

THE RELEVANCE OF THE KEY BIODIVERSITY AREA NETWORK FOR ACHIEVEMENT OF THE KUNMING-MONTREAL GLOBAL BIODIVERSITY FRAMEWORK

KBA
KEY BIODIVERSITY AREAS

Odonata-Polythore manua © Pablo Martínez-Darve Sanz

KBA PARTNERS:



I. BACKGROUND

In December 2022, the international community, at its 15th meeting of the Convention on Biological Diversity's Conference of the Parties (CoP15), adopted the [Kunming-Montréal Global Biodiversity Framework](#) (GBF) also known as the **Biodiversity Plan**. This Framework sets out a 2050 vision for biodiversity:

By 2050, biodiversity is valued, conserved, restored and wisely used, maintaining ecosystem services, sustaining a healthy planet and delivering benefits essential for all people.

Based on this vision, its 2030 mission is:

To take urgent action to halt and reverse biodiversity loss to put nature on a path to recovery for the benefit of people and planet by conserving and sustainably using biodiversity and by ensuring the fair and equitable sharing of benefits from the use of genetic resources, while providing the necessary means of implementation.

The GBF also sets out four 2050 goals and 23 targets for 2030.



THE BIODIVERSITY PLAN
For Life on Earth

2. PURPOSE OF THIS BRIEF

The purpose of this brief is to emphasise the importance of the Key Biodiversity Area (KBA) Network for achievement of the goals and targets of the GBF. Many people will already associate KBAs with Target 3, the target which has received the most attention up to and since the adoption of the framework. However, as will be shown here, KBAs are directly or indirectly relevant to nearly all of the goals and targets of the Framework. If we are to halt and reverse biodiversity loss as envisioned above then KBAs need to form a key tool in our arsenal that can help us better target conservation to the right places to maximise impacts.



3. THE RELEVANCE OF KBAS TO THE GBF GOALS

GOAL A: PROTECT AND RESTORE

The integrity, connectivity and resilience of all ecosystems are maintained, enhanced, or restored, substantially increasing the area of natural ecosystems by 2050;

Human induced extinction of known threatened species is halted, and, by 2050, the extinction rate and risk of all species are reduced tenfold and the abundance of native wild species is increased to healthy and resilient levels;

The genetic diversity within populations of wild and domesticated species is maintained, safeguarding their adaptive potential.

Relevance of KBAs

KBAs should be the tool that guides the conservation, protection, and expansion of natural ecosystems through restoration, and KBAs identified for their species should be managed to support and grow those populations. KBAs will also help us to be effective at halting extinctions because the criteria identify globally significant populations of species when applied comprehensively.

GOAL C: SHARE BENEFITS FAIRLY

The monetary and non-monetary benefits from the utilization of genetic resources and digital sequence information on genetic resources, and of traditional knowledge associated with genetic resources, as applicable, are shared fairly and equitably, including, as appropriate with indigenous peoples and local communities, and substantially increased by 2050, while ensuring traditional knowledge associated with genetic resources is appropriately protected, thereby contributing to the conservation and sustainable use of biodiversity, in accordance with internationally agreed access and benefit-sharing instruments.

Relevance of KBAs

Identification and maintenance of KBAs, as sites which contribute significantly to the global persistence of biodiversity, will ensure the conservation of genetic resources for the future.

GOAL B: PROSPER WITH NATURE

Biodiversity is sustainably used and managed and nature's contributions to people, including ecosystem functions and services, are valued, maintained and enhanced, with those currently in decline being restored, supporting the achievement of sustainable development for the benefit of present and future generations by 2050.

Relevance of KBAs

KBA designation does not in principle rule out sustainable use of the natural resources within the site. Knowledge of what biodiversity a site contains will strengthen our ability to sustainably use and manage resources, as well as preserving the contributions of nature to people, at a site.

