



**Campaign
for Nature**



PROTECTING
30% BY 2030

30X30 GLOBAL ASSESSMENT 2026

September 2026

30x30 Global Assessment 2026

About

30x30 Global Assessment 2026 is an independent global stock-take of progress toward Target 3 of the Kunming-Montreal Global Biodiversity Framework. This report brings together Campaign for Nature's global assessment of progress towards 30x30 with the Ocean Protection Gap analysis, and was developed in collaboration with the Bloomberg Ocean Fund, Marine Conservation Institute, RISE UP, SkyTruth, and WWF International through the Together for the Ocean campaign. It is available for download at <https://www.30x30assessment.com>.

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Foreword

As President of Seychelles, I learned that protecting nature requires governments to make choices today whose benefits may only become fully apparent years from now.

It takes political courage, but conservation and development do not have to be competing ambitions. Protecting nature can strengthen livelihoods, grow economies, and build the resilience of communities.

This Global 30x30 Assessment contains much that should encourage us. More than 50 countries and territories already report protecting or conserving at least 30% of their land and inland waters. Implementing existing commitments could bring global terrestrial protection much closer to the 30% goal by 2030.

This progress matters. It shows that ambitious conservation is not an idea waiting to be tested. Governments and communities are already demonstrating what is possible. We should recognize that progress, learn from it and use it to give others confidence to go further.

But the greatest gap is now at sea. Existing commitments would bring global ocean protection to only around 12% by 2030. Closing this gap will require a step change in the scale and pace of action over the next four years, a challenge explored in greater depth in the accompanying Ocean Protection Gap Report 2026.

Reaching 30% is also only part of the task. Declaring an area protected is where the work begins, not where it ends. Years from now, people will judge success by whether forests are still standing, wildlife is recovering, rivers, wetlands and ocean ecosystems are healthy, and communities are better able to prosper alongside nature.

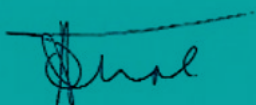
Where we protect matters, how we protect it matters, and whether that protection lasts matters.

Many of the places richest in nature have also been cared for by Indigenous Peoples and local communities for generations. Indigenous and Traditional Territories could cover more than a third of the world's land. Governments should approach this with humility. Indigenous rights, knowledge and leadership must be recognised and supported. 30x30 should strengthen this stewardship, not replace it.

Ambition must also be matched by resources. As a former head of government, I know that ambition has to be paid for. The Assessment identifies an annual financing gap of approximately \$75–150 billion but also shows that practical financing approaches already exist.

The next four years will show what our promise meant. This Assessment shows how far we have come, and how much more the world must now deliver. Across land and ocean, ambition must become action, and no country can deliver this promise alone.

We should ask what we want the next generation to inherit from the decisions we make now.



Danny Faure
Former President of the Republic of Seychelles
2016–2020

Acknowledgements

This report reflects the contributions of a broad group of partners and experts. It brings together Campaign for Nature's global assessment of progress towards 30x30 with the Ocean Protection Gap analysis, and was developed in collaboration with the Bloomberg Ocean Fund, Marine Conservation Institute, RISE UP, SkyTruth, and WWF International through the Together for the Ocean campaign.

This effort was led by Campaign for Nature, with direction and support from Brian O'Donnell, Georg Schwede, Michael Degnan, Rachael Watson and Mark Opel.

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We also thank the interviewees and contributors who shared their time, expertise, and practical perspectives. Their inputs helped shape the analysis, stress-test the findings, and ground the recommendations in implementation realities. The full list of contributors is included in Appendix.

We are very grateful for the financial support provided by the Fondation Hans Wilsdorf toward the completion of this report.

The report's conclusions are the responsibility of Campaign for Nature and should not be interpreted as representing the views of every contributor or knowledge partner.

Executive summary

This report assesses where global progress toward 30x30 stands today, what current trajectories imply for 2030, why implementation is not on track, and which priorities can accelerate delivery. Under the 2022 Kunming-Montreal Global Biodiversity Framework (GBF), Parties to the Convention on Biological Diversity (CBD) adopted Target 3, commonly known as 30x30: the effective protection and conservation of at least 30 percent of land, inland waters, marine and coastal areas by 2030 through protected areas, Other Effective Area-Based Conservation Measures (OECMs), recognizing Indigenous and Traditional Territories where applicable, while respecting the rights of Indigenous Peoples and local communities.

30x30 has important implications for economic resilience, climate stability, and social well-being. More than 50 percent of global GDP depends on nature-related services, and 30x30 could generate up to USD 450 billion in annual GDP gains by 2050 and support 4 to 7 million jobs. These benefits depend on managing transition costs and ensuring equitable implementation.

Progress to date

Global coverage of protected and conserved areas is approximately 20 percent on land and 10 percent at sea, well below the global 30 percent coverage target and unevenly distributed across regions and realms. In comparison, coverage of High Seas stands at only 1.5 percent.

Momentum toward 30x30 is already visible on both land and sea. Regionally, Latin America and Oceania lead across terrestrial (29 percent and 24 percent respectively) and marine (26 percent and 41 percent respectively) realms. At the national scale, more than 50 countries and territories protect at least 30 percent of their terrestrial and inland water area, and 23 already exceed 30 percent marine coverage. Leaders in both realms range in size, from smaller nations such as Bhutan, Liechtenstein, Palau to the largest countries globally such as Australia, Brazil, and

Kazakhstan.

Important ecosystems and threatened species remain insufficiently covered by protected and conserved areas. Protection represents 13 percent of grasslands, 12 percent of boreal forests, 18 percent of freshwater systems, and just 3 percent of offshore and deep-sea ecosystems. Only 14 percent of threatened species have sufficient habitat under protection.

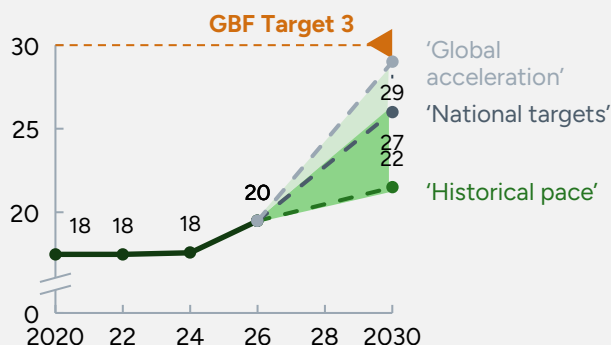
Fewer than 7 percent of protected and conserved areas have reported management-effectiveness assessments, leaving a significant evidence gap. Where evidence does exist, it demonstrates that effective protection reduces pressures on biodiversity. For instance, an assessment of more than 160,000 terrestrial protected areas found that 73 percent experienced habitat loss between 2003 and 2019, affecting approximately 1.14 million sq. km of habitat, with PA with IUCN categories I-II experiencing lower habitat loss than PA with IUCN categories III-VI. In the marine realm as well, fully and highly protected marine areas, covering only about 3.5 percent of the world's oceans, have been shown to achieve higher ecological outcomes than those allowing extractive use.

Protected and conserved areas must remain durable over time to sustain biodiversity outcomes. About 4,900 cases of protected-area downgrading, downsizing, and degazettement were recorded globally up to 2021, equivalent to 7 percent of total terrestrial coverage and 8 percent of total marine coverage today.

OECMs and Indigenous and Traditional Territories (ITTs) represent significant pathways to scale conservation beyond protected areas, though their contribution toward 30x30 still needs clearer recognition. OECMs currently cover around 1 percent of terrestrial and 0.2 percent of coastal and marine areas. Government-recognised ITTs across 53 countries could cover more than 35 percent of global land area, though data remains incomplete.

Exhibit ES 1:

Potential terrestrial and inland water protected and conserved area coverage by 2030



Source: IUCN and UNEP-WCMC (2026); Protected Planet Report (2024); National Targets (CBD)

Exhibit ES 2:

Potential marine and coastal protected and conserved area coverage by 2030



The trajectory to 30x30

Current commitments could narrow the coverage gap to 30x30 for terrestrial areas, but they are not yet sufficient to achieve the target.

132 countries have quantified targets as of 31 May 2026. If fully delivered, national targets could raise terrestrial and inland water coverage to around 27 percent by 2030.

Marine coverage remains the largest gap, with High Seas protection critical to achieving the target. Of the 154 CBD Parties with coastlines, 89 have quantified marine targets, of which about 75 are specific and time-bound to 2030. Implementing these national targets would result in 12 percent global coverage in oceans. Furthermore, designating proposed marine protected areas in the High Seas by 2030 would result in around 13 percent global marine and coastal coverage, of which 11 percent would be attributable to coverage in national waters and 2 percent in the High Seas. Effective delivery of marine targets would require rapid national institutional progress and rapid operationalization of the Biodiversity Beyond National Jurisdiction (BBNJ) Agreement (also referred to as the High Seas Treaty).

Marine implementation is already failing to keep up with ambition. A quarter of countries with target to protect at least 30 percent of their waters have yet to record any progress on implementation, and nearly half have only

protected 5 percent or less. This means that ambition, as measured through GBF targets, is not necessarily a reliable guide to whether countries are on track to deliver 30x30.

Twenty-nine countries are critical to making substantial progress in the coverage of areas of particular importance for biodiversity and could be prioritized for support, of which 20 countries are important for biodiversity on land, 4 for biodiversity at sea, and 5 in both realms. These span all continents: Africa (Algeria, Angola, Democratic Republic of the Congo, Ethiopia, Kenya, Madagascar, Senegal, South Africa), Asia (China, India, Mongolia, Indonesia, Kazakhstan, Myanmar), Europe (Italy, Russia, Türkiye), Latin America (Bolivia, Brazil, Chile, Colombia, Mexico, Peru, Venezuela), North America (Canada, United States), and Oceania (Australia, Papua New Guinea, New Zealand).

Implementation challenges

Many countries still lack quantified targets, and among those that have them, few are supported by credible delivery mechanisms. 132 countries have quantified targets, some targeting below 30 percent, and only around 30 have traceable spatial plans.

The terrestrial–marine protection gap partly reflects different implementation architectures. Terrestrial conservation has developed through long-standing public institutions, while

marine conservation is still an emerging topic. Furthermore, the conservation in the High Seas depends on international cooperation and new institutions under the BBNJ Agreement.

Marine protection also has a narrower set of mature financing models than terrestrial conservation. Tourism, blue carbon and other market-based mechanisms can support some marine protected areas, particularly in coastal settings, but many offshore and high-seas protected areas generate benefits that cannot easily be monetized. Public and philanthropic finance will therefore remain essential.

Complementary pathways are not yet consistently operational at scale. OECMs face limited recognition and uneven national frameworks, and ITTs lack a globally agreed guidance and reporting pathway.

Implementation faces persistent barriers, including capacity, insufficient finance and competing national priorities. Many countries lack the tools, resources, and monitoring systems needed to increase designations and turn designations into outcomes. Finance remains a key constraint with a USD 75-150 billion annual gap. Governments must also balance competing priorities, including debt servicing, food and energy security, infrastructure, and extractive activity.

Accelerating progress

The remaining years to 2030 are decisive for 30x30. Progress has been made, and 30x30 is still within reach. Parties have an agreed global framework, a clear target and a growing evidence base on where action can deliver the greatest value for nature and people. The gap can be closed, but only with a material acceleration in both ambition and delivery.

1. Parties must urgently raise ambition to implement 30x30, starting with all countries coming to COP17 with clear 30x30 commitments; Parties who have not made 30x30 targets must do so before COP17 and those that could do more should strengthen

quantified national contributions to 30x30, supported by Target 1 on biodiversity-inclusive spatial planning. Priority should go to high biodiversity areas, ecological representation, connectivity, ecosystem services and climate resilience, including underrepresented terrestrial, freshwater, coastal and marine ecosystems. Accelerated BBNJ implementation can help unlock conservation beyond national jurisdiction. Additional coverage will contribute to the GBF only if PCAs are well governed, effectively managed, well connected, equitably implemented and durable. Parties should therefore strengthen management, enforcement, monitoring and stewardship, while reducing paper parks or reversals and ensuring expansion delivers measurable biodiversity and climate benefits.

2. Parties and entities should take urgent action to recognize and support the full range of conservation pathways; Delivery of Target 3 should reflect area-based approaches recognized in the GBF, including protected areas, high-integrity OECMs, and Indigenous and Traditional Territories where they deliver long-term biodiversity outcomes. Urgent action must be taken to progress adequate recognition of OECMs and ITTs. Consistent with Target 22, Parties should strengthen safeguards that uphold the rights, participation and leadership of Indigenous Peoples and local communities.

3. All governments should significantly mobilize domestic nature finance and reform harmful incentives and wealthier nations should urgently increase international funding for 30x30 in line with target 19a, bringing new and additional announcements to COP17. As agreed at COP15, Parties must urgently strengthen domestic public nature finance through budgets, fiscal planning, and the reform or redirection of harmful subsidies and incentives, consistent with Target 18. International public finance, consistent with Target 19, must be urgently delivered particularly to lower-income countries with limited fiscal space and directly to Indigenous

Peoples and local communities. Without adequate finance 30x30 will not be achieved. Governments must begin to consider investment and funding towards 30x30 as not just about conservation, but about global and national security.

4. Mainstream nature and reduce land- and sea-use pressures in national decision-making.

In line with Target 14, Parties may need to integrate biodiversity and natural capital values into national accounts, budgets, spatial plans, infrastructure pipelines and investment decisions. This would finally begin to put a value on the ecosystem services that these areas provide to the whole world. This should include reducing pressures from agriculture,

fisheries, forestry, energy, resource extraction and infrastructure expansion, while advancing Targets 10 and 16.

5. Strengthen transparency, accountability and durability.

Progress toward 30x30 should be measured not only by coverage, but by whether PCAs deliver biodiversity outcomes. Parties should make use of component and complementary indicators agreed for target 3 to strengthen reporting on governance, management effectiveness, financing, ecological outcomes and permanence, helping distinguish genuine implementation from nominal gains.

Introduction

01

In 2022, the 196 Parties to the Convention on Biological Diversity (CBD) adopted the Kunming-Montreal Global Biodiversity Framework (GBF), setting out 23 targets to halt and reverse biodiversity loss by 2030 and put nature on a path to recovery by 2050. This report focuses on Target 3, commonly known as 30x30, which commits Parties to effectively conserve at least 30 percent of the world's land, inland waters, coastal areas and oceans by 2030. While 30x30 is only one part of the broader framework, it is a foundational target. If delivered well, it can protect critical ecosystems, secure habitats for species, safeguard carbon sinks, boost economic resilience, support local livelihoods and communities, and create a platform for broader progress across the GBF. Achieving the GBF's wider ambition, however, requires progress across the full framework, including mobilizing the financial, technical and institutional resources needed to implement the remaining targets.

This report is designed to translate evidence into a practical agenda of required actions to fully achieve 30x30. It goes beyond documenting how much of the Earth's terrestrial and marine environment is protected today and sets out what it will take to turn a global commitment into sustained outcomes for nature and people by 2030.

01

What Target 3 requires and why we care

It begins by setting out what GBF Target 3 is, including the coverage, effectiveness, equity and delivery dimensions of 30x30, the role of different conservation pathways, and why it matters for livelihoods, resilience and the economy.

02

Where we stand

It then assesses the current state of progress: how far the world has come since adoption of the GBF, the degree to which protected and conserved areas (PCA) are expanding, and whether this progress is reaching the places, ecosystems, and communities that matter most, and the effectiveness of the PCAs globally

03

Where we're going

It then looks ahead through a set of potential scenarios, assessing how far current national targets and an accelerated pathway could move the world toward 30x30 by 2030, the remaining land and marine gaps, and whether the most important places for biodiversity would be protected.

**This report
examines five key
questions that will
shape the path to
2030**

04

Why implementation is not on track

It examines why delivery is lagging, including gaps in spatial planning, pathway readiness, financing, and broader political and economic conditions.

05

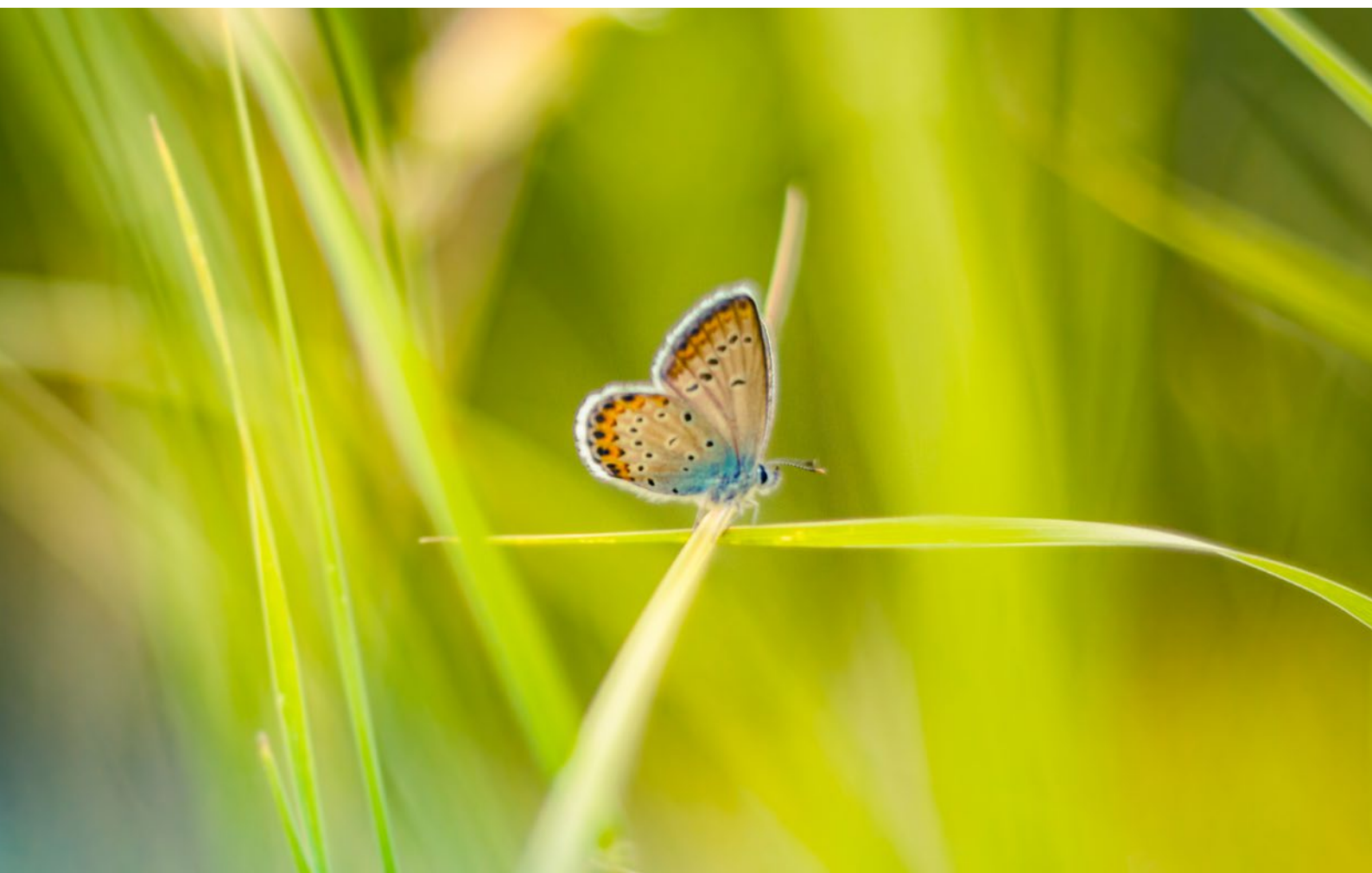
How we can accelerate

Finally, it identifies the strategic priorities that could most effectively accelerate progress through 2030.

Methodologically, the report draws on a meta-analysis of existing literature, datasets and institutional sources as well as interviews with experts and knowledge partners, with targeted analysis used where a forward-looking perspective is required. This is particularly the case for trajectories to 2030 and the strategic priorities with the greatest potential to accelerate delivery. Its purpose is to synthesize the evidence and translate it into an actionable agenda for governments, funders, financial institutions, civil society, Indigenous Peoples and local communities, and the broader conservation community. Methodological details are provided in Appendix I.

This report complements both the CBD Global Review and the Protected Planet Report series. The CBD Global Review provides the formal mechanism for assessing collective progress under the GBF, drawing on National Reports, NBSAPs and submissions through CBD Online Reporting. The Protected Planet Report 2024

[1] is the most recent comprehensive stock-take of PCAs since the GBF was adopted, and the first official evaluation of global progress towards Target 3. It sits within a recurring reporting series led by UNEP-WCMC and IUCN, and provides the accountability baseline for coverage and effectiveness across PCAs. While the Protected Planet report series covers Target 3 in its entirety, this report is focused on coverage, representativeness and effectiveness only, then turning to projected PCA network in 2030, and the pathways, financing and implementation choices needed to accelerate delivery. While it uses the same datasets used by the Protected Planet Report, it also incorporates the latest seventh National Reports and NBSAPs and national targets submitted through CBD Online Reporting where possible, so that the analysis reflects the country submissions made up till 31 May 2026, capturing submissions post the 2026 Global Review Report (that captured submissions up till 07 March 2026, [2]).



02

What is **30x30** and why is it
important



This chapter introduces Kunming-Montreal Global Biodiversity Framework (GBF) Target 3, commonly known as 30x30, outlines the elements covered in this report, and explains why achieving the target matters.

KEY TAKEAWAYS

- **GBF Target 3, or 30x30, commits Parties to conserve and manage at least 30 percent of terrestrial, inland water, marine and coastal areas by 2030.** The target requires these areas to be effectively managed, ecologically representative, connected, and equitably governed.
- **Delivery can happen through multiple pathways.** These include protected areas, OECMs and the appropriate recognition of Indigenous and Traditional Territories. The global target does not require each country to achieve 30 percent coverage nationally.
- **30x30 contributes to the wider GBF and related global agendas.** It contributes directly and indirectly to other GBF targets and supports international climate and land-degradation commitments under the UNFCCC and the UNCCD as well.
- **Nature conservation is an economic and resilience priority.** More than 50 percent of global GDP, or around USD 58 trillion, depends on nature-related services; 30x30 could generate up to USD 454 billion in annual GDP gains by 2050 and support 4-7 million jobs, provided transition costs are managed and implementation is equitable.

2.1 What is 30x30

Target 3 of the Kunming-Montreal Global Biodiversity Framework (GBF), commonly known as 30x30, sets out to ensure and enable that by 2030 at least 30 percent of terrestrial, inland water, and of coastal and marine 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.

Elements of Target 3 include:

Spatial design and effectiveness:

- **Coverage:** A quantitative threshold requiring

the conservation of at least 30 percent of terrestrial and inland water areas, and at least 30 percent of marine and coastal areas globally by 2030. The global target does not necessarily translate into a uniform 30 percent national coverage target for all the CBD Parties that have committed to the framework;

- **Areas of particular importance for biodiversity:** Prioritizes protection of areas of particular importance for biodiversity, including key sites for species, ecosystems and ecological processes
- **Effective conservation:** Delivers positive biodiversity outcomes through effective conservation and management, rather than relying solely on legal designation;
- **Ecological representation:** Ensures PCAs are ecologically representative across ecosystems and biodiversity features;
- **Connectivity:** Calls for well-connected ecological networks via ecological corridors and integrated into wider surrounding landscapes and seascapes.

Governance and implementation:

- **Equitable governance:** Ensures governance is equitable, participatory and inclusive, with recognition of rights and fair sharing of costs and benefits;
- **Protected Areas:** Relies on formally recognized, legally designated, and managed geographic spaces to adhere to management categories as defined by IUCN to meet specific biodiversity targets;
- **Other Effective Area-Based Conservation Measures (OECMs):** Recognizes defined areas outside protected areas that achieve positive, sustained, long-term biodiversity outcomes as a consequence of their management framework;
- **Rights of Indigenous Peoples and Local Communities:** Recognizing Indigenous and Traditional Territories, and respecting the rights of Indigenous Peoples and local communities, including the right to Free, Prior and Informed Consent (FPIC), where applicable;
- **Sustainable use:** Guarantees that any human activities allowed within these areas (e.g., sustainable fishing, harvesting, or tourism) remain entirely compatible with primary biodiversity conservation outcomes.

The report focuses on global and regional PCAs coverage of areas of particular importance for biodiversity, ecological representation, certain aspects of connectivity and effectiveness and the inclusion and recognition of Indigenous Peoples and local communities within PCA systems. It does not provide a comprehensive assessment of ecological connectivity, management effectiveness, or of the full range of governance, rights, and equity dimensions associated with the target.

Target 3 covers terrestrial and inland water areas, as well as coastal and marine areas. This report groups terrestrial and inland water¹ coverage into a single category, and likewise marine and coastal areas as these categories are not consistently reported separately in the databases consulted.

2.2 Why 30x30 is important

2.2.1 The role of Target 3 within the GBF

The natural world requires sufficient intact ecosystems to sustain the ecological processes on which all life depends. The 30x30 target reflects scientific evidence that conserving at least 30 percent of terrestrial, inland water, marine and coastal areas by 2030 is a critical milestone toward maintaining biodiversity, ecosystem functions and ecosystem services [3,4]. PCAs provide habitat for millions of species, whose monitored terrestrial populations have declined by an average of 69 percent since 1970 [5]. Conserving 30 percent of land in strategically selected locations could reduce the extinction risk of nearly nine in ten threatened terrestrial species [6].

In a changing climate, 30x30 could provide the spatial foundation for more effective conservation networks, especially for smaller and more isolated areas that are less able to accommodate shifts in species ranges and ecosystem conditions. PCA networks that prioritize climate refugia, anticipated future habitats, and areas with high biological adaptation potential can help species track shifting climate niches [7]. Combined with other elements of Target 3 (i.e., connectivity and representativeness), such networks could not only enable natural species movement but also buffer the impacts of changing weather patterns [8].

Target 3 both contributes to the broader architecture of the GBF. It is central to achieving Goal A ("Protect and Restore"), contributing to the conservation and restoration of ecosystems,

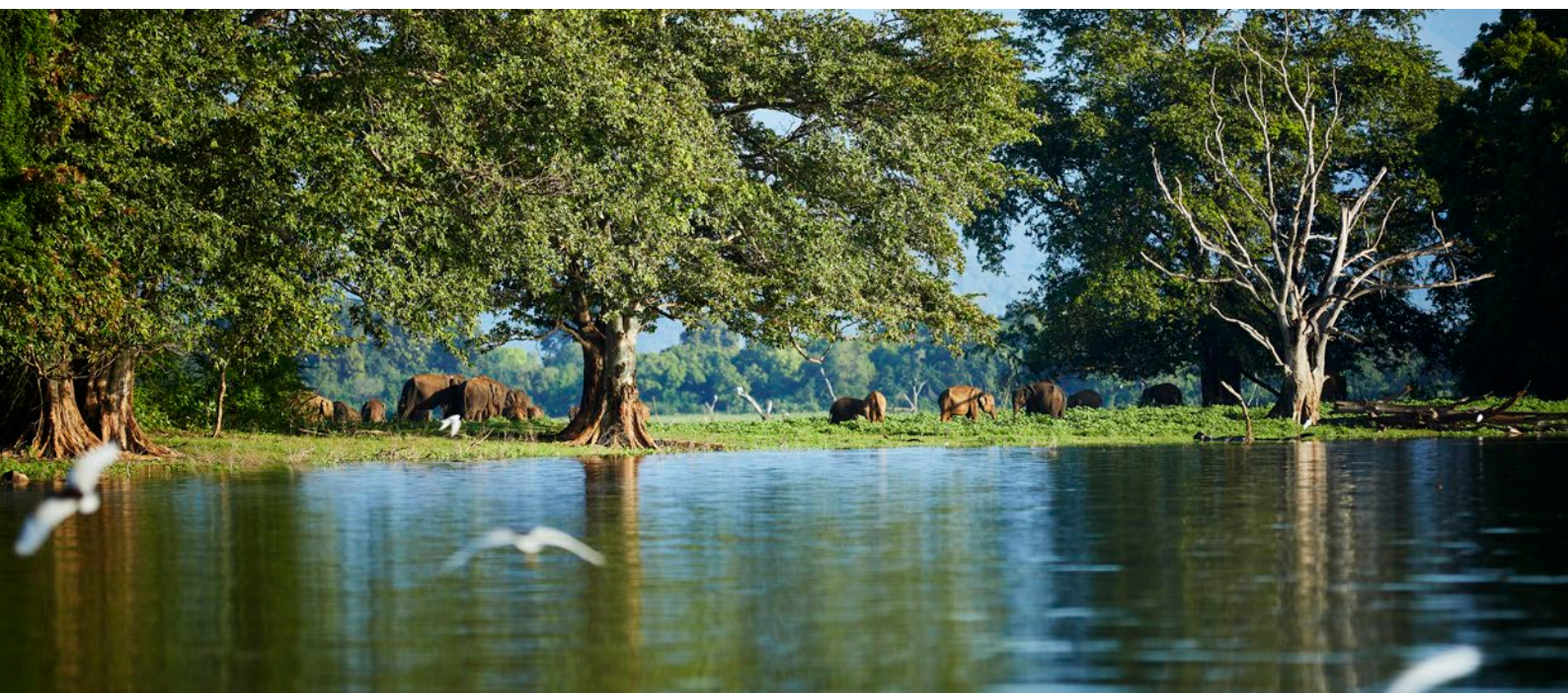
1. Inland waters are aquatic environments located within land boundaries and include freshwater, saline, brackish systems (CBD, n.d.). The distinction between inland waters and marine waters is not applied consistently across Parties to the Convention on Biological Diversity. For example, some countries classify saltwater lagoons separated from the sea by narrow land barriers as inland waters, while others classify them as marine areas. Similarly, some freshwater coastal lakes, such as the IJsselmeer, are reported as marine areas. These differences in national interpretation present challenges for the consistent application of a global definition of inland waters (Burkart, pers. comm., 2026)

the maintenance of genetic diversity, and the reduction of species extinction risk. By conserving biodiversity, Target 3 also supports the delivery of other GBF targets, including reducing species extinction risk (Target 4), enabling the sustainable use of wild species (Target 9), and maintaining nature's contributions to people and ecosystem services (Target 11).

Target 3 cannot be achieved in isolation and depends on progress across several other GBF targets. Integrated spatial planning and ecosystem restoration help identify where conservation and restoration should occur (Targets 1 and 2). Mainstreaming biodiversity across policies, planning and decision-making helps ensure that conservation objectives are integrated across sectors and levels of government (Target 14). Adequate finance, capacity-building, technology transfer and knowledge sharing support implementation (Targets 19, 20 and 21). Respect for the rights, territories and full and effective participation of Indigenous Peoples and local communities is essential for effective and equitable conservation (Targets 22 and 23).

Achieving GBF Target 3 in a manner consistent with Targets 22 and 23 requires meaningful engagement of Indigenous Peoples and local communities throughout the design and implementation of conservation measures,

ensuring that scientific and traditional knowledge jointly inform conservation planning. Estimates of the number of people potentially affected by or overlapping with future conservation expansion vary substantially depending on the methodology and framing: one study estimates that around 35–84 million people could be directly affected by protected-area expansion, while a broader estimate identifies 1.2–1.5 billion people living in currently unprotected areas of high biodiversity importance [9], including through changes to access to fishing grounds, farmland, forests and grazing areas before alternative livelihood opportunities are established. These costs can be immediate and concentrated, whereas benefits such as biodiversity recovery, fish stock recovery, tourism revenues, carbon sequestration and improved ecosystem services often accrue over longer timeframes and may benefit different groups. Without meaningful participation, secure tenure, equitable benefit-sharing and timely support, conservation expansion risks exacerbating existing inequalities and weakening local support, particularly in countries with lower Human Development Index (HDI) scores [9]. Successful examples show that effective implementation requires transition measures, recognition of community rights, participatory planning, benefit-sharing arrangements and livelihood support to be in place before conservation measures take effect.



Example of support measures for conservation transitions

Gill nets kill indiscriminately, catching target fish species but also drowning dugongs, dolphins, and other threatened species. In 2023 the Australian and Queensland governments provided over USD 160 million to buy out all gill net licences, mandate data validation on commercial fishing vessels, and prohibit commercial fishing for hammerhead sharks. The decision to phase out commercial gill net fishing from the Great Barrier Reef World Heritage Area followed earlier purchases of gill net licenses by WWF, which were shelved to reduce risks to wildlife [10]. An estimated one million people live in the Great Barrier Reef region, with an estimated 77,000 full-time jobs relating to the Reef [11].



Namibia has established around 90 local conservancies in its Community-Based Natural Resource Management program, impacting approximately 250,000 people [12]. The programme gave communities a role in managing wildlife and benefiting from conservation-linked income, including from ecotourism. This helped align conservation incentives with local economic interests and supported wildlife recovery where communities have a clearer stake in outcomes.



Costa Rica needed 18,000 rural land-owning families to engage in its forest protection and restoration program to reduce deforestation-related emissions [13]. Costa Rica set up a Payments for Ecosystem Services (PES) program that provided direct payments to these families, totaling over USD 524 million [14], thus creating a financial mechanism to recognize ecosystem services that would otherwise generate limited near-term private income.



2.2.2 Contribution to global climate and land commitments

Reaching 30x30 could deliver 4 to 15 percent of the global emissions reductions needed to meet the UNFCCC 1.5°C target. This corresponds to emission reduction of 340 to 2,050 million metric tonnes of carbon-equivalent per year (modelled estimate, see details in Appendix I.1), approximately equal to the entire annual emissions of the iron and steel sector [15]. Yet, PCAs remain underused in climate policy: only 47 percent of countries included protected areas in the latest round of Nationally Determined Contributions (NDCs), and only 31 percent explicitly mention the CBD, the GBF or National Biodiversity Strategies and Action Plans [16]. While some countries such as Colombia explicitly mention 30x30, other countries frame their commitments around specific sub-categories. For instance, Myanmar's NDC aspires to bring 30 percent of its terrestrial area under Reserved Forest and Protected Public Forest status by 2030.

30x30 could also contribute 3 to 8 percent of the global progress needed toward the UNCCD Land Degradation Neutrality target (modelled estimate, see Appendix I.1 for details). This would reduce net degradation by an estimated 450,000 to 1,290,000 sq. km, while generating additional benefits from ecosystem services such as water provisioning and filtration-related services, potentially beyond PCA boundaries. For instance, 30x30 could capture around 28 percent of global nutrient-regulation potential, retaining, absorbing, or filtering excess nutrients before they flow into rivers, lakes, and coastal systems [17].

30x30 would also contribute to achieving the UN Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs), specifically SDG 14, "Life Below Water: to conserve and sustainably use the oceans, seas and marine resources for sustainable development", and SDG 15, "Life on Land: to protect, restore and promote sustainable use of terrestrial ecosystems, sustainably manage forests, combat desertification, and halt and reverse land degradation and halt biodiversity loss".

2.2.3 Contribution to socioeconomic outcomes

More than half of global GDP depends on nature through services such as water regulation, food provisioning and climate stabilisation [18]. Critical areas for ecosystem services cover an estimated 53 to 63 percent of the Earth's surface, yet fewer than one fifth are currently protected [1]. These services underpin the resilience of value chains in sectors such as food, infrastructure and pharmaceuticals, making 30x30 an important investment in long-term business and macroeconomic resilience. Partial ecosystem collapse could impose costs exceeding USD 2.7 trillion annually, cascading through food systems, freshwater supply, public health and forced displacement, with the greatest impacts falling on the most vulnerable populations with the least capacity to absorb shocks [19]. Natural resources also support extractive industries globally: fisheries and aquaculture employ more than 60 million people globally [20], while in the United States alone the forestry and wood products sector contributes approximately USD 200 billion per year [21].

Nature loss also creates fiscal risks for governments. Failure to halt biodiversity loss, including through achieving 30x30, could increase sovereign risk and borrowing costs by reducing economic resilience, increasing exposure to natural disasters, and degrading natural capital that supports government revenues, causing economic deceleration. A 2022 Finance for Biodiversity analysis estimated that ecosystem degradation could increase annual sovereign interest payments globally by USD 28–53 billion [22], while a separate 2026 analysis estimated an increase of around USD 162 billion under its modelled scenario [23]. Similar fiscal channels are already evident at the subnational level. In the United States, declining bat populations and the loss of natural pest control services increased municipal borrowing costs by approximately USD 33,000 for every USD 1 million of bonds issued, while also imposing average taxpayer costs of around USD 150 per person [24].

