

Post-2020 Global Biodiversity Framework  
**Information document on developing indicators  
for a target on human-wildlife conflict in the framework**

31 January 2022

The Convention on Biological Diversity's 2050 Vision of *Living in harmony with nature* envisages a world in which environmental conflicts are much reduced and “*humanity lives in harmony with nature and in which wildlife and other living species are protected.*” This inherently entails prioritising reducing conflicts that exist over natural resources, including wildlife, protected areas, access, use, and many other aspects of conservation.

Among these biodiversity conflicts, [human-wildlife conflict](#) (HWC) is a rapidly growing, serious, and widespread concern for species conservation, sustainable livelihoods and development worldwide. HWC typically occurs when wildlife poses a direct or indirect and recurring threat to the livelihoods or safety of people, leading to the persecution of the wildlife. A great number of species are affected by HWC, from invertebrates to the largest mammals, and much media and political attention is drawn particularly to conflicts involving large, iconic wildlife species such as elephants, large cats, bears, crocodiles and sharks, which require large areas and often cannot survive only inside protected areas. To enable nature-friendly agriculture and ensure food security alongside biodiversity conservation, the international community must look closely at how communities can live sustainably alongside wildlife and shift a greater focus onto developing ways to coexist with these and many other species outside of protected areas.

HWC is included in the First Draft of the Post-2020 Global Biodiversity Framework ([CBD/WG2020/3/3](#)), which states: **Target 4. Ensure active management actions to enable the recovery and conservation of species and the genetic diversity of wild and domesticated species, including through ex situ conservation, and effectively manage human-wildlife interactions to avoid or reduce human-wildlife conflict.**

The [IUCN SSC Human-Wildlife Conflict Task Force](#) welcomes the removal of a percentage reduction for this target as initially proposed in the Updated Zero Draft ([CBD/POST2020/2/1](#)) because a total percentage reduction as the universal target for all parties may not be the most helpful way to enable countries to meet their target of reducing HWC. As noted in our “[Information document on the inclusion of a target on human-wildlife conflict in the framework](#)”, HWC comprises impacts on wildlife, areas, livelihoods, human wellbeing, and social inequalities. Summing all these effects, which will vary by region, into a single percentage would be very difficult to calculate and too vague to be meaningful.

We recommended the target should focus on the task of *mitigating, managing and preventing* HWC effectively and sustainably, using a combination of quantitative and qualitative measures to demonstrate progress to this aim. Here we outline our recommendations related to indicators for a target including HWC. HWC is both a biodiversity challenge and a sustainable development challenge, making it difficult to measure and develop indicators for the framework comprehensively and holistically. The [Co-chairs' text on item 3 Annex](#) of the Scientific and Technical Advice on Updated Goals and Targets, and Related Indicators and Baselines, of the Updated Zero Draft initially suggested

that “human-wildlife conflict, while important, is problematic given the lack of information to establish a baseline and to monitor progress”. However, efforts are underway to provide precisely such a baseline and progress monitoring. Methods to measure and monitor HWC certainly exist and have been carried out by many researchers at local, community, regional and sub-national scales. Many individual studies have been carried out which it may be possible to bring together into a collaborative monitoring framework.

## Five key considerations for developing HWC indicators

In developing a monitoring approach and indicators, we urge the consideration of the following:

