Department for Environment Food & Rural Affairs

Submission from the United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland (UK)

The United Kingdom (UK) is committed to playing a leading role in the development of an ambitious post-2020 global biodiversity framework. Critical to the delivery of global ambition is a robust, deliverable and clearly-articulated approach to the monitoring of progress. This submission provides proposals to help simplify the presentation of the post-2020 global biodiversity framework and reduce the list of headline indicators in the monitoring framework. It also proposes three indicators that we believe should be included in the monitoring framework.

Part 1 - Proposals for the post-2020 monitoring framework

Introduction

During OEWG-2 and SBSTTA-24, a number of Parties noted that further clarification is required on the relationship between 2030 targets and 2050 goals, and the need to have a logical relationship between the 2030 targets and the 2050 goals, so that we all clearly understand how our efforts to 2030 will contribute to the 2050 goals (and ultimately the 2050 Vision). Many also expressed concerns about the number of headline indicators, both for practical reasons and because having too many will stifle clear communication of our ambitions and results.

In our view the purpose of indicators in the post-2020 Global Biodiversity Framework is threefold:
1. To facilitate high-level communication to diverse audiences about overall progress towards goals and targets at the global level;
2. To enable specific assessment of individual goals (and milestones) and targets at national and global levels (and, as appropriate, at sub-national and regional levels);
3. To provide a tool to support and simplify reporting in consistent and comparable formats.

The monitoring framework needs to be designed to meet these multiple objectives.

Cluster approach

While we appreciate efforts to reduce the list of headline indicators following feedback from SBSTTA-24, we still have concerns with the current proposal for 39 headline indicators. These include:

- The technical or practical feasibility of implementation at both national and global scales, acknowledging the varying levels of reporting capabilities among Parties.
- A list of headline indicators determined just on technical criteria related to availability of data and methods, or existing use within other international processes, would be unbalanced, have gaps in some key areas and may not meet the need for clear communication of global priorities.
- We also emphasise that headline indicators (i.e. those that are applied consistently at national and global levels) should only be part of the monitoring framework and other national and global level indicators are equally important.

Our view therefore is that we should reduce the number of proposed headline indicators. In order to help derive a smaller and balanced set of headline indicators, we propose the goals and targets be clustered in three groupings based on the groups of targets presented in the draft version 1 of the global biodiversity framework. The three groups of targets can be associated with the four goals as follows:

- **CLUSTER I** (Goal A and targets 1-8): enhancing biodiversity and tackling immediate pressures;
- **CLUSTER II** (Goals B and C and targets 9-13): achieving sustainable use & benefits for all;
- **CLUSTER III** (Goal D and targets 14-21): mobilising finance and other means of implementation.

(We recognise there is not a simple nested relationship between goals and targets and often actions (targets) will contribute to two or more outcomes (goals), but nevertheless this provides a simplified way of showing how targets contribute to goals.)

Once the goals and targets have been clustered in this way, we propose selecting a small number of indicators as headlines that are representative of each cluster.

This approach reduces the overall number of indicators needed (and therefore takes better account of national capability and capacity), makes reporting easier, and also enables easier communication to the population at large of our ambitions and progress.

Diagram 1: Alternative presentation of goals, targets and headline indicators

The diagram below sets out some initial ideas of how headline indicators could be organised under each cluster. The examples are used to illustrate our approach and invite an open discussion on which of the proposed headline indicators may be the most effective for each cluster.

2050 VISION Valuing, conserving, restoring, wisely using, maintaining ecosystem services, creating benefits 2030 MISSION Urgent action across society to put biodiversity on a path to recovery for the benefit of planet and people		
CLUSTER I **Goal A and targets 1-8** **ENHANCE BIODIVERSITY AND TACKLE IMMEDIATE PRESSURES**	**CLUSTER II** **Goals B and C and targets 9-13 ACHIEVE SUSTAINABLE USE & BENEFITS FOR ALL**	**CLUSTER III** **Goal D and targets 14-21 MOBILISE FINANCE AND OTHER MEANS OF IMPLEMENTATION**
Possible headline elements		
• Extent of selected ecosystems[1] • Trends in species extinction risk (Red List index) • Trends in species abundance (Living Planet Index) • Sustainable fishing • Extent/ coverage and quality of Protected areas and OECMs*** (please see UK proposal on page 7) • Genetic diversity of wild species (please see UK proposal on page 4)	• National accounts of ecosystem services • Benefits from use of wild species • Proportion of sustainable agriculture and forestry • Legislative and policy frameworks for ABS***	• Integration of biodiversity in national accounting systems • Dependencies and impacts of businesses/supply chains on biodiversity***(please see UK proposal on page 5) • Value of redirected subsidies • ODA for biodiversity • Public and private expenditure for biodiversity*** • Engagement with stakeholder groups in decision making***

*** Needs development as stated in CBD/WG2020/3/3/Add.1.

Finally, in addition to the criteria set out in paragraph 4 presented in document CBD/WG2020/3/3/Add.1, we suggest two additional criteria should be considered when selecting a minimum number of headline indicators:

- Firstly, high-level indicators which capture the overall scope of the goals and targets which can be used for tracking national progress, as well as for tracking progress at regional and global levels.
- Secondly, indicators that can be used for high-level communication purposes.

