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Biodiversity and health

Steps and process for the development of science-based indicators, metrics and progress measurement tools on biodiversity and health***

Note by the Secretariat

I. Background

1. In its decision [14/4](#), the Conference of the Parties to the Convention on Biological Diversity requested the Executive Secretary, subject to the availability of resources, inter alia, to develop integrated science-based indicators, metrics and progress measurements tools on biodiversity and health; and invited the World Health Organization, in collaboration, as appropriate, with other members of the Inter-Liaison Group on Biodiversity and Health, to support this work. Furthermore, in its decision [16/19](#), the Conference of the Parties requested the Executive Secretary, subject to the availability of resources, to complete this work, taking into account section III of the Global Action Plan on Biodiversity and Health.¹

This document outlines the steps taken towards this end.

II. Considerations

2. The process was informed by the following considerations:

(a) The need to monitor progress in addressing biodiversity and health interlinkages through the implementation of the Kunming-Montreal Global Biodiversity Framework (KMGBF),² and the role of the Global Action Plan on Biodiversity and Health as a platform to support the mainstreaming of these linkages into national policies, programs, projects and accounts;

(b) The importance of similar work undertaken by other multilateral agreements and relevant organizations, including the agreed list of KMGBF indicators, as well as the recent Thematic Assessment Report on the Interlinkages among Biodiversity, Water, Food and Health of the Intergovernmental Science-Policy Platform on Biodiversity and Ecosystem Services (here in after

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

¹ Decision [16/19](#).

² Decision [15/4](#), annex.

“Nexus Assessment”),³ to capture the biodiversity and health interlinkages, in order to avoid duplication of efforts;

(c) The importance of developing globally applicable indicators and metrics, while allowing flexibility for national and local contexts;

(d) The need to take into account the reporting burden and the technical and financial constraints faced by Parties, in particular developing countries, in the development and use of indicators;

(e) The need for indicators to meet some criteria, considering the diverse nature of the information submitted, to facilitate the process of analysis of such information systematically. Therefore, the following criteria,⁴ which are largely in line with the criteria in annex I, paragraph 2, of decision 15/5, were used:

- (i) The data and metadata related to the indicator are publicly available;
- (ii) The methodology underpinning the indicator is published in a peer-reviewed academic journal or has undergone scientific peer-review and has been validated for national use;
- (iii) The data sources of the indicator are compiled and regularly updated, with a time lag of less than five years between updates, if possible;
- (iv) There is an existing mechanism for maintaining the indicator methodology and/or data generation, including, for example, by an intergovernmental organization or a well-established scientific or research institution, providing nationally applicable guidance on the use of the indicator;
- (v) The indicator can detect trends relevant to the elements of the actions of the Global Action Plan on Biodiversity and Health;
- (vi) Where possible, the indicator is aligned with existing intergovernmental processes and multilateral agreements.

III. Steps of the process

A. Compilation of information

3. Information was gathered through the following processes:

- (a) Call for submissions of information, through notification No. 2025-012;⁵
- (b) Compilation of existing indicators for monitoring biodiversity and health interlinkages, which focused primarily on indicators developed under multilateral processes and by intergovernmental organizations. This approach was adopted to ensure global relevance, comparability, and to reflect indicators with which Parties are more likely to be familiar and that have been used for international reporting and cooperation. While a wide range of indicators relevant to biodiversity and health have been developed by various initiatives, as well as by academic and other organizations, a comprehensive global compilation of such indicators was not possible with the available time and resources, and would have posed challenges in terms of feasibility, consistency and applicability across Parties. Therefore, the focus on multilateral processes was intended to

³ IPBES (2024). Thematic Assessment Report on the Interlinkages among Biodiversity, Water, Food and Health of the Intergovernmental Science-Policy Platform on Biodiversity and Ecosystem Services. Harrison, P. A., McElwee, P. D., and van Huysen, T. L. (eds.). IPBES secretariat, Bonn, Germany. DOI: <https://doi.org/10.5281/zenodo.1385005>

⁴ Used to assess indicators for inclusion on the monitoring framework for the Kunming-Montreal Global Biodiversity Framework.

⁵ <https://www.cbd.int/notifications/2025-012>.

balance methodological robustness, practical feasibility, and relevance to Parties' implementation and reporting needs, given that these indicators are already used in other processes.

(c) Two expert consultations with members of the former Inter-Liaison Group on Biodiversity and Health,⁶ including: Consultative Group for International Agricultural Research, Food and Agriculture Organization, Future Earth, International Center for Tropical Agriculture, United Nations Environment Program, United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change, United Nations University, International Union for the Conservation of Nature, The Quadripartite Collaboration for One Health through its One Health High-level Expert Panel, World Health Organization, World Organization for Animal Health. During these consultations, the experts provided inputs and feedback on the approach proposed by the Secretariat of the Convention on Biological Diversity. During these consultations, the experts provided technical inputs as well as comments on the approach.

