



FROM COMMITMENTS TO ACTION:

WHAT AFRICA'S SEVENTH NATIONAL REPORTS REVEAL ABOUT PROGRESS ON THE GLOBAL BIODIVERSITY FRAMEWORK

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EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

The adoption of the Kunming–Montreal Global Biodiversity Framework (KMGBF) in December 2022 established a global commitment to halt and reverse biodiversity loss by 2030. For Africa, delivering on this ambition is essential to safeguarding biodiversity, strengthening climate resilience and sustaining nature-dependent livelihoods. As countries prepare for the seventeenth meeting of the Conference of the Parties to the Convention on Biological Diversity (CBD COP17), the central question is whether national commitments are translating into effective implementation and measurable outcomes.

Commissioned by WWF, this review, *From Commitments*

to Action: What Africa's Seventh National Reports Reveal about Progress on the Global Biodiversity Framework, assesses 16 selected countries across Africa's five subregions. Drawing on Seventh National Reports (NR7s), policy and technical documents, and stakeholder consultations, it examines six priority targets: spatial planning (Target 1), ecosystem restoration (Target 2), conservation (Target 3), climate change and biodiversity (Target 8), access and benefit-sharing (Target 13), and biodiversity finance (Target 19). The findings are illustrative rather than statistically representative of the continent.

KEY FINDINGS

African countries have made progress in aligning national biodiversity strategies, targets and reporting with the KMGBF. The assessment's reporting snapshot indicates that African countries accounted for approximately 30% of global submissions across selected GBF planning and reporting instruments. Within Africa, submission rates were 98% for national targets, 80% for NR7s and 67% for updated National Biodiversity Strategies and Action Plans (NBSAPs). These figures demonstrate engagement with the global framework, but reporting and policy alignment alone do not establish implementation effectiveness or biodiversity recovery.

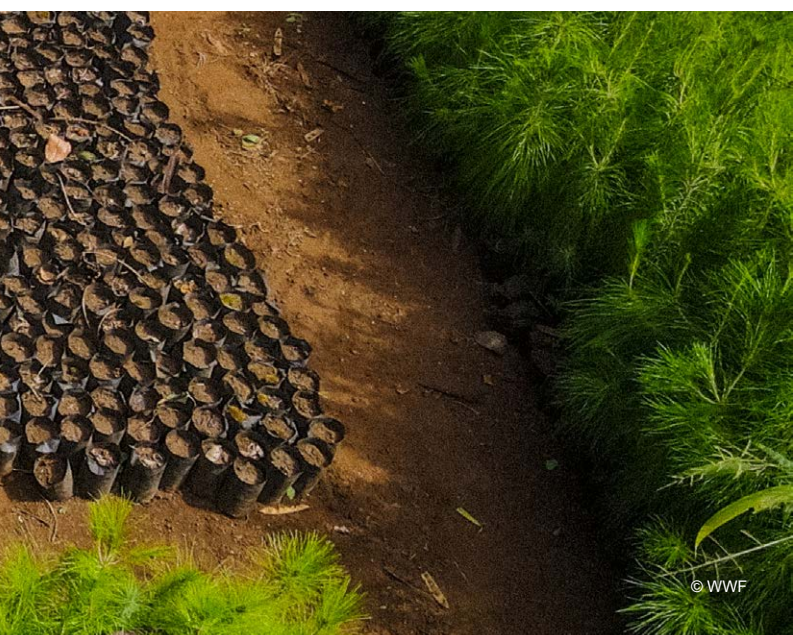
National reports document initiatives in spatial planning, restoration, protected areas, community conservation, climate adaptation and access and benefit-sharing. However, progress varies across countries and targets, while evidence of ecological outcomes and equitable socioeconomic benefits remains limited. Restoration reporting, for example, does not consistently distinguish areas planned, under restoration and successfully restored. Conservation coverage figures do not necessarily demonstrate ecological representativeness, connectivity, effective management or equitable governance. Climate–biodiversity integration and benefit-sharing arrangements remain unevenly operationalised, while reporting on digital sequence information is limited.





THE PRINCIPAL CONSTRAINT IS THE GAP BETWEEN COMMITMENTS AND DELIVERY.

Four interrelated barriers stand out: inadequate and insufficiently tracked biodiversity finance; fragmented institutions and weak integration of biodiversity into sectoral policies, development planning and public budgets; inconsistent data, indicators and outcome monitoring; and insufficiently documented participation and accountability, including for Indigenous Peoples and Local Communities (IPLCs), women, youth and non-state actors.



STRATEGIC PRIORITIES FOR POLICYMAKERS AND NEGOTIATORS

The review calls for a shift from reporting commitments to demonstrating results. Priority actions are to:

- **Secure political ownership and institutional coordination** by assigning clear responsibilities, strengthening cross-sectoral mechanisms and embedding biodiversity priorities in national development plans and budgets.
- **Close the implementation finance gap** through costed NBSAPs, stronger domestic resource mobilisation, improved expenditure tracking and sustained international and appropriate private-sector finance.
- **Deliver inclusive and equitable action** by ensuring meaningful participation of IPLCs, women, youth and other stakeholders in decision-making, implementation and monitoring.
- **Strengthen evidence and accountability** through aligned indicators, more consistent reporting, outcome-based monitoring and systematic tracking of government and non-government commitments.
- **Scale regional cooperation and shared learning** to strengthen technical capacity, improve data systems and address transboundary biodiversity challenges.