GOAL D: INVEST AND COLLABORATE

Adequate means of implementation, including financial resources, capacity-building, technical and scientific cooperation, and access to and transfer of technology to fully implement the Kunming-Montreal Global Biodiversity Framework are secured and equitably accessible to all Parties, especially developing country Parties, in particular the least developed countries and small island developing States, as well as countries with economies in transition, progressively closing the biodiversity finance gap of \$700 billion per year, and aligning financial flows with the Kunming-Montreal Global Biodiversity Framework and the 2050 Vision for biodiversity.

Relevance of KBAs

Directing funding towards identification and conservation of KBAs can ensure maximum benefit, whether for area-based or species/ecosystem-focused conservation.

4. THE RELEVANCE OF KBAS TO THE GBF TARGETS

TARGET 1

Ensure that all areas are under participatory, integrated and biodiversity inclusive spatial planning and/or effective management processes addressing land- and sea-use change, to bring the loss of areas of high biodiversity importance, including ecosystems of high ecological integrity, close to zero by 2030, while respecting the rights of indigenous peoples and local communities.

Relevance of KBAs

KBAs can be integrated into spatial plans, in the way that some subsets, (such as Important Bird Areas) were in the past. [IUCN Resolution WCC 2020 081](#) calls on governments to integrate KBAs and connectivity in national spatial plans - and to mainstream these plans across government sectors. KBA sites identified under Criterion C, sites of high ecological integrity, can be used to identify important areas of ecological integrity under this target.

Percentage of spatial plans utilizing information on KBAs is a complementary indicator in the GBF Monitoring Framework for Target 1.



TARGET 2

Ensure that by 2030 at least 30 per cent of areas of degraded terrestrial, inland water, and marine and coastal ecosystems are under effective restoration, in order to enhance biodiversity and ecosystem functions and services, ecological integrity and connectivity.

Relevance of KBAs

KBAs can be the nuclei of a network of protected and conserved areas. KBAs should be a focus of restoration efforts, particularly to maintain the biodiversity elements that trigger KBA status.

Restoring KBAs helps contribute to the overall goal A, including reducing extinction rate. KBA monitoring can also inform restoration goals by identifying outcomes and processes.

Status of KBAs is a complementary indicator of the GBF Monitoring Framework for T2.



TARGET 3

Ensure and enable that by 2030 at least 30 per cent of terrestrial and inland water areas, and of marine and coastal areas, especially areas of particular importance for biodiversity and ecosystem functions and services, are effectively conserved and managed through ecologically representative, well-connected and equitably governed systems of protected areas and other effective area-based conservation measures, recognizing indigenous and traditional territories, where applicable, and integrated into wider landscapes, seascapes and the ocean, while ensuring that any sustainable use, where appropriate in such areas, is fully consistent with conservation outcomes, recognizing and respecting the rights of indigenous peoples and local communities, including over their traditional territories.

Relevance of KBAs

This target calls for protected areas and Other effective area-based conservation measures (OECMs) to cover 'areas of particular importance for biodiversity'. The CBD AHTEG on indicators has recommended a definition of these areas that closely aligns with the KBA criteria, and notes that KBAs are the most comprehensive network of such areas that have been systematically identified. The protected area and OECM coverage of KBAs is a recommended disaggregation of the headline indicator (on the extent of protected areas and OECMs) for Target 3, and also forms the basis of indicators for Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) 14 and 15 (relating to marine, terrestrial, freshwater and mountain KBAs).



Galapagos Islands, Ecuador © pantxorama

TARGET 4

Ensure urgent management actions to halt human induced extinction of known threatened species and for the recovery and conservation of species, in particular threatened species, to significantly reduce extinction risk, as well as to maintain and restore the genetic diversity within and between populations of native, wild and domesticated species to maintain their adaptive potential, including through in situ and ex situ conservation and sustainable management practices, and effectively manage human-wildlife interactions to minimize human-wildlife conflict for coexistence.

