

Species Elements of the Post-2020 Global Biodiversity Framework

This briefing focusses on the species elements of the draft Post-2020 Global Biodiversity Framework. We make recommendations for the refinement of the Goal A and Target 4 composite text, emerging from the Nairobi OEWG4 meetings¹, needed to place us on pathway to halt and reverse biodiversity loss towards a nature positive future. This is critical to achieving the CBD's 2050 Vision of 'Living in harmony with nature'.

Goal A Critical Elements

Fundamental to the achievement of ambitious outcomes for species are:

- **Outcomes on extinction, extinction risk, and species' population abundance.** Both 'extinction' and 'extinction risk' are essential, as the former incentivises efforts to prevent irreversible loss of biodiversity, while the latter promotes actions to help recover threatened species. The third aspect, 'Population abundance', is critical to track, as depleted and declining populations will not effectively deliver ecosystem functions and services. Trends in species abundance are an unambiguous, transparent signal of environmental health. In brief, halting extinctions will not be enough, because we could mark 2050 with many species still (highly) threatened; it also will not be enough to reduce extinction risk, because this could leave many species with highly depleted populations. All three elements should be retained in the Goal rather than being moved to Targets, as they can each only be achieved through implementation of multiple Targets.
- **Measurable outcomes for 2030 and 2050 should be included in the Goal text** to define the necessary progress in halting and reversing biodiversity loss by 2030 that is needed to put us on track to achieve the 2050 Vision²

As such, the following **language in the composite text is essential to retain** because it captures the three complementary components of the status of species and charts the trajectory for the implementation of these:

1. **'human-induced extinctions of all known threatened species is halted by 2030', 'from now,'** extinctions are irreversible and have wide ranging impacts on ecosystem function. The potential alternative language on "reducing the extinction rate" is both insufficient and challenging to measure owing to difficulties in defining the baseline rate and measuring changes in this. The inclusion of "from now" clarifies that human-induced extinctions should cease immediately – this is both necessary and feasible. While climate change poses a severe challenge for some species in some locations, extinction for such species can be prevented through targeted adaptation interventions in the wild and/or through establishing captive breeding or propagation.
2. **'extinction risk is reduced by at least 20% by 2030 and eliminated by 2050'** (as measured by the Red List Index³). Only a 20%+ reduction by 2030 places us on the required trajectory to eliminate extinction risk by 2050⁴, a prerequisite to meeting the 2050 Vision, and demonstrably feasible with transformative change⁵.
3. **'Average population abundance of wild native species is increased by at least 20 per cent by 2030 and increased to healthy resilient levels by 2050'**. The component on population abundance is essential and is *not* adequately covered by 'reducing extinction risk' or language around 'conservation status'. A 20% increase in abundance by 2030 is needed to restore populations to baseline levels by 2050⁶. The inclusion of 'wild native' avoids incentivising perverse actions to increase the abundance of introduced, invasive or domestic species. The inclusion of "Average" clarifies that this does not require increasing the abundance of *all* species, including already 'super-abundant' and/or 'problematic' species. The indicators available for measuring average species abundance (as measured by e.g., the Living Planet Index⁷) are designed so that large increases in abundance of a small number of species do not have an undue influence on the overall trend.

¹ CBD (Convention on Biological Diversity). 2022. [Post-2020 Global Biodiversity Framework Draft recommendations submitted by Co-Chairs CBD/WG2020/4/L.2-ANNEX](#). Montreal, Canada: CBD

² CBD (Convention on Biological Diversity). 2010. [The Strategic Plan for Biodiversity 2011-2020 and the Aichi Biodiversity Targets, Decision X/2](#). Montreal, Canada: CBD

³ IUCN 2022 [Red List Index](#)

⁴ BirdLife International. 2022. [Species conservation in the post-2020 Global Biodiversity Framework](#)

⁵ Bolam *et al.* 2022. Over half of threatened species require targeted recovery actions to avert human-induced extinction. *Frontiers in ecology and the environment* [online] <https://doi.org/10.1002/fee.2537>

⁶ See ³

⁷ WWF and ZSL. 2022. [Living Planet Report 2020: Bending the curve of biodiversity loss](#)

Goal A Text Proposals

Our text proposals for the species elements of composite text options 1 and 2, are as follows (with new text in **bold**, deletions in ~~strikethrough~~, and critical text to be unbracketed and maintained underlined). **To note**, our preferred text is Option 1. However, we illustrate here how Option 2 could be improved with the addition of timepoints and numeric figures.