IMPLICATIONS FOR COP17 AND BEYOND

COP17 offers African countries an opportunity to advance a common call for predictable and adequate finance, implementation support, capacity development and stronger accountability, while reflecting the continent's diverse national circumstances and development priorities. Negotiating outcomes should translate into practical national and regional follow-up, with clear implementation priorities, mobilised resources and measurable milestones towards 2030.

The review's central message is that Africa's progress towards the KMGBF must be judged not simply by strategies aligned or reports submitted, but by whether commitments are financed, inclusively implemented and translated into measurable gains for biodiversity, ecosystem resilience and human well-being. Moving from commitments to action requires political leadership, coherent institutions, credible evidence and sustained accountability.

ABBREVIATIONS

ABS	Access and BenefitSharing
AHTEG	Ad Hoc Technical Expert Group
AFR100	African Forest Landscape Restoration Initiative
AEWA	Agreement on the Conservation of AfricanEurasian Migratory Waterbirds
AGN	African Group of Negotiators
APAC	Areas of Community Heritage and Territories
BIOFIN	Biodiversity Finance Initiative
CBD	Convention on Biological Diversity
CBD ORT	CBD Online Reporting Tool
CBNRM	CommunityBased Natural Resource Management
CITES	Convention on International Trade in Endangered Species of Wild Fauna and Flora
CMS	Convention on Migratory Species
COMIFAC	Central African Forests Commission
COP	Conference of the Parties
CREMA	Community Resource Management Area
CSO	Civil Society Organization
DSI	Digital Sequence Information
EbA	EcosystemBased Adaptation
EBI	Ethiopian Biodiversity Institute
FRFCA	Forest Regeneration and Carbon Absorption Initiative
GCF	Green Climate Fund
GEF	Global Environment Facility
ITPGRFA	International Treaty on Plant Genetic Resources for Food and Agriculture
IPLC	Indigenous Peoples and Local Communities
KBA	Key Biodiversity Area

KMGBF	KunmingMontreal Global Biodiversity Framework
LMMA	Locally Managed Marine Area
MEA	Multilateral Environmental Agreement
METT	Management Effectiveness Tracking Tool
NBSAP	National Biodiversity Strategies and Action Plans
NCF	Nigerian Conservation Foundation
NFP	National Focal Point
NGO	NonGovernmental Organization
NR7	Seventh National Report
NPAES	National Protected Area Expansion Strategy
NZNP	Net Zero Nature Positive Project
OECD	Other Effective AreaBased Conservation Measures
PA	Protected Area
RAPPAM	Rapid Assessment and Prioritization of Protected Area Management
REDD+	Reducing Emissions from Deforestation and Forest Degradation
RCMRD	Regional Centre for Mapping of Resources for Development
SANBI	South African National Biodiversity Institute
SBSTTA	Subsidiary Body on Scientific, Technical and Technological Advice
SBI	Subsidiary Body on Implementation
SDG	Sustainable Development Goal
UNCCD	United Nations Convention to Combat Desertification
UNDP	United Nations Development Programme
UNEP	United Nations Environment Programme
UNFCCC	United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change
WWF	World Wide Fund for Nature



INTRODUCTION

1. BACKGROUND

The adoption of the Kunming–Montreal Global Biodiversity Framework (KMGBF) in December 2022, at the 15th Conference of the Parties (COP15) to the Convention on Biological Diversity (CBD), marked a landmark in global biodiversity governance (CBD COP Decision 15/4). With four overarching goals for 2050 and 23 targets to be achieved by 2030, the Framework established an ambitious global agenda to halt and reverse biodiversity loss while safeguarding the contributions of nature to human well-being. Its adoption has catalysed efforts to align national policies and update National Biodiversity Strategies and Action Plans (NBSAPs), providing a shared framework for translating global commitments into national action and advancing sustainable development.

For the past four years, governments have worked with stakeholders and partners to develop tools that align national policies with the GBF. These efforts have focused on integrating biodiversity priorities across policy frameworks and implementation practices, promoting coherence, and strengthening transparency and accountability. This work supports national implementation of the GBF through established planning, monitoring, reporting and review processes.

Progress across African countries is reflected in submissions to the Convention on Biological Diversity's (CBD) Online Reporting Tool (ORT). These include national targets, National Biodiversity Strategies and Action Plans (NBSAPs), and Seventh National Reports (NR7). These submissions fulfil Parties' reporting obligations under the Convention and constitute key elements of the GBF implementation framework.

Using the CBD's prescribed reporting template, the Seventh National Reports (NR7s) provide valuable information on Parties' progress in implementing the Kunming–Montreal Global Biodiversity Framework (GBF) through aligned or updated National Biodiversity Strategies and Action Plans (NBSAPs). They highlight key implementation challenges, proposed actions and illustrative case studies. The 25 African countries that submitted their NR7s by the February 2026 deadline contributed to the Global Report on the Collective Progress in the Implementation of the GBF, considered at SBSTTA 28 and SBI 7. These reports are also expected to inform the Global Review of collective progress, a key focus of negotiations at the forthcoming CBD COP17¹.

The journey towards COP 17 has been informed by several assessments undertaken by CBD bodies, UN agencies, partners and other relevant processes. These assessments have examined progress towards the defined global biodiversity goals and targets and identified the challenges that must be addressed to accelerate implementation of the KMGBF.

