



Information Document

Development of the component indicator for human-wildlife conflict for Target 4 of the Kunming-Montreal Global Biodiversity Framework

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Background

Human-wildlife conflict (HWC) is an escalating and serious concern for species conservation, sustainable livelihoods and development worldwide. In December 2022, the Parties to the Convention of Biological Diversity adopted the new *Kunming-Montreal Global Biodiversity Framework* ([CBD/COP/15/L.25](#)) which is the first time that a major international policy includes HWC:

*Target 4: “Ensure urgent management actions to halt human induced extinction of known threatened species..., **and effectively manage human-wildlife interactions to minimize human-wildlife conflict for coexistence.**”*

To monitor progress towards the targets, the Parties also adopted the draft Monitoring Framework for the Global Biodiversity Framework which includes a set of indicators for each target ([CBD/COP/DEC/15/5](#)). The indicator for HWC is included as a component indicator, with the following wording:

Trends in effective and sustainable management of human-wildlife conflict and coexistence

Prior to COP15, the [IUCN SSC Human-Wildlife Conflict & Coexistence Specialist Group](#) (HWCCSG) published a [series of documents](#) with recommendations on the inclusion of HWC in the GBF and started convening discussions about the further development of the HWC indicator. In June 2022, the first technical workshop was held, which included members of the HWCCSG, UN FAO, WWF, the CBD Secretariat and OEWG, UNEP-WCMC and several Parties. A summary of the discussions can be found [here](#).

As the institution for coordinating the development of the framework for the HWC, the HWCCSG put forward a [concept note](#) and has coordinated efforts over the last 10 months to ensure progress towards developing an indicator for this part of Target 4.

Concept for the indicator

As Target 4 refers to *conflict* and *coexistence*, early discussions included the feasibility of the scope of the indicator. Monitoring *coexistence* is in many ways much more difficult to delineate, as humans coexist with wildlife all the time – e.g. driving past a deer in a field or observing a bird in a garden – recording the absence of an incident or encounter would be as meaningless. Although an emphasis on *coexistence* framing is popular among conservation scientists as it lends a more positive outlook and feel to the issue, for the purpose of measuring change and progress, a focus on tracking impacts of living with wildlife, the indicator will focus on *conflict*.

Furthermore, human-wildlife conflict is a complex issue that is inextricably determined by social, cultural and political contexts, which determine the extent to which coexistence is possible. IUCN defines human-wildlife conflict as *struggles that emerge when the presence or behaviour of wildlife poses actual or perceived, direct and recurring threat to human interests or needs, leading to disagreements between groups of people and negative impacts on people and/or wildlife (IUCN 2020 Position Statement on HWC)*. HWC specialists agree that monitoring only the people-animal interactions and impacts (such as losses, deaths, killing of wildlife, damage to livelihoods, etc) would be entirely insufficient in capturing the core issues and triggering drivers of any given HWC.

Therefore is essential, first and foremost, that any indicator on HWC captures not only the quantifiable impacts but also the more qualitative socio-political contexts which determine whether or not a country is progressing towards coexistence. In developing a monitoring approach for human-wildlife conflict, there are several key considerations (discussed also in more detail in the [Information document on developing indicators for a target on human-wildlife conflict in the framework](#), 2022):

- the indicator needs to focus on the long-term aim of the drivers HWC resolution, not symptomatic components thereof
- developing monitoring methods for HWC needs to be a highly participatory, co-designed process involving many stakeholders, to ensure it is relevant and applicable
- the human, social and intangible aspects of HWCs are the most important components to measure, as they are most reflective of the root and nature of the problem
- HWC situations and management capacities are relative and highly variable, and reporting needs to be feasible and appropriate for each party, keeping in mind the resources required for collecting and analysing data

With this in mind, in order to measure ***Trends in effective and sustainable management of human-wildlife conflict and coexistence***, and to capture the complexity of HWC, the HWCCSG recommended that an accurate and meaningful method for measuring and monitoring HWC would need to include three essential elements:

- 1) Incidences of negative impacts or encounters on people and wildlife
- 2) Social, cultural, and political willingness to coexist with wildlife
- 3) Quality of processes of dialogue, engagement, policy and capacity

Given the complexity, scale and context-specific nature of HWC across 196 CBD Parties, the aim was to develop a common, shared monitoring approach through which countries report on their situation and relative progress in managing HWC. Therefore the proposed list of metrics provides a framework for *what* to measure, but allows flexibility on what tools, methods and surveys a country could use given its national context.

For example, some countries already have existing data collection systems in place focused on measuring impact (element 1) which they can use, but the framework directs them to look at the gaps and create additional monitoring systems for other elements. We have not identified any country that systematically monitors elements 2 and 3.

