



# IUCN WCPA Information Note for CBD COP16

Cali, Colombia, October 21–October 31, 2024

*This Information Note is linked to and aligned with [IUCN's position paper for COP16 on scientific and technical issues](#)*

## **Area-based conservation is a natural solution to biodiversity, health and climate crises**

Area-based conservation, through the establishment and management of “protected and conserved” areas—protected areas and other effective area-based conservation measures (OECMs), and “recognizing indigenous and traditional territories, where applicable”—is a critical part of the Kunming-Montreal Global Biodiversity Framework (GBF). Achieving Target 3 (and related GBF targets 1, 2 and 8) in less than six years will require an unprecedented effort to establish, restore, and effectively manage such a global network. Protected areas and OECMs also have an increasingly recognized role in climate mitigation and adaptation options as nature-based solutions to meet targets of the UN Framework Convention on Climate Change (UNFCCC). Addressing drivers of biodiversity loss and habitat degradation, including through well-managed PCAs that protect and restore ecological integrity, can reduce spillover risk to protect human and wildlife health. The purpose of this document is to highlight key elements, gaps and opportunities, and share access to new guidance to be launched at CBD COP16, as well as existing resources.

## **IUCN WCPA guidance on select agenda items at COP16**

The following numbered items of the COP agenda are those where existing and new IUCN WCPA guidance documents are most relevant:

- 16: “Scientific and technical needs to support the implementation of the Kunming-Montreal Global Biodiversity Framework, including implications for the programmes of work of the Convention”
- 8: “Progress on the preparation of targets and updating of national biodiversity strategies and action plans by Parties in line with the Kunming-Montreal Global Biodiversity Framework”
- 10: “Mechanisms for planning, monitoring, reporting and review”
- 12: “Resource mobilisation and financial mechanism”
- 14: “Implementation of Article 8(j) and related provisions”
- 20: “Marine and coastal biodiversity, and island biodiversity”
- 22: “Biodiversity and health”
- 25: “Biodiversity and climate change”

## Agenda item 16: “Scientific and technical needs to support the implementation of the Kunming-Montreal Global Biodiversity Framework, including implications for the programmes of work of the Convention”

The section below provides technical guidance from WCPA on Targets 3, 2, 1 and 12.

### Target 3. Conserve 30% of land, waters, and seas

*Ensure and enable that by 2030 at least 30 per cent of terrestrial, inland water, and of coastal and marine areas, especially areas of particular importance for biodiversity and ecosystem functions and services, are effectively conserved and managed through ecologically representative, well-connected and equitably governed systems of protected areas and other effective area-based conservation measures, recognizing indigenous and traditional territories where applicable, and integrated into wider landscapes, seascapes and the ocean, while ensuring that any sustainable use, where appropriate in such areas, is fully consistent with conservation outcomes, recognizing and respecting the rights of indigenous peoples and local communities, including over their traditional territories.*

The global target of conserving 30% of the surface of the Earth by 2030 requires great ambition, careful planning, and attention to all the many components of the agreed language. WCPA produced a **comprehensive handbook** on how to meet the ambition of Target 3, [30x30: A Guide to the Inclusive, Equitable and Effective Implementation of Biodiversity Target 3](#). Based on wide consultation, the Guide explains all the qualitative components of Target 3, offers a stepwise timeline for implementation, and includes over 500 links to further information. It is available in English, French and Spanish.

WCPA is a lead partner in a companion **web toolkit**, [30x30.solutions](#), which is based on the Guide but provides further information and is continually updated with insights from new experience and links to more detail. Both the Guide and 30x30.solutions are efforts to ensure that areas reported against Target 3 have integrity and actually contribute to achieving the goal of restoring balance with nature by 2050. The site links to a related report, [Best Practice in Delivering the 30x30 Target](#).

WCPA maintains that protected areas, OECMs, Indigenous and traditional territories (ITTs) and other classifications of area-based conservation offer opportunities to diversify governance and management. Each classification has unique features, but they all have more in common than not, especially in that they **must demonstrate positive outcomes for nature** to be considered under the Global Biodiversity Framework. Forthcoming guidance will clarify these distinctions and core similarities after discussions and negotiations at COP16.

