

Virtual meeting SBSTTA-24 (17 - 19 February 2021)

Agenda item 3. Post-2020 Global Biodiversity Framework

Statement from Conservation International

Dear Chair:

Thank you for the opportunity to contribute to this important discussion. We wish to draw attention to the important role that healthy ecosystems provide in terms of the range of benefits to people including supporting economic growth, sustaining livelihoods, and providing the basis for food and water security as well as a stable climate. Just as some areas are more important for avoiding species extinctions than others, there are some places that are more important for delivering high levels of ecosystem services. Achieving the 2050 Vision of living in harmony with nature will require identifying these areas that need special management to stay healthy and to continue delivering these important benefits.

We draw attention to two recent lines of scientific research that now make it possible to identify the globally important ecosystems and sites that are providing these critical services for humanity.:

- The first focuses the mapping the global distribution of areas that can be considered “high performing” in terms of delivering ecosystem services or “Nature’s Contributions to People” (NCPs),¹ per IPBES.²
- The second is the identification and mapping of “Irrecoverable carbon”, which is defined as the carbon that would be impossible to recover by 2050 if exposed and lost to the atmosphere due to land development activities. Human land-use decisions are the primary determinant of whether irrecoverable carbon remains stored or is released to the atmosphere, thus it is critical that these areas be protected if we want to avoid the worst impacts of climate change.

We recommend including these important areas as part of the Goals, Targets, and indicators in the Global Biodiversity Framework (GBF) so they can be prioritized for protection, conservation, and sustainable management in support of the 2050 Vision.

To ensure that these areas essential for delivering high levels of ecosystem services are kept healthy, the GBF will need to specify which areas are of highest priority and what actions are needed to maintain them, from the Goal level down to the Indicator level. Without this approach, there is the risk of implementing broader efforts that may maintain places that are important for species or ecosystem representation -but that allow the loss of places providing vital ecosystem services that underpin human development like those that support food security, water regulation, climate mitigation and others.

¹ Nature’s contributions to people include a range of benefits including: habitat creation and maintenance, pollination and dispersal of seeds and other propagules, regulation of air quality, regulation of climate, regulation of ocean acidification, regulation of freshwater quantity, location and timing, regulation of freshwater and coastal water quality, formation, protection and decontamination of soils and sediments, regulation of hazards and extreme events, regulation of organisms detrimental to humans, energy, food and feed, materials and assistance, medicinal, biochemical and genetic resources, learning and inspiration, physical and psychological experiences, supporting identities and maintenance of options (IPBES, 2017).

² IPBES. (2017) Update on the classification of nature’s contributions to people by the Intergovernmental Science-Policy Platform on Biodiversity and Ecosystem Services. <https://ipbes.net/sites/default/files/downloads/pdf/ipbes-5-inf-24.pdf>.

The current structure of the GBF has some of the right elements related to Nature's Contributions to People but there is a lack of alignment between the benefits to people and the ecosystems that provide them that are mentioned in the 2050 Goal, the 2030 Milestones and Action Targets and the monitoring framework.

We suggest restructure these elements of the GBF around the categories of Nature's Contributions to People³ as described in the recent IPBES report⁴ at the Goal level and highlighting a few specific ecosystem services of high importance for human wellbeing and the ecosystems that provide them at the Target and Indicator level. As the Goals and Targets will define desired outcomes and, potentially, actions, at a high level then the indicator framework should provide the specificity needed to monitor progress towards achieving the 2030 mission. We suggest monitoring extent and condition of places most important for delivering ecosystem services and flows of the services.

We appreciate the opportunity to highlight this potential approach.

Potential bridged version:

Thank you Chair. I am speaking on behalf of Conservation International. In addition to the statement made by WWF on behalf of multiple NGOs, we would like to draw attention to the important role that healthy ecosystems provide in terms of the range of benefits to people and the need to include the areas most important for delivering these benefits in the Goals and Targets and in the monitoring framework.

New research allows us to identify these priority areas and should be used to guide the final design of the GBF. The current structure of the GBF and monitoring framework has some of the right elements related to Nature's Contributions to People but there is a lack of alignment between the benefits to people and the ecosystems that provide them that are mentioned in the 2050 Goal, the 2030 Milestones and the Action Targets and the monitoring framework.

³ According to [IPBES](#), the three groups of Nature's Contributions to People (NCPs) are:

Regulating contributions: Functional and structural aspects of organisms and ecosystems that modify environmental conditions experienced by people, and/or sustain and/or regulate the generation of material and non-material benefits (i.e., water purification, climate regulation, or soil erosion regulation).

Provisioning contributions: Material elements from nature that sustain people's physical existence and infrastructure (i.e. food, energy, or materials for shelter or ornamental purposes).

Non-material contributions: Nature's contribution to people's subjective or psychological quality of life, individually and collectively (i.e., animals in recreational or ritual fishing or hunting and/or individual trees or ecosystems as sources of inspiration).

⁴ IPBES. (2017) Update on the classification of nature's contributions to people by the Intergovernmental Science-Policy Platform on Biodiversity and Ecosystem Services. <https://ipbes.net/sites/default/files/downloads/pdf/ipbes-5-inf-24.pdf>.

We suggest to restructure these elements of the GBF around the categories of Nature's Contributions to People⁵ as described in the recent IPBES report⁶ at the Goal level and highlighting a few specific ecosystem services of high importance for human wellbeing and the ecosystems that provide them at the Target level. For the monitoring framework, we suggest indicators on the extent and condition of places most important for delivering ecosystem services and the flows of the services from those places.

Thank you. We appreciate the opportunity to highlight this potential approach.

⁵ According to [IPBES](#), the three groups of Nature's Contributions to People (NCPs) are:

Regulating contributions: Functional and structural aspects of organisms and ecosystems that modify environmental conditions experienced by people, and/or sustain and/or regulate the generation of material and non-material benefits (i.e., water purification, climate regulation, or soil erosion regulation).

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⁶ IPBES. (2017) Update on the classification of nature's contributions to people by the Intergovernmental Science-Policy Platform on Biodiversity and Ecosystem Services. <https://ipbes.net/sites/default/files/downloads/pdf/ipbes-5-inf-24.pdf>.