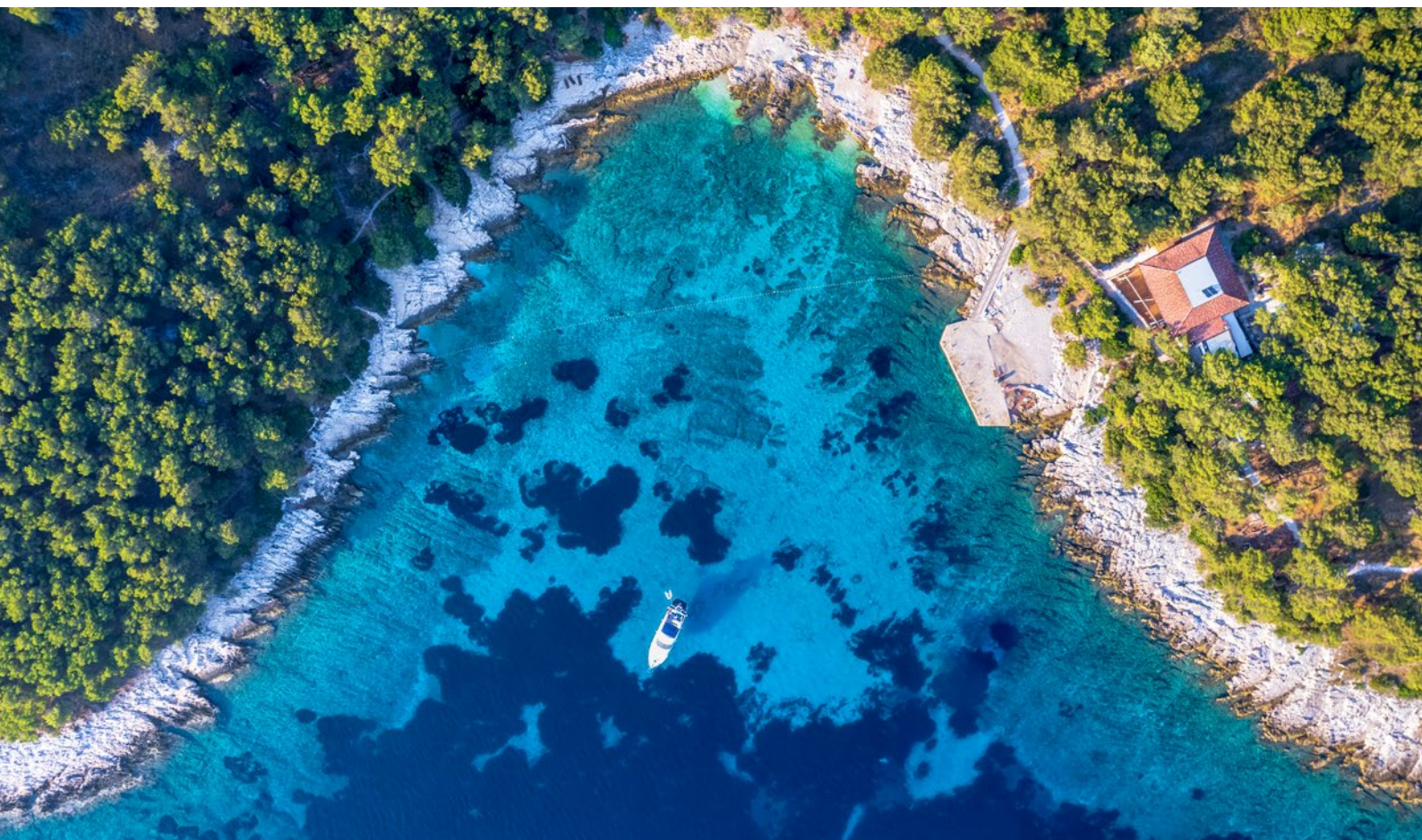
Continued loss of nature also increases systemic risks, including pandemic risk. An estimated 1.7 million undiscovered viruses circulate in mammal and avian hosts, and the frequency of zoonotic spillover events is projected to approximately quadruple by 2050 [25,26]. Primary prevention through reduced deforestation, wildlife trade regulation and improved pathogen surveillance is estimated to cost less than 10 percent of the economic losses from emerging viral zoonoses, while delivering substantial biodiversity and climate co-benefits [27].

Nature conservation through 30x30 could reduce displacement risks. In 2025, natural disasters triggered tens of millions of new internal displacements, while more than 200 million people could become internal climate migrants by 2050 because of declining crop productivity, water scarcity and coastal impacts [19,28]. By maintaining ecosystem functions such as water retention, flood regulation and soil stability, 30x30 can strengthen resilience to these pressures. Mangroves alone provide an estimated USD 855 billion in annual flood-protection benefits and

reduce flooding risk for around 9 million people each year [29].

30x30 could also expand the nature economy, generating up to USD 454 billion in additional annual GDP by 2050 and supporting an estimated 4 to 7 million jobs (estimated leveraging literature research [30,31]; see Appendix I.1 for details). Employment opportunities span protected area management, including rangers, ecological monitoring, restoration and conservation management, as well as roles that extend into sectors such as ecotourism, sustainable agriculture, fisheries, forestry and nature-based solutions. For example, in 2024, Canada's protected area network generated approximately USD 10.9 billion in GDP, supported around 150,000 jobs, generated USD 6.6 billion in wages, and returned USD 3.62 in visitor spending for every USD 1 of public investment [32].

A more detailed discussion of broader socioeconomic benefits of 30x30 is provided in Appendix II.



03

Where we stand today



This chapter takes stock of where the world stands today on 30x30, including how much area has been protected or conserved, whether progress is reaching the places and ecosystems that matter most, how effectively those areas are managed, and the status of complementary delivery pathways such as OECMs and Indigenous and Traditional Territories. It provides the baseline

against which the rest of the report assesses the remaining gap to 2030.

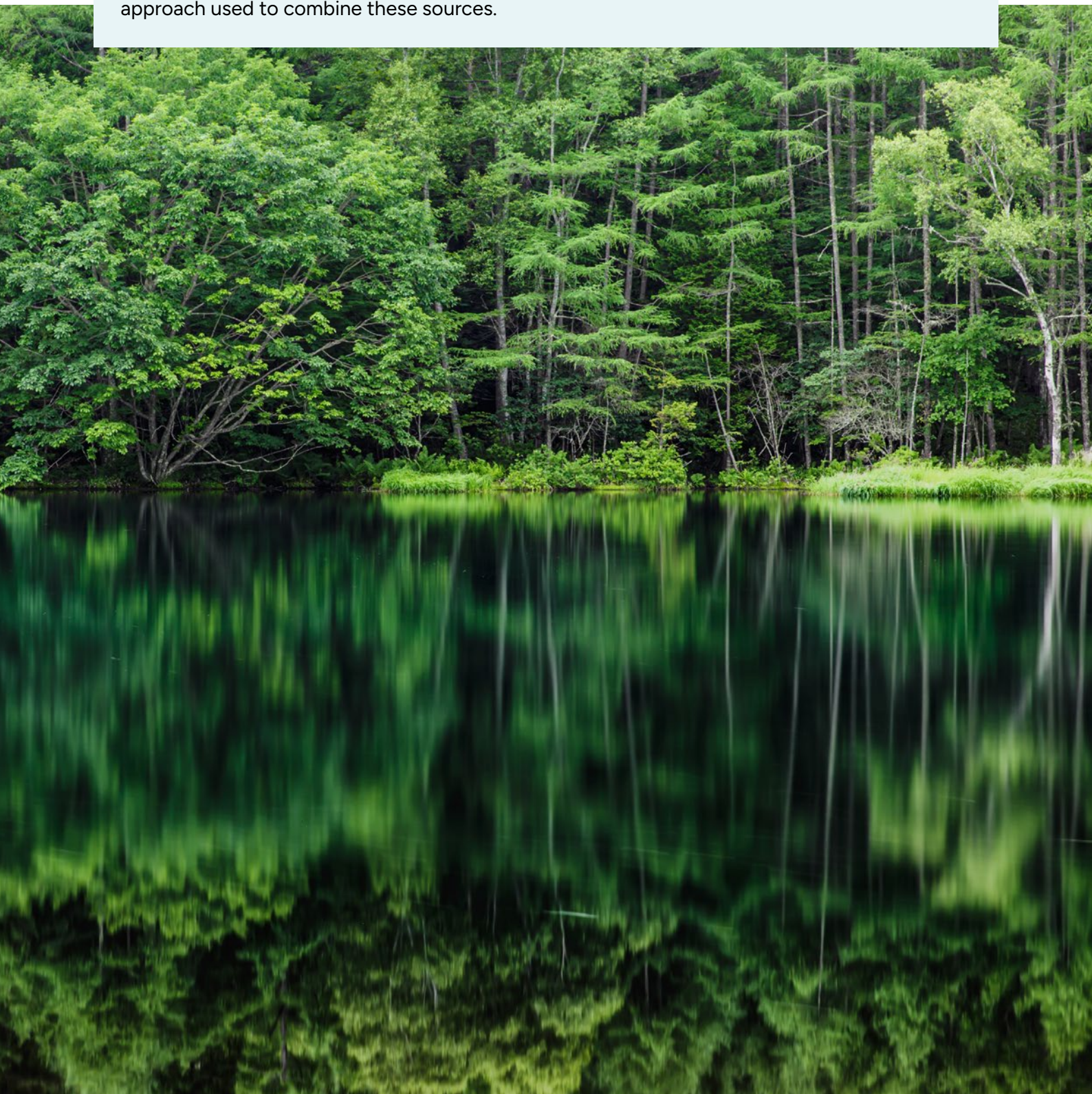
This quantitative assessment is based on globally harmonized data from WDPCA [33] and CBD National Reports and focuses on PCAs across both terrestrial and inland water realms and marine and coastal areas.

KEY TAKEAWAYS

- **Many countries are already protecting and conserving high proportions of their lands and seas.** Over 50 countries and territories already protect at least 30 percent of their terrestrial and inland water areas. Twenty-three countries and territories already exceed 30 percent marine and coastal area coverage.
- **Oceania and Latin America are demonstrating success at the regional level.** Latin America has reached around 29 percent terrestrial coverage and Oceania around 24 percent, driving most of the global expansion since 2020. Oceania has reached 41 percent marine and coastal coverage, and Latin America follows at 26 percent.
- **Some countries have been able to significantly accelerate terrestrial and marine protection in recent years.** Oman, Monaco and Lesotho have each added more than 20 percent terrestrial protection, while Brazil has been able to designate close to 1 million sq km, and Costa Rica, Colombia and Bahrain have each added more than 20 percentage points of marine coverage since 2020.
- **Current global coverage remains below the 30x30 target:** around 20 percent of terrestrial and inland waters and 10 percent of marine and coastal areas are protected or conserved, including the High Seas, only 1.5 percent of which are protected.
- **Overall progress since the GBF has been incremental,** not transformational, and remains uneven across regions, with Latin America and Oceania leading across realms.
- **Protection coverage is uneven across areas of particular importance for biodiversity:** polar and alpine regions (10 percent), grasslands (13 percent), boreal forests (12 percent) and freshwater areas (18 percent) have protection levels below the global average, and only 14 percent of mapped threatened species have sufficient habitat protected.
- **Effectiveness varies and data remains a major gap:** only 6.5 percent of PCAs have reported management-effectiveness assessments. Conservation outcomes are generally positive, though some reversals (downgrading, downsizing and degazettement) are observed.
- **OECMs currently account for a limited share** of reported areas, with OECMs currently covering around 1 percent of terrestrial and inland water areas and 0.2 percent of coastal and marine areas.
- **Indigenous Peoples and local communities lands overlap with important areas for biodiversity and ecosystem services,** yet these areas do not currently have a distinct recognition pathway (such as Indigenous and Traditional Territories (ITTs) under the CBD.

Protected and conserved area coverage statistics data sources

Global protected and conserved area coverage statistics were compiled from WDPCA global statistics [33] and national coverage figures reported through CBD National Reports [34]. Values from Seventh National Reports were compared against WDPCA statistics with reconciliation undertaken in cases of high divergences. See Appendix I.2 for details on data limitations and approach used to combine these sources.



3.1 Terrestrial and inland waters

3.1.1 Global coverage

Current coverage of PCAs remains below the level needed to meet 30x30. Under current reporting (figures vary slightly across datasets), just under 20 percent, or 25 million sq.km, of the

world's land is under some form of protection (Exhibit 3.1). Reported coverage has increased only gradually since 2020, from 17.1 to 18.4 percent, leaving a substantial gap to the global 30 percent target (Exhibit 3.2).

Protected areas, OECMs and Indigenous and Traditional Territories

IUCN defines a protected area as a clearly defined geographical space that is recognized, dedicated and managed through legal or other effective means to achieve the long-term conservation of nature, with associated ecosystem services and cultural values [35].

The Convention on Biological Diversity (CBD) [36] defines Other Effective area-based Conservation Measures (OECMs) as a geographically defined area other than a Protected Area, which is governed and managed in ways that achieve positive and sustained long-term outcomes for the in-situ conservation of biodiversity, with associated ecosystem functions and services and where applicable, cultural, spiritual, socio-economic, and other locally relevant values.

Indigenous and Traditional Territories could be defined as lands and waters traditionally occupied or used by Indigenous Peoples and local communities. In addition, the Indigenous Peoples' and community conserved territories and areas (ICCAs) are defined as natural and/or modified ecosystems containing significant biodiversity values, ecological services and cultural values, voluntarily conserved by Indigenous Peoples and local communities, both sedentary and mobile, through customary laws or other effective means. They are considered a potential additional pathway but are not currently counted in the total area unless they are also recognized as protected areas or OECMs.

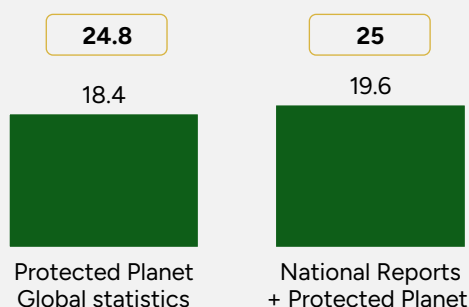
In this document, we use the term "protected and conserved areas" (PCA) to refer collectively to protected areas and OECMs, which are the pathways recognized in the current area totals in official databases held by UNEP-WCMC. The term "protected areas" refers specifically to protected areas only.



Exhibit 3.1

Global reported terrestrial and inland water PCA coverage by data source, percent

Bubbles indicate total area in million sq. km

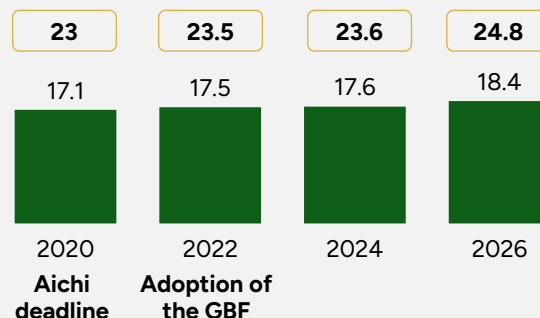


Source: UNEP-WCMC and IUCN (2026); CBD National Reports (2026)

Exhibit 3.2

Global reported terrestrial and inland water PCA coverage by year starting in 2020, percent

Bubbles indicate total area in million sq. km



Source: Protected Planet Report (2024), UNEP-WCMC and IUCN (2026)

3.1.2 Coverage by management categories

Understanding IUCN protected area management categories

The International Union for Conservation of Nature (IUCN) defines a protected area as “a clearly defined geographical space, recognized, dedicated and managed, through legal or other effective means, to achieve the long-term conservation of nature with associated ecosystem services and cultural values.” Protected areas are classified by the IUCN according to their primary management objective into the following categories [36]:

- **Ia Strict nature reserve:** Strictly protected areas where human visitation, use and impacts are controlled and limited.
- **Ib Wilderness area:** Large unmodified or slightly modified areas managed to preserve their natural condition.
- **II National park:** Large natural or near-natural areas managed to protect ecological processes, species and ecosystems, while allowing compatible educational, recreational or cultural uses.
- **III Natural monument or feature:** Areas set aside to protect a specific natural feature, such as a landform, cave, seamount or ancient grove.
- **IV Habitat/species management area:** Areas managed mainly to protect particular species or habitats, often requiring active management.
- **V Protected landscape or seascape:** Areas where long-term interaction between people and nature has created important ecological, cultural and scenic value.
- **VI Protected area with sustainable use of natural resources:** Areas that conserve ecosystems while allowing sustainable, low-level natural resource use compatible with conservation.

The IUCN protected area management category is an important dimension to consider, as protected and conserved areas can differ significantly in their management approaches, restrictions on human activities, and contribution to long-term biodiversity conservation. Although Target 3 counts different management categories equally, management category data helps interpret the intended management approaches and degree of permitted use, noting that they are not a direct proxy for conservation effectiveness.

Much of the world's remaining wilderness remains outside protected and conserved areas.

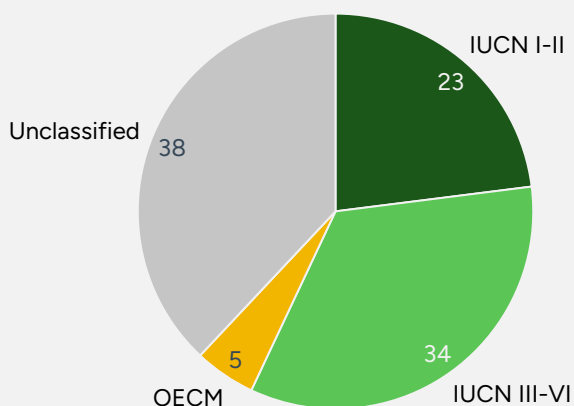
Although around 23 percent of terrestrial and inland waters PCAs fall within IUCN management categories I–II (Exhibit 3.3), these categories are not synonymous with wilderness or intact lands [37]. Conversely, many wilderness areas lie outside protected areas. As wilderness covers nearly one quarter of the Earth's land surface and its extent has declined rapidly in recent decades [38], there is a strong case for placing greater emphasis on identifying and protecting them through management categories aligned with their conservation needs.

A further 34 percent fall under IUCN categories III–VI, where conservation is combined with other management objectives, including various forms of sustainable use (Exhibit 3.3). These categories will remain essential to future expansion, since shared landscapes and seascapes represent a large share of the remaining conservation opportunity. For instance, shared and intensive land use areas account for around 56 percent of the world's land area and contain nearly two-thirds of Key Biodiversity Areas [39].

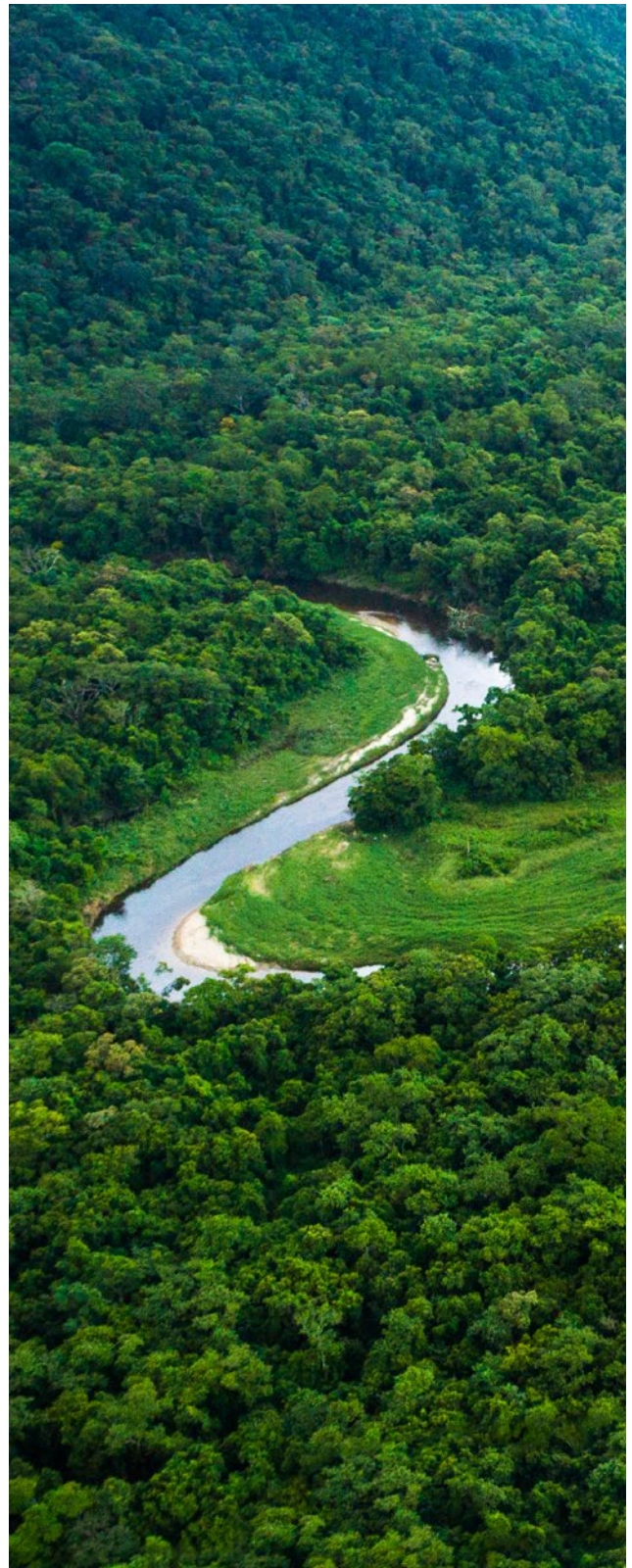
OECMs account for around 5 percent of terrestrial and inland water PCAs and represent an emerging pathway while the remaining 38 percent are not reported under a standardized IUCN category or OECM designation (Exhibit 3.3). Further details on OECMs are discussed in section “Complementary pathways to Target 3”.

Exhibit 3.3

Global reported terrestrial and inland water area coverage by IUCN management category and OECM designation, percent



Source: UNEP-WCMC and IUCN (2026)



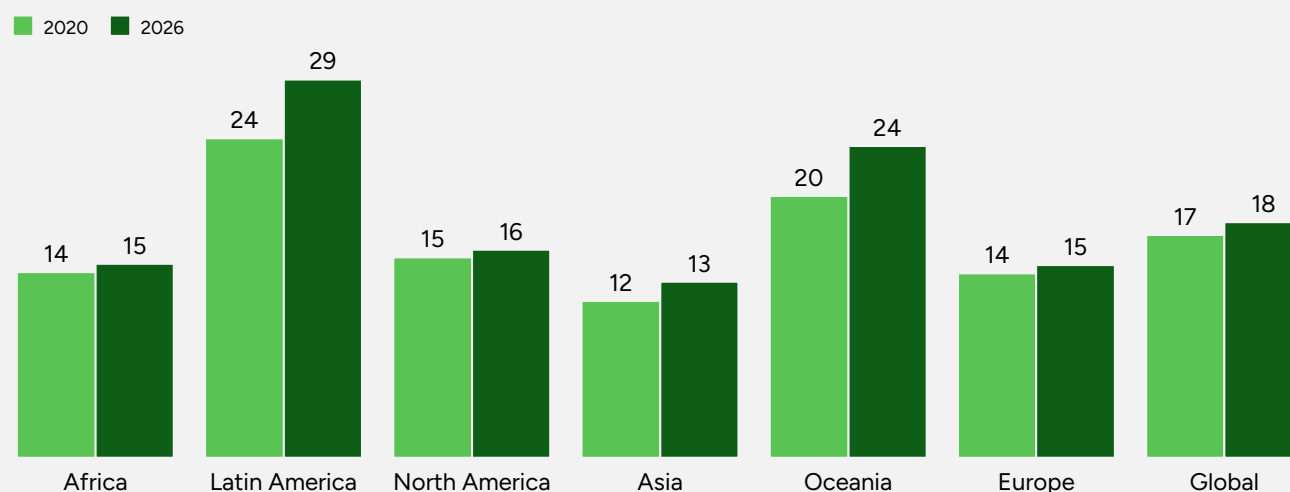
3.1.3 Coverage by region

On land, progress toward 30x30 is diverging across regions with regions that are already closest to 30 percent moving fastest. Latin America has reached around 29 percent terrestrial coverage and Oceania around 24 percent, and

these two regions have driven most of the global expansion since 2020 (Exhibit 3.4). Africa, North America and Europe fall further below the target and have grown more slowly, increasing the rate of acceleration required to reach at least 30 percent by 2030².

Exhibit 3.4

Reported terrestrial and inland waters coverage by region and year, percent



Source: Protected Planet Report (2020); UNEP-WCMC and IUCN (2026)

Over 50 countries and territories already protect at least 30 percent of their terrestrial and inland water area. Highest-coverage countries such as Seychelles, Venezuela, Algeria, Namibia, Bhutan, Liechtenstein, Bulgaria, Guinea, Zambia, and Brazil (Exhibit 3.5) show that high levels of terrestrial coverage are achievable in very different geographical contexts as well as across countries with varying size, with the terrestrial area of Bhutan, Liechtenstein, Seychelles less than 0.5 percent of that of Brazil.

At the other end of the spectrum, many countries still report limited coverage. This is particularly visible in several conflict-affected contexts,

including Somalia, Libya and Eritrea which report 0 percent coverage, as well as Yemen and Syria, which report only 1 percent (Exhibit 3.5). These low levels of coverage likely reflect a combination of limited institutional capacity, technical constraints, competing development priorities, and the challenges associated with prolonged instability and conflict.

Some countries have been able to significantly accelerate coverage in recent years. Oman, Monaco and Lesotho have each been able to add more than 20 percentage points in coverage, while Brazil has been able to designate close to 1 million sq km (Exhibit 3.6).

2. North America includes the United States, Canada and Greenland in this analysis. The United States is included for consistency in the regional and global coverage assessment, although it is not a Party to the CBD.

Exhibit 3.5

Countries with highest and lowest reported terrestrial and inland waters coverage, percent

Countries with highest terrestrial and inland water coverage

Country	Percent protected
Seychelles	48
Venezuela	57
Algeria	54
Namibia	52
Bhutan	52
Liechtenstein	45
Bulgaria	44
Guinea	43
Zambia	41
Brazil	41

Countries with lowest terrestrial and inland freshwater coverage

Country	Percent protected
Vanuatu	4
Maldives	3
Democratic Republic of Korea	2
Djibouti	2
Iraq	2
Yemen	1
Syria	1
Libya	0
Eritrea	0
Somalia	0

Note: There are several additional states that have no land under protection (UNEP-WCMC and IUCN): Sint Maarten, Eritrea, Somalia, Western Sahara, Nauru, Wallis and Futuna, San Marino

Source: CBD National Reports; CBD National Biodiversity Action Plans; UNEP-WCMC and IUCN (2026)

Exhibit 3.6

Countries with highest progress since 2020 in reported terrestrial and inland water coverage in percentage points (pp) and absolute area

xx Percentage of total area

Countries with highest progress in terrestrial and inland water protected and conserved area coverage since 2020

Country	Change in coverage, pp
Oman	26
Monaco	24
Lesotho	23
North Macedonia	19
Seychelles	15
Cabo Verde	15
Armenia	15
Saudi Arabia	14
Georgia	13
Azerbaijan	12

Countries with highest progress in terrestrial and inland water protected and conserved area coverage since 2020

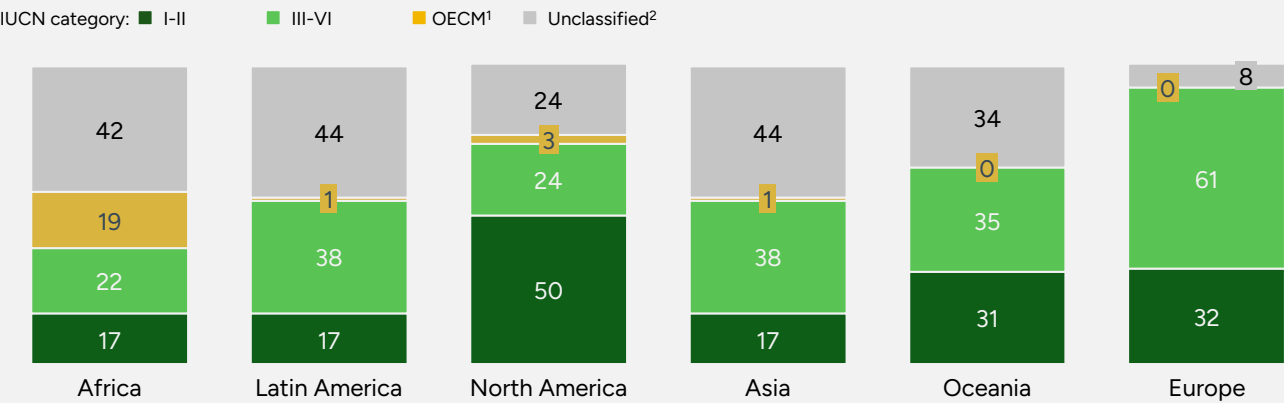
Country	Change in coverage, million sq. km	xx
Brazil	0.9	11
Australia	0.3	4
Saudi Arabia	0.3	14
Canada	0.1	1
Oman	0.1	26
Pakistan	0.1	7
Türkiye	0.1	7
Angola	0	4
Uzbekistan	0	8

Source: CBD National Reports; CBD National Biodiversity Action Plans; UNEP-WCMC and IUCN (2026)

The share of protected areas in each IUCN management category differs substantially across regions. In North America, around 50 percent of the PCA network is reported under IUCN Categories I–II. This compares with 32 percent in Europe and 31 percent in Oceania. Africa, Latin America and Asia report larger shares under IUCN Categories III–VI. These differences may reflect variation in initial land-use conditions more than differences in current

management ambition. Europe reflects a more fragmented and human-dominated landscape, while North America’s higher share of Categories I–II is shaped by the greater availability of large, low-density and relatively intact areas at the time many protected areas were established. All regions have a substantial share that is not reported under a standardized IUCN management category (Exhibit 3.7).

Exhibit 3.7
Share of IUCN categories and OECM designation in terrestrial and inland water coverage by region, percent



1. OECM: Other Area based effective conservation measures
2. Areas in WDPCA dataset with status not assigned/not reported/not applicable.
Source: CBD National reports; UNEP-WCMC and IUCN (2026); CBD National Biodiversity Action Plans;



3.1.4 Representativeness of current coverage

In addition to the extent of PCAs, their representativeness is equally important. PCAs should cover diverse ecosystems, species, and ecological processes across terrestrial and marine realms to maintain a healthy, functioning planetary system [40]. For the purposes of this report, representativeness is assessed through the coverage of so-called “areas of particular importance for biodiversity defined here by combining the following spatial layers: Key Biodiversity Areas (KBAs), Important Bird and Biodiversity Areas (IBAs), Areas of Importance for Biodiversity and Ecosystem Services (AIBES), representative ecosystems across the world’s major biomes from the Global Ecosystem Typology, and priority landscapes and seascapes (see Appendix I.2 for data sources). Globally, these areas of particular importance for biodiversity cover approximately 13.7 million sq. km on land.

Coverage of KBAs and IBAs

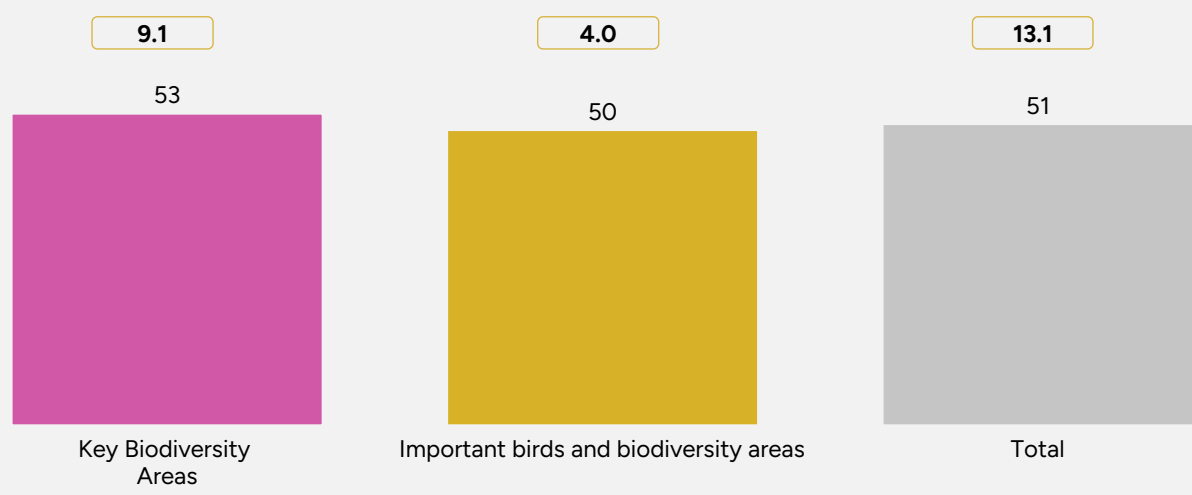
Approximately 53 percent of KBAs and 50 percent of IBAs are covered by protected areas, meaning around half of these recognized high biodiversity areas remain outside the PCA networks (Exhibit 3.8). Coverage is also expected to change as the global inventory of high biodiversity sites continues to evolve.

While Africa and Latin America have the highest terrestrial KBA and IBA coverage, between 45 percent and 72 percent, they remain priorities for expansion as they account for 75 percent of all KBAs globally. Three million of the four million sq. km of total KBA area is located in these two regions (Exhibit 3.9). IBA coverage is lowest in Asia, despite the region having the largest overall IBA area.

KBAs and IBAs

Key Biodiversity Areas (KBAs, [41]) and Important Bird Areas (IBAs, [41]) identify sites that are critical for the persistence of biodiversity. Key Biodiversity Areas are sites that contribute significantly to the global persistence of biodiversity across terrestrial, freshwater and marine systems, while Important Bird and Biodiversity Areas are internationally significant sites for the conservation of birds and other biodiversity, identified using standardized, data-driven criteria. Recent research cited by the KBA Partnership suggests that a large share of important sites may still be unmapped, meaning current datasets represent an evolving view of global priorities.

Exhibit 3.8
Coverage of terrestrial and inland water KBAs and IBAs, percent
Bubbles indicate total area in million sq. km

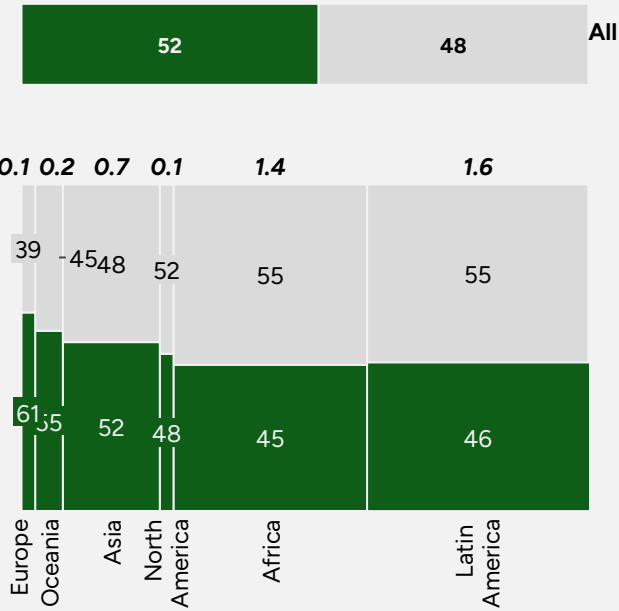


Source: UNEP-WCMC and IUCN (2026), WDKBA (2026)

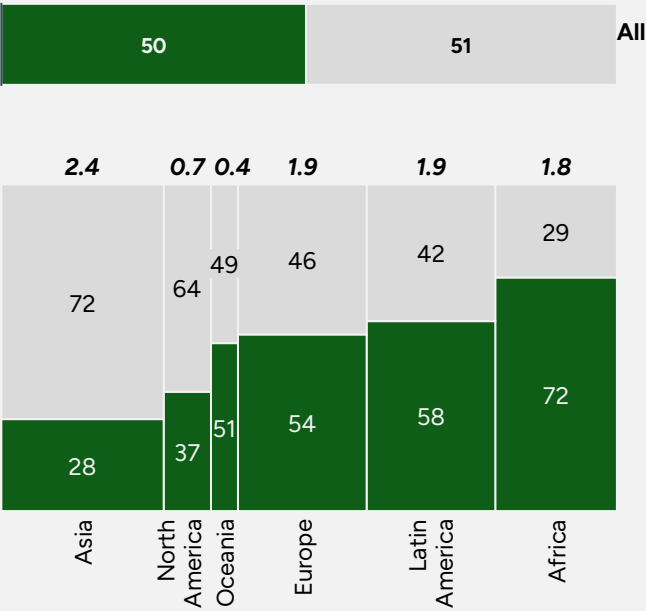
Exhibit 3.9
Coverage of terrestrial and inland water KBAs and IBAs by region, percent and million sq. km

xx Biodiversity priority area (Mkm²)

Current coverage of terrestrial and inland water key biodiversity areas, percent



Current coverage of terrestrial and inland water important birds and biodiversity areas, percent



Source: UNEP-WCMC and IUCN (2026), WDKBA (2026)

Coverage of AIBES

AIBES from the Global Safety Net

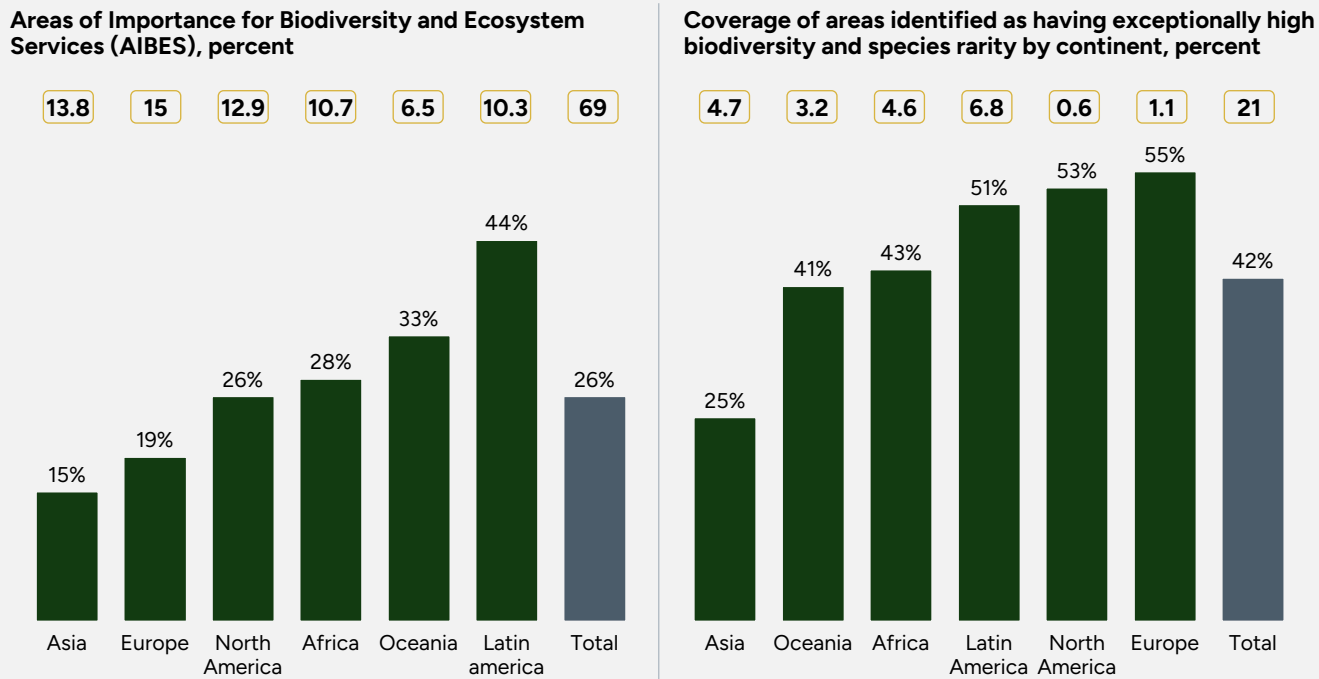
The five Global Safety Net layers [42] include Species Rarity Sites, which harbor rare and threatened species; High Biodiversity Areas, which contain exceptional concentrations of biodiversity; Large Mammal Landscapes, which encompass habitats and migration routes important for large mammals; Intact Wilderness, which consists of large, relatively undisturbed ecosystems; and Climate Stabilization Areas, which contain carbon-rich ecosystems important for climate regulation. Together, these layers identify areas that are critical for maintaining ecosystem integrity, ecological resilience, concentrations of biodiversity and rare species, and ecosystem services. These layers are referred to as Areas of Importance for Biodiversity and Ecosystem Services (AIBES) in the main text.