Option 1 Edited Composite text

From ~~[Beginning now]~~, the human-induced extinction of ~~{all}{known}~~ ~~{threatened}~~ species is halted ~~{by 2030}~~~~[by 2050]~~, ~~{and}~~ extinction risk is reduced ~~{by at least 10}{20}{25}~~⁸ per cent by 2030 and ~~{eliminated}~~~~{reduced}~~ ~~{to a minimum}~~~~[by 50 per cent]~~~~{halved}~~ by 2050, and the ~~{conservation status}~~ average population abundance ~~{and distribution}~~ of ~~{depleted populations of}~~ all ~~{wild and domesticated}~~ native threatened species is increased ~~{or maintained}~~ by at least ~~{10}~~ 20 per cent by 2030 and increased to healthy and resilient levels by 2050.

Clean text

From now, the human-induced extinction of all known threatened species is halted, extinction risk is reduced by at least 20 per cent by 2030 and eliminated by 2050, and the average population abundance of wild native species is increased by at least 20 per cent by 2030 and to healthy and resilient levels by 2050.

Option 2 Edited Composite text

[...] halting ~~{from now}~~ human-induced extinctions ~~{and reducing extinction risk by at least 20 per cent by 2030 and to zero by 2050}~~, **increasing average population abundance of wild** ~~{native}~~ species **by 20 per cent by 2030 and to supporting** healthy and resilient populations **by 2050**, [...]

Clean text

[...] halting from now human-induced extinctions and reducing extinction risk by at least 20 per cent by 2030 and to zero by 2050, increasing average population abundance of wild native species by 20 per cent by 2030 and to healthy and resilient levels by 2050, [...]

Response to the Outcomes of the work of the informal group⁹ Intersessional

- It is critical to ensure that the provisions of Goal A are SMART through the inclusion of numeric values and milestones, in relation to species extinctions, extinction risk and population abundance, and in setting out the timeline for implementation. A vague aspirational goal negates our ability to track progress against the Global biodiversity Framework's Mission to halt and reverse biodiversity loss.
- We must be explicit that action to halt extinctions starts now and reject the proposal that text to this effect should be removed, though would support this being re-phrased as 'From now' (see above formulation.)
- The intersessional groups proposed text leaves many elements still to be discussed within the negotiation and it is vital clarity is provided on the definition and implications of each.

Target 4 Critical elements

The focus of Target four is to take action for threatened species that require targeted species-specific recovery actions to recover. As such, the following **language in the composite text is essential to retain**:

1. **'undertake urgent managements actions to enable the recovery and conservation of threatened species' [...]** **'including through in-situ and ex-situ conservation'**. For some threatened species, designating and effectively managing protected and conserved areas, restoring habitats and mitigating threats (such as unsustainable use, pollution, and invasive aliens) is insufficient. Their extinction can only be prevented through also implementing urgent and targeted species-specific recovery actions^{4, 10}. Recovery of non-threatened species is enabled by actions taken under the other targets. The word 'sustainable', included in square brackets, is ambiguous: this target is not about sustainable use, and the aim is to improve the status of threatened species, not necessarily to sustain actions beyond the period in which they are need. We therefore recommend its deletion.

⁸ A trajectory of a 20% reduction in extinction risk is the minimum required to put us on track in 2030 to achieve the 2050 goal to eliminate extinction risk. The higher figure of 25% is a steeper trajectory and will bring us closer to achieving the 2050 goal by 2030.

