



Convention on Biological Diversity

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Expert meeting on the draft global guidance on the sustainable management of wildlife applicable to multiple species and practices

Bonn, Germany, 9–11 February 2026

Draft global guidance*

1. The Conference of the Parties to the Convention on Biological Diversity in its decision [16/15](#) requested the Executive Secretary, subject to the availability of resources, in collaboration with the Collaborative Partnership on Sustainable Wildlife Management, in particular the Secretariat of the Convention on Migratory Species and the Secretariat of the Convention on International Trade in Endangered Species of Wild Fauna and Flora, and with inputs from Parties, other Governments, indigenous peoples and local communities, and women, youth and relevant organizations, to prepare draft global guidance on the sustainable management of wildlife applicable to multiple species and multiple practices, with a focus on: (a) inclusive and participatory decision-making; (b) the inclusion of multiple systems of knowledge and the recognition of rights; and (c) the equitable distribution of costs and benefits.
2. The present document has been prepared in response to that request. Submissions were received from Parties, indigenous peoples and local communities, and relevant organizations, reflecting a diversity of perspectives and practical experience that informed the development of this first draft. The draft is being circulated to participants for review at the expert meeting and, as a first working draft, is shared in its current form without any editing.

* The present document is being issued without formal editing owing to its late submission.

Annex

Voluntary guidance for the sustainable management of wildlife

I. Context

1. At its fifteenth meeting, the Conference of the Parties (CoP) to the Convention on Biological Diversity (CBD) adopted the Kunming-Montreal Global Biodiversity Framework (KMGBF)¹. Under the KMGBF, wildlife-related targets are explicitly included for the first time, and the role of wild species is clearly recognized. Thereby, strengthening and making more explicit the place of sustainable wildlife management within the Framework. The Framework includes specific targets relevant to the sustainable management and use of wildlife. Target 4 on halting species extinction, protecting genetic diversity, and managing human wildlife conflicts, Target 5 on ensuring sustainable, safe and legal harvesting and trade of wild species, and Target 9 on managing wild species sustainably to benefit people. Together, these targets provide a clear basis for promoting integrated, evidence-informed, rights-respecting and participatory approaches to sustainable wildlife management.

2. At its sixteenth meeting, through decision 16/15, the CoP requested the Executive Secretary, “subject to the availability of resources, in collaboration with the Collaborative Partnership on Sustainable Wildlife Management (CPW), in particular the Secretariat of the Convention on Migratory Species (CMS) and the Secretariat of the Convention on International Trade in Endangered Species of Wild Fauna and Flora (CITES), and with inputs from Parties, other Governments, indigenous peoples and local communities, and women, youth and relevant organizations, to prepare a draft global guidance on the sustainable management of wildlife applicable to multiple species and multiple practices, with a focus on: (a) Inclusive and participatory decision-making; (b) The inclusion of multiple systems of knowledge and the recognition of rights; (c) The equitable distribution of costs and benefits²”.

3. The present guidance has been developed by the Secretariat of the CBD in collaboration with CPW, Secretariat of CMS and the Secretariat of CITES in response to that request, considering submissions from relevant stakeholders listed in paragraph 2, to Notifications [2025-014](#) and [2025-015](#). It also takes into consideration information contained in the Intergovernmental Science-Policy Platform on Biodiversity and Ecosystem Services (IPBES) thematic assessment report on the sustainable use of wild species³ as well as the Gap Analysis conducted by the CPW⁴ and other provisions of the CBD related to sustainable wildlife management, such as Article 10: Sustainable use of components of biological diversity, the Addis Ababa principles and guidelines for the sustainable use of biodiversity⁵, and relevant guidance under the KMGBF.

4. In particular, the guidance draws on the Addis Ababa Principles and Guidelines for the Sustainable Use of Biodiversity, adopted under CBD Decision VII/12 (annex II)⁵, which provide an established, practical framework for operationalizing sustainable use under the Convention and are directly relevant to the objectives of the Kunming-Montreal Global Biodiversity Framework, including Targets 5 and 9.

¹ COP decision 15/4.

² COP decision 16/15.

