



**Intergovernmental Science-Policy
Platform on Biodiversity and
Ecosystem Services**

Distr.: General
16 December 2014

English only

**Plenary of the Intergovernmental Science-Policy
Platform on Biodiversity and Ecosystem Services**

Third session

Bonn, Germany, 12–17 January 2015

Item 5 (c) of the provisional agenda*

**Initial work programme of the Platform:
scoping documents for regional assessments, land
degradation and restoration and the conceptualization
of values**

**Consistent use of indicators across global, regional and
subregional assessments**

Note by the secretariat

The annex to the present note sets out a briefing paper on the consistent use of indicators across global, regional and subregional assessments prepared by the United Nations Environment Programme World Conservation Monitoring Centre in its capacity as secretariat of the Biodiversity Indicators Partnership. The paper is intended to highlight the value of considering the alignment of indicators with those being developed and used under the Convention on Biological Diversity. It also addresses the issue of coherence in the use of indicators across the assessments carried out by the Intergovernmental Science-Policy Platform on Biodiversity and Ecosystem Services, and in so doing represents a contribution to the work of the task force on knowledge and data. The annex is presented as received, without formal editing.

* IPBES/3/1.

Annex

Consistent use of indicators across global, regional and subregional assessments

Briefing Paper for the Third Session of the Platform's Plenary (IPBES-3)

Introduction

1. IPBES is about to embark on a series of regional and subregional assessments (decision IPBES-2/5 and working document IPBES/3/6), and the generic framework which forms part of the scoping (IPBES/3/6/Add.1) aims to promote coherence across the regional/subregional assessments. The draft generic scoping report also highlights the importance of a common framework in arriving at an integrated view that makes it possible to assess the impact of drivers external to a region on that region, for example, and to provide the basis for the upcoming global assessment (IPBES/3/9).
2. The Guide for Assessments (IPBES/3/INF/4) emphasises the multiple role of biodiversity and ecosystem service indicators for assessments, in particular for tracking performance and monitoring the consequences of alternative policies. Indicators can be used across sectors and disciplines to inform data collection and collation, for communicating the results of assessments, and as a policy support tool in tracking performance and understanding the consequence of particular decisions. Also the draft IPBES Data and Information Management Plan (IPBES/3/4) emphasises that indicators will be an essential link between national, regional and global assessments and could be used as common building blocks.
1. The IPBES operating principles¹ make it clear that IPBES should collaborate with existing initiatives, and both build on what is already being done and avoid duplication. If IPBES is to employ indicators and metrics, then it needs to consider key initiatives already under way so as to be able to use and build on them. This necessarily includes building on the work being done by the Convention on Biological Diversity to assess progress in achieving the Aichi Biodiversity Targets.
3. The aim of this document is to inform discussion and decision making at IPBES-3 on this issue, by providing information on key parts of the current landscape with regards to biodiversity indicator development and use. This document does not intend to be exhaustive, but rather to highlight a few key processes for consideration as the decisions made at the third session of the Plenary are subsequently implemented.

Indicators to track achievement of CBD Targets

4. There are numerous processes currently ongoing at the global, regional and national levels that aim to promote and support the development and use of indicators for biodiversity and ecosystem services. This information document only specifically indicators and indicator processes relating to the Convention on Biological Diversity (CBD).
5. The Strategic Plan for Biodiversity 2011-2020² was adopted by the CBD Conference of the Parties in 2010. It presents a framework for not only the biodiversity-related conventions but for the entire UN system, meaning that indicators for tracking progress towards its goals and targets are highly relevant to far more than just the CBD.
6. The Biodiversity Indicators Partnership (BIP) brings together a host of international organisations working on indicator development to provide the best available information on biodiversity trends to the global community. The Partnership was initially established to help monitor progress towards the CBD 2010 biodiversity target. However, since its establishment in 2006, the BIP has developed a strong identity not only within the CBD but with other Multilateral Environmental Agreements (MEAs), national and regional governments and other sectors.

¹ Appendix I to the resolution establishing IPBES

² See www.cbd.int/sp

7. For the fourth Global Biodiversity Outlook³ (the flagship publication of the CBD), the BIP mobilised a suite of global indicators to monitor progress towards implementation of the Strategic Plan for Biodiversity 2011-2020. These indicators utilised a wealth of global, regional and national datasets in their development. Fifty-five indicators were projected to 2020 to provide an assessment of progress towards 2020 (Figure 1). Both the Global Biodiversity Outlook report 4 and the underlying CBD Technical Series 72 used a range of indicators that are also applicable to IPBES assessments such as land use trends, the status of pollinating species, and extent of natural habitats.

