IBAT briefing note

Essential information for governments

BirdLife INTERNATIONAL
CONSERVATION INTERNATIONAL
IUCN
UN environment programme
WCMC

Meeting data requirements for NBSAPs and the Kunming-Montreal Global Biodiversity Framework with IBAT

In 2022, parties to the Convention on Biological Diversity (CBD) adopted the Kunming-Montreal Global Biodiversity Framework (KM-GBF). The KM-GBF contains 4 overarching goals and 23 targets, which together should achieve the vision and mission of the KM-GBF[1].

Governments that are contracting parties to the CBD are currently in the process of updating their National Biodiversity Strategies and Action Plans (NBSAPs) to align them with the KM-GBF[2]. Countries are required to update their NBSAPs or develop national targets by COP16 in October 2024.

The Integrated Biodiversity Assessment Tool (IBAT) provides governments with free, integrated access to the World Database on Protected Areas (WDPA), the IUCN Red List of Threatened Species and the World Database of Key Biodiversity Areas (WDKBA). This data can be used to formulate National Biodiversity Strategies and Action Plans (NBSAPs) in line with the KM-GBF, in particular to assist with national biodiversity-inclusive spatial planning (target 1 of the KM-GBF).

Atlantic Puffin
Fratercula arctica
Vulnerable

What is Integrated Biodiversity Assessment Tool?

The Integrated Biodiversity Assessment Tool (IBAT) provides decision-makers with the world's most authoritative biodiversity data to inform spatial planning and ensure that any decisions that may impact the conservation, restoration or management of critical natural habitats are informed by the best available scientific information. Private sector organisations also use IBAT to better inform their risk management and integrate biodiversity into their decision-making processes.

IBAT is developed through a partnership of BirdLife International, Conservation International, International Union for Conservation of Nature (IUCN) and United Nations Environment World Conservation Monitoring Centre (UNEP-WCMC).

IBAT hosts 3 core datasets:

- **World Database on Protected Areas (WDPA).** The WDPA is the world's most authoritative and comprehensive global database of marine and terrestrial protected areas and Other area-based Effective Conservation Measures (OECM) sites. Data for the WDPA is collected primarily from governments with additional data from other stakeholders. As of June 2024, the WDPA includes almost 300,000 protected areas. A protected area is a clearly defined geographical space, recognised, dedicated, and managed, through legal or other effective means, to achieve the long-term conservation of nature with associated ecosystem services and cultural values.
- **World Database of Key Biodiversity Areas (WDKBA).** Key Biodiversity Areas (KBAs) are '*sites contributing significantly to the global persistence of biodiversity*', in terrestrial, freshwater, marine and subterranean ecosystems. As of June 2024, there are 16,551 KBAs acknowledged worldwide, and more continue to be identified nationally using globally standardised criteria and thresholds. There are 11 criteria, organised into five categories: threatened biodiversity; geographically restricted biodiversity; ecological integrity; biological processes; and irreplaceability.
- **The IUCN Red List of Threatened Species™** (also known as the IUCN Red List) is the most comprehensive information source on threats, ecological requirements, and habitats of over 164,040 species; and on conservation actions that can be taken to reduce or prevent extinctions. Through a replicable method, experts assess and categorise the risk of extinction of animal, fungus, and plant species based on past, present and projected threats.

IBAT also hosts 2 derived datasets from the IUCN Red List:

- **Species Threat Abatement and Restoration (STAR).** The STAR metric allows quantification of the potential contributions that species threat abatement and restoration activities offer towards reducing extinction risk across the world.
- **Rarity Weighted Richness.** The rarity-weighted richness map is a raster layer showing the relative importance of each ~10km grid cell in terms of its aggregate contribution to the global distribution of species of mammals, birds, amphibians, crabs, crayfishes, and shrimps.