Relevance of KBAs

KBAs triggered by species contain globally significant populations of these species. Urgent management actions for threatened species are often best targeted to such locations. For example, preventing extinctions of some species is entirely dependent on actions at particular sites: Alliance for Zero Extinction (AZE) sites are a subset of KBAs and support the last remaining populations of at least one Critically Endangered or Endangered species. All sites identified under KBA criterion A1 are of significance for the populations of threatened species that they support.



Monitoring american eel (EN) © Chesapeake Bay Program

TARGET 5

Ensure that the use, harvesting and trade of wild species is sustainable, safe and legal, preventing overexploitation, minimizing impacts on non-target species and ecosystems, and reducing the risk of pathogen spillover, applying the ecosystem approach, while respecting and protecting customary sustainable use by indigenous peoples and local communities.

Relevance of KBAs

KBA designation does not exclude sustainable use. Monitoring of KBAs will help identify any negative impacts occurring in significant populations and inform management actions.



Mbagathi, Nairobi, Kenya © Jan Maguire

TARGET 6

Eliminate, minimize, reduce and or mitigate the impacts of invasive alien species on biodiversity and ecosystem services by identifying and managing pathways of the introduction of alien species, preventing the introduction and establishment of priority invasive alien species, reducing the rates of introduction and establishment of other known or potential invasive alien species by at least 50 per cent by 2030, and eradicating or controlling invasive alien species, especially in priority sites, such as islands.

Relevance of KBAs

Along with islands, KBAs, as sites which are significant for the global persistence of biodiversity, should be among the sites prioritised for addressing invasive alien species to ensure the globally significant trigger elements are not impacted by the alien species.



Chinese mitten crab (*Eriocheir sinensis*) © Kat

TARGET 7

Reduce pollution risks and the negative impact of pollution from all sources by 2030, to levels that are not harmful to biodiversity and ecosystem functions and services, considering cumulative effects, including: (a) by reducing excess nutrients lost to the environment by at least half, including through more efficient nutrient cycling and use; (b) by reducing the overall risk from pesticides and highly hazardous chemicals by at least half, including through integrated pest management, based on science, taking into account food security and livelihoods; and (c) by preventing, reducing, and working towards eliminating plastic pollution.

Relevance of KBAs

Downstream effects of pollution on KBAs will likely have impacts on the biodiversity that trigger KBA status, and the implications for Targets 1- 5 as a result, need to be considered. Reducing pollution impacts at KBAs should be a priority given their global significance.



Marine Debris on Kure Atoll, Hawaii © USFWS - Pacific Region

TARGET 8

Minimize the impact of climate change and ocean acidification on biodiversity and increase its resilience through mitigation, adaptation, and disaster risk reduction actions, including through nature-based solutions and/or ecosystem-based approaches, while minimizing negative and fostering positive impacts of climate action on biodiversity.

Relevance of KBAs

KBAs may lose their status as a result of climate change impacting their biodiversity. KBAs need to be monitored to assess impacts and manage risk of climate change, potentially including the implementation of adaptation actions, or the identification of new areas for species where populations are shifting. KBAs contribute to carbon sequestration - in some countries they contribute proportionally more than their area would suggest (e.g. Ecuador). Forest KBAs also tend to be areas of high carbon storage - climate and biodiversity co-benefits.



Scientists measure carbon in Indonesia's mangroves ©CIFOR-ICRAF

TARGET 9

Ensure that the management and use of wild species are sustainable, thereby providing social, economic and environmental benefits for people, especially those in vulnerable situations and those most dependent on biodiversity, including through sustainable biodiversity-based activities, products and services that enhance biodiversity, and protecting and encouraging customary sustainable use by indigenous peoples and local communities.

Relevance of KBAs

KBA designation does not preclude any particular kind of management. 36% of the area of terrestrial KBAs are located on IP and LC lands, and IP and LCs play a significant key role in the management of many sites. IP and LCs in Democratic Republic of Congo have valued the KBA process as one way they can get formal recognition for the conservation of their lands.



