



WWF suggestion for the 2030 Mission and Apex Goal

BRIEFING

Summary

WWF suggests to include as part of the post-2020 global biodiversity framework a **Mission and an Apex Goal** that would be **interconnected and mutually supportive**. The Mission and Apex Goal convey the same message, which is to **not only halt but also reverse the loss of biodiversity by 2030**.

Reversing biodiversity loss: a necessity for the post-2020 global biodiversity framework

Human development and well-being depend on healthy natural systems. Globally, nature provides services worth around US\$ 125 trillion a year¹. However, **nature is declining at a rate unprecedented in human history**, with major impacts for ecosystems and societies around the world. Any delay in addressing the biodiversity crisis will increase the cost of reversing nature decline, and will threaten past development gains. In addition, the collapse of ecosystems will lead to unpredictable tipping points, with even higher societal and economic impacts. **Reversing biodiversity loss is therefore urgent and needed, but it is also doable**: biodiversity can be restored while achieving other socio-economic goals².

Our proposal for the Mission and the Apex Goal

WWF puts forward a 2030 Mission inspired by the view of “bending the curve” of biodiversity loss along the lines of the following proposal:

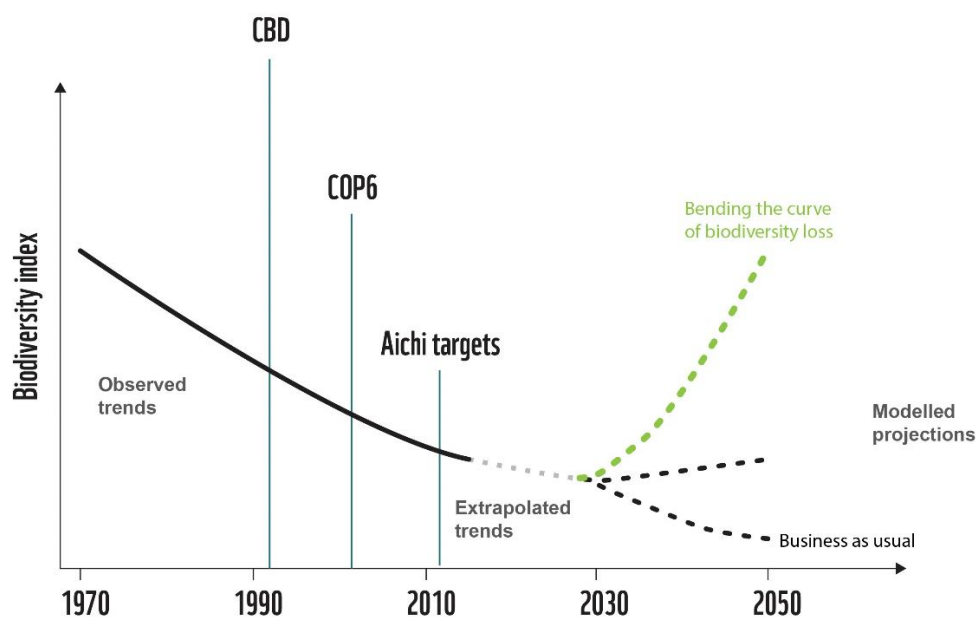
*“By 2030, halt and reverse the unprecedented loss of biodiversity
and put nature on a path to recovery for the benefit of all people and the planet”.*

WWF believes that the 2030 mission should convey the idea that the **new CBD framework will not resign itself to just halt the loss of biodiversity by 2030**, but also to **reverse this trend**, by “bending the curve” of biodiversity loss, as shown in the Living Planet Report 2018³ and outlined below:

¹Living Planet Report 2018, WWF, https://wwf.panda.org/knowledge_hub/all_publications/living_planet_report_2018/

²Global Assessment Report on Biodiversity and Ecosystem Services 2019, IPBES, <https://www.ipbes.net/global-assessment-report-biodiversity-ecosystem-services>

³Living Planet Report 2018, WWF, Chapter 4 authored by Georgina Mace, UCL, Mike Barrett, WWF, Neil Burgess, UNEP-WCMC, Sarah E. Cornell, SRC, Robin Freeman, ZSL, Monique Grooten, WWF, Andy Purvis, Natural History Museum
https://wwf.panda.org/knowledge_hub/all_publications/living_planet_report_2018/



Bending the curve of biodiversity loss by 2030 (redrawn from Mace et al. 2018)

To complement and clarify the Mission, an Apex Goal is needed. This Apex Goal would provide a **simple ‘metric’ to measure overall progress** towards the achievement of the post-2020 global biodiversity framework. The Apex Goal should focus on **defining the point of reversal of the nature loss trend**, in line with the Mission and the view of “bending the curve” of biodiversity loss.