### **Protected areas**

WCPA maintains that protected areas remain an effective mechanism to conserve nature, and that **existing systems need to be expanded and strengthened**. The Commission offers many [sources of technical information](#) on every aspect of protected areas, and on [management](#) under every major [type of governance](#): by government, shared governance, private governance (privately protected areas) and governance by Indigenous Peoples' and local communities (Indigenous Peoples' and community conserved areas, sometimes called Territories of Life). WCPA's peer-reviewed journal [PARKS](#) provides science from sites and systems, and editorials addressing challenging and new issues that arise.

## **OECMs**

Many Parties are looking to **Other Effective Area-based Conservation Measures** to be central to achieving their commitments on Target 3. WCPA developed the definition of OECMs after the term was introduced in COP10 at Aichi, Japan. The [2019 Technical Report](#) setting out that definition has now been updated in **forthcoming** Guidelines on OECMs. The Guidelines reinforce that, above all else, OECMs must deliver positive outcomes for nature. The [Site-level Tool for Identifying OECMs](#) is an easy-to-use workbook which steps through all the criteria to determine if an area might be eligible to be an OECM. The Tool is available in nine languages.

A **new** paper examines the [Global Status and Emerging Contribution of OECMs to Target 3](#). In countries and territories that have reported OECMs, a far greater proportion of OECMs than protected areas are under **shared governance** (40.9% compared to 2.5%), and collaborative governance is the most common governance sub-type among reported OECMs.

### ***Conserving nature in perpetuity (long-term conservation)***

Target 3 language suggests that protected and conserved areas be established with **permanence** in mind. WCPA's **new** Technical Note on [Defining 'long-term' for PAs and OECMs](#) clarifies guidance from the [Guidelines for Privately Protected Areas](#). Any significant deviation from global guidance and existing national policy that lessens the chances of achieving long-term conservation sets a concerning precedent and is not consistent with the intent of the GBF.

Despite the agreement that PCAs are to be governed and deliver conservation outcomes for the long-term, they are not always permanent. Legal rollbacks to protections—**protected area downgrading, downsizing and degazettement** (PADDD), the legal tempering, reduction, or elimination of PAs—can compromise PA objectives. [Research by WCPA members](#) has alerted Parties to the urgent need to address PADDD-related issues in accurate reporting, prioritising restoration of reserve networks in addition to careful expansion and recognition of new conservation areas. An IUCN WCPA PADDD Task Force will provide capacity and technical support to defend the integrity of PAs as a means to reduce unrestrained and poorly-governed PADDD events and to encourage governments and non-state actors to report on PADDD.

### ***Areas of particular importance for biodiversity***

The 30% called for in Target 3 should be “**especially areas of particular importance** for biodiversity and ecosystem functions and services.” A paper by WCPA members describes [Priorities for Protected Area Expansion](#). It highlights examples of planning methods available, and discusses issues in operationalizing some of the vaguer concepts like ‘representation’ and ‘ecosystem functions and services’ so that they achieve the best outcomes for biodiversity.

[A Global Standard for Identification of Key Biodiversity Areas](#) presents the criteria to locate and highlight sites that make significant contributions to the global persistence of biodiversity. The criteria incorporate elements of biodiversity across genetic, species and ecosystem levels. The Target is “at least 30 per cent of terrestrial, **inland water**, and of **coastal and marine areas**...”

## **Strengthening and expanding marine protection**

A **new** Technical Note answers [Frequently Asked Questions on Establishing Marine OECMs](#) (and identifies key characteristics and criteria) for **marine OECMs**. Existing guidance is also available on [Large-Scale Marine Protected Areas](#), as well as Guidelines for [Applying the IUCN Protected Area Management Categories to MPAs](#).