³ IPBES (2022) The thematic assessment report on the sustainable use of wild species of the Intergovernmental Science-Policy Platform on Biodiversity and Ecosystem Services. Fromentin, J.M., Emery, M.R., Donaldson, J., Danner, M.C., Hallosserie, A., Kielling, D., Balachander, G., Barron, E.S., Chaudhary, R.P., Gasalla, M., Halmy, M., Hicks, C., Park, M.S., Parlee, B., Rice, J., Tickin, T., and Tittensor, D. (eds.). IPBES secretariat, Bonn, Germany. <https://doi.org/10.5281/zenodo.6425599>.

⁴ CPW CBD Gap Analysis.

⁵ COP decision VII/12.

5. For the purposes of this guidance, “wildlife use” refers to the use of wild organisms or their parts and populations as biological resources, in a way and at a rate that does not lead to the long-term decline of biological diversity.
6. “Wildlife management” refers to the measures and arrangements used to conserve wild species and regulate their use, including, where relevant, managing “taking” and associated pressures.
7. Wildlife use and management occur within diverse ecological, social and institutional contexts, and involves a variety of practices including fisheries, forest and non-timber forest product harvesting systems, trade in wild animals, plants and fungi, and wildlife-based tourism and recreational use. Sustainability challenges and management requirements vary across time, species, ecosystems, use types and governance arrangements. This necessitates integrated, ecosystem-based and adaptive approaches that are responsive to local contexts.
8. In many contexts, sustainable use is not only a pressure to be managed but also an enabling conservation approach. When effectively governed, monitored and adapted over time, sustainable wildlife use and management can help maintain wildlife populations and habitats by reinforcing stewardship incentives, supporting locally rooted customary and statutory institutions, and sustaining cultural practices and livelihood strategies that contribute to long-term conservation outcomes.
9. Multiple pressures, including unsustainable harvest, illegal take, use and trade-fuelled by increasing demand, habitat loss and degradation, pollution, climate change and invasive alien species, continue to affect wildlife populations and their habitats, while increasing the risk of zoonotic diseases emergence. These pressures highlight the need for coordinated and effective management approaches that address cumulative impacts across species, ecosystems and sectors.
10. The present guidance acknowledges that there is no one-size-fits-all approach and should be implemented in a manner appropriate to national and local circumstances, while respecting the rights of indigenous peoples and local communities and supporting the objectives of the CBD and the GBF.

II. Purpose and scope

A. Scope

11. Sustainable Wildlife Management (SWM) refers to “the sound management of wildlife species to sustain their populations and habitat over time, considering the socio-economic needs of human populations⁵. Besides the global benefits of sustaining biodiversity, wildlife, if sustainably and safely managed, can provide multiple long-term benefits to indigenous peoples and local communities, including contributions to food security and nutrition, sustained income and employment, health and wellbeing, as well as cultural, social and spiritual values. In doing so, it can support local livelihoods while safeguarding human and environmental health⁶.
12. This draft global guidance on the sustainable management of wildlife is applicable to multiple species (belonging to different taxonomic kingdoms and groups and using terrestrial, freshwater and marine habitats) and multiple practices. These practices may include, fishing, gathering of wild plants, fungi and algae, logging, terrestrial animal harvesting, and non-extractive practices such as wildlife observation and tourism³. The guidance is intended to be applied in a manner tailored to the specific practice and national and local context.
13. For states that are Parties to CMS and/or CITES, the application of this guidance is subject to the relevant exceptions provided for under the respective conventions for species listed in Appendix I of CMS and/or CITES Appendices. In such instances, those species may only be taken, used and/or traded where the applicable conditions and exceptions set out in the articles of the relevant conventions are met.

⁶ COP decision 14/7.

B. Goal and objectives

14. In line with paragraph 6 of Decision 16/15, the guidance aims to promote inclusive and participatory decision-making, the integration of multiple systems of knowledge and recognition of rights, and the equitable distribution of costs and benefits arising from the use and management of wildlife². It builds upon the foundations laid in Decision 14/7, which provided voluntary guidance for the sustainable management of wild meat in tropical and subtropical ecosystems³, and expands this focus to cover terrestrial, freshwater, and marine species, and both extractive and non-extractive practices.