[1] https://www.cbd.int/doc/decisions/cop-15/cop-15-dec-04-en.pdf
[2] https://www.cbd.int/nbsap/post-cop15.shtml

Countries identifying Key Biodiversity Areas (KBAs) comprehensively using National Coordination Groups

KBAs can inform the prioritisation of conservation action and help ensure that multiple aspects of conservation value are protected across a country. Most countries interested in making a comprehensive assessment of their KBAs are forming a KBA National Coordination Group (KBA NCG). These groups usually consist of members of government agencies, scientific establishments (such as universities, museums, and herbaria), and the conservation community (including KBA partners where present in country), bringing them together to identify globally significant sites, often for the first time. The KBA Partnership encourages participation of Indigenous Peoples and local communities in these groups to contribute to the identification of sites and ensure that their rights are respected during the KBA assessment process. The KBA NCG then coordinates and manages the process of making a comprehensive assessment, organising the training in the application of the KBA criteria, coordinating the various expert groups (often organized by taxon or ecosystem type) as they compile and work on their data of biodiversity distributions, supporting GIS analyses where required and eventually proposing and nominating sites for publishing in the World Database of KBAs. Government representation on the KBA NCG can support consideration of KBAs in land-use planning and other processes including actions towards their long-term management and conservation.

Please contact Andrew Plumptre (Head of Key Biodiversity Areas Secretariat) at aplumptre@keybiodiversityareas.org for further information regarding joining, supporting, or setting up a NCG.

How can IBAT Support Meeting Data Requirements for NBSAPs

All these datasets (the WDPA, WDKBA, IUCN Red List and STAR metric) are headline or component indicators of the KM-GBF, as outlined in the KM-GBF monitoring framework* (see Appendix 1), which encourages contracting parties to incorporate these indicators and datasets into relevant national planning processes[3].

IBAT provides free, integrated access for governments to these datasets, and therefore can contribute to the monitoring of multiple goals and targets under the KM-GBF. Already, IBAT is used extensively in the private sector to guide spatial planning and to assess biodiversity related risks and opportunities. At least one of the 3 core datasets of IBAT are referenced in multiple standards, frameworks and regulations driving action to address the biodiversity crisis including, the Taskforce on Nature-related Financial Disclosures (TNFD), Science Based Targets for Nature (SBTN), GRI 101: Biodiversity 2024, ESRS E4 Biodiversity and ecosystems, CDP Climate Change questionnaire, EU Taxonomy, IFC PS6, and the Equator Principles.

Komodo islands
World Database on Protected Areas
World Database of Key Biodiversity Areas

[3] https://www.cbd.int/doc/decisions/cop-15/cop-15-dec-04-en.pdf

* Note the KM-GBF is still in development.

Banff National Park
UNESCO World Heritage Site
World Database on Protected Areas

How can IBAT inform Biodiversity-Inclusive Spatial Planning?

Governments are among the most important users of IBAT data, as these datasets should form a core component of any national spatial conservation plan. Governments can also provide a leadership role in using the best available scientific data to make decisions.

Spatial plans should form the core of National Biodiversity Strategy and Action Plans (NBSAPs) following Target 1 of the KM-GBF. IBAT can inform spatial planning in multiple ways:

- **Plan and manage all areas to reduce biodiversity loss (target 1)**
  The integration of IBAT datasets into participatory, integrated and biodiversity-inclusive spatial planning across government sectors could support avoidance of negative environmental impacts of developments such as urban and agricultural expansion, infrastructure development (including energy and transport), forestry, and fisheries as existing protected areas and the most significant sites for the persistence of biodiversity can be avoided.
- **Prioritizing sites for restoration (target 2)**
  KBAs can guide where to invest efforts into restoration to have the most significant impact necessary to achieving goal A of the KM-GBF. The focus should be on quality as well as extent of restoration. Degraded KBAs are some of the most urgent areas to restore, buffer and reconnect to meet the objectives of Goal A, including reducing the extinction rate. 17% of CBD Parties that submitted national reports during the previous cycle already reported having incorporated KBAs into their NBSAPs.

  The STAR metric derived from the IUCN Red List allows quantification of the potential contributions that species threat abatement and restoration activities offer towards reducing extinction risk across the world. Sites with relatively high STAR scores could also be prioritised for restoration.
- **Expanding protected area networks (target 3)**
  Sometimes, protected areas have been designated in remote areas, at high elevations, and in locations that are less suitable for agriculture, rather than places of importance for biodiversity[4]. As a consequence, around one third of KBAs do not overlap with any protected area or Other Effective Area-based Conservation Measures (OECM)[5].

  Governments may consider expanding protected area and OECM networks to cover KBAs, sites with a relatively high number of threatened species from the IUCN Red List, or a relatively high rarity-weighted richness score to ensure the most important sites for biodiversity are protected. Evidence-based expansion of the protected area and OECM network will be critical to meet target 3 of the KM-GBF where '*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… systems of protected areas and other effective area-based conservation measures*'.

