

# WORLD HERITAGE AND THE KUNMING-MONTREAL GLOBAL BIODIVERSITY FRAMEWORK



## Expert Meeting Report

25-29 November 2024

International Academy for Nature Conservation (BFN)

Vilm, Germany

*By its Decision 45 COM 7.2, the World Heritage Committee requested the World Heritage Centre, in collaboration with the Advisory Bodies, to identify and develop coordinated actions on World Heritage and the Kunming-Montreal Global Biodiversity Framework, including specific guidance on how the World Heritage Convention might contribute to the aims of the Joint Programme of Work on the Links between Biological and Cultural Diversity. These requests were further reiterated in Decision 46 COM 7.*



Kunming - Montreal  
**GLOBAL BIODIVERSITY FRAMEWORK**

This expert meeting was organised by UNESCO and the German Federal Agency for Nature Conservation (BfN) in collaboration with IUCN, ICOMOS and ICCROM.



Federal Agency for  
Nature Conservation



**ICOMOS**  
international council on monuments and sites



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**Norway**

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## Expert Meeting

Responding to a mandate from the World Heritage Committee<sup>1</sup>, UNESCO organized an expert meeting in cooperation with the Advisory Bodies on the synergies and opportunities between the World Heritage Convention and the Kunming-Montreal Global Biodiversity Framework (GBF) adopted under the Convention on Biological Diversity. The workshop was hosted by the German Federal Agency for Nature Conservation (Bundesamt für Naturschutz<sup>2</sup>) at its International Academy for Nature Conservation<sup>3</sup> on the Isle of Vilm, Germany, and took place on 25-29 November 2024.

The Committee requested the World Heritage Centre, in collaboration with the Advisory Bodies (IUCN, ICOMOS, and ICCROM), to identify and develop coordinated actions on World Heritage and the GBF, including specific guidance on how the World Heritage Convention might contribute to the aims of the Joint Programme of Work on the Links between Biological and Cultural Diversity. The expert meeting addressed the following objectives:

- Identify how the objectives of the World Heritage Convention and the targets of the GBF align,
- Identify concrete options and actions to strengthen the implementation of the World Heritage Convention while supporting the GBF,
- Discuss opportunities for how the World Heritage Convention and World Heritage properties can contribute to the objectives of the Joint Programme of Work on the Links between Biological and Cultural Diversity,
- Discuss linkages and potential synergies with other UNESCO designated sites and programmes.

The meeting drew representatives of ten States Parties to the World Heritage Convention, UNESCO World Heritage Centre, UNESCO Natural Sciences Sector, the Advisory Bodies to the World Heritage Committee (IUCN, ICOMOS and ICCROM), the International Indigenous Peoples' Forum on World Heritage and relevant experts. See Annex I for the meeting agenda and list of participants.

## Overview of Results

Informed by an advance technical paper, and following 12 stage-setting presentations, participants debated topics in themes of strategic planning; National Biodiversity Strategies and Action Plans (NBSAPs)<sup>4</sup>; management effectiveness; monitoring and reporting; GBF targets, tentative lists and nominations; rights, governance, intersections of nature and culture; synergies among conventions; Indigenous Peoples and Local Communities and civil society; and the means of implementation.

This report presents 19 primary recommendations and a further 26 suggested actions that emerged from the meeting, each linked to the primary actors of the World Heritage Convention: the World Heritage Committee, States Parties, or the UNESCO Secretariat (namely, the World Heritage Centre as the Convention focal point at UNESCO) and Advisory Bodies. The outcomes

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<sup>1</sup> Decisions 45 COM 7.2 and 46 COM 7, available at <https://whc.unesco.org/en/decisions/8082/> and <https://whc.unesco.org/en/decisions/8469/>, respectively.

<sup>2</sup> <https://www.bfn.de/en>

<sup>3</sup> <https://www.bfn.de/en/international-academy-nature-conservation-isle-vilm>

<sup>4</sup> National Biodiversity Strategies and Action Plans (NBSAPs) are strategic documents that outline the actions and strategies needed to protect a country's biodiversity. NBSAPs are the primary tools for implementing the Convention on Biological Diversity (CBD) at the national level. <https://www.cbd.int/nbsap/introduction.shtml>



of the meeting, including the recommendations will be presented to the World Heritage Committee at its 47<sup>th</sup> session in 2025<sup>5</sup>, and may also aid prior discussions, including through the Open-Ended Working Group of States Parties to the World Heritage Convention (OEWG)<sup>6</sup>.

## Background

The expert meeting confirmed that the World Heritage Convention makes a unique and substantial contribution to conservation and sustainable use of biodiversity, and it is relevant to almost all of the 23 global targets of the GBF. The GBF, in turn, can be relevant to all types of World Heritage properties (natural, cultural and mixed).

Examples of existing documents that document the ways in which the World Heritage Convention can support biodiversity conservation include the UNESCO/IUCN booklet *World Heritage: A unique contribution to biodiversity conservation*<sup>7</sup> (2023) which includes specific recommendations for action by States Parties. The 2022 UNESCO Policy Brief on *The role of UNESCO Biosphere Reserves in the implementation of the Convention on Biological Diversity's Post-2020 Global Biodiversity Framework*<sup>8</sup> makes many points that would be similar to World Heritage. In addition, the outcome document of the 2019 Expert Meeting on World Heritage and the post-2020 global biodiversity framework<sup>9</sup> outlined several key strengths of the Convention.

## Recommendations

Participants in the expert workshop discussed many ideas for promoting coordination and cooperation, reducing redundancies, and advancing the goals of both the World Heritage Convention and the Kunming-Montreal Global Biodiversity Framework (GBF).<sup>10</sup>

Logical first steps in enhancing World Heritage contributions to the GBF are to further illustrate current potential contributions, while also further promoting and communicating the documentation that already exists.

The experts identified a wide range of recommendations for the World Heritage Committee, States Parties, and/or the UNESCO Secretariat and Advisory Bodies. While all are important, 19 are presented as priority actions.<sup>11</sup>

The “targets” mentioned below refer to the 23 targets as agreed in the GBF.

General overarching recommendation:  
Documenting current contributions of the World Heritage Convention to the Global Biodiversity Framework

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<sup>5</sup> <https://whc.unesco.org/en/sessions/47com/>

<sup>6</sup> Open-ended Working Group of States Parties to the World Heritage Convention in conformity with Decision 45 COM 11, <https://whc.unesco.org/en/activities/1405/>

<sup>7</sup> <https://unesdoc.unesco.org/ark:/48223/pf0000385392>

<sup>8</sup> <https://unesdoc.unesco.org/ark:/48223/pf0000384367>

<sup>9</sup> <https://whc.unesco.org/document/179982>

<sup>10</sup> <https://www.cbd.int/gbf>

<sup>11</sup> The priority recommendations were determined by the meeting participants through voting and subsequent plenary discussion. However, all recommendations presented in this report were presented and discussed at the meeting. In editing the report, similar recommendations have been grouped together to make the report and the list of recommendations more concise.

## Priority Recommendations

### For the World Heritage Committee

1. Call for the development of a policy brief or similar document on the World Heritage Convention and the GBF<sup>12</sup>, taking into account the results of the Vilnius expert meeting<sup>13</sup>.
2. Update the *Operational Guidelines for the Implementation of the World Heritage Convention* to integrate GBF provisions.<sup>14</sup>
3. Review the Rules of Procedure to strengthen participation of civil society in the World Heritage Convention and to promote the conservation and sustainable use of biodiversity, good governance and co-management with the full and effective participation of Indigenous Peoples and local communities in accordance with the Joint Programme of Work on the Links between Biological and Cultural Diversity (JPoW).
4. Integrate reporting on GBF implementation, including identified synergies with other Conventions and international agreements, into the working documents of the World Heritage Committee<sup>15</sup> and next cycle of Periodic Reporting on the implementation of the World Heritage Convention.
5. Noting that GBF joins international human rights norms and standards with the conservation of biodiversity, the World Heritage Committee is encouraged to consider:
  - a) implications for the processes of the World Heritage Convention, including nominations of new sites and existing World Heritage properties, in support of Target 22,
  - b) responsibilities for human right protection and which competent entities could inform Committee's decision-making on human rights issues.
6. As a follow-up to previous technical work<sup>16</sup>, reconsider the proposal to apply the World Heritage Convention to the protection of the high seas in cooperation with The Agreement under the United Nations Convention on the Law of the Sea on the

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<sup>12</sup> Similar to the 2022 UNESCO Policy Brief on “The role of UNESCO Biosphere Reserves in the implementation of the Convention on Biological Diversity’s Post-2020 Global Biodiversity Framework”, or the more recent Local actions for the New Global Biodiversity Framework published by the Nordic Council of Ministers.

<sup>13</sup> The policy brief should also consider the existing policy documents under the World Heritage Convention on Climate Action for World Heritage (<https://whc.unesco.org/document/204421>) and on Sustainable Development (<https://whc.unesco.org/document/139747>).

<sup>14</sup> The relevant sections would include: protection and management of World Heritage properties; protection of biological and cultural diversity and ecosystem services and benefits in all types of World Heritage properties; recognition and respect for the rights of Indigenous Peoples and local communities; cultural landscapes; sustainable use of biodiversity; Tentative List format; nomination format; Periodic Reporting.

<sup>15</sup> The World Heritage Centre already reports to Committee on cooperation with the biodiversity-related Conventions. Reporting on GBF could also be systematized.

<sup>16</sup> In 2011, the UNESCO External Auditor recommended States Parties to the 1972 World Heritage Convention to explore the possible protection of marine areas beyond national jurisdiction. Between 2015-2021, the World Heritage Centre’s Marine programme, in collaboration with IUCN, has developed the groundwork that provides insight in the scientific, policy and legal aspects of nominating and protecting World Heritage in marine areas beyond national jurisdiction. <https://whc.unesco.org/en/highseas/>

Conservation and Sustainable Use of Marine Biological Diversity of Areas beyond National Jurisdiction (BBNJ Agreement).<sup>17</sup>

7. Invite the Council of the Global Environment Facility (GEF) to provide funding to States Parties for activities that support the World Heritage Convention and the GBF<sup>18</sup>, and request the GEF Secretariat to report on the funding provided by the GEF that supports the implementation of the World Heritage Convention.
8. Integrate GBF in the World Heritage capacity-building strategy<sup>19</sup> and explore and promote synergies between UNESCO category 2 centres, regional technical support centres for GBF<sup>20</sup>, UNESCO chairs, and the work of the UNESCO Secretariat and the Advisory Bodies in joint capacity building activities that support the GBF targets in the context of the World Heritage Convention and UNESCO-designated sites.
9. Ensure that the UNESCO World Heritage Centre and the Advisory Bodies have adequate staff with expertise in biodiversity conservation to implement the decisions of the Committee on the GBF.

For States Parties

10. Integrate the World Heritage Convention into the National Biodiversity Strategies and Action Plans (NBSAPs)<sup>21</sup>, including actions to improve effective, equitable and inclusive management and protection of World Heritage properties, which will also facilitate access to biodiversity and climate funding.
11. Update Tentative Lists and pursue priority World Heritage nominations for biodiversity conservation to address current gaps in the World Heritage List, making full use of the available body of thematic studies by the Advisory Bodies.
12. Enlarge World Heritage buffer zones<sup>22</sup> (natural, cultural and mixed – as appropriate), and better integrate them in territorial planning, and establish, where necessary, improved ecological connectivity and thereby greater integrity of properties; including for climate change resilience; and ecological restoration.

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<sup>17</sup> The Vilm expert meeting further recommended that the UNESCO Secretariat and the Advisory Bodies engage with the Secretariat of the Agreement under the United Nations Convention on the Law of the Sea on the Conservation and Sustainable Use of Marine Biological Diversity of Areas beyond National Jurisdiction (BBNJ) to further explore the synergies between the World Heritage Convention and the BBNJ Agreement and consider developing procedures for World Heritage nominations in the high seas.

<sup>18</sup> An example of a funding priority could be the World Heritage GAP analysis proposed by IUCN.

<sup>19</sup> <https://whc.unesco.org/en/capacity-building/>

<sup>20</sup> The CBD Parties have selected 18 regional organizations to support the implementation of the KM-GBF through science, technology and innovation. <https://www.cbd.int/article/sbi4-regional-centres-implementation-2024>

<sup>21</sup> The UNESCO/IUCN publication “World Heritage: a unique contribution to biodiversity conservation” (<https://unesdoc.unesco.org/ark:/48223/pf0000385392>) includes specific guidance on the NBSAPs and the World Heritage Convention.

<sup>22</sup> Paragraph 104 of the Operational Guidelines: “For the purposes of effective protection of the nominated property, a buffer zone is an area surrounding the nominated property which has complementary legal and/or customary restrictions placed on its use and development in order to give an added layer of protection to the property.” Buffer zones can be a “win-win” for World Heritage and for the GBF, especially targets 1 and 3.