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TARGET 10

Ensure that areas under agriculture, aquaculture, fisheries and forestry are managed sustainably, in particular through the sustainable use of biodiversity, including through a substantial increase of the application of biodiversity friendly practices, such as sustainable intensification, agroecological and other innovative approaches, contributing to the resilience and long-term efficiency and productivity of these production systems, and to food security, conserving and restoring biodiversity and maintaining nature's contributions to people, including ecosystem functions and services.

Relevance of KBAs

Intensive land uses should be avoided in KBAs, and downstream effects need to be considered. However, agricultural systems can qualify as KBAs provided that the species that trigger KBA status are stable or increasing.

An example would be the wheat fields in the 'Gouritz Cluster - Touwsberg KBA' in South Africa which are used by Blue Cranes for feeding in winter.



Sustainable fish farming © Mohsen Taha

TARGET 11

Restore, maintain and enhance nature's contributions to people, including ecosystem functions and services, such as the regulation of air, water and climate, soil health, pollination and reduction of disease risk, as well as protection from natural hazards and disasters, through nature-based solutions and/or ecosystem-based approaches for the benefit of all people and nature.

Relevance of KBAs

Where studied, KBAs play an outsize role in delivering ecosystem services including climate adaptation and mitigation (see Target 8). In Ecuador, for instance, more than 60% of the country's ecosystem services come from its KBAs and it is likely that other countries have a disproportionate amount of their ecosystem services provided by KBAs.



Water sampling at Sondu Basin, Kenya © CIFOR-ICRAF

TARGET 12

Significantly increase the area and quality, and connectivity of, access to, and benefits from green and blue spaces in urban and densely populated areas sustainably, by mainstreaming the conservation and sustainable use of biodiversity, and ensure biodiversity-inclusive urban planning, enhancing native biodiversity, ecological connectivity and integrity, and improving human health and well-being and connection to nature, and contributing to inclusive and sustainable urbanization and to the provision of ecosystem functions and services.

Relevance of KBAs

Some urban green and blue spaces do meet KBA criteria (e.g. Dublin Bay, Ireland, or some green spaces in Cape Town, South Africa), and can also be important for connecting KBAs identified for migratory species.



Dublin Bay, Ireland © Sergei Gushev

TARGET 13

Take effective legal, policy, administrative and capacity-building measures at all levels, as appropriate, to ensure the fair and equitable sharing of benefits that arise from the utilization of genetic resources and from digital sequence information on genetic resources, as well as traditional knowledge associated with genetic resources, and facilitating appropriate access to genetic resources, and by 2030, facilitating a significant increase of the benefits shared, in accordance with applicable international access and benefit-sharing instruments.

Relevance of KBAs

Identification and maintenance of KBAs will ensure the conservation of genetic resources for the future.



TARGET 14

Ensure the full integration of biodiversity and its multiple values into policies, regulations, planning and development processes, poverty eradication strategies, strategic environmental assessments, environmental impact assessments and, as appropriate, national accounting, within and across all levels of government and across all sectors, in particular those with significant impacts on biodiversity, progressively aligning all relevant public and private activities, and fiscal and financial flows with the goals and targets of this framework.

Relevance of KBAs

Mainstreaming biodiversity by ensuring that all relevant authorities are aware of KBAs and respecting the need to protect them will go a long way to achieving the goals of the GBF. Countries can use the biodiversity-inclusive spatial plans developed under Target 1 (including KBAs in them) to mainstream biodiversity across government sectors to plan for agriculture, urban, mining etc expansion to minimise impacts on biodiversity. Developing national policies that recognised and conserve KBAs will help ensure that these globally significant sites are conserved.