Globally, 26 percent of Areas of Importance for Biodiversity and Ecosystem Services (AIBES) are protected, while protection reaches 42 percent for the most biodiversity-rich and species-rare areas. Regional coverage is uneven: coverage of priority areas ranges from 44 percent in Latin

America to 15 percent in Asia. For the most biodiversity-rich and species-rare areas, coverage is highest in Europe (55 percent), followed by North America (53 percent) and Latin America (51 percent), while Asia again has the lowest at 25 percent (Exhibit 3.10).

Exhibit 3.10
Coverage of areas of importance for biodiversity and ecosystem services (AIBES) by region, percent

Bubbles indicate total area in million sq. km



Source: UNEP-WCMC and IUCN; Global Safety Net

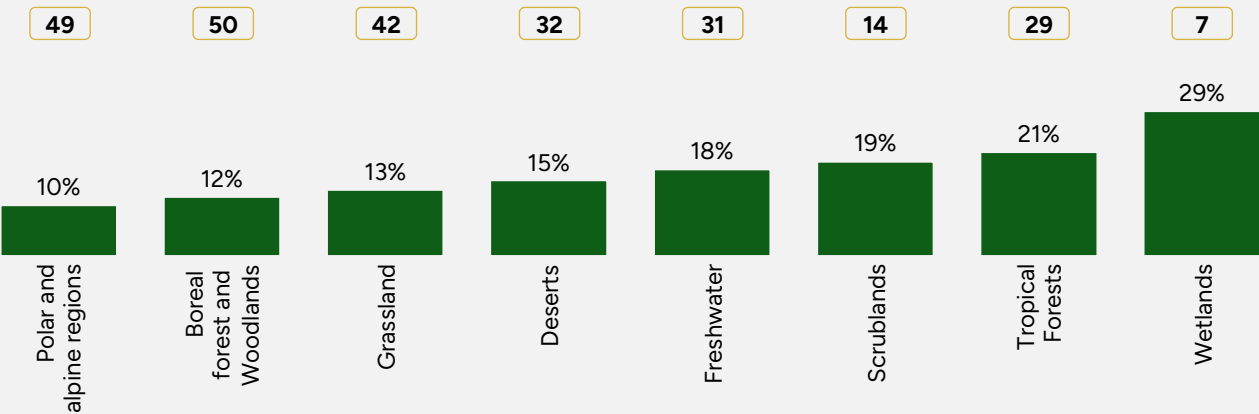
Coverage of representative ecosystems across the world's major biomes

Coverage of terrestrial ecosystems remains uneven, with the largest shortfalls in polar and alpine regions as well as boreal forests and woodlands. Among terrestrial ecosystems [43], tropical forests have around 21 percent coverage and wetlands reach around 29 percent, while grasslands, boreal forests and woodlands have lower coverage at 13 percent, 12 percent and

12 percent respectively (Exhibit 3.11), despite their importance for carbon storage and species habitats.

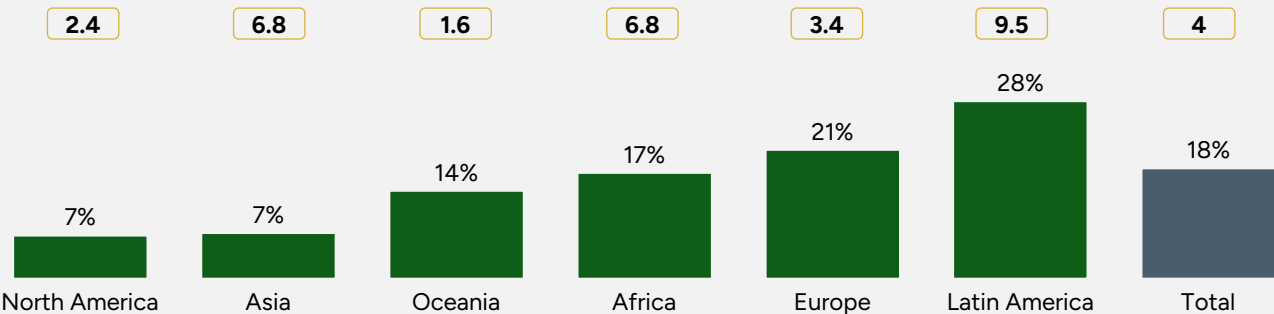
Freshwater ecosystems coverage is below 30 percent across all regions. Latin America has the highest coverage at 28 percent, followed by Europe at 21 percent, while North America and Asia are lowest at 7 percent each. Globally, coverage reaches 18 percent of the total freshwater ecosystems area (Exhibit 3.12).

Exhibit 3.11
Coverage of terrestrial and inland waters ecosystems, percent
Bubbles indicate total area in million sq. km



Source: UNEP-WCMC and IUCN (2026); Keith et al. (2023)

Exhibit 3.12
Coverage of freshwater areas by region, percent
Bubbles indicate total area in million sq. km



Source: UNEP-WCMC and IUCN (2026); Keith et al. (2023)

Coverage of priority landscapes

Priority Landscapes

WWF identifies priority places as ecoregions scientifically identified as either being home to irreplaceable and threatened biodiversity, or representing an opportunity to conserve the largest and most intact representative of their ecosystem [44]. In this report, these priority places are combined with several complementary geospatial layers to produce an integrated set of landscape-scale spatial priorities, referred to in this report as “priority landscapes or seascapes” (see Appendix I.2 for details).

High coverage of priority landscapes has been achieved in some regions, but many areas remain below 30 percent. Outside the Amazon, the Guianas, the Galapagos, the Kavango-Zambezi, southern Chile, and the Namib-Karoo, no other

priority region exceeds 30 percent coverage. Most priority landscapes with single-digit coverage are in North America and Asia, including the Yangtze Basin, the Northern Great Plains, and the Chihuahua Desert (Exhibit 3.13).

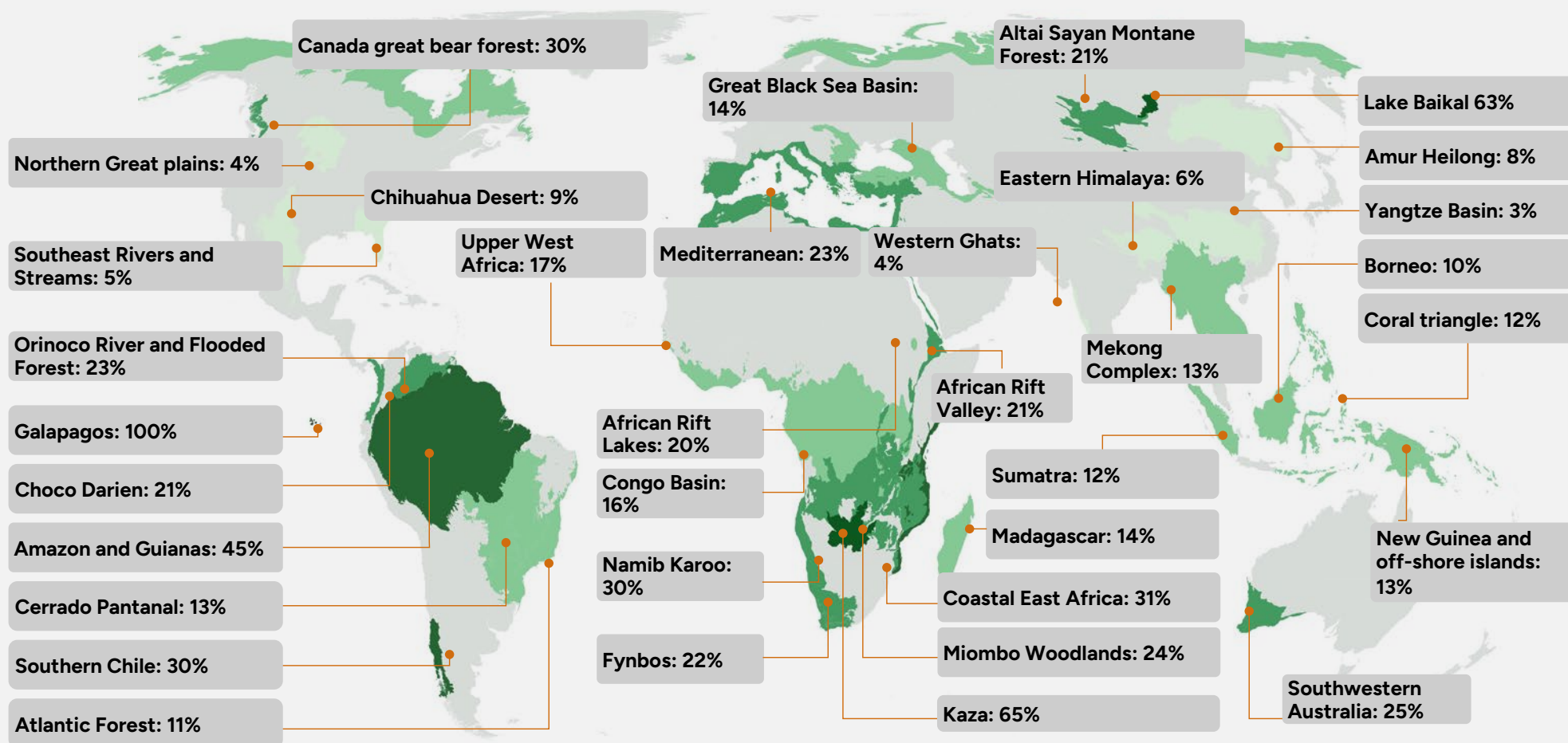


Exhibit 3.13

Coverage of example priority terrestrial landscapes¹, percent

Non-exhaustive list of featured landscapes¹

Coverage (%) 0–10 10–20 20–30 30–50 50–75 75–100



1. The landscapes displayed on this map, and the associated boundaries are indicative and not exhaustive in nature. Landscapes were collected from multiple sources (see Appendix I.2 for further details). There are on-going efforts to compile a comprehensive list of biodiversity hotspots, led by leading organizations in conservation such as IUCN: <https://iucn.org/news/202510/comprehensive-update-worlds-biodiversity-hotspots-project-begins>

Sources: UNEP-WCMC and IUCN (2026); WWF (2024)

Coverage of terrestrial threatened species

Globally, terrestrial vertebrates achieve a Species Protection Index (SPI) of 51, but values differ substantially among taxonomic groups, ranging from an SPI of 62 for birds to 55 for mammals, 44 for amphibians, and 43 for reptiles (Exhibit 3.14, [45]). Coverage of terrestrial vertebrates varies considerably across countries, with particularly strong outcomes concentrated in parts of Europe and southern Africa. Higher Species Protection Index (SPI) values are observed in countries such as Poland, Luxembourg (100 percent), Slovakia,

the Netherlands, Germany (99 percent), and Botswana (94 percent), while some of the lowest scores occur in India, Eritrea, Western Sahara, Kiribati, and Nauru. More broadly, higher SPI values are concentrated across parts of Europe, southern Africa, and selected countries in the Americas, whereas lower values are more common across South Asia, the Middle East, and parts of Central Asia. Higher SPI values in Europe could be attributable to an overall low conservation burden, while high SPI values in selected Latin American (e.g., Venezuela) and southern African countries (e.g., Botswana) could be attributable to large coverage or a large PCA network.

The Species Protection Index

The IUCN Red List defines threatened species as those classified as Vulnerable, Endangered, or Critically Endangered based on their risk of extinction. To assess the extent to which threatened species are represented within protected and conserved areas, this report uses the Species Protection Index (SPI) [46] without modification. The SPI measures the representation of species within protected and conserved areas relative to species-specific coverage targets. These targets vary according to range size, with species that have smaller distributions requiring a larger proportion of their range to be protected than more widespread species.

SPI values range from 0 to 100. A value of 100 indicates that all assessed threatened species meet their species-specific representation targets within protected and conserved areas. A value of 50 indicates that species are, on average, halfway to meeting those targets, while a value of 0 indicates no representation of assessed species within protected and conserved areas. A country's SPI is calculated as a weighted average of Species Protection Scores where weights reflect a country's responsibility for conserving each species (i.e., endemic species receive the highest weight).

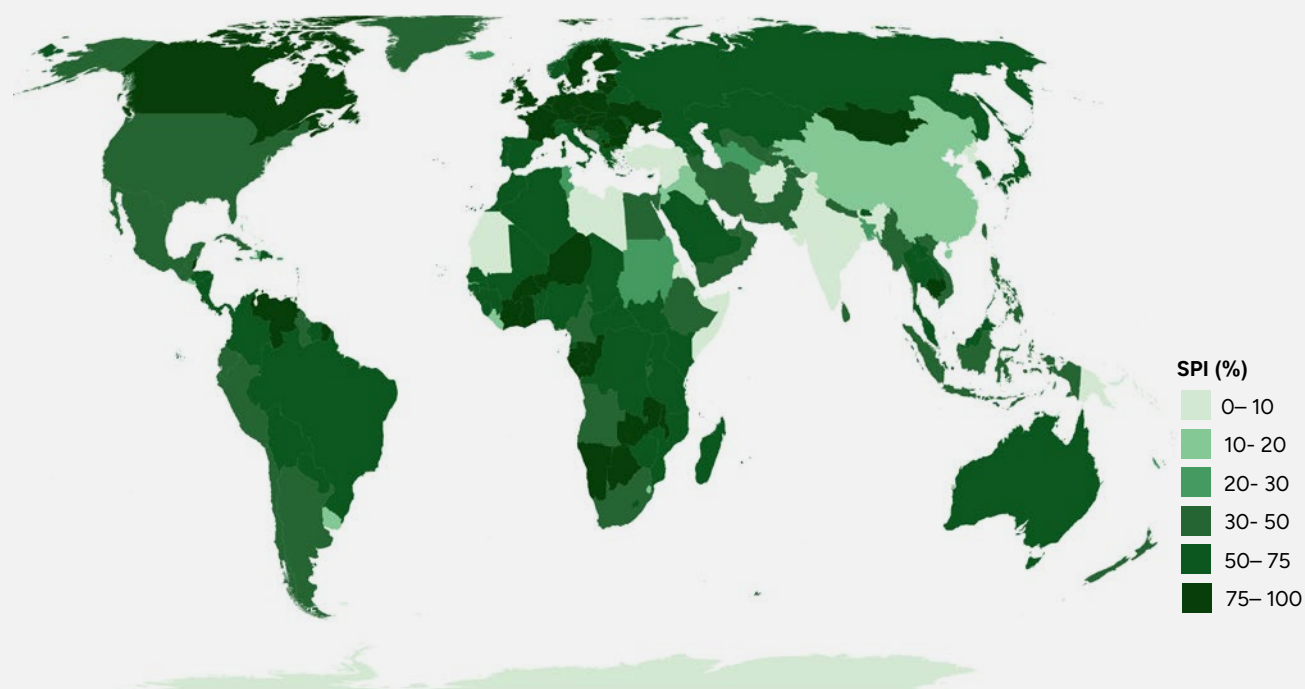
Any conclusion on comparison of conservation efforts between different geographies cannot be drawn based on SPI alone. High SPI values may reflect relatively low stewardship responsibility for species, for example where countries contain relatively few species or few endemics, or extensive protected and conserved area coverage. Conversely, countries with high species richness or many endemic species may record lower SPI values despite substantial conservation efforts.

Globally, tree species have a relatively high protection level with an SPI of 58. The highest SPI values (100) are found in several European countries, including Estonia, Latvia, Lithuania, Poland and Liechtenstein, as well as Niger. In these cases, high scores largely reflect relatively low national stewardship responsibility for tree species. High SPI values are also observed in forest-rich countries such as Venezuela and Namibia, where more extensive protected and

conserved area networks contribute to higher species coverage. In contrast, lower SPI values are more common across parts of the Middle East and Asia, including Saudi Arabia and Türkiye, where more limited protected area coverage contributes to lower scores. Countries with high tree diversity and many endemic species, such as India, may also record lower SPI values because they have greater stewardship responsibility for global tree conservation (Exhibit 3.15).

Exhibit 3.14

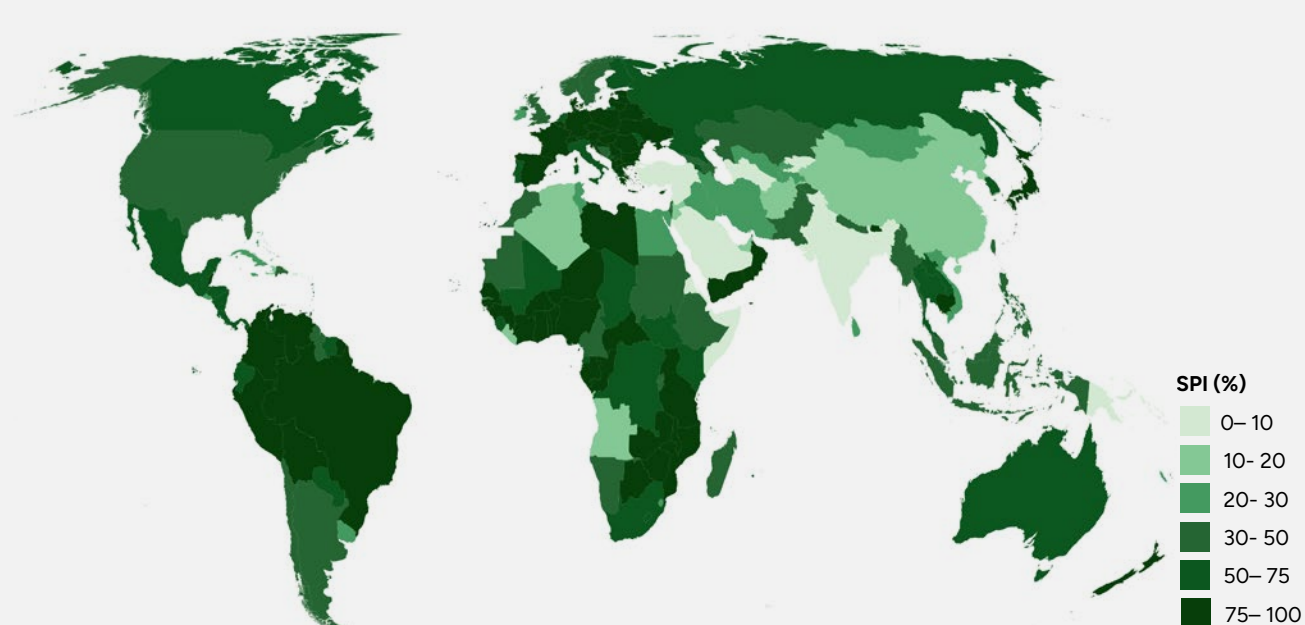
Species Protection Index (SPI) for terrestrial vertebrates, percent



Source: The Species Protection Report 2025

Exhibit 3.15

Species Protection Index (SPI) for trees, percent



Source: The Species Protection Report 2025

3.1.5 Effectiveness

Beyond coverage, PCAs must be effective in conserving biodiversity. Target 3 requires protected and conserved areas to be effectively managed, ecologically representative, well connected and equitably governed. Effective conservation requires limiting pressures on biodiversity and maintaining, or ideally improving, ecological integrity and resilience.

This section assesses three complementary dimensions of effectiveness: evaluation and reporting of management effectiveness, ecological outcomes, and reversals of protection status.

Evaluation and reporting of management effectiveness

Only a small proportion of protected and conserved areas have publicly reported management effectiveness assessments. The Global Database on Protected Area Management Effectiveness (GD-PAME [47]), the most comprehensive global repository, contains assessments for only around 20,000 of more than 320,000 protected and conserved areas worldwide, representing approximately 6.5 percent of sites (Exhibit 3.16). This likely underestimates the number of sites that have been assessed, as not all assessments are reported

to GD-PAME. UNEP-WCMC, which manages the database through Protected Planet, has recently upgraded the platform to facilitate the submission of high-level assessment results. Expanding the capacity of protected area agencies to undertake, report and use management effectiveness assessments therefore remains a critical priority for strengthening adaptive management and tracking progress towards Target 3.

Ecological outcomes

Ecological outcomes as proxy of effectiveness

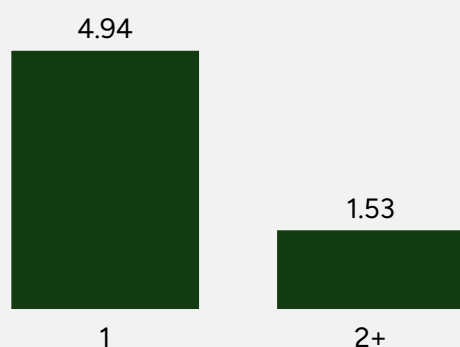
Effectiveness is commonly assessed using indicators of ecological outcomes. In terrestrial systems, these typically include habitat loss and human pressures such as agricultural expansion, livestock grazing and infrastructure development [48]. In marine and coastal systems, assessments often focus on fish biomass or fish stock status [49-51].

These indicators do not provide a comprehensive assessment of the ecological outcomes or effectiveness of protected and conserved areas. However, given current data limitations, they provide useful proxy indicators.

Conservation interventions, including PCAs, generally improve biodiversity outcomes or slow biodiversity decline relative to no intervention [52]. PCAs maintain monitored bird and mammal populations on average, with more positive population trends observed in countries with higher development scores and for larger-bodied species, highlighting the importance of management capacity and sustained investment [53]. Targeted interventions, including invasive alien species control and ecological restoration, are associated with particularly positive biodiversity outcomes [52]. However, effectiveness is not universal and remains influenced by institutional capacity, available resources, enforcement, and pressures from resource extraction [52,53].

Despite these positive outcomes, habitat loss continues within many protected areas. An assessment of more than 160,000 protected areas

Exhibit 3.16
Percentage of PCAs (N=320,370) that have reported an evaluation to GD-PAME since 2017, reported once or more than once



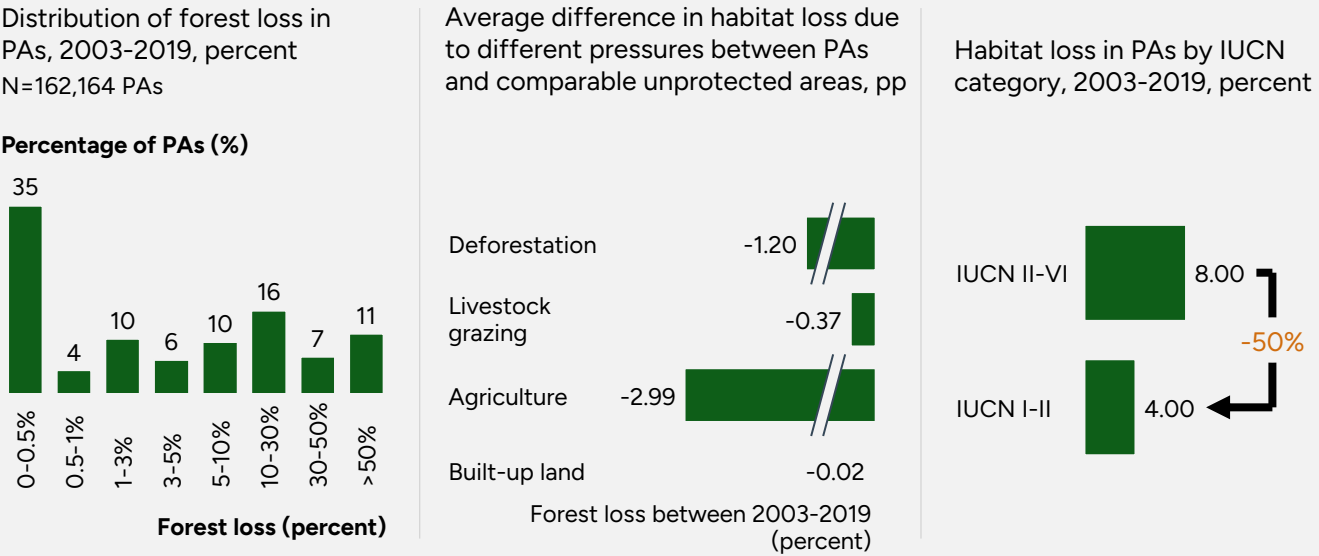
Source: GD-PAME (2026)

found that 73 percent experienced habitat loss between 2003 and 2019, affecting approximately 1.14 million sq. km of habitat ([48], Exhibit 3.17). Annual forest loss ranged from 0.2 to 1.1 percent. More than one-third of assessed protected areas lost less than 0.5 percent of their forest cover over the study period, while more than 17,500 protected areas lost over half of their forest cover, indicating that protected area designation alone does not eliminate land conversion pressures.

Protected areas reduced overall habitat loss by approximately one-third relative to

unprotected areas under similar biophysical socio-economic conditions. Protection reduced habitat loss associated with forest loss by 1.2 percentage points, cropland expansion by 3.0 percentage points and pastureland expansion by 0.4 percentage points, with only marginal reductions in built-up land expansion ([48], Exhibit 3.17). More strictly protected areas (IUCN Categories I-II) experienced around 4 percent habitat loss between 2003 and 2019, compared with approximately 8 percent in Categories III-VI (Exhibit 3.17). Similarly, cropland expansion was greater in Categories III-VI than in Categories I-II.

Exhibit 3.17
Effectiveness of terrestrial and inland water protected areas



Source: Li et al. (2024)





Gola is a gazetted protected area (PA). Gazetted protected areas in Sierra Leone exhibit notably lower deforestation rates (0.4 percent per year) compared to the national average (2.8 percent per year), effectively contributing to conservation compared to non-protected areas.

The Gola Rainforest National Park project employs economic incentives and participatory governance, co-managed with local communities and organizations like Royal Society for Protection of Birds (RSPB) and Conservation Society of Sierra Leone (CSSL).

The park has established a REDD+ (Reduced Emissions from Deforestation and Forest Degradation) project, which includes Cooperation

and Benefit Sharing Agreements with local communities and chiefdoms. This directly benefits communities that historically depended on the forest: 23,500 people across 122 communities, providing USD 12,000 in yearly disbursements for each chiefdom in the vicinity of the protected area. These funds are disbursed in the form of direct cash payments, school tuition payments, or in-kind agricultural inputs.

Looking ahead, Gola aims for financial self-sufficiency and is looking to develop carbon financing and ecotourism infrastructure, creating sustainable revenue streams for the protected area and communities.

Source: Program SPACES

The effectiveness of PCAs varies across regions and generally declines where pressures from land conversion are greatest. In Sub-Saharan Africa, cropland expansion is a growing pressure on PCAs. Around 28.5 percent of Africa's cropland is located either within conservation areas (8.5 percent) or within 10 km of them (20 percent), highlighting the close interaction between agricultural production and conservation landscapes [54]. Europe and North America contain a relatively high share of PCAs affected by both forest loss and cropland expansion, while North America records the greatest expansion of built-up land. In Southeast Asia, forest loss remains the dominant pressure, whereas pastureland expansion is the principal driver of habitat loss in Central Asia [48]. Evidence also shows that PCAs supporting sustainable livelihoods and engaging local communities can experience lower pressures on natural habitats and achieve stronger conservation outcomes.

Downgrading, downsizing and degazettement of PCAs

Between 1892 and 2021, 71 countries enacted around 3,800 terrestrial protected area downgrading, downsizing and degazettement (PADDD) events, affecting around 1.9 million sq. km [55], equivalent to approximately 7 percent of total coverage today. Some 78 percent of these events were enacted after 2000, and about half arise from causes that can be seen as high-risk for conservation such as infrastructure, mining, oil and gas, forestry, industrial agriculture and industrialization [56]. The United States accounts for the largest national total in the dataset, with around 550,000 sq. km, followed by Australia (410,000 sq. km) and Colombia (129,000 sq. km) [55].

Similar events are still recorded after the adoption of the GBF. Bears Ears National Monument in the United States, downsized in 2017 then restored to close to its original boundaries in 2021, was reduced again by roughly 5,000 sq. km in 2026 [57]. In the Democratic Republic of the Congo, a 2025 oil licensing round covering 53% of national territory overlaps with 83,000 sq. km of protected areas [58].

Connectivity

Ecological connectivity

Ecological connectivity is an integral element of Target 3. CBD guidance describes the target as requiring ecologically representative, well-connected and equitably governed systems of PCAs integrated into wider landscapes, seascapes and the ocean. Measuring connectivity remains challenging because ecological processes operate across multiple spatial and temporal scales. The literature distinguishes between structural connectivity, which describes the spatial arrangement of habitats and physical features, and functional connectivity, which reflects the extent to which organisms can move through landscapes or seascapes. Given current data availability, this assessment focuses on terrestrial connectivity indicators, while recognizing that globally consistent indicators for inland waters and the marine realm remain limited.

Globally, at least 8.5 percent of the world's terrestrial surface is both protected and connected, up from 7.8 percent in the previous assessment [1]. Excluding other effective area-based conservation measures (OECMs), the value falls to 7.5 percent, highlighting the contribution that recognized OECMs can make to ecological connectivity by complementing protected areas and maintaining linkages across managed landscapes. Connectivity varies considerably among countries, indicating that similar levels of protected area coverage can translate into very different levels of ecological connectivity depending on the size, spatial configuration and fragmentation of PCA networks.

3.2 Marine and coastal areas

3.2.1 Global coverage

Coverage of PCAs remains below 30 percent.

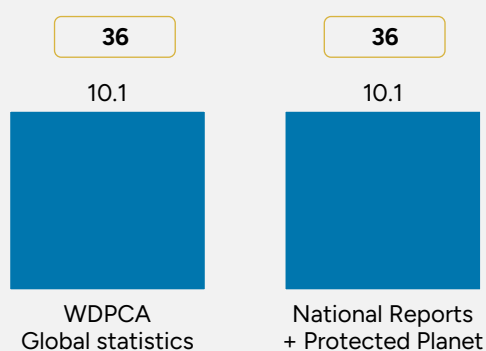
Around 10 percent, or 35 million sq. km of the world's marine and coastal areas is under some form of protection (Exhibits 3.18 and 3.19). The gap to 30 percent is structurally large because much of the ocean lies outside national jurisdictions, i.e., in the High Seas. Around 22 to 23 percent of national waters are protected, while only

around 1.5 percent of the High Seas is. The BBNJ Agreement (High Seas Treaty), which entered into force in January 2026, creates a potential pathway to expand High Seas protection, but progress will depend on its implementation framework and countries' ability to advance new protected area proposals. The High Seas therefore represent one of the largest remaining opportunities for expanding marine coverage.

Exhibit 3.18

Global reported marine and coastal PCA coverage by data source, percent

Bubbles indicate total area in million sq. km

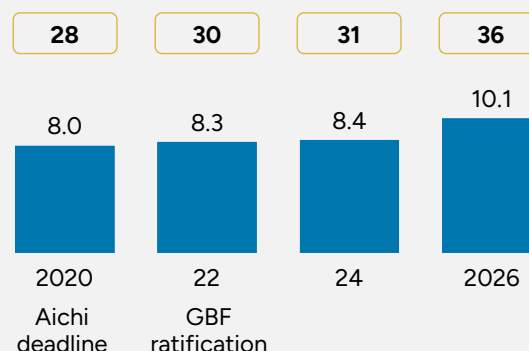


Source: UNEP-WCMC and IUCN (2026); CBD National Reports (2026)

Exhibit 3.19

Global reported marine and coastal PCA coverage by year starting in 2020, percent

Bubbles indicate total area in million sq. km



Source: Protected Planet Report (2024), UNEP-WCMC and IUCN (2026)



3.2.2 Coverage by management categories

Only 13 percent of the total PCA network is reported under IUCN Categories I–II in the marine realm. Around 50 percent is classified under Categories IUCN III–VI, with a further 36 percent having no reported IUCN category (Exhibit 3.20). Broadly consistent with this, independent assessments suggest that around one-third (or 3.5 percent of the world’s oceans) is currently fully or highly protected in implemented marine protected areas [59]. This lower share of IUCN I–II compared with land reflects the importance of mixed-use conservation models in the ocean, where biodiversity priorities often overlap with fishing grounds, coastal livelihoods, navigation routes, and other forms of marine use. Industrial fishing alone has been estimated to occur across more than 55 percent of the ocean [58], underscoring that future expansion will often need to take place in working seascapes. Yet there is little evidence that fisheries and protected-area

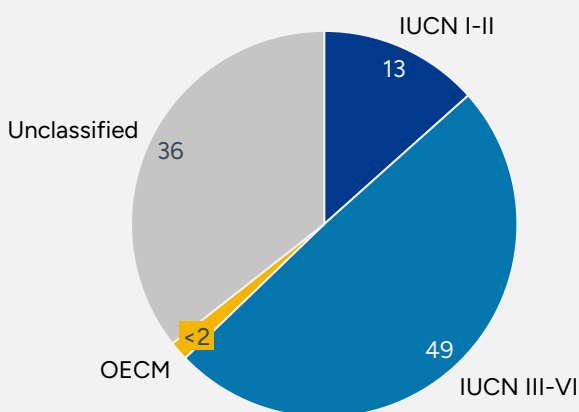
targets are currently being integrated, despite their potential co-benefits [61]. The relatively low share of IUCN I–II areas highlights also the need to identify where no-take or highly protected areas are required to safeguard vulnerable habitats, rebuild fish biomass and protect ecological processes that are not compatible with extractive use.

3.2.3 Coverage by regions

The EEZs of Oceania and Latin America account for the highest coverage in marine protection. Oceania has reached 41 percent marine and coastal coverage, and Latin America follows at 26 percent. Every other region remains far behind, with Africa at 16 percent, North America at 14 percent, and Europe and Asia both below 10 percent. The lowest coverage is in areas beyond national jurisdiction, which cover around two-thirds of the global ocean but have only 1.5 percent under formal protection, leaving the largest single ocean realm effectively unmanaged (Exhibit 3.21).

Exhibit 3.20

Reported marine and coastal area coverage by IUCN management category and OECM designation, percent



Source: UNEP-WCMC and IUCN (2026)

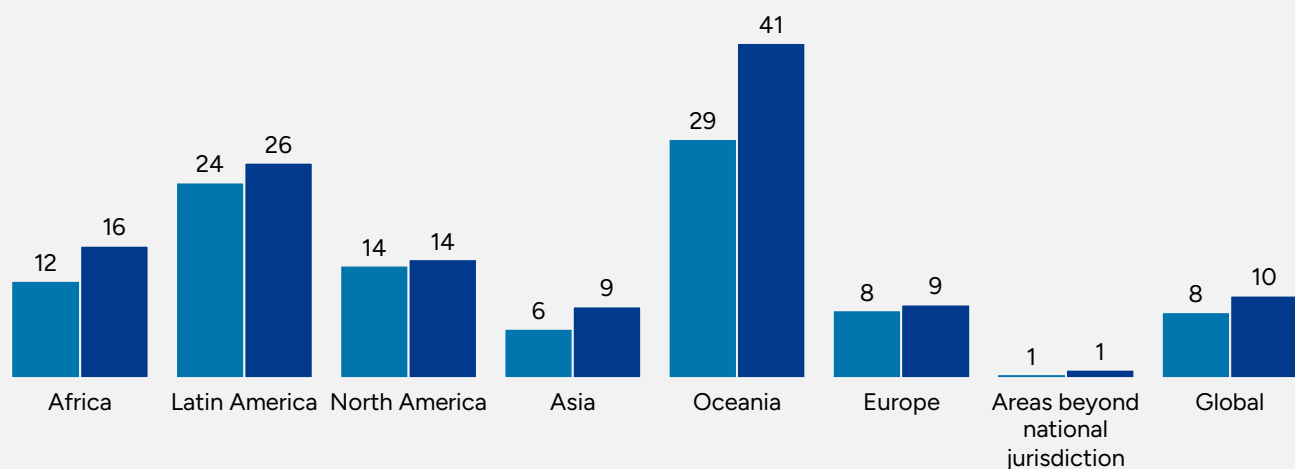


*Image credit: Tom Vjerus (WWF-US)

Exhibit 3.21

Reported marine and coastal area by region and year, percent

■ 2020 ■ 2026



Source: Protected Planet Report (2020); UNEP-WCMC and IUCN (2026)

Twenty-three countries and territories already exceed 30 percent marine coverage, often through large-scale PCA designations. Reported coverage is highest in Palau and Monaco, both at 100 percent, followed by Kazakhstan at 52 percent, France at 49 percent, Australia at 46 percent, Germany at 45 percent, Colombia at 42 percent, Niue at 41 percent, Belgium at 38 percent, Seychelles at 33 percent although these figures mask different implementation realities (Exhibit 3.22). First, these countries vary vastly in size: The EEZ area of Monaco and Germany is less than 1 percent of Australia (approximately 8 million sq. km) and France (approximately 10 million sq. km). Furthermore, Germany, for instance, reports high marine coverage, but a large majority of its marine protected areas is exposed to bottom trawling [62]. Widespread habitat and seafloor degradation caused by bottom trawling is identified as one of the reasons for the poor ecological status of its waters [63]. This illustrates why headline marine coverage should be interpreted as a measure of designation, not necessarily of effective conservation as countries that exceed 30 percent coverage may still fall short of Target 3 if PCAs cannot deliver biodiversity outcomes.

In terms of recent progress, Costa Rica, Colombia and Bahrain can be highlighted for adding more than 20 percentage points of coverage since 2020. During the same period, France added the

largest area in absolute terms through 4.5 million sq. km of PCAs in French Polynesia (Exhibit 3.23). Of this, French Polynesia fully protects about 1.4 million sq. km in area, or 30 percent of its waters [33].

Recent announcements at the 2026 Our Ocean Conference indicate continued momentum in expanding marine protection [64]. Major commitments included large-scale expansions of MPA in French Polynesia and the Juan Fernández Archipelago (Chile), alongside new marine protected areas and conservation commitments in several African countries, including Tanzania and São Tomé and Príncipe.