13. Identify, using the internationally adopted criteria, current and potential World Heritage properties (natural, cultural and mixed) and their buffer zones which could be recognised as Other Effective area-based Conservation Measures (OECMs) and strengthen legal protection of these areas.
14. Harness cultural World Heritage properties in the implementation of the GBF, including properties that overlap with Key Biodiversity Areas (KBAs), and promote cultural World Heritage properties, in particular cultural landscapes and sacred and religious sites, as champions for Target 10 on lands and waters under sustainable production<sup>23</sup>, and urban World Heritage properties as champions for Target 12<sup>24</sup>.
15. Coordinate technical and scientific cooperation across agencies and ministries at the national level<sup>25</sup> to identify synergies and efficiencies in objectives common to the GBF and the World Heritage Convention, as well as with other multi-lateral environmental agreements, UNESCO site designations, and UNESCO culture conventions<sup>26</sup>.
16. Systematically integrate Indigenous and local knowledge, and other ways of knowing<sup>27</sup>, into plans and programmes to manage World Heritage properties, which thereby contribute to GBF Target 3, Target 22 and other targets.
17. Promote Nature-based solutions<sup>28</sup> in cultural, natural and mixed World Heritage properties towards achieving GBF Target 8 and GBF Target 11 to minimize the impact of climate change on biodiversity and on properties, and increase resilience.<sup>29</sup>

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<sup>23</sup> Promote cultural World Heritage properties, in particular cultural landscapes and sacred and religious sites, as champions for GBF Target 10 to enhance biodiversity and sustainability in agriculture, aquaculture, fisheries, and forestry. The Secretariat, or networks, may be tasked to scope which sacred and religious sites that may be most relevant.

<sup>24</sup> Promote urban World Heritage properties as champions of the GBF Target 12 to enhance green spaces and urban planning for human well-being and biodiversity, tapping into networks such as the World Heritage Cities programme and UNESCO cities network.

<sup>25</sup> The “Bern process” has been as example of a meeting to facilitate cooperation and coordination among Convention Focal points. This could be replicated at the national level, see page 28.

<sup>26</sup> With the endorsement of the the Joint Programme of Work on the Links between Biological and Cultural Diversity, Parties to the CBD have recognised the ways in which culture can enhance conservation and sustainable use of biodiversity. This is relevant not only to the World Heritage Convention but also to UNESCO Convention for the Safeguarding of the Intangible Cultural Heritage (2003) and Convention on the Protection and Promotion of the Diversity of Cultural Expressions (2005).

<sup>27</sup> The technical support unit (TSU) for Indigenous and local knowledge of IPBES is hosted by the UNESCO Local and Indigenous Knowledge Systems (LINKS) programme. IPBES stands for the Intergovernmental Science-Policy Platform on Biodiversity and Ecosystem Services.

<sup>28</sup> The United Nations Environment Assembly at its fifth meeting (UNEA-5) adopted a global definition of Nature-based Solutions: Nature-based Solutions are actions to protect, conserve, restore, sustainably use and manage natural or modified terrestrial, freshwater, coastal and marine ecosystems which address social, economic and environmental challenges effectively and adaptively, while simultaneously providing human well-being, ecosystem services, resilience and biodiversity benefits. <https://digitallibrary.un.org/record/3999268?v=pdf>

<sup>29</sup> Taking into consideration the 2023 Policy Document on Climate Action for World Heritage and the 2015 Policy for the Integration of a Sustainable Development Perspective into the Processes of the World Heritage Convention.



18. Develop guidance on World Heritage and GBF based on:

- a) Documentation of the contributions of cultural and natural World Heritage properties to conservation and sustainable use of biodiversity and options to work on GBF,
- b) Mapping of cultural and natural World Heritage against the goals and targets of the GBF, in addition to the work already undertaken,
- c) Study of natural values that contribute to biodiversity conservation in cultural World Heritage properties,
- d) Options to collaborate with the Joint Programme of Work on the Links between Biological and Cultural Diversity (JPoW).

19. Work with the GEF multilateral funds and other relevant institutions to:

- a) Promote the protection of priority areas for biodiversity conservation at the national level and consider the possibility of their nominations to the World Heritage List,<sup>30</sup>
- b) Promote protection and management of existing World Heritage properties,<sup>31</sup>
- c) Ensure sufficient funding and mechanisms for comprehensive capacity building and awareness raising.<sup>32</sup>

## Complementary Recommendations

The experts identified the below complementary recommendations that provide specific guidance to several of the priority recommendations and present additional suggestions for action by the States Parties, the UNESCO Secretariat and the Advisory Bodies.

For States Parties

World Heritage Convention and its processes	
1	Improve management and protection of priority sites for biodiversity conservation on the Tentative List in preparation of their future nomination on the World Heritage List.
2	Use appropriate assessment tools (e.g., Enhancing Our Heritage <sup>33</sup> ) and data (Reactive Monitoring, Periodic Reporting, IUCN World Heritage Outlook) to monitor and improve management effectiveness of World Heritage properties relevant for biodiversity conservation.
3	Align World Heritage site management plans with GBF targets to strengthen properties' contribution to the GBF.

<sup>30</sup> Taking into account that 32% of key biodiversity areas lack formal protection (Protected Planet Report 2024).

<sup>31</sup> Taking into account the increasing number of World Heritage properties that are subject to Reactive Monitoring, and that about half of all natural and mixed World Heritage sites have insufficient management effectiveness (World Heritage Outlook 2020).

<sup>32</sup> Considering the potential 2.8-fold increase of staff engaged in nature protection activities for the projected new protected areas to meet 30/30 (Appleton et al. 2022)

<sup>33</sup> UNESCO/ICCROM/ICOMOS/IUCN. 2023. Enhancing Our Heritage Toolkit 2.0: Assessing Management Effectiveness of World Heritage Properties and Other Heritage Places. Paris, UNESCO.

<https://whc.unesco.org/en/eoh20/>

NBSAPs and implementation of GBF	
4	Use World Heritage properties as demonstration sites to implement the NBSAPs.
5	Highlight the contribution of the World Heritage Convention when reporting on the implementation of NBSAPs and GBF to the CBD, using specific indicators related to the World Heritage Convention, and providing both Party-led information and reporting by non-state actors.
Synergies and cooperation among conventions and programmes	
6	In their role as States Parties to the World Heritage Convention and Parties to the CBD, ensure that the World Heritage Convention is appropriately referenced in relevant discussions and decisions of CBD, including COPs and the CBD subsidiary body on <i>Article 8(j) and Other Provisions of the Convention on Biological Diversity related to indigenous peoples and local communities</i> .
7	Harmonize management approaches and communication on the contribution of sites with multiple international designations to biodiversity conservation.
8	Consider appropriate synergies in implementing the 1972 World Heritage Convention and the 2003 Convention for the Safeguarding of the Intangible Cultural Heritage to support the GBF.
9	Partner with UNESCO on the “100 Sites for Transformation” initiative which is implemented as a primary component of the Joint Programme of Work on the Links between Biological and Cultural Diversity.
10	Continue to participate in the global Bern process for cooperation among Parties to the biodiversity-related conventions for the implementation of the GBF, requesting the convening organisations to invite the Secretariat of UNESCO designated sites (World Heritage, Biosphere Reserves, UNESCO Global Geoparks) and the relevant UNESCO Culture Conventions in this process.
Means of implementation: funding, capacity building, awareness raising	
11	Mobilise national and regional funding mechanisms to facilitate the implementation of the GBF through the World Heritage Convention, including through transboundary cooperation and taking into account ecological connectivity and areas beyond national jurisdiction.
12	Ensure capacity building and exchange of experiences among site managers and States Parties in order to improve management effectiveness and alignment with GBF targets.

For the UNESCO Secretariat and Advisory Bodies

World Heritage Convention and its processes	
13	Update biodiversity gap studies for priority nominations and communicate results regionally. (for IUCN)
14	Establish a task force comprising UNESCO, IUCN and other relevant organisations (e.g. UNESCO Category II Centres) to promote the implementation of the results of the biodiversity gap studies to nominate priority natural sites on the World Heritage List,

	which would add to the GBF 30x30 target and bring these sites under international oversight by the World Heritage Convention.
15	Explore the ways to assess the Outstanding Universal Value (OUV) of natural sites to enable inclusion of sites that have similar values and are equal global significance on the World Heritage List and develop guidance on this. <sup>34</sup> (for IUCN)
16	Explore the possibilities of transnational World Heritage properties for migratory species in the context of the GBF.
17	Explore how provisions of paragraph 112 of the Operational Guidelines which refers to an integrated approach to planning and management that goes beyond the property to include any buffer zones, as well as the wider setting, can contribute to GBF Target 1 in relation to spatial planning and effective management. <sup>35</sup>
18	Use the Preliminary Assessment to provide specific guidance to States Parties for more effective conservation of biodiversity, cultural heritage, and the links between nature and culture <sup>36</sup> in support of the GBF. (for ICOMOS and IUCN)
19	Conduct a desktop study on available resources to guide States Parties, the World Heritage Centre, and the Advisory Bodies in the implementation of the Free, Prior and Informed Consent (FPIC) under the World Heritage Convention in line with the GBF and in particular Target 21.
20	Explore opportunities for States Parties to include narratives of Indigenous Peoples in the statements of OUV as appropriate.
21	Continue to promote the World Heritage “no-go” commitment <sup>37</sup> with the corporate sector to harness sustainable business conduct in and near World Heritage properties and seek ways to expand these commitments beyond the boundaries of World Heritage properties, in line with the GBF and in particular Target 15.
NBSAPs and implementation of GBF	
22	Engage with the Regional Technical Support Centres for the GBF to integrate guidance on World Heritage into their work plans, and explore opportunities to apply World Heritage-specific guidance through the NBSAP Accelerator <sup>38</sup> , the NBSAP Forum <sup>39</sup> , and similar mechanisms to support the development and implementation of NBSAPs.

<sup>34</sup> Workshop participants were concerned that currently, IUCN and ICOMOS are perceived to approach this question differently. IUCN may recommend against sites whose values are already represented on the List, even though the comparative analysis asks if a nominated property is “the best example, or one of the best examples.” Guidance should answer the question, “Why should equally valuable sites not be included just because there is already an example?”

<sup>35</sup> “An integrated approach to planning and management is essential to guide the evolution of properties over time and to ensure maintenance of all aspects of their Outstanding Universal Value. This approach goes beyond the property to include any buffer zone(s), as well as the wider setting.”

<sup>36</sup> The *Policy Document for the Integration of a Sustainable Development Perspective into the Processes of the World Heritage Convention* also refers to the protection of biological and cultural diversity and ecosystem services and benefits.

<sup>37</sup> <https://whc.unesco.org/en/no-go-commitment> and “UNESCO guidance for the world heritage ‘No-Go’ commitment: global standards for corporate sustainability” (2022), <https://unesdoc.unesco.org/ark:/48223/pf0000383811>

<sup>38</sup> <https://nbsapaccelerator.org/>

<sup>39</sup> <https://www.learningfornature.org/en/nbsap-forum/>

Synergies and cooperation among conventions and programmes	
23	Strengthen the cooperation within UNESCO sectors and between the Advisory Bodies on biodiversity topics, bringing the different programmes and initiatives together through platforms such as the Joint Programme of Work on the Links between Biological and Cultural Diversity and the IUCN World Conservation Congress.
24	Update the publication “Managing MIDAS” (Multi-Internationally Designated Areas) taking into account synergies between designations in achieving GBF targets. <sup>40</sup> (for IUCN)
Means of implementation: funding, capacity building, awareness raising	
25	Produce a compilation of biodiversity funding opportunities for States Parties and World Heritage properties in support of conservation and sustainable use of biodiversity and implementation of the GBF.
26	Strengthen the capacity of States Parties to make funding proposals that support the implementation of the GBF through the World Heritage Convention.

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<sup>40</sup> <https://iucn.org/resources/publication/managing-midas-harmonising-management-multi-internationally-designated-areas>

## Background on the GBF in relation to the World Heritage Convention

Participants were provided with an introduction to the CBD Kunming-Montreal Global Biodiversity Framework and suggestions for discussion points for the meeting. This took the form of a technical report, which was amended after the meeting to provide additional information and is included below.

### The GBF in outline

The Kunming-Montreal Global Biodiversity Framework (GBF)<sup>41</sup> is a plan for restoring an abundance of nature. Its vision is a world in harmony with nature where “by 2050, biodiversity is valued, conserved, restored and wisely used, maintaining ecosystem services, sustaining a healthy planet and delivering benefits essential for all people.” It features four global goals for 2050 and 23 global targets for 2030. The goals are:

GOAL A – 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.

GOAL B – 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.

GOAL C – 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.

GOAL D – 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.