[4] https://www.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/pmc/articles/PMC2788247/
[5] https://livereport.protectedplanet.net/chapter-5

- **Reducing species extinction risk (target 4)**
  The IUCN Red List is the world's most comprehensive information source on the global extinction risk status of animal, fungus and plant species and is therefore listed as a headline indicator for target 4. The Red List Index can be used to track how species extinction risks are changing globally.

  The STAR metric derived from the IUCN Red List allows quantification of the potential contributions that species threat abatement and restoration activities offer towards reducing extinction risk across the world.

  The KBA criteria helps ensure that multiple aspects of conservation value are assessed across a country (threatened species, geographically restricted species, ecological integrity, demographic processes, and irreplaceability) and KBA monitoring and Red List data could inform conservation management actions for protected areas or OECMs. If KBAs are not effectively conserved, we will fail to meet the primary objective of the KM-GBF, to halt and reverse biodiversity loss.

- **Increasing connectivity (goal A, target 2, target 3, target 12)**
  Spatial planning should also include identifying corridors between KBAs and protected areas as well as habitat for threatened species. This will support one of the objectives of goal A; '*The integrity, connectivity and resilience of all ecosystems are maintained, enhanced, or restored, substantially increasing the area of natural ecosystems by 2050*'.

- **Guiding the private sector (target 14, target 15)**
  IBAT can help '*ensure the full integration of biodiversity and its multiple values... across all levels of government and across all sectors, in particular those with significant impacts on biodiversity…*' as outlined in target 14 of the KM-GBF. Strategic spatial planning and collaboration with private sector developments will assist in the full application of the mitigation and conservation hierarchy where developments avoid existing protected areas, OECMs and the most significant sites for biodiversity. IBAT supports business disclosures and reporting as required by target 15 of the KM-GBF.

Additional resources

- The IBAT resource page contains tutorials, webinars, and briefing notes.
- UNEP-WCMC has case studies for how IBAT can be used to facilitate decision-making in practice, particularly for migratory birds.

How can IBAT be accessed?

The IBAT Alliance provides free access to IBAT to governments and municipalities. Please contact ibat@ibat-alliance.org to arrange a demonstration and to request an account for full access to IBAT's datasets and functionalities.

Crabeater Seal
Lobodon carcinophaga
Least Concern

Appendices

Appendix 1. Indicators utilising IBAT datasets within the KM-GBF monitoring framework

Goal/target	Headline indicator	Component indicator	Complementary indicator
A	• Red List Index	-	• Percentage of threatened species that are improving in status according to the Red List • Number of threatened species by species group
B	-	-	• Number of mixed sites (having both natural and cultural Outstanding Universal Values), cultural landscapes (recognized as combined works of nature and people) and natural sites with cultural values including those supporting local and indigenous knowledge and practices inscribed on the UNESCO World Heritage List and UNESCO World Network of Biosphere Reserves
1	-	-	• Percentage of spatial plans utilizing information on Key Biodiversity Areas • Habitat patches located within marine protected areas or Integrated Coastal Zone Management (ICZM)
2	-	-	• Index of species rarity sites • Status of Key Biodiversity Areas • Red List Index

Appendices (continued)

3	• The coverage of protected areas and other effective area-based conservation measures	• Protected area coverage of Key Biodiversity Areas • Protected Area Management Effectiveness (PAME)	• Status of Key Biodiversity Areas • Number of hectares of UNESCO designated sites (natural and mixed World Heritage sites and Biosphere Reserves) • Extent to which Protected Areas and Other Effective area-based Conservation Measures cover Key Biodiversity Areas that are important for migratory species • Coverage of protected areas and other effective area-based conservation measures and traditional territories (by governance type) • Proportion of terrestrial, freshwater, and marine ecological regions which are conserved by protected areas or other effective area-based conservation measures
4	• Red List Index	-	• Species Threat Abatement and Restoration (STAR) metric • Percentage of threatened species that are improving in status
5	-	-	• Proportion of terrestrial, freshwater, and marine ecological regions which are conserved by protected areas or other effective area-based conservation measures

Appendices (continued)

6	-	-	-
7	-	-	-
9	-	-	-
10	-	-	
15	-	-	• Species Threat Abatement and Restoration (STAR) Metric
21	-	-	• Proportion of known species assessed through The IUCN Red List of Threatened Species™ • Number of assessments on The IUCN Red List of Threatened Species™