However, most of these assessments have focused on global progress, while ongoing studies examining African countries' experience remain fragmented across Anglophone and Francophone contexts². This gap highlights the urgent need for a consolidated, Africa-focused review that captures the continent's perspectives and builds on the recently published Seventh National Reports (NR7) submitted by African countries.



1 CBD/SBSTTA/28/1 ; CBD/SBI/7/1; CBD/COP/17/Rev.1

2 UNEP 2026 – Study on Policy Alignment with GBF and Policy Coherence for Anglophone Africa and Study for Francophone Africa

1.1. OBJECTIVES AND SCOPE

This study aimed at assessing evidence from African countries' 7th National Reports and inform policy dialogues ahead of COP17. The findings will also inform practical actions to accelerate implementation of the Kunming-Montreal Global Biodiversity Framework (KMGBF) beyond the conference.

The review cover:

- Assess regional progress in implementing the Kunming-Montreal Global Biodiversity Framework through a review of selected Seventh national reports from Africa.
- Evaluate regional progress towards the goals of the KMGBF, including the comparability and quality of reporting on selected GBF targets.
- Review the provision of means of implementation in line with the KMGBF
- Assess the contributions of relevant multilateral environmental agreements, international organizations and processes towards the implementation of the KMGBF
- Identify regional implementation challenges, gaps, and opportunities, and propose practical recommendations to strengthen future reporting and coordination, and
- Identify the regional policy and advocacy priorities that emerge from the review.

The review adopts a continent-wide perspective, drawing on evidence from 16 selected African countries across the continent's five subregions. These countries were selected as illustrative cases to enable a manageable and focused assessment, given the practical challenges of analysing reporting from all African countries.

The analysis examines country-level experiences to identify broader trends, common patterns, progress and implementation challenges that can inform an understanding of Africa's overall performance in implementing the KMGBF.

The countries covered are Cameroon, the Democratic Republic of the Congo and Gabon (Central Africa); Kenya, Tanzania and Uganda (East Africa); Botswana, Madagascar, Namibia, South Africa, Zambia and Zimbabwe (Southern Africa); Ghana, Nigeria and Senegal (West Africa); and Tunisia (North Africa). The findings are therefore intended to inform a broader continental assessment, while recognising that the selected countries do not constitute a statistically representative sample of all African countries.

The analysis focuses on six key targets of the Kunming-Montreal Global Biodiversity Framework (KMGBF): Targets 1–3, covering spatial planning, ecosystem restoration and conservation; Targets 8 and 13, addressing climate change and the fair and equitable sharing of benefits from genetic resources and associated traditional knowledge; and Target 19, focusing on biodiversity finance. These targets were selected for their strategic relevance to Africa's biodiversity and ecosystems, community livelihoods and rights, climate resilience, and the financial and institutional capacity required to accelerate implementation of the Framework across the continent.

1.2. PURPOSE, POLICY RELEVANCE AND APPLICATION OF FINDINGS

This review provides Africa-focused evidence to inform national, regional and global policy dialogue ahead of COP17. It examines progress in aligning national policies and strategies with the Kunming-Montreal Global Biodiversity Framework (GBF), identifies gaps in implementation, and highlights promising approaches that could be adapted, scaled up or replicated across the continent. The findings are intended to help governments, civil society and development partners identify priorities, target support and define practical actions to accelerate implementation of the Framework.

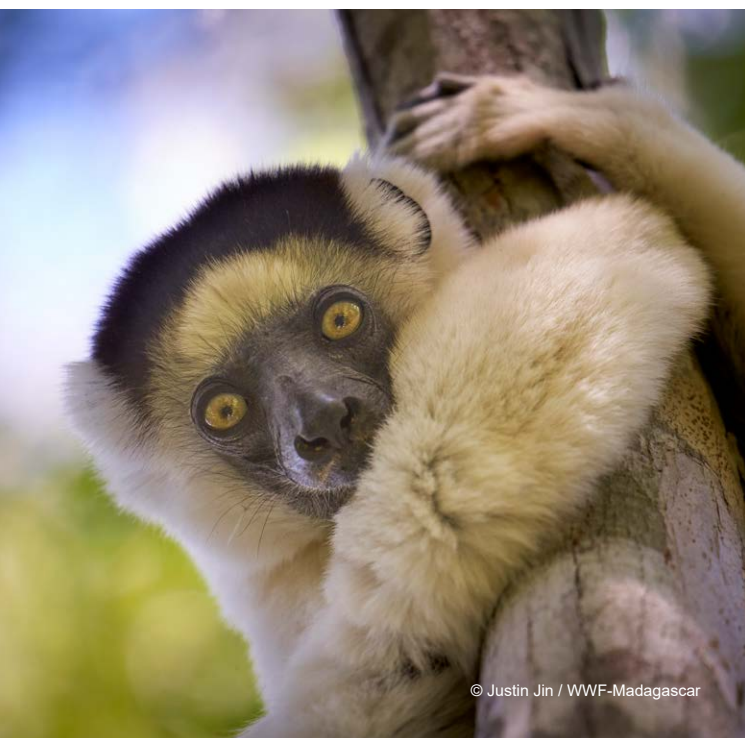
While the country reports provide valuable insights into progress and emerging good practices, the availability, depth and quality of evidence vary across countries and targets. These variations limit comparability and constrain a consistent assessment of implementation progress and outcomes at the continental level. The review therefore highlights both promising practices that could inform wider action, and evidence gaps that future national reporting, monitoring and research should address.