B. Analysis of information

4. The analysis of the information evidenced the following:

(a) It was recognized that there are currently limited indicators that directly measure biodiversity and health linkages in a standardized and globally applicable manner. Methodological challenges, data gaps, and uneven availability of nationally comparable data currently constrain the development and application of biodiversity and health indicators. These considerations should be taken into account when interpreting the indicators and their respective applications;

(b) Only two of the inputs received were found to be operational indicators and meet the criteria outlined in subparagraph 2 (e) above: the “Global One Health index for zoonoses”, and the “Number of cities applying the 3+30+300 principle”;

(c) The information from submissions and expert consultations highlighted important issues that may inform future indicator development as data availability and validation improve;

(d) Most existing indicators measure trends on biodiversity and/or health, while a more limited number are specifically designed to address or to adequately reflect the cross-cutting nature of the interlinkages between the two fields;

(e) Indicators focusing exclusively on single outcomes or narrow elements of these linkages were found to be useful for tracking trends in specific areas or fields (e.g., land-and-sea-use, species management, pollution, etc), but insufficient to capture the cross-sectoral nature of biodiversity-health interlinkages.

5. Developing entirely new science-based indicators is a resource-intensive process. It requires establishing reliable baseline data, designing data-collection methodologies, and ensuring long-term data hosting, management, and quality control. This work depends on a broad mix of technical, scientific, and policy expertise, often spanning multiple disciplines and institutions, and often requiring work of technical expert groups. Because of the scope and complexity involved, a larger team, additional funding, and a longer timeframe are needed to design, test, validate, and operationalize such indicators robustly and sustainably. In this respect, it was also noted that even indicators adopted for the monitoring framework of the Kunming-Montreal Global Biodiversity Framework required an organization that was currently working on, or willing to, develop the methodology, and required the work of an Ad Hoc Technical Expert Group that could bring multidisciplinary expertise into the process. Based on this analysis, and on findings from other processes that highlighted major data and methodological gaps, such as the IPBES Global Assessment Report on biodiversity and Ecosystem Services,⁷ and the Nexus Assessment, which showed weak links between environmental-change data and health data, and no indicators connecting

⁶ See Inter-Agency [Liaison Group on Biodiversity and Health](#)

⁷ 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.

biodiversity change to health; most of the information from submissions and the expert consultation was used to create new indicators that could be easily and readily used by Parties and stakeholders. These were designed to assess how well biodiversity and health interlinkages are being mainstreamed at a national level and were considered the most practical first step toward improving monitoring of this issue.

C. Development of indicators on the mainstreaming of biodiversity and health interlinkages

6. The indicators are intended to serve as a practical tool for Parties and stakeholders to measure their progress towards the consideration of biodiversity and health interlinkages, in a manner consistent with CBD-related processes, such as the implementation of the Framework, specifically section C, subparagraph 7 (r), and to track progress in the implementation of the Global Action Plan on Biodiversity and Health.

7. The development of these indicators is based on the recognition that interlinkages between biodiversity and health operate across multiple spatial and temporal scales and sectors, as highlighted in the Nexus Assessment and the Global Action Plan on Biodiversity and Health. These linkages are thus not confined to a single thematic area, but are embedded across diverse policy, institutional and operational contexts.

8. The development of the indicators was guided by the need for an approach that was feasible within the available resources and timeframe, while also responding to the methodological challenges, data gaps and uneven availability of nationally comparable data. As highlighted in the Nexus Assessment, data and indicators on the status and trends of nexus elements, biodiversity, water, food, health and climate change; and particularly their interactions across spatial and temporal scales, remain largely missing.⁸ In this context, an approach that enables Parties to track trends and efforts to mainstream biodiversity and health at the national level was favoured. The proposed indicators, therefore, allow for meaningful reporting within existing national capacities and available expertise, without requiring the generation of new or highly specialized datasets. It is also noted that the current work can be complemented with more indicators as data and financial resources become available, and as science-based indicators and their supporting data infrastructure are developed.

9. Based on the above, the proposed indicators focus on assessing the extent to which biodiversity and health considerations are integrated into national policies and strategies as an essential first step toward achieving co-benefits. They are not intended to directly measure biodiversity and health interlinkages or their outcomes at this stage. Thus, the indicators are designed to capture trends in the level of cross-sectoral integration and institutional consideration of biodiversity and health linkages. Positive changes in the indicator may reflect progress towards a more comprehensive consideration of biodiversity and health issues across multiple sectors. While the indicators do not directly assess outcomes, they may provide useful information on enabling conditions relevant to the implementation of integrated biodiversity-health approaches across several sectors and areas.

10. The selection of this approach recognizes the technical and financial realities of many Parties by relying, to the extent possible, on information that is already generated through national policy and reporting processes or could be easily gathered, rather than requiring the generation of new and highly specialized datasets. This approach was considered particularly appropriate at this stage of global awareness of the interlinkages of biodiversity and health, and in light of the need to ensure global relevance and applicability across diverse institutional capacities and monitoring infrastructures in different countries.

⁸ Page 501 In: Kumar, R., Paukert, C., Ferreira Dos Santos, M. J., Gyawali, D., Kouame, A. A., Kulmala, S., Lalika, M., Minaverly, C. M., Rafa, N., Sandin, L., and Simatele, M. D. (2024). Chapter 5.2: Options for delivering sustainable approaches to water. In: Thematic Assessment of the Interlinkages among Biodiversity, Water, Food and Health of the Intergovernmental Science-Policy Platform on Biodiversity and Ecosystem Services. Harrison, P. A., McElwee, P. D., and van Huysen, T. L. (eds.). IPBES secretariat, Bonn, Germany. DOI: <https://doi.org/10.5281/zenodo.13850325>.

11. The operationalization of the indicators is through a progress measurement tool structured around a set of questions and response options, enabling systematic aggregation and disaggregation, assessment and comparison of responses across Parties in a reproducible manner (see annex I and II of document [CBD/COP/17/7](#)).
