



Global Action Plan on Biodiversity and Health: advancing Coherence and Co-Benefits Across Multilateral Environmental Agreements

A joint document of the Secretariats of:



Convention on
Biological Diversity



BASEL | ROTTERDAM | STOCKHOLM
CONVENTIONS



CMS



Ramsar
Convention
on Wetlands



United Nations
Convention to Combat
Desertification



United Nations
Climate Change



Strengthening coherence across MEAs on actions related to biodiversity and health reduces costs, increases impact, and improves plant, animal and human health.

What is the Global Action Plan on Biodiversity and Health?

In 2024, a Global Action Plan on Biodiversity and Health¹ (GAP) was adopted under the Convention on Biological Diversity (CBD) to support Parties and stakeholders in the mainstreaming of biodiversity and health interlinkages into national policies, strategies, programs, and accounts. The GAP aims to facilitate the realization of biodiversity and health co-benefits from the implementation of the Kunming-Montreal Global Biodiversity Framework (KMGBF).² It provides an enabling framework for recognizing and addressing the connections between biodiversity and health around two categories of actions: general and sector-specific actions. Parties and other actors are encouraged to voluntarily select and implement these actions to strengthen the integration of biodiversity and health interlinkages into policies, planning, and decision-making.

How does the Global Action Plan on Biodiversity and Health matter for other multilateral environmental agreements?

The GAP reinforces the objectives of other multilateral environmental agreements (MEAs) by providing a common framework that links environmental protection with plant, animal, and human health. Many MEAs already act on key determinants of health, such as ecosystem integrity, climate stability, pollution control, chemicals management and land restoration, among others. The GAP helps make these connections explicit, supporting more preventive, ecosystem-based approaches to health while strengthening the relevance and impact of MEAs implementation.

By promoting coherence across sectors and agreements, the GAP facilitates coordinated action on cross-cutting challenges. National implementation of the GAP can therefore generate benefits not only for biodiversity and health, but also for the work carried out by other MEAs.

¹ <https://www.cbd.int/health/GAP.shtml>

² <https://www.cbd.int/gbf>

How can the implementation of The Global Action Plan on Biodiversity and Health complement ongoing efforts under other multilateral environmental agreements?

The GAP offers a practical entry point for strengthening coherence and implementation across multilateral environmental agreements in the mainstreaming of biodiversity and health interlinkages. Its implementation can complement ongoing efforts under other MEAs that generate co-benefits for both biodiversity and health. Some examples are provided below.

Basel, Rotterdam and Stockholm conventions (BRS conventions)

Implementation of the GAP can generate important co-benefits for meeting the objectives of the BRS conventions by reinforcing shared objectives on preventing and reducing pollution that harms both biodiversity and health. By recognizing biodiversity as a foundation for health, the GAP can support efforts to identify, prevent and address harmful emissions and exposures to hazardous chemicals and wastes, contributing to the protection of both environmental and public health. The GAP further supports implementation of the BRS conventions by encouraging improved access to information, data and knowledge on the interlinkages between pollution, biodiversity loss and health impacts. This supports more preventive, risk-based and coordinated approaches to chemicals and waste management, including through the promotion of sound management of hazardous chemicals and safe disposal of wastes in the health sector, thereby reducing pollution-related health risks and strengthening coherence across multilateral environmental agreements.

Convention on International Trade in Endangered Species of Wild Fauna and Flora (CITES)

CITES aim is to ensure that international trade in specimens of wild animals and plants does not threaten the survival of the species in the wild. This aligns with the second objective of the CBD on the sustainable use of biodiversity that informs the implementation of the GAP.

As a multilateral environmental agreement governing international trade in endangered species of wild fauna and flora, CITES plays a central role in addressing zoonotic disease transmission risks associated with wildlife trade. In line with decisions 20.10 to 20.13 on the Role of CITES³ in reducing the risk of future zoonotic disease emergence associated with international wildlife trade, Parties place particular emphasis on taking appropriate measures to implement international standards, guidelines and action plans relevant to risk management during wildlife trade to prevent, detect and control pathogen spillover risks and to ensure the proper implementation of all necessary measures in respect to the different existing relevant international agreements and mechanisms.

Convention on the Conservation of Migratory Species of Wild Animals (CMS)

The CMS approach to health of migratory species addresses the determinants of health⁴ by tackling drivers such as climate change, pollution, habitat degradation and loss, and unsustainable use of resources, including the overexploitation of wildlife. The Convention also addresses specific infectious and non-infectious wildlife health issues by, for example, providing mandates for regulatory action or guidance to Parties, supporting measures that protect both wild and domestic animals.

