



Quick guide to the Aichi Biodiversity Targets Sustainable management of marine living resources

By 2020 all fish and invertebrate stocks and aquatic plants are managed and harvested sustainably, legally and applying ecosystem based approaches, so that overfishing is avoided, recovery plans and measures are in place for all depleted species, fisheries have no significant adverse impacts on threatened species and vulnerable ecosystems and the impacts of fisheries on stocks, species and ecosystems are within safe ecological limits.

Overexploitation is a severe pressure on marine ecosystems globally, and has led to the loss of biodiversity and ecosystem structure. Harvests of global marine capture fisheries have been reduced from the unsustainable levels of a decade and more ago. However, overfishing still occurs in many areas, and fisheries could contribute more to the global economy and food security with more universal commitment to sustainable management policies. This target should be regarded as a step towards ensuring that all marine resources are harvested sustainably.

Explanation of the Target

This target refers to **all harvested fish and invertebrate stocks and aquatic plants**. Therefore it applies to a variety of marine biological resources including fish, crustaceans, mollusks, urchins and seaweeds. This target has number of components which need to be considered at the national level:

- Stocks need to be **managed and harvested sustainably, legally and applying ecosystem based approaches** – There are a variety of management and harvesting methods used worldwide. These need to be applied in ways which do not damage the long term sustainability of resources, do not constitute illegal, unreported or unregulated fishing, and which take account of the full impact of the fishery on the ecosystem.
- **Overfishing is avoided** – Overfishing refers to harvesting activities which reduce fish stocks to levels that effect their ability to replenish themselves. The ability of a fish stock to cope with harvesting pressure is dependant on, among other things, ecosystem conditions, the life history of the species being harvested and the magnitude and type of harvesting pressure applied.
- **Recovery plans and measures are in place for all depleted species** - For those species which have already been depleted by some factor the development and implementation of a recovery plan is a first step towards their possible recovery. Depending on the state of the stock and the capacities of management there is a spectrum of management options available ranging from catch reductions and quotas to gear restrictions and partial, periodic or full fishery closures.
- **Fisheries have no significant adverse impacts on threatened species and vulnerable ecosystems** – In addition to the direct pressures on target stocks, some harvesting and fishing methods can have unintentional impacts on other species such as through bycatch and/or damage to habitat. These impacts, though unintentional, can nonetheless have major ramifications on species and ecosystem health and must be minimized. This component of the target reflects directly the language of United Nations Resolution 81/105 where this commitment has been made for deep-sea fisheries on the high seas.
- The impacts of fisheries on stocks, species and ecosystems are within safe **ecological limits** – Ultimately the impact of fishing and harvesting pressures on species and ecosystems must be kept at levels which do no undermine the long term sustainability of the ecosystem. In this respect pressures need to be at or below the level of what ecosystems can sustain while still allowing them to provide ecosystem services.

Implications for setting national targets

Global marine capture fisheries are yielding lower harvests and contributing less to the global economy than they could under stronger policies to manage fish stocks sustainably. The main drivers of overexploitation, such as over capacity, inadequate surveillance and control, or other consequences of poor governance generally can be mitigated, at least in part, by improved governance at international, regional and national levels. Actions taken to reach this target would help to ensure implementation, with respect to marine living resources, of the United Nations Convention on the Law of the Sea and its 1995



Convention on
Biological Diversity

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Implementation Agreement of its Provisions relating to the Conservation and Management of Straddling Fish Stocks and Highly Migratory Fish Stocks, and several key UNGA Resolutions. National targets set in support of this target would also contribute to the Johannesburg Plan of Implementation. In situations where fisheries are shared by several countries in a region, mechanisms, such as multilateral strategies, may need to be developed to allow for a coordinated approach to resource management.

Guiding questions for setting national targets

Which fish and invertebrate stocks and aquatic plants are harvested in the country? Which are under or moderately exploited? Which are fully exploited? Which are overexploited, depleted or recovering?

What are the main fishing and harvesting techniques used in the country? What effect are they having on vulnerable species and ecosystems? Which of these are sustainable? Which are not?

What management plans are already in place? How effective have they been? How could their effectiveness be improved? What species or ecosystems require management plans? What type of management could be introduced (quotas, allocation of rights to harvester, communities, or other appropriate units, fishing gear restrictions, spatial measures including marine protected areas, catch reductions, partial or full fishery closures, license buybacks, etc.)?

What fisheries subsidies are in place? What effect are these having? Which subsidies should be reformed or phased out? Which positive incentives could be further developed?

What are the opportunities and constraints in reducing overexploitation of marine resources? Consider potential ecological, economic, and social costs and benefits of reducing harvest pressure. How may these justify higher or lower figures for a national target than for the global target?

Who are the stakeholders that may be affected by efforts to reduce overexploitation? How can they be involved, how would they be affected, and how can their needs addressed? What are the trade-offs to consider?

What additional resources (financial, human and technical) will be required to reach the national target that is set? How can additional funds be raised? What are possible funding sources?

Note that, given the particular national circumstances, national targets may be more specific and more precise than the global target. Further national targets should be ambitious but realistic and be supportive of the Strategic Plan by moving beyond business as usual.

Actions and milestones

Actions towards this target should bear in mind the guidance provided by the programme of work on marine and coastal biodiversity as well as the sustainable use cross-cutting issue. There are a variety of actions which countries can take to fulfill this target. Where fisheries are already managed sustainably and using ecosystem approaches, no further reductions in fishing pressure may be needed, whereas in some areas substantial reductions might be warranted. Similarly actions to ensure all fishing gear is used in ways and places that do not cause serious adverse impacts to the seafloor or non-target species are necessary to achieve this target. Actions that build upon existing initiatives such as the Code of Conduct for Responsible Fishing could help to ensure this. Actions which build from the fisheries targets set during the 2002 World Summit on Sustainable Development and build upon the diverse approaches and tools agreed upon there could also be considered. These include the Ecosystem Approach; the elimination of destructive fishing practices; the establishment of representative networks of marine protected areas; and time/area closures for the protection of nursery grounds.

Possible indicators

- Trends in proportion of depleted target and bycatch species with recovery plans
- Trends in area, frequency, and/or intensity of destructive fishing practices
- Trends in catch per unit effort
- Trends in extinction risk of target and bycatch aquatic species
- Trends in fishing effort capacity
- Trends in population of target and bycatch aquatic species
- Trends in proportion of utilized stocks outside safe biological limits

Resources

- The programmes of work of Marine and Coastal Biodiversity - www.cbd.int/marine/
- CBD Technical Series 27 - www.cbd.int/doc/publications/cbd-ts-14.pdf