Bezos KBA project Congo results socialized with government officials © WCS Congo

TARGET 15

Take legal, administrative or policy measures to encourage and enable business, and in particular to ensure that large and transnational companies and financial institutions:

- (a) Regularly monitor, assess, and transparently disclose their risks, dependencies and impacts on biodiversity, including with requirements for all large as well as transnational companies and financial institutions along their operations, supply and value chains, and portfolios;
- (b) Provide information needed to consumers to promote sustainable consumption patterns;
- (c) Report on compliance with access and benefit-sharing regulations and measures, as applicable;

in order to progressively reduce negative impacts on biodiversity, increase positive impacts, reduce biodiversity-related risks to business and financial institutions, and promote actions to ensure sustainable patterns of production.

Relevance of KBAs

KBA-friendly business practices should be encouraged in the private and financial sectors. The Integrated Biodiversity Assessment Tool ([IBAT](#)) is recommended by the Taskforce on Nature Related Financial Disclosures for businesses and financial institutions making disclosures. KBAs are one of the three core datasets included in IBAT. KBAs are also used in many other financial disclosure, regulatory and taxonomy frameworks including the International Finance Corporation's Performance Standard 6, the Equator Principles, the Asia Development Bank Performance Standards, Société Générale, EU Taxonomy, Science Based Targets Network and the Global Reporting Initiative to identify areas of importance for biodiversity. - companies can sign up and use these tools through IBAT.



TARGET 16

Ensure that people are encouraged and enabled to make sustainable consumption choices, including by establishing supportive policy, legislative or regulatory frameworks, improving education and access to relevant and accurate information and alternatives, and by 2030, reduce the global footprint of consumption in an equitable manner, including through halving global food waste, significantly reducing overconsumption and substantially reducing waste generation, in order for all people to live well in harmony with Mother Earth.

Relevance of KBAs

Unsustainable consumption threatens the future of KBAs through land conversion, pollution and over-exploitation of natural resources. Reducing over-consumption will therefore indirectly help KBAs.



TARGET 17

Establish, strengthen capacity for, and implement in all countries, biosafety measures as set out in Article 8(g) of the Convention on Biological Diversity and measures for the handling of biotechnology and distribution of its benefits as set out in Article 19 of the Convention.

Relevance of KBAs

KBAs need to be factored into risk assessments for living modified organisms (LMOs).



TARGET 18

Identify by 2025, and eliminate, phase out or reform incentives, including subsidies, harmful for biodiversity, in a proportionate, just, fair, effective and equitable way, while substantially and progressively reducing them by at least \$500 billion per year by 2030, starting with the most harmful incentives, and scale up positive incentives for the conservation and sustainable use of biodiversity.

Relevance of KBAs

When redirecting subsidies and other incentives, KBA-friendly subsidies can be taken into account.



TARGET 19

Substantially and progressively increase the level of financial resources from all sources, in an effective, timely and easily accessible manner, including domestic, international, public and private resources, in accordance with Article 20 of the Convention, to implement national biodiversity strategies and action plans, mobilizing at least \$200 billion per year by 2030, including by:

- (a) Increasing total biodiversity related international financial resources from developed countries, including official development assistance, and from countries that voluntarily assume obligations of developed country Parties, to developing countries, in particular the least developed countries and small island developing States, as well as countries with economies in transition, to at least \$20 billion per year by 2025, and to at least \$30 billion per year by 2030;
- (b) Significantly increasing domestic resource mobilization, facilitated by the preparation and implementation of national biodiversity finance plans or similar instruments according to national needs, priorities and circumstances;
- (c) Leveraging private finance, promoting blended finance, implementing strategies for raising new and additional resources, and encouraging the private sector to invest in biodiversity, including through impact funds and other instruments;
- (d) Stimulating innovative schemes such as payment for ecosystem services, green bonds, biodiversity offsets and credits, and benefit-sharing mechanisms, with environmental and social safeguards;
- (e) Optimizing co-benefits and synergies of finance targeting the biodiversity and climate crises;
- (f) Enhancing the role of collective actions, including by indigenous peoples and local communities, Mother Earth centric actions^[1] and non-market-based approaches including community based natural resource management and civil society cooperation and solidarity aimed at the conservation of biodiversity;
- (g) Enhancing the effectiveness, efficiency and transparency of resource provision and use;