Indicator linkage to guidance

The approach of giving substantial weighting to the socio-economic and political aspects of human-wildlife conflict within the indicator serves not only to provide a more holistic and true understanding of the state of HWC in any given country, it is also intended to help nudge and encourage parties towards more holistic management of HWC.

Furthermore, such a multifaceted approach would align well with the foundational principles of the [IUCN SSC Guidelines on Human-Wildlife Conflict and Coexistence](#) (IUCN, 2023):

- 1) *Do no harm* (consider unintended consequences and follow a precautionary principle)
- 2) *Understand issues and context* (check assumptions and analyse the interplay of drivers)
- 3) *Work together* (build teams across relevant stakeholders and sectors)
- 4) *Integrate science and policy* (evidence-based integration into governance and policy)
- 5) *Enable sustainable pathways* (anticipating and preventing emerging conflicts)

The Subsidiary Body on Scientific, Technical and Technological Advice (SBSTTA) of the CBD also recommends the [IUCN SSC Guidelines on Human-Wildlife Conflict & Coexistence](#) in its *Compilation of submissions of views and information on existing tools and guidance that can support the implementation of the KMGBF (SBSTTA/26/INF/16)*

Output of the Working Group

In line with the key considerations outlined above and following a participatory and collaborative process for the development of the indicator, the HWCCSG issued a six-week-long open [call for applications](#) and [Terms of Reference](#) for a multi-disciplinary, intersectoral working group. This resulted in over 150 applications, and an initial group of approximately 75 participants from 45 countries was formed in October 2023. This expanded roster included members of the HWCCSG, academic and technical experts in the field of HWC, invited IGO partners, and representatives from 14 CBD Parties, including the United Kingdom, Israel, Costa Rica, Italy, Ethiopia.

The members of the Working Group met via a series of online workshops facilitated by the HWCCSG Chair, Policy Officers and several of its members. To date, four workshops have been held between November 2023 and April 2024. These workshops included eight iterations of the concept, data sources, organisation of metrics, essential vs optional metrics, and feasibility of data gathering. Several participants also gave brief information talks about existing HWC data collection efforts in various countries. The Working Group also looked at other indicators and existing related assessment methodologies such as METT, SAGE, OECM assessment tool, 5DSAF. After four workshops, the working group was refined in May 2024 to contain a core group of 35 members based on their recurring active participation.

The current version, which continues to be refined, contains 6 sections:

- 1) Species and spaces
- 2) People and livelihoods
- 3) Interventions
- 4) Perceptions and tolerance
- 5) Governance and engagement
- 6) Policy and capacity

Each of these currently break down into 6-8 metrics, some of which are quantitative and/or categorical and others qualitative, allowing for observational responses. The reporting form also includes recording of the data sources used and the confidence or reliability of the data.

Importantly, the collection of data for the HWC indicator does not need to be the sole responsibility of the government. Many of these data may be best collected via collaborations or by outsourcing the monitoring research to research organisations or universities, NGOs with research departments or other conservation monitoring stakeholders. This spreads the resource burden and encourages collaboration and innovation, while at the same time providing a common, internationally used structure for the types of data that are to be gathered.

Since component indicators are optional indicators and Parties are not required to use them for reporting, it is assumed that countries where HWC is a high concern and priority are more likely to use this indicator framework. However, it is expected that the number of countries using it will be high as many countries have already expressed their need for guidance on how to monitor HWC in order to assess the effectiveness of their management actions nationally, even before reporting obligations to the CBD.

Next steps

As this is a novel attempt and collaboration for an internationally used common indicator for human-wildlife conflict, its development requires many iterations of collective thinking, drafting and refining. Currently (May 2024) the next steps include:

- Presentation of the conceptual framework at CBD SBSTTA 26 and early stage consultations with selected Parties, and further fine-tuning with the core Working Group
- Preparation of a draft list of recommended tools for collecting data for specific metrics with the core Working Group and external experts where needed (e.g. social survey design, apps for incident data, compensation records, governance reviews)
- Preparation of an information document for CBD COP16, request for feedback and presentation of the indicator concept and draft reporting form at COP16
- Final revisions and planning of piloting phase, to be undertaken in 2025

Further information

All IUCN HWWCSG background documents are available at: www.hwctf.org/policy

Members of the HWC Indicator Working Group: www.hwctf.org/hwcindicatordevelopment

IUCN HWCCSG Focal Points: www.hwctf.org/focalpoints

IUCN SSC Guidelines on Human-Wildlife Conflict & Coexistence: www.hwctf.org/guidelines

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