

Linking our biodiversity, climate, and health crises: WCS priorities for CBD CoP16



About the Wildlife Conservation Society (WCS)

The Wildlife Conservation Society (WCS) is an international non-governmental organization (NGO) that has been working across the globe for more than 125 years to save wildlife and wild places. We have active conservation programs in more than 50 countries that work in partnership with governments, Indigenous Peoples, local communities, other conservation organizations, academia, the private sector, and other stakeholders on science- and evidence-based conservation efforts.

For more on our engagement with the Convention on Biological Diversity (CBD) and the Kunming-Montreal Global Biodiversity Framework (GBF), please visit www.wcs.org/cbd.

Ecological integrity is our best tool to improve the health of nature

The interlinked crises of biodiversity loss, climate change, and global health are accelerating, threatening entire ecosystems and undermining national and global efforts to implement the CBD. Ecological integrity - the health of nature - is central to WCS's response to all three of these crises, to halting and reversing the rate of loss biodiversity and to increasing global resilience.

The health of nature can be defined by **ecological integrity** -- or the structure, function, and composition of ecosystems. Protecting areas with high ecological integrity, restoring those under threat, and safeguarding the land and seascapes managed by Indigenous Peoples and by local communities, paying particular attention to human rights-based approaches and socio-ecological dimensions, will be essential to nature's survival and our collective future.

Setting clear, actionable targets is essential for achieving this goal. In line with monitoring frameworks for the Kunming-Montreal Global Biodiversity Framework and the Paris Agreement, WCS and partners work to develop robust metrics for Parties to identify, conserve, and restore ecological integrity.

Ecological integrity is the unifying framework linking the biodiversity, climate and health crises.

Biodiversity

Ecological integrity is necessary to prioritize/plan biodiversity conservation efforts [e.g., 30x30] and to measure our effectiveness.

Climate

We can't achieve our climate mitigation and adaptation goals without maintaining and/or restoring ecological integrity.

Health

Ecological integrity directly impacts human health, and losses of integrity must be avoided for both biodiversity and people.

Outcomes from CoP16 can drive ambition on ecological integrity

To maintain momentum towards the 2030 Mission and the 2050 Vision of the Kunming-Montreal Global Biodiversity Framework, Parties to the CBD must ensure the following outcomes at CBD CoP16.

Our [full policy recommendations](#) on CoP16 working documents are available [here](#).

Biodiversity: Parties incorporate ecological integrity into their NBSAPs and associated national targets that contribute to achievement of the GBF 2030 and 2050 objectives.

Increases in ecological integrity is a long-term goal of the KM-GBF, and is part of achieving 2030 targets (e.g., Targets 1, 2, and more). As Parties submit their national targets prior to CoP16, elements of KM-GBF Targets on ecological integrity and relevant indicators should be reflected in national strategies.

Climate: Parties recognize ecological integrity as critical to climate change mitigation and adaptation efforts, and calls for greater effort within UNFCCC.

Complex negotiations on biodiversity and climate change should conclude with an ambitious decision at CoP16 that includes explicit recognition that ecological integrity underlies the success of our nature-based solutions. The decision should call for greater ambition within the UNFCCC.

Health: Parties adopt a Global Action Plan centered on One Health approaches and recognize the diverse links between ecological integrity and human health.

Parties should adopt a robust Global Action Plan as part of the biodiversity and health agenda item that does two things: 1) recognizes linkages between ecological integrity and our desired health outcomes; and 2) maintains language on preventing zoonotic pathogen spillover and spillback

The GBF: Parties should commit to implementation of national targets and NBSAPs, and build mechanisms for progress on finance and global reviews of implementation.

To maintain the credibility of the KM-GBF and its associated processes, Parties must commit to implementation of global targets through national targets, including those related to finance and mainstreaming, and agree to transparent, inclusive processes and timelines for reviews of progress.