⁹ CBD (Convention on Biological Diversity). 2022. [OUTCOMES OF THE WORK OF THE INFORMAL GROUP ON THE POST-2020 GLOBAL BIODIVERSITY FRAMEWORK CBD/WG2020/5/2](#) Montreal, Canada: CBD

¹⁰ CBD.2022. Information Document OEWG3 [A Global Species Action Plan: supporting implementation of the post-2020 global biodiversity framework](#)

2. **‘genetic diversity of native wild species’**. The word “all” should be deleted to avoid incentivising actions favouring introduced or invasive species. The focus should remain on wild rather than domesticated species (including landraces), because the latter are covered by other targets, and would distract from the urgent actions needed to conserve threatened wild native species.
3. **‘effectively manage human-wildlife conflict *and* coexistence’**, with the addition of ‘and’ this simplifies the text and balances both types of human-wildlife interaction “conflict” and “co-existence”¹¹.

Target 4 Text Proposals

Our text proposals are as follows (with new text in bold, deletions in ~~strikethrough~~, and critical text to be unbracketed and maintained underlined).

Edited Composite Text

[Ensure active] ~~Undertake~~ urgent ~~and sustainable~~ management actions ~~to~~ ~~enable~~ [achieve] the recovery and conservation of ~~threatened species~~ ~~species, in particular threatened species~~, [and] [to] [maintain and restore] the ~~genetic diversity~~ [within and between populations] of ~~all species~~ ~~[[all] ~~native~~ wild and domesticated species]]~~ ~~[[to] [and] maintain their adaptive potential] including through in situ and ex situ conservation, [[prevent] human-induced extinctions [of [known] threatened species,]] and ~~effectively manage human-wildlife interactions~~ and to ~~[[halt] [minimize] [avoid or reduce]] human-wildlife conflict~~ ~~to promote their~~ **and** coexistence [to the benefit of both humans and wildlife]].~~

Clean text

Undertake urgent management actions to enable the recovery and conservation of threatened species and the genetic diversity of native wild species including through in situ and ex situ conservation, and **effectively manage human-wildlife conflict and coexistence**¹².

Response to the Outcomes of the work of the informal group¹³

- We prefer the original text “Undertake urgent” rather than the “Ensure urgent” proposed by the intersessional group because the latter can be argued to be indirect with responsibility lying elsewhere.
- We do not agree with the proposal to retain ‘sustainable’ and strongly suggest it should be deleted. This target is about promoting urgent actions to enable recovery of threatened species. Once such species have recovered, different actions will need to be sustained to ensure these species remain unthreatened. The recovery actions themselves need not be sustainable in the long-term. Though some limited actions may be maintained once the recovery has occurred to prevent declines below carrying capacity, such as anti-poaching patrols.
- The wording ‘species in particular threatened species’ undermines the focus of this target on taking action for threatened species that require targeted species-specific recovery actions to recover. The conservation of non-threatened species (and many threatened species) typically requires the implementation of actions under other targets (such as protected areas or habitat restoration), not targeted species-specific recovery actions. Implying that this target encompasses all species is therefore confusing and would diminish the emphasis on those species that *need* targeted actions.
- We do not support the proposal of the intersessional group to retain the words “all” and “domesticated” species. This target should not promote action beneficial to invasive alien species (as opposed to native species), while the focus should remain on wild species, as management of domesticated species is covered under other Targets in the Framework.

¹¹ IUCN. 2022. [IUCN’s Position Post-2020 Global Biodiversity Framework](#)

¹² *To note:* Our preference is for the Goal A milestones to remain at the outcomes level in Goal A. If there is consensus for these to be integrated into Target 4, our views remain on the key essential elements, which are that i) Human induced extinction of all threatened species is halted by 2030, ii) Extinction risk is reduced by at least 20% by 2030; iii) Average abundance of wild native species is increased, by at least 20% by 2030.

¹³ CBD (Convention on Biological Diversity). 2022. [OUTCOMES OF THE WORK OF THE INFORMAL GROUP ON THE POST-2020 GLOBAL BIODIVERSITY FRAMEWORK CBD/WG2020/5/2](#) Montreal, Canada: CBD