

IUCN's position on scientific and technical issues

Convention on Biological Diversity
Sixteenth Meeting of the Conference of the Parties (COP16)
Cali, Colombia, 21 October – 1 November 2024

IUCN's Main Messages

Scientific and technical needs to support the implementation of the Framework, including its implication for the programmes of work of the Convention (Agenda item 16)

IUCN urges Parties to make use of existing tools and guidance that support the implementation of the Kunming-Montreal Global Biodiversity Framework (KMGBF) including the recently established regional and subregional technical and scientific cooperation support centres. It is critical that further guidance developed responds to the needs and gaps identified by Parties, avoiding duplication of work.

Marine and coastal biodiversity (Agenda item 20)

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 adoption of the proposed modalities to (re-)describe these important areas.

IUCN underscores that further efforts are needed to mobilize resources, build capacity, transfer knowledge and technology to implement the existing Programme of Work on Marine and Coastal Biodiversity and to address the gaps and areas in need of additional focus to ensure adequate implementation of the KMGBF targets.

Invasive alien species (Agenda item 21)

IUCN welcomes the IPBES Thematic Assessment Report on Invasive Alien Species and its findings, and highlights that managing biological invasions is realistic and achievable.

IUCN recommends that assessments on the impacts for all the 3,500 known invasive alien species recognised by the IPBES Assessment are undertaken and completed using the Environmental Impact Classification of Alien Taxa (EICAT), in order to provide Parties with detailed information to support the identification and prioritisation of IAS, and encourages Parties to make use of the resources developed in response to Decision 15/27, notably, the updated online toolkit on invasive alien species, for the implementation of Target 6.

Biodiversity and health (Agenda item 22)

IUCN welcomes the actions proposed in the Global Action Plan and urges Parties to adopt the Global Action Plan at COP16. IUCN further encourages Parties, other Governments and all stakeholders to implement the actions therein.

Biodiversity and climate change (Agenda item 25)

IUCN stresses that to achieve the goals and targets of the KMGBF, it is crucial to take decisive climate action, to avoid or minimize negative impact of climate change responses on biodiversity, to consider existing and projected impacts of climate change on biodiversity when implementing the entire Framework and to address the interconnected crises of climate change and biodiversity loss in a coherent and synergistic manner. The climate goals cannot be fully met without full achievement of the goals and targets of the KMGBF; climate, biodiversity conservation, and indeed global health are all intricately interconnected.

For more information, please contact:

Mrs. Sonia Peña Moreno
Director
Centre for Policy and Law
IUCN Headquarters
sonia.penamoreno@iucn.org

Ms. Victoria Romero
Senior Policy Officer –
Biodiversity
Centre for Policy and Law
IUCN Headquarters
victoria.romero@iucn.org

IUCN World Headquarters
Rue Mauverney 28
1196 Gland
Switzerland
Tel: +41 22 999 0000
Fax: +41 22 999 0002
www.iucn.org

Scientific and technical needs to support the implementation of the Framework, including its implication for the programmes of work of the Convention (Agenda item 16)

There is a considerable amount of existing guidance to support the implementation of the KMGBF, but the challenge is ensuring the information is accessible to, and used by, relevant decision-makers. In this regard, IUCN:

- ✓ Encourages Parties to identify their scientific and technical needs, in accordance with their national circumstances and make use of the available tools and guidance in the implementation of their National Biodiversity Strategies and Action Plans.
- ✓ Recommends the COP requests the regional and subregional technical and scientific cooperation support centres to assist Parties in the uptake and use of existing tools and guidance for the implementation of the KMGBF.
- ✓ Further invites Parties to consider the findings of the various IPBES and IPCC assessments in their national implementation processes and recommends that the Executive Secretary collaborates with IPBES and other relevant organisations in enabling the uptake of the findings of the assessments in decision-making.

IUCN recognises that not all the information currently available to support the implementation of the KMGBF is relevant and supports filling the gaps under existing work areas as identified in CBD/SBSTTA/26/3 and CBD/SBSTTA/INF/15, in order to meet the targets of the KMGBF.

It is important, however, that efforts to develop further guidance for implementation are facilitated by Executive Secretary to, among other things, ensure it responds to needs identified by Parties and that new guidance and tools avoid duplication of work, leverage synergies and facilitate uptake by Parties.