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<sup>41</sup> <https://www.cbd.int/doc/decisions/cop-15/cop-15-dec-04-en.pdf>



## World Heritage Committee decisions specific to the Global Biodiversity Framework

### 45 COM 7.2 (Riyadh, 2023) Kunming-Montreal Global Biodiversity Framework<sup>42</sup>

17. Welcomes the adoption of the Kunming-Montreal Global Biodiversity Framework (GBF) during the fifteenth meeting of the Conference of the Parties (COP-15) to the Convention on Biological Diversity (CBD) in December 2022 to set the global pathway to halt and reverse biodiversity loss by 2030, in line with the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development;
18. Requests the States Parties to fully harness the World Heritage Convention in supporting the goals and targets of the GBF, including through effective collaboration among convention focal points, and by integrating World Heritage-related objectives within their National Biodiversity Strategies and Action Plans (NBSAPs);
19. Also requests the World Heritage Centre, in collaboration with the Advisory Bodies, to identify and develop coordinated actions on World Heritage and the GBF, including specific guidance on how the World Heritage Convention might contribute to the aims of the Joint Programme of Work on the Links between Biological and Cultural Diversity, subject to the availability of resources, and to integrate reporting on progress regarding contributions of World Heritage to the GBF under the Committee's item on Sustainable Development and invites States Parties to contribute financially for this purpose;

### 46 COM 7 (New Delhi, 2024) World Heritage contribution to Biodiversity Conventions<sup>43</sup>

36. Reiterates its request to States Parties to fully harness the World Heritage Convention in supporting the goals and targets of the Kunming-Montreal Global Biodiversity Framework, including through effective collaboration among convention focal points, and by integrating World Heritage-related objectives within their updated National Biodiversity Strategies and Action Plans (NBSAPs), to ensure synergies between World Heritage and other biodiversity-related Conventions, and that World Heritage properties fully benefit from international biodiversity financing such as the Global Biodiversity Framework Fund;
37. Thanks the States Parties of the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia and Germany for their offer to support the expert meeting on World Heritage and the Kunming Montreal Global Biodiversity Framework, with a view to elaborating specific guidance on how the World Heritage Convention could be better harnessed to contribute to the Global Biodiversity Framework and the aims of the Joint Programme of Work on the Links between Biological and Cultural Diversity, and requests that the outcomes and recommendations of the expert meeting be reported to the Committee at its 47th session;
38. Noting the growing concern over the impacts of avian influenza on wildlife in World Heritage properties, encourages management authorities to develop appropriate management strategies in line with international standards and good practice.

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<sup>42</sup> <https://whc.unesco.org/en/decisions/8082/>

<sup>43</sup> <https://whc.unesco.org/en/decisions/8469/>

## The case for aligning and coordinating global conventions for nature conservation

Though developed for different specific reasons, often at different moments in history, and targeted at distinct outcomes, multi-lateral environmental agreements (MEAs) share many common characteristics, and respond to the same threats. Extinction, species decline, land use change, pesticides, pollution, climate change are all issues that are mentioned in the GBF and affect sites of Outstanding Universal Value (OUV) protected under the World Heritage Convention.

The vision of the GBF is “people living in harmony with nature”; the World Heritage Convention and its Operational Guidelines<sup>44</sup> recognize the interaction of nature and culture, and states that “cultural and natural heritage is among the priceless and irreplaceable assets, not only of each nation, but of humanity as a whole.”

“UNESCO natural World Heritage sites are critical for the conservation of ecosystem integrity and biodiversity. While they make up less than 1% of the Earth’s surface, they harbour more than 1/5 of mapped global species richness. This includes over 75,000 species of plants, and over 30,000 species of mammals, birds, fishes, reptiles and amphibians. Cultural World Heritage sites in particular can be an important ally in biodiversity conservation since around 20% of them are located in Key Biodiversity Areas (KBAs).”<sup>45</sup>

Decision 15/13<sup>46</sup>, from Kunming-Montreal COP15 of the CBD, calls for Cooperation with other conventions and international organizations. It also instructs the Liaison Group of Biodiversity-related Conventions<sup>47</sup> “to enhance cooperation, reduce inefficiencies and facilitate synergies between the heads of the secretariats of biodiversity-related conventions, including through thematic consultations, on key issues for the implementation of the [GBF] and to provide common messages or draft recommendations to their respective governing bodies to act upon.”

However, the decision should be implemented not only at the level of global convention secretariats but also at national levels, with enhanced coordination within States Parties, where often different agencies are responsible for national commitments to different conventions. The focus should be on “win-wins”/mutual interests that support the achievement of GBF targets and enables all MEAs involved to achieve their own goals more effectively and efficiently.”<sup>48</sup>

The list of Parties to the Convention on Biological Diversity is nearly identical to the States Parties of the World Heritage Convention.

Important work to strengthen cooperation and synergies among the biodiversity-related Conventions have been achieved through initiatives such as the Bern process<sup>48</sup>, noted in the COP decision 15/13. Case studies collected for the Bern III conference included examples of:

- Enhanced cooperation in the development and implementation of NBSAPs; Creation of avenues for ongoing dialogue, collaboration, and capacity-building on biodiversity related issues, both within governments and with a broad range of stakeholders;
- Alignment of national monitoring, assessment, and reporting systems that support implementation of the GBF with those for related MEAs; Collaboration at the regional

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<sup>44</sup> <https://whc.unesco.org/en/guidelines/>

<sup>45</sup> <https://doi.org/10.58337/LSRE8424>

<sup>46</sup> <https://www.cbd.int/doc/decisions/cop-15/cop-15-dec-13-en.pdf>

<sup>47</sup> Biodiversity Liaison Group is the formal mechanism to facilitate cooperation and coordination among the Secretariats of the key biodiversity-related conventions. The World Heritage Centre has been among the founding members. <https://www.cbd.int/brc> and <https://www.cbd.int/blg>

<sup>48</sup> <https://www.unep.org/events/conference/bern-iii-conference-cooperation-among-biodiversity-related-conventions>

and sub-regional levels to advance implementation of the GBF along with related MEAs, aiming to foster lasting partnerships and mutual learning; and Whole of society approach in practice.

The World Heritage Convention is also among the UNESCO Culture Conventions and UNESCO instruments of internationally designated sites, supporting nature conservation through a human lens, which has been long on UNESCO's agenda.<sup>49</sup> Initiatives such as the Naples Conference<sup>50</sup> have promoted synergies between the 1972 World Heritage Convention and the 2003 Convention for the Safeguarding of the Intangible Cultural Heritage to foster “community-based and culturally grounded responses to challenges facing heritage sites, such as disaster risks and biodiversity loss” (Call for Action: The Spirit of Naples<sup>51</sup>).

Decision 15/13 also calls for UNESCO and IUCN “to advance the Joint Programme of Work on the Links between Biological and Cultural Diversity.”

Regarding the financing, it is important to recall Decision CBD/COP/DEC/15/15 (Annex I, para 12 of that document), which established that “the GEF-8 biodiversity strategy and programming directions should promote, synergies, cooperation and complementarity in the implementation of the three objectives of the Convention with those of the other conventions served by GEF, as well as with other biodiversity-related conventions and agreements, recognizing the important contributions that these instruments can make to the objectives of the Convention on Biological Diversity, its Protocols and the Kunming-Montreal Global Biodiversity Framework, and vice versa”.

## National Biodiversity Strategy and Action Plans

National Biodiversity Strategies and Action Plans<sup>52</sup> (NBSAPs) are strategic documents that outline the actions and strategies needed to protect a country's biodiversity. NBSAPs are the primary tools for implementing the Convention on Biological Diversity (CBD) at the national level, and currently the key instrument to operationalize the GBF. As such, they present an important opportunity to align implementation of multiple international agreements.

According to the CBD's training module, “The NBSAP can be used to facilitate more coherent and effective implementation of the biodiversity-related conventions. Decision X/5 invites Parties and Governments, inter alia, to involve national focal points of all the biodiversity-related agreements, as appropriate, in the process of updating and implementation of national biodiversity strategies and action plans and related enabling activities. These biodiversity-related conventions include the Convention on International Trade in Endangered Species of Wild Fauna and Flora (CITES); the Convention on the Conservation of Migratory Species of Wild Animals (CMS); the Convention on Wetlands of International Importance, Especially as Waterfowl Habitats (RAMSAR); the World Heritage Convention (WHC); and the International Treaty on Plant Genetic Resources for Food and Agriculture (ITPGRFA). All of these make significant contributions to the sustainable management and use of the world's biodiversity. Activities to implement other conventions and agreements can be included in

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<sup>49</sup> See e.g. [Links between biological and cultural diversity: report of the International Workshop - UNESCO Digital Library](#)

<sup>50</sup> <https://www.unesco.org/en/culture/naples-conference>

<sup>51</sup> [https://www.unesco.org/sites/default/files/medias/fichiers/2023/11/UNESCO\\_CALL\\_FOR\\_ACTION\\_NAPLES.pdf](https://www.unesco.org/sites/default/files/medias/fichiers/2023/11/UNESCO_CALL_FOR_ACTION_NAPLES.pdf)

<sup>52</sup> <https://www.cbd.int/nbsap/introduction.shtml>

national biodiversity strategies as a means of achieving collaborative implementation of the Strategic Plan for Biodiversity 2011-2020 and its Aichi Targets.”<sup>53</sup>

Updated NBSAPs were due to be submitted to the CBD prior to COP16 in October 2024. However, most are still in development or process of official approval. However, quoting again the training module, “the NBSAP should be a living process by which increasing scientific information and knowledge, gained through the monitoring and evaluation of each phase of implementation, are fed back into a permanent review process. This should result in periodic updating and revision of the NBSAP.”<sup>54,55</sup> To that effect, the UNESCO/IUCN publication *World Heritage: a unique contribution to biodiversity conservation*<sup>56</sup> includes specific guidance to States Parties on integrating the World Heritage Convention into the NBSAPs.

## Joint Programme of Work on the Links between Biological and Cultural Diversity

The Roundtable on Cultural Diversity and Biodiversity or Sustainable Development, jointly organised by UNESCO and United Nations Environment Programme (UNEP) at the 2002 World Summit on Sustainable Development (Johannesburg, South Africa) triggered an initiative for joint action between the UNESCO and the CBD on biological and cultural diversity. Several related initiatives have contributed to this work, which has explored the interlinkages and opportunities for improving the protection of biological and cultural diversity.<sup>57</sup>

This work has evolved over time into the Joint Programme of Work (JPoW) on the Links between Biological and Cultural Diversity that was adopted at COP10, and reaffirmed and enhanced under the GBF text at COP15.<sup>58</sup> The COP decision invites many partners to come together with the CBD Secretariat, UNESCO, IUCN (International Union for Conservation of Nature) and with cultural partners ICOMOS and ICCROM.<sup>59</sup>

The Joint Programme of Work on the Links between Biological and Cultural Diversity currently aims to develop a common strategy to halt the decline of biological and cultural diversity, operationalize relevant indicators within the GBF, and create communication and educational materials to raise awareness, in all spheres of society and sectors, about the links between biological, cultural and linguistic diversity.

For UNESCO Secretariat, a key element is addressing how protected areas, notably those listed by UNESCO (World Heritage properties, Biosphere Reserves and UNESCO Global Geoparks), and Other Effective Area-based Conservation Measures (OECMs) are able to simultaneously support cultural and linguistic diversity as well as biological diversity. See Annex III for more details.

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<sup>53</sup> <https://www.cbd.int/doc/training/nbsap/b1-train-intro-nbsap-revised-en.pdf>

<sup>54</sup> Though they were due in October 2024, only 15% of countries met the deadline.

<sup>55</sup> This could take a form similar to the Ramsar guidance on NBSAPs <https://www.ramsar.org/document/scaling-wetland-conservation-restoration-deliver-kunming-montreal-global-biodiversity>

<sup>56</sup> <https://unesdoc.unesco.org/ark:/48223/pf0000385392>

<sup>57</sup> See e.g. “Links between biological and cultural diversity: report of the International Workshop” <https://unesdoc.unesco.org/ark:/48223/pf0000159255> and “Conserving cultural and biological diversity: the role of sacred natural sites and cultural landscapes” <https://unesdoc.unesco.org/ark:/48223/pf0000147863>

<sup>58</sup> <https://www.cbd.int/doc/decisions/cop-15/cop-15-dec-22-en.pdf>

<sup>59</sup> <https://livinglandscapeobserver.net/un-biodiversity-conference-december-2022-new-support-for-the-connection-of-nature-and-culture/>

The new Joint Programme of Work is built on 4 elements:

1. A joint strategy to stop the ongoing and often dramatic decline in global diversity of both nature and culture
2. Science dialogue, knowledge dialogue, equivalence of knowledge systems, indicators and monitoring efforts
3. Biocultural diversity and linkages between nature and culture in integrated socio-ecological systems
4. Develop new approaches to communication, education and public awareness (CEPA)

## GBF targets relevant to the World Heritage Convention

World Heritage is relevant to nearly all of the 23 GBF global targets. The below table summarises the preliminary mapping of the GBF targets against the World Heritage Convention through its *Operational Guidelines* and selected policy documents. This exercise was carried out by the World Heritage Centre in preparation for the Bern III Conference<sup>60</sup>, and was further expanded for this report. Most other MEAs have aligned their Strategic Plans with the GBF, but the World Heritage Strategic Action Plan 2012-2022 has expired, so the Operational Guidelines currently provides the most relevant source of comparison with the GBF. The Operational Guidelines are also expected to integrate provisions of specific policy documents that may be relevant to the GBF.

**Table 1. Relevance to the World Heritage Convention of GBF Global Targets.**

	GBF Target	Relevance to World Heritage Convention
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.	Several paragraphs in the Operational Guidelines (OG), including paragraph 4 referring to the purpose of the Convention and paragraph 15 determining the responsibilities of the States Parties. Chapter IV of the OG sets out the Process for monitoring the State of conservation of World Heritage Properties. It is also a standard practice that projects that may have an impact on World Heritage are subject to appropriate impact assessments (paragraph 118bis).
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.	E.g., paragraph 176.b) of the OG “when the Committee considers that the property has seriously deteriorated, but not to the extent that its restoration is impossible, it may decide that the property be maintained on the List, provided that the State Party takes the necessary measures to restore the property within a reasonable period of time. –”. The OG also refers to the establishment of programmes of corrective measures for properties included on the List of World Heritage in Danger, as well as the funds that could be available to support properties.