1.3. METHODOLOGY

The review combined desk research, stakeholder consultations and comparative analysis to assess progress towards implementing the Kunming-Montreal Global Biodiversity Framework (KMGBF) in Africa. The primary evidence base comprised Seventh National Reports (NR7s) submitted through the Convention on Biological Diversity (CBD) Online Reporting Tool (ORT), supplemented by relevant CBD decisions, guidance and materials from the Global Environment Facility (GEF), United Nations Environment Programme (UNEP) and United Nations Development Programme (UNDP).

An analytical framework and standardised country data-collection template guided the assessment of 16 selected countries across Africa's five subregions. Preliminary findings were discussed with CBD national focal points, representatives of the African Group of Negotiators on Biodiversity and African civil society organisations during meetings associated with SBSTTA-28, SBI-7 and regional preparations for COP17. These consultations helped contextualise findings and identify policy and advocacy priorities.

Comparative analysis identified common trends, differences, implementation gaps and promising practices. The findings inform a broader continental perspective while recognising variations in reporting quality and the limitations of extrapolating from the selected countries.



The assessment covered three analytical dimensions:

PROGRESS TOWARDS SELECTED KMGBF TARGETS

A process, content and outcome approach examined national planning, policy alignment and reported implementation progress against Targets 1–3 (spatial planning, restoration and conservation), Target 8 (biodiversity and climate change), Target 13 (access and benefit-sharing) and Target 19 (biodiversity finance).

Process analysis: Assessed the status of national targets, NBSAPs and NR7s, whole-of-government coordination, and whole-of-society participation, including Indigenous Peoples and local communities, women, youth, civil society and the private sector.

Content and outcome analysis: Examined alignment between national targets and the KMGBF, reported implementation measures, progress and outcomes, and coherence with relevant national policies. Country examples were used to illustrate promising practices and opportunities for wider application.

SYNERGIES WITH OTHER MULTILATERAL ENVIRONMENTAL AGREEMENTS

The review assessed the integration of biodiversity commitments with other MEAs, the Sustainable Development Goals and national development plans. It examined institutional coordination, joint planning and reporting, implementation synergies, and barriers and enabling practices that could inform more coherent environmental governance.

MEANS OF IMPLEMENTATION

The assessment examined the availability of financial resources, institutional and technical capacity, and other enabling conditions for KMGBF implementation. Key indicators included the status of national biodiversity finance plans and resource mobilisation strategies, reported financing and capacity-building measures, and commitments from actors beyond national government. Relevant country examples were used to highlight financing approaches and opportunities to address implementation gaps.

The findings provide an evidence base for identifying shared African priorities, informing policy dialogue ahead of COP17 and accelerating KMGBF implementation beyond the conference.

A black and white woodhoopoe is perched on a thin, light brown branch. The bird has a long, straight, dark beak and a crest of dark feathers on its head. Its body is primarily white with black markings, including a black collar around its neck and black spots on its wings and back. The background is a clear, solid blue sky. An orange rectangular box is overlaid on the right side of the image, containing white text.

KEY FINDINGS: PROGRESS, CHALLENGES AND PRIORITIES ACROSS AFRICA



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Africa has demonstrated strong commitment to the GBF, but the priority must now shift from planning and reporting to accelerated implementation.

OVERALL ASSESSMENT

African submissions account for approximately 30% of global submissions for selected Global Biodiversity Framework (GBF) planning and reporting instruments, based on the reporting snapshot used in this study. This indicates engagement with the GBF process, although submission figures alone do not demonstrate effective implementation or political commitment.

The Seventh National Reports (NR7s) document a range of national experiences and approaches to biodiversity planning and implementation. However, persistent gaps in data, technical capacity and financing remain. While the reported experiences provide useful examples that could be scaled up, further evidence is needed to assess their environmental and social impacts.

The review identifies three priorities:

- Strengthen biodiversity integration across sectoral policies and local planning processes.
- Promote inclusive and equitable participation in biodiversity planning and implementation.
- Translate national plans into measurable results for ecosystems and communities.

Community-led land-use planning, restoration and conservation initiatives offer promising approaches. However, their results need to be assessed consistently to determine their effectiveness and potential for wider application.

Countries also recognise the links between the GBF and other environmental agreements. More systematic alignment of objectives, indicators and reporting processes could improve coordination, reduce duplication and strengthen the assessment of conservation outcomes and community benefits.

NATIONAL REPORTING, COORDINATION AND PARTICIPATION

The process analysis examined the submission of national policy and reporting instruments, the coordination structures established to support implementation and reporting, and the participation of relevant stakeholders. Submission data were assessed across Africa, while the analysis of coordination and participation focused on the 16 selected countries.

Data from the Convention on Biological Diversity (CBD) Online Reporting Tool show progress in the submission of national targets, updated National Biodiversity Strategies and Action Plans (NBSAPs), Seventh National Reports (NR7s) and commitments from non-government actors. These instruments support national planning, implementation and accountability, although each provides a different type of evidence.

Based on the reporting snapshot used in this review, African submissions accounted for approximately 30% of global submissions across the selected instruments (Figure 1). This figure represents Africa's share of global submissions and should not be confused with the proportion of African countries that have submitted each instrument.