¹ 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

Formal and informal experts' groups and initiatives are well placed to identify issues and co-develop guidance to address gaps and support the implementation of the 2030 Targets. The [Global Species Action Plan \(GSAP\)](#), for example, provides relevant guidance on species conservation actions across all KMGBF targets and was developed by IUCN and its Members, Commissions and Partners in consultation with the Secretariats of the biodiversity-related conventions.

- ✓ IUCN supports the requests to the Executive Secretary as presented in SBSTTA recommendation 26/3, 4 (a) and 4 (b), to continue to facilitate the development of further tools, where needed, to address gaps identified by Parties, in cooperation with relevant multilateral environmental agreements, competent intergovernmental organizations and invites Parties to include these gaps as an annex to the decision.

IUCN and its 7 expert Commissions stand ready to engage with Parties and the Executive Secretary in this endeavour and will continue working in developing new and updating existing guidance for the implementation of the KMGBF Targets, including but not limited to Targets 2, 3, 4, 6, 8, and 11¹.

In relation to the implications for the adjustment of work undertaken under the Convention:

- ✓ IUCN recommends better alignment of the agenda items of the Conference of the Parties, as well as its programmes of work and cross cutting work, with the goals and targets of the KMGBF, and supports the draft COP decision in SBI recommendation 4/13.

Regarding the potential new work areas under the Convention:

- ✓ IUCN supports the proposal for further work on pollution and biodiversity. IUCN has proposed a new dedicated article on "Biodiversity Aspects" in the plastic pollution treaty currently under negotiation, in combination with specific

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.

language proposal for the article on “International Cooperation”. The proposed biodiversity specific language would, among others, facilitate the coordination of obligations under existing Multilateral Environmental Agreements (MEAs) to reflect the alignment with the 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.

Marine and coastal biodiversity (Agenda item 20)

Ecologically or biologically significant marine areas (EBSAs)

IUCN commends the progress achieved during the technical and legal expert workshops for modifying and describing new EBSAs in November 2023, and accordingly,

- ✓ Welcomes SBSTTA recommendation 26/8 to adopt the modalities included in the Annex which present in a clear and streamlined way the different scenarios (e.g. within or beyond national jurisdiction).
- ✓ Recommends removing brackets in SBSTTA recommendation 26/8 and adopting the draft decision, given the crucial role of Ecologically or Biologically Significant Areas (EBSAs) in the achievement of the KMGBF, as well as other relevant international frameworks, including the BBNJ Agreement.

IUCN strongly supports efforts to ensure the CBD 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:

- ✓ Highlights the utmost importance of maintaining a unique global process under the CBD for describing ecologically or biologically significant areas for marine biodiversity both within and beyond national jurisdictions, while recognizing the sovereignty of Parties.
- ✓ 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 organizations, and stakeholders for strengthening the scientific credibility and transparency of the process – whether for inclusion in the repository or the information sharing mechanism.
- ✓ Supports the urgent conservation of areas of importance of biodiversity in the global ocean and is ready to contribute knowledge and expertise for the identification of marine Key Biodiversity Areas (KBAs), Important Marine Mammal Areas (IMMAs), Important Shark and Ray Areas (ISRAs), Important Marine Turtle Areas (IMTAs), 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, as well as strategic direction and priorities to the development of other effective area-based conservation measures (OECMs) and GBF planning more broadly.

Conservation and sustainable use of marine and coastal biodiversity

Marine and coastal biodiversity is one of the key cross-cutting elements of the KMGBF and while the Programme of Work on Marine and Coastal Biodiversity and associated COP decisions provide guidance to support the implementation of the Framework, further efforts are needed to mobilize resources, build capacity, transfer knowledge and technology to implement them. Furthermore, to ensure adequate implementation of the KMGBF targets, the gaps and areas in need of additional focus identified in the annex of the draft COP decision in SBSTTA/REC/26/7, must be addressed.

In this regard, IUCN would like to bring to the attention of Parties the IUCN-CEM Fisheries Expert Group (FEG) publication on [Fisheries and the Targets of the Global Biodiversity Framework - Opportunities, Challenges, and Concerns](#). Whilst by no means exhaustive and focussed on fisheries,

this report touches upon a number of gaps outlined in the draft COP decision annex, providing insight into how the sector can deliver on the GBF as a package. Furthermore, the FEG publication on [Area-based Management Tools \(ABMTs\) and Marine Fisheries](#) provides additional guidance on the effective implementation of ABMTs, including MPAs and Other Effective Area-based Conservation Measures (OECMs), aligning with addressing gap 1(b) of the draft COP decision annex.