---

[1] Consideration to be given to carbon rich ecosystems

What would this mean for targets that would no longer have headline indicators?

We understand the need to have indicators for all goals and targets and the concern that those targets left without headline indicators under this proposal might be seen as 'less important'. However, as stated above, we suggest that equal importance should be attached to the use of other national and global indicators for each goal and target: there is no need for a consistent methodology for these indicators to be applied across countries. In many cases, it will be appropriate to use nationally-determined indicators to track progress towards national targets (which should be aligned to global targets).

To facilitate this approach, the monitoring framework should therefore include guidance on the use of a full set of indicators at both national and global levels as well as an agreed a list of headline indicators. The component and complementary indicators proposed by the Secretariat, as well as headline indicator proposals that are not adopted as headlines, could provide a basis for this further guidance.

Part 2 - Proposals for additional indicators to be included in the monitoring framework

In addition to the proposal above, the UK would like to make three suggestions for further headline and supporting component indicators. The three are:

- **Genetic Diversity Indicator** (headline)
- **Global Consumption Impact Risk Indicator** (headline)
- **Protected area (PA) effectiveness Indicator** (alternative component indicator – to be integrated into the headline indicator)

Genetic diversity indicator: Scorecard approach for wild species of cultural and socioeconomic importance

Context
Indicators for assessing genetic diversity have mainly focussed on species of agricultural importance, while neglecting wild species which represent the majority of genetic diversity. While Aichi Target 13 includes wording on maintaining genetic diversity of 'other socioeconomically- as well as culturally-valuable species', there is no clear strategy on assessing and reporting on such species. Addressing this gap has been the major focus of the scorecard approach developed in the UK by NatureScot.

What is the indicator?
NatureScot, Edinburgh University, the Royal Botanic Garden Edinburgh and other stakeholders, have developed an approach for assessing and reporting on genetic diversity, incorporating wild species. Criteria are used to select species of socio-economic or cultural importance and a simple scorecard method is used for assessing risks to conservation of genetic diversity. This is based on expert opinion, using genetic data where available, combined with information on species biology, abundance, and distribution. Where no genetic data exist, the risk assessment is based on species biology, abundance, and distribution.

4

What criteria are used to identify species?
- Species prioritised for conservation value.
- Species identified as being culturally important.
- Species providing important ecosystem services.
- Game species (wild species of direct commercial value through hunting).
- Species collected for food or medicine (forage species).

What assessments does the scorecard approach include?
The approach uses structured expert opinion assessments of whether:
- Demographic declines are likely to lead to loss of genetic diversity (genetic erosion).
- Hybridisation is likely to lead to undesirable replacement of genetic diversity.
- Restrictions to regeneration/turnover are likely to impede evolutionary change.

How are genetic risks categorised?
The methodology results in a 'traffic light' score of 'negligible', 'moderate' or 'serious' as to whether genetic risks are occurring or expected over the next 25 years. Current management actions are also assessed in the context of genetic risk.

What is the development timeline?
- A [method report](#) was published in 2020.
- The indictor was used to [measure Scotland's progress towards Aichi Target 13](#).
- The indicator is applicable globally and nationally with potential to be applied under the Post-2020 Global Biodiversity Framework.
- NatureScot are working with the University of Benghazi, Libya to test the indicator's applicability in a country facing challenges from access to technology.

What are the key limitations to the methodology?
- Whilst the methodology is designed to be applicable in any country or region, wider uptake is needed for certainty. Ongoing testing in Libya will aid understanding.
- The methodology requires access to experts. Evidence suggests all countries have suitable experts, but some nations may lack a broad taxonomic base of experts.

What are the future priorities?
- Extension to other species (with inclusion of marine species a particularly high priority).
- Greater incorporation of genomic data into monitoring genetic diversity (particularly in the agricultural and forestry sectors where data availability is potentially high).