<sup>60</sup> <https://www.unep.org/events/conference/bern-iii-conference-cooperation-among-biodiversity-related-conventions>



3	<p>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.</p>	<p>OG includes several provisions concerning identification and integrity of World Heritage properties, including their buffer zones (paragraphs 103-107) and “landscape, ecological, evolutionary or habitat connectivity” (paragraph 137). Effective protection and management of the properties is expected (several paragraphs, such as 108-118bis), which also “goes beyond the property to include any buffer zone(s), as well as the wider setting” (paragraph 112), and includes the requirement for the conduct of Environmental Impact Assessments, Heritage Impact Assessments, and/or Strategic Environmental Assessments when necessary (paragraph 118bis).</p>
4	<p>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.</p>	<p>World Heritage Properties are estimated to protect over 20,000 threatened species (UNESCO/IUCN, 2023). In the OG, criterion X for the assessment of Outstanding Universal Value refers to properties that “contain the most important and significant natural habitats for in-situ conservation of biological diversity, including those containing threatened species of Outstanding Universal Value from the point of view of science or conservation” (paragraph 77). The OG also state that “A serious decline in the population of the endangered species or the other species of Outstanding Universal Value for which the property was legally established to protect, either by natural factors such as disease or by human-made factors such as poaching” constitutes an ascertained danger justifying the inscription of a World Heritage property on the List in Danger by the World Heritage Committee (paragraph 180).</p>
5	<p>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.</p>	<p>Paragraph 119 of the OG refers to sustainable use. “Properties may support a variety of ongoing and proposed uses that are ecologically and culturally sustainable and which may enhance the quality of life and well-being of communities concerned. The State Party and its partners must ensure their use is equitable and fully respects the Outstanding Universal Value of the property.”</p>
6	<p>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</p>	<p>The nomination format included in the OG (Annex 5) includes a chapter on “State of conservation and factors affecting the nominated property” including invasive alien species. In the case of properties included on the World Heritage List, these are further addressed through processes determined under Chapter V of OG, Process for Monitoring the State of Conservation of World Heritage Properties.</p>

	species, especially in priority sites, such as islands.	
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.	Pollution is determined as among the potential threats to nominated sites or inscribed World Heritage properties (paragraphs 180, Nomination Format in the OG).
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.	<p>Several paragraphs in the OG refer to climate change and disasters. E.g. Paragraph 118 of the OG. “The Committee recommends that States Parties include disaster, climate change and other risk preparedness as an element in their World Heritage site management plans and training strategies”. Paragraph 111: “common elements of an effective management system could include: -- an assessment of the vulnerabilities of the property to social, economic, environmental and other pressures and changes, including disasters and climate change, as well as the monitoring of the impacts of trends and proposed interventions”.</p> <p>Benefits of natural and cultural heritage, including the ecosystem services they provide which may contribute to resilience is recognized in the 2015 <i>Policy for the Integration of a Sustainable Development Perspective into the Processes of the World Heritage Convention</i><sup>61</sup> and the 2023 <i>Policy Document on Climate Action for World Heritage</i><sup>62</sup>.</p>
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.	Paragraph 119 of the OG refers to sustainable use. “Properties may support a variety of ongoing and proposed uses that are ecologically and culturally sustainable and which may enhance the quality of life and well-being of communities concerned. The State Party and its partners must ensure their use is equitable and fully respects the Outstanding Universal Value of the property. For some properties, human use would not be appropriate.”

<sup>61</sup> <https://whc.unesco.org/document/139747>: “States Parties should ensure that biological and cultural diversity, as well as ecosystem services and benefits for people that contribute to environmental sustainability, are protected and enhanced within World Heritage properties, their buffer zones and their wider settings”.

<sup>62</sup> <https://whc.unesco.org/document/204421>: “--recognising that World Heritage properties represent both an asset to be protected from climate impacts and a resource to strengthen the ability of communities to pursue transformative change.”

<b>10</b>	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.	Several provisions of the OG, including 14bis. Biological resource use/modification (e.g. fishing, agriculture, forestry) among the potential factors affecting nominated sites or inscribed World Heritage properties. Paragraph 47 refers to cultural landscapes inscribed on the World Heritage List which may reflect "traditional forms of land use" that support "biological diversity in many regions of the world. The protection of traditional cultural landscapes is therefore helpful in maintaining biological diversity."
<b>11</b>	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.	The Convention was early in encompassing the relationship of people to nature. These were further highlighted in the 2015 <i>Policy for the Integration of a Sustainable Development Perspective into the Processes of the World Heritage Convention</i> .
<b>12</b>	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.	Many cultural World Heritage Properties provide such services and benefits or have the potential to do so. For example, many historic cities inscribed on the World Heritage List may protect last remnants of nature in urban areas.  Several provisions in the OG, including 14bis. Biological resource use/modification (e.g. fishing, agriculture, forestry) among the potential factors affecting nominated sites or inscribed World Heritage properties. Paragraph 47 refers to cultural landscapes inscribed on the World Heritage List which may reflect "traditional forms of land use" that support "biological diversity in many regions of the world. The protection of traditional cultural landscapes is therefore helpful in maintaining biological diversity."
<b>14</b>	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.	Several paragraphs in the OG. The States Parties have the responsibility to <i>inter alia</i> "adopt general policies to give the heritage a function in the life of the community" (paragraph 15.b). Effective protection and management of the properties is a key requirement in the OG (several paragraphs, such as 108-118bis), which also "goes beyond the property to include any buffer zone(s), as well as the wider setting" (paragraph 112), and includes the requirement for the conduct of Environmental Impact Assessments, Heritage Impact Assessments, and/or Strategic Environmental Assessments when necessary (paragraph 118bis).
<b>15</b>	Take legal, administrative or policy measures to encourage and enable business, and in particular	E.g., provisions on impact assessments, and paragraph 98 of the OG: "Legislative and regulatory measures at national and local levels

	<p>to ensure that large and transnational companies and financial institutions:</p> <p>(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;</p> <p>(b) Provide information needed to consumers to promote sustainable consumption patterns;</p> <p>(c) Report on compliance with access and benefit-sharing regulations and measures, as applicable;</p> <p>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.</p>	<p>should assure the protection of the property from social, economic and other pressures or changes that might negatively impact the Outstanding Universal Value, including the integrity and/or authenticity of the property. States Parties should also assure the full and effective implementation of such measures”. Under the Convention, long-term work also done to promote the World Heritage “no-go” commitment among the corporate sector to ensure sustainable business conduct in and near World Heritage properties.<sup>63</sup></p>
16	<p>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.</p>	<p>Paragraph 214bis. Of the OG “States Parties are encouraged to develop educational and capacity building programmes that harness the reciprocal benefits of the Convention for heritage and society. The programmes may be based on innovation and local entrepreneurship, and aimed in particular at medium/small/micro scale levels, to promote sustainable and inclusive economic benefits for local communities and indigenous peoples and to identify and promote opportunities for public and private investment in sustainable development projects, including those that promote use of local materials and resources and foster local cultural and creative industries and safeguarding intangible heritage associated with World Heritage properties.”</p>
19	<p>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, by 2030 mobilizing at least 200 billion United States dollars per year, including by:</p> <p>(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</p>	<p>Chapter VII.B. of the OG Mobilization of other technical and financial resources and partnerships in support of the World Heritage Convention.</p> <p>It should also be recalled that the Sustainable Development Goal Indicator 11.4.1 measures financial resources dedicated to natural and cultural heritage, and therefore may provide important data to target 19: “Total per capita expenditure on the preservation, protection and conservation of all cultural and natural heritage, by source of funding (public, private), type of heritage (cultural, natural) and level of government (national, regional, and local/municipal).”</p>

<sup>63</sup> <https://whc.unesco.org/en/no-go-commitment> and UNESCO, 2022: UNESCO Guidance for the World Heritage ‘No-Go’ Commitment. Global standards for corporate sustainability, <https://unesdoc.unesco.org/ark:/48223/pf0000383811>

	<p>developed countries and small island developing States, as well as countries with economies in transition, to at least US\$ 20 billion per year by 2025, and to at least US\$ 30 billion per year by 2030;</p> <p>(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;</p> <p>(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;</p> <p>(d) Stimulating innovative schemes such as payment for ecosystem services, green bonds, biodiversity offsets and credits, benefit-sharing mechanisms, with environmental and social safeguards;</p> <p>(e) Optimizing co-benefits and synergies of finance targeting the biodiversity and climate crises;</p> <p>(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;</p> <p>(g) Enhancing the effectiveness, efficiency and transparency of resource provision and use.</p>	
<b>20</b>	<p>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.</p>	<p>Several paragraphs of the OG including Chapter VI.B Capacity building and research, and Chapter VI.C. Awareness-raising and education.</p> <p>The Capacity Building Strategy for World Heritage is currently being updated.</p>
<b>21</b>	<p>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</p>	<p>Several paragraphs in the OG including Chapter VI.B Capacity building and research, and Chapter VI.C. Awareness-raising and education. Also IV Process for monitoring the state of conservation of World Heritage properties, and V Periodic Reporting on the implementation of the World Heritage Convention.</p>



	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,[2] in accordance with national legislation.	
<b>22</b>	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.	<p>Paragraph 12 of the OG “States Parties to the Convention are encouraged to adopt a human-rights based approach, and ensure gender-balanced participation of a wide variety of stakeholders and rights-holders, including site managers, local and regional governments, local communities, indigenous peoples, non-governmental organizations (NGOs) and other interested parties and partners in the identification, nomination, management and protection processes of World Heritage properties.” Paragraph 14bis, 40, 61, 117, and 123 amongst others include related provisions.</p> <p>“Respecting, protecting and promoting human rights”, “Respecting, consulting and involving indigenous peoples and local communities” and “Achieving gender equality” are also integrated as specific aims in the <i>2015 Policy for the Integration of a Sustainable Development Perspective into the Processes of the World Heritage Convention</i>.</p>
<b>23</b>	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.	<p>Gender equality is integrated as a crosscutting issue in several paragraphs of the OG, such as 12 (see above for Target 22), paragraph 15 “contribute to and comply with the sustainable development objectives, including gender equality, in the World Heritage processes and in their heritage conservation and management systems”, 64 (gender equality in preparation of Tentative Lists), 111 (respect for gender equality as contribution to effective management system), 155 (“In the framework of the Gender Equality Priority of UNESCO, the use of gender-neutral language in the preparation of Statements of Outstanding Universal Value is encouraged”), and 214 (“States Parties are encouraged to ensure that there is a gender-balanced representation of their professionals and specialists at all levels and that they are adequately trained”).</p> <p>“Achieving gender equality” is also a specific aim in the <i>2015 Policy for the Integration of a Sustainable Development Perspective into the Processes of the World Heritage Convention</i>.</p>

## Target 3 – “30x30” – Protected and conserved areas

While most of the GBF’s Global Targets relate to the World Heritage Convention, Target 3, known colloquially as “30x30” is particularly relevant since World Heritage properties are geographically defined spaces.

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.

The World Heritage List therefore already contributes substantially to achieving this target, at least where properties meet qualifying criteria such as management effectiveness. Indeed, the aim for effectiveness under the World Heritage Convention is explicit—the three pillars of Outstanding Universal Value (OUV) are protection and management (which should demonstrate effectiveness); meeting the criteria; and integrity and authenticity (authenticity only applies for cultural and mixed properties).

The Bern III Conference<sup>64</sup> on Cooperation among the Biodiversity-related Conventions for the implementation of the Kunming-Montreal GBF cross-mapped GBF targets and Multilateral Environmental Agreements (MEAs) and recognised that the World Heritage Convention can deliver on several targets. The World Heritage Convention was also identified as one of two MEAs as a “potential ‘champion’ or partner” for target 3 (the other was the Ramsar Convention).

### Effective conservation and management

Parties may be putting too much emphasis on the 30% figure in Target 3, rushing to expand the area under some form of protection or conservation. But nature would also benefit if protected and conserved areas were more effective in delivering on their conservation objectives. As noted above, effective protection and management is an explicit requirement for a property to be included on the World Heritage List and to be considered of OUV. Therefore, World Heritage has often been referred to as the litmus test in how countries are achieving their global objectives on nature conservation.<sup>65</sup>

World Heritage properties can leverage their notoriety and serve as examples of how to measure and improve effectiveness, using existing processes under the Convention such as Reactive Monitoring<sup>66</sup> and tools such as Enhancing our heritage toolkit 2.0.<sup>67</sup> State Parties could benefit from data collected in Periodic Reporting and as part of Reactive Monitoring (State of Conservation reporting) to identify major threats to their properties, and consequently, successful implementation of GBF. Through the reactive monitoring process and state of conservation reporting the World Heritage Committee has the possibility to ask for concrete measures from

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<sup>64</sup> <https://www.unep.org/events/conference/bern-iii-conference-cooperation-among-biodiversity-related-conventions>

<sup>65</sup> See e.g. [Today defines tomorrow: World Heritage as litmus test for action on agreements - UNESCO Digital Library](#)

<sup>66</sup> <https://whc.unesco.org/en/reactive-monitoring/>

<sup>67</sup> <https://whc.unesco.org/en/eoh20/>

States Parties to improve the conservation and management effectiveness (including the possibility of inscribing a property on the List of World Heritage in Danger).