Relevance of KBAs

Many donors already use KBAs to guide where they will invest in conservation and this needs to be broadened to all donors with interests in biodiversity conservation. Ensuring that all countries make comprehensive assessments of KBAs, monitor and conserve them to guide implementation of the GBF will ensure that globally significant sites for species and ecosystems are identified and conserved.



TARGET 20

Strengthen capacity-building and development, access to and transfer of technology, and promote development of and access to innovation and technical and scientific cooperation, including through South-South, North-South and triangular cooperation, to meet the needs for effective implementation, particularly in developing countries, fostering joint technology development and joint scientific research programmes for the conservation and sustainable use of biodiversity and strengthening scientific research and monitoring capacities, commensurate with the ambition of the goals and targets of the Framework.

Relevance of KBAs

Awareness-raising of KBAs as a tool should be included in capacity building and there is a need for capacity building and scientific cooperation to apply the KBA criteria effectively in each country. Experts from South Africa are already training others in sub-Saharan Africa in how to identify KBAs.



Bezons KBA Project DRC presentation in Montreal © WWF DRC

TARGET 21

Ensure that the best available data, information and knowledge are accessible to decision makers, practitioners and the public to guide effective and equitable governance, integrated and participatory management of biodiversity, and to strengthen communication, awareness-raising, education, monitoring, research and knowledge management and, also in this context, traditional knowledge, innovations, practices and technologies of indigenous peoples and local communities should only be accessed with their free, prior and informed consent, in accordance with national legislation.

Relevance of KBAs

The KBA process, operating through the establishment of National Coordination Groups, helps bring together the biodiversity data at a national scale in a collaborative process to identify KBAs and which can be useful for many other processes. This includes enhancing data access and information sharing and incorporating IP and LC knowledge.



Images from top to bottom: Meeting ACEAA Conservación Amazónica, Bolivia © Armonia; Nanki Wampankit (Territories Director CONFENIAE); Manuel Sánchez (KBA coordinator), Dionisio Mukucham (vicepresident NAE) © Juan Carlos Sanchez

TARGET 22

Ensure the full, equitable, inclusive, effective and gender-responsive representation and participation in decision-making, and access to justice and information related to biodiversity by indigenous peoples and local communities, respecting their cultures and their rights over lands, territories, resources, and traditional knowledge, as well as by women and girls, children and youth, and persons with disabilities and ensure the full protection of environmental human rights defenders.

Relevance of KBAs

KBAs do not prescribe a certain governance type. 36% of KBAs occur on IP and LC land. The KBA Programme encourages the identification and management of KBAs to pro-actively include marginalised groups, and gender equity with full participation.



Santa Rosa, Peru © ECOAN

TARGET 23

Ensure gender equality in the implementation of the Framework through a gender-responsive approach, where all women and girls have equal opportunity and capacity to contribute to the three objectives of the Convention, including by recognizing their equal rights and access to land and natural resources and their full, equitable, meaningful and informed participation and leadership at all levels of action, engagement, policy and decision-making related to biodiversity.

Relevance of KBAs

KBAs identification and assessment processes aim to be gender sensitive and proactively include gender and marginalised groups.



Naranjos, Shambuyacu © Constantino Aucca

5. CONCLUSION

This briefing demonstrates that KBAs' relevance to the GBF is not limited to Target 3, or even only to the first three area-based targets. Rather, the rationale for and value of KBAs are inextricably linked with all the goals and targets of the GBF, albeit to varying degrees. Thus KBAs demonstrate their utility as a key implementation mechanism for the framework.



Mobula birostris © David Novo