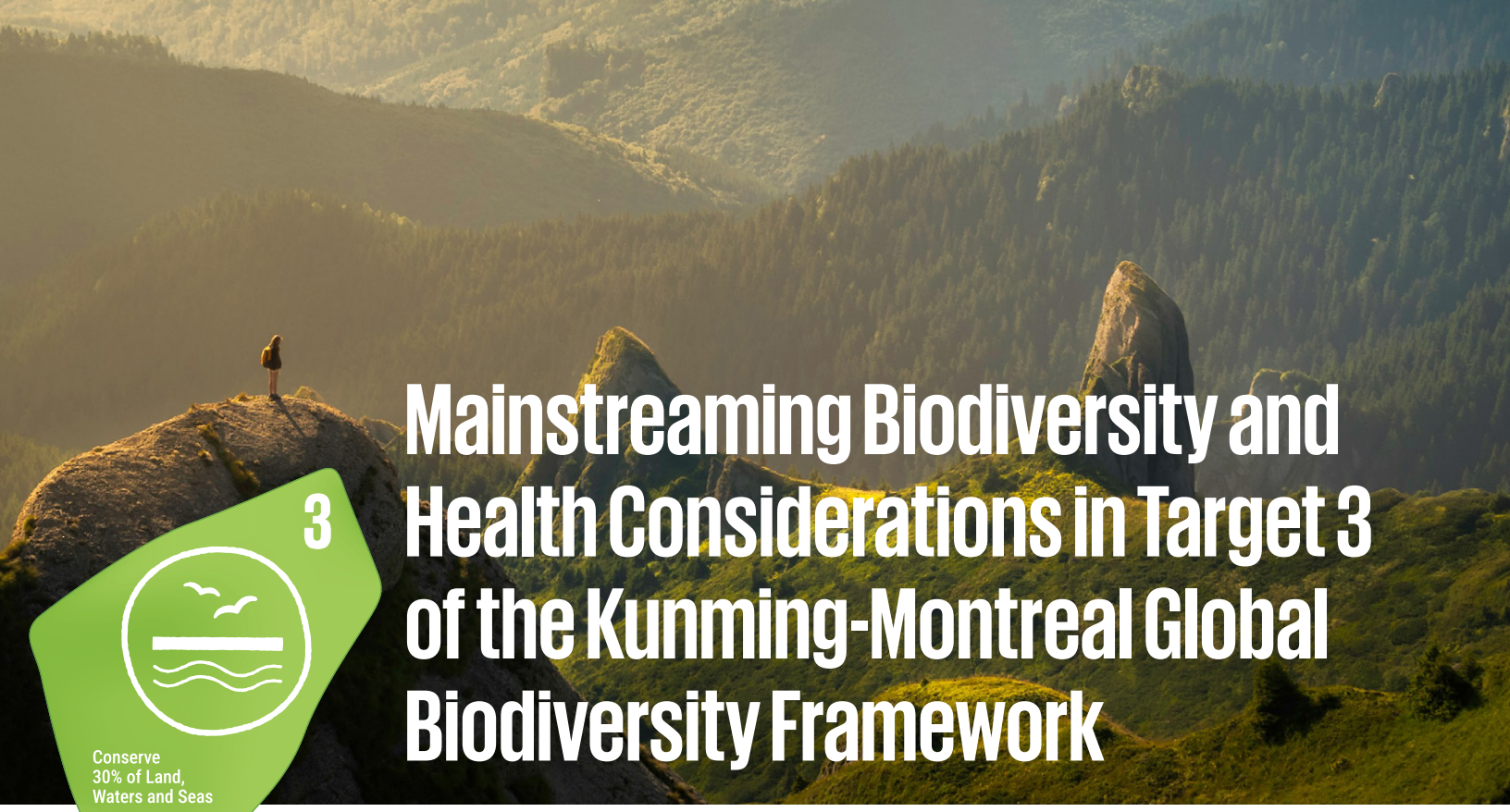

3

Conserve
30% of Land,
Waters and Seas

Mainstreaming Biodiversity and Health Considerations in Target 3 of the Kunming-Montreal Global Biodiversity Framework

"Reducing the loss, degradation and fragmentation of wildlife habitats and the encroachment on biodiverse areas contributes to the continued provision of nature's contributions to people, which in turn support health and reduce disease emergence and transmission among wildlife, livestock and people."

—Global Action Plan on Biodiversity and Health

HOW PROTECTED AND CONSERVED AREAS SUPPORT BIODIVERSITY AND HEALTH OUTCOMES?