Complementing the statutory data from the State of Conservation Information System<sup>68</sup> and Periodic Reporting exercise<sup>69</sup>, the IUCN World Heritage Outlook remains one of the most in-depth analyses of threats facing natural World Heritage around the world – complementing analyses of threats to the protected area estate more broadly. The quadrennial updating of the World Heritage Outlook, now underway, is an opportunity to a) get a proxy reading on effectiveness and sustainability in 271 natural and mixed World Heritage properties and b) highlight the need for ongoing monitoring after new protected and conserved areas are declared or recognized by the Convention in pursuit of “30x30.”

## Ecological integrity, connectivity and resilience

Integrity is a key pillar for the concept of OUV and resilience has been long addressed through practical guidance on disaster risk management<sup>70</sup> and now the newly adopted Policy Document on Climate Action on World Heritage<sup>71</sup>.

Evaluation of potential natural World Heritage properties includes a review of values at ecoregional scales, and the IUCN and the World Heritage Centre have collaborated on gap analyses of protected area systems for the terrestrial realm.

## Areas of particular importance for biodiversity

Biodiversity is not distributed evenly on the planet. The best areas for biodiversity conservation for Protected and Conserved Areas (PCA) must be selected to be effective and efficient. Natural World Heritage Properties are almost always of particular importance to biodiversity, notably properties inscribed under criteria ix (outstanding ecological and biological processes) and x (most important and significant natural habitats for in-situ conservation of biological diversity). “World Heritage Sites cover less than 1% of the earth’s surface, yet harbour more than 1/5 of mapped global species richness” and protect over 20,000 globally threatened species (UNESCO and IUCN 2023)<sup>72</sup>.

The World Heritage Centre and IUCN have extensive experience and guidance on identifying exceptionally important areas for biodiversity and ecosystem functions and services.

While some properties are explicitly recognized for their outstanding biodiversity values, cultural World Heritage Properties can be an important ally in conservation and sustainable use of biodiversity. Approximately 17% (>160) of them are located in Key Biodiversity Areas (KBAs)<sup>73</sup>. Beyond target 3 – and whilst environmental sustainability is a key requirement for all types of World Heritage properties as stressed in the *Policy for the Integration of a Sustainable Development Perspective into the Processes of the World Heritage Convention* – several GBF targets and notably 10 and 12 offer new opportunities for cultural World Heritage properties to contribute to GBF.

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<sup>68</sup> <https://whc.unesco.org/en/soc/>

<sup>69</sup> <https://whc.unesco.org/en/periodicreporting/>

<sup>70</sup> E.g. [World Heritage Centre - Managing Disaster Risks for World Heritage](#)

<sup>71</sup> [World Heritage Centre - Climate Change and World Heritage](#)

<sup>72</sup> <https://unesdoc.unesco.org/ark:/48223/pf0000385392>

<sup>73</sup> Bertzky et al. 2020 <https://whc.unesco.org/en/review/96/>

## Ecologically represented

Representation is a useful concept in selecting Protected and Conserved Areas (PCAs) but will only address biodiversity needs adequately if both species and ecosystems are considered. Target 3 refers to “ecologically representative” and this poses further challenges. For example, temperate grasslands, freshwater ecosystems and tropical dry broadleaved forests are both seriously under-represented in current protected area systems. Given the current bias in the type of ecosystem represented in protected areas, achieving representation by any measure (ecoregions, bioregions or ecosystems) will require more than 30% area-based conservation.

It is a strategic objective of the World Heritage Convention to “Strengthen the Credibility of the World Heritage List, as a representative and geographically balanced testimony of cultural and natural properties of outstanding universal value.”

## Well-connected

IUCN WCPA guidelines for conserving connectivity through ecological networks and corridors<sup>74</sup> are based on the best available science and practice for maintaining, enhancing and restoring ecological connectivity among and between Protected and Conserved Areas (PCAs), and provide a rich resource for policy makers and practitioners. The Operational Guidelines refer to connectivity only once (Paragraph 137.a), in the context of serial properties. However, the concept of integrity, which is among the key pillars of OUV, and which properties included on the World Heritage List must meet, is closely related to connectivity. In addition, the World Heritage Convention may provide opportunities to improve connectivity through, for example, serial properties and buffer zones and through articulation with other international designations, such as Biosphere Reserves and Ramsar sites.

The new Protected Planet Report<sup>75</sup> uses a Protected Network (ProNet) metric to measure connectivity. Interestingly, and “in line with WDPA preprocessing best practice, UNESCO Man and the Biosphere Reserve (UNESCO-MAB) designations were removed (UNESCO World Heritage Sites (natural and mixed) were retained).”

## Equitably governed

Implementation of the World Heritage Convention has increasingly been attentive to questions of governance, equity and inclusion, and the Operational Guidelines have subsequently evolved.<sup>76</sup> Among key landmark decisions was the adoption of Community as the ‘fifth C’ in its Strategic Objectives (complementing objectives relate to Credibility, Conservation, Capacity-building and Communication) in 2007. The first property under Indigenous governance (East Rennell) was inscribed much earlier, in 1998. Through specific categories of properties such as cultural landscapes and new policies, notably the 2015 Policy for the Integration of a Sustainable Development Perspective into the Processes of the World Heritage Convention<sup>77</sup>, the Convention has raised the expectations on equitable governance. This includes the changes made to the Operational Guidelines in 2019 to integrate some of the provisions of the above policy (including Free, Prior and Informed Consent - FPIC)<sup>78</sup>.

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<sup>74</sup> <https://portals.iucn.org/library/efiles/documents/PAG-030-En.pdf>

<sup>75</sup> UNEP-WCMC and IUCN, 2024. <https://digitalreport.protectedplanet.net/>

<sup>76</sup> See e.g. “Engaging Local Communities in Stewardship of World Heritage”, <https://whc.unesco.org/en/series/40/> for background.

<sup>77</sup> <https://whc.unesco.org/en/sustainabledevelopment/>

<sup>78</sup> <https://whc.unesco.org/en/decisions/7353/>

A new IUCN WCPA Good Practice Guidelines on Recognising territories and areas conserved by Indigenous Peoples and local communities (ICCAs) overlapped by protected areas<sup>79</sup>, was launched at COP16. It features several case studies on overlaps of Indigenous and Community Conserved Areas with World Heritage properties, including Sagarmatha (Mt. Everest) National Park (on the cover); Causses and the Cévennes, Mediterranean Agro-pastoral Cultural Landscape (France); Central Sikhote-Alin (Russia); Dolomites (Italy); Great Barrier Reef and Wet Tropics of Queensland (Australia); Laponian Area (Sweden); Rice Terraces of the Philippines Cordilleras; Sacred Mijikenda Kaya Forests (Kenya); Taos Pueblo (USA); Three Parallel Rivers (China); Uluru-Kata Tjuta National Park (Australia); plus a tentative list property, Coron Island Natural Biotic Area (Philippines).

A new Roadmap on advancing rights and equity in implementation of Target 3 should be reviewed for applications to the World Heritage.<sup>80</sup>

A significant decision of COP16 creates a new Subsidiary Body on Article 8(j). This part of the Convention on Biological Diversity deals with traditional knowledge, innovations and practices, and therefore has many links with the World Heritage Convention but also the mandate of the Convention for the Safeguarding of the Intangible Cultural Heritage of UNESCO.

## Opportunities for synergy and coordination

### The “Bern Process”

Most countries of the world are signatories to multilateral environmental agreements (MEAs) in addition to the World Heritage Convention. These carry a burden not only to act on their provisions, but to monitor and report on progress, participate in negotiations (multiple conferences of the parties), and record-keeping. Responsibility for compliance with these MEAs often fall to different ministries and departments in each country, all of which can lead to much duplication of effort.

The “Bern Process”<sup>81</sup> is among the initiatives to encourage cooperation and synergies amongst the MEAs on the implementation of the GBF. In January 2024, the Bern III Conference<sup>82</sup> brought together representatives of parties and secretariats of 16 multilateral environmental agreements (MEAs), and a range of other stakeholders, organizations and individual experts. The open exchange on cooperation to implement the Kunming-Montreal Global Biodiversity Framework resulted in a wide range of concrete ideas for increased collaboration among MEAs at global, regional and national levels.

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<sup>79</sup> <https://portals.iucn.org/library/node/51567>

<sup>80</sup> <https://www.forestpeoples.org/en/road-map-for-advancing-rights-and-equity-in-conservation>

<sup>81</sup> The “Bern Process” is a UNEP-led process for cooperation among Parties to the relevant biodiversity-related conventions that aims to strengthen cooperation and collaboration, contributing to effective and efficient implementation of the Kunming-Montreal Global Biodiversity Framework. The name “Bern” comes from the role of Switzerland as a major partner to this initiative, also due to its role to foster the development of the DART reporting tool.

The first consultation of biodiversity-related conventions on the post-2020 Global Biodiversity Framework (Bern I) took place in Bern, June 10-12, 2019, in response to CBD COP [decision 14/34](#). Conducted virtually in early 2021, during the Covid-19 Pandemic, [Bern II](#) focused on concrete elements for inclusion in the post-2020 GBF and mechanisms for the monitoring and review of its implementation.

<sup>82</sup> <https://www.cbd.int/doc/c/ff05/5015/84bd131c7b038cc541fed147/sbi-04-inf-15-en.pdf>



The Bern III conference report calls for cooperation among relevant MEA secretariats; a platform for similar enhanced coordination at national level; contributions to the global review of collective progress on the GBF in 2026 and 2030; and alignment in use of indicators and information collected across MEAs. It even considered a proposal to convene a “common COP” or high-level intergovernmental meeting on biodiversity in 2030.

## Monitoring and Reporting

Reporting on implementation of the GBF can benefit from using existing data sources. The 2022 COP 15 of the CBD (which adopted the GBF) also published an initial decision (15/5) on a monitoring framework. That decision specifically mentioned World Heritage among complementary indicators. Note, however, that the draft framework discussed at COP 16 no longer makes specific reference to World Heritage (CBD 2024). Indicators from the COP 15 monitoring framework are included as Annex IV, but note that these are to be reviewed and revised when COP16 resumes in February 2025. We include them here to illustrate how GBF indicators reference other MEAs, or not.<sup>83</sup>

The decision is not very detailed. For example, the “headline indicator” for Target 3 is simply “Coverage of protected areas and other effective area-based conservation measures,” ignoring all the other elements of the target. The monitoring framework will be reconsidered at COP 16.

A lot of statutory data is being produced under the World Heritage Convention, including through the processes of the Periodic Reporting<sup>84</sup> and Reactive Monitoring (which includes state of conservation reporting).<sup>85</sup> The Governing Bodies of the World Heritage Convention could consider how this wealth of information could be harnessed to contribute to reporting on the GBF.

## Capacity building

The GBF (CDB Decision 15/4) is supported by Decision 15/8<sup>86</sup> on “capacity-building and development and technical and scientific cooperation.” Capacity building is one of the “Five Cs” in the Strategic Objectives adopted by the World Heritage Committee in 2002 and 2007. Capacity building is also essential to the success of the GBF. The Capacity Building Strategy for World Heritage<sup>87</sup> is currently being updated, which provides good opportunities in linking with the GBF.

A recent study (Appleton, et al. 2022) estimates that personnel numbers to achieve 30x30 effectively will need to increase by at least 2.8-fold. It projects a global requirement for approximately 3 million personnel, including more than 1.5 million rangers, to manage an increase in coverage to 30%. Specific to World Heritage, people managing those properties also

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<sup>83</sup> World Heritage is not included in the current monitoring and reporting indicators. It was included in the complementary indicators for Target 3 in the COP 15 decision as, “Number of hectares of UNESCO designated sites (natural and mixed World Heritage sites and Biosphere Reserves)” It was also included as an indicator under Goal B as, “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.” This list is to be revisited during the COP16 negotiations to be continued in February, 2025, in Rome.

<sup>84</sup> <https://whc.unesco.org/en/periodicreporting/>

<sup>85</sup> <https://whc.unesco.org/en/soc/>

<sup>86</sup> <https://www.cbd.int/doc/decisions/cop-15/cop-15-dec-06-en.pdf>

<sup>87</sup> [World Heritage Centre - Capacity Building](#)

need adequate competencies<sup>88</sup> to succeed in their work. Capacity building initiatives such as the World Heritage Leadership Programme, can be helpful in strengthening the competencies of the next generation of heritage managers and custodians to ensure that World Heritage Properties can also meet the challenges of the GBF.<sup>89</sup>

Interest in the professional development and support for site managers, especially rangers, is ascendent, an opportunity for World Heritage to both benefit and contribute. A new IUCN WCPA Good Practice Guidelines focuses on Building trust between rangers and communities<sup>90</sup>, guidance that applies equally to World Heritage properties.

## Technical and scientific cooperation

Goal D of the GBF sets out that “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...”. This topic is also specifically referred to in COP 15 decision 15/8.<sup>91</sup>

The Bern III conference acknowledged that “There is a rich body of knowledge among parties and secretariats about effective, inclusive and collaborative approaches to achieving the targets. The conference provided an excellent opportunity for mutual learning, but significant support and continued momentum is needed to continue this work.”