Identifying and conserving areas of particular importance for biodiversity is a fundamental element of the GBF. There are a number of standardised approaches for **identifying areas of particular importance for biodiversity in the marine realm**: Ecologically or Biologically Significant Marine Areas (EBSAs), Important Marine Mammal Areas (IMMAs), Important Shark and Ray Areas (ISRAs) and Key Biodiversity Areas (KBAs), with a standard for Important Marine Turtle Areas (IMTAs) also nearing completion. In a **new** [Technical Note](#), experts from the WCPA and Species Survival Commission (SSC) have developed a guidance document that provides a summary of these approaches—highlighting the biodiversity considered, identification process, and outputs, and showcases how they can be used to inform GBF planning. Taken together, these approaches provide crucial data to inform planning towards the GBF, and continuing identification of important marine biodiversity areas should be a priority for CBD Parties.

## **Strengthening and expanding inland water protection**

Inland waters were recognised as needing particular attention in the GBF. This means not only **identifying protected and conserved areas focused on these habitats**, but also ensuring that freshwater issues are taken into account when managing **larger terrestrial areas that contain inland waters**.

A **forthcoming** [Technical Report](#) on inland water has been developed in partnership with The Nature Conservancy and produced by them in collaboration with WWF, Conservation International and WCPA. The report makes **the case for paying greater attention to inland waters** and explains aspects that makes their management unique, before looking in detail at issues of human rights, planning, design, governance, and management. A series of case studies illustrate key aspects of management. Additionally, a **forthcoming** [Technical Note](#) on freshwater OECMs, developed by the IUCN WCPA Freshwater Specialist Group, outlines how the **OECM concept can be applied** using a variety of conservation measures in freshwater areas.

## **Effectiveness**

Target 3 sets out that all areas should be effectively managed. WCPA has developed a range of **assessment tools for effectiveness**, including the [Green List Standard](#) and the [Management Effectiveness Tracking Tool \(METT\)](#). A **new** Technical Note on [Assessing and Reporting on the Effectiveness Element of Target 3](#) provides clarity on effectiveness reporting for Target 3. 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 would be unlikely to be adopted in many cases, and would disrupt established and entirely adequate systems already in place. WCPA recommends 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](#). Additionally, a **new** Technical Report lays out [A Framework for Monitoring Biodiversity in PAs and OECMs](#). It will help managers and site planners to consider all relevant details to develop effective biodiversity monitoring programmes for improved management outcomes.

## **Well-connected**

Target 3 calls for areas to be “well-connected.” WCPA [Guidelines for Conserving Connectivity through Ecological Networks and Corridors](#) is a valuable resource. It introduces a common definition and recommends formal recognition of ecological corridors to serve as critical building blocks of ecological networks in conjunction with protected areas and OECMs. A recent Technical Report is specific in [Addressing Ecological Connectivity in the Development of Roads, Railways and Canals](#). It provides an overview of practical, feasible, science-based strategies for PCA managers, transport practitioners, industry, conservationists and other stakeholders interested in biodiversity and ecological connectivity conservation in, and adjacent to, PCAs.

## **Human workforce needs to achieve Target 3**

[Rangers](#) are **essential planetary-health professionals** and play a critical role in conserving nature and supporting communities in addition to many core responsibilities within and surrounding protected and conserved areas. A [2022 study](#) estimates that expansion to 30% in PCAs will require more than 1.5 million rangers or equivalent, three times the current workforce. **Rangers for 30 by 30**, developed by the [International Ranger Federation](#) and Universal Ranger Support Alliance, offers a [framework to support governments, agencies, donors and NGOs to implement Target 3](#). It defines the *conditions, conduct and competence* needed for a workforce sufficient in numbers, diverse and recognized. In parallel, rules, regulations and restrictions designed to protect nature and ecosystems, in some instances, have had serious adverse impacts on human rights of communities living within and around PCAs. WCPA’s **new** [Guidance on Building Trust Between Rangers and Communities](#) focuses on actions that rangers, and to a lesser extent managers, can do themselves. It does not address institutional changes that would need intervention at the government level.

