



TRAFFIC®

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# TOWARDS SUSTAINABLE USE OF WILD SPECIES FOR PEOPLE AND NATURE

MEASURING GLOBAL PROGRESS



Daniel Lloyd Blunk-Fernández / Unsplash

# USE AND TRADE

USE AND TRADE OF WILD SPECIES ARE ISSUES AT THE NEXUS OF TODAY'S MOST PRESSING CONSERVATION AND DEVELOPMENT CONCERNS

**The use and trade in wild animal, plant and fungi species contributes to the livelihoods of hundreds of millions of people around the world and generates hundreds of billions of dollars of economic value annually. However, all too often, efforts to ensure this use and trade remain legal and at sustainable levels struggle to succeed. This is jeopardising the status of species, ecosystems and the wellbeing of people who depend on wild resources for their livelihood.**

The Intergovernmental Science-Policy Platform on Biodiversity and Ecosystem Services (IPBES) Global Assessment Report on biodiversity and ecosystem services (2019) estimated that direct overexploitation is the main cause of marine biodiversity loss and second most significant cause of terrestrial

biodiversity loss. This threatens not only the species being used and the benefits derived from them, but the ecosystems that may themselves provide vital services and those that depend on them. For many species, there is a combined issue of illegal as well as legal but unsustainable use and trade linked to a wider lack of good governance and effective management, as well as persistent and systemic corruption in the area of natural resource management.

The past decade has seen the development and implementation of a growing number of regulatory and voluntary systems and approaches to support sustainable management of wildlife resources and facilitate benefit flows from legal, sustainable use and trade in wild species.

Governments have acted to strengthen management and traceability systems for wildlife products in trade, e.g., in relation to timber trade in Lao PDR, Cambodia, Myanmar, Tanzania, Cameroon and Madagascar, and trade in European Eels to Asia.

Positive actions by businesses that depend on sustainable supplies of wild-sourced products are also growing. Chain of custody, certification and other approaches are increasingly being used to demonstrate sustainability and traceability along supply chains in the timber, fisheries, wild plant and fungi, and leather goods sectors. Key companies in sectors such as transport, logistics, courier, and freight companies, alongside e-commerce, social media and travel and tourism, are mainstreaming biodiversity into their operations by implementing “zero-tolerance” policies towards illegal wildlife trade.

Nevertheless, expanding human populations, growing consumer purchasing power and global interconnectivity drive and facilitate increasing wildlife consumption that is all too often at unsustainable levels. The illegal exploitation and trade in wildlife products, which is exacerbated by corruption and links with financing other illicit activities, continues

to drive an increasing number of species towards extinction, and undermines national and international efforts to transition towards sustainable practices.

The Post-2020 Global Biodiversity Framework (GBF) is currently being drafted by negotiations of the Parties to the Convention on Biological Diversity (CBD). The Parties have shown a strong commitment to sustainable use of biodiversity for the benefit of the species and people that rely on them through the draft Targets 5 and 9 of the GBF. Although not yet finalised and adopted, the draft Global Biodiversity Framework, which establishes the level of global ambition. However, **an effective way to measure the progress towards this draft of Target 5 is currently lacking.**

To fill this gap in a monitoring framework, TRAFFIC proposes the development of a headline indicator for the draft Target 5<sup>1</sup> of the Global Biodiversity Framework, to ensure that there is adequate measurement of progress towards this target. Although an index exists for the proportion of fish stocks that are harvested sustainably (FAO<sup>2</sup>), no similar index exists for terrestrial species of fauna, flora or fungi.

