



Convention on Biological Diversity

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Biodiversity and health

Framework and methodology for indicators on biodiversity and health**

I. Introduction

1. The present document contains a detailed description of a set of qualitative indicators designed to assess the extent to which biodiversity and health interlinkages are incorporated into national policies, strategies, and planning processes.
2. A total of 17¹ qualitative indicators with predefined response options were developed to measure the extent to which Parties have mainstreamed biodiversity and health interlinkages at the national level. Out of these, 3 (I, II and III) are core indicators, and 14 (IV to XVII) are sector-specific indicators.
3. These indicators can be used in two ways. Separately, each indicator tracks progress for a specific thematic area of the Global Action Plan on Biodiversity and Health (hereinafter the “GAP”).
4. Together, they can be averaged to form a national summary providing an overview of national progress towards the mainstreaming of biodiversity and health interlinkages.

II. Purpose and rationale

5. The indicators were developed to track, on a voluntary basis, national efforts to mainstream biodiversity and health interlinkages across policies, programs and practices with the view that the integration of biodiversity and health considerations is central to achieving the goals and targets of the Framework, in particular its section C. Similarly, these indicators can provide information on the state of development of policy architecture to support the One Health approach.
6. The indicators complement, rather than replace, those of the monitoring framework adopted in decision 15/5. Each indicator provides valuable, targeted information on progress within a particular domain, such as policy and national coordination, land-and-sea use, species management, or climate-related health impacts, among others. However, these individual indicators alone cannot capture the full complexity or cross-sectoral nature of biodiversity and health interlinkages.
7. Using multiple indicators allows for the identification of contrasting trends across areas. The proposed two-level structure combines multiple specific indicators with an aggregate, standardized scoring system. This approach provides several advantages.

* [CBD/COP/17/1/Rev.1](#).

** The present document is being issued without formal editing.

¹ See information document CBD/COP/17/INF/9 for the full list of indicators.

8. First, individual indicators provide granular, domain-specific insights, enabling countries to identify progress and gaps within particular sectors or thematic areas (e.g. disease surveillance, ecosystem integrity, or pollution exposure), useful for technical experts and to support targeted interventions. The summary score, in turn, synthesizes information from multiple domains, enabling Parties to assess overall progress in a way that reflects the integrated, cross-cutting nature of biodiversity and health interlinkages. It also provides policymakers with a clear, high-level measure of national mainstreaming progress that can inform strategic planning, resource allocation, and cross-sectoral coordination.
9. Second, the use of a standardized scoring system enhances comparability and consistency across Parties. While individual indicators may vary in data availability, methodological complexity, or sectoral relevance, the aggregated score provides a uniform metric that can be applied across diverse national contexts. This supports equitable reporting and facilitates global assessments.
10. Third, this combined approach helps reduce the reporting burden by allowing Parties to report on individual indicators according to their capacities and data availability, while the aggregation mechanism enables available information to contribute to an overall assessment. This flexibility is particularly important for Parties with limited resources or fragmented monitoring systems. The indicators have been designed to accommodate situations where the questions are not relevant or cannot be answered due to a lack of relevant data, without decreasing the score for each indicator, therefore adapting to national circumstances.
11. Fourth, this approach was ultimately considered the most feasible given the information available from submissions and expert consultations as well as the resources available for this work. Many proposed indicators that lacked publicly accessible data and metadata, methodological transparency, and had not undergone peer-reviewed validation. Other were conceptually misaligned with the intended focal areas, overly narrow in scope, or operationally infeasible due to irregular, incomplete, or entirely absent data streams, often relying on national reporting mechanisms that do not yet exist or function inconsistently. The broader challenge of insufficient ecological metrics capable of translating biodiversity change into health-related risks or benefits has also been highlighted in the Global Assessment Report on Biodiversity and Ecosystem Services of the Intergovernmental Science-Policy Platform on Biodiversity and Ecosystem Services.²
12. Finally, the GAP spans multiple thematic areas, and the development of a suite of science-based indicators for each area would require additional research, technical work, and resources, beyond those currently available for this task. For example, there is no established suite of methodologies capturing, at a global scale, the contribution of biodiversity to mental health and well-being, the health impacts of ecosystem degradation, integrated One Health governance and cross-sectoral coordination mechanisms, and the role of biodiversity in reducing risks associated with zoonotic disease emergence and antimicrobial resistance. Most datasets, when available, remain fragmented across regions and sectors, lack global comparability, or do not yet support consistent time-series analysis. Developing entirely new indicators was considered premature, as the foundational data systems and cross-sectoral coordination mechanisms are still being established. Significant uncertainties remain, including the lack of agreed agreement for hosting and publishing indicators metadata, and limited visibility into ongoing data-collection efforts. Many proposals also lack peer-reviewed methodological support, evidence of global applicability, or agreement on the spatial or temporal resolution at which updates should occur. Taken together, these gaps underscore that the necessary scientific, technical, and institutional conditions for creating new indicators are not yet in place.
13. Giving these limitations, it remains unclear whether the current scientific state of the art can yet support robust indicator development, or whether future research is needed. Some questions in

