**Submission from UNESCO to Notification 2019/108 from the Executive Secretary of the Secretariat of the Convention of Biological Diversity: comments and inputs on baseline, indicators and targets for post 2020.**

**31 January 2020**

Reference is made to notification No. 2019/108. It included the request from the Executive Secretary to provide written on views on possible targets, indicators and baselines related to the drivers of biodiversity loss, as well as peer review comments on the document "Indicators for global and national biodiversity targets - Experience and indicator resources for development of the post-2020 global biodiversity framework". UNESCO welcomes the opportunity to comment on these documents.

Challenges related to climate change, biodiversity loss, nature deterioration and achieving a good quality of life for all **are interconnected** and need to be **addressed synergistically**, from local to global levels. The adoption of the Post-2020 Global Biodiversity Framework presents a unique opportunity for the Governments of the World to achieve the transformative change required to halt the loss of biodiversity. UNESCO considers that without an ambitious global agenda to address biodiversity loss and climate change, including restoration of ecosystems it will not be possible to achieve the Sustainable Development Goals. UNESCO remains committed to support Member States to accelerate the achievement of the SDG’s of Agenda 2030 and leaving no one behind.

UNESCO as a UN partner of IPBES also wishes to highlight the need for the post 2020 process to address the direct and indirect drivers of biodiversity loss as well as multiple values of nature and its benefits as described in the global assessment report on biodiversity and ecosystem services and therefore to include specific indicators to measure how these are addressed.

UNESCO’s interdisciplinary mandate in the natural and social sciences, culture, education and communication makes it uniquely able to explore the diverse ways in which nature and culture are mutually reinforcing and interlinked. Indigenous, local and traditional knowledge, oral traditions, spirituality, rituals and practices, accumulated and renewed across generations, play an important role, alongside scientific knowledge and policies, in sustaining, regenerating, conserving and governing biodiversity. UNESCO’s role in the IPBES assessments, bringing together scientists and indigenous knowledge holders, has shown the benefit of a ‘best available knowledge’ approach. Post-2020 provides an opportunity for improved synergies and coproduction of knowledge between diverse experts and custodians of biodiversity, landscapes and seascapes. Biodiversity is also an invaluable source of cultural diversity, intangible cultural heritage, creativity and innovation, crucial to sustainable development for human dignity and wellbeing. Through its programmes and culture conventions, UNESCO recognizes the diverse cultural values of biodiversity, which underlie human interactions with nature and shape decision-making about conservation strategies and sustainable use and management practices.

As the only UN agency with a specific mandate in the field of culture, UNESCO carries this responsibility notably through its six Culture Conventions. The World Heritage Convention recognizes, from the outset, the linkages between nature and culture, and is also one of the eight biodiversity-related conventions.

The multiple values of biodiversity, including cultural and spiritual values, need to be further recognized, documented and integrated into conservation and management both at policy and on-the-ground levels. Building on the SCBD-UNESCO Joint Programme on the Links between Biological and Cultural Diversity (2010-2020), a better recognition of these links and connections between biodiversity and cultural diversity should also be translated in school curricula, teacher education, non-formal education programmes as well as in global awareness raising. Formal and non-formal education should be mobilized to provide the knowledge, awareness and action that are needed for sustainable development and the protection of biodiversity. Education and learning are, indeed, crucial to achieve the major global transformation towards sustainable ways of life mindful of biodiversity. Recent UN General Assembly Resolutions 72/222 and 74/233 reaffirmed UNESCO’s role as the lead UN agency on Education for Sustainable Development (ESD) and calls ESD “an integral element of the Sustainable Development Goal (SDG) on quality education and a key enabler of all the other Sustainable Development Goals”.

UNESCO acknowledges that culture and nature are intertwined, interconnected and co-productive and that there is a diversity of possible transformational pathways and sustainable solutions as demonstrated in UNESCO’s unique world networks of sites such as the World Network of Biosphere Reserves, the World Heritage sites and the UNESCO global Geoparks networks. The UNESCO designated sites builds on more than 50 years’ experience from strict protection to integrated management of connected landscapes and seascapes.. Lessons and practices shall be shared to inspire and reconnect beyond the boundaries of protected areas to reach out all sectors of societies that need to play their role in the conservation and sustainable use of biodiversity, including youth. In particular, being at the cross road of social and biological sciences , UNESCO’s the Man and the Biosphere (MAB) programme and its World network of Biosphere reserves is definitely referring to landscape and seascapes as socio-ecosystems, putting the social part at the heart of the issues to be addressed.

