

IN-WILD: Revolutionising Indicators for Wildlife Use and Trade Monitoring

PRELIMINARY SUMMARY: IN-WILD INDICATOR SITUATION & GAP ANALYSIS (2026)

Full report expected to be published in early 2027

THE NEED TO STRENGTHEN INDICATORS POST-2030

We are halfway through the monitoring period for the 2030 Targets as outlined in the Kunming-Montreal Global Biodiversity Framework (KM-GBF). Unsustainable exploitation of wildlife remains a key driver of the ongoing biodiversity crisis. However, a comprehensive review by the Convention on Biological Diversity Ad Hoc Technical Expert Group suggests that many Targets of the existing framework lack meaningful indicators with which to track global progress.



A fact that is restated in the first Global Report¹ explicitly stating “**progress towards the sustainable use of wild species remains limited and uneven**”. Thus, ensuring the post-2030 monitoring framework is able to effectively monitor and deliver progress towards the safe, sustainable and legal use and trade of wild species to benefit both people and the environment is essential.

CRITICAL GAPS IN THE EXISTING INDICATOR FRAMEWORK FOR SUSTAINABLE USE & TRADE

We conducted an in-depth and structured review of 949 indicators and metrics from all 375 indicators from the KM-GBF, and 574 biodiversity metrics from a recent global review.² Through **identifying gaps and exploring synergies** with existing metrics and indicators, we provide recommendations to synergise existing indicators and **develop novel indicators** to fill critical gaps in current coverage.

We focused on **five** key dimensions of use and trade explicitly referenced and highlighted in Targets 5 and 9 of the current KM-GBF Monitoring Framework.



Legality: Indicators rely on data generated through existing regulatory systems, and globally only CITES-listed species provide structured reporting on legal trade. This restricts taxonomic coverage and leaves the legality of most traded taxa unmonitored. Current indicators of illegal wildlife trade rely on seizure counts or seizure-based ratios, which do not adequately account for variations in enforcement effort, capacity, and investment across countries and over time.



Sustainability: Almost half of all sustainability indicators focus solely on commercialised fish stocks or cetaceans. The remaining indicators rely on robust yet taxonomically biased resources such as the IUCN Red List Index and the Living Planet Index.



Safety: Although explicitly referenced in Target 5 and integral to sustainable use and trade, safety considerations, such as zoonotic disease transmission and invasive species risks, are not captured by any of the indicators currently adopted.



Benefits: Despite the importance of understanding the social, economic, cultural, and conservation outcomes of wildlife use and trade, the current indicator framework provides limited capacity to assess or track these benefits, particularly across Targets 5 and 9 where methodological gaps remain substantial.



Structural: Comprehensive indicators exist tracking the establishment and existence of policies and certification tools to monitor and assess the impacts of use and trade. Nothing specifically assesses how effective these policies or schemes may be.

¹ CBD Secretariat (2026), “The Global Report on Collective Progress in the Implementation of the Kunming-Montreal Global Biodiversity Framework”.

² Burgess et al., “Global Metrics for Terrestrial Biodiversity,” *Annual Review of Environment and Resources* 49, no. 1 (2024): 673–709.

