

Views on the UAE-Belém work programme on indicators for measuring progress towards the targets agreed in support of the global goal on adaptation

Submission by the International Union for Conservation of Nature (IUCN)

March 2024

The International Union for Conservation of Nature (IUCN) is pleased to make this submission in accordance with paragraph 41 of [Decision 2/CMA.5](#) on the Global Goal on Adaptation that invites Parties and observers to submit their views on matters referred to in paragraph 39, i.e. on the two-year UAE-Belém work programme on indicators for measuring progress achieved towards the targets referred to in paragraphs 9–10 of the decision, with a view to “identifying and, as needed, developing indicators and potential quantified elements for those targets”, as well as the modalities for the same.

At the outset, IUCN welcomes the adoption at COP28/CMA5 of the UAE Framework for Global Climate Resilience as well as the launch of the UAE-Belém work programme on indicators for measuring progress towards the targets identified under it for 2030 and beyond. We believe that these are concrete and important steps that can significantly advance the achievement of the Global Goal on Adaptation established under the Paris Agreement.

We welcome, in particular, the decision that the UAE Framework for Global Climate Resilience “should guide and strengthen efforts, including long-term transformational and incremental adaptation, towards reducing vulnerability and enhancing adaptive capacity and resilience, as well as the collective well-being of all people, the protection of livelihoods and economies, and the preservation and regeneration of nature, for current and future generations”, and that it “should take into account the best available science and the worldviews and values of Indigenous Peoples, to support the achievement of the global goal on adaptation” (Decision 2/ CMA.5, paragraph 8).

We also welcome all the specific targets for 2030 that have been agreed to under paragraphs 9 and 10 of this decision. In our view, the identification and establishment of credible indicators, including appropriate quantified elements, that can help to systematically measure the progress in achieving these targets is critical to ensuring that these targets will be delivered.

In this submission, IUCN would like to focus in particular on the development of indicators for the target specified in paragraph 9(d) of this decision, which focuses on “*Reducing climate impacts on ecosystems and biodiversity, and accelerating the use of ecosystem-based adaptation and nature-based solutions, including through their management, enhancement, restoration and conservation and the protection of terrestrial, inland water, mountain, marine and coastal ecosystems*”.

As the IPCC Sixth Assessment Report reminds us, widespread and rapid changes in the atmosphere, ocean, cryosphere and biosphere have already occurred, resulting in widespread adverse impacts and related losses and damages to both nature and people. For example, hundreds of local losses of species have been driven by increases in the magnitude of heat extremes, with mass mortality events recorded on land and in the ocean. Impacts on some ecosystems are even approaching irreversibility such as the impacts of hydrological changes resulting from the retreat of glaciers, or the changes in some mountain and Arctic ecosystems driven by permafrost thaw. Such loss of ecosystems and their services has cascading and long-term impacts on people globally, especially for Indigenous Peoples and local communities who are directly dependent on ecosystems to meet basic needs (IPCC AR6 Synthesis Report SPM, A.2 and B.2.4).