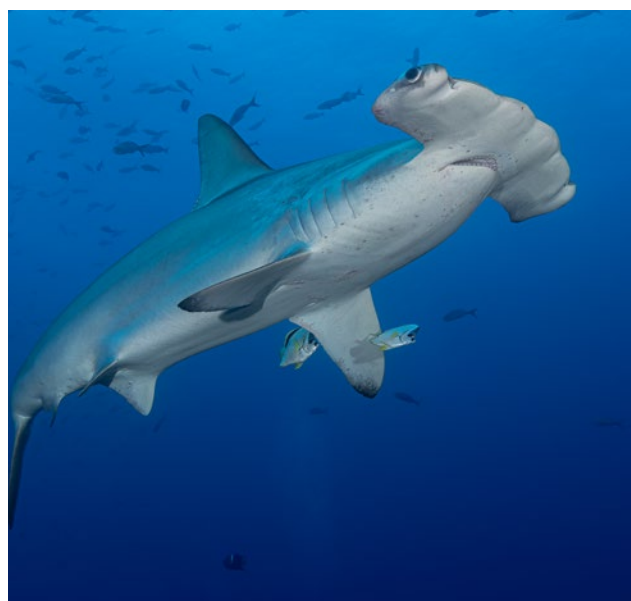


Exhibit 3.22

Countries with highest and lowest (not including those with none) reported marine and coastal coverage, percent

Countries with highest marine and coastal area coverage

Country	Percent protected
Monaco	100
Palau	100
Kazakhstan	52
France	49
Australia	46
Germany	45
Colombia	42
Niue	41
Belgium	38
Seychelles	33

Countries with lowest marine and coastal area coverage

Country	Percent protected
Maldives	0.06
Guyana	0.05
Tuvalu	0.03
Democratic Republic of Korea	0.02
Nigeria	0.02
Ghana	0.01
Sri Lanka	0.003
Angola	0.003
Tokelau	0.003
Mauritius	0.002

Note: There are several states that have no marine area under protection: Montserrat, Palestine, Bosnia and Herzegovina, Singapore, Bermuda, Iraq, Eritrea, Somalia, Western Sahara, Nauru, Wallis and Futuna

Source: CBD National Reports; CBD National Biodiversity Action Plans; UNEP-WCMC and IUCN (2026)

Exhibit 3.23

Countries with highest progress since 2020 in reported marine and coastal area coverage in percentage points (pp) and absolute area in million sq. km

Bubbles indicate increase in coverage in percentage points

Countries with highest progress in marine and coastal protected and conserved areas coverage since 2020

Country	Increase in coverage, pp
France	43
Costa Rica	26
Colombia	24
Bahrain	20
Australia	16
Oman	16
Panama	15
Ukraine	13
Saudi Arabia	11
Republic of Congo	11

Countries with highest progress in marine and coastal protected and conserved area coverage in Area since 2020

Country	Increase in coverage, million sq. km	
France	4.5	43
Australia	1.4	16
Japan	0.2	6
Colombia	0.2	24
Canada	0.2	3
Costa Rica	0.1	26
Indonesia	0.1	2
Oman	0.1	16
Peru	0.1	6
Spain	0.1	6

Source: Protected Planet Report (2020); UNEP-WCMC and IUCN (2026)

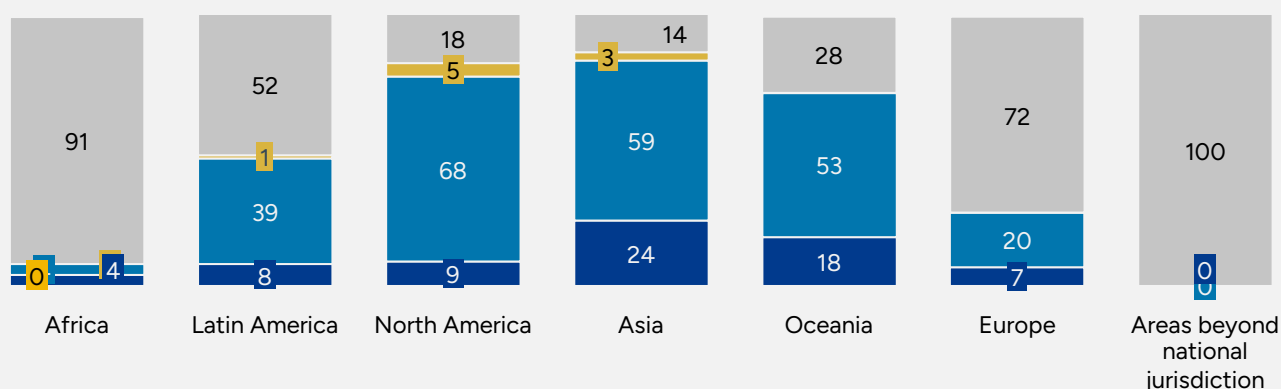
The share of marine PCAs assigned to different IUCN management categories varies considerably across regions. Asia and Oceania are the only regions where more than 10 percent of the reported network is classified under IUCN Categories I-II. Africa and Europe report the lowest shares under these categories, each with fewer than 10 percent of their networks. In areas

beyond national jurisdiction, all reported PCAs remain unclassified under the IUCN management categories. Reported OECMs also remain limited in the marine realm, accounting for no more than 5 percent of the reported network in any region, with the highest share recorded in North America (Exhibit 3.24).

Exhibit 3.24

Share of IUCN categories and OECM designation in marine and coastal coverage by region, percent

IUCN category: ■ I-II ■ OECM¹ ■ III-VI ■ Unclassified²



1. OECM: Other Area based effective conservation measures

2. Areas in WDPCA dataset with status not assigned/not reported/not applicable.

Source: CBD National reports; UNEP-WCMC and IUCN (2026); CBD National Biodiversity Action Plans

3.2.4 Representativeness of current coverage

Coverage of KBAs, IBAs, EBSAs, ISRAs and IMMAs

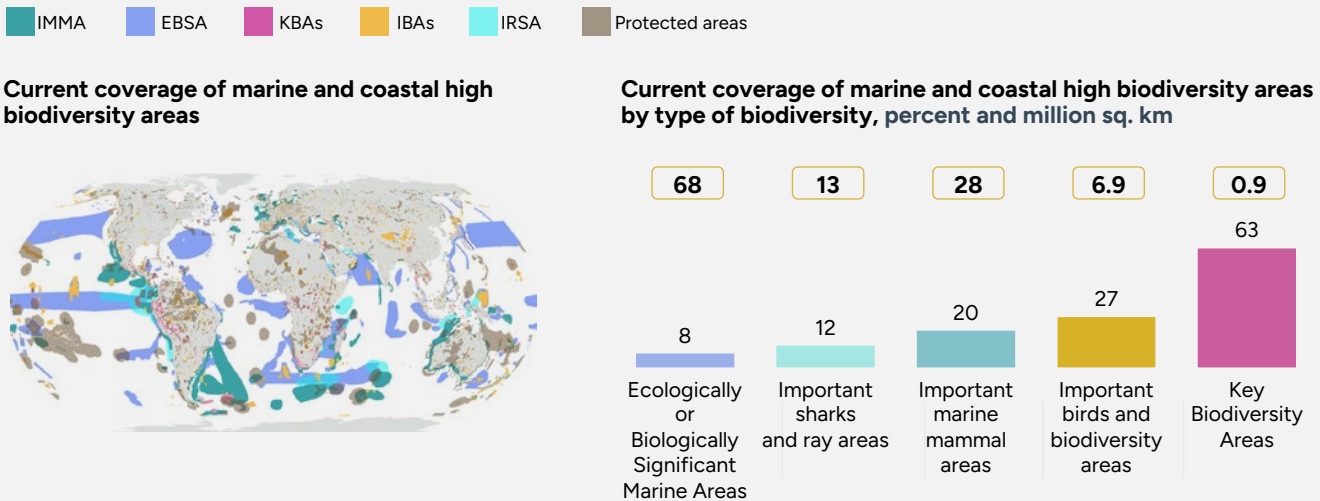
Other recognized high biodiversity areas in the marine realm

In addition to Key Biodiversity Areas (KBAs) and Important Bird Areas (IBAs) [41], several other globally recognized spatial frameworks identify marine areas of particular importance for biodiversity. Ecologically or Biologically Significant Marine Areas (EBSA, [65]) are regions identified under the Convention on Biological Diversity as critical for ecosystem functioning, biodiversity, and species persistence, based on criteria such as uniqueness, productivity, and vulnerability. Important Shark and Ray Areas (ISRA, [66]) are habitats essential for the survival of shark and ray species, including breeding, feeding, and aggregation sites. Important Marine Mammal Areas (IMMA, [67]) highlight key habitats for marine mammals, such as migratory corridors, calving grounds, and foraging areas.

Coverage of high biodiversity marine and coastal areas varies widely, with KBAs having the highest protected rate at 63 percent. While KBA and IBA coverage is relatively higher, other categories of high biodiversity marine areas have considerably lower coverage (see Callout box for definition): only around 8 percent of EBSAs, 12 percent of ISRAs and 20 percent of IMMAs are covered, even though these areas are critical for ocean function and species habitats (Exhibit 3.25).

Protected area coverage across the world’s ocean regions remains below 30 percent. The Indian, North Atlantic, South Atlantic and North Pacific oceans account for the majority of global high biodiversity areas, yet protection remains limited because much of these areas lie beyond national jurisdiction. Smaller seas tend to achieve higher levels of protection, with the Baltic Sea recording the highest coverage. However, no single region has yet reached 30 percent coverage (Exhibit 3.26).

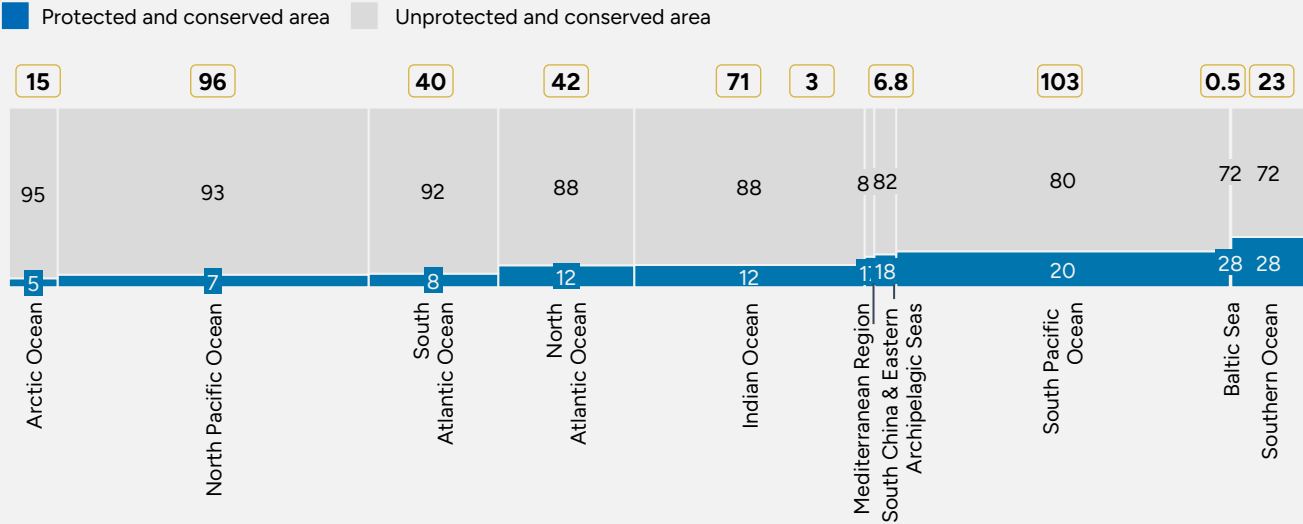
Exhibit 3.25
Coverage of marine and coastal recognized high biodiversity areas, percent.
Bubbles indicate total area in million sq. km



Source: IUCN & UNEP-WCMC (2026), BirdLife International , Digital boundaries of Key Biodiversity Areas (World Database of KBAs), IUCN SSC Shark Specialist Group (2022), Important Shark and Ray Areas (ISRA) dataset; IUCN Marine Mammal Protected Areas Task Force (2024), Important Marine Mammal Areas (IMMA) dataset. IUCN Marine Mammal Protected Areas Task Force (2022), Guidance on the Use of IMMA Data; Esri (2024), World Continents; Flanders Marine Institute (2021), Global Oceans and Seas (VLIZ, 2021)



Exhibit 3.26
Coverage of marine and coastal high biodiversity by region, percent and million sq. km
Bubbles indicate total area in million sq. km



Source: UNEP-WCMC and IUCN (2026), BirdLife International , Digital boundaries of Key Biodiversity Areas (World Database of KBAs), IUCN SSC Shark Specialist Group (2022), Important Shark and Ray Areas (ISRA) dataset; IUCN Marine Mammal Protected Areas Task Force (2024), Important Marine Mammal Areas (IMMA) dataset. IUCN Marine Mammal Protected Areas Task Force (2022), Guidance on the Use of IMMA Data; Esri (2024), World Continents; Flanders Marine Institute (2021), Global Oceans and Seas (VLIZ, 2021)

Coverage of representative ecosystems across the world’s major biomes

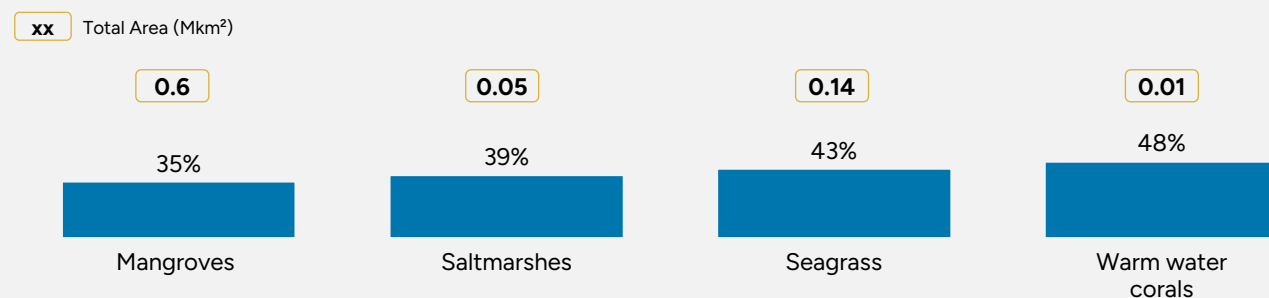
Coastal marine ecosystems generally have higher levels of protection than offshore and deep-sea ecosystems. Approximately 35 percent of mangroves and 48 percent of warm-water coral reefs [69] fall within PCAs (Exhibit 3.27). These ecosystems have been a major focus of conservation efforts because of their importance for biodiversity, blue carbon storage, fisheries and

coastal protection. Despite these comparatively high levels of coverage, global mapping of marine ecosystems remains incomplete but is essential for identifying conservation priorities. Rapid advances in Earth observation are, however, improving global ecosystem inventories. For example, a recently published global 10 m-resolution seagrass dataset provides the first consistent global map of shallow-water seagrass ecosystems [70].



Exhibit 3.27

Coverage of coastal and marine ecosystems



Source: UNEP-WCMC and IUCN (2026); Resource Database. GIS-based tools for inland aquatic resource management, CIFA Technical Paper. No. 33, Part 2. Rome, FAO, 2007. 308 p., UNEP-WCMC et al. (2010). Global distribution of warm-water coral reefs (v4.0), Mcowen C. et al. (2017). A global map of saltmarshes (v6.0), UNEP-WCMC & Short FT (2020), Global Distribution of Seagrasses (v7), Keith et al. (2023)

Coverage of priority seascapes

Outside the Caribbean and Oceania, most priority seascapes³ remain poorly protected. Polar and temperate seascapes, including the Arctic Ocean, the Sargasso Sea, the Falkland Islands, and the Benguela Current, each have less than 10 percent coverage, as do tropical seascapes such as the Coral Triangle and Coastal West Africa (Exhibit 3.28). These seascapes support globally important migratory pathways, fisheries, biodiversity and climate regulation, making them priorities for expanding protection and conservation.

Coverage of marine threatened species

Marine species achieve the highest aggregate Species Protection Index (SPI) among the major taxonomic groups, with an overall SPI of 62. Marine mammals are best represented with an SPI of 72, followed by marine fish with an SPI of 62. Nearly half of jurisdictions have low SPI scores (below 12), while only 21 percent achieve high SPI values (above 75). Palau, Seychelles, Germany, Belgium, and Australia rank among the highest-scoring jurisdictions, whereas Angola, Benin, Djibouti, Eritrea, Iraq, Kazakhstan, and Togo record an SPI of zero (Exhibit 3.29 [45]).



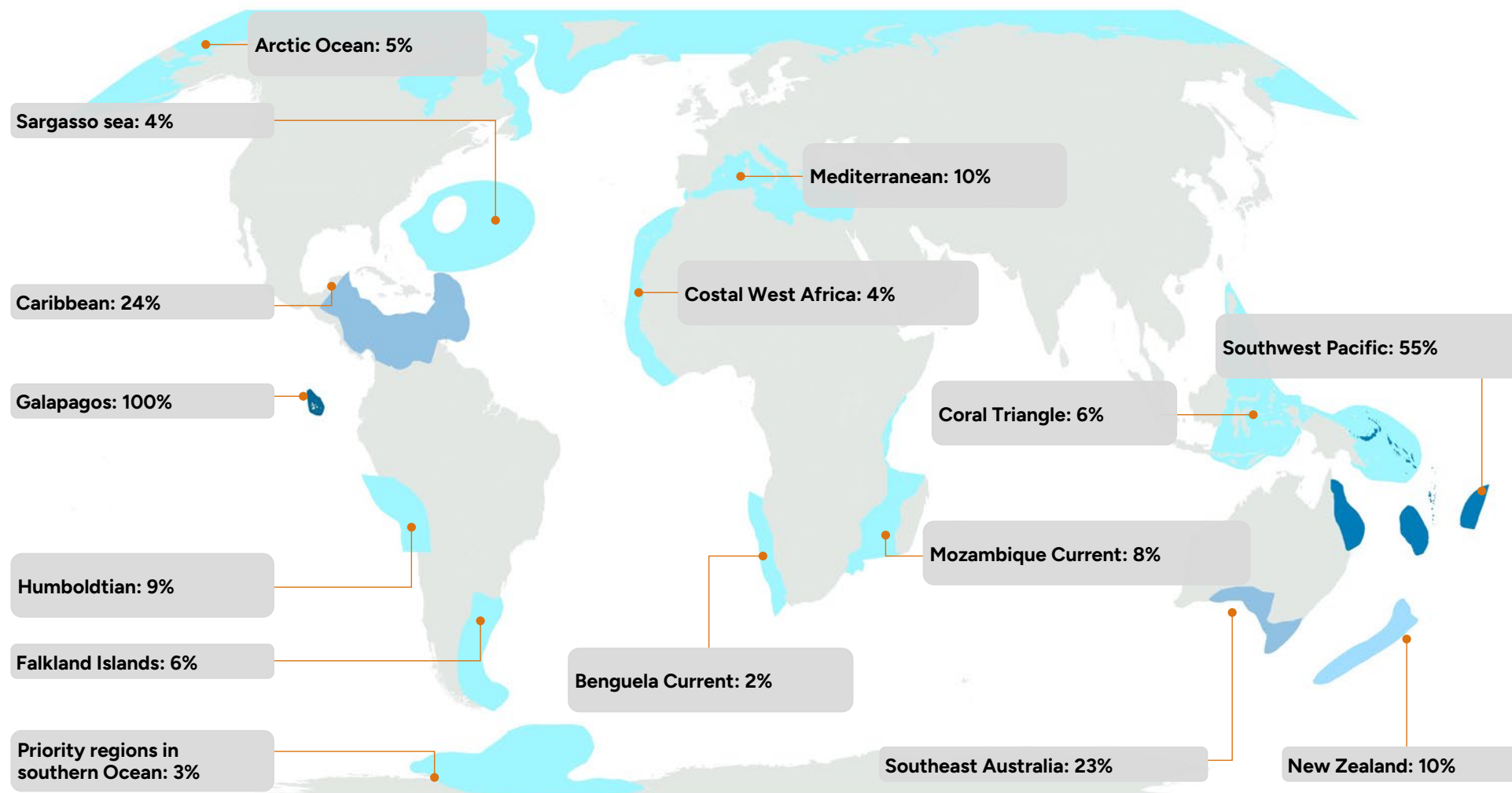
3. See callout box "Priority Landscapes" in the terrestrial and inland waters section of this Chapter and Appendix I.3 for definition

Exhibit 3.28

Coverage of example priority seascapes¹, percent

Non-exhaustive list of featured seascapes¹

Coverage (%) 0–10 10–20 20–30 30–50 50–75 75–100



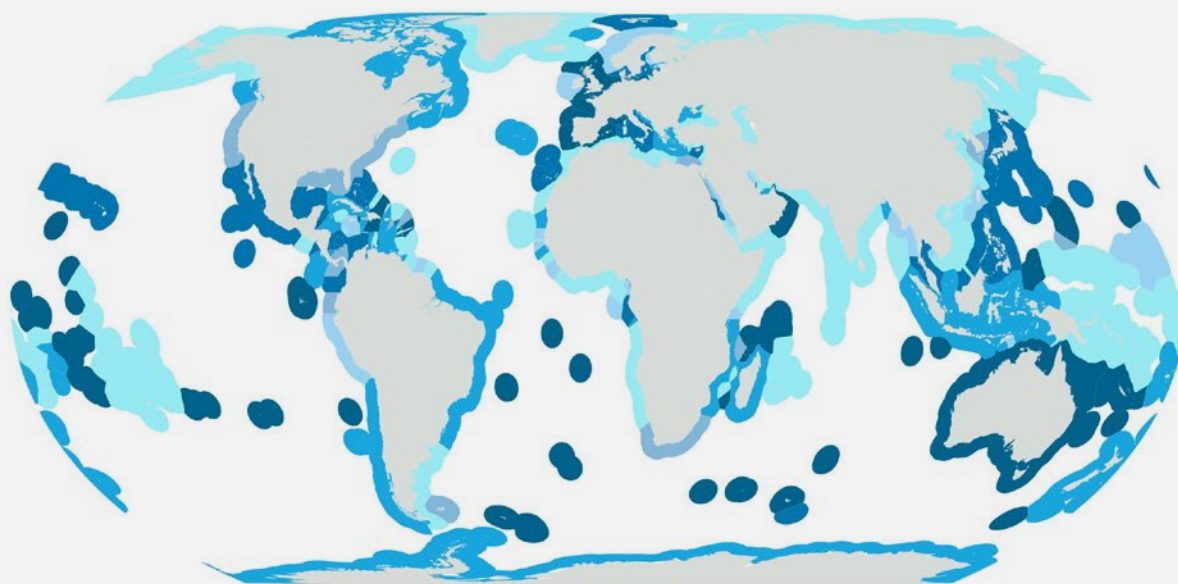
1. The seascapes displayed on this map, and the associated boundaries are indicative and not exhaustive in nature. Seascapes were collected from multiple sources (see Appendix I.2 for further details). There are on-going efforts to compile a comprehensive list of biodiversity hotspots, led by leading organizations in conservation such as IUCN: <https://iucn.org/news/202510/comprehensive-update-worlds-biodiversity-hotspots-project-begins>

Sources: UNEP-WCMC and IUCN (2026); WWF (2024)

Exhibit 3.29

Species Protection Index for marine vertebrates, percent

Coverage (%) 0–10 10–20 20–30 30–50 50–75 75–100



Sources: The Species Protection Report 2025

3.2.5 Effectiveness

Evaluation and reporting of management effectiveness

Only a small proportion (18 percent) of marine PCAs have publicly reported management effectiveness assessments. Of the approximately 20,000 areas with assessments reported in GD-PAME [47] (Exhibit 3.16), only about 3,000 areas are in the marine realm. Assessing management effectiveness of marine and coastal PCAs remains a critical priority for strengthening adaptive management and tracking progress towards Target 3.

Ecological outcomes

Highly protected no-take marine reserves deliver the strongest ecological outcomes in marine and coastal ecosystems. Compared with partially protected and unprotected areas, no-take reserves support substantially higher fish biomass, larger individual fish, greater species richness, and more intact food webs [50,51,71]. For instance, Cabo Pulmo National Park in Mexico has experienced fish biomass increase by more than 460 percent between 1999 and 2009, accompanied by an elevenfold

increase in top predators [72]. Similar recovery has been documented in community-managed no-take areas, including Fiji's Ucuivanua locally managed marine area, where clam populations recovered within seven years of implementing strict protection.

Ecological outcomes also depend on effective management. A global assessment of 433 marine protected areas found that 71 percent had positive effects on fish populations, although outcomes varied widely. Management capacity, particularly adequate staffing and financial resources, was the strongest predictor of ecological performance, with well-staffed marine protected areas achieving ecological effects 2.9 times greater than those with inadequate staffing [75]. Ecological benefits can also extend beyond reserve boundaries through adult movement and larval dispersal, contributing to adjacent fisheries [76]. Recent evidence further indicates that a diverse portfolio of marine protected areas, ranging from fully protected no-take reserves to multiple-use protected areas, can better balance biodiversity conservation with fisheries, livelihoods and equity objectives than reliance on a single protection model [51].

Marine protection strictness

The Ocean Protection Gap report series [73,74] defines effective protection as an area that has been assessed and has regulation and active management in place to minimise or exclude damaging practices, so that its intended conservation outcomes can be achieved. Appropriate restrictions will vary by site and objective, but areas that continue to allow damaging activities are unlikely to deliver the same ecological benefits as those where pressures are effectively controlled.

The Ocean Protection Gap report series uses the MPAtlas categories of fully and highly protected areas as the best globally consistent proxy for effective protection. Fully protected areas allow no extractive or destructive activities and minimize all avoidable impacts; highly protected areas allow only light extractive activities with a low total impact. Not every effective MPA must be fully or highly protected, but these categories are most consistently associated with strong ecological outcomes. Effectiveness also depends on equitable governance, sustainable finance, monitoring and enforcement, and, at the system level, representative and connected networks.

While 10 percent of the global ocean is now reported as protected or conserved, only around 3.5 percent is assessed as fully or highly protected - approximately one-third of reported coverage. Within national waters, around 24 percent is reported as protected or conserved, compared with approximately 8 percent that is fully or highly protected. The gap is greater on the High Seas, where less than 2 percent is protected and less than 1 percent is fully or highly protected. These figures illustrate the gap between legal designation and the conditions most consistently associated with strong ecological outcomes.



*Image Credit: Jeff Siebert (WWF-US)



Ucunivanua Locally Managed Marine Area (LMMA) — Fiji

Established in 1997, Ucunivanua became Fiji's first Locally Managed Marine Area (LMMA) and served as the model for the Fiji Locally Managed Marine Area Network (FLMMA) [77–79].

The community established a 24-hectare inshore tabu (no-take) area for an initial period of three years to allow depleted marine resources to recover. Within seven years, populations of the culturally and economically important kaikoso clam had recovered substantially, with clams larger than 8 cm, previously rare, becoming common [79].

Village incomes also increased as marine resources recovered and harvests improved [79]. The success of Ucunivanua inspired the subsequent expansion of the Fiji Locally Managed Marine Area Network, which by 2009 comprised around 250 locally managed marine areas covering more than one-quarter of Fiji's inshore fishing grounds and has continued to expand since then [79].

Similar community-led conservation successes have been documented elsewhere in the Pacific, including Tavua in Fiji [79], Helen Reef in Palau [80] and Safata MPA in Samoa [81].

Downgrading, downsizing and degazettement of PCAs

Reversal in the marine realm is rarer than in land by count but larger by area. Forty-four enacted coastal and marine PADDD events are documented across six countries, affecting 1.2 million sq. km [55,82], equivalent to 8 percent of total marine coverage today. The largest single

case is the 2018 downgrade of Australia's Coral Sea Marine Park, which weakened protection across 740,275 sq. km, or 75% of the protected area's extent, and was the largest protected-area downgrade recorded to date [82]. In the United States, three proclamations issued in 2025 and 2026 lifted commercial fishing prohibitions across all five marine national monuments [83,84].

3.3 Complementary pathways to Target 3

While protected areas remain a cornerstone of area-based conservation under the Convention on Biological Diversity (CBD), additional pathways have been identified to achieve Target 3. Other Effective Area-Based Conservation Measures (OECMs) were first incorporated into Aichi Biodiversity Target 11 under the Strategic Plan for Biodiversity 2011–2020 and were formally defined by the CBD in Decision 14/8 in 2018 [36]. More recently, Target 3 of the Kunming-Montreal Global Biodiversity Framework explicitly recognizes Indigenous and Traditional Territories, where applicable, as an important pathway for achieving conservation outcomes while respecting the rights of Indigenous Peoples and Local Communities.

3.3.1 Other effective area-based conservation measures (OECMs)

OECMs provide an opportunity to expand conservation while supporting broader social, cultural, and economic objectives. They are geographically defined areas outside protected areas that are governed and managed to achieve positive and sustained long-term outcomes for

the in-situ conservation of biodiversity, together with associated ecosystem functions and services and, where applicable, cultural, spiritual, socio-economic, and other locally relevant values [36]. OECMs can also strengthen ecological connectivity by complementing protected area networks across wider landscapes and seascapes.

OECMs remain limited globally, accounting for around 1 percent of terrestrial and inland water areas and 0.2 percent of marine and coastal areas. The World Database on Protected Areas and OECMs [33] currently records approximately 7,600 OECMs across 17 countries and territories. These figures are likely to increase rapidly as countries continue to identify, assess and report qualifying sites at fast pace [85]⁴. Algeria, Canada and Morocco currently report the largest OECM areas, each exceeding about 100,000 sq. km (Exhibits 3.30 and 3.31). Many countries first develop national OECM frameworks to support consistent identification and reporting. To date, 12 countries⁵ have published such frameworks, while several others, including Kenya, Thailand, Viet Nam, Bolivia, Ecuador and Mexico, are developing similar approaches.



*Image credit: Jerry Mushala (WWF-US)

4. Latest figures can be found on the OECM Platform (<https://oecm.info>)

5. Australia, Bhutan, Canada, Colombia, Finland, Indonesia, Italy, Japan, Mexico, Peru, South Africa, and Ukraine.

Exhibit 3.30

Terrestrial and inland water OECMs reported by countries in WDPCA, sq. km

Country	Terrestrial and inland water area (sq. km)	Number of sites
 Algeria	1,229,498	5
 Morocco	143,503	326
 Colombia	102,983	65
 Canada	94,674	447
 Philippines	3,987	16
 Peru	2,573	10
 Sweden	934	541
 Japan	522	270
 Bhutan	319	11
 Korea	240	7
 Ukraine	161	639
 Ecuador	86	5
 Eswatini	81	8
 UK (Guernsey)	7	10
 Australia ¹	3	2

1. Australia includes a site on Cocos (Keeling Islands) and one site on mainland Australia

Source: UNEP-WCMC and IUCN

Exhibit 3.31

Marine and coastal OECMs reported by countries in WDPCA, sq. km

Country	Marine and coastal area (sq. km)	Number of sites
International Waters	462,914	1
 Canada	244,307	60
 Colombia	46,962	3
 Philippines	34,684	26
 Morocco	609	12
 Oman	174	2
 Japan	1	3

Source: UNEP-WCMC and IUCN (2026)

Variation in OECM size highlights the need to assess ecological function, connectivity, and management quality, rather than area alone.

Algeria's OECMs for instance, have an average size of 250,000 sq. km, while Morocco's average is around 440 sq. km. Elsewhere, average size falls to around 30 sq. km. Small OECMs can deliver meaningful conservation outcomes where they are well governed, effectively managed, monitored, and designed for a clear ecological function. The contribution of small OECMs depends on how they function within wider conservation networks. Where sites are isolated, their ability to support long-term biodiversity persistence may be reduced by fragmentation and edge effects, which can diminish habitat quality and ecological integrity [86]. Well-connected PCA systems

support species movement, ecological resilience and climate adaptation, whereas fragmented systems constrain ecological processes and reduce resilience [87].

Meeting CBD and IUCN criteria is central to the effectiveness of OECMs.

Recent assessments of early OECM implementation in countries including Algeria and Morocco identified gaps in alignment with the CBD definition and IUCN guidance. For example, Algeria's Cultural Parks do not consistently articulate biodiversity conservation as a measurable outcome and may permit activities with environmental impacts following assessment and approval. This creates a need for clearer safeguards, given the IUCN expectation that environmentally damaging activities should not take place in OECMs.

IUCN Site-Level assessment criteria for OECM evaluation.

The IUCN assessment framework translates the CBD definition of OECMs into site-level criteria for identifying and recognizing OECMs [88]. To qualify, a site must:

- be outside the protected area system;
- be a clearly defined geographic area;
- support important biodiversity values;
- have governance and management arrangements that achieve, or are expected to achieve, the long-term in situ conservation of those values; and
- address equity through recognition of rights, inclusive decision-making, and the equitable sharing of costs and benefits, including for Indigenous Peoples and local communities



3.3.2 Indigenous and Traditional Territories (ITTs)

Target 3 of the GBF recognizes Indigenous and Traditional Territories and the importance of respecting the rights of Indigenous Peoples and local communities while achieving 30x30. This recognition is consistent with the IPBES Global Biodiversity Assessment [81], which mentioned that “At least a quarter of the global land area is traditionally owned, managed, used or occupied by Indigenous Peoples. These areas include approximately 35 per cent of the area that is formally protected, and approximately 35 per cent of all remaining terrestrial areas with very low human intervention. In addition, a diverse array of local communities, including farmers, fishers, herders, hunters, ranchers and forest users, manage significant areas under various property and access regimes” and “...the lands of Indigenous Peoples are becoming islands of biological and cultural diversity surrounded by areas in which nature has further deteriorated.” This recognition is even more important given that projections suggest that more than 2 billion people could be living within or surrounding PCAs in a 30x30 world [9].

While Target 3 explicitly mentions Indigenous and Traditional Territories, the interpretation is contested. Some Parties have argued that the target merely allows for Indigenous and Traditional Territories to be considered as a subset of protected areas and OECMs, where appropriate. Others, such as the International Indigenous Forum for Biodiversity (IIFB), argue that some Indigenous Peoples and local communities do not want their territories to be considered protected or conserved areas, even if they could qualify as such, and view Target 3’s language as supporting the recognition of governance structures beyond protected areas and OECMs as a third pathway to achieving 30x30.

Regardless of this interpretation, Indigenous and Traditional Territories already make an important contribution to 30x30. Many overlap with existing PCAs or are managed in ways that support the objectives of Target 3. Should the Convention on Biological Diversity, or a growing number of Parties, recognize Indigenous and Traditional Territories as a distinct implementation pathway, their contribution to achieving 30x30 could increase further, provided they meet the qualitative requirements of Target 3.



Definition of Indigenous and Traditional Territories (ITTs)

The definition of Indigenous and Traditional Territories (ITTs) remains under discussion within the international biodiversity framework.

The United Nations Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples [90] underpins this discussion, recognizing that Indigenous Peoples have the right to the lands, territories and resources which they have traditionally owned, occupied or otherwise used or acquired. This rights-based foundation provides the normative basis for recognizing Indigenous and community governance over lands and waters within conservation frameworks.

Indigenous Peoples' and community conserved territories and areas (ICCAs) represent one established category within this broader concept. ICCAs are defined as natural or modified ecosystems containing significant biodiversity values, ecological services and cultural values, voluntarily conserved by Indigenous Peoples and local communities through customary laws or other effective means [36]. Areas conserved by Indigenous Peoples and local communities could potentially be recognized as protected or conserved areas, subject to their free, prior and informed consent, according to national circumstances. ICCAs can be understood as a subset of ITTs — where conservation outcomes are explicitly linked to Indigenous or community governance — though not all ITTs would qualify as ICCAs.

Indigenous and Traditional Territories (ITTs) can be defined as lands and waters under Indigenous or community governance where secure tenure, local decision-making, and a long-term relationship between people and territory maintain or enhance biodiversity. Where these conditions are met, ITTs can make a meaningful contribution to biodiversity conservation at scale, whether or not they are formally recognized as protected areas, OECMs or ICCAs.

Indigenous Peoples have long conserved biodiversity on their lands, waters, and territories; however, a global dataset on the contribution of ITTs to biodiversity does not exist, and current information is limited and incomplete. Some information on government-recognized land, waters and territories that could be considered as ITTs drawn from 53 countries shows they could cover over 36 per cent of the Earth's terrestrial surface, or 55 million sq.km [81,82]. This figure comprises self-reported areas, both recognized and not recognized by governments, and the actual extent could differ meaningfully due to the absence of consistent definitions and slow titling processes. Spatial mapping is even more limited: of the 55 million sq.km reported in LandMark (comprising self-reported datasets on land tenure) and ICCA Registry (comprising government reported data on areas conserved by Indigenous Peoples and local communities specifically for their conservation governance and ecological values), only around 15 million sq.km have been

mapped explicitly. The remaining 40 million sq.km is unmapped in the above-mentioned sources. For some countries, more accurate boundary information may exist in national records and with the Indigenous Peoples who hold them. In this context, Indigenous Peoples in countries such as Colombia and the Philippines are driving the development of Geographic Information Systems (GIS) to map their ITTs (CNTI in Colombia, and PAFID in the Philippines) but these efforts are in progress and not consolidated in any global dataset as of May 2026.

ITTs are associated with important biodiversity and climate outcomes, particularly where tenure rights are secure. About 60 percent of known Indigenous Peoples' and local communities' lands have experienced no to low human impact [93,94] and more than 40 percent overlap with intact wilderness areas, sites important for biodiversity and vulnerable species and for climate stabilization (analysis using Global Safety

Net [42,95]). These areas also hold major water value, overlapping with 46 percent of the global top 30 percent of areas that provide clean water (analysis using [6]). Additional evidence points to the climate benefits of Indigenous stewardship where tenure-security is provided. These lands preserve carbon stocks as effectively as formal PCAs, with lower deforestation induced forest carbon emissions than other unprotected areas [96,97]. Habitat loss can still occur due to a range of pressures, although generally at lower rates than under other land tenures and in unprotected areas [48,89,95,98].

The recognition of ITTs as a distinct pathway is hindered due to the lack of internationally agreed guidelines, definition and criteria. IUCN and/or CBD are yet to publish any guidelines, with description and criteria, regarding the evaluation of effectiveness of ITTs as a pathway to Target 3. Progress is similarly slow at the national level with many countries lacking relevant and effective regulatory frameworks to recognize contribution of ITTs (or equivalent as applicable) towards conservation. Having said that, recognizing the above-mentioned positive conservation and climate benefits, select countries are leading the way and adopting systems to include ITTs in their national plans for 30x30.



Case study

deep dives

Recognition of Indigenous governance in national biodiversity strategies

Several countries have already recognized how Indigenous Peoples and community-managed lands within their conservation systems, either as PCAs or a distinct implementation pathway – and have reflected this recognition in their National Biodiversity Strategy Action Plan (NBSAPs).

Colombia explicitly recognizes Indigenous, Afro-descendant, and peasant territories as a distinct pathway for conservation and management, treating Indigenous Peoples rights as integral to achieving national biodiversity targets. The country is supporting Indigenous Peoples in producing their own conservation monitoring reports and integrating conservation criteria into their own planning instruments.