The IUCN report [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](#)² 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.

Regarding areas of collaboration and cooperation with competent global and regional organizations in the context of the BBNJ Agreement, IUCN welcomes the strong and continued collaboration between the CBD Secretariat and UN DOALOS and highlights the importance of the Sustainable Ocean Initiative (SOI) and its Global Dialogues with Regional Seas Organizations and Regional Fishery Bodies in building synergies between the CBD and the BBNJ Agreement.

Taking the above into account, IUCN:

- ✓ Supports keeping the annex in the draft COP decision in SBSTTA/REC/26/7 and all paragraphs referring to it, and highlights the need for both Parties and the CBD Executive Secretary to enhance work on the issues listed in the annex. IUCN stands ready to continue supporting Parties in addressing them.
- ✓ Stresses the importance of the BBNJ Agreement in supporting the objectives of the Convention, and in meeting the targets and goals of the KMGBF and urges Parties to sign and ratify the Agreement.

- ✓ Calls on Parties to take note of the above-mentioned IUCN publications, all of which could support efforts to effectively and successfully implement the GBF in the marine context and address the identified gaps.
- ✓ Encourages Parties to recognize the need to strengthen cross-sectoral cooperation and collaboration on a regional and global scale, including through the Sustainable Ocean Initiative Global Dialogue with Regional Seas Organizations and Regional Fishery Bodies.
- ✓ Welcomes the request to the Executive Secretary to continue to facilitate capacity-building and partnership activities, including through the Sustainable Ocean Initiative, while noting that resources are needed for this to be successfully carried out and encouraging Parties to contribute to these efforts.

Invasive alien species (Agenda item 21)

IUCN supports the proposed draft COP decision in SBSTTA/REC/25/6, and the revised guidance set out in the Annexes to the decision and encourages parties to endorse them. IUCN particularly welcomes the importance given in the Annexes to the need for efficient, timely and high quality up-to-date standardised data and the recognition that long-term funding is needed to support their proper operation and maintenance.

As an active member of the Inter-agency Liaison Group on Invasive Alien Species (IALG-IAS), IUCN further welcomes the request to the Executive Secretary to continue to collaborate with IALG-IAS and reiterates its continued support to its work towards the implementation of Target 6, including on the development of capacity-building materials to address technical and scientific needs of Parties, and on determining approaches to prevent and control the invasion of pathogenic agents.

IUCN highlights the resources produced in collaboration with the IALG-IAS in response to COP Decision 15/27 and encourages Parties to

² 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.

make use of these resources, in particular the revised IAS Toolkit developed under the Secretariat of the Convention on Biological Diversity with support from IUCN. This toolkit will support countries in implementing actions towards Target 6, and in developing National Invasive Alien Species Strategies and Action Plans (NISSAPs). IUCN stands ready to work with countries and other stakeholders in building capacity for the application of the toolkit.

In light of the above, IUCN invites Parties to consider the following amendments to the draft decision:

7. *Notes with appreciation* the efforts of the Global Biodiversity Information Facility **and IUCN and its SSC Invasive Species Specialist Group** to improve access to data and information on invasive alien species;

7 bis. Notes with appreciation the work of the Executive Secretary in collaboration with the International Union for Conservation of Nature and the Inter-agency Liaison Group on Invasive Alien Species, in updating the online toolkit on invasive alien species, and conducting a study on how approaches for the prevention, control and management of invasive alien species may be usefully applied to biological invasions of pathogenic agents, in particular zoonotic pathogens³, in response to the Decision 15/27 and encourages Parties to make use of these resources for the implementation of Target 6.

