

## USE OF INDICATORS FOR TRACKING PROGRESS

### ~ Issue Brief ~

#### Background

##### *Use of Indicators for Tracking National and Global Targets*

Indicators are currently used to track progress towards the Aichi Biodiversity Targets at both national and global scales. A number of global scale indicators are used to track the Aichi Targets, as set out in decision XIII/28 (*Indicators for the Strategic Plan for Biodiversity 2011 – 2020 and the Aichi Biodiversity Targets*). This decision includes a list of global indicators, which provide a framework, for assessing progress towards the Aichi Biodiversity Targets at the global level and by Parties, other Governments and international organizations. The list can be seen as a flexible framework for Parties to adapt, as appropriate, according to their national priorities and circumstances. Some of the indicators listed in this Decision can be disaggregated to the national scale, and some use methodologies that can be adapted for national application. The list contained in the COP decision is kept under review, in order to incorporate other relevant indicators, as they become available.

While the use of indicators in national reports has generally increased in the past decade, significant inconsistency in the use of indicators for tracking targets remains, and there is limited alignment with the list of indicators welcomed in decision XIII/28.<sup>1</sup> An analysis<sup>2</sup> of the use of indicators in 5<sup>th</sup> national reports showed a wide range in the number and application of quantifiable, evidence-based indicators for tracking national targets with significant bias towards use of indicators for tracking targets relating to Goals B and C in the Strategic Plan for Biodiversity 2011-2020 with limited coverage for Goals A, D and E. This analysis found that nationally generated indicators are used 11 times more frequently than indicators produced from global sources and only a small proportion of these nationally generated indicators (22%) showing alignment with the indicators found within the abovementioned list. The lack of data coverage<sup>34</sup> (e.g. thematic, temporal and spatial) to ensure reliable production of indicators across all biomes and countries further limits full and effective use of indicators for target tracking. This variable use and limited alignment of indicators has led to:

- Limitations in consistent reporting of target progress constraining the ability to align national and global target tracking and to quantify national progress as a contribution towards global targets;
- Challenges in identifying priority actions needed to address shortfalls in progress towards achieving targets; and,
- Inefficiencies in reporting due to multiple, overlapping efforts and methodologies for tracking and reporting on national and global target progress.

Decision X/2, which adopted the Strategic Plan for Biodiversity 2011-2020, requested Parties to set national targets within the flexible framework of the Aichi Biodiversity Targets. Most Parties have complied with this decision resulting in a large number of national targets adopted, with a wide variation in degree of alignment in scope, specificity and ambition with the Aichi Biodiversity Targets. As is requested in the National Reporting guidance, Parties are reporting progress towards both national targets and global targets. However, the inconsistent alignment of national targets with global targets compound

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<sup>1</sup> <https://www.cbd.int/decisions/cop/?m=cop-13>

<sup>2</sup> Bhatt R et al. (2019) Uneven use of biodiversity indicators in 5th National Reports to the Convention on Biological Diversity. Environmental Conservation page 1 of 7. doi: [10.1017/S0376892919000365](https://doi.org/10.1017/S0376892919000365)

<sup>3</sup> Mihoub J-B, Henle K, Titeux N, Brotons L, Brummitt NA, Schmeller DS: Setting temporal baselines for biodiversity: the limits of available monitoring data for capturing the full impact of anthropogenic pressures. *Sci Rep* 2017, 7:srep 41591.

<sup>4</sup> Pereira HM, Navarro LM, Martins IS: Global biodiversity change: the bad, the good, and the unknown. *Annu Rev Environ Resour* 2012, 37:25-50. 7.

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the difficulties presented by the above-mentioned issues in indicator use, when tracking collective progress to global targets.

At the global level, indicators produced from global sources, including those welcomed in decision XIII/28, are used to track progress towards the Aichi Biodiversity Targets (i.e. in the 5<sup>th</sup> Edition of the *Global Biodiversity Outlook* report) and to track biodiversity status and trends (i.e. for the Intergovernmental Science-Policy Platform on Biodiversity and Ecosystem Services assessments and for tracking progress in some of the Sustainable Development Goals). Many, but not all, of these indicators have global coverage and can be disaggregated to the national level.

*Global Monitoring and Tracking on Target Progress*

At each of its meetings, the Conference of the Parties considers a compilation, synthesis and analysis of data from national reports, NBSAPs and other sources to produce a global scale review of progress in implementation. This has allowed for the mid-term assessment and will allow for a final assessment of the Aichi Biodiversity Targets. The periodic and backward looking nature of this exercise (e.g. national and global reports can only draw from dated information due to the length of the publication process) has limited the opportunity to forecast and track progress in real-time to facilitate more timely policy actions, and to respond to emerging issues and trends.