15. Consistent with decisions 15/19 and 15/23, in which the CoP called for the integration of sustainable use principles into national biodiversity strategies and the coherent implementation of the Framework, this guidance seeks to ensure that the management of wildlife contributes simultaneously to biodiversity conservation, human well-being, and equitable governance. Its specific objectives are to:

(a) Strengthen participatory and rights-based approaches to sustainable wildlife management;

(b) Facilitate the inclusion of traditional, local, and scientific knowledge systems in sustainable wildlife management;

(c) Enhance fair and equitable sharing of benefits derived from the sustainable use of wildlife².

16. Through these objectives, this guidance operationalizes the commitments made in Decisions 14/7, 15/19, 15/23, and 16/15, providing Parties with a unified framework for sustainable wildlife management applicable to diverse ecological and sociocultural contexts.

III. Key elements for sustainable wildlife management

17. As requested by the CoP in its decision 16/15 this guidance is based on the seven “key elements”, from the IPBES assessment³, which were identified for use in developing and implementing policies on sustainable use², namely:

(a) Inclusive and participatory decision-making;

(b) Inclusion of multiple knowledge systems and recognition of rights;

(c) Equitable distribution of costs and benefits of wildlife use and management;

(d) Policies tailored to local social and ecological contexts;

(e) Monitoring of social and ecological practices and conditions;

(f) Coordinated and aligned policies across sectors;

(g) Robust institutions from customary to statutory.

IV. Guidance for sustainable wildlife management

18. The guidance comprises a comprehensive set of recommendations for sustainable wildlife management. It is presented in four sub-sections with a focus on participatory and rights-based approaches to sustainable wildlife management (subsect. A); inclusion of traditional, local and scientific knowledge systems (subsect. B); fair and equitable benefit sharing (subsect. C) and policy coherence and cross-sectoral integration (subsect. D). These subsections are guided by the focus areas in the request in decision 16/15.

19. The application of this guidance should be adapted to national and local contexts, considering ecological conditions, cultural diversity and governance systems across tropical, temperate, boreal, arid and other environments.

A. Participatory and rights-based approaches to sustainable wildlife management

20. To ensure participatory and rights-based approaches to sustainable wildlife management policies and practices should be designed and implemented in ways that respect rights and empower local governance systems. Policies should also enable inclusive, informed and equitable participation.

21. Parties are encouraged to recognize and uphold the rights of indigenous peoples and local communities to access, manage, govern and benefit from wildlife, consistent with national legislation, relevant international obligations and customary governance systems. Parties may do so by enabling meaningful participation in decision-making, strengthening recognition of customary tenure and governance institutions, and ensuring fair, transparent and equitable benefit-sharing. Where appropriate, stewardship and co-stewardship arrangements should be promoted as practical mechanisms through which indigenous peoples and local communities can exercise these rights while contributing to environmental sustainability and social well-being.

22. Sustainable wildlife management measures should be designed to respect and, where appropriate, build upon existing community governance systems, including customary institutions, community protocols and indigenous tenure agreements. Where customary governance systems intersect with statutory or private land regimes, Parties are encouraged to establish shared governance or co-management arrangements. These should clarify roles and responsibilities, support coordination among authorities and communities and facilitate conflict prevention and resolution.

23. Decision-making processes affecting wildlife use and management should be guided by the principle of free, prior and informed consent (FPIC), ensuring that indigenous peoples and local communities are able to participate effectively and make informed decisions throughout planning, implementation, monitoring and review processes.

24. Conservation and management measures should avoid restricting customary access to wildlife unless such measures are developed with the leadership and participation of affected communities, and their enforcement properly monitored. They should also be consistent with FPIC, and accompanied, where appropriate, by fair and effective forms of redress or compensation.

25. Parties are encouraged to acknowledge and support human rights-based approaches and different value systems associated with wildlife, including spiritual and cultural values linked to species, landscapes and sacred sites. This may be achieved through community-based approaches such as:

(a) Biocultural Community Protocols, as tools developed by indigenous peoples and local communities that articulate customary practices, rights and responsibilities relevant to wildlife management;

(b) Community forestry, buffer zone and locally governed wildlife management arrangements;

(c) The recognition and support of indigenous and traditional territories.