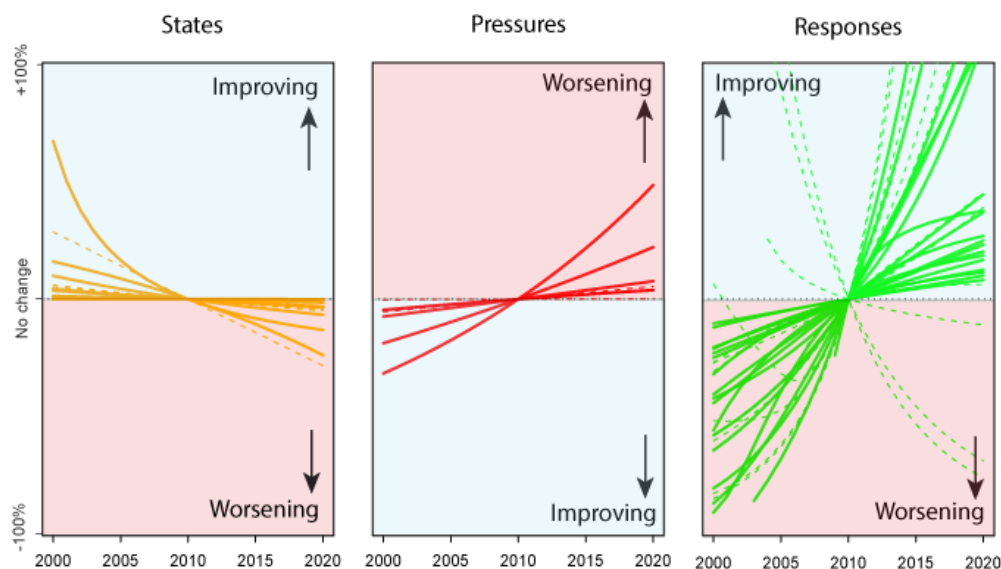


Figure 1. Overview of the indicator trends across 20 Aichi Targets in the fourth edition of the Global Biodiversity Outlook.⁴

8. There are a number of ongoing processes to review and update the available indicators, including as part of the production of the fourth edition of the Global Biodiversity Outlook⁵ and the CBD COP has recently decided to convene an Ad-Hoc Technical Expert Group (AHTEG) meeting on indicators in the middle of 2015. This meeting will agree a road map for addressing indicator gaps for tracking the Aichi Biodiversity Targets as well as understand how current indicators can better support other initiatives such as IPBES, the Global Strategy on Plant Conservation (GSPC), the Ramsar Convention, and the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs).
9. Given the considerable overlap in the overarching goals of the biodiversity-related Conventions, efforts have been made to harmonise indicators across conventions and to identify those produced by BIP Partners that can be used directly - or for which the underlying data can be used - to produce meaningful indicators for other Conventions. For example, an exploratory study found that at least 16 of the BIP indicators used for reporting for the CBD could also be utilised for the Ramsar Convention on Wetlands. For many of these, trend analysis and versions for multiple scales were possible. A Red List Index was calculated for wetland species, and abundance trends were calculated for wetland species from the Living Planet Database, which illustrate the high potential for adapting global indicators to the specific needs of the Ramsar Convention, and potentially other conventions.
10. The proposed SDGs released in July 2014 include two Goals (14 & 15) focusing on biodiversity while a number of others mention or allude to biodiversity issues. All but two of the Aichi Targets (Targets 1 and 20) can be aligned with an SDG Target to some degree. The opportunity therefore exists to consider the development of indicators that will have relevance to both processes.
11. In addition to this work, partners from the Group on Earth Observation Biodiversity Observation Network (GEO BON) are developing Essential Biodiversity Variables (EBVs). EBVs are measurements required for study,

³ See www.cbd.int/en/gbo4

⁴ See www.cbd.int/en/gbo4

⁵ See www.cbd.int/en/gbo4

reporting, and management of biodiversity change and will allow the harmonization of existing monitoring schemes and facilitate the development of new indicators of biodiversity change, especially in gap areas where information on biodiversity change is still very sparse.

Global assessments

12. Biodiversity indicators are important tools for understanding the state of the environment and tracking and communicating progress towards goals and targets, as well as for informing policy and planning. It is for this reason that the importance of using indicators and metrics has been raised in a number of IPBES-related meetings and documents (including IPBES/3/9), and this is why advising on the issue is one of the responsibilities of the IPBES Task Force on Knowledge and Data, and will be taken up further at future meetings (IPBES/3/4).
13. As indicators are already being developed and used to track progress in achieving the Aichi Biodiversity Targets and implementation of the Strategic Plan for Biodiversity 2011-2020, there are strong arguments for promoting use of these indicators for IPBES assessments, building on these further as necessary. This will utilize existing experience and work, help build coherence between IPBES and the CBD, and also potentially contribute to building coherence with other MEAs and the SDGs. Additionally, consistent use of indicators will help to ensure spatial scalability of IPBES assessments.
14. Today the BIP brings together over 40 organisations working internationally on indicator development and use to provide the most comprehensive information on biodiversity trends. These Partners, which include academic institutions, NGOs, MEAs, intergovernmental organisations and regional organisations, together currently produce over 55 global indicators, tracking progress towards the Aichi Biodiversity Targets. This suite of global indicators contains not just direct measures of biodiversity, but also includes measures of pressures on biodiversity, benefits from biodiversity and policy responses.

Regional and subregional assessments

15. The draft generic scoping report for regional and subregional assessments (IPBES/3/6/Add.1) specifies that regional assessments will draw on a wide variety of datasets addressing all the specific components of the conceptual framework. The rationale for the generic scoping report is to promote coherence across the regional/subregional assessments. As is suggested above, an important part of this will be consistency and coherence in the use of indicators.
16. The draft IPBES Data and Information Management Plan (IPBES/3/4) emphasises that indicators will be an essential link between national, regional and global assessments and could be used as common building blocks. Indeed, as outlined above, there are strong foundations on which to develop IPBES assessments and associated indicators at various spatial scales, and many initiatives that could be mobilised to support and provide information and indicators for IPBES assessments.
17. In addition to supporting indicator development and mobilisation at the global scale, the BIP has also been working with the CBD at national and regional scales. Since the adoption of the Strategic Plan for Biodiversity 2011-2020, work has been under way to develop capacity within governments and national-level institutions for the development and use of indicators as part of the NBSAP revision process. A current Swiss-funded project is investigating the disaggregation of BIP indicators at the regional and national level and will produce a road-map for regions and countries in the use of and access to these data for their various reporting needs.
18. There is also experience in the Pan-European region in developing a regional set of biodiversity indicators aligned with the CBD indicators, for which the data and information used came from each of the participating countries through processes developed as part of the project. This was the *Streamlining European Biodiversity Indicators* (SEBI) project managed by the European Environment Agency.