



Quick guide to the Aichi Biodiversity Targets Ecosystems and essential services safeguarded

By 2020, ecosystems that provide essential services, including services related to water, and contribute to health, livelihoods and well-being, are restored and safeguarded, taking into account the needs of women, indigenous and local communities, and the poor and vulnerable.

All terrestrial, freshwater and marine ecosystems provide multiple ecosystem services. However some ecosystems are particularly important in that they provide services that directly contribute to human wellbeing by providing services and goods to fulfill daily needs. Actions taken to protect and restore such ecosystems will have benefits for biodiversity as well as human wellbeing.

Explanation of the Target

This target focuses specifically on:

- **Ecosystems that provide essential services** – All ecosystems provide goods and services. However some ecosystems are particularly important for human wellbeing because of the services they provide. Ecosystems which provide services related to the provision of food, fibre, medicines and fresh water, pollination of crops, filtration of pollutants, and protection from natural disasters are among those ecosystem services provided by biodiversity which are essential for human wellbeing.

The target requires that such ecosystems:

- **Are restored and safeguarded** – Restoration refers to the process of actively managing the recovery of an ecosystem that has been degraded, damaged or destroyed as a means of sustaining ecosystem resilience and conserving biodiversity. Safeguarded is a general term which relates to protection. There is a wide range of measures which can be used to protect ecosystems spanning from strict protected areas to community conserved areas. The most suitable type of restoration and protection will vary with the type of ecosystem being considered.
- **Taking into account the needs of women, indigenous and local communities, and the poor and vulnerable** - While all people are dependent on ecosystem services for their survival some groups are particularly reliant on them for their wellbeing. In many countries the poor and vulnerable are directly reliant upon ecosystem services for their day to day survival needs. In many countries the poor and vulnerable are disproportionately composed of women. Further because of different gender roles, in some countries women may be reliant on certain types of ecosystems more than men. For many indigenous and local communities ecosystems not only provide services but are also an essential part of their spirituality, worldview and identity. Therefore decisions about how to restore and protect ecosystems particularly important for human wellbeing could have effects on these different groups. As such it will be important to ensure that the needs of these groups are considered when setting policies or undertaking certain types of action.

Implications for setting national targets

As all ecosystems provide important services, countries will need to identify those ecosystems that are particularly important for human wellbeing given their national conditions and circumstances. The attainment of the other Aichi Biodiversity Targets will greatly contribute to this target.

Guiding questions for setting national targets

- **What are the major ecosystems in the country?** What are the areas of importance for the provision of ecosystem services? How do these ecosystems contribute to human wellbeing?
- **What is the condition of important ecosystems in the country?** Which ecosystems are degrading the quickest? Which ecosystems are improving? Does further degradation of some ecosystems risk passing tipping points? Which ecosystems are in need of restoration? Which ecosystems are in need of safeguarding?



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- **What are the main pressures on the ecosystems that provide services essential for human wellbeing?** Which ecosystems are particularly important for the wellbeing of women, indigenous and local communities, and the poor and vulnerable? What factors are driving or causing the loss of ecosystem services? Which are the easiest to address?
- **What are the opportunities and constraints in restoring or safeguarding ecosystems that provide essential services, generally and by ecosystem?** Consider potential ecological, economic, and social costs and benefits in specific ecosystems. How may these justify higher or lower figures for a national target than for the global target?
- **Who are the stakeholders that may be affected by efforts to restore or safeguard ecosystems?** How can they be involved and their needs addressed? What are the trade-offs to consider?
- **What additional resources (financial, human and technical) will be required to reach the national target that is set?** How can additional funds be raised? What are possible funding sources?

Note that, given the particular national circumstances, national targets may be more specific and more precise than the global target. Further national targets should be ambitious but realistic and be supportive of the Strategic Plan by moving beyond business as usual.

Actions and milestones

Ecosystems which provide essential services should be identified through participatory processes at local, national and global levels and in accordance with Article 10 of the Convention. Tools for mapping ecosystem services and for the valuation of ecosystem services are now available and/or are being tested. The resulting information should be integrated into development plans to ensure that these ecosystems receive the necessary protection and investments. Sound distribution and recognition of property rights, including traditional and customary rights, can contribute to ensuring adequate and equitable access to ecosystem services.

Where possible, avoiding degradation through conservation is preferable to restoring an ecosystem after a disturbance. Given the emphasis on safeguarding in this target the programme of work on protected areas provides relevant guidance on the types of actions which could be taken to fulfill this target. Further restoration activities, such as forest and wetland landscape restoration, are already underway in many parts of the world and increasingly will be needed to re-establish ecosystem functioning and the provision of valuable services. Consolidating policy processes and the wider application of these efforts could contribute significantly to the achievement of the objectives of the Convention and this target specifically.

Possible indicators

- Population trends and extinction risk trends of species that provide ecosystem services
- Trends in benefits that humans derive from selected ecosystem services
- Trends in proportion of the population using improved water services
- Trends in proportion of total freshwater resources used

Resources

- Addis Ababa Principles - www.cbd.int/doc/publications/addis-gdl-en.pdf
- CBD Technical Series No. 44 - www.cbd.int/doc/publications/cbd-ts-44-en.pdf
- Programme of work on protected areas - www.cbd.int/protected/
- Society for Ecological Restoration - www.ser.org/