26. Secure tenure arrangements over land, resources and wildlife use should be strengthened, as appropriate, to support sustainable use, effective regulation, long-term planning and diversified livelihoods. Parties are encouraged to address tenure insecurity, including illegal land seizure and encroachment, where these undermine customary wildlife management systems, increase conflict or weaken conservation outcomes.

27. Institutional frameworks for wildlife management should be adaptive, transparent and accountable, and capable of responding to changing ecological and social conditions. Parties are encouraged to integrate accessible grievance and conflict-resolution mechanisms, drawing on both statutory and customary systems, to address disputes related to wildlife use and management. Where appropriate, legal recognition of customary territories and governance institutions should be accompanied by mechanisms that support collaboration, trust and shared responsibility.

28. Inclusive participation frameworks should be established to ensure equitable representation and effective engagement in wildlife governance. These may include:

(a) Formal mechanisms for community representation in wildlife management bodies, advisory councils and protected area governance structures;

(b) Measures to promote balanced participation of women, youth, elders and under-represented groups in decision-making processes;

(c) Inclusion of mobile pastoralists, harvesters, smallholder farmers and artisanal fishers whose livelihoods depend on wildlife where relevant.

29. The application of technological innovations should be guided by considerations of equity, accessibility and cultural appropriateness. Parties are encouraged to engage indigenous peoples and local communities in decisions on technology choice, data collection and use, and benefit-sharing, consistent with and customary governance systems, to avoid reinforcing existing inequalities or undermining local livelihoods and conservation incentives.

B. Integration of traditional and scientific knowledge systems

30. In order to ensure the effective integration of traditional and scientific knowledge systems in sustainable wildlife management, policies and practices should promote respectful co-learning and knowledge sharing.

31. Parties are encouraged to integrate traditional and scientific knowledge systems in wildlife management planning and decision-making, by establishing participatory mechanisms that enable the co-production of knowledge, respect rights-holders' knowledge governance systems, and ensure that different knowledge sources are considered on an equal footing, recognizing their distinct and complementary contributions to understanding species behaviour, habitat dynamics and sustainable use practices. In this regard, Parties may also draw on and adapt, as appropriate, existing guidance developed under CITES on the incorporation of local and traditional knowledge in decision-making, including in the context of non-detriment findings.

32. Wildlife management processes should consider gender-differentiated roles, responsibilities and knowledge, particularly in relation to access, harvesting and other forms of wildlife use. Parties are encouraged to establish multi-stakeholder knowledge exchange platforms that include indigenous peoples and local communities, women, youth, local authorities, civil society, private sector actors and scientific institutions, as appropriate.

33. Parties should support intergenerational knowledge transfer, including elder to youth learning exchanges, indigenous scholarship and traditional skills apprenticeships.

34. Policy processes for sustainable wildlife management should safeguard traditional knowledge systems and promote co-learning among scientists, indigenous peoples and local communities, authorities and other relevant actors. Participation should be supported throughout the policy cycle, including assessment, planning, implementation, monitoring and review, with equitable access to information, data and capacity-building.

35. Parties are encouraged to support community-led processes for the development of wildlife management plans, based on integrated traditional and scientific knowledge, local priorities, customary rules and governance systems. This may include providing resources for community consultations, translation, accessible communication materials and opportunities for engagement in policy and planning processes.

36. Transparency measures should be applied to wildlife governance, including, in the appropriate format & language, public access to monitoring results, licensing information and harvest quotas, to support accountability, trust and shared understanding among stakeholders.

37. Social feasibility assessments should be undertaken prior to major wildlife-related interventions, such as species translocations, invasive species management or the establishment of

new protected areas, to identify social concerns, cultural values, potential trade-offs and non-ecological impacts.

38. Adaptive management frameworks should be supported by long-term, integrated monitoring systems that combine multiple systems of knowledge, that is, scientific data with traditional knowledge. Monitoring should inform management decisions and periodic policy review.

39. Structured platforms should be established to enable the co-design of assessments, monitoring protocols, indicators and management strategies by indigenous and traditional knowledge holders, scientists, managers and policy-makers, recognizing that decision-making is strengthened when multiple knowledge systems are applied together.