## **Target 2. Restore 30% of all degraded ecosystems**

*Ensure that by 2030 at least 30 per cent of areas of degraded terrestrial, inland water, and coastal and marine ecosystems are under effective restoration, in order to enhance biodiversity and ecosystem functions and services, ecological integrity and connectivity.*

WCPA [guidelines](#) for ecological restoration in protected areas provides guidance for terrestrial, marine and freshwater protected area managers at both system and site levels on the restoration of natural and associated values of protected areas. The IUCN WCPA Restoration Task Force, together with the Alliance of Bioversity International and the International Center for Tropical Agriculture (CIAT), has co-authored a **forthcoming** policy brief on the importance of integrating human dimensions in Target 2. In addition, Task Force has developed a summary selection of restoration guidelines (of relevance to protected areas) [here](#).

## **Target 1. Plan and manage all areas to reduce biodiversity loss**

*Ensure that all areas are under participatory, integrated, and biodiversity inclusive spatial planning and/or effective management processes addressing land and sea use change, to bring the loss of areas of high biodiversity importance, including ecosystems of high ecological integrity, close to zero by 2030, while respecting the rights of indigenous peoples and local communities.*

The IUCN WCPA Taskforce on Spatial Planning has developed guidance in a [new Issues Paper](#) on Participatory, Integrated and Biodiversity-Inclusive Spatial Planning (PI-BISP) to bring the loss of areas of high biodiversity importance and ecosystems of high integrity close to zero by 2030. PI-BISP is a systematic, holistic and inclusive approach to spatial planning that integrates terrestrial, inland waters and marine realms, identifying the **spatial actions necessary to address the drivers of biodiversity loss**. PI-BISP guides coordinated spatial interventions to manage, protect and restore areas for improved biodiversity outcomes and avoid potential negative impacts on biodiversity. Effective implementation of Target 1 informs the planning and achievement of multiple other GBF targets, especially on restoration (Target 2), conservation (Target 3), halting species extinction, protecting genetic diversity, and human-wildlife conflict (Target 4) and ensuring sustainable, safe, and legal harvesting and trade of wild species (Target 5), amongst others.

## Target 12. Enhance green spaces and urban planning for human well-being and biodiversity

*Significantly increase the area and quality and connectivity of, access to, and benefits from green and blue spaces in urban and densely populated areas sustainably, by mainstreaming the conservation and sustainable use of biodiversity, and ensure biodiversity-inclusive urban planning, enhancing native biodiversity, ecological connectivity and integrity, and improving human health and well-being and connection to nature and contributing to inclusive and sustainable urbanization and the provision of ecosystem functions and services.*

**Urban protected areas** protect biodiversity, deliver ecosystem services and support local economies, while providing opportunity for urban people to experience nature. The IUCN WCPA Urban Conservation Strategies Specialist Group has related resources, including good practice guidelines for urban protected areas, on their website [here](#). A second [Good Practice Guidelines \(Series No. 33\)](#) highlights the importance of preserving natural darkness for heritage conservation and night sky appreciation.

## Agenda item 8: “Progress on the preparation of targets and updating of national biodiversity strategies and action plans by Parties in line with the Kunming-Montreal Global Biodiversity Framework”

National biodiversity strategies and action plans (NBSAPs) offer an opportunity to scale up national ambition on area-based conservation reflected in national level targets to strengthen and expand protected areas, and formally recognize and report on OECMs and ITTs as applicable. WCPA guidance on incorporating Target 3 into NBSAPs can be found in [30x30: A Guide to the Inclusive, Equitable and Effective Implementation of Biodiversity Target 3](#).

## Agenda item 10: “Mechanisms for planning, monitoring, reporting and review”

The SBSTTA/REC/26/1 recommends adoption of a decision at COP16 that endorses the technical updates to the Monitoring Framework for the GBF provided by the Ad Hoc Technical Expert Group on indicators as contained in Annex 1 (CBD/SBSTTA/REC/26/1). These updates support the operationalization of the monitoring framework and comprise headline, binary, component, and complementary indicators and optional headline indicator disaggregations.