This briefing provides suggestions on the Mission and the Apex Goal, but does not address the targets and indicators, which are crucial and should also form part of the post-2020 global biodiversity framework. They will be considered in a separate briefing.

The Mission and the Apex Goal: two elements of a single unit

The **2030 Mission and Apex Goal should be integrated and mutually supportive**. They should both focus on the **necessity to halt and reverse biodiversity loss by 2030**. The Mission should operate as a **‘guiding light’** for the post-2020 global biodiversity framework, while the Apex Goal should work as a **measurement** to quantify progress towards the achievement of the framework. While the Mission and the Apex Goal have different functions, they should be presented as **interconnected and complementary**. The table below details the roles and characteristics of both elements.

Mission: a ‘guiding light’ for the post-2020 global biodiversity post-2020 framework	Apex Goal: a ‘metric’ to measure overall progress
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Short, clear, easy to communicate • Inspiring⁴ • Clear milestone towards the CBD 2050 Vision • Should reflect the three objectives of the Convention • Should provide a good umbrella for the targets and indicators of the framework 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Often compared to the 1.5°C target of the UNFCCC Paris Agreement⁵ • A simple “metric” to measure overall progress towards bending the curve • Measurable and preferably SMART • Science based

The Mission, a ‘guiding light’ for the post-2020 global biodiversity framework

“By 2030, halt and reverse the unprecedented loss of biodiversity and put nature on a path to recovery for the benefit of all people and the planet”. This proposal is for several reasons an appropriate option for the Mission.

⁴ CBD/COP/DEC/14/34 mentions “An inspirational and motivating 2030 mission as a stepping stone towards the 2050 Vision”

⁵ UNFCCC Paris Agreement, article 2, para. 1 a) “Holding the increase in the global average temperature to well below 2°C above pre-industrial levels and pursuing efforts to limit the temperature increase to 1.5°C above pre-industrial levels”

1/ It is clear and easy to communicate

The language of the proposal is clear and the general public can easily grasp the idea of reversing the loss of biodiversity.

2/ It is inspiring

Political momentum and public mobilization are needed to address the biodiversity crisis. The best way to spark and sustain this impetus is to put forward a proposal that is ambitious **and goes a step further than previous plans**. The 2011-2020 Strategic Plan's mission was limited to halting the loss of biodiversity by 2020. Just reiterating this approach would lack ambition while failing to recognize the urgency of the biodiversity crisis.

3/ It is a clear step towards the 2050 Vision

The intention of the 10-year strategic frameworks is to take steps that build on each other towards the CBD's 2050 Vision that states: *"By 2050, biodiversity is valued, conserved, restored and wisely used, maintaining ecosystem services, sustaining a healthy planet and delivering benefits essential for all people"*. The **2020 mission** from the 2011-2020 Strategic Plan was to **halt biodiversity loss** and this mission is unlikely to be achieved by 2020. With the continuing decline of biodiversity, the logical and necessary direction of travel for the new framework should be to not only halt, but also reverse the trend of biodiversity loss. Parties and stakeholders should not resign themselves to just manage the continued decline of biodiversity until it comes to a stop.

4/ It reflects the three objectives of the Convention

The three objectives of the Convention of Biological Diversity are 1) conservation of biological diversity, 2) sustainable use of biological diversity and 3) fair and equitable sharing of benefits arising from the utilization of genetic resources.