² IPBES. Global assessment report on biodiversity and ecosystem services. E. S. Brondizio, E.S., Settele, J., Díaz, S., and Ngo, H.T. (eds). IPBES Secretariat, Bonn, Germany; 2019. doi: 10.5281/zenodo.3831673

the suggested indicators attempt to capture the extent to which Parties encourage and facilitate this research, helping to build the robust basis for future science-based indicators.

14. By focusing on policy and institutional capacity, the proposed indicators enable Parties to understand their progress in integrating biodiversity and health linkages and strengthening their ability to use, mobilize, and further develop relevant information across sectors and different levels of government.

III. Definition

15. Key aspects of the indicators are the following:

(a) Components measured: This set of indicators measures the extent to which Parties are mainstreaming biodiversity and health interlinkages into the implementation of the KMGBF, with progress assessed against the voluntary actions set out in the GAP;

(b) Method: The indicators are based on a progress measurement tool, as a questionnaire, composed of multiple-choice questions. Responses are aggregated through three “Core indicators for biodiversity and health mainstreaming at a national level” (corresponding to section III.A of the GAP) and fourteen “Sector-specific indicators of the mainstreaming of biodiversity and health across the KMGBF” (corresponding to section III.B of the GAP). These indicators are then averaged into a “National summary score” to provide a national average. Indicators are mapped to thematic categories to facilitate disaggregated reporting, allowing them to functionally be used as indicators of the GAP. The indicators use a two-tier weighting system to guide reporting efforts towards high-value items. The system reflects a conceptual hierarchy: Tier 1 questions measure the presence of enabling conditions that make further progress possible, while Tier 2 questions describe the depth, quality, or specific modalities of that progress. If Tier 1 conditions are absent, Tier 2 elements are unlikely to be meaningful or feasible. Therefore, assigning greater weight to Tier 1 questions ensures that the indicator reflects the most critical drivers of change rather than the more detailed or context-specific aspects of implementation.

(c) Alignment with global frameworks: The indicators are suitable for providing information on progress towards paragraph 7 (r) of the KMGBF and implementation of the GAP. The indicators could also be used to support monitoring progress towards One Health frameworks.

(d) Use: The use of these indicators is voluntary. It is intended to serve as a tool that Parties may use to report on the mainstreaming of biodiversity and health interlinkages. The design seeks to reduce the reporting burden by using existing data sources, including, when appropriate, indicators from other multilateral environmental processes. Parties may report using these indicators when reporting on progress towards section C of the KMGBF, on the national reports, or else, through a specific section that could be added to the template for the 8th report if Parties so decide.

(e) Use over time: It is expected that this approach establishes a framework that can be strengthened over time as data availability, technical capacity, and methodologies improve. This could notably be achieved by adapting the list of questions that constitute each indicator.

(f) Data sources: Data sources used by Parties will vary based on national circumstances. Therefore, it is not possible to provide an exhaustive list. Nonetheless, to help Parties in their reporting, the questionnaire identifies some potential sources that Parties may use as appropriate, when responding to the progress measurement tool. Data sources should also consider different knowledge systems and information from indigenous peoples and local communities with their free, prior and informed consent.

16. Parties should use the most relevant and authoritative data sources available to them, with priority given, where possible, to national multi-sectoral sources.

IV. Method and calculation

17. The indicators gather information through a progress measurement tool in the form of a questionnaire with multiple-choice responses, and by the calculation of a national summary score through a scoring instrument. The results are presented as a value that ranges from 0 to 100%, where 0 represents no progress and 100% represents full national implementation of the GAP and therefore progress in the mainstreaming of biodiversity and health linkages. The national summary score is presented in the same way.