The AHTEG recommends **five disaggregations for the Headline Indicator for Target 3** “Coverage of protected areas and other effective area-based conservation measures”:

- Coverage by protected areas versus OECMs:
- Coverage of realms, biomes, ecosystem functional groups, ecoregions etc. to allow coverage in land, coastal and marine and inland waters
- Coverage of areas of particular importance for biodiversity
- Coverage by level of effectiveness
- Coverage by type of governance

IUCN WCPA has a number of guidance documents related to these disaggregations:

On coverage by protected areas versus OECMs, WCPA has developed [Guidance on Applying Protected Areas Categories](#), [Guidance on Privately Protected Areas](#) and a [Site-level Tool for Identifying OECMs](#) (also see above in Section under Agenda Item 16).

On coverage of areas of particular importance for biodiversity, a paper by WCPA members describes [Priorities for Protected Area Expansion, especially those focusing on areas of particular importance for biodiversity](#). The [IUCN Global Standard for Key Biodiversity Areas](#), as well as the IUCN [Important Marine Mammal Areas](#) Atlas, are linked to spatial databases.

On coverage by level effectiveness: WCPA, as a partner of UNEP-WCMC’s Protected Planet Initiative, has supported the development of a document on [monitoring ‘effectiveness’ of areas contributing to Target 3](#), which details an approach for disaggregating PA and OECM coverage by ‘level of effectiveness’ that builds on the IUCN Green List Standard and brings together results from existing protected area effectiveness assessment methods and frameworks. This **new** [Technical Note](#) by IUCN WCPA (also referred to above) provides further clarity on reporting on effectiveness for Target 3. On coverage by type of governance, [IUCN WCPA’s guidance on governance](#) provides details on the four primary types of governance.

IUCN WCPA is a partner with UNEP-WCMC in the **forthcoming** Protected Planet Report, which will be launched on [30x30 Action Day](#), 29 October 2024. The Protected Planet Report helps track international progress towards achieving global biodiversity targets, focusing on key aspects relating to protected areas and biodiversity (30x30 Action Day is being organized by WCPA, the High Ambition Coalition for Nature and People and the CBD Secretariat).

## Agenda item 12: “Resource mobilisation and financial mechanism”

To achieve PCA outcomes, a portfolio of **finance solutions** should be designed and implemented with careful attention to systems thinking, equity and effectiveness and social and cultural awareness. WCPA is finalizing **forthcoming** [Good Practice Guidelines for Protected and Conserved Areas Finance](#). The Guide provides detailed frameworks, descriptions and insights into conservation finance solutions, presents the case for PCA investment and sustainable finance, describes the role and use of finance and economics to achieve PCA outcomes and presents guidance on how to conduct strategic and practical financial planning.

## Agenda item 14: “Implementation of Article 8(j) and related provisions”

WCPA worked with a wide range of organisations to develop a [Road Map for Advancing Rights and Equity in Conservation](#). It identifies **11 key action areas** from changing discourse around conservation and the way we finance, to supporting conservation practices, and reforming national policies and laws.

A **new** Issues Paper on [Advancing Equitable Governance in Area-Based Conservation](#) provides an overview of the equitable governance element of Target 3, which is key to **advancing rights**. It reflects the growing recognition of the importance of equity and respect for rights, and thus equitable governance, for improving both the social outcomes of conservation for Indigenous Peoples and Local Communities (IPs and LCs) and the ecological outcomes.

A very large number of ICCAs (Indigenous Peoples' and community conserved areas) are also overlapped by protected and conserved areas that have been designated and governed by others. IUCN has affirmed the importance of appropriately **recognising, respecting and supporting overlapped ICCAs** in several policies, including in IUCN World Conservation Congress 2016 Resolution 030, [Recognising and respecting the territories and areas \(ICCAs\) overlapped by protected areas](#). Now, **new** [Guidelines Recognizing Territories and Areas Conserved by Indigenous Peoples and Local Communities \(ICCAs\) Overlapped by Protected Areas](#) documents a 26% overlap of terrestrial PAs with ICCAs. These overlap situations create **opportunities for collaboration and mutual aid** between PA authorities and ICCA custodians that benefit from their knowledge and capacities.