UNESCO also reiterates that the post 2020 process should **be ambitious**: business as usual is not an option as clearly evidenced by the global biodiversity assessment as well as the call for actions from the Youth in the planet. With this regards, UNESCO would like to emphasise that while protected areas are important, biodiversity must be protected also outside strictly protected areas. UNESCO want to underline that the current trend of biodivesrity loss and change on land tenure will increase the area of secondary ecosystems that are also rich in biodiversity. It is therefore extremely important to know what is happening outside protected areas and how we can improve biodiversity in areas, which have already been used by human activities. UNESCO stressed the need to restore corridors between ecosystems like forests or wetlands since fragmentation of ecosystems is a major issue to biodiversity conservation.

For ecosystem restoration the source for seeds is an issue. Biosphere reserves including strictly protected areas could be play a key role of providers of genetic resources to restore degraded ecosystems in the other connected spaces of the biosphere reserve (buffer zone and transition area).

UNESCO supports that the post-2020 process should also focus on **stewardship and values** to guide individuals towards respect for nature and humanity, solidarity and intergenerational responsibility, by promoting the principles of the [*Earth Charter*](http://earthcharter.org/virtual-library2/the-earth-charter-text/)[[1]](#footnote-1). It defines sustainability as *"environmental practices that value and sustain biodiversity and life-supporting ecological processes”,* and the ideals of the UNESCO [*Declaration on the responsibilities of the present generations towards future generations*](http://unesdoc.unesco.org/images/0011/001108/110827eb.pdf).

As regard to Water Targets and suggested indicators, the International Hydrological Programme (IHP) of UNESCO has contributed to the “UN-WATER Technical Advice on Freshwater-Biodiversity Linkages *draft 17 January 2020*” (*as response to the zero-draft document of 6 January 2020 from the Open-Ended Working Group on the Post 2020 Global Biodiversity Framework*).

In particular as regards the following targets:

Ecohydrology could give a strong contribution to the following[[2]](#footnote-2):

* 2.2.4 Target 4: Pollution
	+ B: Change in the trends of nitrogen waste
	+ C: Suggested indicators (N use efficiency, N+Phosphate fertilizers, etc.)
* 2.2.7 Target 9: Nature-based solution for clean water (page 10)
	+ B: Change in the number of people with access to sufficient amounts of quality freshwater
	+ C: the 3 indicators proposed/revised

Therefore, in addition to edits made in the addendum on specific indicators (see addendum edited table attached), UNESCO’s suggests to add the following 4 targets and associated indicators to ensure transformational pathways and sustainable actions are available to Member states and has a proposal to complement the Target on protection. Finally, UNESCO reiterates the need and importance for the targets and indicators to be science based.

* **Target on Education and lifelong learning**

UNESCO has been promoting educational responses to environmental issues through Education for Sustainable Development (ESD), which emphasizes a holistic approach on how environmental issues need to be addressed in connection with the economic and social pillars of sustainable development to achieve a fundamental transformation.

Possible indicators:

Integration of knowledge, skills, values and attitudes that support sustainable development and biodiversity protection into formal and non-formal education at all levels (policies, curricula, teacher training, assessment) (baseline provided through UNESCO’s reporting on SDG indicators 4.7.1, 12.8.1 and 13.3.1)

Outreach to all sectors of society, through communication and awareness raising, on the importance of biodiversity protection

The interdependence and interlinkages between biological, cultural and linguistic diversity, for human well-being and environmental sustainability

The 2003 Convention’s [Overall Results Framework](https://ich.unesco.org/doc/src/41571-EN.pdf) includes an indicator on the integration of intangible cultural heritage into primary and secondary education: “Assessment factor 5.4: Educational programmes teach about the protection of natural and cultural spaces and places of memory whose existence is necessary for expressing intangible cultural heritage.”