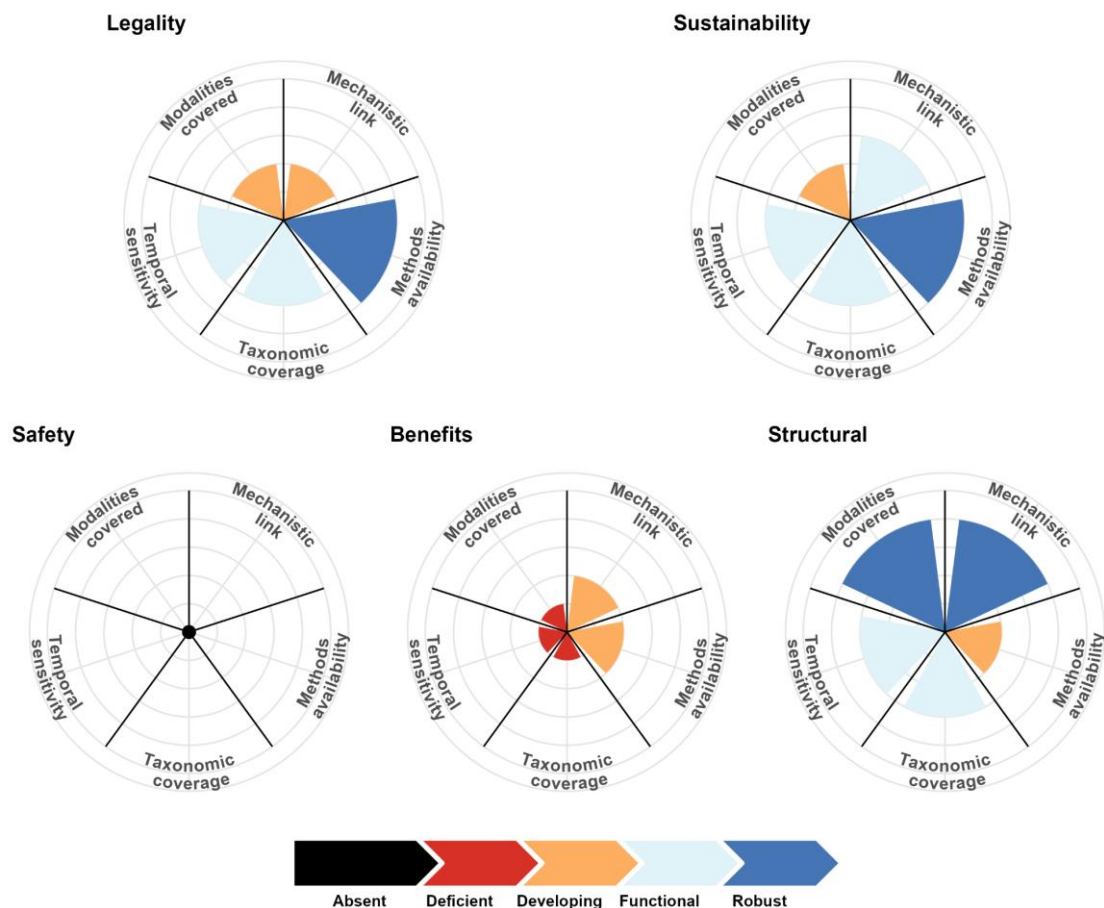


Figure 1. Target 5 and 9 Indicator coverage across key dimensions of use and trade. Each plot denotes a predefined dimension. Colours denote how well that facet is covered within each dimension.

PRIORITISING FUTURE INDICATOR DEVELOPMENT

The aspirations and aims of the KM-GBF monitoring framework are laudable and needed. However, key gaps exist in the current suite of indicators. We are now in a vital period of opportunity to develop an improved post-2030 framework, particularly by drawing on **social media data and global digital databases**.

Key areas for indicator development will be chosen through a collaborative process with a **Stakeholder Working Group**, made up of experts from MEA Secretariats, government agencies, and representatives of Indigenous People and Local communities. At this early stage in the process, we have identified the potential for use and trade metrics to synergise, for example, in areas with existing methods and approaches, such as for the spread of invasive alien species (e.g., GRIIS) introduced by trade, and extend existing approaches to quantify trends in illegality (e.g., the CITES ETIS report). However, as highlighted by Figure 1., there are many further dimensions of wildlife use and trade with significant gaps to address. To support the development of practical indicators for Parties, IN-WILD is also building a **Stakeholder Network** – open to all policymakers, practitioners and academics, to engage in opportunities to test and provide feedback on future indicators.

CALL TO ACTION: Join the **IN-WILD Stakeholder Network** and stay up to date with the project and opportunities to engage: <https://iucn.org/our-work/projects/in-wild>

IN-WILD is led by IUCN and comprises a consortium of experts from the University of Cambridge, UNEP-WCMC, TRAFFIC, the University of Oxford, the University of Helsinki, ZSL, UNODC, and IUCN CEESP-SSC Sustainable Use and Livelihoods specialist group (SULi).