40. Culturally grounded indicators should be incorporated into wildlife monitoring frameworks, including indicators related to seasonal cycles, culturally significant species, ecosystem health, relational values and community well-being. These will be used to support indigenous peoples and local communities in research, monitoring and governance activities.

41. Ethical and culturally appropriate knowledge governance protocols should be established, including procedures for free, prior and informed consent, protection of intellectual property, and community-defined rules governing the storage, use and interpretation of traditional knowledge, ensuring community ownership and control.

42. Community-based mapping approaches should be encouraged, including mapping of wildlife corridors, conflict hotspots, poaching risks and climate change impacts, using accessible and context-appropriate tools.

43. Where appropriate, emerging technologies may be applied to support wildlife monitoring and management, including genetic tools, environmental DNA analysis, monitoring technologies and digital citizen science platforms, in combination with established methods and indigenous and local indicators.

44. National capacities should be strengthened to integrate community-based monitoring data into formal decision-making, including quota-setting, harvest regulations, concessions and protected area management.

45. Parties are encouraged to integrate wildlife health surveillance into sustainable wildlife management frameworks, including through coordinated monitoring of wildlife and livestock. This will support early detection of zoonotic risks and inform adaptive responses to ecosystem pressures, climate change and socioeconomic drivers.

C. Fair and equitable benefit-sharing

46. In order to ensure fair and equitable benefit sharing in sustainable wildlife management, policies and practices should be designed to recognize and address both the benefits derived from wildlife use and the costs borne by the people living with wildlife.

47. Parties are encouraged to establish transparent and legally clear benefit-sharing arrangements that reflect the full range of financial, subsistence, cultural and spiritual values associated with wildlife. Benefit-sharing mechanisms should be based on clear rules, community-defined priorities and gender-responsive allocation criteria, and should provide accessible information on revenue generation, distribution and use.

48. Where revenues are generated from wildlife use, including through licensing, fees, taxes or tourism, Parties are encouraged to put in place arrangements that enable a fair share of benefits to reach indigenous peoples and local communities, particularly in rural and wildlife-adjacent areas. In co-management contexts, agreed procedures for sharing proceeds from tourism, harvesting or by-products should be clearly defined and publicly communicated.

49. Mechanisms to address the costs borne by communities living with wildlife should be integrated into wildlife management frameworks, including measures to prevent and mitigate human-

wildlife conflict, the risk of zoonotic emergencies and, where appropriate, insurance or incentive schemes for crop damage, livestock loss or other impacts, to support coexistence and reduce local vulnerabilities.

50. Benefit-sharing frameworks should be gender-responsive and socially inclusive, recognizing differentiated roles, costs and benefits among women, men and youth and other groups. Parties are encouraged to promote equitable access to income, employment and decision-making opportunities arising from wildlife-related activities across genders and generations.

51. Access to markets for sustainably sourced wildlife products should be facilitated, as appropriate, through measures such as legality verification, humane harvest standards, traceability systems and certification schemes. Parties are encouraged to support ecosystem-friendly product standards, local branding and culturally appropriate labelling, while ensuring equitable access to markets, finance and certification opportunities for indigenous peoples and local communities.

52. Sustainable livelihood strategies should be promoted in landscapes where human-wildlife coexistence is a priority, including approaches that reduce pressure on wildlife, strengthen food security and diversify income sources. Diversification within wildlife-based economies should be encouraged to reduce reliance on single species or value chains and enhance resilience.

53. Where appropriate, payments for ecosystem services and other incentive-based mechanisms may be applied to support conservation outcomes and locally driven initiatives. Such mechanisms should be voluntary, transparent and conditional on agreed management practices, and designed to reinforce community stewardship and equitable benefit-sharing.

54. Scenario-planning and trade-off assessment tools should be applied to support decision-making in wildlife management, particularly where competing objectives, values or land uses are present. These tools should be used in participatory processes that enable different stakeholders to assess potential benefits, costs and distributional impacts, with attention to power imbalances.