Example of positive transformation:

During the period 2013-2015, a set of 9 ESD *‘United for Biodiversity’* pilot projects were undertaken in the context of UNESCO sites in Cambodia, Chile, Costa Rica, Democratic Republic of Congo, Ethiopia, India, Indonesia, Oman and Tanzania. Many of which are still running and being multiplied. These pilots resulted in reaching some 5,600 students, 620 teachers and educators, 80 schools (from primary to vocational high schools) and 12 local communities.

The 2018 Global Action Programme (GAP) on ESD survey (2015–2018)[[3]](#footnote-3) revealed that the GAP Key Partners supported local authorities to establish 2,390 ESD activities or programmes and 5,685 networks/civil society organizations to conduct ESD activities in 2015 to 2018. In addition, over the same period, UNESCO and partners jointly ran ESD activities that resulted in reaching 164 local authorities and communities in 81 countries.

Examples of future positive action can be collected from country initiatives for UNESCO’s [global framework on Education for Sustainable Development (ESD for 2030) (2020-2030)](https://unesdoc.unesco.org/ark%3A/48223/pf0000370215)[[4]](#footnote-4).

* **Target on strengthening links between nature, people and culture**

UNESCO’s unique networks of sites such as the World Network of Biosphere Reserves, the World Heritage sites and the UNESCO global Geoparks network, as well as the 2003 Convention for the Safeguarding of the Intangible Cultural Heritage, are management tools that strengthen these links between nature and culture.

Furthermore, being at the cross road of social and ecological sciences, UNESCO’s Man and the Biosphere (MAB) programme and its World Network of Biosphere Reserves are landscape and seascapes models of socio-ecological systems, putting the social (including cultural) part at the heart of the issues to be addressed and solutions to be provided.

UNESCO-designated sites can also provide important lessons learnt and experiences which can support the development of capacities for the implementation of the post-2020 global biodiversity framework, while directly contributing to materialize the commitments expressed in *the Sharm El-Sheikh Declaration on Nature and Culture* (CBD/COP/14/INF/46).

Possible indicators:

* To record, document, protect and transmit traditional languages, including languages of indigenous peoples, as a vehicle of intangible cultural heritage and related knowledge, practices and skills with a focus on threatened languages including in UNESCO designated sites;
* Participation of indigenous peoples and local communities in conservation and management of the World Heritage sites, biosphere reserves could be used as an indicator to measure cultural/spiritual/heritage values of biodiversity as well as nature’s contribution to people (e.g. local people conserve mangrove forests because they protect them from natural disasters), to better understand linkages between people, culture and nature.
* Policies and/or legal and administrative measures for environmental sustainability integrate intangible cultural heritage and its safeguarding. (periodic reports from 2003 Convention, Assessment factor 13.2)
* Reconnect youth with nature through multiple values and in UNESCO designated sites;
* Number and/or total area of biosphere reserves that measures the number/increase of socio-ecological systems under monitored integrated management plan taking into account biological, cultural and social issues (reference nomination forms and periodic review forms).

Example of positive transformation:

* Within 7 years, the excellence process (2013-2020) implemented in the World Network of Biosphere Reserves (in 2013, there were 270 sites not meeting the criteria out of 701 sites in 124 countries in early 2020) supported the transformation and the upgrade of the management and implementation plan as well as governance of 250 sites in 84 countries.
* **Target on co-production of knowledge**

The post-2020 Global Biodiversity Framework has the opportunity to include the mobilisation of diverse knowledge systems to contribute to the targets and increased urgency of effective conservation and sustainable use. The IPBES process and outcomes have shown the benefit of mobilising indigenous and local knowledge systems to develop holistic and multi-faceted approaches to biodiversity and ecosystems conservation, sustainable use and restoration. This includes the knowledge, practices and skills of indigenous peoples, as well as the use of new technologies, participatory research and citizen science by local communities. Transformational change involves generating new ways of working and new forms of cooperation and coproduction of knowledge. Greater synergy is possible between the old Aichi Targets 18 and 19.

