

Review of the document on the draft monitoring framework for the post-2020 global biodiversity framework

Disclaimer

The comments provided by Eurostat/ European Commission on the draft monitoring framework and supporting information documents do neither represent nor prejudice the EU positions on goals, targets and indicators that will be expressed at the third meeting of the open-ended working group and by no means, indicate any agreement on what is currently included in the draft monitoring framework.”

This document contains the comments by Eurostat the statistical office of the European Union in reply to the invitation letter that Stefan Schweinfest, Director of UNSD, sent on 7 July 2020 to all statistical organisations globally to participate in the consultation.

The comments provided here are therefore purely from a statistical, technical perspective and complement the comments by the Directorate General Environment of the European Commission that coordinated the reply from the EU.

COMMENTS

Review comments on the draft monitoring framework for the post-2020 global biodiversity framework	
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<i>General Comments</i>	
Why goals and targets?	
Even so no comments on goals and targets are sought during this consultation, it is rather difficult to work with these two concepts and the additional 2030 milestones and understand their roles when reviewing the indicator framework. It would be therefore useful to provide more context on why we have goals and targets?	
Aim for a limited set	
The goals, milestones and targets set out in this document aim to cover all possible aspects of biodiversity, its protection and restoration in a comprehensive way. However, as a consequence the number of monitoring components and elements both for the goals and the targets is fairly high and requires many indicators to monitor. This may results in a relatively high number of indicators where it is doubtful that data will become available in the near future and on a regular basis.	

Eurostat therefore suggests that the final number of monitoring components and indicators should be much lower than in this proposal, with one headline indicators for each goal and target. Each monitoring element should only have one suitable indicator that . (see also comments on the selection process in the indicators-comments-document).

Show policy relevance

For the next version of the indicator list, it would be useful to better understand the relevance of the component and its indicators and the potential for synergies if you could link the components in column A to international conventions, agreements, or other policy documents where applicable

Full definition of all proposed indicators is essential for next review

The indicators are not explained in detail. From their wording a larger number of indicators (e.g. biodiversity habitat index, species habitat index) do not allow to assess what they measure and how complex an operational indicator would be. A definition document is therefore needed to better assess the feasibility of these indicators. Likewise the many missing indicators somewhat make the review difficult.

Include links to data sources

For the next version of the document, for existing indicators links to data/charts/metadata could be added so that it is easier to assess the fitness for purpose of the indicator from a data management perspective.

Strengthen alignment of goals/targets with monitoring elements and indicators

- The unit of measurement of the goals/targets should be reflected in the units of measure of the indicators. As an example if goal A aims to increase the area, connectivity and integrity of ecosystems, there should be one indicator that measures extent of (all) ecosystems, one indicator that measures connectivity/fragmentation and one that measures integrity. The current wording of the indicators does not always allow making this direct connection or the proposed indicators might miss out one of the aspects of a goal/target and their components.
- Introduce summary indicators at the component (Column A) or even Goal/Target level e.g. an indicator that measures the extent of all ecosystems. The aggregation might be easily done technically but it would be still important to have this reflected in the design of the set also for communication purposes.
- In the final set each monitoring element should only have one indicator, this would also help limiting the size of the set.
- It is sometimes difficult to assess how the monitoring elements in Column B will contribute to assessing if a Goal, Target or 2030 milestone has been achieved. As an example, Goal A reads: The area, connectivity and integrity of natural ecosystems increased by at least [5%]. Column C has the different monitoring elements but it is not clear if each of them should increase by 5% or if this values holds for all ecosystems as a whole. Eurostat suggests that all monitoring elements should be quantified in the final set.

Improve information in column D

The heading reads: “Period of availability of baseline data and frequency of updates”, however:

- First, it appears that the term “baseline data” is not used here correctly (e.g. for indicators “Trends in area of forest ecosystems” it is indicated as “1990-2015” – is this really the baseline against which progress is going to be assessed? How would this be done?
- Second, information on the frequency is often missing in column D.

Information in column D should be completed for the next review so that the usefulness and use of all indicators can be assessed. In addition, it should be clarified whether continuation of data collection in the future is assured – e.g. for indicator “Trends in mangrove extent” column D reads “1996-2016” – how should this be understood? Annual data for 1996 - 2016? Data every ten years? Did data collection end in 2016?

Specifically for Goals A and Goal B, many of the proposed monitoring elements could be monitored with indicators developed from Natural Capital Accounting. They should be designed in line with the SEEA-EEA standard.

For target A.2, from their wording many of the suggested indicators seem not fully adequate to capture the monitoring element ‘Fragmentation’ of ecosystems.

Specific Comments				
Table	Page	Column letter	Row number	Comment
1	2	B	1-14	The wording of the listed ecosystems should be based on an international standard.
1	2	C	2	A further disaggregation by managed and natural forests could be useful to assess the impact on biodiversity. In general measuring ecosystems condition is equally important as area.
1	2	C	16	At EU level only the Farmland Bird Index exists: http://appsso.eurostat.ec.europa.eu/nui/show.do?dataset=env_bio2&lang=en
1	2	D	12	Indicators with only one data point and with the most recent data older than 5 years should be dropped from the final indicator framework.
1	6	C.2	74-76	Possibly an indicator on filed or granted patent applications using genetic diversity could be added?
1	5	C	51, 56, 58	Could Number of certified forest areas be replaced by size of forest area?
2	12	C	48	Could Number of certified forest areas be replaced by size of forest area?
2	19	A		T8.2 Do we need a monitoring element on the risk from wild species to human health (Corona virus outbreak on animal markets)?
2	20	C	118	SDG 2.4.1 no data at EU level except area under organic farming
2	26	C	158	Possible indicator: Number of countries that have put in place natural capital accounting adopting the SEEA-EEA standard.
2	21	C		Target 10 alternative indicators could be developed from ecosystem accounts implementing the SEEA-EEA standard showing the providers and users of these ecosystem services.

Comments should be sent by e-mail to secretariat@cbd.int no later than 25 July 2020.