**Main issues for discussion**

Consistent and effective use of indicators for tracking post-2020 Targets: there is currently a list of available indicators for Parties to use for tracking progress towards national targets, but alignment with national scale measures is limited and is evidenced by limited use in the national reports. In most instances, Parties have relied on tracking national targets using their own datasets and indicators. This has led to inconsistencies in methodologies, target tracking and reporting amongst and between countries, limiting the ability to conduct an overall assessment of progress based on national contributions and progress. Further, many current Aichi Biodiversity Targets are not easily measured with few if any fit-for-purpose indicators.

The Subsidiary Body on Scientific, Technical and Technological Advice (SBSTTA), at its twenty-third meeting, recommended that the Executive Secretary and the Biodiversity Indicators Partnership (BIP) undertake analyses on indicators for the post-2020 global biodiversity framework (see CBD/SBSTTA/REC/23/1 para 13). While this analysis may provide some insights on the measurability of the draft goals and targets of the draft post-2020 global biodiversity framework at SBSTTA-24, several questions still remain:

- How can we ensure that we have fit-for-purpose indicators for targets to ensure targets are measurable and thus, effective for tracking progress at the outset of the implementation of the new Global Biodiversity Framework?
- Considering the limited use of the global indicators by Parties and the diversity of indicators in use at the national scale, how can we structure the Monitoring Framework for the post-2020 global framework to facilitate:
  - o consistent translation of global targets to national contexts,
  - o consistent use of national and global indicators to ensure consistent and comparable measurement of progress towards the agreed Goals and Targets?
  - o reliable quantification of national commitments and target progress to assess level of ambition and distance to global targets?

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- What processes will be needed to fill gaps in indicator coverage of targets if needed?
- Should the indicators used in the new global framework be flexible in nature or fixed at the outset?

New means for ensuring timely, forward looking monitoring: the current process for reporting on target progress is via the production of periodic national reports to the Convention on Biological Diversity and the *Global Biodiversity Outlook*. Noting the calls for a transparent, accountable and responsive tracking of targets in the new global biodiversity framework, new processes and technology for more continual, forward looking target tracking could be explored.

- Should other, complementary means for reviewing progress (such as global monitoring through global real time data) be adopted?

### **Key Mandates**

[Decision XIII/28](#) - Indicators for the Strategic Plan for Biodiversity 2011-2020 and the Aichi Biodiversity Targets

COP14 decisions: Several decisions made by the Parties at COP14 support the need for improved indicators and improved access to them. Parties encouraged the development of data sets that can be disaggregated at different geographic scales and to share this information effectively (decision 14/1). They called for guidance on data sources to support analyses of progress used in national reports (decision 14/27) and urged organizations to make relevant trend and projection data openly available (decision 14/35). Finally, the Parties urged coordination with IPBES to serve the assessment needs for the post-2020 framework as well as the biodiversity and ecosystem services components of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development (decision 14/36). They emphasized the continued need for work on scenarios and models to assess pathways towards a sustainable future (decision 14/36).

[Decision XIII/31](#), annex - Key scientific and technical needs related to the implementation of the Strategic Plan for Biodiversity 2011-2020 and related research

[Decision XII/1](#), para. 20 (b) - Mid-term review of progress in implementation of the Strategic Plan for Biodiversity 2011-2020 including the fourth edition of the Global Biodiversity Outlook, and actions to enhance implementation

[Decision XII/3](#) – Resource mobilization

[Decision XI/3](#) - Monitoring progress in implementation of the Strategic Plan for Biodiversity 2011-2020 and the Aichi Biodiversity Targets

[Decision X/43](#) - Multi-year programme of work on the implementation of Article 8(j) and related provisions of the Convention on Biological Diversity

[Decision VIII/15](#) - Framework for monitoring implementation of the achievement of the 2010 target and integration of targets into the thematic programmes of work

[Decision VII/30](#) - Strategic Plan: future evaluation of progress

### **Useful documents for further background**

- Preliminary draft monitoring framework for the goals and preliminary draft monitoring framework for targets [CBD/WG2020/2/3/ADD1](#)
- CBD website on National Reports: <https://www.cbd.int/reports/>

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- Global list of available indicators: <https://www.bipindicators.net/list-of-global-indicators-available-for-review>
- Bhatt, R et al. (2019) Uneven use of biodiversity indicators in 5<sup>th</sup> national reports to the Convention on Biological Diversity. Environmental Conservation. (NatureServe publication)
- CBD/SBSTTA/23/INF/3: The post-2020 biodiversity framework: targets, indicators and measurability implications at the global and national levels
- CBD/SBSTTA/23/INF/4: Indicators for global and national biodiversity targets – experience and indicator resources for development of the post-2020 global biodiversity framework
- CBD/COP/14/INF/40: Developing indicators for the post-2020 global biodiversity framework: lessons from the Biodiversity Indicators Partnership
- Further resources on the application and use of national indicators: <https://www.bipindicators.net/national-indicator-development>

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