Planet Initiative, and specifically through the work of the Conservation Effectiveness and Outcomes Task Force of the WCPA,
  ○ the continued advancement of work to develop a methodology to disaggregate the Headline Indicator 3.1 by effectiveness, working toward the vision outlined here,
  ○ that this methodology aims to develop an overarching, flexible reporting system that allows as many sites as possible to report to the PAME database in order to understand governance, management, and ecological outcomes (recognizing that there is variability in the level of sophistication in systems used by countries),
  ○ the development of a method for crosswalking a range of frameworks and tools to assess and report progress towards 30x30 (allowing a tractable way of incorporating data from different systems; the high level structure of the GL Standard could provide the architecture for such a crosswalk system),
  ○ the publication of simple, generic guidance for what constitutes an adequate effectiveness measurement system for the purpose of CBD reporting on Protected and Conserved Areas.

- *Further* recognises that countries will likely continue to use a variety of assessment and reporting systems matched to their own requirements.

- *Acknowledges* the investments made by countries into the PAME assessments reported to the GD-PAME and accepts that approaches to assessments will be diverse.

In conclusion:

CBD Parties are required to report on progress in the implementation of the Global Biodiversity Framework Targets by February 2026. For Target 3, this implies evidence of progress in the expansion and enhancement of protected and conserved areas that are managed with the aim of achieving positive outcomes for biodiversity. Recognizing the significant challenges that lie ahead for implementation and reporting on the many elements of Target 3, WCPA advises an emphasis on practicality and cost-efficiency, building on existing systems and filling gaps with the aim to maximize the number of sites reporting on effectiveness globally.

References

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