The Democratic Republic of the Congo enacted Law N°22-030 of 15 July 2022 specifically protecting and promoting the rights of Indigenous Pygmy Peoples, establishing a framework for ensuring Free, Prior and Informed Consent in all conservation projects. Its NBSAP supports the documentation of traditional knowledge linked to the sustainable use of wild species and equitable

benefit-sharing from traditional land management practices.

The Philippines hosted the world's first Indigenous Peoples Biodiversity Strategy Action Plan, which the national government formally accepted and committed to integrating into its updated NBSAP. The country's biodiversity strategy is anchored in the Indigenous Peoples Rights Act of 1997, which recognizes ancestral land rights and requires Free, Prior and Informed Consent across all biodiversity-related activities.

Canada established the Great Bear Rainforest as a landmark of Indigenous-led conservation, featuring a tri-governmental management model where governance is shared equally between 17 coastal First Nations, British Columbia, and the federal government. This approach is now expanding into the marine realm through a CAD \$335 million Project Finance for Permanence agreement to protect 30 percent of the Northern Shelf Bioregion in partnership with First Nations.

Additional details on these four case studies are provided in Appendix III.

04

Trajectory

toward 2030



This chapter assesses whether the world is on track to meet Target 3 by 2030 by examining recent progress, projecting future protected and conserved area coverage under different implementation scenarios, and identifying the remaining gap to the target.

KEY TAKEAWAYS

- **Current targets could significantly narrow the terrestrial gap**, reaching 27 percent land and inland water coverage by 2030 if fully delivered.
- **Marine coverage would remain the largest gap** as national targets currently imply only ~12 percent global marine and coastal coverage by 2030, with High Seas protection critical to any upside.
- **Under a global acceleration scenario, coverage could reach approximately 29 percent on land and inland waters and 26 percent in marine and coastal areas.** This would require countries without quantified targets to adopt and fully implement commitments of comparable ambition, alongside protection of priority biodiversity areas in the High Seas through rapid implementation of the BBNJ Agreement. Both realms would remain below 30 percent, indicating that broader commitments would need to be accompanied by greater ambition in some countries.
- **Continuation of the historical pace of expansion would leave a considerably larger gap.** Terrestrial and inland water coverage would reach only 21–22 percent by 2030, while marine and coastal coverage would reach approximately 15 percent, confirming the need for sustained acceleration beyond recent trends.
- **Spatially optimized implementation of current national targets could substantially improve the representation of areas of particular importance for biodiversity.** Terrestrial KBA coverage could reach 63 percent, priority landscapes 35 percent, and all four assessed coastal ecosystems more than 40 percent coverage.
- **Important representation gaps would remain across both terrestrial and marine realms.** Europe would remain below 50 percent coverage of terrestrial areas of particular importance for biodiversity; several terrestrial ecosystems and priority seascapes would remain below 30 percent coverage.
- **The greatest opportunities to expand protection across areas of particular importance for biodiversity are concentrated in 29 priority countries, of which 20 countries are important for biodiversity on land, 4 for biodiversity at sea, and 5 in both realms:** Algeria, Angola, Australia, Bolivia, Brazil, Canada, Chile, China, Colombia, Democratic Republic of the Congo, Ethiopia, India, Indonesia, Italy, Kazakhstan, Kenya, Madagascar, Mexico, Mongolia, Myanmar, New Zealand, Papua New Guinea, Peru, Russian Federation, Senegal, South Africa, Türkiye, United States and Venezuela.
- **These countries will need different forms of support depending on the status of their current commitments.** Where existing national targets are sufficient to achieve adequate coverage, support should focus on implementation, ensuring that expansion prioritizes the most important biodiversity areas. Where quantified national targets have not yet been established, support should focus on developing and submitting 30x30 targets. Where existing targets fall short of adequate coverage, support should focus on strengthening national targets beyond their current level.

Projecting coverage by 2030

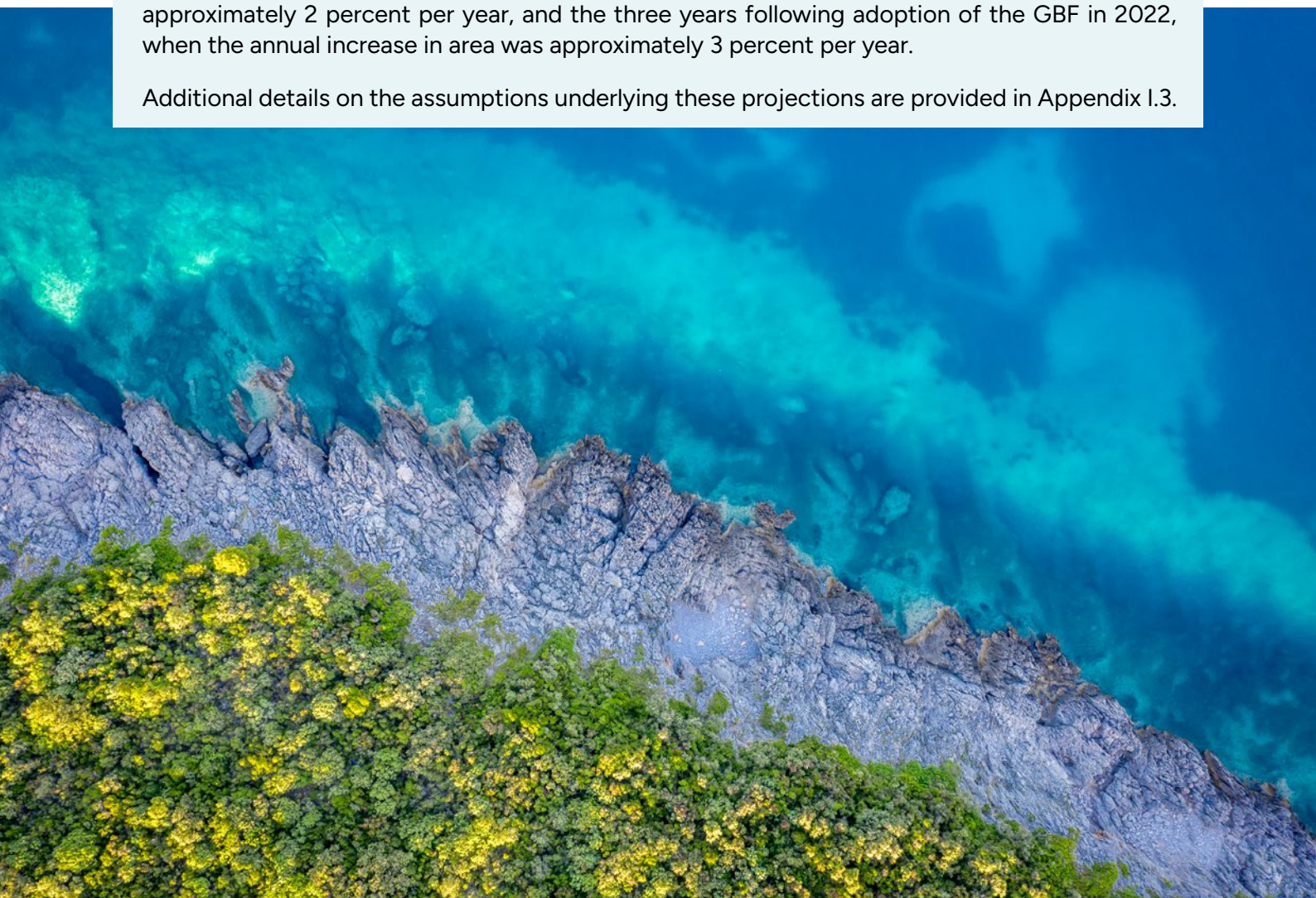
Potential protection and conservation coverage by 2030 is projected under three scenarios:

‘National targets’: Countries with quantified targets, as reported on CBD Online Reporting Tool (ORT) reflected under GBF Indicator 3.1 (“Coverage of protected areas and other effective area-based conservation measures”), and/or in their conservation strategies, where applicable, fully implement those targets by 2030, including the qualitative aspects (see Chapter 2 for details). The projection is based on targets submitted as of 31 May 2026 and does not reflect subsequent updates to national targets or domestic conservation strategies that might occur in the lead-up to 2030. The designation and reporting of some protected and conserved areas may also occur after 2030 due to implementation lag.

‘Global acceleration’: In addition to countries with quantified national targets, countries without quantified targets adopt the same level of ambition as countries that have already established national targets and implement them by 2030. For the marine and coastal projection, this scenario further assumes that priority biodiversity areas identified by Visalli et al. [99], covering approximately 52.5 million sq. km of the High Seas, are protected by 2030.

‘Historical pace’: Protection and conservation continue to expand at the same rate observed historically. The projection is ranged using two recent reference periods: the three years preceding the Aichi Target deadline in 2020, when covered terrestrial and inland water area increased by approximately 2 percent per year, and the three years following adoption of the GBF in 2022, when the annual increase in area was approximately 3 percent per year.

Additional details on the assumptions underlying these projections are provided in Appendix I.3.



4.1 Terrestrial and inland waters

4.1.1 Projections to 2030

National targets

As of May 2026, 132 of 196 countries have quantified Target 3 commitments and, if these commitments are fully implemented, global terrestrial and inland water coverage would reach approximately 27 percent by 2030 (Exhibit 4.1, Appendix I.4).

Latin America and Oceania remain the leading regions for terrestrial and inland water coverage by 2030, while Asia accounts for the largest relative expansion. Coverage in Latin America could increase to around 42 percent in 2030, the highest regional coverage globally. Coverage in Asia could see the highest rise by 13 percentage points (from 13 percent today to 26 percent by 2030), making it a priority region for implementation despite remaining below 30 percent. Africa and North America also show

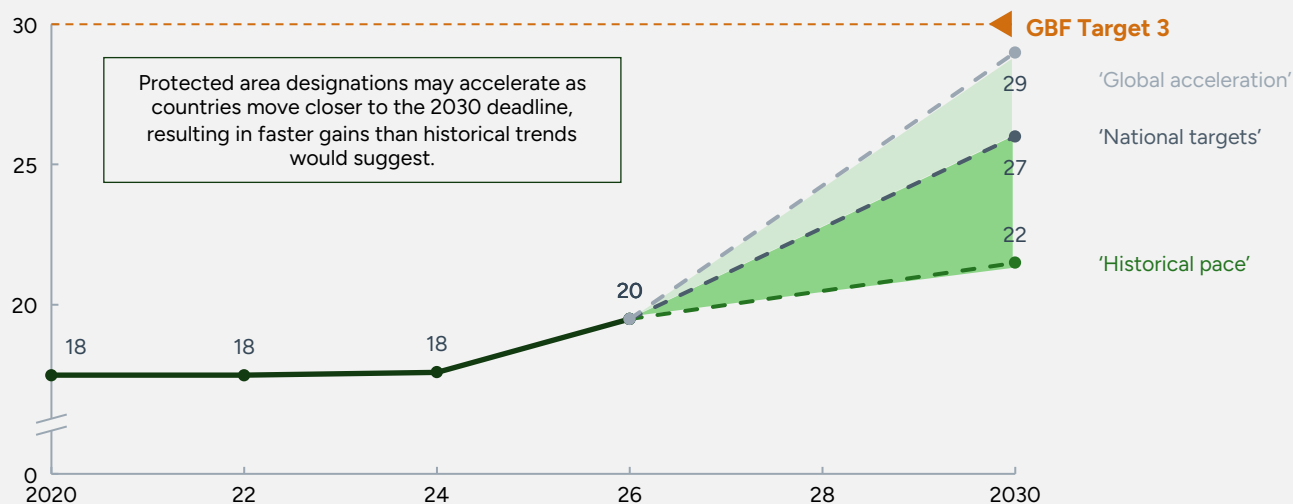
material gains, while Europe shows limited additional expansion, rising from 15 percent to 17 percent (Exhibit 4.2).

Global acceleration

As of May 2026, 65 countries (including USA) did not have national level quantified commitments for terrestrial and inland waters. If these countries were to adopt commitments of comparable ambition and fully implement them by 2030, global terrestrial and inland water coverage would further increase to approximately 29 percent (Exhibit 4.1). The additional gains would be driven primarily by large countries, including the Russian Federation and the United States⁶. This projection still falls just short of 30 percent, suggesting that achieving Target 3 will require not only broader adoption of quantified targets but, in some countries, greater ambition than is reflected in current commitments.

Exhibit 4.1

Potential terrestrial and inland water PCA coverage by 2030, percent

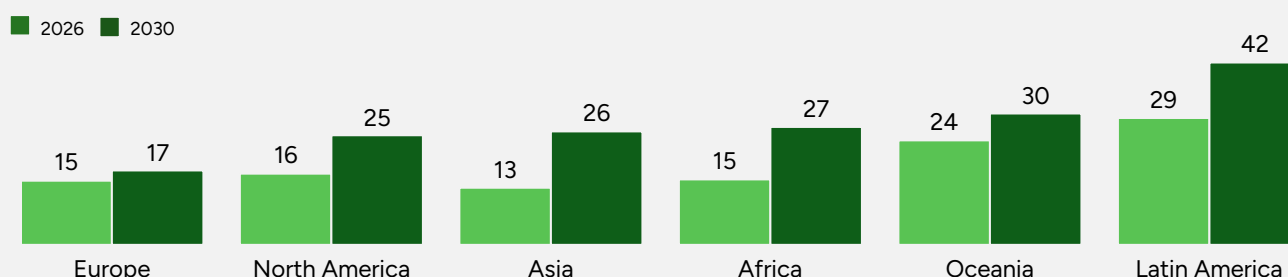


Source: UNEP-WCMC and IUCN (2026); Protected Planet Report (2024); National Targets (CBD)

6. The United States is not a Party to the Convention on Biological Diversity and is therefore treated separately from CBD Parties. Following the rollback of the "America the Beautiful" initiative, the analysis assumes no quantified national 30x30 commitment for terrestrial and inland waters (Villagomez, 2025)

Exhibit 4.2

Terrestrial and inland water areas coverage under national targets projection by region, percent



Source: UNEP-WCMC and IUCN (2026), Jung et al. (2021)

Historical pace

Assuming progress would follow historical pace, terrestrial and inland water coverage would reach between 21 and 22 percent by 2030,

depending on the assumed rate of expansion (Exhibit 4.1). Achieving Target 3 would therefore require a sustained acceleration in implementation beyond recent trends, together with broader national commitments and their timely delivery.

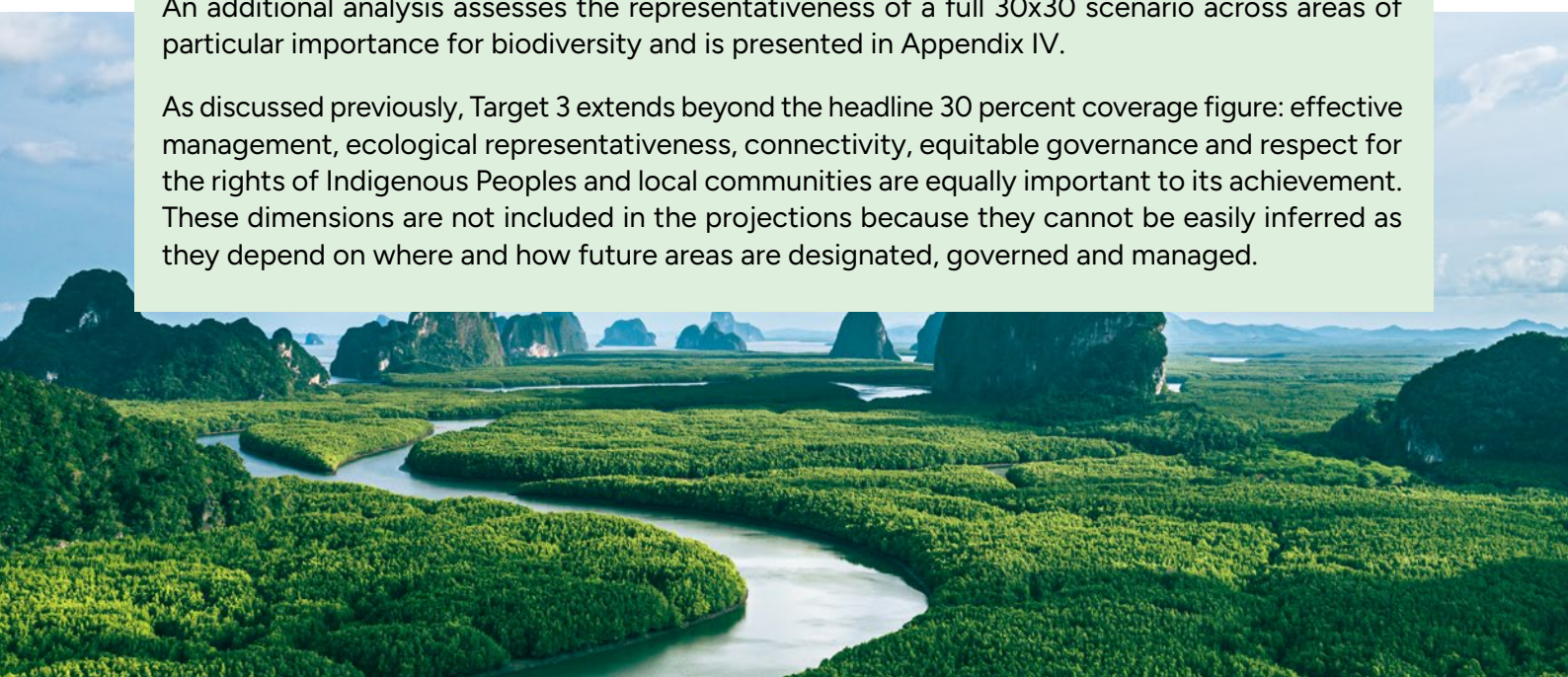
4.1.2 Representativeness of areas of particular importance for biodiversity under 'National targets' projection

Representativeness under 'National targets' projection

Achieving Target 3 depends not only on expanding PCA coverage, but also on where that expansion occurs. To assess the representativeness of the projected PCA across areas of particular importance for biodiversity under the 'National targets' projection, the analysis assumed that additional protected and conserved areas are established in locations that provide the greatest benefits for biodiversity and nature's contributions to people while remaining within each country's quantified coverage targets (see Appendix I.3 for methodology).

An additional analysis assesses the representativeness of a full 30x30 scenario across areas of particular importance for biodiversity and is presented in Appendix IV.

As discussed previously, Target 3 extends beyond the headline 30 percent coverage figure: effective management, ecological representativeness, connectivity, equitable governance and respect for the rights of Indigenous Peoples and local communities are equally important to its achievement. These dimensions are not included in the projections because they cannot be easily inferred as they depend on where and how future areas are designated, governed and managed.

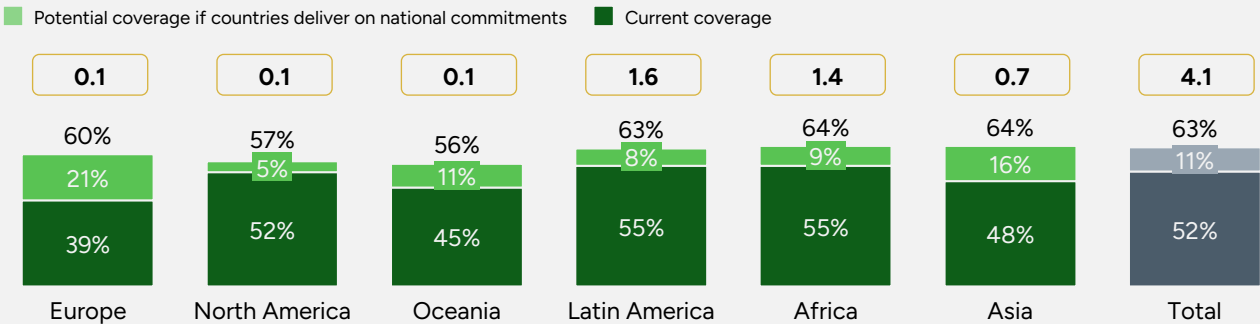


Delivery of current national targets could substantially improve the coverage of terrestrial areas of particular importance for biodiversity, particularly in Asia, Latin America and Oceania. Coverage of terrestrial Key Biodiversity Areas could increase by 11 percentage points globally, reaching 63 percent by 2030, with the largest gains occurring in Europe, Asia and Oceania, driven primarily by commitments from China, India and Pacific Island states (Exhibit 4.3). Coverage of globally priority landscapes would increase from 21 to 35 percent. The largest absolute gains would occur in the Amazon and Guianas, where an additional 1.1 million sq. km would be brought under protection and conservation,

while landscapes such as the Yangtze Basin and Western Ghats would increase from less than 5 percent to more than 50 percent coverage (Exhibit 4.4). Among ecosystems, wetlands would achieve the highest average coverage, reaching 49 percent (Exhibit 4.5).

Despite these gains, important representation gaps would remain. All regions would still not fully cover their areas of particular importance for biodiversity (Exhibit 4.3), while deserts, grasslands, boreal forests and woodlands, and polar and alpine regions would all remain below 30 percent coverage (Exhibit 4.5).

Exhibit 4.3
Potential coverage of terrestrial and inland waters KBAs and IBAs under ‘National targets’ projection by region, percent
Bubbles indicate total area in million sq. km



Source: UNEP-WCMC and IUCN (2026), Jung et al. (2021)

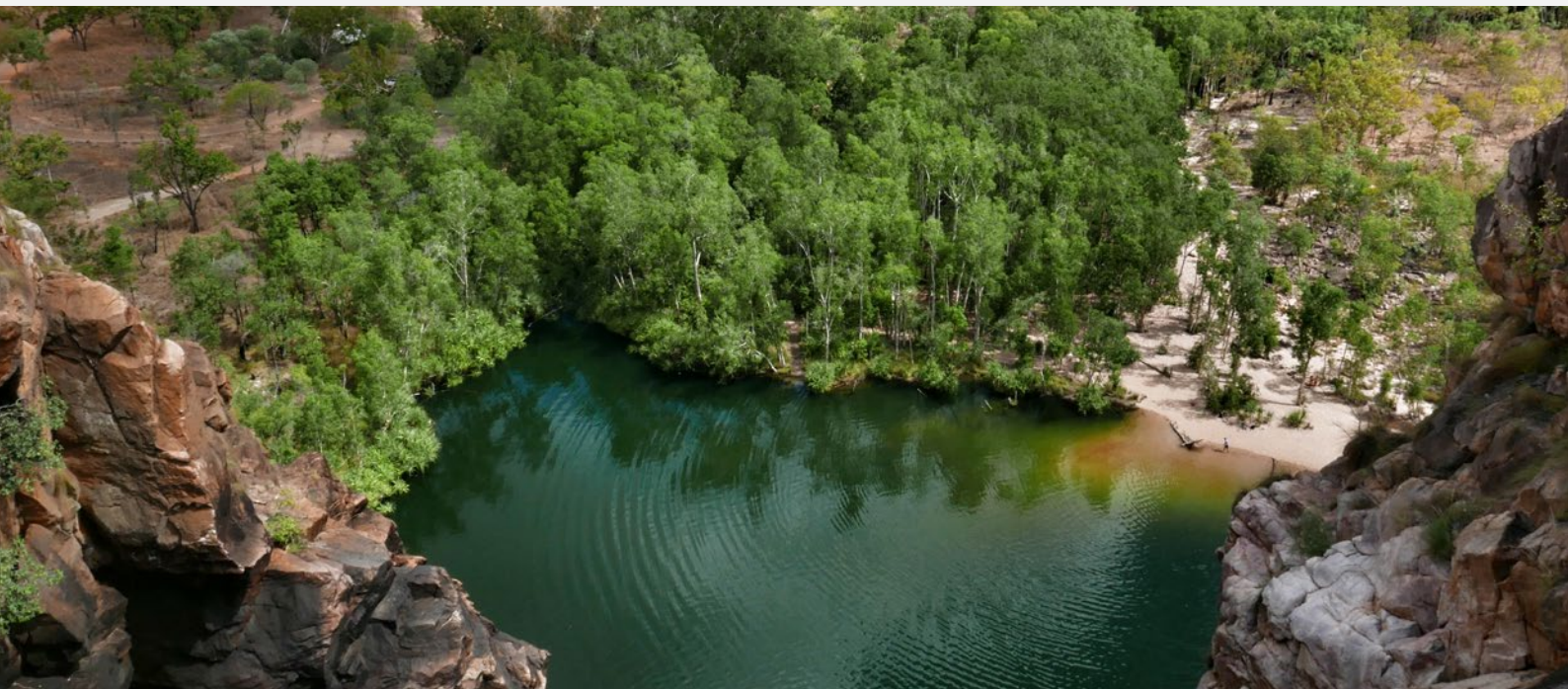
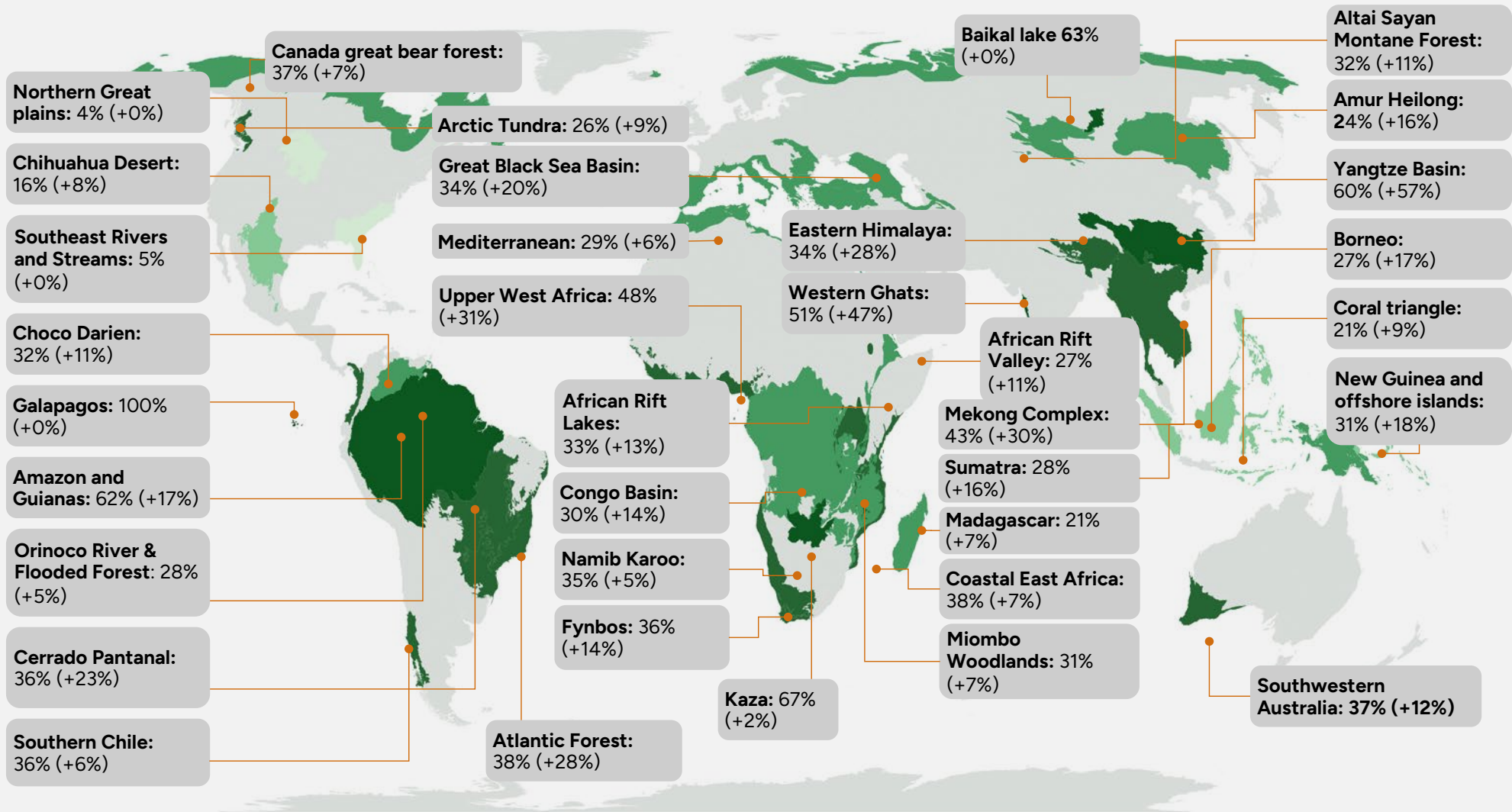


Figure 4.4

Potential coverage across priority landscapes¹ under 'National targets' projection, percent

Non-exhaustive list of featured landscapes¹

Coverage (%) 0–10 10–20 20–30 30–50 50–75 75–100



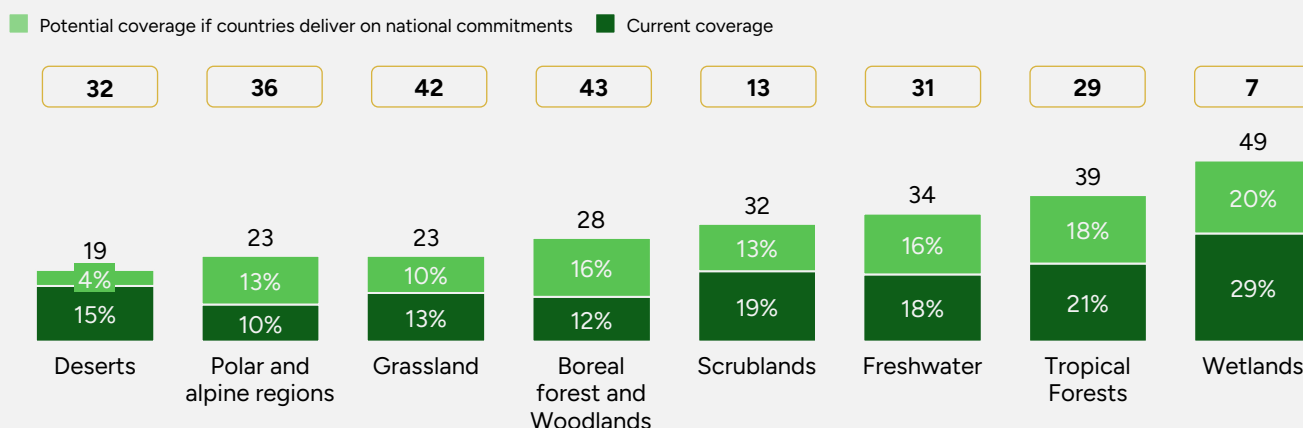
1. The landscapes displayed on this map, and the associated boundaries are indicative and not exhaustive in nature. Landscapes were collected from multiple sources (see Appendix I.2 for further details). There are on-going efforts to compile a comprehensive list of biodiversity hotspots, led by leading organizations in conservation such as IUCN: <https://iucn.org/news/202510/comprehensive-update-worlds-biodiversity-hotspots-project-begins>

Sources: UNEP-WCMC and IUCN (2026); Jung et al. (2021); WWF Priority Places complemented with various geospatial layers (see appendix)

Exhibit 4.5

Potential coverage of key terrestrial and inland waters ecosystems under 'National targets' projection, percent

Bubbles indicate total area in million sq. km



Source: UNEP-WCMC and IUCN (2026), Jung et al. (2021), Keith et al. (2023)

4.1.3 Priority countries with the greatest opportunities to expand coverage of areas of particular importance for biodiversity

Identification of priority countries

To identify priority countries, the analysis combined three complementary biodiversity layers, Key Biodiversity Areas (KBAs), priority landscapes and seascapes, and ecosystems, and assessed the additional PCA projected under a 30x30 scenario. Priority countries were those whose projected expansion collectively increased the total global coverage of each biodiversity layer from its current level to 50 percent, and that were identified through at least two of the three biodiversity layers (see further methodological details in Appendix I.3).

These priority countries were further categorized according to the current status of their national targets:

- **'Implement national targets prioritizing the most important biodiversity areas'** where existing targets are sufficient to achieve adequate coverage.
- **'Define and/or submit 30x30 national targets'** where quantified targets have not yet been established.
- **'Go beyond existing national targets'** where current targets are insufficient to achieve adequate coverage.

The identification of priority countries is based on global biodiversity coverage alone. It does not account for national or local implementation considerations, including population density, existing land uses, governance, tenure, human-wildlife interactions or socio-economic context. These factors should inform how conservation is implemented and whether protected areas, OECMs, Indigenous and Traditional Territories, or other approaches are the most appropriate pathway in each country.

Achieving a uniform 30 percent PCA coverage within every country would still leave substantial areas of global biodiversity without adequate protection because areas of particular importance for biodiversity are unevenly distributed across the planet. Key Biodiversity Areas, intact ecosystems and/or species-rich landscapes are concentrated disproportionately in a relatively small number of countries [100,101]. Consequently, progress towards Target 3 depends disproportionately on conservation action in a limited group of biodiversity-rich countries.

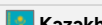
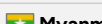
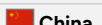
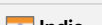
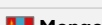
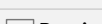
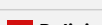
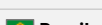
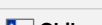
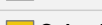
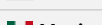
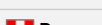
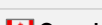
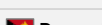
Approximately 25 countries have a particularly important role in improving the coverage of areas of particular importance for biodiversity on land (Exhibit 4.6). Together, they span six continents and include tropical forest countries in Central Africa and South America, as well as boreal, Arctic and mountain regions in the Northern Hemisphere. Each faces distinct challenges depending on the priority regions it hosts and its current level of commitment to Target 3.



Exhibit 4.6

Priority countries with commitments status, and corresponding landscapes, ecosystems and KBAs¹ prioritized for protection and coverage

Region ■ Africa ■ Asia ■ Europe ■ Latin America ■ North America ■ Oceania

Country	Commitment status	Optimal action for global biodiversity	Example priority landscapes	Ecosystems	KBAs
 Angola	30% by 2030	Implement national targets prioritizing most important biodiversity	Congo Basin	Grasslands, freshwater, tropical rainforest	✗
 Senegal	No commitment	Go beyond existing national target	West Africa coastline	Grasslands, freshwater, tropical rainforest	✗
 Democratic Republic of the Congo	30% by 2030	Go beyond existing national target	Congo Basin, Miombo woodlands, East African Rift Valley	Tropical rainforest, grasslands	✗
 Madagascar	21.5% by 2030	Go beyond existing national target	Madagascar	Tropical forest	✗
 South Africa	19% by 2040	Go beyond existing national target	Fynbos, Namib-Karoo	Freshwater	✓
 Algeria	50% by 2030	Implement national targets prioritizing most important biodiversity	Mediterranean	Desert	✗
 Ethiopia	30% by 2030	Implement national targets prioritizing most important biodiversity	East African Rift Valley	Tropical forest	✗
 Kenya	30% by 2030	Implement national targets prioritizing most important biodiversity	East African Rift Valley	Scrublands	✗
 Indonesia	24% by 2030	Implement national targets prioritizing most important biodiversity	New Guinea, Borneo, Coral triangle	Freshwater, tropical forest	✗
 Kazakhstan	15% by 2030	Implement national targets prioritizing most important biodiversity	Not applicable	Grasslands	✗
 Myanmar	No commitment	Submit 30x30 national target	Mekong Complex	Tropical forest	✗
 China	30% by 2030	Go beyond existing national target	East Himalaya, Amur Heilong	Alpine landscape, grasslands, freshwater, desert, boreal forest	✓
 India	30% by 2030	Go beyond existing national target	Eastern Himalayas	Grasslands, tropical forest	✗
 Mongolia	30% by 2030	Implement national targets prioritizing most important biodiversity	Altai-Sayan mountain forests	Desert, grassland	✗
 Russia	No commitment	Submit 30x30 national target	Arctic tundra, Altai-Sayan mountain forests	Arctic tundra, boreal forest, grasslands	✓
 Türkiye	30% by 2030	Implement national targets prioritizing most important biodiversity	Mediterranean, Greater Black sea basin	Scrublands	✗
 Bolivia	30% by 2030	Go beyond existing national target	Amazon	Freshwater, tropical forest	✗
 Brazil	55% by 2030	Go beyond existing national target	Cerrado, Atlantic forest	Tropical rainforest, grasslands, freshwater	✗
 Chile	30% by 2030	Go beyond existing national target	Southern Chile	Scrublands	✗
 Colombia	34% by 2030	Go beyond existing national target	Choco-Darien, Orinoco river and flooded forests	Tropical forest	✗
 Mexico	30% by 2030	Go beyond existing national target	Chihuahuan desert	Scrublands	✓
 Peru	30% by 2030	Go beyond existing national target	Amazon	Tropical forest, freshwater	✓
 Canada	30% by 2030	Go beyond existing national target	Arctic , Great Bear forest	Boreal forests	✓
 Australia	30% by 2030	Go beyond existing national target	Southwest Australia	Grasslands	✗
 Papua New Guinea	30% by 2030	Go beyond existing national target	New Guinea forests, Coral triangle	Not applicable	✓

1. Based on mapped KBAs that are not yet covered in the current PCA network. See limitations of datasets in Appendix I.2

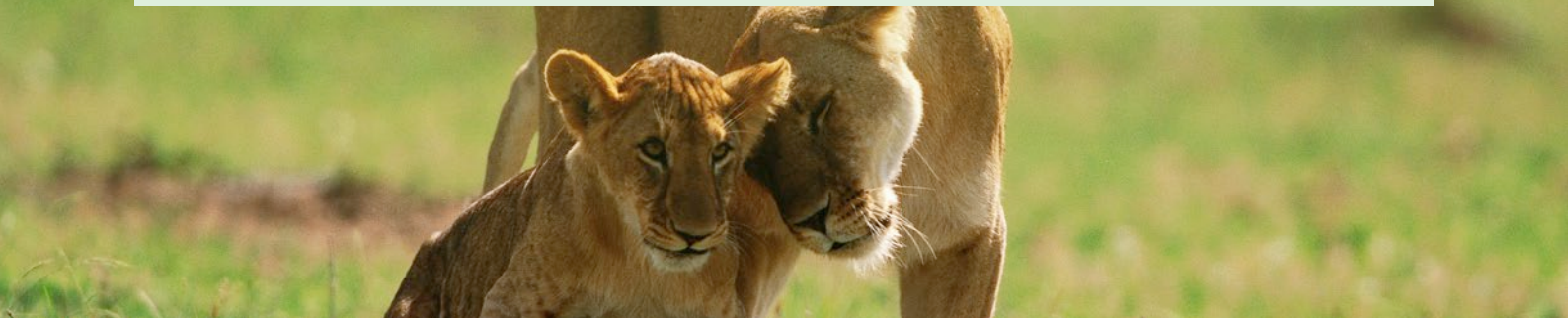
These 25 priority countries fall in three broad categories:

- **Implement national targets prioritizing most important biodiversity:** Eight countries, **Algeria, Angola, Ethiopia, Indonesia, Kazakhstan, Kenya, Mongolia, and Türkiye** have already established coverage targets that are sufficient to achieve adequate protection of their areas of particular importance for biodiversity. The priority is to implement these targets through spatially optimized conservation planning that maximizes benefits for biodiversity and nature's contributions to people. Continued technical and financial support will be important to translate these commitments into effective conservation outcomes.
- **Define and/or submit 30x30 national targets:** Three countries, **Myanmar, Russian Federation, and Senegal** have not yet established quantified coverage targets. The priority is to establish targets that adequately reflect the distribution of their areas of particular importance for biodiversity and implement them through spatially optimized conservation planning. Technical and planning support may be important to develop and implement these commitments.
- **Go beyond existing national targets:** Fourteen countries, **Australia, Bolivia, Brazil, Canada, Chile, China, Colombia, the Democratic Republic of Congo, India, Madagascar, Mexico, Papua New Guinea, Peru and South Africa**, have already established coverage targets, but these are insufficient to achieve adequate protection of their areas of particular importance for biodiversity. The priority is to strengthen existing targets while implementing them through spatially optimized conservation planning. Increased and sustained technical and financial support will be important to translate stronger targets into effective protection and conservation on the ground.