Properties on the World Heritage List form a global network of sites through which technical and scientific cooperation can be promoted. As an organisation UNESCO also has a broad mandate on this, backed up by its university cooperation programme (incl. UNESCO Chairs), which could be mobilised in support for sites.<sup>92</sup>

## Rights and equity

A distinguishing characteristic of the GBF over its predecessor, the Aichi Targets, is the attention to rights and equity, the role of Indigenous Peoples and local communities in conservation, and respect for “indigenous and traditional territories.” These issues appear early in the decision to endorse the GBF, and many times in the framing section on “Considerations for the implementation of the [GBF].”

Practice must catch up to the rhetoric; World Heritage can further this by taking note of the principles now being articulated and adopting them in the work of the World Heritage Convention; ensuring that provisions on rights and equity that are already included in the Operational Guidelines are implemented and strengthened as needed; and encouraging additional nominations of Indigenous and traditional territories for inscription on the World Heritage List.

In the context of CBD Article 8(j), traditional territories can be understood as “lands and waters traditionally occupied or used by Indigenous Peoples and local communities.” The new inclusion of “indigenous and traditional territories” requires some development of similar understanding,

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<sup>88</sup> See e.g. Competence Framework for Cultural Heritage Management, [unesdoc.unesco.org/ark:/48223/pf0000379275/PDF/379275eng.pdf.multi](https://unesdoc.unesco.org/ark:/48223/pf0000379275/PDF/379275eng.pdf.multi)

<sup>89</sup> World Heritage Leadership programme is a partnership between ICCROM, IUCN and the Norwegian Ministry of Climate and the Environment in collaboration with the UNESCO World Heritage Centre and ICOMOS. <https://www.iccrom.org/programmes/world-heritage-leadership-whl>

<sup>90</sup> <https://portals.iucn.org/library/node/51568>

<sup>91</sup> <https://www.cbd.int/doc/decisions/cop-15/cop-15-dec-08-en.pdf>

<sup>92</sup> <https://www.unesco.org/en/unitwin>

with the Article 8(j) definition providing a starting point for what this might mean. It is of central importance that the views and positions of Indigenous Peoples and local communities (as major rightsholders) are given full consideration and priority when it comes to resolving this definition. World Heritage should engage in the new Subsidiary Body on Article 8(j) which was agreed at COP 16.

It must be acknowledged that in the 52-year history of the World Heritage Convention there are legacy issues of rights and equity in some inscribed properties. At the same time, there are now new properties inscribed where Indigenous Peoples and local communities have played a key role in assisting State Parties in nominating and thereafter managing a property, for example, Pimachiowin Aki (Canada).<sup>93</sup> The visibility of the Convention provides an opportunity to put this issue in the spotlight both for showcasing best practice but also for finding solutions for some of the legacy cases.

The Open-Ended Working Group of States Parties to the World Heritage Convention<sup>94</sup> (created during the extended 45<sup>th</sup> session, Riyadh, 2023) is currently considering language that recognises the challenges faced by Indigenous Peoples when navigating the World Heritage system and seeks ways to better enhance their participation under the Convention.

### Communication, education and awareness

Communication is one of the “Five C’s” of the World Heritage Strategy, and communication, education and awareness are a subject of Target 21. While this technically focuses on increasing “public awareness, involvement and support for World Heritage through communication” it can be expanded to communication on the interconnections of nature and culture in supporting both, and the importance of keeping all the elements of the GBF in mind while pursuing its implementation.

There are many persistent misconceptions about the GBF (e.g., the purpose and role of OECMs; the global targets being taken as national targets when not always appropriate or necessary). World Heritage can capitalize on reputation and experience to illustrate pathways to effective implementation. For example, the sticky idea of a “30x30” target has been a driver in CBD Parties’ agreement on the GBF. But a focus on the quantitative 30% has, in the view of some experts, overshadowed the qualitative elements, including “areas of particular importance to biodiversity and ecosystem functions and services”. The World Heritage Convention’s focus on outstanding universal value should inform implementation, even though for the GBF such values do not always have to be “universal” *sensu strictu*.

“The most significant feature of the 1972 World Heritage Convention is that it links together in a single document the concepts of nature conservation and the preservation of cultural properties. The Convention recognizes the way in which people interact with nature, and the fundamental need to preserve the balance between the two.”<sup>95</sup> The GBF also touches on this basic point but not in a fully coherent way. Better articulation of how that is expressed in World Heritage could provide an example for the CBD.

Finally, initiatives for education such as the World Heritage Education programme and involvement of the youth in World Heritage conservation could help amplify biodiversity conservation in World Heritage properties. These could be implemented in collaboration with

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<sup>93</sup> <https://whc.unesco.org/en/list/1415>

<sup>94</sup> Open-ended Working Group of States Parties to the World Heritage Convention in conformity with Decision 45 COM 11, <https://whc.unesco.org/en/activities/1405/>

<sup>95</sup> <https://whc.unesco.org/en/convention/>

youth-led initiatives such as the Global Youth Biodiversity Network which has extensively collaborated with UNESCO's Man and the Biosphere programme. Such initiatives could be further supported by UNESCO's programmes on associated schools<sup>96</sup> and education for sustainable development<sup>97</sup>.

## Funding to Implement the World Heritage Convention and the GBF

The Open-Ended Working Group of States Parties<sup>98</sup> (created during the extended 45<sup>th</sup> session, Riyadh, 2023) adopted a proposal on 15 November 2024 to “Explore and develop coordinated actions on World Heritage and related sectors (e.g., biodiversity), also with a particular focus on mobilizing additional dedicated funding (e.g., GEF-funding and other Natural Facility funding) to support the inscription of prioritized natural and mixed World Heritage proposals in line with Target 3 of the Global Biodiversity Framework and with Decision 44 COM 7.2.” This proposal will be submitted to the World Heritage Committee at its 47th session in July 2025, similar to the Vilm expert meeting recommendations.

## Global Biodiversity Framework Fund

“The Global Biodiversity Framework Fund (GBFF) was established by the GEF at the request of parties to the Convention on Biological Diversity's COP15 to support implementation of the Kunming-Montreal Global Biodiversity Framework. Launched at the Seventh GEF Assembly in 2023, the fund aims to help countries strengthen national-level biodiversity management, policy, governance, and resource mobilization, including blended finance to leverage private sector financing. The GBFF can receive contributions from public, private, and philanthropic sources. It has streamlined procedures to provide efficient and impactful support for developing countries towards biodiversity goals, with a target of having 20 percent of its funding to support biodiversity action led by Indigenous Peoples and local communities.”<sup>99</sup> Countries pledged an additional \$163 million to the GBF Fund at COP16. The financial mechanism for implementing the GBF is a major topic for the resumed session of COP16 (25-27 February 2025, Rome, Italy).<sup>100</sup>

## Conclusion

### Looking beyond 2030 to the 2050 vision of living in harmony with nature

This report deals expressly with the Kunming-Montreal Global Biodiversity Framework as agreed in COP 15 of the Convention on Biological Diversity in December 2022. Parties have committed to implementing the 23 Targets by 2030. However, the vision and four goals are for 2050.

The vision of the Kunming-Montreal Global Biodiversity Framework is a world of living in harmony with nature where “by 2050, biodiversity is valued, conserved, restored and wisely

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<sup>96</sup> <https://www.unesco.org/en/aspnet>

<sup>97</sup> Education for sustainable development | UNESCO, <https://www.unesco.org/en/sustainable-development/education>

<sup>98</sup> <https://whc.unesco.org/en/activities/1405/>

<sup>99</sup> <https://www.thegef.org/newsroom/press-releases/boost-nature-governments-announce-163-million-new-pledges-global#:~:text=About%20the%20Global%20Biodiversity%20Framework%20Fund&text=Launched%20at%20the%20Seventh%20GEF,to%20leverage%20private%20sector%20financing.>

<sup>100</sup> <https://www.cbd.int/meetings/COP-16-R2>

used, maintaining ecosystem services, sustaining a healthy planet and delivering benefits essential for all people.”

The mission of the Framework for the period up to 2030, towards the 2050 vision 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 endpoint for the targets is now just five years away. Though not yet a subject of public discussion, one must assume that either a new version of the GBF will be negotiated for the 2030-2050 period, or (more likely) that target dates will be extended. Either will likely involve new decisions, and reporting reviews in 2026 and 2030 may lead to revisions in indicators. Recall also that the Bern process proposes a “common COP” or similar in 2030. Early participation of States Parties of the World Heritage Convention, the UNESCO Secretariat, and Advisory Bodies will increase the odds of synergy, coordination, due recognition of the contributions of World Heritage.

# **Annexes**

Annex I – Workshop Agenda and Participant List

Annex II – Literature Reviewed

Annex III – Detail on the Joint Program of Work on the Links between Biological and Cultural Diversity

Annex IV – GBF Indicators



# World Heritage and the Kunming-Montreal Global Biodiversity Framework

25-29 November 2024  
International Academy for  
Nature Conservation Isle of Vilm

EXPERT MEETING



## Background and objectives

The 2022 UN Biodiversity Conference adopted the Kunming-Montreal Global Biodiversity Framework (KM-GBF) to halt the rapid loss of biodiversity and to safeguard its contributions to human well-being ([decision 15/4](#)), and acknowledged that the biodiversity-related Conventions can substantially contribute to achieving the goals and targets of this framework ([decision 15/13](#)). The Parties to the Convention on Biological Diversity also reaffirmed their commitment to the Joint Programme of Work on the links between biological and cultural diversity ([decision 15/22](#)).

Unique in its way to link the protection of natural and cultural heritage, the World Heritage Convention recognizes the close relationship between people, culture, and nature, and through its network of 1,223 UNESCO World Heritage sites, plays a vital role in biodiversity conservation.

By its Decision [45 COM 7.2](#) (Riyadh, 2023) the World Heritage Committee welcomed the adoption of the KM-GBF and requested the States Parties to fully harness the World Heritage Convention in its implementation. The Committee also requested the World Heritage Centre, in collaboration with the Advisory Bodies, to identify and develop co-ordinated actions on World Heritage and the KM-GBF, including specific guidance on how the World Heritage Convention might contribute to the aims of the Joint Programme of Work on the Links between Biological and Cultural Diversity. The expert meeting is expected to work on this task, addressing the following objectives:

- Identify how the objectives of the World Heritage Convention and the targets of the KM-GBF align,
- Identify concrete options and actions to strengthen the implementation of the World Heritage Convention while supporting the KM-GBF,
- Discuss opportunities how the World Heritage Convention and World Heritage sites can contribute to the objectives of the Joint Programme of Work on the links between biological and cultural diversity,
- Discuss linkages and potential synergies with other UNESCO designated sites and programmes.

The meeting is building on past initiatives, such as the outcomes of the 2019 [expert meeting on World Heritage and the post-2020 global biodiversity framework](#) and the 2023 UNESCO-IUCN report "[World Heritage: a unique contribution to biodiversity conservation](#)". Furthermore, a technical options paper will be provided to the participants to facilitate the discussions. The meeting outcomes will be presented to the Committee at its 47th session in 2025.

## Target group

Representatives of States Parties to the World Heritage Convention, UNESCO World Heritage Centre, the Advisory Bodies to the World Heritage Committee, the International Indigenous Peoples' Forum on World Heritage and relevant experts.

## Organiser

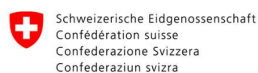
This expert workshop is organised by UNESCO and the German Federal Agency for Nature Conservation (BfN) in collaboration with IUCN, ICOMOS and ICCROM.



Federal Agency for  
Nature Conservation



The meeting is supported by:



Office fédéral de l'environnement OFEV



## Travel information

**By train** via Stralsund – Bergen auf Rügen – Lauterbach Mole

**By car** via Stralsund or Glewitzer Fähre, Garz, Putbus to Lauterbach

The ferry transfer from Lauterbach to the Isle of Vilm takes 10 minutes. The ferry is run by the Federal Agency for Nature Conservation.