18. The progress measurement tool consists of 119 questions (62 Tier 1 questions, 57 Tier 2 questions, as explained in a later paragraph) to assess progress towards the specific thematic categories in both sections III.A and III.B of the GAP. Each question is to be answered via the selection of a category that reflects the level of progress made: *(a) Fully; (b) Partially; (c) Under development; (d) No; (e) Not applicable; (d) No relevant data.* (see details about each potential answer under “computation” below)

19. In light of the cross-cutting nature of the interlinkages between biodiversity and health, the questionnaire is meant to be completed with input from several sectors³, indigenous peoples and local communities and stakeholders as relevant, and based on national circumstances, which is also in line with a whole-of-government and whole-of-society approach and with the One Health approach. It is suggested that the compilation be embedded in the national reporting cycle under the Convention.

20. Additionally, Parties may wish to circulate the questionnaire in advance to relevant ministries, technical experts, indigenous peoples and local communities, women and youth networks, among others, for input and review; convene meetings or consultations to discuss responses and ensure consistency among departments, document areas where information is incomplete or uncertain, and retain supporting documents and references that may assist in future reporting or updates.

21. Where data is scarce and/or unevenly distributed across sites and sectors, Parties are encouraged to use the best available information, including national and subnational assessments, programme reports, policy documents, expert knowledge and other relevant sources. The absence of comprehensive nationwide biodiversity data should not preclude reporting where evidence exists to assess the implementation of relevant biodiversity and health policies, actions or frameworks. Where information is incomplete, Parties should document the limitations and base their assessment on the evidence available. Responses are then used to generate a quantitative index for each indicator, as well as a national summary score, through the process detailed in V. For all questions, Parties are encouraged to rely on the "Comments" column to add free-form comments to explain or document the answer. These comments can eventually be gathered and considered through a process with the aim of refining the questionnaire over time.

V. Computation

22. The indicators employ the same Likert scale as indicator 23.CT.2⁴ of the Monitoring Framework, a measurement method widely used in social sciences. The progress measurement tool and scoring instrument contain a four-point scale, with “No” being 0% and “Fully” being 100%. Questions identified as “Not applicable” or “No relevant data” are not used in scoring.

³ For instance: agriculture, forestry, fisheries, aquaculture, tourism, health, infrastructure, energy and mining, manufacturing, processing and finance, in line with previous Conference of the Parties decisions on mainstreaming

⁴ <https://gbf-indicators.org/metadata/other/23-1-C>

23. Indicator 23.CT.2 uses question-specific definitions of each point on the scale. Given the number of questions currently considered for these indicators, this was unfeasible, and the criteria were harmonized so that the categories for scoring are defined as:

(a) **Fully (score of 100%):** Select this option if the activity is fully implemented. Depending on the context, it should be evident and occur at different levels. For example, it may involve participation or input from multiple sectors and actors; have broad coverage (e.g. nationwide or spanning more than one sector or area); be formalized and likely to continue over time; have a dedicated budget allocation; and be verifiable or easily identifiable. When this score is selected, Parties should provide additional comments in the “Means of verification” column that serve as evidence of progress or achievement;

(b) **Partially (score of 66.67%):** Select this option if the activity is implemented in its entirety but meets some, but not all, of the parameters. For example, it may: involve only a limited number of sectors or actors; cover a narrower scope (e.g. local level, single sector, or specific area); be informal or temporary, with limited likelihood of continuation; have minimal or no dedicated budget allocation; be more difficult to verify or only partially documented;

(c) **Under development (score of 33.33%):** Select this option if the activity is in progress but has not been implemented in its entirety. For example, it may be in the planning or early implementation phase; involve initial consultations or limited participation from sectors and actors; have a draft framework, pilot, or strategy in place but not fully formalized; have potential funding identified, though not yet allocated or operational; show early evidence or commitments, but with limited concrete results so far. In this case, the action may (i) indicate intent and movement toward implementation, but it is not yet fully operational or sustained; (ii) demonstrate progress but falls short of meeting the full set of parameters and being fully implemented. Which parameters apply will depend on the question asked. These parameters should be interpreted in the context of each specific question. Not all of them will apply in every case, but some may be particularly relevant depending on the question asked. This category differs from “Partially” in that it denotes work towards the mainstreaming of biodiversity and health that is ongoing and not currently part of standard procedures;

(d) **No (score of 0%):** Select this option if no activity has been taken. When work to implement an action is planned but has not been initiated, use this answer rather than “Under development”;

(e) **No relevant data:** Select this option if the question cannot be answered due to a lack of reliable data to support an answer at the national level; selecting this option has no impact on the score and removes the question from scoring. The use of the “No relevant data” answer can help Parties identify data gaps at the national or global scale;

(f) **Not applicable:** Select this option if the question is not relevant to national circumstances; selecting this option has no impact on the score and removes the question from scoring. The use of “Not Applicable” can help Parties account for national and/or regional differences.