Target 3 of the Kunming-Montreal Global Biodiversity Framework (KMGBF) is fundamental to both the achievement of conservation efforts under the Framework and the objectives of the Convention on Biological Diversity (CBD). By contributing to the conservation and sustainable management of biodiversity, systems of protected areas and other effective area-based conservation measures (OECMs),[1] safeguard habitats and species while maintaining the ecosystem functions and services that underpin human and animal health. As such, they also serve as important health assets for societies and ecosystems alike.

Through the protection of functioning ecosystems, protected and conserved areas (PCAs) help regulate disease transmission, support food security and nutrition, protect water and air quality, and contribute to both physical and mental well-being. Well-managed PCAs are therefore essential for maintaining nature's contributions to people, including reducing health risks associated with ecosystem degradation.

Complementing the KMGBF, the Global Action Plan on Biodiversity and Health (GAP) was adopted under the CBD at COP 16 in 2024 to provide an enabling framework and guidance for integrating biodiversity and health considerations national policies, programs and accounts. Together, the KMGBF and the GAP underscore the role of PCAs for delivering co-benefits for people, animals, and ecosystems.

1 They will be referred to in this brochure as "protected and conserved areas (PCAs)"

Convention on Biological Diversity

Kunming–Montreal GLOBAL BIODIVERSITY FRAMEWORK

By promoting integrated approaches such as One Health, the GAP supports actions that enhance health outcomes while advancing biodiversity conservation and sustainable use. In doing so, it encourages greater coherence across conservation, sustainable use and health policies, contributing to the effective implementation of the KMGBF and to the achievement of the 2050 Vision of living in harmony with nature.

Figure 1: Protected and conserved areas sustain healthy ecosystems and nature's contributions to people, creating a continuous cycle that supports climate resilience, reduces disease risks, and improves health outcomes and well-being for all.

The following examples show the connection between PCAs and biodiversity and health

ECOSYSTEM HEALTH AND DISEASE REGULATION

PCAs support ecosystems in which disease are better regulated.

- Healthy ecosystems can limit the spread of infectious diseases by maintaining balanced populations of species and natural predators of disease vectors (like mosquitoes and rodents).
- Degraded or simplified ecosystems may increase disease risks when natural regulation is lost, for example, through deforestation or wildlife disturbance.

HEALTH AND WELL-BEING

PCAs contribute to physical and mental health in several ways.

- Clean water and air: Forests, wetlands, and other ecosystems filter pollutants and maintain air and water quality.
- Food and medicine: Biodiverse areas support wild foods, pollinators, and resources used in traditional and modern medicine.
- Recreation and mental health: Outdoor recreation and physical activity, supports physical and mental health by reducing stress, improving mood, and fostering social, cultural, and spiritual well-being.

ANIMAL HEALTH

PCAs help maintain wildlife health, which is directly linked to healthy ecosystems that provide essential services for human health and well-being. At the same time, zoonotic disease risks are often associated with ecosystem disruption and increased human–wildlife contact.

- By safeguarding wildlife populations, habitats, and from the encroachment of human-wildlife contact, PCAs can reduce the likelihood of zoonotic disease spillover.
- They also provide refugia for species threatened by diseases spreading from domestic animals or humans.

CLIMATE AND ENVIRONMENTAL STABILITY

Healthy, biodiverse PCAs help regulate the climate, reduce the impacts of natural disasters, and support resilience to environmental change, all of which are critical for long-term health and safety.

- Biodiverse ecosystems can provide early ecological signals of environmental change, such as shifts in species composition, climate stress, and resource degradation, which in turn can inform adaptive responses and support early warning systems.
- Forests, peatlands, and coastal ecosystems (e.g. mangroves, seagrasses) absorb and store carbon, mitigating climate change and its health impacts.
- Urban and peri-urban green spaces help moderate local temperatures, reduce heat stress, and improve livability.

INTEGRATED MANAGEMENT AND POLICY IMPLICATIONS

Linking biodiversity and health with PCAs maximizes health and biodiversity co-benefits.

- For PCAs, cross-sectoral collaboration helps ensure that conservation objectives are aligned with those for health, food security, livelihoods, and sustainable development among others.
- Formal agreements and protocols for intersectoral cooperation can enable joint efforts in surveillance, data sharing, and coordinated responses to health and environmental risks.
- Integrating biodiversity and health considerations strengthens the role of PCAs as key areas for the provision of ecosystem functions and services, which are fundamental to human health and well-being.

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