The review reports the following submission rates among African countries:

- National targets: 98%
- Seventh National Reports (NR7s): 80%
- Updated NBSAPs: 67%

These figures indicate substantial engagement with the GBF planning and reporting process, but also highlight gaps, particularly in the submission of updated NBSAPs.

Commitments published by non-government actors show a different pattern. Approximately 18.24% of the global commitments presented in Figure 2 relate to African countries. This suggests an opportunity to strengthen the visibility and documentation of contributions from civil society organisations, communities, businesses and other partners.

The review records 873 commitments by non-government actors in Africa in support of GBF-aligned NBSAPs. These commitments are unevenly distributed across countries, with 50% concentrated in ten countries: South Africa, Kenya, Malawi, Rwanda, Uganda, Tanzania, Nigeria, the Central African Republic, the Democratic Republic of the Congo and Morocco. South Africa accounts for 12.2% of the African total. These figures reflect published commitments and do not necessarily indicate the extent to which the commitments have been implemented or the results they have achieved.

While aligning national biodiversity policies with the GBF provides a foundation for implementation, effective delivery also depends on inclusive processes that engage the whole of government and the whole of society. Strong coordination and meaningful stakeholder participation are therefore essential to building legitimacy, shared ownership and collective responsibility across sectors and communities.

The review examined the background sections and Section 1 of the NR7s, alongside selected country information on progress towards ecological integrity and ecosystem and community resilience. It identified a range of coordination mechanisms and institutional arrangements used to support biodiversity planning, reporting and implementation.

These arrangements varied across countries but generally sought to strengthen policy coherence and collaboration across government institutions, technical agencies, civil society and other stakeholders. Their areas of focus included spatial planning, ecosystem restoration, conservation, climate change adaptation and benefit-sharing mechanisms.

The country reports highlight several approaches to coordination.

NATIONAL COORDINATION TEAMS LED BY ENVIRONMENTAL AUTHORITIES — BOTSWANA

Botswana established an NR7 National Coordination Team under the supervision of the Department of Environmental Protection, the lead ministry for the process. The team comprised technical officers from the department and representatives of relevant government institutions and civil society organisations.

MULTI-SECTORAL AND MULTI-STAKEHOLDER COORDINATION STRUCTURES — GHANA AND NIGERIA

Ghana and Nigeria built on existing NBSAP coordination structures to support national reporting.

- **Ghana:** The process was supported by the National Biodiversity Steering Committee, which includes the CBD National Focal Point and focal points for other biodiversity-related conventions. A Biodiversity Technical Working Group, comprising relevant ministries, agencies and local government representatives, also contributed to the process.
- **Nigeria:** The coordination framework included the National Biodiversity Coordination Committee (NBCC), chaired by the CBD National Focal Point and comprising focal points for relevant CBD thematic areas. The National Biodiversity Technical Committee (NBTC), made up of focal points from implementing ministries, departments and agencies (MDAs) and non-governmental organisations, was responsible for monitoring NBSAP interventions within their respective areas of responsibility. The Federal Ministry of Environment provided overall supervision. Nigeria's NR7 indicates that the national reporting process drew on these NBSAP coordination arrangements.

TECHNICAL SUPPORT FROM REGIONAL SCIENTIFIC COOPERATION INSTITUTIONS — KENYA AND SOUTH AFRICA

Regional scientific and technical institutions played a role in supporting national reporting.

- In **Kenya**, support was provided by the Regional Centre for Mapping of Resources for Development (RCMRD).
- **South Africa's** NR7 provides a detailed account of a coordination model involving the Department of Forestry, Fisheries and the Environment (DFFE) and the South African National Biodiversity Institute (SANBI). The DFFE, as the CBD National Focal Point institution, engaged SANBI to provide technical support for preparing the report. SANBI subsequently established an NR7 Coordination Team comprising technical specialists, senior management officials and young professionals. At the central administrative level, an NBSAP Reference Group, chaired by the Deputy Director-General of the Biodiversity and Conservation Branch within DFFE, provided an additional coordination mechanism.

COORDINATION LED BY THE CBD NATIONAL FOCAL POINT AND A MULTIDISCIPLINARY TECHNICAL WORKING GROUP — UGANDA

In Uganda, the CBD National Focal Point, based at the National Environment Management Authority (NEMA) under the Ministry of Water and Environment, coordinated all phases of the reporting process. A multidisciplinary technical working group was established to draft the report, followed by a review and editing process conducted by a selected team of experts before submission. This approach combined institutional leadership with technical expertise and quality assurance.

EXPERT-LED COORDINATION SUPPORTED BY TECHNICAL WORKING GROUPS — ZAMBIA

Zambia used an Ad Hoc Technical Expert Group (AHTEG) as the principal coordination mechanism for preparing its NR7. Other technical working groups contributed to data collection, review and validation, facilitating collaboration among key national stakeholders and sector representatives.

JOINT INSTITUTIONAL LEADERSHIP AND THEMATIC WORKING GROUPS — ZIMBABWE

Zimbabwe adopted a collaborative coordination model involving the Department of Forestry and Wildlife within the Ministry of Environment, Climate and Wildlife, the Global Biodiversity Information Facility–Zimbabwe, the National Biotechnology Authority and the Environmental Management Agency (EMA). The arrangements included:

- A National Coordination Team (NCT): This team oversaw the overall reporting process and brought together representatives from relevant ministries and government agencies, academic and research institutions, and development partners.
- Thematic working groups: Several groups were established to address five thematic priority areas.
- Technical expertise: Parks, wildlife, forestry and environmental authorities, academic and research institutions, selected non-governmental organisations and development partners contributed technical knowledge and expertise.