11. *Requests* the Executive Secretary (...):
(a) To further strengthen collaboration (...) by:
(v) Strengthening collaboration with the relevant sectors, such as tourism and trade, and with the **existing data providers, such as** Global Biodiversity Information Facility, **IUCN-Invasive Species Specialist Group (IUCN-ISSG) and CABI** to improve access to data and information on invasive alien species;

Annex V, Section II

6. (c) Maintaining a dynamic data flow of records of invasive alien species occurrences from a wide variety of sources, including field monitoring, citizen science and specimen collections, as brought together by the Global Biodiversity Information Facility⁵⁶, on the one

hand, and expert-derived checklists, including up-to-date literature reviews, as compiled **by the IUCN SSC Invasive Species Specialist Group (ISSG)** in the Global Register of Introduced and Invasive Species⁵⁷, on the other hand

6. (d) Ensuring the interoperability of data streams between data providers (e.g. national authorities and researchers) and aggregators (e.g. the Global Biodiversity Information Facility, the **IUCN SSC ISSG** Global Register of Introduced and Invasive Species **and Global Invasive Species Database including IUCN Environmental Impact Classification of Alien Taxa assessments**, the CABI Compendium⁵⁸ and the European Alien Species Information Network)⁵⁹ to increase the data flows necessary for global and regional analyses and decision-making and to create opportunities for national capacity-building and financing;

IUCN further urges COP to welcome the IPBES assessment on invasive alien species and endorse its key messages and encourages Parties and others to make use of the findings to support taking action towards Target 6.

An invaluable amount of data, was collated to support the findings of the IPBES Assessment, and IUCN encourages Parties, in line with the Annexes to the draft COP decision, to allocate the necessary resources to incorporate this data where feasible into existing databases and processes, including the IUCN Global Invasive Species Database ([GISD](#)), EICAT, and the Global Register of Introduced and Invasive Species ([GRIIS](#)), and the binary national Target 6 invasive species response indicator. These datasets, if accessible and adequately resourced and maintained, will be critical in providing the up-to-date and robust information needed to support implementation of Target 6, and to fill the knowledge and data gaps highlighted in the Summary for Policymakers of the Assessment.

As a priority, IUCN recommends that assessments on the impacts for all the 3,500 known invasive alien species recognised by the IPBES Assessment, using the Environmental Impact Classification of Alien Taxa ([EICAT](#)) are undertaken and completed, in order to provide Parties with detailed information to support the

³ These resources will be published as INF documents, in time for COP16.

identification and prioritisation of IAS as requested in Target 6.

Biodiversity and health (Agenda item 22)

IUCN welcomes the Global Action Plan on Biodiversity and Health which provides a useful framework for promoting collaboration with different organizations to mainstream biodiversity-health interlinkages into health and conservation sectors. Actions set out in the Plan are urgently needed to accelerate and mainstream the One Health approach for the implementation of the KMGBF. Accordingly, IUCN:

- ✓ Encourages Parties to adopt and implement the Global Action Plan on Biodiversity and Health.
- ✓ 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.
- ✓ Encourages the active participation of wildlife and environment authorities in multisectoral (e.g., One Health) coordination platforms and decision-making processes to ensure the mainstreaming of biodiversity across assessment, planning, implementation, and evaluation.
- ✓ Stresses that taking actions to prevent zoonotic spillover, spillback and disease outbreaks is more cost-effective than responding and controlling them. Addressing drivers of biodiversity loss and habitat degradation, and protecting and restoring intact ecosystems can also reduce spillover risk to protect human and wildlife health^{4 5}. The recent impacts of avian influenza on wildlife reinforce the need to monitor and mitigate infectious diseases as well

as other causes of species' population decline such as toxic exposures.

- ✓ Underscores the importance of incorporating disease and health considerations into land and sea use planning and impact assessment, including for projects that drive environmental degradation, changes in land use as well as for biodiversity- and climate-positive approaches like restoration, to ensure trade-offs and co-benefits are adequately captured⁶.
- ✓ Recalls that Nature-based Solutions (NbS) can lead to co-benefits for biodiversity and improved health outcomes, such as the reduction of communicable and non-communicable diseases, better nutritional health, food security, and improved mental health. Analysis⁷ by WHO-IUCN-FEBA expert group on Biodiversity, Climate, One Health and Nature-based Solutions underscores the critical relationship between human health and the environment, emphasizing the reciprocal impacts of the triple planetary crisis on human health and the adverse effects of poor health on ecosystems.
- ✓ Stands ready to support the implementation of the Action Plan, through its various expert groups⁸ providing capacity building and providing guidance, standards and tools⁹ to support mainstreaming of biodiversity-health interlinkages into environmental policy, NBSAPs, impact assessments and other strategies.