The figure below highlights how the proposal for the 2030 mission **relates to all three objectives** of the Convention:



5/ It provides a suitable umbrella for the framework's targets and indicators

The Mission describes where we want to be in 2030. The targets and related indicators of the post-2020 global biodiversity framework will set out the actions that will lead to reversing the loss of biodiversity, including:

- **Zero natural habitat loss and zero human induced extinctions of species;**
- **Halving the negative footprint of production and consumption;**
- **Ensuring that access to and benefits from biodiversity are sustained and shared fairly and equitably.**

The Apex Goal, a 'metric' to measure overall progress

The Apex Goal should focus on **defining the point of reversal of the nature loss trend by 2030**. This proposal is for several reasons an appropriate option for the Apex Goal and should be understood as a complement to the Mission.

1/ It is in several aspects comparable with the 1.5°C target

Several actions need to be taken in parallel to achieve the 1.5°C target – from a rapid and fair transition to clean energy to turning vast amounts of nature from carbon sources into carbon sinks and substantially reforming our food system, for example. Similarly, to reverse the trend of biodiversity loss, several transformative actions need to be taken in parallel – from protecting and restoring nature to urgently addressing the drivers of biodiversity loss and reducing the global footprint of our consumption and production. The **temperature target is practical and operational**, as it can be translated into quantified actions for governments and economic sectors. The Apex Goal for the post-2020 framework should play the same role.

2/ Indicators exist to measure progress towards bending the curve

A few key indicators aggregated together can show whether the loss of biodiversity has been halted and whether the trend has been reversed. They also determine clearly at which point that 'reversal' will be achieved, as the trend will be flipping from a downward to an upward trend. The suggested mission/apex goal can be tracked through three indicators measuring:

1. The **loss of diversity** through, for example, the Red List Index (RLI)
2. The **increase in abundance** through, for example, the Living Planet Index (LPI)
3. The **increase in extend and quality of habitat** through, for example, the Biodiversity Intactness Index (BII) or the Species Habitat Index (SHI)

3/ It is SMART

Simple	Straightforward to explain as it relates to the view of "bending the curve".
Measurable	Through the three indicators outlined above.
Achievable	The CBD has already established that it is still feasible to achieve the 2050 vision, including restoring biodiversity, provided transformative action is taken urgently. Further, the 'bending the curve initiative' (see below) has been modelling pathways that will be published soon to provide additional evidence.
Relevant	Is attached to a Mission that touches on the three objectives of the CBD and provides a pertinent umbrella for the different types of actions that can be outlined in the targets and indicators.
Timebound	2030 is a clear timeline.

4/ It is science-based

The view of "bending the curve" presented in WWF's 2018 *Living Planet Report* is based on peer reviewed scientific publications⁶ and the initial outcomes of the **research initiative *Bending the Curve of Biodiversity Loss*** – a consortium of almost 40 universities, conservation organizations and intergovernmental organizations⁷. The concept has since been taken up successfully by the wider scientific community and was presented, among other opportunities, at the Trondheim Biodiversity Conference in July 2019.

Scientific backing for "bending the curve" might not match the broad support the 1.5°C target enjoys nowadays. However, let's not forget that the 1.5°C target had been explored by experts for more than a decade in the run up to the Paris Climate COP. Those involved in the conversations around the long-term objectives of the Paris Agreement will recall that the **temperature goal was also not the only 'kid on the block'** at that time. Its scientific foundations were **hotly debated**, not least because the 2°C /1.5°C mark itself was an arbitrary and political decision. Nonetheless, it gained traction because Parties and stakeholders lined up behind it and understood the value of a common measure to galvanize action across sectors and stakeholders.

This experience shows that it is **important not to make perfect the enemy of good**. Sometimes it is preferable to choose a goal that is good enough and then move on to translate it into concrete action on the ground. Waiting for the perfect, undisputable and solid goal poses a major risk: missing the critical window of opportunity to catalyze the level of action needed to reverse the catastrophic loss of biodiversity.

We are the first generation that has a clear picture of the global value of nature and the enormous impact we have on it.

We may also be the last that can act to reverse the loss of biodiversity.

2020 will be a decisive moment in history.

For further information

Bernadette Fischler

WWF UK

bfischler@wwf.org.uk



Why we are here

To stop the degradation of the planet's natural environment and to build a future in which humans live in harmony with nature.

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