FINDINGS ON COORDINATION

The country examples demonstrate that there is no single coordination model used across Africa. Approaches range from coordination led by environmental authorities and CBD National Focal Points to multi-stakeholder committees, technical working groups and partnerships with specialised scientific institutions.

These arrangements provide a foundation for coordinated biodiversity planning, reporting and implementation. However, the existence of coordination structures alone does not establish their effectiveness. Further assessment is needed to determine how consistently these mechanisms' function, how effectively they engage different sectors and stakeholders, and whether they translate national biodiversity commitments into measurable conservation and community outcomes.

PARTICIPATION AND EQUITY IN ENGAGEMENT OF STAKEHOLDERS

The review found that a whole-of-society approach was used to broaden stakeholder participation in the preparation of NR7s, as reflected mainly in Section 1 of the reports. However, evidence of stakeholder participation in NBSAP development and implementation, as presented in Section 2, was limited, partly due to the structure of the NR7 reporting template.

Despite these reporting limitations, national reports across Africa recognise the important role of stakeholders in implementing various GBF targets. The reports highlight the involvement of Indigenous Peoples and Local Communities (IPLCs), as well as efforts by some countries to increase women's participation in NBSAP development and national biodiversity reporting.

EXAMPLE FROM NORTH AFRICA: TUNISIA

Tunisia reported increased participation of women in biodiversity planning and reporting processes:

- **42%** participation by women in NBSAP and CBD alignment workshops.
- **40%** representation of women in NBSAP Steering Committees and the preparation of the Seventh National Report.
- **40%** participation by women in Biodiversity Finance Initiative (BIOFIN) workshops.

These examples demonstrate efforts to promote more inclusive participation in biodiversity planning and reporting. However, assessing progress towards equity requires more consistent reporting on stakeholder representation, the extent of their involvement in decision-making, and their influence on priorities and implementation outcomes.

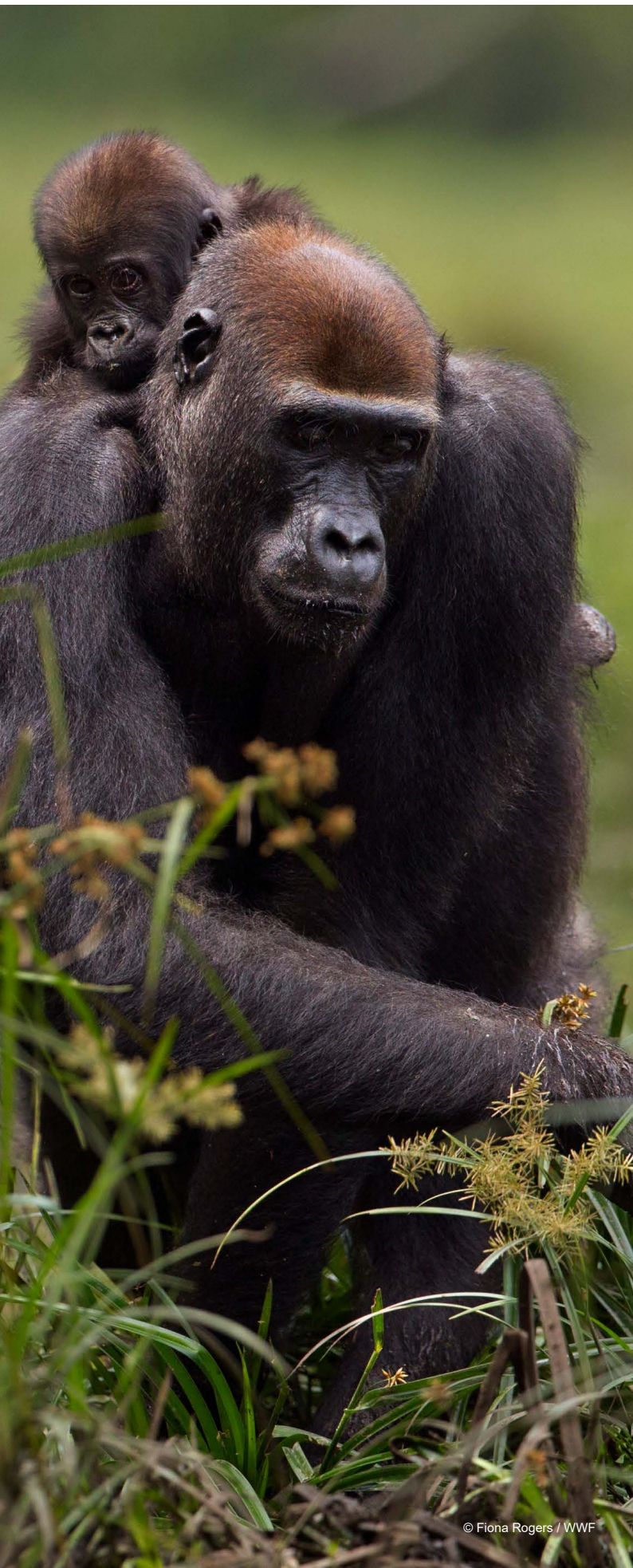
IMPLEMENTATION OF SELECTED GBF TARGETS

The reviewed Seventh National Reports (NR7s) indicate that an increasing number of African countries are integrating biodiversity considerations into land- and sea-use planning, ecosystem restoration, conservation, climate resilience and benefit-sharing. However, the scale and quality of reported progress vary considerably, and inconsistencies in indicators, methodologies and reporting limit cross-country comparisons.