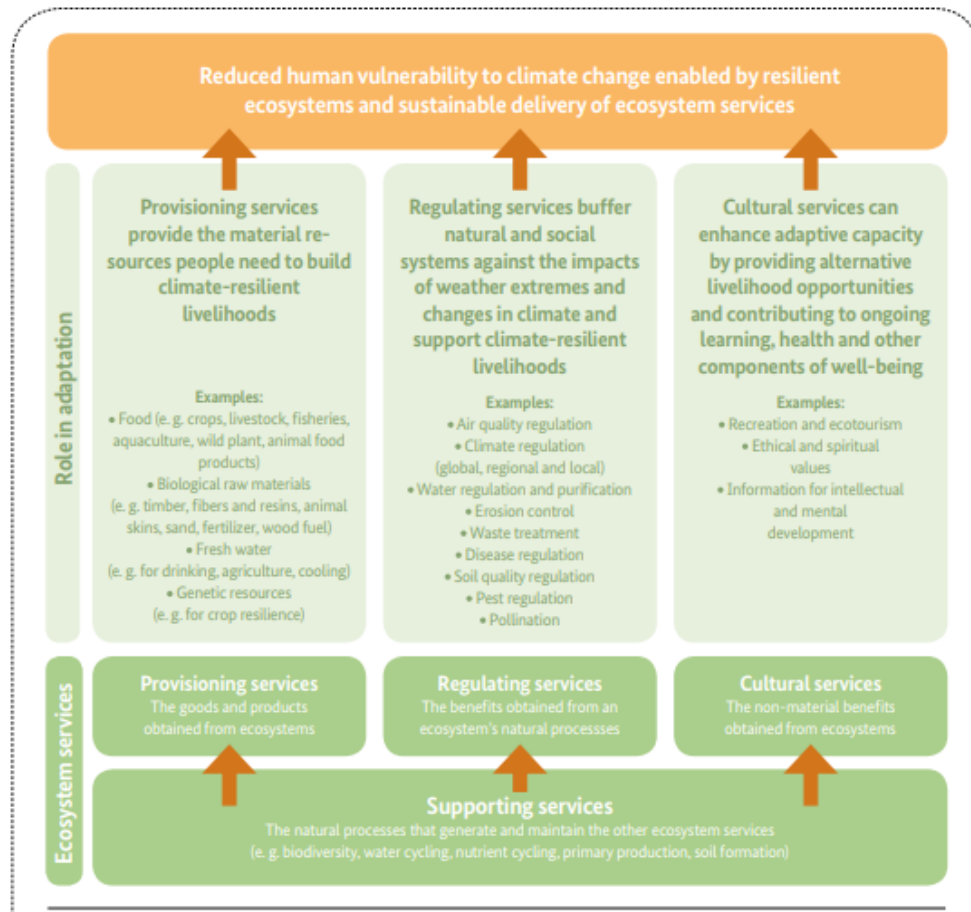
In our view, reducing climate impacts on ecosystems and biodiversity requires, in the first instance, rapid, deep and sustained reductions in GHG emissions, as called for by science, to limit warming to 1.5°C above pre-industrial levels, given that every increment in warming increases adverse impacts. But in addition to ambitious mitigation efforts, reducing adverse climate impacts on ecosystems and biodiversity, including through adaptation measures, also requires their systematic assessment and monitoring over time. IUCN can support this effort through its global-level scientific tools and methodologies such as the [IUCN Red List of Threatened Species](#), the [IUCN Red List of Ecosystems](#) and the [IUCN Global Ecosystem Typology](#).

On quantified elements within target 9(d), we further note that IPCC AR6 has, itself, specified that “Maintaining the resilience of biodiversity and ecosystem services at a global scale depends on effective and equitable conservation of approximately 30% to 50% of Earth’s land, freshwater and ocean areas, including currently near-natural ecosystems (high confidence)” (IPCC AR6 Synthesis Report, SPM, C.3.6). Through tools such as the [World Database on Protected Areas \(WDPA\)](#), the [World Database on Other Effective Area-based Conservation Measures \(WD-OECM\)](#), and the [Green List of Protected and Conserved Areas](#), IUCN can assist in measuring implementation progress and quality on these as well.

Target 9(d) also recognises the importance of accelerating the use of ecosystem-based adaptation (EbA) and nature-based solutions (NbS). As the IPCC AR6 WGII has noted, nature-based solutions, including ecosystem-based adaptation, can reduce risks for ecosystems and benefit people, when they are planned and implemented in the right way and in the right place. For example, ecosystem-based adaptation approaches such as urban greening, restoration of wetlands and upstream forest ecosystems have been found to be effective in reducing flood risks and urban heat. In addition to their adaptation benefits, conservation, improved management, and restoration of forests and other ecosystems have also been estimated to offer the largest share of economic mitigation potential in the land sector, with reduced deforestation in tropical regions having the highest total mitigation potential (IPCC AR6 Synthesis Report SPM). Thus, systematically measuring the progress in the uptake of NbS and EbA, and ensuring that these are done in the right way, is also highly important.

IUCN would also like to highlight the importance of target 9(d) to the attainment of the other targets that have been specified under the UAE framework. A critical value of nature-based solutions, including ecosystem-based adaptation, is that they link traditional biodiversity and ecosystem conservation approaches with sustainable socio-economic development as part of an overall strategy for helping people adapt to shocks and risks associated with climate change. An increasing body of evidence indicates that healthy ecosystems with rich biodiversity can enhance water provision, quality and security (target 9a); underpin resilient and sustainable agriculture and food systems (target 9b); generate urban and rural health benefits (target 9c); increase resilience of infrastructure and human settlements through both green and green-grey approaches (target 9e); diversify livelihood options and support poverty eradication efforts (target specified in paragraph 9f); and help protect heritage sites (particularly natural and mixed nature-culture sites), including through Indigenous, traditional and local knowledge (target 9g).