24. To facilitate reporting, questions are classified into two tiers, whose impact on the score calculation is detailed below. When reporting capacities are limited, Parties are encouraged to prioritize indicators I, II, and III. These core indicators have been designed to provide an overview of potential progress towards overarching actions that serve as steppingstones for further progress in mainstreaming biodiversity and health linkages. Reporting on these indicators can be further complemented with the use of sector-specific indicators (IV to XVII). Therefore, countries could opt, according to their capacities, to use only indicators I, II and III, the whole set of seventeen indicators, or thematic indicators (IV to XVII) individually. Moreover, if reporting capacities prevent answering all the questions, reporting should focus on Tier 1 questions, as they measure progress on actions that enable further progress on the GAP, as opposed to Tier 2 questions that capture the nuance of progress made on these actions.

25. The two steps to calculate the indicator score are:

(a) **Step 1.** Assign numerical values to categorical responses. Categorical values for each answer correspond to: (a) Fully = 100%; (b) Partially = 66.67%; (c) Under development = 33.33%; (d) No = 0%. Questions that are scored as “Not applicable” or “No relevant data” are not counted in the index and do not impact the response rate;

(b) **Step 2.** Weight the value of each question according to its Tier. Questions are weighted by their Tier. Tier 1 questions carry a weight of 2, while Tier 2 questions carry a weight of 1.

Tier 1- Foundational questions: These measure essential enabling conditions and foundational processes that act as steppingstones for future action or directly measure the most critical concepts (such as high-level requirements) within a thematic area. *Tier 2 -Granular questions:* These depend on Tier 1 elements, provide finer detail or nuance regarding progress, or focus on more specific sub-domains that presuppose the existence of a Tier 1 condition;

(c) **Step 3.** For each indicator, the reporting sheet of the progress measurement tool will be updated with two values: the indicator score (accounting for the weights of questions), and the response rate (proportion of questions that have been answered by the user). Both the score and the response rate are given as percentages;

(d) **Step 4.** The National summary score, as well as the scores of all indicators, are updated in real time when questions are scored. The national summary score is measured as the weighted average of the indicator scores, where the weights are the response rate of each indicator. This method was chosen to ensure that indicators with lower response rates do not disproportionately affect the national summary score. The questions scored as “Not relevant” and “No relevant data” do not affect the response rate and therefore do not negatively affect the national summary score.

VI. Interpretation

26. The indicators should be interpreted as a measure of the extent to which biodiversity and health considerations are integrated within national policies and strategies, within the context of the thematic categories within the GAP. Positive progress across areas (high score, or alternatively, increasing score when the reporting is conducted several times) indicates the development of enabling conditions necessary for the implementation of integrated biodiversity-health approaches.

27. Parties are encouraged to interpret the indicators and national summary score using the “traffic light” system:⁵

Index smaller than 33%	Further progress needed
Index between 33 and 66%	Moderate progress
Index greater than 66%	Good progress

28. As the indicators aggregate multiple components across the scope of the GAP, opposing trends may offset each other in the overall score. For example, improvements in some areas may hide declines in other areas. To address this, the indicators should be interpreted on their own, and not only through the national summary score. By way of example, two countries (A and B) with national summary scores of 70% are on average making “good progress”. If Country A has lower scores on indicators I, II, and III, but higher scores on all other indicators, this would suggest that good progress is made on specific actions, but hindered by a lack of national capacity; if Country B has equal scores

⁵ Also used for indicator 23.CT.2 for the Gender Plan of Action.

across all indicators, this would suggest that progress is being made at equal levels on both national capacity and specific thematic areas.

29. Reporting based only on answering Tier 1 questions would provide a holistic assessment of both national capacity and progress on specific actions. Adding the reporting for Tier 2 questions allows Parties to identify areas where progress is being made, or where reporting is hindered by lack of relevant data, in a more granular and thematically specific way. Parties are encouraged to specify what their reporting strategies were.