Other priority countries identified by the Conservation Imperatives

The countries identified here represent the largest contributors to globally under-protected areas of particular importance for biodiversity and establish a baseline for where expanding protection and conservation could deliver the greatest gains in absolute coverage. Countries with smaller territories can nevertheless make disproportionately important contributions to global biodiversity and may also warrant prioritization.

Additional priority countries have been identified using the Conservation Imperatives framework, which prioritizes sites based on threatened species, site irreplaceability, representation of remaining ecoregion habitat and projected conversion pressure by 2030 [102]. This approach places greater emphasis on species persistence and site-level conservation value than on the absolute extent of currently unprotected biodiversity. Their analysis highlights the Philippines and Ecuador as additional top 10 priority countries beyond those identified here. When countries are ranked using the Species Protection Index for threatened species, Gosling et al. further identify Liberia, Guatemala, Sri Lanka, Cambodia, Mayotte, the Lao People's Democratic Republic, Guinea-Bissau, Saint Lucia and Malaysia as additional priorities.



4.2 Marine and coastal areas

4.2.1 Projections to 2030

National targets

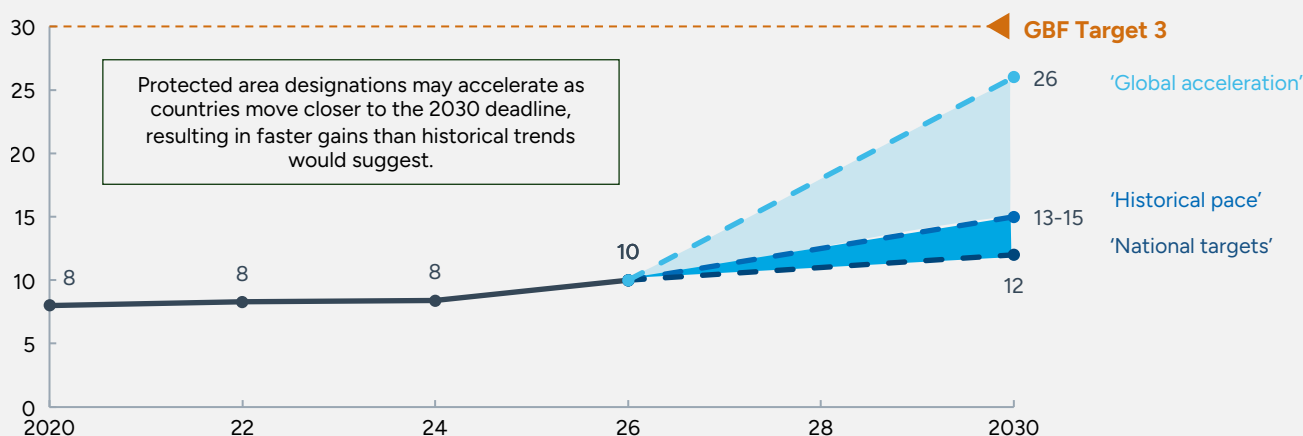
As of May 2026, 89 of the 154 countries with coastlines had submitted quantified targets for marine and coastal protection and conservation (Appendix I.4). In addition, three marine protected areas covering approximately 3.6 million sq. km have been proposed for designation by the Commission for the Conservation of Antarctic Marine Living Resources (CCAMLR) in the Southern Ocean [103]. If all Parties fully implement these targets within their EEZs, this would result in 12 percent global coverage in oceans. Furthermore, if CCAMLR designates the proposed areas currently under consideration [103], global marine and coastal coverage

would reach approximately 13 percent by 2030 (Exhibit 4.7), of which approximately 11 percent would be attributable to coverage in EEZs and approximately 2 percent would be attributable to coverage in the High Seas. Within national waters alone, where conservation delivers the greatest biodiversity benefits [50], coverage would reach approximately 27 percent by 2030 (Exhibit 4.8).

This projection also assumes that countries fully implement their stated commitments. While quantified national targets remain an important signal of ambition, they are not necessarily a reliable guide to whether countries are on track to deliver 30x30. A quarter of countries targeting protection of at least 30 percent of their waters have yet to make any progress on implementation, while nearly half have protected 5 percent or less.

Exhibit 4.7

Potential marine and coastal PCA coverage by 2030



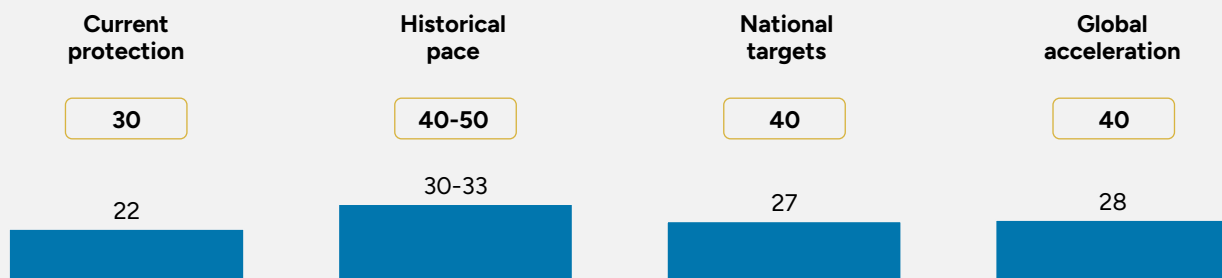
Source: IUCN and UNEP-WCMC (2026); Protected Planet Report (2024); National Targets (CBD)



Exhibit 4.8

Potential coverage of marine and coastal areas in EEZs by 2030 by scenario, percent

Bubbles indicate total area in million sq. km



Source: UNEP-WCMC and IUCN (2026); National Targets (CBD); Zhao et al. (2019)

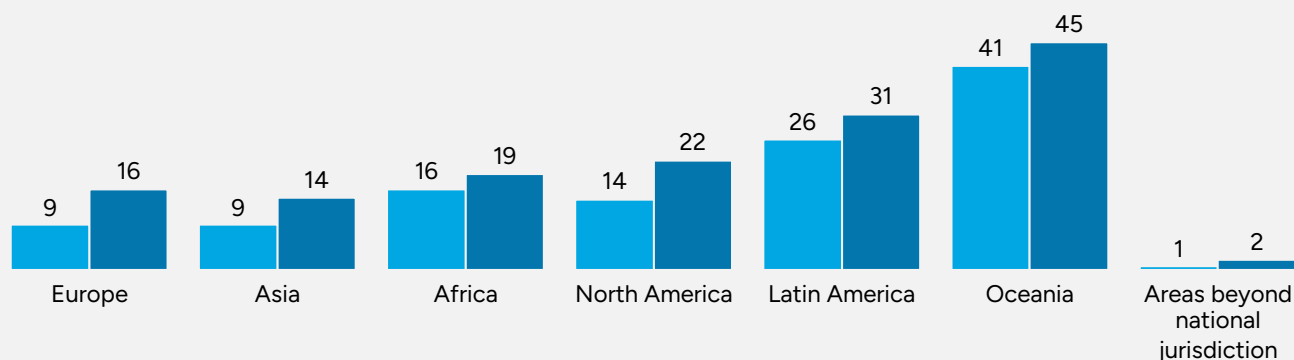
Marine and coastal protection under current national targets would expand to be the largest of all regions in Oceania and Latin America, while the largest implementation gap would remain in areas beyond national jurisdiction. Oceania would increase from 41 to 45 percent coverage by 2030, followed by Latin America, which would reach 31 percent. Coverage in Europe would nearly

double to 19 percent (Exhibit 4.9). Despite these gains, substantial gaps would remain in Africa, Asia, Europe and North America. In areas beyond national jurisdiction, coverage would reach only around 2 percent by 2030, leaving a large gap towards the 30 percent global coverage target [203].

Exhibit 4.9

Marine and coastal areas coverage under 'National targets' projection by region, percent

2026 2030



Source: UNEP-WCMC and IUCN (2026); National Targets (CBD); Zhao et al. (2019)



*Image Credit: Tristian Ray-Wilks (OneOcean Expeditions)

Global acceleration

Assuming the remaining countries without quantified targets adopt targets of comparable ambition, and priority biodiversity areas in the High Seas are fully protected, global marine and coastal coverage would increase to approximately 26 percent by 2030 (Exhibit 4.7). Achieving this outcome would require not only expansion in EEZs, but also rapid implementation of the Biodiversity Beyond National Jurisdiction (BBNJ) Agreement.

Historical pace

Assuming progress would follow historical pace, global marine and coastal coverage would reach approximately 15 percent by 2030 (Exhibit 4.7). The observed rate of expansion was high in the last decade: 17 percent per year in 2016–2020 (i.e., in the run-up to the Aichi deadline) and 6 percent per year in 2022–2026 (i.e., since acceptance of GBF, see Appendix I.3 for details). Even if the world continued at these high rates of expansion, this projection would still fall short of Target 3 by 2030.

4.2.2 Representativeness of areas of particular importance for biodiversity under 'National targets' projection

Coverage of marine areas of particular importance for biodiversity would increase substantially, although important representation gaps would remain. Across the world's oceans, coverage would exceed 20 percent in all regions, with the Baltic Sea, Southern Ocean and South Pacific Ocean reaching the highest levels at 32 percent, 31 percent and 28 percent, respectively (Exhibit 4.10).

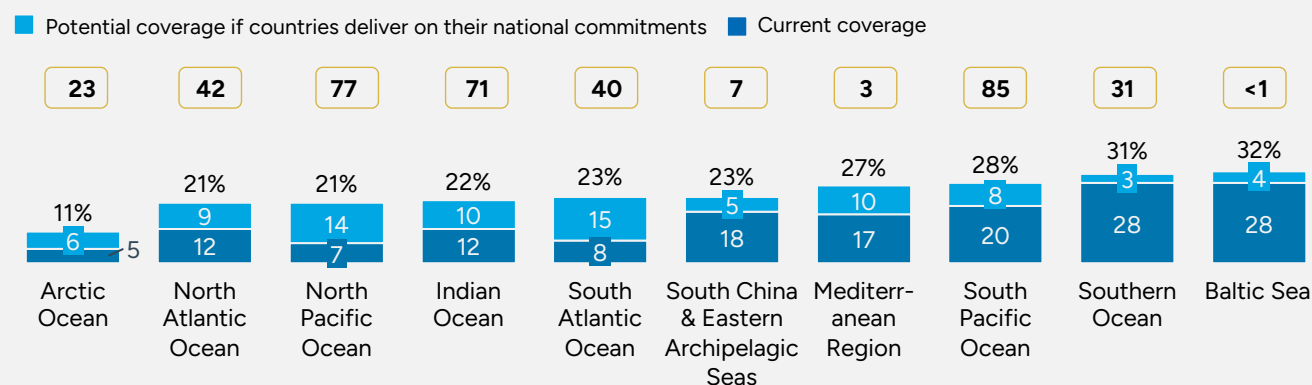
Coverage of priority seascapes would also improve, but remain below 30 percent for all except Galapagos. The Coral Triangle, Southwest Pacific, Benguela Current, Falkland Islands and the Mediterranean would experience the largest gains (Exhibit 4.11). By contrast, the Arctic Ocean, Sargasso Sea, Humboldt Current, Coastal West Africa and priority seascapes in the Southern Ocean would remain below 30 percent coverage, indicating that several globally important marine regions would continue to be underrepresented.

Among coastal ecosystems, only warm water corals would exceed 50 percent coverage (Exhibit 4.12). The rest of the ecosystems would exceed 40 percent coverage.

Exhibit 4.10

Potential coverage of recognized marine and coastal high biodiversity areas under 'National targets' projection, percent

Bubbles indicate total area in million sq. km



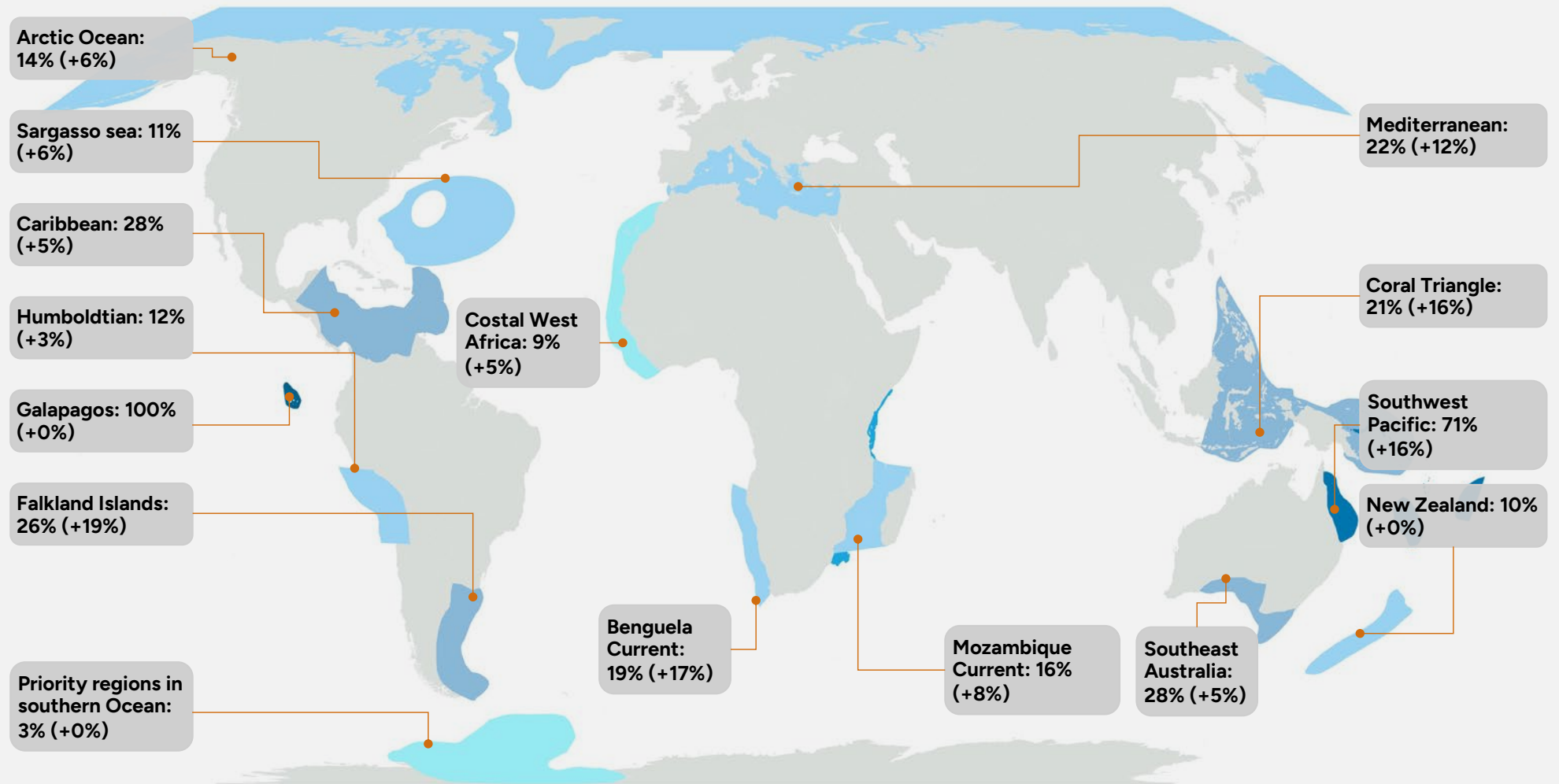
Source: UNEP-WCMC and IUCN (2026); National Targets (CBD), Zhao et al. (2019), Craig et al. (2021)

Exhibit 4.11

Potential coverage across example priority seascapes under 'National targets' projection, percent

Non-exhaustive list of featured seascapes¹

Coverage (%) 0–10 10–20 20–30 30–50 50–75 75–100



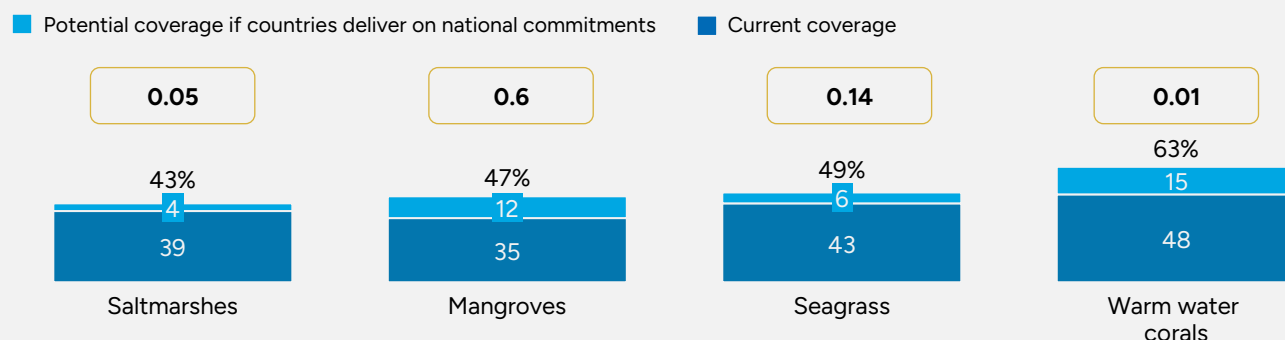
1. The seascapes displayed on this map, and the associated boundaries are indicative and not exhaustive in nature. Seascapes were collected from multiple sources (see Appendix I.2 for further details). There are on-going efforts to compile a comprehensive list of biodiversity hotspots, led by leading organizations in conservation such as IUCN: <https://iucn.org/news/202510/comprehensive-update-worlds-biodiversity-hotspots-project-begins>

Sources: UNEP-WCMC and IUCN (2026); Zhao et al. (2019); Craig et al. (2021); WWF (2024)

Exhibit 4.12

Potential coverage of marine and coastal areas ecosystems under 'National targets' projection, percent

Bubbles indicate total area in million sq. km



Source: UNEP-WCMC and IUCN (2026), National Targets (CBD), Zhao et al. (2019), Craig et al. (2021)

4.2.3 Priority countries with the greatest opportunities to expand coverage of areas of particular importance for biodiversity

Around 9 countries globally have a critical role to play in delivering coverage of areas of importance for biodiversity at sea, and their support needs vary based on current commitment levels. These countries span the world's major ocean basins, reflecting the global distribution of under-protected marine priority regions, ranging from the tropics in South America to Arctic territories in the Northern Hemisphere to Oceania (Exhibit 4.13). As in the terrestrial realm, these countries fall into three categories according to their current national targets (see terrestrial and inland section for definition):

- **Implement national targets prioritizing most important biodiversity areas:** Australia, Canada, Italy and Papua New Guinea.
- **Define and/or submit 30x30 national targets:** New Zealand, the Russian Federation, the United States and Venezuela. As the United States is not a Party to the Convention on Biological Diversity, this would require a renewed national commitment to marine and coastal conservation alongside terrestrial and inland waters.
- **Go beyond existing national target:** Madagascar

Other priority countries identified by Pristine Seas

Several additional priority countries could be identified using a more comprehensive conservation planning framework for benefits across three dimensions: biodiversity protection, food provisioning, and carbon storage [37]. This framework leveraged global datasets on species distributions, sedimentary carbon stocks, seamount density, biogeographical provinces, commercially exploited fish and invertebrate stocks, and human impact, and optimized benefits to people thereof to identify priority regions.

Based on this, Pristine Seas is targeting future expansion in diverse geographies, including countries in the Arctic, western Indian Ocean, western Pacific, south Atlantic, the Arabian Gulf, and the Caribbean.

Successful implementation of these initiatives could increase protection within the relevant Exclusive Economic Zones (EEZs) by approximately 3 percentage points and increase global marine protection by around 1 percentage point (E. Sala, pers. comm., 2026).

Exhibit 4.13

Countries with targets status, and corresponding seascapes, ecosystems and KBAs¹ prioritized for protection and coverage

Region ■ Africa ■ Asia ■ Europe ■ Latin America ■ North America ■ Oceania

Country	Commitment status	Optimal action for global biodiversity	Example priority seascapes	Ecosystems	KBAs
 Madagascar	8.5% by 2030	Go beyond existing national target	Mozambique channel	Not applicable	✓
 Russia	No commitment	Submit 30x30 national target	Arctic	Not applicable	✓
 Italy	30% by 2030	Implement national targets prioritizing most important biodiversity	Mediterranean	Seagrasses	✗
 Venezuela	No commitment	Submit 30x30 national target	Caribbean	Not applicable	✓
 United States	No commitment	Submit 30x30 national target	Arctic	Mangroves	✗
 Canada	30% by 2030	Implement national targets prioritizing most important biodiversity	Arctic	Mangroves	✓
 New Zealand	No commitment	Submit 30x30 national target	New Zealand	Not applicable	✓
 Australia	30% by 2030	Implement national targets prioritizing most important biodiversity	Southwest Australia	Seagrasses	✗
 Papua New Guinea	30% by 2030	Implement national targets prioritizing most important biodiversity	Coral triangle	Mangroves	✓

1. Based on mapped KBAs that are not yet covered in the current PCA network. See limitations of datasets in Appendix I.2

05

Challenges

to achieving **30x30**



Despite strong global ambition, the implementation architecture needed to deliver Target 3 by 2030 remains incomplete. Countries have committed to 30x30, but most have not yet put in place the spatial plans, institutional arrangements, management systems, or financing needed to convert those commitments into effective PCAs.

The gap between terrestrial and marine protection reflects a much weaker implementation architecture for ocean protection. Terrestrial conservation has developed around clearer spatial boundaries, more established public institutions and tenure systems. Land use policy traditionally sits within long-established ministries, backed by international and domestic political commitments. Marine protection is often more complex because responsibility is divided across agencies.

This challenge is even more pronounced on the High Seas, or Areas Beyond National Jurisdiction, which represent nearly two thirds of the global ocean. Here, protection depends on international decision-making and sustained coordination with bodies governing fisheries, shipping and seabed activities to deliver on implementation, monitoring and enforcement. The BBNJ agreement presents the first pathway to achieving this at a global scale.



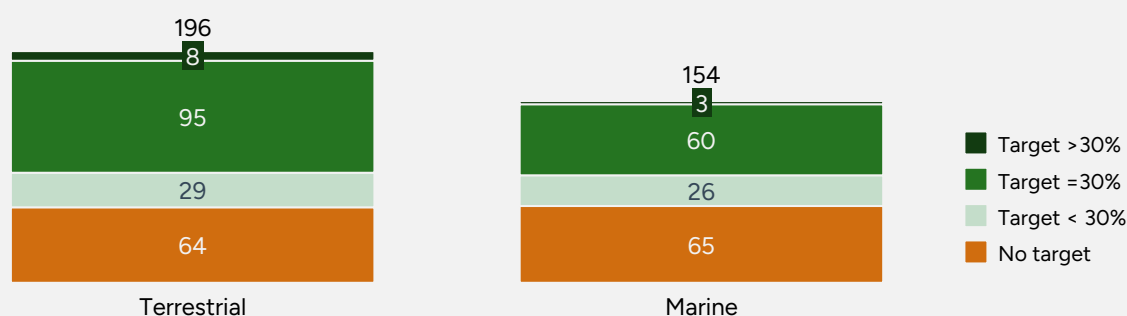
*Image credit: Gareth Bentley (WWF-US)

KEY TAKEAWAYS

- **Uneven target-setting and planning signal limited implementation readiness.** Only 132 countries have quantified terrestrial targets, and only 89 of 154 Parties with coastlines have submitted quantified marine and coastal targets. Fewer than 50 countries have traceable spatial plans, and fewer than 20 have detailed implementation plans covering costs, sequencing, governance and financing.
- **Complementary delivery pathways are under-developed.** OECMs and ITTs are not yet operational at scale, owing to recognition, uneven national frameworks, incomplete data, and unresolved reporting questions.
- **Existing protection does not consistently translate into effective conservation.** Many PCAs lack adequate staffing, management systems, enforcement, monitoring and long-term finance
- **Insufficient resources and limited institutional, technical and human capacity underpin these implementation gaps.** Achieving 30x30 requires an estimated USD 100–180 billion annually, compared with current expenditure of around USD 24 billion, leaving an annual financing gap of approximately USD 75–150 billion. These constraints affect every stage of implementation, from target setting and spatial planning to designation, management, monitoring and enforcement.
- **Competing demands for land and ocean space add a distinct challenge.** Many remaining areas of high biodiversity value overlap with established agriculture, fisheries, mining, energy, infrastructure, settlements and other uses, creating complex social, economic and political trade-offs.

Exhibit 5.1

Number of countries with corresponding status of commitments by realm



Source: National Target (CBD); Immerzeel et al. (2026)

5.1 Countries lack quantified targets and spatial plans for effective 30x30 implementation

National target setting and implementation planning remain uneven. Many Parties have yet to submit quantified targets, and many that have fall short of the 30 percent ambition. Less than half of submissions refer to the legal, financial, institutional, and planning elements needed for delivery. Significant gaps remain in spatial planning, implementation machinery, and technical capacity, limiting countries' ability to identify, prioritize, and protect the places most important for biodiversity, ecosystem functions, and ecosystem services.

5.1.1 Quantified targets

Only 132 countries have quantified terrestrial targets, and only 89 of 154 Parties with coastlines have submitted quantified marine targets. **Among those that have submitted quantified targets, 29 terrestrial and 26 marine targets remain below 30 percent.** In addition, 41 Parties do not clearly distinguish target coverage between terrestrial and inland waters and marine and coastal areas, creating ambiguity around intended delivery pathways (Exhibit 5.1).

5.1.2 Spatial planning

Most commitments are not backed by actionable spatial plans showing where conservation will expand, making implementation by 2030 more challenging. Overall, only 28 percent of CBD Parties (55 countries), representing around 15 percent of global terrestrial and marine area,

reported on Indicator 1.1 biodiversity-inclusive spatial planning in their Seventh National Reports [34]. Among 132 countries assessed in greater detail, only around 35 have published a terrestrial spatial plan and about 20 more are developing one. By comparison, approximately 30 countries have undertaken marine spatial planning across parts of their EEZs, although these efforts are not always explicitly linked to Target 3 delivery. Without spatial plans, expansion is more likely to follow opportunity rather than systematic conservation priorities, increasing the risk that the most important areas for biodiversity may be missed even where overall coverage increases.



Target 3 suffers from lack of integration into broader national planning processes, leaving protected areas as isolated 'add-ons' rather than core components of government strategy" (Astrid Schomaker, CBD Secretariat)

Effective spatial planning remains challenging for many countries, because they lack the data, modelling capacity, sustained financing, and cross-ministerial coordination. National Reports frequently cite technical and financial constraints as barriers to progress in developing these plans [34]. Biodiversity data, land- and sea-use mapping, and tenure information remain incomplete or inaccessible in many countries. Environment ministries are often under-resourced and lack the technical bandwidth required to lead complex spatial planning processes.

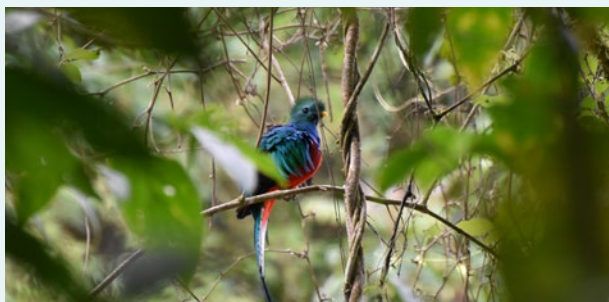
Technical support initiatives such as SPACES have demonstrated the value of targeted assistance in helping countries develop biodiversity-inclusive spatial plans and strengthen planning capacity. Of the countries with spatial plans, about 20 Parties have been supported by the SPACES consortium, while the remainder are primarily high-income countries in Europe and North America and small island states in the Pacific (Appendix I.4). Evidently, such technical support remains available to only a limited number of countries relative to the scale of global need.

SPACES Consortium

The SPACES consortium provides technical assistance to low- and middle-income countries in developing comprehensive, costed, and nationally led spatial plans for achieving 30x30 [96].

The consortium supports countries across three pillars: comprehensive planning through advanced analytics, supportive legislation, and integration of biodiversity, social, and climate priorities into national strategies (NBSAPs and NDCs); inclusive engagement with civil society and Indigenous Peoples to ensure conservation reflects local knowledge and builds public support; and the design of financial roadmaps and partnerships to sustain conservation beyond direct programme involvement. SPACES operates on the principle that high-quality implementation of the Global Biodiversity Framework requires centering leadership from the Global South

SPACES has already demonstrated measurable impact across multiple geographies in Latin America, the Caribbean, Africa, and South Asia:



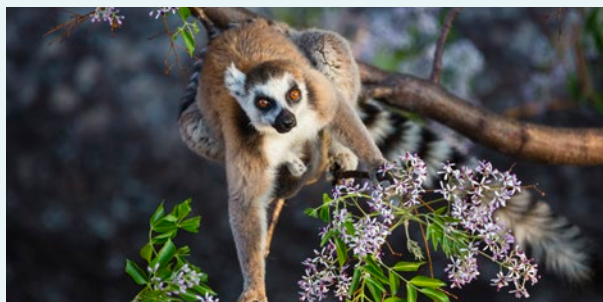
Panama: Developed a 30x30 Transformation Programme that has extended protection to more than 54 percent of the country's marine areas, identified 840,000 hectares of forest for restoration



The Dominican Republic: Achieved 30 percent marine protection, identified 450,000 hectares for reforestation, and launched a green bond to sustain financing for conservation



Sierra Leone: Developed a plan that targets 1 million hectares of protection across four priority landscapes and the establishment of approximately 700,000 hectares of community-managed forests



Madagascar: Developed a 30x30 plan targeting 18 million hectares of terrestrial areas for priority protection and 40 million hectares of critical marine ecosystems, aiming to mobilize USD150–220 million annually for conservation financing



“SPACES-type capacity including spatial analytics, economic arguments, and implementation support should be scaled to help governments prioritize the most valuable and threatened areas rather than adding low-conflict acreage.” (Duko Hopman, Rob Walton Foundation)

Beyond spatial planning, many countries also lack the institutional capacity to translate commitments into implementation. Even where national targets and spatial plans are in place, effective designation and long-term management require enabling legal frameworks, institutional arrangements, financing mechanisms, and stakeholder engagement. Fewer than 100 target submissions refer to legal and regulatory frameworks or economic and financial instruments to support implementation [106]. In addition, fewer than 60 submissions identify non-governmental stakeholders in their implementation approach [106], indicating limited adoption of the whole-of-society approach envisioned under the Global Biodiversity Framework.

5.2 Complementary pathways face systemic barriers

5.2.1 Other effective area-based conservation measures (OECMs)

OECMs remain an underutilized mechanism for achieving 30x30. Although formally recognized by the CBD, only 17 countries and territories currently report OECMs, and only 12 have published national OECM frameworks (OECMs account for around 1 percent of terrestrial and inland water areas and 0.2 percent of marine and coastal areas globally).

Progress has been constrained by challenges in identification, governance, and quality assurance. While global IUCN guidance exists, many countries are still actively working on establishing clear domestic criteria, policy frameworks, and institutional processes for identifying, designating, and reporting OECMs in a manner consistent with national planning systems. Concerns also remain around the credibility and consistency of reporting.



“Greenwashing risk exists as OECMs can be designated without independent verification” (Nigel Dudley, Equilibrium Research)

As a result, OECMs have yet to become a significant delivery pathway for 30x30, despite their potential to recognize conservation outcomes across a much broader range of governance systems and land-use practices than traditional protected areas. They provide a mechanism for acknowledging areas where biodiversity is maintained through Indigenous Peoples’ stewardship, community governance, private management, or sectoral practices in agriculture, forestry, and fisheries. However, this ability to accommodate different governance models and conservation also creates challenges around consistency, eligibility, monitoring, and verification.



“OECMs are essential to 30x30 as they form the critical middle layer between strict protection and unmanaged land” (Basile van Havre, IDDRI).

5.2.2 Indigenous and Traditional Territories (ITTs)

ITTs could make a substantial contribution to 30x30, yet the pathway is not yet effectively recognized with clear guidance or a globally agreed definition or reporting route. Existing datasets remain inconsistent and incomplete. Indigenous Peoples, local communities and Afro-descendant Peoples have mapped their lands and territories, but only an unknown proportion is reflected in global datasets [91,92].

Recognition varies widely across countries, and where ITTs overlap with protected areas or OECMs, governance arrangements often do not fully reflect Indigenous Peoples’ and local communities’ rights, governance, Free, Prior, and Informed Consent (FPIC), traditional knowledge or customary sustainable use. Countries interpret and classify ITTs differently: some, such as Brazil, already count and report them as PCAs where applicable/overlaps exist, while others treat them as autonomous governance models.

Engagement with Indigenous Peoples and local communities, including respecting their FPIC processes and rights, required for any conservation recognition, is inherently resource and time intensive. Countries have not prioritized the allocation of sufficient resources towards

engaging in sustained, community-led dialogue, in compliance with FPIC. This limits legal clarity on land rights and, in many cases, delays resolutions of outstanding tenure disputes, further delaying implementation.



“Western protected area delineation systematically misses Indigenous territorial governance because pastoral corridors, ocean-based territories, and community-governed valleys fall outside PA and OECM categories” (Hindou Oumarou Ibrahim, AFPAT)

“Progress requires settled treaty regimes establishing land title and rights before conservation discussions can advance” (Basile van Havre, IDDRI)

5.3 Existing protection does not always deliver conservation outcomes

Existing PCAs do not always deliver effective conservation outcomes. As discussed in Chapter 3, PCAs can reduce habitat loss, support wildlife populations, and deliver biodiversity benefits when

effectively managed. However, outcomes remain highly variable across sites and regions, and many PCAs continue to experience substantial habitat degradation and biodiversity loss. This largely reflects persistent gaps in financing, capacity, enforcement, accountability and institutional coordination.



“The ‘paperwork syndrome’ that plagued the Aichi Target 11 persists, requiring much greater emphasis on management effectiveness, inclusivity, monitoring, and governance” (Astrid Schomaker, CBD Secretariat).

Many PCAs lack the basic operational conditions required for effective management. Management plans, which define objectives, zoning, permitted activities, and enforcement protocols, are absent for a large proportion of sites [98]. Staffing levels often fall far below operational requirements. Current estimates suggest that around 555,000 personnel currently manage terrestrial protected areas worldwide, including around 286,000 rangers, compared with an estimated requirement of around 3 million personnel to manage a global 30x30 network effectively by 2030 [99]. Equipment, vehicles, communications infrastructure, and patrol stations are frequently underfunded, limiting the ability of managers to detect and respond to threats. Finally, lack

of management plans also limits the overall evaluation of management effectiveness of sites.

Participation of Indigenous Peoples and local communities in the design, governance and management of PCAs needs to be strengthened.

In many locations, their rights, tenure, knowledge and priorities remain insufficiently reflected in decision-making, limiting local ownership and weakening long-term support for conservation, and increasing the risk of encroachment, poaching, and political pressure to weaken protections. In some contexts, these pressures contribute to Protected Area Downgrading, Downsizing and Degazettement (PADDD), particularly where population growth and competition for land and natural resources are increasing [56].



“African countries with large PA estates face inevitable population and food pressure which could increasingly drive PADD events.”

Nigel Dudley (Equilibrium Research)

Accountability systems also remain underdeveloped. Global conservation reporting remains far better at measuring coverage than outcomes. The Global Database on Protected Area Management Effectiveness (GD-PAME), the most comprehensive global repository, contains assessments for only around 6.5 percent of sites worldwide. Where assessments exist, they often focus on administrative and management inputs rather than ecological performance. As a result, a functioning accountability system capable of highlighting effective and underperforming sites does not yet exist at scale, and, a well-managed site with strong enforcement and documented species recovery is effectively counted in the same way as a site without staff or budget, and ongoing habitat degradation within its boundaries.

Institutional fragmentation further constraints implementation. Effective management depends on decisions extending well beyond conservation agencies. Responsibilities for biodiversity, land use, fisheries, mining, energy, infrastructure, water, and public finance frequently sit across different ministries and agencies with distinct mandates, budgets, reporting lines, and political priorities. This can make it difficult to align designation, management, monitoring, and enforcement across agencies, yet environment ministries, often have limited authorities and resources to fulfill this coordinating role.



“Fragmentation and sector silos remain a core barrier because conservation, agriculture, mining, and water are managed separately with no integration.”

Nils Meyer (KfW)

5.4 Financing is far below the scale required

Financing remains one of the main constraints on achieving 30x30, and delivering this ambition will require substantially greater investment, together with predictable, flexible, long-term and better-targeted finance. Assessments of progress towards the Aichi Biodiversity Targets consistently identified inadequate and fragmented financing as a major barrier to both expanding and effectively managing PCAs. Achieving Target 3 will require addressing this persistent financing gap.