## Agenda item 20: “Marine and coastal biodiversity, and island biodiversity”

See the section above on “Strengthening and expanding marine protection”.

## Agenda item 22: “Biodiversity and health”

Land-use change, globalization and climate change are rapidly altering wildlife–livestock–human interfaces, increasing the rate of disease emergence and spread. To combat these risks, land managers and policymakers at all scales are increasingly aligning their activities with the **One Health** framework: “an integrated, unifying approach that aims to sustainably balance and optimize the health of people, animals, and ecosystems.” As outlined in the journal [PARKS](#), One Health policy should explicitly incorporate protected and conserved areas (PCAs) because PCAs are widespread and important wildlife–livestock–human interfaces. Addressing drivers of biodiversity loss and habitat degradation, including through well-managed protected and conserved areas that protect and restore ecological integrity, can reduce spillover risk to protect human and wildlife health.

An IUCN WCPA Task Force on Protected Areas and One Health is developing **three forthcoming tools for PCA site and system managers** to (1) assess infectious disease threats in PCAs, (2) reduce infectious disease threats in PCAs and (3) assess and improve One Health capacity in PCAs. Addressing drivers of biodiversity loss and habitat degradation, including through well-managed PCAs that protect and restore ecological integrity, can reduce spillover risk to protect human and wildlife health.



## Agenda item 25: “Biodiversity and climate change”

Target 8 of the GBF is to “Minimize the impact of climate change and ocean acidification on biodiversity and increase its resilience through mitigation, adaptation and disaster risk reduction including through nature-based solutions and/or ecosystem-based approaches, while minimizing negative and fostering positive impacts of climate action on biodiversity.”

A **new** Issues Paper on [Climate Change and Protected Areas](#), produced in collaboration with IUCN’s Climate Crisis Commission, examines some topical issues, **linking biodiversity conservation and climate and adaptation**, and what this means in practical terms. In the first iteration of Nationally Determined Contributions (NDCs) to the Paris Agreement, 67 countries (37 per cent of the NDCs examined) explicitly mentioned terrestrial protected areas or other conserved areas as part of their contribution to reduce greenhouse gas emissions. We can presume that protected areas will also be more prominent in updated NDCs. A Technical Brief also [Connects the Dots](#) and lays out six recommendations on the overlap between the CBD, UNFCCC and SDGs and their dependence on retaining and recovering the ecological integrity of ecosystems, which is in turn dependent on retaining and recovering biodiversity.

Another **new** Technical Note on [Protected and Conserved Areas as Irreplaceable Tools for Meeting Linked Targets on Biodiversity and Climate](#) posits that focusing on the development and management of protected and conserved areas in National Biodiversity Strategies and Action Plans and in plans for Nationally Determined Contributions offers cost-effective, **win-win options for governments**.

It is obvious that there is a need for a rapid transition to low-carbon energy sources such as wind and solar power if the climate change crisis is to be abated. But it **cannot come at a cost to biodiversity**. There is evidence throughout the world that renewable energy projects are being put in places that damage species and ecosystems and, in some countries, they are being sited within the boundaries of protected areas. At a minimum, we need to avoid the locations of threatened significant species and places and ensure effective integrated planning occurs. The aforementioned guidance within a **new** [Issues Paper](#) on Participatory, Integrated Biodiversity-Inclusive Spatial Planning by the IUCN WCPA Taskforce on Spatial Planning should help with this transition to a green energy future.

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**IUCN’s World Commission on Protected Areas (WCPA)**—with its global network of 3,000 experts and wide range of implementing partners—is uniquely positioned and mandated to support implementation of Target 3. WCPA works by providing strategic advice to policy makers and practitioners to help strengthen capacity and guide investment in protected and conserved areas. As the recognized global authority on protected areas, the guidance, policies and innovations developed by WCPA are widely adopted around the world. They have been incorporated into national and international policies and programs of governments, intergovernmental organizations, and both national and international NGOs. WCPA is one of seven voluntary commissions of the International Union for the Conservation of Nature (IUCN). See the most recent [Impact Report](#) for more details.

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