### Contact

International Academy for Nature Conservation Isle of Vilm  
Federal Agency for Nature Conservation (BfN)

### Content

Barbara Engels

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### Organizational issues

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## Programme

### Monday, 25 November 2024

Arrival	Ferry crossings from port Lauterbach/Mole at 04:10, 05:10 and 06:10 (last possibility at 07:10 pm)
06:30 pm	Dinner
07:30 pm	<b>Introduction to the Isle of Vilm</b> Mr Thomas Göttert, BfN
07:50 pm	<b>Welcome</b> Ms Barbara Engels, BfN
08:00 pm	<b>Greetings</b> from Ms Astrid Schomaker, Executive Secretary of the Convention on Biological Diversity (online)
08:10 pm	<b>Introduction of participants</b>

### Tuesday, 26 November 2024

From 07:30 Breakfast

#### Setting the Scene part I: World Heritage – A unique contribution to biodiversity conservation

08:45 am	<b>Introduction to the workshop</b> Mr Guy Debonnet, UNESCO World Heritage Centre
09:00 am	<b>Introduction to the CBD and the Kunming-Montreal Global Biodiversity Framework (KM-GBF)</b> Ms Barbara Engels, BfN
09:20 am	<b>Outcomes of the CBD COP16</b> Ms María Claudia Vélez Crismatt, Office of the Vice Minister of Multilateral Affairs, Colombia
09:30 am	<b>World Heritage and biodiversity conservation: Data and perspectives</b> Ms Mizuki Murai, IUCN
09:45 am	<b>Biodiversity conservation in cultural World Heritage sites</b> Ms Leticia Leitão, ICCROM/ICOMOS
10.00 am	<b>UNESCO designated areas and the KM-GBF: World Heritage sites, Biosphere Reserves and UNESCO Global Geoparks (online)</b> Mr António Abreu, Director of the Division of Ecological and Earth Sciences, Secretary of the UNESCO Man and the Biosphere (MAB) Programme

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10.15 am Discussion

10:30 am Coffee/tea break

#### Setting the Scene part II: Cooperation among the Biodiversity-related Conventions

11:00 am	<b>Cooperation among the biodiversity-related conventions for the implementation of the KM-GBF</b> Mr Norbert Bärlocher, Federal Office for the Environment FOEN, Switzerland
11:15 am	<b>Peer learning from other biodiversity-related Conventions (online)</b> Mr Jerker Tamelander, Secretariat of the Convention on Wetlands Ms Laura Cerasi, Secretariat of the Convention on Migratory Species
11:45 am	<b>Roundtable on national experiences in harmonising the implementation of the World Heritage Convention and the KM-GBF</b> All national experts
12:15 pm	Discussion/open questions
12:30 pm	Lunch
01:30 pm	Guided Walk on Vilm
3:00 pm	Coffee/tea break

#### Working sessions - part I: Harnessing the World Heritage Convention in the implementation of the Kunming-Montreal Global Biodiversity Framework

03:30 pm	<b>Technical options paper</b> Mr Brent Mitchell, Senior Vice President, QLF Atlantic Center for the Environment, Vice Chair of the IUCN World Commission on Protected Areas (WCPA), Partner NPS Stewardship Institute
04:20 pm	Comment on the technical options paper by Alfred Degemmis, Vice-Chair for World Heritage, IUCN WCPA (online)
04:30 pm	Introduction to working groups and methods
04:45 pm	<b>WG session I</b>
06:00 pm	Dinner followed by informal get-together (optional)

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## Wednesday, 27 November 2024

07:30 am Breakfast

09:00 am **General Discussion/Wrap up from Day 1**

[Setting the Scene part III: World Heritage and the Joint Programme of Work on links between biological and cultural diversity](#)

09:20 am **The Convention on Biological Diversity, the World Heritage Convention and rights-based conservation**  
Ms Chrissy Grant, International Indigenous Peoples' Forum on World Heritage

09:40 am **The Joint Programme of Work on links between biological and cultural diversity**  
Mr Nigel Crawhall, UNESCO Local and Indigenous Knowledge systems (LINKS) programme

10:00 am Discussion/open questions

10:30 am Coffee/tea break

[Working sessions - part II: Harnessing the World Heritage Convention in the implementation of the Kunming-Montreal Global Biodiversity Framework](#)

11:00 am **WG Session I** wrap-up

11:30 am Start of **WG Session II**

12:30 am Lunch break

01:30 pm Walk & Talk (outside): **WG Session II** cont.

02:30 pm **WG Session II** wrap-up

02:45 pm Start of **WG Session III**

03:45 pm Coffee/Tea break

04:15 pm Wrap up **WG Session III**

04:45 pm Plenary: presentation of results from WG Sessions I/II/III

06:00 pm Dinner

07:30 pm Cultural evening (participants are invited to bring drinks, sweets, songs and dances...)

## Thursday, 28 November 2024

07:30 am Breakfast

[Excursion](#)

09:20 am Departure with the ferry

12:10 am Return ferry from Lauterbach

12:30 am Lunch break

[Working sessions - part III: Harnessing the World Heritage Convention in the implementation of the Kunming-Montreal Global Biodiversity Framework](#)

13:30 am **Wrap up from Day 2**

14:00 am **Group Discussion on key actions and guidance**

15:30 am Coffee/tea break

16:00 am **Conclusions and next steps**

06:00 pm Farewell dinner offered by BfN

## Friday, 29 November 2024

07:25 am **Departure boat 1 (from Vilm)**  
Packed breakfast will be provided  
Departure of train at 08:00 from Lauterbach Mole to Bergen. Onward travel at 08:42 to Berlin main station (arrival 12:35) or BER airport (arrival 13:00)

08:25 am **Departure boat 2**  
Departure 09:00 from Lauterbach Mole to Bergen. Onward travel at 09:26 via Stralsund to Berlin (arrival 13:28) or BER airport (arrival 14:00)

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**International Academy for Nature Conservation Isle of Vilm:****A platform for dialogue**

The INA is a centre for capacity building and dialogue on issues with relevance to nature conservation on national and international level. The unique natural setting of the academy and the transdisciplinary, international orientation of various workshops have attracted around 50,000 people from 150 countries to Vilm since the establishment of the INA in 1990.

In cooperation with other organisations, the INA provides about 60 workshops, retreats, conferences and training events each year on national and international nature conservation topics.

More information:

[www.bfn.de/en/ina](http://www.bfn.de/en/ina)



Bundesamt für  
Naturschutz

## Expert meeting: World Heritage and the Kunming-Montreal Global Biodiversity Framework, 25-29 November 2024

### List of participants (in-person)

Name	Organisation
Ms Barbara Engels	Head of Department "Economy, Society and International nature conservation", German Federal Agency for Nature Conservation
Mr Thomas Göttert	International Academy for Nature Conservation and Event Management, German Federal Agency for Nature Conservation
Mr Nehru Prabakaran	Associate Nodal Officer of the Wildlife Institute of India
Mr José Feliciano González Jiménez	Director General for the National Commission for Natural Protected Areas, Mexico
Mr Dries Desloover	Project Manager National Parks Flanders – Belgium Agentschap voor Natuur en Bos
Ms Elina Maltseva	Head, Biosafety and Biosecurity Department, Almaty Branch of National Center for Biotechnology, Kazakhstan
Mr Norbert Bärlocher	Head, Rio Conventions Section, International Affairs Division, Federal Office for the Environment, Switzerland
Ms Kristina Strukanska	Chief Expert, Department Natura 2000, National Nature Protection Service Directorate, Ministry of Environment and Water, Bulgaria
Ms María Claudia Vélez Crismatt	First Secretary, Office of the Vice Minister of Multilateral Affairs, Colombia
Mr Felipe Dittrich Ferreira	Attaché, Culture Sector - Natural Heritage, Permanent Delegation of Brazil to UNESCO
Mr Gaute Sønstebo	Senior Advisor, Norwegian Environment Agency
Ms Chrissy Grant	Chair, International Indigenous Peoples' Forum on World Heritage
Ms Mizuki Murai	Senior Programme Coordinator, World Heritage, Centre for Conservation Action, IUCN
Ms Leticia Leitão	Independent Consultant, representing ICCROM and ICOMOS
Mr Brent Mitchell	Senior Vice President, QLF Atlantic Center for the Environment Vice Chair, IUCN World Commission on Protected Areas Partner, NPS Stewardship Institute
Mr Nigel Crawhall	Chief of Section, Local and Indigenous Knowledge Systems, UNESCO
Mr Guy Debonnet	Chief, Natural Heritage Unit, UNESCO World Heritage Centre
Ms Susanna Kari	Project Officer, Natural Heritage Unit, UNESCO World Heritage Centre



## Annex II - Literature Reviewed

Anon. 2024. Briefing Note for UNEA-6 on the Bern III Conference – Preliminary Highlights

Anon. 2024. Overview of Case Studies Submitted by Bern III Participants (Powerpoint presentation)

Appleton, M.R., Courtiol, A., Emerton, L. *et al.* 2022. Protected area personnel and ranger numbers are insufficient to deliver global expectations. *Nat Sustain* 5, 1100–1110.  
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Badman, T. and E. Jo. 2023. UN Biodiversity Conference December 2022: New support for the connection of nature and culture. Living Landscape Observer.

Bertzky, B. et al. 2020. Cultural World Heritage Sites and Key Biodiversity Areas: a remarkable overlap. World Heritage No. 96: 14-15.

Campbell, S. 2024. The World Heritage Convention, Protected Areas and Rivers: Challenges for Representation and Implications for International Water Conservation. PARKS 30 pages 79-88.

Canadian Commission for UNESCO & United Kingdom National Commission for UNESCO (2022). Sites for Sustainable Development: Realizing the Potential of UNESCO Designated Sites to Advance Agenda 2030. T. Carter; E.R. Haine; A.J. Kent, M. Rabagliati. Canadian Commission for UNESCO, Ottawa, Canada and United Kingdom National Commission for UNESCO, London, UK, 101 pages

Chakraborty, P. and Ghosh, S. 2024. Nudging to Glory: The World Heritage Convention's Influence in Conflict-Prone Global South Natural Sites. PARKS 30.1 pages 46-56.

Convention on Biological Diversity. 2023. Statement by David Cooper to the 45<sup>th</sup> Session of the World Heritage Committee.

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<https://www.cbd.int/doc/c/d140/f363/5a2af2b9b67c9e69b645fb84/sbstta-26-02-en.pdf>

ICOMOS. 2024. ICOMOS Annual Report 2023.

IUCN. 2018. Natural World Heritage Issues Brief

IUCN WCPA. 2024 (draft). Protecting Natural Heritage to Halt and Reverse Biodiversity Loss: A CoP16 Technical Brief from the IUCN World Commission on Protected Areas (WCPA)

Neugarten, R.A., Langhammer, P.F., Osipova, E., Bagstad, K.J., Bhagabati, N., Butchart, S.H.M., Dudley, N., Elliott, V., Gerber, L.R., Gutierrez Arrellano, C., Ivanić, K.-Z., Kettunen, M., Mandle, L., Merriman, J.C., Mulligan, M., Peh, K.S.-H., Raudsepp-Hearne, C., Semmens, D.J., Stolton, S., Willcock, S. 2018. Tools for measuring, modelling, and valuing ecosystem services: Guidance for Key Biodiversity Areas, natural World Heritage Sites, and protected areas. Gland, Switzerland: IUCN. x + 70pp.

Nordic Council of Ministers. 2024. Local Actions for the New Global Biodiversity Framework <http://dx.doi.org/10.6027/nord2024-019>

Pecher, S., Huber, M., Schäfer, I., Wolf, L., Kirchmeir, H. (2023): Evaluation of the World Heritage Capacity-Building Strategy. Final Report. E.C.O. Institute of Ecology, Klagenfurt, Executive summary + 46 p. + Annex

Phang, S.C., Failler, P., Bridgewater, P. 2020. Addressing the Implementation Challenge of the Global Biodiversity Framework. Biodiversity and Conservation (2020) 29:3061–3066  
<https://doi.org/10.1007/s10531-020-02009-2>

Ramsar Convention. 2024? Scaling Up Wetland Conservation and Restoration to Deliver the Kunming-Montreal Global Biodiversity Framework. Ramsar Technical Note 12

Sapijanskas, J. 2024. Synergy among Biodiversity-related MEAs and the GEF. (Powerpoint presentation to Bern workshop).

Schaaf, T. and Clamote Rodrigues, D. (2016). Managing MIDAs: Harmonising the management of MultiInternationally Designated Areas: Ramsar Sites, World Heritage sites, Biosphere Reserves and UNESCO Global Geoparks. Gland, Switzerland: IUCN. xvi + 140 pp.  
<http://dx.doi.org/10.2305/IUCN.CH.2016.03.en>  
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Stevens, S., Hay-Edie, T., Miranda, C., Ramos, A. & Pathak Broome, N. (Eds.). Stevens, S. with contributions by Eghenter, C., Fitzsimons, J., Goradze, I., Ironside, J., Mellis, C., Nitah, S., Parling, P., Reyes, G. & Tabanao, G. 2024. *Recognising territories and areas conserved by Indigenous peoples and local communities (ICCAs) overlapped by protected areas*. IUCN WCPA Good Practice Guidelines No. 34. Gland, Switzerland: IUCN.  
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Stolton, S., Timmins, H.L., Dudley, N., Appleton, M., Álvarez Malvido, M., Singh, R., Tao, B., Biegus, O., Moreto, W., Itela, S. & Mupeta-Muyamwa, P. 2024. *Building trust between rangers and communities*, IUCN WCPA Good Practice Guidelines Series No. 35. IUCN.

UNEP-WCMC and IUCN. 2024. Protected Planet Report 2024. UNEP-WCMC and IUCN: Cambridge, United Kingdom; Gland, Switzerland.

UNESCO, ICCROM, ICOMOS and IUCN. 2023. Enhancing Our Heritage Toolkit 2.0. World Heritage Resource Manual. <https://doi.org/10.58337/HBZY1376>

UNESCO and IUCN. 2023. World Heritage: a unique contribution to biodiversity conservation. <https://doi.org/10.58337/LSRE8424>

UNESCO. 2019. Experts Stress Key Role of World Heritage in Meeting Global Biodiversity Objectives.

UNESCO. 2022. The Role of UNESCO Biosphere Reserves in the Implementation of the Convention on Biological Diversity's Post-2020 Global Biodiversity Framework.

UNESCO. 2023a. Operational Guidelines for the Implementation of the World Heritage Convention. WHC.23/01

UNESCO. 2023b. State of Conservation of World Heritage Properties. Decision 45 COM 7.2

UNESCO. 2024a. Culture-Nature: Joint Programme of Work on the links between Biological and Cultural Diversity. SC/PBS/ILK/REPT-JPW/23UNPFII/04/24 Rev.