5.4.1 Financing gap

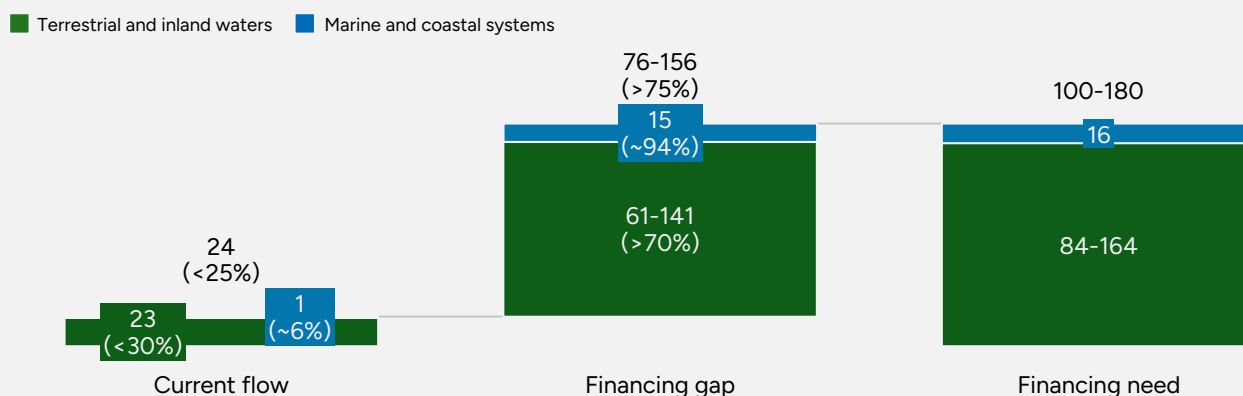
Estimates suggest that delivering 30x30 will require USD 100 to 180 billion annually, of which more than 80 percent relates to land [30]. Between 70 and 90 percent of these financing needs are expected to arise in low- and middle-income countries. Current expenditure is estimated at around USD 24 billion per year, leaving an annual financing gap of approximately USD 75-150 billion [30] (Exhibit 5.2).



7. Together for the Ocean, 2026. *The Ocean Protection Gap*

Exhibit 5.2

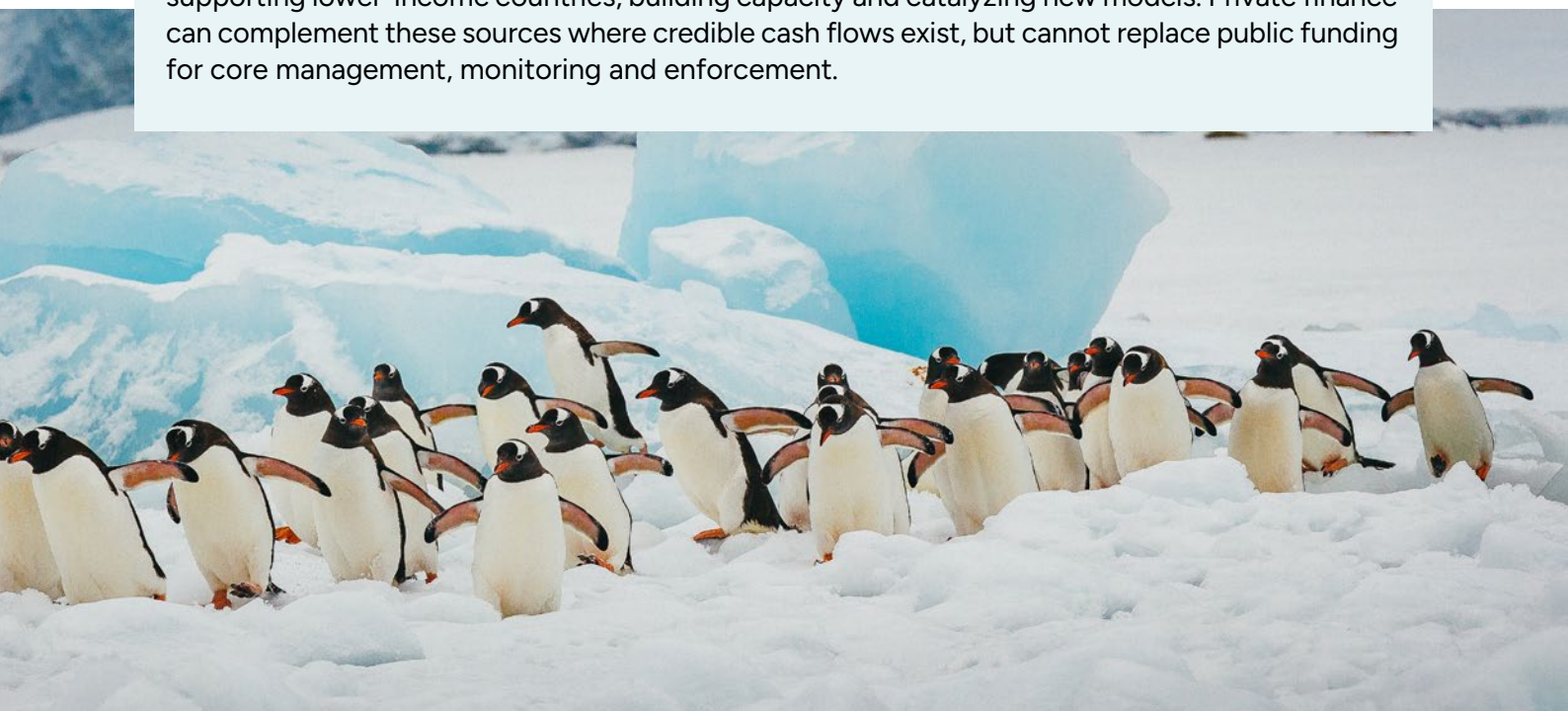
Financing needs vs current flows for 30x30, USD billion



Marine Finance

Finance for marine protection has increased in recent years but remains orders of magnitude below what is needed. Bilateral and multilateral finance for marine protection reached around USD 200 million in 2024, according to the 30x30 Funding Dashboard, while domestic public spending and philanthropic funding are also estimated to have grown. However, reporting lags and inconsistent methodologies make it difficult to produce a complete and up-to-date picture across sources.

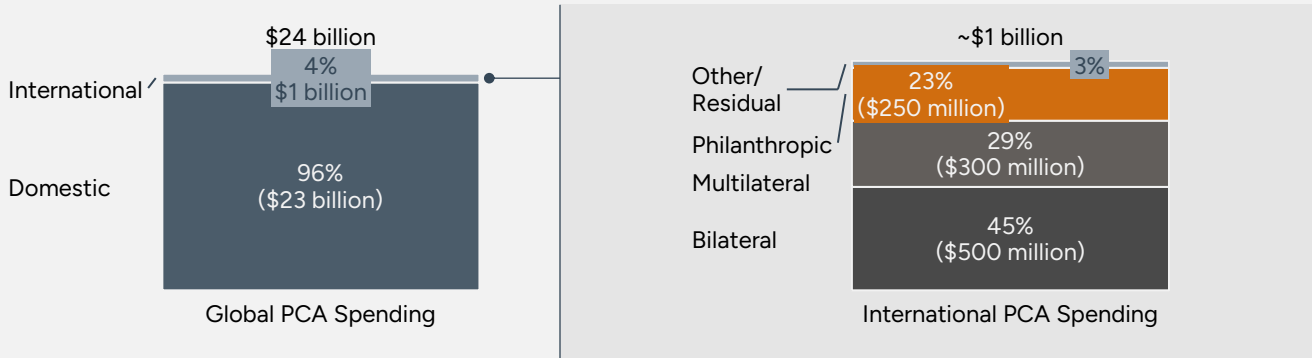
The financing requirement is nevertheless modest relative to the wider nature-finance agenda. The 2026 Ocean Protection Gap report estimates an annual marine protection financing gap of just over USD 14 billion, based on an annual financing need of around USD 15.9 billion and latest reported flows of approximately USD 1.8 billion. Closing this gap will require domestic public finance to provide the long-term backbone, with international finance and philanthropy supporting lower-income countries, building capacity and catalyzing new models. Private finance can complement these sources where credible cash flows exist, but cannot replace public funding for core management, monitoring and enforcement.



Domestic public finance should provide the foundation for recurrent, system-level funding for long-term management and stewardship of PCAs. While comprehensive data on global public domestic expenditure on protected and conserved areas are not available, it is estimated that public spending on biodiversity and landscapes rose from USD 72 billion in 2021 to USD 82 billion in 2023 [109] a fraction of which is likely to support protected and conserved areas [110].

International finance remains below the scale envisaged under GBF Target 19⁸. Reported international funding explicitly supporting Target 3 reached around USD 1.1 billion in 2024 (Exhibit 5.3), far below a benchmark of about USD 6 billion annual funding (derived by allocating the USD 30 billion Target 19 commitment in proportion to the 20 percent share of total biodiversity conservation financing needs attributed to protected areas, as estimated by Deutz et al [110]).

Exhibit 5.3
Sources of 30x30 financing, USD per year, percent



Note: The 96/4 domestic/international split is derived from two sources. Total global spending on protected and conserved areas is estimated at approximately USD 24 billion per year (Waldron et al., 2020). Of this, just over USD 1 billion represents tracked international public and philanthropic flows to protected and conserved areas in developing countries (Indufor, 2025)



8. Ensuring annual funding flow of at least USD 20 billion towards conservation by 2025, and USD 30 billion by 2030

Current international funding is unevenly distributed across ecosystems, regions, and recipients. Around 82 percent of reported funding for Target 3 is directed toward supporting the management of existing PCAs, with relatively little allocated to expanding coverage [111]. Marine and coastal systems receive only 14 percent of funding, despite facing the largest remaining coverage gap [111]. Regional allocation is also uneven, with Africa and Latin America receiving around 85 percent of the funds, while Asia receives around 14 percent and Oceania around 1 percent [111] (Exhibit 5.4). Small Island Developing States receive only about USD 48 million per year, despite harboring more than 20 percent of global biodiversity and around 40 percent of the world’s coral reefs [111].

5.4.2 Financing mechanisms

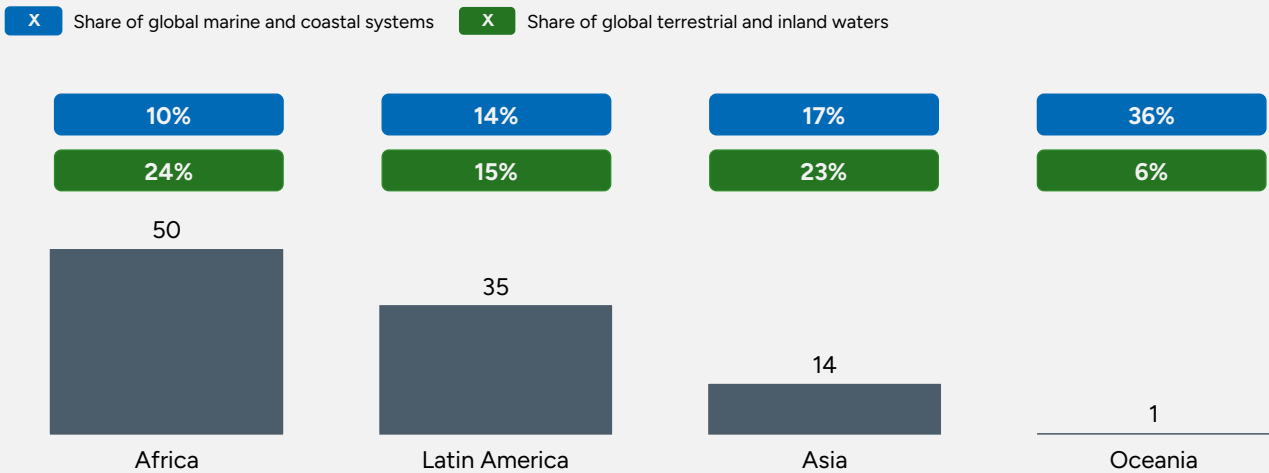
See details on financial instruments & case studies in Appendix V.

While domestic public funding and international finance will remain the foundation of financing for PCAs, achieving 30x30 will also require a broader portfolio of financing mechanisms.

Emerging options addressing different conservation objectives, geographies and stages of implementation include

- **Government-led financing and fiscal mechanisms:** debt-for-nature swaps, jurisdictional REDD+, environmental subsidies and taxes
- **Pooled conservation investment facilities:** conservation trust funds (incl. the Legacy Landscapes Fund), Project Finance for Permanence, performance-based payment facilities (including the Tropical Forest Forever Facility (TFFF))
- **Nature-linked bond and loan instruments:** thematic bonds and loans, sustainability-linked bonds and loans, outcome-based bonds
- **Nature markets:** offset / habitat banking, carbon finance, biodiversity credits
- **Nature-based revenue mechanisms:** Payment for Ecosystem Services, fees and levies
- **De-risking instruments and blended finance**

Exhibit 5.4
International 30x30 financing by region in 2024, percent



Source: CfN State of International 30x30 Funding (2025), Own analysis

Scaling these mechanisms remains the principal challenge. While some constraints differ across instruments, there is a set of common gaps: clearer standards and methodologies, credible governance, simpler and more replicable transaction structures, and policy or market signals that make participation economically rational. Strengthening these enabling conditions would reduce transaction costs and uncertainty for governments, donors, investors and local stakeholders.

Marine protection often has fewer and more geographically constrained opportunities to generate revenue than terrestrial conservation. Although some coastal protected areas generate revenues through tourism and recreation, many marine protected areas - particularly in offshore and high-seas environments - lack comparable opportunities. Some land-based models can also apply in marine settings, including carbon and biodiversity markets, tourism fees and conservation trusts, but they are often more geographically constrained and less readily available offshore.

Many of the benefits they generate, including biodiversity conservation, climate regulation and fish-stock recovery, accrue across jurisdictions, sectors and generations and have historically been treated as public goods rather than direct revenue streams for protected-area management. Public and philanthropic finance will therefore remain central to the management, monitoring and enforcement of many marine protected areas, complemented by private and market-based finance where credible cash flows exist.

5.5 Competing national priorities can constrain delivery

5.5.1 Political commitment and fiscal priorities

In most countries, spending on environmental protection represents only a small share of total government expenditure. Across OECD nations, environmental protection accounts for around 1 percent of government expenditures [112].



“Environment ministries in biodiversity-rich countries receive small functional budgets from finance ministers and are then expected to raise money predominantly from international sources” (Guido Schmidt-Traub, Systemiq).

Political continuity also matters as changes in government can alter policy priorities and weaken or reverse commitment to previously adopted biodiversity strategies. The absence of sustained political support at the ministerial and head-of-state level is among the most significant barriers to 30x30 implementation. Without senior championship, the target too often remains an aspirational commitment rather than an actionable, funded program with clear mandates and measurable results. Where this leadership has been established, it has helped embed 30x30 within broader government priorities, strengthen cross-government coordination and create dedicated delivery structures.





Many current governments were not in power during the Montreal COP and the GBF adoption, so they do not feel bound by the commitments” (Carlos Manuel Rodriguez, former CEO, GEF).

Case study



Costa Rica, long recognized as a global leader that has effectively reached over 30 percent conservation of its territory through protected areas and forest restoration, saw its budget for conservation areas cut by more than one-third during the COVID-19 fiscal crisis, lowering management of already designated sites [113,114]. In the United States, President Biden’s 2021 Executive Order 14008 and the subsequent America the Beautiful initiative established a national goal to conserve 30 percent of United States lands and waters by 2030. However, subsequent executive order under the current administration revoked the federal 30x30 initiative [115], although a number of states continue to pursue their own 30x30-aligned policies [116].

Recent examples of political leadership support for 30x30

Panama has embedded 30x30 within broader government reform through strong ministerial leadership. Under Environment Minister Milciades Concepción, the government established the Centre for Conservation and Sustainability (CONSOS) as a national delivery unit to coordinate implementation. As program leaders observed: “the Panama 30x30 program has changed how the Ministry is viewed across the government and to the outside world: from a cost-center to an investment opportunity.”

In Sri Lanka, leadership from the Presidential Secretariat has positioned 30x30 as an economic as well as an environmental priority. Chief of Staff Sagala Ratnayaka described the Global Biodiversity Framework as “a transformative initiative poised to elevate eco-tourism, generate green employment, and attract sustainable development funding,” while Senior Advisor Ruwan Wijewardena stressed that “safeguarding our environment is not merely essential but pivotal to rejuvenating our economy.”

In Sierra Leone, launching the program through the Vice President’s Office helped establish whole-of-government ownership. Environment Minister Jiwoh E. Abdulai has framed implementation as a shared national responsibility, noting that “realizing our 30x30 goals is a shared responsibility, and together we can create a sustainable future where nature thrives.”

At the regional level, the Organization of Eastern Caribbean States (OECS) demonstrates how sustained political leadership can extend beyond national governments. Through its Council of Ministers of Environmental Sustainability (COM:ES), the OECS has coordinated implementation across multiple jurisdictions, creating a shared regional approach that individual states would have found more difficult to achieve independently.

Source: Panama’s 30x30 plan; protectsierraleone.com; srilanka30x30.com; oecs30x30.com

5.5.2 Competition for land and ocean space

Competition for land and ocean space creates further challenges for implementation. As PCA networks expand, conservation increasingly competes with agriculture, fisheries, mining, energy production, infrastructure and urban development. Many of the remaining areas

important for biodiversity are therefore associated with more complex social, economic and political trade-offs than areas protected in earlier phases of network expansion. Balancing these competing land- and sea-use priorities has become an increasingly important determinant of progress towards Target 3.



“The next 15 years or so are critical for land-use planning: rising livestock demand in particular could drive agricultural sprawl into many landscapes needed for biodiversity and food security.”
(Nils Meyer, KfW)

Case study



Extractive pressure and competing development priorities

Globally, 918 terrestrial and inland water protected areas overlap with ongoing or planned fossil fuel extraction projects, encompassing more than 2,000 active or proposed oil, gas, and coal projects [117]. In the Congo Basin, planned oil and gas blocks overlapped 45 IUCN Category I-IV protected areas, representing 38 percent of their total extent (Exhibit 5.5). In the Western Amazon, 26 protected areas, or 12 percent of their combined extent, overlap with planned oil and gas blocks [117]. PIACI reserves in Peru are particularly exposed to infrastructure development, mining concessions and fossil fuel extraction, with production, exploration and promotional oil and gas blocks overlapping approximately 1.6 million hectares, or 20% of the total area of existing and proposed PIACI reserves [118].

Marine protected areas face similar pressures as offshore oil and gas exploration expands. Across eleven offshore frontier regions, 129 marine protected areas, covering more than 88,500 sq. km and 19 percent of total Marine Protected Area (MPA) area in those regions, currently overlap with oil and gas block development [119]. At the individual site level, overlap can be extensive, as seen in the Tun Mustapha Park in Malaysia, where the MPA reportedly overlaps completely

with oil and gas blocks [117] (Exhibit 5.6). Similarly, in Peru, 21 percent of production, exploration and promotional oil and gas blocks overlap with Indigenous Peoples in Voluntary Isolation and Initial Contact reserves are particularly exposed to infrastructure development, mining concessions and fossil fuel extraction, with 1.6 million hectares, or 21 percent, of production, exploration and promotional oil and gas blocks overlapping with PIACI reserves [117] (Exhibit 5.6).

Exhibit 5.5

Oil and gas block overlap with pantropical protected areas

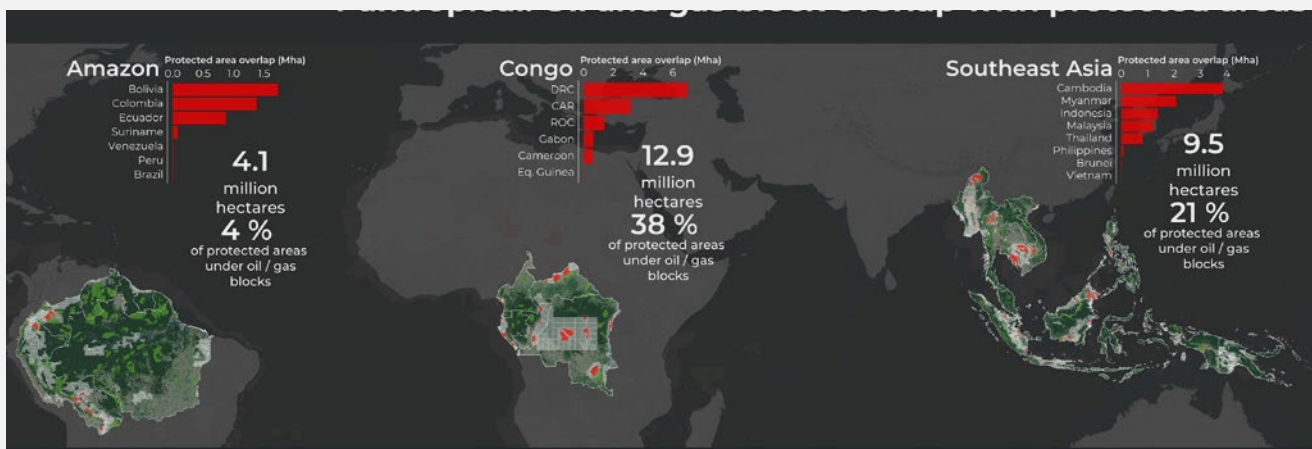
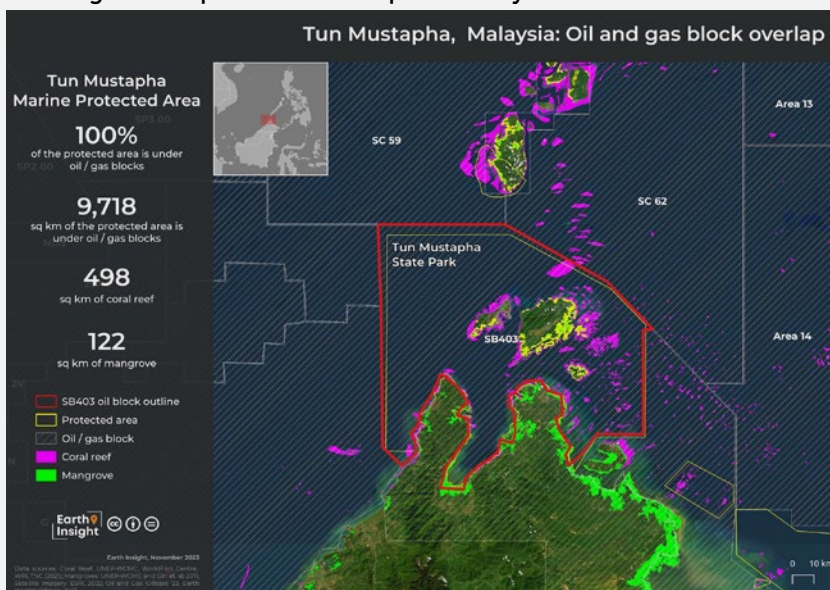


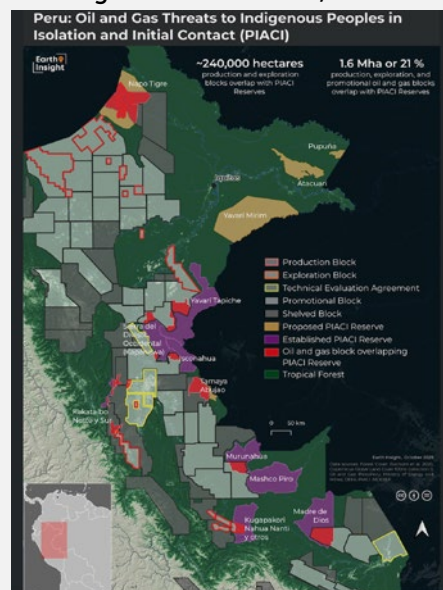
Exhibit 5.6

Oil and gas block threats in marine and terrestrial realms

Oil and gas overlap with Tun Mustapha in Malaysia



Oil and gas threats to PIACI¹, Peru



1. Indigenous Peoples in Isolation and Initial Contact

Source: Earth Insight (2024)

5.5.3 Nature remains undervalued in economic decision-making

Many ecosystem services, including water regulation, pollination, carbon storage and coastal protection, are only partially reflected in market prices, national accounts and public decision-making. In practice, activities that

degrade ecosystems can increase measured economic output while reducing long-term economic resilience, productivity and the ecosystem services on which economies depend [120]. This is reinforced by harmful subsidies and other misaligned incentives that continue to support activities placing pressure on ecosystems.



“Nature remains undervalued because we still struggle to measure the value of biodiversity in a consistent and scalable way. Improving how we track nature outcomes will help build confidence and direct investment to where it can have the greatest impact.”
(Kristen Schuijt, WWF International)

“The fundamental barrier to 30x30 progress is that investments in nature are treated as pure costs with zero return in IMF macro-fiscal accounts, and until nature’s benefits can be translated into GDP flow metrics that finance ministers use for decision-making, domestic resource mobilization will remain insufficient” (Guido Schmidt-Traub, Systemiq)

“Harmful subsidies vastly outnumber nature-positive subsidies, and this imbalance directly undermines protected area outcomes” (Astrid Schomaker, CBD Secretariat)

USD 7.3 trillion

is invested annually in activities harmful to nature, 30 times the investment in nature-based solutions in 2023, USD 220 billion [109].

Harmful subsidies (GBF Target 18): Public subsidies and other policy incentives continue to shape land- and ocean-use decisions, often making environmentally damaging activities more financially attractive than conservation. Globally, environmentally harmful subsidies and other incentives are estimated at USD 2.6 trillion per year, spanning sectors including fossil fuels, agriculture, water, transport, forestry and fisheries, equivalent to around 2.5 percent of global GDP [121].

Natural capital accounting (GBF Target 14): Natural capital accounting makes ecosystem stocks and services visible in national statistics and economic decision-making. By 2025, 98 countries had implemented the System of Environmental-Economic Accounting (SEEA), including 71 publishing at least one account regularly [122]. However, only 18 countries compile monetary ecosystem services flow accounts and only 10 countries compile monetary ecosystem asset accounts, indicating that monetary valuation remains at an early stage globally [122]. Further integration into fiscal planning and public investment decisions will be needed if these accounts are to influence resource allocation, consistent with GBF Target 14.



06

How we can accelerate

Strategic priorities until 2030

Accelerating progress to reach 30x30 by 2030 requires a shift from ambition to implementation. The analysis in this report shows that current protection is expanding too slowly, remains uneven across realms and regions, and often lacks the effectiveness, durability and ecological representation needed to deliver the required biodiversity outcomes. Yet, the current landscape also offers new levers for change; by capitalizing on expanding global technical capacity in conservation (e.g., in earth sciences and computational biology), emerging frameworks for international cooperation (e.g., BBNJ), innovative financing mechanisms, and rapid technological advancements (e.g. in earth observation and AI), we possess powerful tools needed to overcome these challenges and accelerate momentum.

This chapter lays out the strategic priorities for accelerating progress towards 30x30, presented thematically instead of by importance. They are informed by the analyses in this report and interviews conducted with global leaders from governments, Indigenous Peoples and local

communities, NGOs, the scientific community, donors and the private sector.

The recommendations are organized into two parts. The first focuses on expanding and strengthening PCAs. The second suggests broader reforms needed to reduce the pressures driving ecosystem loss and point toward a deeper, more fundamental transformation of the global economic systems. Detailed exploration of these systemic shifts is excluded from the scope of this report. These priorities aim to improve coverage, quality, durability and equity while directing resources to where they can deliver the greatest value for nature and people. They build on commitments already agreed under the GBF. Some, particularly those relating to management standards and the assessment of conservation outcomes, would require further methodological development and, where appropriate, agreement among Parties before they can be incorporated into national legislation, policies and monitoring frameworks.



KEY TAKEAWAYS: Direct priorities for 30x30 delivery

Prioritization and expansion pathways

Achieving 30x30 will require improved planning and prioritization for expanding protected areas, improved management effectiveness, and recognition of the various conservation pathways that can be deployed. Progress also relies on implementation of complementary GBF targets, particularly Target 1 (biodiversity-inclusive spatial planning), Target 4 (preserving species, genetic diversity), and Target 22 (rights, participation and leadership of Indigenous Peoples and local communities). Priorities for expansion pathways can be broadly organized in five themes (see section “Direct priorities for 30x30 delivery: Prioritization and expansion pathways” below for a detailed discussion):

- **High-integrity PCAs deliver measurable biodiversity outcomes through effective management, stronger enforcement and reduced paper parks**
- **High biodiversity and underrepresented ecosystems and landscapes are prioritized through stronger commitments and spatially explicit 30x30 plans**
- **Indigenous and Traditional Territories are recognized as a distinct 30x30 pathway under agreed human rights-based criteria, safeguards and long-term conservation outcome measures**
- **OECMs deliver measurable, long-term conservation outcomes through national frameworks, private and community incentives, and integrity standards**
- **High Seas protection is operationalized through the BBNJ treaty, with coordinated ocean institutions, first-wave MPAs and funded implementation**



Conservation finance and resource mobilization

Delivering 30x30 will require a significant increase in financial resources alongside more effective allocation of existing funding and incentives to encourage actions that protect and restore ecosystems and discourage activities that harm nature. This directly supports Target 19 on biodiversity finance, while Target 18 can help reduce nature-negative incentives that undermine PCAs below

Current finance flows remain insufficient and are often fragmented, short-term, or misaligned with priority geographies and outcomes. Strengthening the volume and effectiveness of both domestic and international finance is therefore essential to sustained conservation action. Priorities for conservation finance and resource mobilization can be organized in five themes (see section “Direct priorities for 30x30 delivery: Conservation finance and resource mobilization” below for a detailed discussion):

- **Domestic public funding is increasingly mobilized by recognizing the positive economic returns natural capital brings and redirecting harmful subsidies**
- **International biodiversity finance reaches the USD 30 billion Target 19 commitment, directing an estimated USD 6 billion toward 30x30 delivery**
- **Allocate at least 30 percent of climate funding to biodiversity conservation, in particular nature-based solutions and protected area management**
- **At-scale or high potential innovative financing instruments become long-term funding systems for conservation, management and stewardship**
- **Improved coordination of finance and delivery of shared 30x30 priorities is achieved across bilateral and multilateral donors, philanthropies and NGOs**

A well-coordinated 30x30 implementation network

30x30 finance and its implementation are currently fragmented. This fragmentation is characterized by donors, philanthropies, and non-governmental organizations (NGOs) frequently clustering their support in the same high-profile countries and landscapes. As a result, critical and high-potential areas such as the Congo Basin, Borneo, the Yangtze Basin, and the Western Ghats often receive insufficient support. The existing limited coordination among these various actors leads to several inefficiencies, including duplicated due diligence processes, inconsistent metrics, disconnected project pipelines, and elevated transaction costs for recipient countries and implementing partners. Ultimately, this lack of effective coordination impedes the feasibility and potential impact of large-scale initiatives such as debt swaps, Project Finance for Permanence deals, and comprehensive landscape programs. The priority theme for coordinated implementation of 30x30 is as follows:

- **Improved coordination of finance and delivery of shared 30x30 priorities is achieved across bilateral and multilateral donors, philanthropies and NGOs**



KEY TAKEAWAYS : Wider reforms to reduce long-term pressure on nature and improved coordination among key actors would accelerate delivery:

Beyond protection and conservation, wider reforms are required to structurally reduce pressure on nature. These reforms include reducing land-use pressure, reimagined economic systems and a well-coordinated global implementation effort (see Appendix VI “Wider reforms to reduce long-term pressure on nature” for a detailed discussion):

Innovations to reduce land-use pressure

30x30 will be difficult to achieve without addressing the underlying demand for land, water, and marine resources. Population growth, dietary patterns, and energy needs continue to drive expansion of agriculture, fisheries, and resource extraction into high biodiversity ecosystems. Carefully reducing the intensity and footprint of these activities while protecting local livelihoods is necessary to relieve the structural pressure on the planet’s biodiversity. This supports GBF Target 3 by reducing pressure on PCAs, while also advancing Target 10 on sustainable agriculture, aquaculture, fisheries and forestry, and Target 16 on sustainable consumption and food waste reduction. Priorities for innovations to reduce land-use pressure are broadly organized in two themes:

- **Food-system pressure on nature is reduced through lower-footprint demand, improved productivity and zero-conversion production growth**
- **Fuelwood-driven ecosystem degradation and deforestation are reduced through scaled clean cooking and sustainable fuel access**
- **Reimagining of economic systems**

Nature’s economic value remains largely invisible in public decision-making. Many ecosystem services, including water regulation, pollination and carbon storage often sit outside budgets, investment appraisals and infrastructure plans, even when their loss creates real fiscal and economic costs. Durable long-term conservation of our planet’s biodiversity will require treating natural capital as productive infrastructure and integrating ecosystem service value into public planning, budgeting and investment decisions. This supports GBF Target 14, which calls for biodiversity to be mainstreamed across policies, regulations, planning and accounting - and strengthens Target 11 by making the value of nature’s contributions to people more visible in economic decisions. The priority theme for reimagining of economic systems is as follows:

- **Natural capital value is integrated into public planning, budgets and investment decisions through natural capital accounting**

*Image credit: James Morgan (WWF)

6.1 Direct priorities for 30x30 delivery

6.1.1 Prioritization and expansion pathways



High-integrity PCAs deliver measurable biodiversity outcomes through effective management, stronger enforcement and reduced paper parks

Context

GBF Target 3 explicitly requires areas to be effectively conserved and managed and equally requires that the rights of Indigenous Peoples be fully respected in how these areas are governed. Yet global progress metrics still focus overwhelmingly on coverage. The majority of PCAs have never been assessed for management effectiveness, and assessment systems remain fragmented and unevenly reported. Furthermore, a quarter of the world's MPAs are not implemented [123]. PCAs can deliver materially better biodiversity outcomes than comparable unprotected land, but performance varies significantly (See Chapter 3 for details). High-integrity PCAs generally perform better and result in high ecological integrity across multiple dimensions including but not limited to human footprint and associated stressors [124], while sites exposed to weak enforcement, competing land uses, or overlaps with oil and gas blocks and mining concessions remain vulnerable to habitat loss and reduced ecological intactness or PADDD.

Key actions

Embed rights and equity guardrails conditions for designation and continued recognition. Protected areas, OECMs and ITT pathways should require Free, Prior and Informed Consent (FPIC) for affected Indigenous Peoples and local communities, secure and legally recognized tenure, transparent benefit-sharing, displacement risk assessment and accessible grievance mechanisms. Governance standards should also require women's meaningful participation in site-level decision-making and compliance should be assessed through regular management-effectiveness reviews.

Key international entities (e.g., UNEP, IUCN, CBD) driving global biodiversity and conservation policy could develop common frameworks defining minimum management and ecological criteria for protected areas, OECMs and, where appropriate, Indigenous and Traditional Territories (ITTs). A framework to disaggregate level of effectiveness for protected areas and OECMs is in progress [125], and its operationalization could be accelerated, while a similar framework could also be developed for ITTs, where applicable. The framework would establish a clear threshold for what qualifies as "effectively managed" under Target 3 including operational capacity (e.g., governance, staffing, budgets). Similarly, a common framework for biodiversity outcome indicators such as habitat

condition, species trends, threat reduction, connectivity and ecosystem function, could be initiated for protected areas, OECMs and ITTs, if applicable.

Mandate regular, transparent management-effectiveness assessments. PCAs should undergo updated periodic assessments and report them to the Global Database on Protected Area Management Effectiveness (GD-PAME) using globally recognized frameworks such as UNEP's Management Effectiveness Tracking Tool (METT), as a condition for being counted toward national 30x30 commitments. Governments and technical partners should develop and disseminate practical, low-cost rapid assessment tools such as the Rapid Assessment and Prioritization of Protected Area Management tool designed by WWF including AI-enabled remote sensing, satellite monitoring, and automated species identification systems, that can realistically be applied at least every five years to make this achievable at scale. Reporting should be public, identifying sites that meet minimum standards alongside those requiring corrective measures.

Link finance to management effectiveness and biodiversity outcomes, while ensuring under resourced areas are not structurally excluded. Major conservation funding mechanisms, including GEF, GCF biodiversity windows, bilateral ODA and philanthropic programs, should integrate management effectiveness and outcome criteria

into eligibility and disbursement rules. At the same time, performance-based criteria should be designed to avoid penalizing areas that lack the resources to demonstrate results.

Implement early-warning systems and strengthen community support to prevent downgrading, downsizing, and degazettement (PADDD). Countries must track and publicly disclose PADDD events equivalent to disclosure of new designations to prevent habitat losses from being masked by gross expansion numbers. Prevention strategies should combine spatial monitoring, including satellite-based deforestation alerts and automated encroachment detection, and strict mitigation rules for overlapping industrial concessions (e.g., mining, oil and gas,

infrastructure) with deep community engagement since locally legitimate areas are highly resilient to political pressure.

Build protected-area workforce and operational capacity in countries that are rapidly scaling protected and conserved-area systems. These countries should receive dedicated support for comprehensive management planning, financing strategies, and workforce development for rangers, site managers, and community liaisons. Technical partners should accelerate this through operational guidance, standardized templates, and South-South learning exchanges that connect rapidly scaling agencies with proven rights-based management models.



High biodiversity and underrepresented ecosystems and landscapes are prioritized through stronger commitments and spatially explicit 30x30 plans

Context

Target 3 requires countries to prioritize places of particular importance for biodiversity, ecosystem functions and services, yet many high-value ecosystems remain underprotected. Current protection is roughly 18 to 20 percent for terrestrial and inland waters and 10 percent in marine and coastal areas and only 55 percent of the area identified as Key Biodiversity Areas are protected across realms (see Chapter 3 for details).

National commitments remain insufficient. Only 132 countries have set specific protection targets, adding up to 27 percent terrestrial coverage and 12 percent marine coverage if fully implemented (See Chapter 4 for details). Fewer have spatially explicit, costed plans that identify priority areas, sequencing, tenure, implementation costs and financing needs.

Closing the gap requires expansion of protection and conservation in under-protected ecosystems and regions. On land, key gaps remain in temperate and boreal forests and grasslands, tropical and subtropical moist broadleaf forests, tundra and alpine ecosystems. In the ocean, offshore and high-seas areas remain weakly protected, including EBSAs, important shark and ray areas, and important marine mammal areas.

Key actions

Support priority countries without quantified targets to set credible national targets and implement these targets. The countries that have not yet made quantified targets and are still below 30 percent, and identified as priority countries (Africa: Senegal; Asia: Myanmar; Oceania: New Zealand; Europe: Russian Federation; Latin America: Venezuela, and North America: United States), should receive technical and financial support to define national targets. Further, these countries along with countries that have quantified targets (Africa: Angola, Ethiopia, Kenya; Asia: Kazakhstan, Mongolia; Europe: Italy, Türkiye) should receive further support to, identify priority areas and move from ambition to implementation. At the same time, countries that hold globally significant ecological landscapes or ecosystems (Africa: DRC, Madagascar, South Africa; North America: Canada; Asia: China, India, Indonesia; Latin America: Brazil, Chile, Colombia, Argentina, Bolivia, Peru, Mexico; Oceania: Australia, Papua New Guinea) should be encouraged to set ambitions above 30 percent, reflecting their outsized responsibility and opportunity to deliver conservation outcomes for the world.