These inter-linkages can be illustrated through the following schematic:



Source: GIZ, UNEP-WCMC and FEBA (2020) *Guidebook for Monitoring and Evaluating Ecosystem-based Adaptation Interventions*. Deutsche Gesellschaft für Internationale Zusammenarbeit (GIZ) GmbH, Bonn, Germany

Taken together, these make it all the more important to identify and develop clear and fit-for-purpose indicators for measuring progress on target 9(d).

In this regard, it is important to also note that a number of frameworks that build on multi-stakeholder consultations and collaboration among practitioners and policy-makers on nature-based solutions and ecosystem-based adaptation, already exist. It will be important to leverage and draw on these to help determine suitable indicators for this target.

Two key frameworks, in this regard, include:

- The [IUCN Global Standard for Nature-based Solutions](#) and its accompanying [self-assessment tool](#) – these can facilitate the achievement of the thematic targets related to ecosystem preservation and resilience building and assist in the development of indicators for measuring progress towards these goals. The Global Standard criteria and indicators also align with the UAE Framework's emphasis on gender-responsive, participatory and transparent adaptation actions.
- A [Framework for defining qualification criteria and quality standards for Ecosystem-based Adaptation](#) (developed by the [Friends of EbA](#) network) – EbA initiatives draw on a wide range of existing practices employed by the conservation and development sectors, such as sustainable natural resource management, community-based natural resource management and community-based adaptation. The Framework developed by FEBA includes key elements, principles, criteria, and indicators for defining EbA and for strengthening its integration into policy frameworks and implementation measures at different levels.

The IUCN Global NbS Standard and FEBA EbA Criteria form the basis of IUCN's on-going work on climate change adaptation and can bring additional value to the UAE-Belém work programme, particularly to support the development of indicators for measuring progress on target 9(d).

Some specific on-going work that could also support this process include the following:

- *Unpacked Guidance on Nature-based Solutions for Adaptation* – to be developed under the “Nature-based Solutions for climate Adaptation: monitoring & impact evaluation (NAbSA)” project, based on field implementation experience of 19 large-scale gender-responsive NbS for Adaptation projects with biodiversity co-benefits. The development of this guidance will be supported by FEBA through its workstream on mainstreaming EbA as an integrated approach to achieving the objectives of the 3 Rio Conventions through integrated approaches to MEL (Monitoring, Evaluation, and Learning) using cross-cutting targets and indicators.
- *FEBA Working Group on targets 8 and 11 of the Kunming-Montreal Global Biodiversity Framework* – this working group works under the guidance of the Convention for Biological Diversity (CBD) secretariat to assist national target setting and implementation for these targets, which are as follows:
 - 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.
 - 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.

It would be particularly valuable, in our view, to ensure alignment of the indicators developed for these targets with those developed for target 9(d), noting their substantive overlap.

- IUCN is also working with the Egypt COP27 Presidency and the Government of Germany on the [ENACT \(Enhancing Nature-based Solutions for an Accelerated Climate Transformation\) Partnership](#). This initiative aims to amplify and strengthen collaboration between existing NbS efforts and partnerships and foster an enabling environment for NbS across the 3 Rio Conventions. With a main goal of *'enhanced protection and resilience of at least 1 billion vulnerable people including at least 500 million women and girls'*, the ENACT Partnership aims to advance the necessary alignment of integrated climate and biodiversity action with transformative change.

Similarly, a lot of work on adaptation target-setting and definition of indicators has also been undertaken in various other project and programmatic settings. These hold valuable lessons and it will be important for the UAE-Belém work programme to draw and build on the experiences of these past, ongoing and emerging initiatives in this space as well. Likewise, also with respect to the relevant targets and indicators of other key international processes and frameworks, including the SDGs and the other Rio Conventions, in order to maximise synergies and ensure alignment.

IUCN appreciates the opportunity to make this submission, and looks forward to actively participating in the UAE-Belém work programme and contributing to the development of indicators to measure the progress on the achievement of these important targets.