UNESCO. 2024b. World Heritage and the Kunming-Montreal Global Biodiversity Framework. 2024 Expert Meeting Concept Note.

UNESCO. 2024c. State of Conservation of World Heritage Properties. Decision 46 COM 7

WWF and IUCN WCPA. 2023. A Guide to Inclusive, Equitable and Effective Implementation of Target 3 of the Kunming-Montreal Global Biodiversity Framework: Version 1, August 2023

## Annex III - Joint Programme of Work on the Links between Biological and Cultural Diversity

The Roundtable on Cultural Diversity and Biodiversity or Sustainable Development, jointly organised by UNESCO and United Nations Environment Programme (UNEP) at the 2002 World Summit on Sustainable Development (Johannesburg, South Africa) triggered an initiative for joint action between the UNESCO and the CBD on biological and cultural diversity. This has evolved over time into the Joint Programme of Work on the Links between Biological and Cultural Diversity (JPoW) that was adopted at COP10 reaffirmed and enhanced under the Kunming Montreal Global Biodiversity Framework (KM-GBF) text at COP15.

Building on CBD-COP9 Decision IX/27 Paragraph 8, and fostered by the context of the 2010 International Year of Biodiversity (IYB), and the 2010 International Year of Rapprochement of Cultures (IYRC), the International Conference on Biological and Cultural Diversity – for Development, a SCBD-UNESCO joint initiative, developed a UNESCO-SCBD Joint Programme on the links between cultural and biological diversity, which was acknowledged by the World Heritage Programme at its 34<sup>th</sup> meeting (Brasilia, July 2010) , and formalised by the CBD-COP10 through Decision X/20 (Nagoya, October 2010).

The SCBD, UNESCO, the Government of Egypt and other partners organized the Nature and Culture Summit (22-24 November 2018) on the margin of the CBD-COP14 (Sharm El-Sheikh, Egypt, November 2018). The Summit results led to a further decision at COP14 to extend the JPoW as an important component of the Global Biodiversity Framework to be considered at COP15.

At COP-15, the KM-GBF, in decision CBD/COP/15/L.10 included an elaborated Joint Programme of Work on the Links between Biological and Cultural Diversity, which is to be led by UNESCO, IUCN and SCBD in cooperation with the International Indigenous Forum on Biodiversity (IIFB) and other networks and partners.

Under the KM-GBF, the JPoW currently aims to develop a common strategy to halt the decline of biological and cultural diversity, operationalize relevant indicators within the Kunming-Montreal Global Biodiversity Framework, and create communication and educational materials to raise awareness, in all spheres of society and sectors, about the links between biological, cultural and linguistic diversity.

The new JPoW is built on 4 elements:

1. A joint strategy to stop the ongoing and often dramatic decline in global diversity of both nature and culture
2. Science dialogue, knowledge dialogue, equivalence of knowledge systems, indicators and monitoring efforts
3. Biocultural diversity and linkages between nature and culture in integrated socio-ecological systems
4. Develop new approaches to communication, education and public awareness (CEPA)

The design, resources and work plan of the JPoW are currently under discussion. There have been a series of exchanges between UNESCO, SCBD and IUCN, while UNESCO has worked with the partners to hold four dialogues with Indigenous peoples' networks during 2024, to identify expectations and approaches to defining and operationalizing the JPoW. One of the dialogues focused on the relationship between the World Heritage Convention and the JPoW in relation to the implementation of the KM-GBF.

For UNESCO Secretariat, a key element is addressing how protected areas and Other Effective Area-based Conservation Measures (OECMs) are able to simultaneously support

cultural and linguistic diversity as well as biological diversity. As such, this connects to the use of Indigenous and Local Knowledge Systems which have received greater attention internationally through the assessments of the Intergovernmental Science Policy Platform on Biodiversity and Ecosystems Services (IPBES).

Indigenous partners have emphasized, *inter alia*, the following points:

- **Roadmap:** UNESCO, SCBD, IUCN and other partners involved in the JPoW should develop a roadmap that promotes Indigenous perspectives, knowledge systems and languages in biodiversity conservation, as a contribution to the implementation of the Kunming-Montreal Global Biodiversity Framework. This roadmap should help map Indigenous practices on biodiversity globally, identifying existing Indigenous governance systems, and highlighting enabling and threatening existing biodiversity and environmental policies.
- **Consultations:** The JPoW roadmap, which should be developed in full consultation with Indigenous Peoples, should highlight the Indigenous Peoples' crucial role in biodiversity conservation while addressing the challenges they face from existing policies and practices; promoting ecological sustainability, fostering international, regional and national cooperation, and providing an overview of sources of funding which could potentially support Indigenous-led conservation initiatives.
- **JPoW as connector:** CBD JPoW provides a framework to act on the critical connection between language vitality, culture, food systems, land tenure, ecosystem restoration, intergenerational solidarity and conserving biodiversity.
- **Language vitality** serves as a proxy for cultural diversity, and the current efforts to define an implementation pathway for the JPoW coincide with the International Decade of Indigenous Languages (IDIL).
- **Checks on 30 x 30:** The JPoW can be a check and balance on risks arising from the 30x30 land and sea conservation target that could cause disputes or displacements.
- **Enhance Collaboration Between Conventions:** There is a need for closer collaboration between the WHC and CBD to address the links between culture and nature.
- **Improving FPIC Implementation:** The implementation of Free Prior and Informed Consent (FPIC) should be meaningfully applied across both the WHC and CBD processes to protect Indigenous rights and ensure their voices are heard in land governance. It is recommended that the WHC formally adopt FPIC as a requirement for all World Heritage site nominations involving Indigenous lands.
- **Document and Share Best Practices:** There is a need for creating repositories of information, case studies, tools and lessons learned to share best practices in including Indigenous perspectives in heritage management and on co-governance models.
- **Support Indigenous-Led Initiatives:** Financial resources and capacity-building opportunities should be provided to support Indigenous-led to foster the inclusion of Indigenous worldviews in heritage management, it is recommended that UNESCO develop a toolkit for World Heritage site managers that provides guidelines on incorporating ILKS and Indigenous perspectives into site management plans.
- **Human Rights Integration:** The interaction between the UNCBD, JPoW, and WH Convention should fall under a unified human rights framework, ensuring compliance, promotion, and respect for Indigenous Peoples' rights. The KM-GBF and JPoW must keep pace with international norms on Nature-Culture and Indigenous Peoples' human rights, with the WH Convention acting as a leader in innovation and adherence to these standards.
- **Improvement of SOC Reporting:** The State of Conservation (SOC) reporting process must be reformed to ensure that it accurately reflects the cultural significance of sites, particularly from the perspective of Indigenous communities. This would

require a more inclusive approach to data collection and reporting, where Indigenous voices are central.

- **Integration of Cultural and Natural Heritage:** Greater efforts should be made to integrate the principles of the 2003 Convention for the Safeguarding of the Intangible Cultural Heritage with the World Heritage Convention. This integration could be achieved by developing joint guidelines that allow for a more holistic approach to heritage conservation.
- **Recognition of OECMs:** The inclusion of Indigenous and traditional territories as Other Effective Area-based Conservation Measures (OECMs) under the GBF should be strengthened. This recognition would help align global conservation targets with the cultural and spiritual values of Indigenous peoples, ensuring that conservation efforts support both biodiversity and cultural heritage.

## Annex IV – GBF Indicators

*Optional disaggregation of the headline indicators and voluntary component and complementary indicators in the monitoring framework for the Kunming-Montreal Global Biodiversity Framework (Annex II in CBD/COP/16/L.26)*<sup>101</sup>

Target	Headline or binary indicator	Optional disaggregations	Component indicator	Complementary indicator
<b>1</b>	A.1 Red List of Ecosystems A.2 Extent of natural ecosystems 1.1 Percentage of land and sea area covered by biodiversity-inclusive spatial plans 1.b Number of countries using 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 close to zero by 2030	For indicators A.1 and A.2: Described in Goal A (some disaggregations may be more relevant to the specific target) For indicator 1.1: No metadata currently proposed		Proportion of transboundary basin area with an operational arrangement for water cooperation (Sustainable Development Goal indicator 6.5.2)
<b>2</b>	2.1 Area under restoration	By ecosystem functional group (Global Ecosystem Typology levels 2 and 3 or equivalent) By indigenous and traditional territories By protected areas or other effective area-based conservation measures By type of restoration activity	Proportion of land that is degraded over total land area (Sustainable Development Goal indicator 15.3.1)	Global Ecosystem Restoration Index Proportion of key biodiversity areas in favourable condition
<b>3</b>	3.1 Coverage of protected areas and other effective area-based conservation measures	By protected areas and other effective area-based conservation measures; By realm, biome and ecosystem functional group (Global Ecosystem Typology levels 2 and 3 or equivalent) By areas of importance for biodiversity (existing	Protected Connected Index Protected Area Connectedness Index Species Protection Index	Rate of protected area downgrading, downsizing and degazettement events IUCN Green List of Protected and Conserved Areas Standard

<sup>101</sup> <https://www.cbd.int/doc/c/5044/ea79/105d29801a3efae8df742c93/cop-16-l-26-en.pdf>



		Sustainable Development Goal indicators 4.5.1, 15.1.2, 15.4.1) By effectiveness (protected area management effectiveness) By governance type By indigenous and traditional territories		Proportion of key biodiversity areas in favourable condition  Protected Area Isolation Index  Protected Areas Network metric  Number of protected areas that have completed a site-level assessment of governance and equity
<b>4</b>	A.3 Red list Index (Sustainable Development Goal indicator 15.5.1) A.4 The proportion of populations within species with an effective population size greater than 500	For indicators A.3 and A.4: Described in Goal A (some disaggregations may be more relevant to the specific target)	Living Planet Index  Number of plant and animal genetic resources for food and agriculture secured in medium- or long-term conservation facilities  Green status of species  Human-wildlife conflict indicator  Proportion of local breeds classified as being at risk of extinction (SDG indicator 2.5.2)	Species Threat Abatement and Restoration metric  Red List Index (wild relatives of domesticated animals)  Number of island invasive alien species eradications
<b>10</b>	10.1 Proportion of agricultural area under productive and sustainable agriculture (Sustainable Development Goal indicator 2.4.1)  10.2 Progress towards sustainable forest management (Sustainable Development Goal indicator 15.2.1)	For indicator 10.1: By household and non-household sector farms  By crops and livestock  For indicator 10.2: By indigenous and traditional territories	Average income of small-scale food producers, by sex and indigenous status (SDG indicator 2.3.2)	Agrobiodiversity Index  Soil organic carbon stocks (subindicator under Sustainable Development Goal indicator 15.3.1)  Red List Index (wild relatives of domesticated animals)  Red List Index (pollinating species)  Red List Index (forest specialist species)  Red List Index (impacts of fisheries)  Proportion of local breeds classified as being at risk of extinction (SDG indicator 2.5.2)  Proportion of land that is degraded over total

				<p>land area (SDG indicator 15.3.1)</p> <p>Area of forest under sustainable management: total forest management certification by the Forest Stewardship Council and the Programme for the Endorsement of Forest Certification</p>
<b>12</b>	<p>12.1 Average share of the built-up area of cities that is green or blue space for public use for all 12.b Number of countries with biodiversity-inclusive urban planning referring to green or blue urban spaces</p>	<p>By space type: by realm, biome and ecosystem functional group (Global Ecosystem Typology levels 2 and 3 or equivalent)</p>	<p>Singapore Index on Cities' Biodiversity</p>	
<b>22</b>	<p>22.1 Land-use change and land tenure in the traditional territories of indigenous peoples and local communities 22.b Number of countries taking action towards 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 the full protection of environmental human rights defenders</p>	<p>Disaggregations by indigenous and traditional territories and governance of all indicators are relevant to Target 22</p>	<p>Participation of indigenous peoples and local communities in decision-making related to the implementation of the Convention at all levels</p> <p>Index of Linguistic Diversity</p> <p>Proportion of total adult population with secure tenure rights to land, (a) with legally recognized documentation; and (b) who perceive their rights to land as secure, by sex and type of tenure (Sustainable Development Goal indicator 1.4.2)</p> <p>Number of verified cases of killings and other attacks against environmental human rights defenders in the previous 12 months (Sustainable Development Goal indicator 16.10.1)</p>	<p>Proportions of positions in national and local institutions, including: (a) the legislatures; (b) the public service; and (c) the judiciary, compared to national distributions, by sex, age, persons with disabilities and population groups (Sustainable Development Goal indicator 16.7.1)</p> <p>Proportion of countries with systems to track and make public allocations for gender equality and women's empowerment (Sustainable Development Goal indicator 5.c.1)</p> <p>Proportion of total agricultural population with ownership or secure rights over agricultural land, by sex; and share of women among owners</p>

				<p>or rights-bearers of agricultural land, by type of tenure (Sustainable Development Goal indicator 5.a.1)</p> <p>Proportion of countries where the legal framework (including customary law) guarantees women's equal rights to land ownership and/or control (Sustainable Development Goal indicator 5.a.2)</p> <p>Proportion of population who believe decision-making is inclusive and responsive, by sex, age, disability and population group (Sustainable Development Goal indicator 16.7.2)</p> <p>Area covered by the reported territories and areas governed, managed, and conserved by custodian indigenous peoples and local communities (ICCAs—territories of life)</p>
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