Global consumption impact risk indicator

What is it?
An indicator estimating total risk of impact (deforestation, biodiversity loss, etc) caused by countries' consumption of commodities. Results can also be broken down by the producer countries in which the impact risk is taking place, and by the commodities causing the impact. The indicator is being developed in the UK by the [Stockholm Environment Institute (University of York)](#) and the [Joint Nature Conservation Committee](#), funded by the UK Department for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs (Defra).

What is the development timeline?

- Interim UK results were published in March 2021
- Additional and improved results will be published as a UK experimental statistic in October 2021, accompanied by a separate dashboard showing global impacts.
- It is expected that the indicator will be updated annually following this. It is hoped that further development work will also continue, depending on funding.

Which impact metrics does it include?

Interim results relating to agricultural commodities included tropical deforestation risk; greenhouse gas (GHG) emissions from tropical deforestation; total cropland use; and material footprint. The October release will additionally include biodiversity and water stress.

Which commodities does it include?

Interim results included agricultural commodities. The October release will additionally include timber and cattle (for some extensions). Results can be broken down by commodity type.

Which countries does it include?

- Whilst developed to provide a UK indicator, the dataset has globally relevant results.
- Any country worldwide will be able to view results from a *production* perspective, to break down impacts taking place in their own country by the countries or regions that are driving them through their consumption.
- It will also be possible to view results from a *consumption* perspective for 44 of the world's largest economies, to identify the impacts that their consumption is driving within each producer country. Other countries will be grouped into five 'rest of world' regions due to data availability in the underlying dataset.

How is it calculated and what are the data sources?

- Trade flows were estimated with data from the Food and Agriculture Organisation of the United Nations (FAO) and Exiobase (a dataset tracking financial flows).
- Cropland use was also calculated using FAO data, whilst deforestation risk and GHG emissions from deforestation were calculated using data from Pendrill et al, 2020.
- Full methodological information is given in the project's interim report.

What assumptions and caveats should users be aware of?

- Data tracing all commodities exactly back to their countries of origin are not publicly available. Whilst based on empirical statistics, the outputs produced by this indicator derive from modelling so should be considered as estimates rather than exact.
- Only the country of origin, and not the exact location, can be estimated from the current version of the indicator. This means impacts are based on average production practices per country, not the actual impacts at the exact location the product came from. We are seeking to improve this by using sub-national data in the future.
- Further assumptions and caveats are outlined in the project's interim report.

Protected area (PA) effectiveness indicator

Context

We must focus on enhancing the quality of protected areas by ensuring they are effectively managed and delivering against their stated conservation objectives. The current proposed indicator (3.3.1) for assessing **PA management effectiveness** is based on the PAME framework and utilises the World Database on Protected Areas (WDPA). The indicator records the number of assessments of management effectiveness that have been completed. While this is a key starting point it does not provide an assessment for how effective a protected area is and rather focuses on whether or not a PA effectiveness assessment process is in place.

Given the current progress towards developing a post-2020 global biodiversity framework and its associated indicators, it is timely to consider how we can improve on our existing mechanisms for assessment. In view of this we propose to **build on existing approaches** for PA management effectiveness to develop a new global indicator that will most notably provide an assessment for the missing link of how effective PA management is in a proportionate way that has global application.

What is the indicator?

It is proposed that this new global indicator will be based on the existing approach used by the **OSPAR Regional Sea Convention**, which has been successfully applied for the past four years across all Marine Protected Areas (MPAs) in the NE Atlantic. The approach asks four simple questions (with Yes, No, Partial or unknown standard response categories) on the key life cycle stages of PA:

   a. Whether management information is documented and available in a suitable format to those that may need to understand the management in place at the site.
   b. Whether management measures considered important to mitigate or alleviate the threats to achieving the conservation objectives of the site have been implemented.
   c. Whether monitoring systems are in place (both compliance and ecological state) to assess if measures are working; and
   d. Using the information supplied in response to questions a-c, as well as any other suitable information sources (e.g., on ecological condition) to consider if the site is achieving its stated conservation objectives.

It is envisaged that each of these questions will give rise to a **metric**, with **thresholds** to set quality targets and an integration method applied to provide a component level indicator and assessment. **The outputs would then be integrated with PA coverage and OECM coverage into the headline indicator**.

What is the development timeline?
- An example assessment of the four-question approach for the OSPAR MPA network can be found in Chapter 3 of the latest OSPAR MPA Status Report saved here.
- Work is currently underway to identify and develop suitable metrics.
- High level guiding principles and worked examples will be developed to support country application of the four-question approach, drawing on existing high-level guidance to the Contracting Parties to the OSPAR Convention.
- Regional testing will be conducted to ensure global applicability.