Biodiversity and climate change (Agenda item 25)

To achieve the goals and targets of the KMGBF, it is of the utmost importance to take decisive climate action, to avoid or minimize negative impact of climate change responses on biodiversity, to consider existing and projected impacts of climate change on biodiversity when implementing all

⁴ [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

⁵ Hopkins et al. (2024). Editorial Essay: Protected Areas and One Health. *Parks* Vol 30.1 May 2024
<https://parksjournal.com/wp-content/uploads/2024/05/PARKS-301-ALRE8783-Hopkins-et-al-1.pdf>

⁶ IUCN Resolution 7.135

⁷ [Designing Nature-based Solutions for Human Health](#)

⁸ Such as, but not limited to, the IUCN SSC Wildlife Health Specialist Group, IUCN WCPA Protected Areas and One Health Task Force, IUCN CEM Human Health and Ecosystem Management Thematic Group.

⁹ [PANORAMA One Health](#) promotes best practices, solutions and lessons learned that facilitate the implementation of a One Health approach.

targets and to address the interconnected crises of climate change and biodiversity loss in a coherent and synergistic manner. Considering this, the COP decision needs to highlight priority policy actions to address these crises in an integral way. IUCN thus:

- ✓ Invites Parties to explicitly take note in the draft decision of the outcomes of the IPBES-IPCC Co-Sponsored Workshop on Biodiversity and Climate Change. Such outcomes can facilitate future discussions under this Convention regarding the role of biodiversity to tackle climate change.
- ✓ Highlights that NbS to address climate change can support the implementation of several other targets, beyond Targets 8 and 11, and enhance biodiversity resilience. The [IUCN Global Standard for Nature-based Solutions](#) provides a concrete tool to support high-integrity implementation of these important solutions, and minimize the risk of unanticipated negative outcomes or misuse.
- ✓ Reiterates that NbS for climate change must not be used either as a substitute for, or as a means to postpone ambitious GHG emission reduction efforts that science tells us are required today.
- ✓ Urges Parties to avoid and mitigate negative impacts of climate change responses, such as when deploying renewable energy generation and distribution as part of the energy transition¹⁰, and in other climate mitigation projects. The recent IUCN publication [Climate mitigation and biodiversity conservation: A review of progress and key issues in global carbon markets and potential impacts on](#)

¹⁰ IUCN has developed guidance for Mitigating biodiversity impacts associated with solar and wind energy development : guidelines for project developers <https://doi.org/10.2305/IUCN.CH.2021.04.en> and is currently developing guidance for optimal spatial planning and cumulative impact assessment for the renewable energy sector.

[ecosystems](#)¹¹ can serve as a resource in this regard.

- ✓ Supports paragraph 3(c) of the draft decision in SBSTTA/REC/25/8 that calls for the integration of NbS and ecosystem-based approaches in NBSAPs and promote synergies with other national planning processes established under the UNFCCC. Noting that Parties will be considering further guidance on the features of Nationally Determined Contributions (NDCs) at COP29/CMA6, IUCN stresses that this offers a concrete opportunity to systematically integrate biodiversity considerations within the core design features required in any future NDC. This will help to ensure the integrity of all ecosystems and the protection of biodiversity when taking action to address climate change.
- ✓ Invites the respective COP Presidencies in addition to the Convention secretariats to further explore opportunities for collaboration, noting that the last quarter of 2024 will successively host CBD COP16 in Cali, UNFCCC COP29 in Baku, and UNCCD COP16 in Riyadh.
- ✓ Notes that ENACT Partnership on Nature-based Solutions and FEBA directly respond to the parties' requests to facilitate capacity-building and to increase awareness and understanding of the impacts of climate change on biodiversity, including through the implementation of nature-based solutions and/or ecosystem-based approaches, and invites Parties and non-parties to engage and join these initiatives.

¹¹ Shah, M.A.R., Orchard, S., Kreuzberg, E., Braga, D., Das, N., Dias, A., Kandasamy, K., Kibria, A. SMG., Kumar, A., Min, W. W., Pandey, P., Rais, M., Sahay, S., Saikia, P., Scozzafava, S., Sharma, S.B., Swamy, S.L., Kumar Thakur, T., Vasseur, L., & Andrade, A. (2024). Climate mitigation and biodiversity conservation: A review of progress and key issues in global carbon markets and potential impacts on ecosystems. Gland, Switzerland: IUCN. <https://doi.org/10.2305/WGZ15482>