- 1) The indicator needs to focus on the long-term aim of human-wildlife conflict resolution, not symptomatic components thereof.** Keeping in mind Goodhart’s Law: *when a measure becomes a target, it ceases to be a good measure*, overly focussing on easily noticeable elements of HWC, such as income loss from crop damage or number of animals killed in retaliation does not adequately provide an indication of whether the conflict itself is being managed effectively.
- 2) Developing monitoring methods for HWC needs to be a highly participatory, co-designed process involving many stakeholders.** Process is as important as the final method. To improve the approach, ensure it is relevant and applicable, and to create co-ownership and commitment, extensive collaboration and a pathway for ongoing iterative learning about HWC management is essential.
- 3) The human, social and the intangible aspects of HWCs are the most important components to measure, as they are closest to the root of the problem.** HWCs are about conflicts between groups of people over the management of wildlife; measuring the social dimensions of conflict, and ability of stakeholders to navigate these is core and essential in measuring HWC.
- 4) HWC situations and management capacities are relative and highly variable.** Within and across countries HWCs are managed to very different extents. A universal measurement method would need to be adaptable to large variations in scale (local, regional, national) as well as the uniqueness and biological as well as social complexity of each scenario over time.
- 5) Measuring and monitoring HWC can be costly and resource dependent.** Substantial resources and budget allocations will be needed for parties to collect and analyse data. This can be operationally onerous and costly. It is important to consider the practicalities and do a feasibility test on several diverse HWC situations to ‘field-test’ the method, and co-design cost-effective innovative approaches.

## Addressing HWC facilitates the enabling conditions of the framework

The [IUCN SSC Position Statement on the Management of Human-Wildlife Conflict](#) “urges governments, non-governmental organisations, researchers, practitioners, community leaders, environmental agencies, and others to ensure that efforts to manage human-wildlife conflicts are pursued through well-informed, holistic, and collaborative processes that take into account underlying social, cultural and economic contexts”. Central to the effective mitigation and prevention of HWC are the Enabling Conditions required for the implementation of the framework, which contribute to the attainment of other societal conditions, as outlined in Paragraph 14 of Section G (page 7) of the

Update of the Zero Draft of the Post-2020 Global Biodiversity Framework Note by the Co-Chairs ([CBD/POST2020/PREP/2/1](#)). Best practice in HWC management not only requires but also enables and facilitates all of the conditions listed in Paragraph 14.

### Technical advisory support is available to parties

Governments, non-governmental organisations, communities, companies, research institutions, and individuals worldwide are working to understand and address HWCs more efficiently and sustainably. The [IUCN SSC Human-Wildlife Conflict Task Force](#) is an interdisciplinary global advisory group that support organisations, governments and professionals working to resolve conflicts in biodiversity conservation. It was created to foster links between policy, science, and communities and assimilate knowledge and capacity for HWC management.

The Task Force is available to assist with technical support to all parties and able to advise on the operationalisation of a monitoring framework for the HWC component of Target 4 as part of a technical expert group, following Paragraph 11 of the Draft Recommendations submitted by the Chair regarding the [Scientific and Technical Information to Support the Review of the Updated Goals and Targets, and Related Indicators and Baselines](#) (26 May 2021).

Managing HWC and coexistence is a field of continuous learning that requires collaborative processes tailored to social and cultural contexts. To this end, the IUCN SSC Human-Wildlife Conflict Task Force is currently in the final stages of preparing comprehensive practical guidance to assist practitioners, researchers, communities, and decision-makers in navigating human-wildlife interactions. The [IUCN Guidelines on the Management of Human-Wildlife Conflict](#), which provide comprehensive practical advice, is expected to be piloted in 2022 with governments, conservation organisations, communities, and projects around the globe.

#### About the IUCN SSC Human-Wildlife Conflict Task Force

The [IUCN SSC Human-Wildlife Conflict Task Force](#) is an interdisciplinary global advisory group that support organisations, governments and professionals working to resolve conflicts in biodiversity conservation. It was created to foster links between policy, science, and communities, and assimilating knowledge and capacity for this human-wildlife conflict management. The Task Force is working to help enable the following outcomes: 1) **increase understanding** and awareness of the complexities of conflict; 2) **facilitate more collaboration** between practitioners and policy, science and community 3) **catalyse more resources** and effort committed to good human-wildlife conflict management; 4) **encourage preventive mitigation** of emerging human-wildlife conflicts; 5) **integrate effective policies** into global biodiversity and development agendas

#### Key resources:

[IUCN Human-Wildlife Conflict Resource Library](#)  
[IUCN SSC Position Statement on the Management of Human-Wildlife Conflict](#)  
[IUCN SSC Guidelines on the Management of Human-Wildlife Conflict](#)  
[International Conference on Human-Wildlife Conflict and Coexistence](#)

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