The GAP and CMS both recognize the importance of addressing cross-sectoral pressures that undermine biodiversity conservation and use. They both promote strengthening capacities to prevent, detect, and respond to wildlife health issues in the context of biodiversity and health interlinkages. By encouraging measures to mainstream health into environmental actions, implementation of the GAP can support conditions that maintain the health of migratory species and the ecosystems on which they depend. Improved information-sharing and coordination encouraged by the GAP can help Parties to uptake actions that support the conservation of migratory species while contributing to the protection of animal, environment, and human health.

³ <https://cites.org/eng/dec/index.php>

⁴ https://www.cms.int/sites/default/files/document/2025-11/cms_cop15_inf.28.5b_health-and-cms-resolutions-analysis_e.pdf

Convention on Wetlands of International Importance especially as Waterfowl Habitat

The Convention on Wetlands has long recognized the links between wetlands and health. This is evident in resolution XI.12 on “Wetlands and Health”,⁵ a technical report on managing wildlife and animal diseases in wetlands,⁶ and a joint technical report by the Convention on Wetlands and the World Health Organization concerning wetlands and human health interactions.⁷ The GAP provides an opportunity to more clearly incorporate the wetlands-water-health nexus into national planning and reporting.

By encouraging collaboration between the environment, water, health, and disaster risk reduction sectors, the GAP can help contracting Parties to integrate wetland conservation and restoration into health-related policies and programs, including those relating to water, sanitation, and hygiene. The GAP also reinforces the role of wetlands as nature-based solutions that mitigate the risks of floods, droughts and other climate-related extremes, and facilitates recovery. Furthermore, its focus on assessments, shared metrics and capacity development can enhance the uptake of technical guidance from the Convention across sectors, promote alignment with other MEAs, and prevent duplication.

United Nations Convention to Combat Desertification (UNCCD)

Implementation of the GAP can deliver co-benefits for the implementation of the UNCCD by reinforcing shared objectives on land health, ecosystem resilience, and human well-being.

Promoting land health as a foundation for human health, the GAP emphasizes healthy ecosystems as determinants of physical and mental health. This directly supports the UNCCD’s focus on restoring degraded land, preventing desertification, and achieving Land Degradation Neutrality. The GAP also supports integrated land, biodiversity and health policies. By encouraging cross-sectoral planning between environment, agriculture and health sectors, the GAP helps countries implement UNCCD commitments through integrated land-use approaches that conserve biodiversity, improve soil quality, enhance food and nutrition security, and reduce health risks linked to land degradation (such as sand and dust storms, water scarcity and exposure to pollutants). Additionally, implementation of the GAP strengthens the resilience of communities and livelihoods. By reducing human health vulnerabilities, enhancing adaptive capacity, and improving the sustainability of land-dependent livelihoods, the GAP supports UNCCD objectives of supporting people and ecosystems facing increasing pressures from land degradation and climate change.

United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change (UNFCCC)

Climate change is a key driver of biodiversity loss and a growing risk multiplier for human health, while healthy ecosystems underpin climate resilience, adaptation, and sustainable development. By linking ecosystem integrity, climate risks, and health outcomes, the GAP supports integrated approaches aligned with the Paris Agreement and the KMGBF.

In implementation terms, it complements the Global Goal on Adaptation and the Belém Adaptation Indicators spanning, water, agriculture, health, ecosystems, and social dimensions of adaptation. The biodiversity and health nexus strengthens the evidence base for prioritizing nature-based solutions with health co-benefits, including actions addressing heat-related health risks, infectious disease exposure, and ecosystem resilience, while supporting more outcome-oriented adaptation planning, monitoring, and coherence across MEAs.

5 <https://www.ramsar.org/sites/default/files/documents/pdf/cop11/res/cop11-res12-e.pdf>

6 <https://www.ramsar.org/sites/default/files/documents/library/rtr7-disease.pdf>

7 <https://www.ramsar.org/sites/default/files/documents/pdf/lib/rtr6-health.pdf>



**Discover how the
Global Action Plan
on Biodiversity
and Health can
support your MEA**

Opportunities for Collaboration

The GAP creates multiple entry points for collaboration among Parties, stakeholders, and MEAs. Some key opportunities include:

- **Support the implementation of the GAP:** MEAs can actively align efforts with the GAP to ensure integrated and coordinated impact and results;
- **Shared scientific information and assessments:** Joint assessments, data-sharing, and knowledge exchange can strengthen the evidence base for common drivers and biodiversity and health interlinkages. These efforts promote harmonized methodologies while reducing duplication of efforts across initiatives;
- **Coordinated technical support and capacity-building:** Collaborative workshops, technical guidance, and targeted training can help Parties build the capacity needed to implement biodiversity and health actions across sectors effectively, moving beyond siloed approaches and toward increased co-benefits;
- **Coherent messaging for COPs and regional meetings:** Unified communication strategies can amplify the importance of biodiversity and health considerations, foster political momentum, and secure broader buy-in from all stakeholders.

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