UNESCO proposes that draft post-2020 target 18 could be enhanced to read:

Promote education and the generation, coproduction, sharing and use of knowledge relating to biodiversity, in the case of the indigenous, local and traditional knowledge, innovations and practices of indigenous peoples and local communities with their free, prior and informed consent, ensuring by 2030 that all decision makers have access to reliable and up-to-date information for the effective management of biodiversity.

Potential indicators

* Number of research, monitoring and site-management initiatives including coproduction of knowledge on biodiversity, adaptation and / or ecosytsems by indigenous peoples or local communities in cooperation with scientists (natural and social);
* Numbers of protected areas and OECM’s demonstrating coproduction of management plans, research, monitoring, protected areas management effectiveness reporting and decision making (including in UNESCO designated sites);
* Number of NBSAPs or National Adaptation Plans demonstrating effective coproduction and / or complementarity of knowledge between scientists, indigenous peoples or local communities.
* **Target on ocean (and see separate IOC contribution)**

The UN Decade of Ocean Science for Sustainable Development is currently in the final year of its preparation phase. IOC/UNESCO is coordinating development of an Implementation Plan including a Science Action Plan that aims to galvanize a wide range of ocean stakeholders and catalyze transformative change in marine and oceanic scientific research and knowledge generation over the next ten years. **A leitmotif of the Decade is that we cannot manage what we do not measure.** Using the Decade as a common framework, we would therefore greatly welcome commitments from parties to the CBD and other actors to invest in research to improve knowledge, tools and capacity for monitoring and use of global marine and oceanic biodiversity data in the context of the post-2020 global biodiversity framework, Agenda 2030 and other global processes.

* **Comments as regards Target to “Protect sites of particular importance for biodiversity through protected areas and other effective area-based conservation measures, by 2030 covering at least [60%] of such sites and at least [30%] of land and sea areas with at least [10%] under strict protection. “**

UNESCO suggests complementing it with a target on sharing and supporting the application of sustainable use practices and lessons learnt from protected sites and OECM to the remaining % (70 %) of Earth that is not under protection and conservation measures. In addition, it is important to include the aspect of the quality of the management of sites.

**Indicators:**

% of sustainable use practices in UNESCO designated sites implemented beyond their boundaries by 2030 ( and 100 % elsewhere by 2050).

Trans-national and transboundary cooperation between World Heritage sites, biosphere reserves and similar sites as indicator of connectivity.

Increased number of World Heritage sites that have a positive conservation outlook and effective management (data available through the triannual World Heritage outlook report).

* Comments as regards to Target to “ **Retain and restore freshwater, marine and terrestrial ecosystems, increasing by at least [50%] the land and sea area under comprehensive spatial planning addressing land/sea use change, achieving by 2030 a net increase in area, connectivity and integrity and retaining existing intact areas and wilderness**”.

As regards restoration targets and activities, the source for seeds is an issue. This can be addressed more easily in biosphere reserves . UNESCO designated biosphere reserves could play a role by providing areas where genetic source of biodiversity in core areas can be used to restore degraded ecosystems within the buffer zone and transition area.

**Indicators:**

Number of ha of degraded ecosystems under restoration activities in biosphere reserves.

Number of endangered species successfully used for restoration of ecosystems in biosphere reserves.

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Thank you and we remain available to provide any required additional information or clarification of issues raised in our submission.

1. UNESCO 40C/Resolution 80 (Contribution of the Earth Charter to UNESCO activities) encourages Member States to “take into account the principles and values contained in the Earth Charter in their efforts on Education for Sustainable Development (ESD).” [↑](#footnote-ref-1)
2. There are 24 sites in 18 countries around the globe, which use solutions oriented to address eutrophication, nutrients pollution, water over abstraction, flood mitigation, urban storm water treatment, biodiversity restoration, etc. These examples are shown in the EH web platform ecohydrology-ihp.org [↑](#footnote-ref-2)
3. See *Education for Sustainable Development: Partners in Action (2015-2018)* at https://en.unesco.org/system/files/private\_documents/partners-in-action\_final\_web.pdf [↑](#footnote-ref-3)
4. https://unesdoc.unesco.org/ark:/48223/pf0000370215 [↑](#footnote-ref-4)