55. Wildlife management strategies should consider climate-related risks and vulnerabilities, including the impacts of climate change, extreme events and human migration pressures on species, ecosystems and livelihoods. Parties are encouraged to integrate climate risk considerations into planning, monitoring and adaptive management measures.

56. Parties are encouraged to support community-owned and locally based sustainable and safe wildlife enterprises, including sustainable tourism, wildlife-compatible agriculture forestry practices and value-added wildlife products, through business development support, access to finance and enabling policy environments. This will strengthen livelihoods, generate employment and reinforce incentives for sustainable and safe wildlife management.

57. Benefit-sharing arrangements should explicitly include non-monetary benefits, such as equitable access to data, information and monitoring results generated through wildlife management activities. Where indigenous peoples and local communities contribute knowledge or monitoring data Parties are encouraged to support appropriate community access to, and governance over, resulting data and information, consistent with community-defined priorities.

58. Non-monetary benefit-sharing may also include capacity-building, skills development and institutional strengthening for indigenous peoples and local communities, including training in monitoring, governance, enforcement, business development, health and safety, and adaptive wildlife management, aligned with community-defined priorities.

D. Policy coherence and cross-sectoral integration

59. In order to ensure policy coherence and effective cross-sectoral integration in sustainable wildlife management, policies and legal frameworks should be aligned across sectors and governance levels. They should be responsive to ecological, social and cultural contexts.

60. Parties are encouraged to design and apply policy instruments for sustainable wildlife management in ways that are responsive to ecological, social and cultural contexts. To reduce conflicting objectives and improve coherence, wildlife conservation needs should be integrated, as appropriate, into land-use planning, forestry, agriculture, energy, climate, animal and public health, infrastructure and trade policies.
61. Wildlife considerations should be integrated into national and subnational spatial planning processes, including through the identification and protection of wildlife corridors, ecological connectivity and migration routes, and through measures to minimize and compensate for incompatible land uses.
62. Parties are encouraged to strengthen policy coherence by recognizing both ecological and cultural dimensions of wildlife use, including sustainable customary use by indigenous peoples and local communities and their tenure and access rights.
63. Where relevant, implementation of relevant international instruments and complementary guidance, such as CMS concerted actions and CITES guidance on non-detriment findings, should be promoted to support holistic and coordinated approaches.
64. To support coherent, equitable and effective wildlife governance, legal pathways should be established or strengthened to recognize customary law and practices of indigenous peoples and local communities, and to harmonize these with national legislation, where appropriate.
65. Management instruments such as quotas, permit systems and management plans should be applied within adaptive legal and policy frameworks, including provisions for periodic review based on scientific evidence. In this way, Parties will ensure that wildlife management remains context-appropriate and consistent with ecological sustainability objectives.
66. Parties are encouraged to strengthen regional and transboundary cooperation where species, ecosystems or resource-use practices extend across national borders. This may include:
- (a) Cooperation on enforcement through information-sharing, joint patrols and, where appropriate, harmonized penalties;
 - (b) Collaboration on the management of shared ecosystems and wildlife populations, migration corridors and cross-border harvest or trade, including harmonized monitoring, reporting and management approaches for migratory species or populations shared across national borders;
 - (c) Regional capacity-building and knowledge exchange platforms involving indigenous peoples and local communities, protected area managers, scientists and relevant authorities.
67. Wildlife governance frameworks should incorporate cross-sectoral coordination to address health and biosecurity risks, including through approaches such as One Health following the Global action plan on Biodiversity and Health in [decision 16/19](#).
68. Parties are encouraged to review and strengthen national legislation to support sustainable, legal, transparent and traceable wildlife use, providing clear regulatory foundations that are aligned with broader biodiversity and conservation objectives.
69. Legal and regulatory frameworks should include provisions on humane harvesting, wildlife welfare and ethical trade practices, as appropriate. This will improve animal welfare outcomes where feasible and strengthen confidence in the sustainability and safety of wildlife products in domestic and international markets.
70. Harmonization of legal frameworks governing the pet trade, wild meat, live animal transport and the ownership of wild species should be pursued, as appropriate. This will reduce regulatory inconsistencies, address illegal trade and biosecurity risks, and provide predictable conditions for communities and businesses engaged in lawful and sustainable wildlife use.