**Currently lacking**  
an effective measure of progress on Target 5

## <sup>1</sup>Draft Target 5

“Ensure that the harvesting, trade and use of wild species is sustainable, legal, and safe for human health”

## PRACTICALITY OF THE IUCN RED LIST

The IUCN Red List provides a global assessment of species and the threats that are contributing to the extinction risks that they face. Within these assessments each species is evaluated for whether it is used at Local, National and International level, as well as whether “biological resource use” including intentional harvesting is a contributing threat to extinction risk. At a global level this can assess whether use is a threat (unsustainable) or not (sustainable), thus giving a proportion of assessed species that are sustainably harvested. Furthermore, the changing threat from use can be further monitored over time by using a Red List Index for taxonomic groups

that have been fully assessed multiple times, and the contribution of the harvest and trade as a threat can be further investigated (see Butchart, 2008).

While this gives an extremely useful overview of species that have been assessed against the IUCN Red List, a large number of species that are harvested are yet to be assessed, many of which may be considered to be of “Least Concern” and not in imminent peril of extinction, but where use may still be unsustainable, which may be masked within this wide category of the Red List.

Given the importance of the use of wild species nationally, concerns and warnings over unsustainable use are most likely need to be tackled at a national level before they are elevated to an international level. Therefore,

indicators that are nationally based and relevant both to assessing sustainability, but also to highlighting concerns that can be addressed nationally would be particularly useful.

2. <https://www.fao.org/sustainable-development-goals/indicators/1441/en/>



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# CONCEPT PROPOSAL

TRAFFIC PROPOSES TO DEVELOP A NEW INDICATOR FOR THE SUSTAINABLE USE OF WILD SPECIES, DATA FOR WHICH WOULD BE COLLECTED NATIONALLY, WITH THE POTENTIAL TO AGGREGATE UP TO A REGIONAL OR GLOBAL INDICATOR.

## Interested parties

include CITES, CBD, UNEP, CIFOR and FAO

**TRAFFIC will work with others to develop a framework that would be populated with national data and be driven by CBD Parties. Given the specific reference to the trade in wild species, the intention would be to disaggregate the indicator for species traded internationally. This would be relevant to the Convention on International Trade in Endangered Species of Wild Fauna and Flora (CITES), as well as the implementation of the SDGs 12, 14 and 15 and inform the IPBES Sustainable Use Assessment.**

TRAFFIC has already started reaching out to some Parties for their buy-in with several expressing interest. Others interested in engaging on development include IUCN, UNEP-WCMC, BirdLife, IIED, UNCTAD, as well as the partners of the Collaborative Partnership on Sustainable Wildlife Management (including CITES, CBD, UNEP, CIFOR, FAO).

## DURATION

3 year project

## OUTCOME

The indicator framework on 'Sustainable Use of Wild Species' is developed, piloted nationally in countries with varied species management, abundance, and capacity resource situations, regional capacity is built at the regional level, and the global level indicator is available for policy-makers to track the progress and adapt actions to promote the legal, sustainable and safe use and trade in wild species.

## BUDGET

USD 300,000 per year for three-year project. Further budget details are available.



## **PROPOSED STEPS FOR INDICATOR DEVELOPMENT AND ROLL-OUT PROCESS:**

1. Conduct a situation analysis to include consideration of what relevant data are available and how potential indicators can be developed.
2. Form an expert group or a Steering Committee including CBD Parties (expert representatives from each region), and other stakeholders, including GEF, CPW, CITES, UNCTAD, WTO, ITC, FAO, IUCN, UNEP-WCMC, BirdLife, IIED, NORAD, USAID.
3. Hold discussions/workshops to develop a framework for national level indicators and data collection.
4. Select countries to pilot approach and prove concept.
5. Adapt framework and approach based on pilot studies.
6. Publish journal article describing approach and indicator methods.
7. Develop necessary data management systems to be accessed and populated nationally and to produce national level indicator outputs.
8. Conduct regional outreach to ensure significant buy-in to indicator approach and agreement to contribute data. Provide training and support to Parties for data collection and provision.
9. Produce global level indicators in 2026 and 2030.

TRAFFIC is a leading non-governmental organisation working globally on trade in wild animals and plants in the context of both biodiversity conservation and sustainable development.

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