The following sections examine available evidence for GBF Targets 1, 2, 3, 8 and 13. Country examples illustrate reported approaches and achievements but should not be interpreted as a comprehensive or independently verified assessment of progress across Africa.

ECOLOGICAL INTEGRITY, CONNECTIVITY AND REPRESENTATION

The NR7s highlight progress in biodiversity-inclusive spatial planning, ecosystem restoration, protected-area management and community-based conservation. However, implementation remains uneven, particularly in the geographical coverage of plans, the integration of biodiversity safeguards into decision-making and the measurement of ecological outcomes. The strongest evidence comes from countries that report both policy and regulatory measures and quantitative indicators of implementation.



SPATIAL PLANNING

GBF Target 1 calls for all areas to be under participatory, integrated and biodiversity-inclusive spatial planning and/or effective management processes that address land- and sea-use change, while retaining existing intact and wilderness areas. Progress must therefore be assessed not only by the existence of spatial plans but also by their coverage, implementation, participatory character and contribution to reducing biodiversity loss.

Alignment of national spatial planning with GBF Target 1

The NR7s show varying degrees of alignment with Target 1. Some countries have established ambitious national frameworks that integrate biodiversity into land-use planning, while others address relevant elements across multiple national targets without a coherent framework for demonstrating alignment with the GBF. The evidence points to growing policy recognition of biodiversity-inclusive spatial planning, but the extent to which these commitments translate into effective implementation remains uneven.



**Africa's progress is real,
but highly uneven across
countries, regions and
GBF targets.**

Illustration from countries

BOTSWANA

Botswana demonstrates an ambitious national approach through its National Spatial Plan (NSP 2036), which designates the entire country as a planning area. The framework provides for the integration of biodiversity safeguards into national and district land-use planning, supported by the Tribal Land Act, Land Boards and zoning systems accommodating different development and natural-resource uses. The NR7 reports that 100% of the country's land is covered by biodiversity-inclusive spatial plans and that 40.4% of its territory has been designated as green reserves, including protected areas and animal migration routes. These areas have reportedly been mapped and gazetted. Since 2022, the Chobe District Council has also approved redevelopment projects incorporating biodiversity clauses, including the reported relocation of government offices along the riverfront. These examples illustrate progress in translating national planning commitments into local decision-making, although the effectiveness of implementation and resulting biodiversity outcomes require further assessment.

CAMEROON

Cameroon's NR7 identifies 30 national targets, although their numbering does not align directly with the GBF framework. Spatial planning is addressed under National Target 15, whose objectives broadly correspond to Target 1. However, the five key elements of Target 1 are distributed across different national targets, making it difficult to assess their coherence and overall contribution to the GBF. This illustrates how fragmented target alignment can weaken the visibility of national progress, even where relevant policy measures exist.

Progress in the coverage of land and sea areas under spatial planning and management

The NR7s report a range of spatial planning and management approaches, including the integration of protected areas into national spatial frameworks, community conservancies, community forest management areas, community-based natural resource management areas, marine spatial plans and marine protected areas. However, many countries describe the existence of planning frameworks without providing quantitative information on the area covered or evidence of their implementation. Consequently, the available information remains insufficient to establish a consistent continental picture of progress in spatial coverage, ecological representation and connectivity.

Illustrations from regions

CENTRAL AFRICA

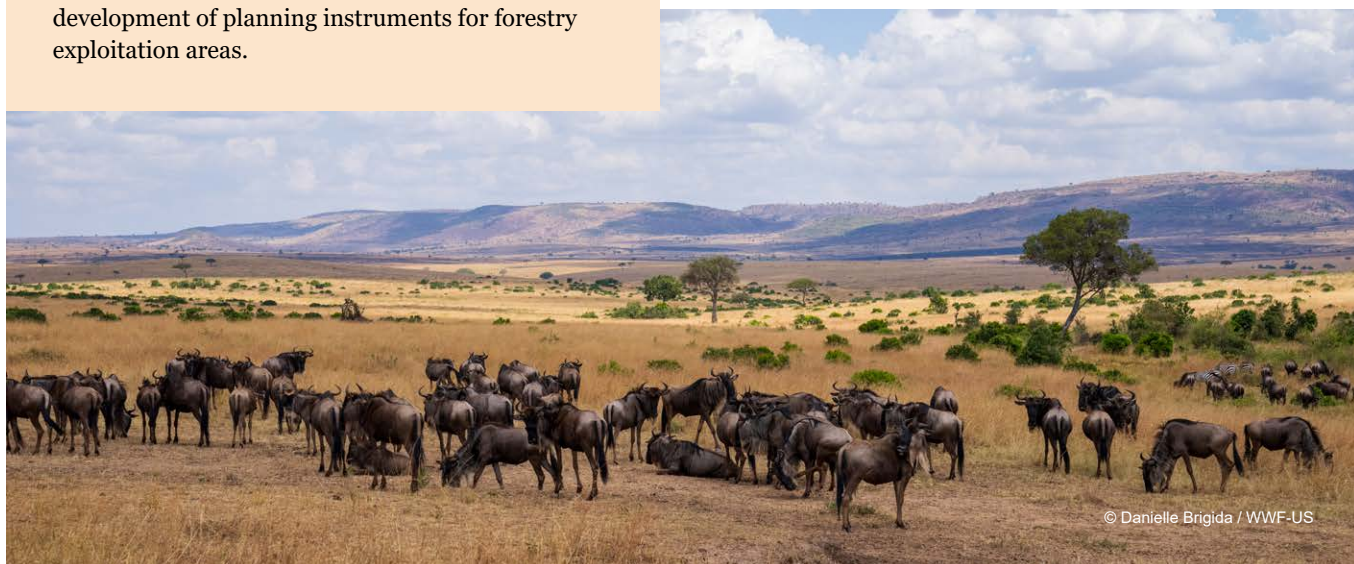
Cameroon provides quantitative evidence of spatial planning and management, reporting 12 local plans, seven regional plans and nearly 398 community forest management plans covering more than 1.4 million hectares. These figures demonstrate the reach of local and community-based planning instruments, although their contribution to biodiversity outcomes depends on the extent to which biodiversity priorities are incorporated and implemented. In Gabon, updated spatial planning supported by WWF-Gabon has facilitated the integration of biodiversity data into national landscape management tools and key sectors, including forestry, agriculture and fisheries. Participatory mapping under the Central African Forest Initiative (CAFI), involving the National Agency of National Parks, has also supported the development of planning instruments for forestry exploitation areas.