Translate targets into spatially explicit national plans grounded in both biodiversity value and feasibility analyses. Countries should convert 30x30 targets into maps that identify priority areas, sequencing, ownership, governance models, implementation costs, monitoring requirements and financing needs. Spatial planning should go beyond identifying where expansion would deliver the greatest biodiversity value and assess where protection is feasible, rights-compatible, affordable and likely to be enforced. These plans should link protection targets to delivery systems, so expansion is not left to opportunistic designation. Countries should also ensure their data is kept up to date in the World Database on Protected and Conserved Areas, since accurate and timely national reporting is essential for Target 3 to be tracked reliably at the global level.

Prioritize under-represented priority regions, with an emphasis on boreal forests and polar and alpine regions, shrublands, freshwater sources and savanna-grassland complexes where current coverage is less than 20 percent. Expansion should focus on high biodiversity areas where coverage is lowest or the unprotected area is largest, while targeting ecosystem gaps in deserts (e.g., Chihuahuan desert), grasslands (e.g., Congo

Basin, KAZA, East Africa Rift valley), alpine and tundra systems (e.g., Arctic Canada and Russia), boreal forests (e.g., Canada), shrublands (e.g., Miombo woodlands), and freshwater ecosystems (e.g., Congo Basin, KAZA, Yangtze Basin, Mekong complex).

Prioritize under-protected marine and offshore biodiversity areas. Countries and treaty bodies should direct expansion toward important shark and ray areas, important marine mammal areas and EBSAs, especially in the Arctic Ocean, South Atlantic, South China and Eastern Archipelagic Seas, Southern Ocean and Indian Ocean. Operationalizing the BBNJ Treaty will be critical to protect critical offshore and High Seas biodiversity areas that national jurisdiction cannot reach.

Expand and create new PCAs conditioned on Free, Prior and Informed Consent (FPIC) from affected Indigenous Peoples and local communities. Explicit safeguards against displacement, criminalization, marginalization or cultural harm arising from conservation designation should be established. Conservation models should fully respect traditional forms of biodiversity stewardship and secure human rights of Indigenous Peoples and local communities. Any existing legal or management frameworks (whichever applicable) that do not comply should be revised as a condition of continued recognition toward 30x30.



Indigenous and Traditional Territories are recognized as a distinct 30x30 pathway under agreed human rights-based criteria and FPIC, safeguards and long-term conservation outcomes by CBD Parties

Context

Indigenous and Traditional Territories (ITTs) are critical to achieving 30x30, but they are not yet recognized internationally as a distinct delivery pathway. These territories are estimated to cover around 36 percent of Earth's terrestrial surface [92], and many are governed through customary institutions, Indigenous knowledge systems and long standing stewardship practices.

The current global conservation architecture does not consistently recognize ITTs. Recognition varies by country, and ITTs are often subsumed under protected area or OECM designations without full recognition of Indigenous Peoples' or local community governance, free, prior and informed consent (FPIC), or customary sustainable use.

The case for recognizing ITTs rests on both rights and conservation outcomes. UNDRIP Article 26 affirms Indigenous Peoples' rights to the lands, territories and resources they have traditionally owned, occupied, used or acquired, and evidence from mapped territories suggests many ITTs hold high conservation value [90].

The 'Recommendation adopted by the Subsidiary Body on Article 8(j) and Other Provisions of the CBD Related to Indigenous Peoples and Local Communities' [126] will be taken up by CBD Parties at COP17. An important, and still contested, element is a bracketed proposal (Paragraph 26) to recognize ITTs as a distinct system contributing to the conservation and sustainable use of biodiversity, complementary to and different from protected areas and other effective area-based conservation measures (OECMs) that count toward Target 3.

Key actions

ITTs are officially recognized by national governments as a distinct system to achieve their Target 3 goals, in addition to protected areas and OECMs. Following the examples of Brazil, Colombia, Peru, DRC, the Philippines, and others, recognition must be grounded in tenure rights with decision-making authority, and meet agreed conservation guidelines and criteria, with necessary policies codified in national legislation.

At COP17, Parties recognize ITTs as a distinct system contributing to Target 3 by adopting CBD/SB8J/REC/1/3, 2025, including the bracketed portion of paragraph 26, which recognizes and supports Indigenous and Traditional Territories that contribute to the conservation and sustainable use of biodiversity as a distinct pathway, different from protected areas and OECMs. They should also agree on a clear process and timeline in line with the recommendation to Parties, to develop guidelines to strengthen the legal and policy

framework for the implementation, leading to the formal adoption of ITTs criteria on identifying and recognizing ITTs as a distinct contribution to Target 3.

Where ITTs overlap with existing protected areas and OECMs, governments ensure the full, effective and gender responsive participation of Indigenous Peoples and local communities in governance and management (Paragraphs 31 to 34, 40 to 41). This requires FPIC before establishing, expanding or changing any protected area or OECM affecting Indigenous Peoples' or local communities' territories, lands and waters, recognition of customary tenure and traditional sustainable use practices, and the right of Indigenous Peoples and local communities to decide whether and how their territories are counted toward 30x30, with protection against displacement or imposed conservation models (Paragraphs 25, 35 to 37).

Geographic information systems are developed at the national level with a corresponding global reporting mechanism. Governments should co-develop with Indigenous Peoples and local communities a national system to enable transparent identification, titling and recognition of ITTs and their contribution to conservation (Paragraph 55). CBD Parties should agree at COP17 to collate this information into a global database or ITTs registry, as a distinct layer alongside protected areas, OECMs and other datasets stored by World Database for Protected and Conserved Areas, by COP18. The system should be federated, consent based and designed to integrate Indigenous Peoples and local communities datasets and national datasets, with safeguards for sensitive information and full respect for data sovereignty.

Governments and donors agree at COP17 to provide direct, long-term finance for Indigenous Peoples and local communities-led stewardship (Paragraphs 50 to 51). Existing mechanisms, including philanthropic (i.e., the Forest Tenure Funders Group), multilateral (i.e. GEF-8 Heart of Conservation Initiative), and territorial funds (i.e. Nusantara and Mesoamerican Territorial Fund) show that funding can reach Indigenous Peoples and local communities at scale when institutional pathways are designed for accessibility and flexibility. These pathways now need significantly increased capital and faster grant processes to match the scale of stewardship they support, alongside transparent tracking of how much committed finance actually reaches ITTs on the ground.



*Image credit: Jasper Doest (WWF)

OECMs deliver measurable, long-term conservation outcomes through national frameworks, private and community incentives, and integrity standards

Context

OECMs remain underdeveloped as a 30x30 pathway, despite their potential to recognize effective conservation outside of formal protected areas. The global database contains only around 7,600 reported OECMs across 17 countries and territories, and marine OECMs account for less than 1 percent of total ocean protection (WDPCA).

OECMs can expand conservation across private, community, productive and culturally significant landscapes and seascapes, but only where they are monitored to deliver long-term biodiversity outcomes. National standards often remain uneven, and some reported sites do not fully meet the 8 OECM evaluation criteria on governance, management and biodiversity outcomes. Algeria's Cultural Park OECMs, covering 250,000 sq. km, for example, do not meet criteria 5, 6, 7 and 8 on governance and management [85].

Key actions

Establish clear and inclusive national legal OECM frameworks aligned with CBD and IUCN criteria before formal global recognition that generate significant interest and stakeholder buy-in.

Countries should translate CBD Decision 14/8 into national policy frameworks, guidance and administrative procedures, with clear eligibility criteria, governance standards, management-effectiveness requirements, stakeholder engagement obligations and biodiversity outcome thresholds. Canada, Sweden, Japan and South Korea can provide practical lessons on framework design, reporting, and recognition, while Ecuador, Kenya, South Africa, India, Vietnam, and Indonesia are important emerging cases where technical and financial support could help translate OECM potential into credible national systems. The United States, the United Kingdom, and European countries are also strong candidates given the large share of land under private ownership or commons-based management such as hunting estates, agri-environment schemes and privately managed forests, that may already deliver conservation outcomes and could be formally recognized, strengthened and financed through OECM frameworks.

Integrate OECMs into national 30x30 spatial plans and accounting systems, and integrate national OECM registries into international databases such as WDPCA to support

transparent global accounting. NBSAPs should distinguish OECM targets from protected-area expansion targets, while spatial planning should identify where OECMs can improve ecological connectivity between PCAs. Countries should map private, community and other managed areas with OECM potential to establish baseline estimates of extent, location and biodiversity value.

Create streamlined designation, monitoring and reporting systems that reduce barriers while enforcing long-term effectiveness standards.

Countries should create clear application routes, practical guidance, technical support and reporting requirements. Designation should be followed by periodic independent effectiveness assessments, for example every five years, using clear ecological and governance indicators. Sites that do not meet agreed criteria should receive support to improve with persistent failure triggering de-designation.

Create financing and regulatory incentives for private and community actors to participate.

Governments should use tax incentives, conservation easement equivalents, stewardship payments or regulatory recognition to reward landowners and managers who maintain OECM-qualifying management. Incentives should make conservation-compatible management financially viable while keeping biodiversity outcomes as the condition for recognition.

High Seas protection is operationalized through the BBNJ treaty, with coordinated ocean institutions, first-wave MPAs and funded implementation

Context

Areas beyond national jurisdiction cover nearly two-thirds of the ocean and roughly half the planet's surface, yet only around 1.5 percent of the High Seas are currently protected (see Chapter 3 for details). These waters contain critical biodiversity, carbon-cycling systems, migratory corridors, and marine genetic resources, while facing growing pressure from overfishing, shipping, pollution, climate impacts and potential deep-sea mining. Existing governance remains fragmented across regional fisheries bodies, international authorities, regional seas conventions and flag-state enforcement, leaving no single institution accountable for the full High Seas system.

The BBNJ Agreement creates the first global legal pathway to designate High Seas MPAs and coordinate conservation beyond national jurisdiction. It was enacted on 17 January 2026 and provides the legal architecture for area-based management tools, environmental impact assessments, marine genetic resource benefit-sharing, capacity building, technology transfer and a dedicated institutional system, including a COP, Scientific and Technical Body, Secretariat, Clearing-House Mechanism and financial mechanism [127]. The priority now is to turn the treaty into an operating system.

Key actions

Establish integrated governance and domestic legal readiness so countries can execute BBNJ mandates. Countries should create national BBNJ implementation platforms that bring together their various ministries and public agencies responsible for foreign affairs, environment, fisheries, shipping, science, seabed and mining authorities, finance ministries and enforcement agencies. These platforms should translate BBNJ-adopted measures into domestic fisheries, environmental and maritime law, with clear offences, credible penalties, MPA compliance rules, EIA procedures, MGR notifications, data-sharing obligations and benefit-sharing requirements.

Use COP1 in 2027 to align the treaty with 30x30 and launch a credible first wave of high-seas MPAs. At BBNJ COP1, Parties should agree to effective and efficient institutions, rules and procedures for the Treaty, so that effective implementation can begin as soon as possible. State Parties should secure formal adoption of a 30 percent High Seas protection ambition under BBNJ, while separately advancing an initial portfolio of scientifically robust and politically feasible MPA proposals guided by biodiversity value, ecological importance and threat levels on various marine habitats such as seamount chains, hydrothermal vents, migratory corridors,

deep-sea coral habitats and high-productivity oceanographic features.

Capitalize and operationalize the BBNJ finance architecture so implementation is not limited to legal designation. Parties and partners should develop a cost estimate for protecting and managing 30 percent of the high seas, then secure commitments across BBNJ's financing architecture. Early allocations, including the GEF's initial USD 34 million commitment [128] should be used to crowd in additional public, philanthropic and private capital for proposal preparation, monitoring systems, implementation capacity and long-term management.

Deploy transparent monitoring and enforcement to make high-seas activity visible and actionable, in line with different MPA models. Effective protected no-take zones can rely more heavily on remote policing, while multi-use areas will require more granular monitoring of gear, activity type, intensity and compliance. The Clearing-House Mechanism should operate as a practical implementation platform for MPA boundaries and monitoring data and compliance information. This should be paired with satellite monitoring, vessel tracking, port-state controls, public compliance reporting and disclosure requirements for companies operating in seafood, shipping, biotechnology and seabed-related value chains.

6.1 Direct priorities for 30x30 delivery

6.1.2 Conservation finance and resource mobilization



Domestic public funding is increasingly mobilized by recognizing the positive economic returns natural capital brings and redirecting harmful subsidies

Context

Domestic finance, including public funding and locally generated revenues such as park fees, will remain a cornerstone of recurrent, system-level funding for the long-term management and stewardship of PCAs. Countries need to mobilize their own budgets, fiscal systems and public investment processes for 30x30 by recognizing that natural capital is not a cost, but instead productive infrastructure that generates economic and fiscal returns.

Investment in PCAs can strengthen water security, fisheries productivity, soil fertility, disaster resilience, tourism, public health and rural livelihoods, while reducing public costs linked to water treatment, sedimentation, hydropower disruption, flood damage, drought risk and declining ecosystem productivity. Making these benefits visible in budget and public investment decisions would help ministries of finance justify higher domestic spending on conservation as a way to protect growth, reduce fiscal risk and strengthen long-term resilience. The macro-fiscal case is also increasingly material as nature loss can weaken revenues, raise disaster liabilities and increase sovereign debt risk.

Domestic misalignment of incentives: USD 2.6 trillion per year in environmentally harmful subsidies drive nature loss globally, more than 5x the USD 500 billion reform ambition of GBF Target 18. Agriculture alone contributes ~USD 610 billion and drives an estimated 22,000 sq. km of forest loss per year. Fisheries subsidies, undermining marine protection, contribute about USD 55 billion [121].

Key actions

Build and embed the domestic investment case for nature into fiscal frameworks. Finance ministries, planning agencies and environment ministries should quantify the economic returns of priority 30x30 investments, including water provision, fisheries recovery, soil productivity, flood protection, tourism, health benefits and avoided disaster costs, and translate these into a finance-ministry-ready investment case showing how PCAs protect growth, reduce fiscal risk and generate macro-fiscal returns. Ecosystem-service values should be integrated into public investment appraisal, spatial planning, infrastructure decisions, fiscal risk assessments and medium-term budget frameworks, with nature-positive investments assessed alongside grey infrastructure where they deliver comparable or stronger returns - particularly for water security, coastal protection, disaster-risk reduction and agricultural resilience. Governments and technical partners should equip finance ministries with natural capital accounts,

budget-tagging systems, nature-related fiscal risk tools, resilience KPIs and investment playbooks to move nature into core fiscal management and enable countries to track spending, assess returns and prioritize the natural assets most material to growth, resilience and debt sustainability.

Use debt sustainability analysis (DSA) to unlock fiscal space for nature investment. The IMF, World Bank, Multilateral Development Banks (MDBs) and finance ministries should develop practical approaches that recognize how natural capital investment can reduce sovereign risk, disaster liabilities and long-term debt pressure. DSA pilots should test how investments in forests, reefs, watersheds and coastal ecosystems can be treated as resilience-enhancing expenditure, helping countries access concessional finance, improve debt terms or justify higher domestic allocations.

Create and ring-fence domestic revenue streams for long-term conservation stewardship. Countries should convert ecosystem beneficiaries

into funders by linking revenues to the services they depend on. Utilities can finance watershed protection, fisheries agencies can reinvest access fees into stock recovery and marine protection, tourism levies can fund protected-area management, and cities can fund wetlands and mangroves that reduce flood costs. Where possible, revenues should be retained or ring-fenced for long-term management, local stewardship and community benefit-sharing.

Identify a targeted harmful subsidy reform pipeline and design reforms that redirect funding toward nature-positive outcomes. Governments, MDBs, and technical partners

should prioritize fisheries and agriculture subsidies with the highest biodiversity impact and strongest reform potential, taking a sectoral approach and assessing subsidies by type, fiscal cost, beneficiary profile, political sensitivity, and feasible reform pathway. In fisheries, this pipeline could support national implementation of the WTO Agreement on Fisheries Subsidies and strengthen accountability for major distant-water fishing nations. In agriculture, a similar approach could identify high-impact subsidies that drive conversion, degradation, or inefficient resource use, and sequence reforms toward more nature-positive forms of public support.

Governments should redirect savings toward sustainable production, conservation, rural resilience and transition support for affected producers. For example, governments can condition agricultural credit, crop insurance or input support on zero-conversion practices, restoration or soil and water outcomes.

For example, Costa Rica's Pagos por Servicios Ambientales (PSA) program, launched in 1997 and financed primarily through a 3.5 percent earmarked levy on fossil fuel sales, replaced earlier production-oriented reforestation incentives with direct payments for the ecosystem service value of standing forests, including carbon sequestration, watershed protection and biodiversity stewardship. To date, the program has disbursed over USD 524 million to more than 18,000 families across more than 10,000 sq. km under contract. Costa Rica's forest cover collapsed from roughly 75 percent in the 1940s to a low of 21 percent in the 1980s, and has since recovered to approximately 57-58 percent today - making Costa Rica the first tropical country to achieve net-negative deforestation [14].

Deploy ecological fiscal transfers to reward subnational conservation performance. Governments should pilot and scale ecological fiscal transfer mechanisms that reward subnational governments, states, provinces, municipalities,

for maintaining or expanding PCA coverage and management effectiveness, integrating conservation performance into intergovernmental fiscal systems as a durable incentive for local-level delivery of 30x30.



International biodiversity finance reaches the USD 30 billion Target 19 commitment, directing an estimated USD 6 billion toward 30x30 delivery

Context

International biodiversity finance needs to increase in both volume and effectiveness to meet 30x30 delivery needs. GBF Target 19 requires international biodiversity flows to developing countries to reach at least USD 30 billion per year by 2030, implying around USD 6 billion annually for PCAs. While this commitment reflected real political ambition when the GBF was adopted in 2022, and some donors, notably Germany, have increased contributions, aggregate flows remain far below target, with international funding for PCAs at just over USD 1.1 billion in 2024 [129]. The outlook has also weakened as harmful subsidy reform stalls, political attention shifts toward competing fiscal, humanitarian and security pressures, and ODA budgets contract. Biodiversity also remains a small share of development finance, historically accounting for only 4 percent [130] of the approximately USD 200 billion in total ODA [131] despite its relevance to food security, disaster-risk reduction, pandemic prevention and fiscal resilience.

UNEP-WCMC analysis indicates that achieving nine key nature-related Sustainable Development Goals (SDG) targets, spanning biodiversity conservation and restoration, sustainable resource use, and water and air pollution reduction, in 40 strategically important countries could yield USD 20 in economic returns for every USD 1 invested [132]. Beyond direct returns, pandemic prevention benefit-cost ratios reach approximately 20:1. Conservation investments equivalent to just 1/20th of COVID-19 pandemic losses could have reduced emergence likelihood [27,133], while disaster risk reduction yields returns of around 6:1 [134].

Key actions

Hold donor countries accountable for their fair share of the USD 30 billion Target 19(a) commitment. Countries and independent tracking partners should publish annual capacity-weighted scorecards (e.g., using the ODI methodology) to track international biodiversity finance. Scorecards should distinguish between finance where biodiversity is the principal objective and finance where it is only a significant co-benefit to assess the quality of capital. These scorecards should be integrated into GBF national reporting and stock take processes, allowing countries to learn from peers with similar fiscal capacity while making persistent under-contribution and quality gaps visible.

Expand the contributor base beyond traditional OECD donors to mobilize new public and private capital. CBD processes, MDBs and existing biodiversity funds should actively recruit non-traditional contributors, including Gulf states, East Asian economies and upper-middle-income countries with high biodiversity dependence or

growing international finance capacity. They should also mobilize new philanthropic capital from the technology sector, high-net-worth individuals, and corporate foundations. Launching a voluntary “first-time funder” pledge at CBD COP17 would establish a clear entry point and set a powerful precedent that biodiversity finance is a shared global responsibility.

Redirect 30 percent of climate finance toward nature-based solutions and protected-area management. Global climate finance reached an all-time high of roughly USD 2 trillion in 2024 [135]. Countries should adopt a formal sub-target requiring at least 30 percent of international public climate finance to flow to nature-based solutions (commensurate to their potential contribution to cost-effective CO2 mitigation [136]), including protected-area management and ecosystem restoration.

Create structured entry pathways that reduce first-mover risk for new funders. New contributors should be able to co-invest alongside established biodiversity finance mechanisms

such as the GBF Fund, coalitions such as LEAF or experienced bilateral agencies to enable rapid capital deployment without requiring full in-house expertise from day one. Offering shared due diligence and 12-to-18 months of portfolio co-management will allow new funders to safely deploy capital while gradually building their own institutional capability.

Reposition biodiversity finance within global development budgets as a high-return resilience investment. Donors, MDBs and technical partners should commission a small number of decision-grade economic analyses quantifying how Global South nature investments generate tangible benefits for Global North countries, including through food supply-chain security, pandemic-risk reduction, disaster avoidance and lower future instability costs. These funds could be sourced from national security budgets of Global North countries, in recognition of nature's foundational role in global prosperity, resilience and security [137,138]. Funding should then be directed toward conservation programs that simultaneously

deliver strong socioeconomic co-benefits such as poverty alleviation, disaster-risk reduction and long-term fiscal resilience.

Build investable country-led pipelines capable of absorbing new finance. Increased commitments will only translate into 30x30 delivery if recipient countries have credible project pipelines, implementation capacity and financing vehicles.

Donors and MDBs should support countries to develop costed 30x30 investment plans, identify protected-area and OECM financing needs, and prepare bankable opportunities for public, philanthropic and blended finance.

Provide long-term funding to achieve long-term outcomes. Current funding for PAs is often short-term and project based, resulting in short-term gains that are hard to maintain. Funders should provide long-term flexible, baseline program funding that covers essential running costs of protected areas in order to achieve long-term, measured biodiversity outcomes. Models such as the Legacy Landscapes Fund should receive increased funding.



Innovative financing instruments become repeatable funding systems for long-term conservation, management and stewardship

Context

Domestic public budgets, public grants and philanthropy remain essential to conservation finance, while private and market-based finance can play a complementary role. Deploying this capital effectively requires a broader financing architecture capable of matching diverse conservation contexts with instruments suited to their fiscal, ecological and governance conditions is necessary and deploy funding effectively.

No single instrument is appropriate across all geographies or conservation targets. Debt-for-nature swaps, Project Finance for Permanence, jurisdictional REDD+, de-risking tools and blended finance and other mechanisms can each play a role, but only where the enabling conditions are in place. Standards, governance, demand signals, transparency and trusted measurement systems remain uneven, which has restricted market confidence and deal flow. Debt-for-nature swaps have closed fewer than ten major transactions since 2020 [139], while PFPs often require multi-year negotiation cycles. Scaling 30x30 therefore requires turning promising instruments identified in Chapter 4 into credible, repeatable systems that countries, donors, investors and conservation partners can deploy at scale.

Key actions

Prioritize instruments based on maturity, scale potential and fit with country context.

Governments, MDBs, donors and conservation partners should build national, subnational and project-level financing strategies that match instruments to the fiscal, ecological and governance conditions of each 30x30 opportunity. Strategies should distinguish between tools suited to system-wide finance, such as domestic budgets, fiscal mechanisms and debt conversions, and tools better suited to landscapes, seascapes, sites or specific stewardship models, such as PES, fees, levies and revenue-sharing mechanisms.

Reduce transaction costs and improve financing efficiency across instruments.

Governments, MDBs, donors and conservation partners should design financing packages that combine complementary tools rather than treating each instrument as standalone. Where relevant and possible, instruments should be coordinated into single deal structures that sequence near-term capital with long-term revenue generation. For example, debt conversions, PFPs, blended finance and grant capital could stand up future

revenue streams such as jurisdictional REDD+, PES programs such as watershed payments or other conservation-linked mechanisms.

Standardize and replicate proven structured-finance models such as debt-for-nature swaps, PFPs, Jurisdictional REDD+, Payment for Ecosystem Services, and conservation trust funds including the LLF. This standardization can reduce time, cost and complexity to close deals while preserving additionality, accountability and community legitimacy. This requires developing legal templates, common governance arrangements, clearer conservation-commitment frameworks, and faster negotiation processes, alongside a wider pool of coordinators, trustees, fund managers and credit-enhancement providers. Governments and MDBs should actively build country pipelines where sovereign debt conditions, biodiversity value and political readiness align, and mobilize increased capital from bilateral donors who remain an underutilized source of concessional co-finance for deal origination.

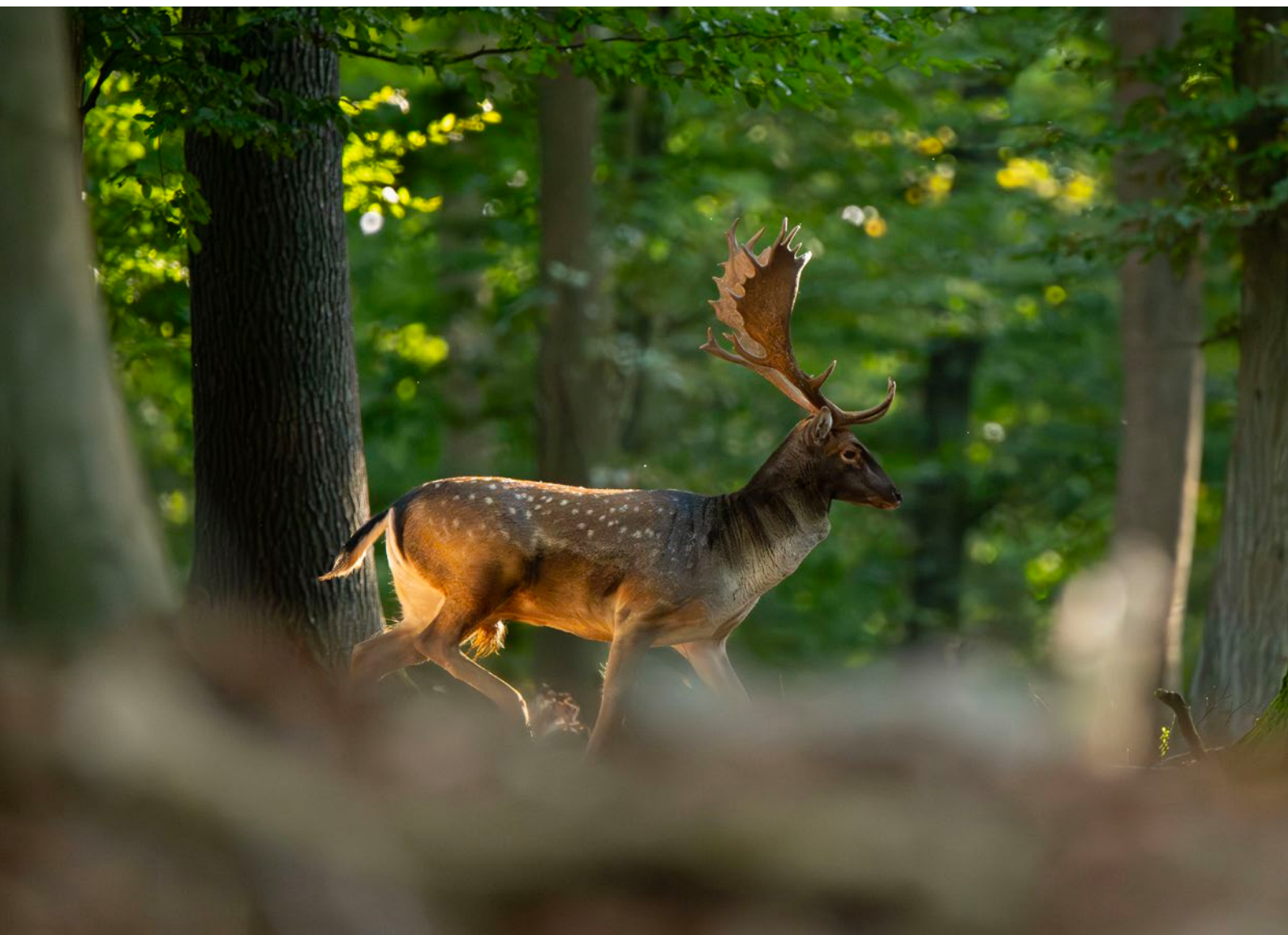
Refer to Appendix V for further key actions for each financial instrument mentioned here.

Create investable pipelines for sustainability-linked bonds and loans, thematic bonds and loans, and de-risking tools and blended-finance.

Governments, MDBs, DFIs, commercial banks and standard-setters should converge around credible biodiversity taxonomies, eligible-use-of-proceeds definitions, nature-related KPIs, and outcome reporting that ensures these instruments finance real conservation and biodiversity results. Aggregation platforms should bundle subscale conservation projects into diversified portfolios to reach institutional investment thresholds, while concessional and philanthropic capital should be used to absorb early risk, extend tenor and crowd in private investors where repayment sources, cash-flow profiles and exit pathways are clear.

Operationalize performance-based payment facilities such as the TFFF through trusted MRV, clear rules and equitable benefit-sharing.

Drawing on the momentum of concepts like the TFFF, these overarching mechanisms should be capitalized by securing anchor capital from sovereign and institutional investors, and further operationalized by developing the necessary national and subnational monitoring systems, transparent eligibility and disbursement rules, as well as legal clarity on rights to revenues and benefit. Benefit-sharing arrangements should direct meaningful resources to PCA management, restoration and stewardship, as well as to Indigenous Peoples and local communities. Independent governance boards with transparent MRV and dedicated allocation mechanisms should be established to ensure accountability and long-term legitimacy.



6.2 A well coordinated 30x30 implementation network



Improved coordination of finance and delivery of shared 30x30 priorities is achieved across bilateral and multilateral donors, philanthropies and NGOs

Context

30x30 finance and implementation remain fragmented, with donors, philanthropies and NGOs often clustering around the same high-profile countries and landscapes while high-potential areas such as the Congo Basin, Borneo, the Yangtze Basin and the Western Ghats receive less support. Coordination is often limited where multiple actors are active, creating duplicative due diligence, inconsistent metrics, disconnected pipelines and higher transaction costs for countries and implementers. This affects the feasibility and potential impact of large-scale instruments such as debt swaps, Project Finance for Permanence deals and landscape programs.

The contribution of nature coalitions and platforms

Several nature coalitions and platforms play a critical role in helping mobilize large-scale planning, financing and implementation support for 30x30. This includes the High Ambition Coalition for Nature and People, SPACES, BIOFIN, Enduring Earth, the Debt for Nature Coalition, the Blue Nature Alliance, the LEAF Coalition, the Africa Keystone Partnership, the Forest Tenure Funders Group, and the Conservation Finance Alliance.

The High Ambition Coalition for Nature and People, SPACES, BIOFIN, the NBSAP Accelerator Partnership, and the Africa Keystone Partnership help countries move from commitment to implementation. The High Ambition Coalition has sustained political momentum behind 30x30, while working closely with the NBSAP Accelerator Partnership to support countries in translating global biodiversity commitments into updated National Biodiversity Strategies and Action Plans (NBSAPs) and actionable implementation pathways. SPACES supports low- and middle-income countries to develop costed, nationally led 30x30 plans through spatial planning, financial modelling, and policy alignment. BIOFIN plays a complementary role by working directly with governments, particularly in the Global South, to build national biodiversity finance plans, assess spending, and develop the fiscal and institutional foundations needed to mobilize finance at scale. In Africa, the Africa Keystone Partnership provides a more regionally focused implementation platform, supporting governments and conservation actors to design and deliver large-scale, landscape-level conservation programs across the continent's most biodiverse regions. Together, these initiatives create a bridge between political commitment, national planning, and implementation readiness, helping address the pre-financing gap that prevents country commitments from becoming investable pipelines. The Forest Tenure Funders Group adds a rights and tenure foundation by mobilizing long-term philanthropic support to strengthen Indigenous and community forest tenure as a foundation for rights-based stewardship, conservation, and climate outcomes. The Community Land Rights and Conservation Finance Initiative (CLARIFI) is an international, rightsholder-led funding mechanism that funds projects by Indigenous Peoples, local communities, and Afro-descendant Peoples to advance their recognition, livelihoods, gender justice, and sustainable resource management.

The Forest Tenure Funders Group mobilized USD 1.7 billion for 2021 to 2025, with a renewed USD 1.8 billion pledge through 2030, to secure Indigenous and community forest tenure in critical ecosystems [140].

Other platforms such as Enduring Earth, the Debt for Nature Coalition, the Blue Nature Alliance, and the LEAF Coalition help convert planning into financeable transactions. Enduring Earth supports the design and delivery of Project Finance for Permanence initiatives that bring together governments,

Indigenous Peoples, local communities, funders, and other partners to secure durable protection for large landscapes and seascapes. The Debt for Nature Coalition is helping to strengthen the debt conversion market by developing shared best-practice standards, building a joint project pipeline, and creating a global forum to reduce fragmentation; it has already supported debt swaps in Seychelles, Belize, Barbados, Gabon, Ecuador and the Bahamas. The Blue Nature Alliance works with governments and Indigenous partners to design and finance large-scale marine conservation areas, directly supporting delivery of 30x30 in the ocean. The LEAF Coalition mobilizes private and government finance to protect tropical and subtropical forests at jurisdictional scale, channeling results-based payments directly to forest countries and subnational jurisdictions, with a focus on maintaining large, contiguous forest landscapes that are critical to both biodiversity and climate goals.

Enduring Earth, launched in 2020, has durably financed 2.3 million sq. km across 8 Project Finance for Permanence initiatives in Bhutan, Brazil, Canada, Colombia, Mexico, Mongolia, Namibia, and Peru securing more than USD 1.8 billion in long-term conservation finance (Enduring Earth 2026). A further 10 initiatives are in development across 12 countries and nations worldwide. By 2030, its current portfolio could represent around 10.7 percent of the 153 million sq. km countries have committed to conserve and protect under Target 3 and deliver 30x30. More than 200 local partners, Indigenous Peoples, rights-holders, governments, and public and private funders are leading PFP development and community development plans [141].

The Conservation Finance Alliance and similar platforms help strengthen standards, tools, and knowledge products. By improving how financing is designed, compared, and documented, they make it easier to structure, replicate, and scale across countries and ecosystems. That matters because the next phase of 30x30 will depend on more repeatable financing systems, not one-off transactions.

Key actions

Establish a dedicated 30x30 coordination platform for donors and implementers. Bilateral donors, multilateral institutions, philanthropies and NGOs should create a standing coordination platform with a clear mandate to convene funders and delivery partners, identify financing gaps and facilitate joint programming. The platform could be housed within the CBD with the role of aligning funding around country-led priorities, using COP-related gatherings to reduce duplication and guide funders and implementers towards underserved priority geographies where no major actor is operating at scale.

Create a shared 30x30 investment pipeline and gap map. The coordination platform should maintain a shared pipeline of 30x30-eligible opportunities that funders can support individually or through co-investment. A systematic mapping of funder and NGO presence against biodiversity

significance, current protection gaps and institutional readiness would make gaps visible and guide attention toward neglected but high-value areas.

Deploy joint programming, country-level compacts and co-investment mechanisms for large-scale transactions. Funders should develop co-investment protocols for debt swaps, PFPs, large landscape programs and multi-country marine initiatives, clarifying how different capital providers can participate in a single transaction with coordinated terms. Where multiple funders are active in the same country, they should develop country-level compacts that pair finance transfers with agreed protection, management and effectiveness objectives. A rapid-response co-financing facility could allow funders to act collectively when time-sensitive opportunities arise, including debt restructuring windows, political openings for protected-area designation or major donor-matching opportunities.

Conclusion

The remaining years to 2030 are decisive for 30x30. Progress has been made, and 30x30 remains achievable. Parties have an agreed global framework, a clear target and a growing evidence base on where action can deliver the greatest value for nature and people. The gap can be closed, but only with a material acceleration in both ambition and delivery.

- 1. Parties must urgently raise ambition to implement 30x30, starting with all countries coming to COP17 with clear 30x30 commitments;** Parties who have not made 30x30 targets must do so before COP17 and those that could do more should strengthen quantified national contributions to 30x30, supported by Target 1 on biodiversity-inclusive spatial planning. Priority should go to high biodiversity areas, ecological representation, connectivity, ecosystem services and climate resilience, including underrepresented terrestrial, freshwater, coastal and marine ecosystems. Accelerated BBNJ implementation can help unlock conservation beyond national jurisdiction. Additional coverage will contribute to the GBF only if PCAs are well governed, effectively managed, well connected, equitably implemented and durable. Parties should therefore strengthen management, enforcement, monitoring and stewardship, while reducing paper parks or reversals and ensuring expansion delivers measurable biodiversity and climate benefits.
- 2. Parties and entities should take urgent action to recognize and support the full range of conservation pathways;** Delivery of Target 3 should reflect area-based approaches recognized in the GBF, including protected areas, high-integrity OECMs, and Indigenous and Traditional Territories where they deliver long-term biodiversity outcomes. Urgent action must be taken to progress adequate recognition of OECMs and ITTs. Consistent with Target 22, Parties should strengthen safeguards that uphold the rights, participation and leadership of Indigenous Peoples and local communities.
- 3. All governments should significantly mobilize domestic nature finance and reform harmful incentives and wealthier nations should urgently increase international funding for 30x30 in line with target 19a, bringing new and additional announcements to COP17.** As agreed at COP15, Parties must urgently strengthen domestic public nature finance through budgets, fiscal planning, and the reform or redirection of harmful subsidies and incentives, consistent with Target 18. International public finance, consistent with Target 19, must be urgently delivered particularly to lower-income countries with limited fiscal space and directly to Indigenous Peoples and local communities. Without adequate finance 30x30 will not be achieved. Governments must begin to consider investment and funding towards 30x30 as not just about conservation, but about global and national security.
- 4. Mainstream nature and reduce land- and sea-use pressures in national decision-making.** In line with Target 14, Parties may need to integrate biodiversity and natural capital values into national accounts, budgets, spatial plans, infrastructure pipelines and investment decisions. This would finally begin to put a value on the ecosystem services that these areas provide to the whole world. This should include reducing pressures from agriculture, fisheries, forestry, energy, resource extraction and infrastructure expansion, while advancing Targets 10 and 16.
- 5. Strengthen transparency, accountability and durability.** Progress toward 30x30 should be measured not only by coverage, but by whether PCAs deliver biodiversity outcomes. Parties should make use of component and complementary indicators agreed for target 3 to strengthen reporting on governance, management effectiveness, financing, ecological outcomes and permanence, helping distinguish genuine implementation from nominal gains.

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