SOUTHERN AFRICA

Namibia reports 86 registered conservancies in 2024, covering approximately 20% of the country's territory under participatory management. This network provides a basis for landscape-scale conservation, community participation and improved ecological connectivity, although coverage alone does not establish the effectiveness of these outcomes. South Africa has expanded stewardship areas and integrated protected areas into broader spatial planning frameworks. At subnational level, biodiversity-inclusive planning is also reflected in initiatives such as the Durban Metropolitan Open Space System. Madagascar's NR7 highlights provincial initiatives to incorporate biodiversity into land-use planning, while Zimbabwe's Nyaminyami Rural District Council illustrates the role of local authorities in integrating biodiversity considerations into land-use planning and management.

EAST AFRICA

Kenya provides an example of community-driven approaches through the biocultural protocols developed by the Endorois and Ogiek communities. These initiatives highlight the importance of incorporating Indigenous Peoples' and local communities' knowledge, priorities and rights into spatial planning processes. However, further evidence is needed to establish their geographical coverage and contribution to biodiversity conservation outcomes.



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WEST AFRICA

Ghana's Blue Deal Project, implemented with the involvement of the Water Resources Commission, has advanced integrated and participatory water-resource planning. Several integrated water resources management (IWRM) plans have reportedly been completed and adopted for implementation across lake and river basins. These initiatives demonstrate the relevance of basin-scale planning to integrated ecosystem management. Their contribution to GBF Target 1 will depend on the extent to which biodiversity priorities, ecological connectivity, freshwater ecosystem needs and land- and water-use trade-offs are explicitly incorporated into planning and implementation.

Overall, the available evidence suggests that African countries are increasingly recognising spatial planning as an instrument for integrating biodiversity into land- and sea-use decisions. Botswana's national framework, Namibia's community conservancies, Cameroon's local and community-based planning instruments, and Ghana's participatory basin planning demonstrate different approaches to advancing this agenda.

Nevertheless, the existence of plans, mapped areas or participatory management arrangements does not necessarily demonstrate effective implementation or reduced biodiversity loss. Three key gaps remain: inconsistent quantitative reporting on spatial coverage; fragmented alignment between national targets and GBF Target 1; and limited evidence of implementation effectiveness and measurable ecological outcomes. Strengthening reporting against common indicators, documenting the implementation of biodiversity safeguards and tracking changes in ecosystem condition, connectivity and land- and sea-use pressures would enable a more robust assessment of progress towards Target 1 across Africa.



Policies and Regulatory Measures Supporting Spatial Planning

Across Africa, legal and policy reforms are increasingly embedding biodiversity considerations into land- and sea-use planning. The NR7s reflect growing efforts to align national frameworks with the Global Biodiversity Framework (GBF), particularly Target 1. These measures provide an important foundation for integrating ecological integrity, connectivity and ecosystem representation into territorial governance and development decisions at national, regional and local levels.

However, the existence of enabling policies and legislation does not necessarily translate into effective biodiversity-inclusive spatial planning. Progress also depends on policy coherence across sectors and levels of governance, the enforcement of regulatory provisions, the availability of biodiversity data, and the meaningful participation of Indigenous Peoples and Local Communities (IPLCs). The extent to which these frameworks influence land- and sea-use decisions and prevent the loss of important ecosystems therefore remains a key consideration.

NR7 examples

CENTRAL AFRICA

The Democratic Republic of the Congo (DRC) reports reforms to its territorial planning and land-tenure frameworks in 2025 that explicitly integrate biodiversity into spatial planning instruments (Loi No 251045 du 1 juillet 2025 relative à l'aménagement du territoire). Strategic Objective 5 requires ecological integrity priorities to be reflected across territorial planning levels, including national master plans and provincial and local plans. This provides a basis for embedding biodiversity considerations throughout territorial governance, although evidence of implementation and enforcement will be important in assessing its contribution to Target 1. In Cameroon, the national land-use zoning plan, currently under revision, provides a reference framework for integrating conservation priorities into territorial management.

EAST AFRICA

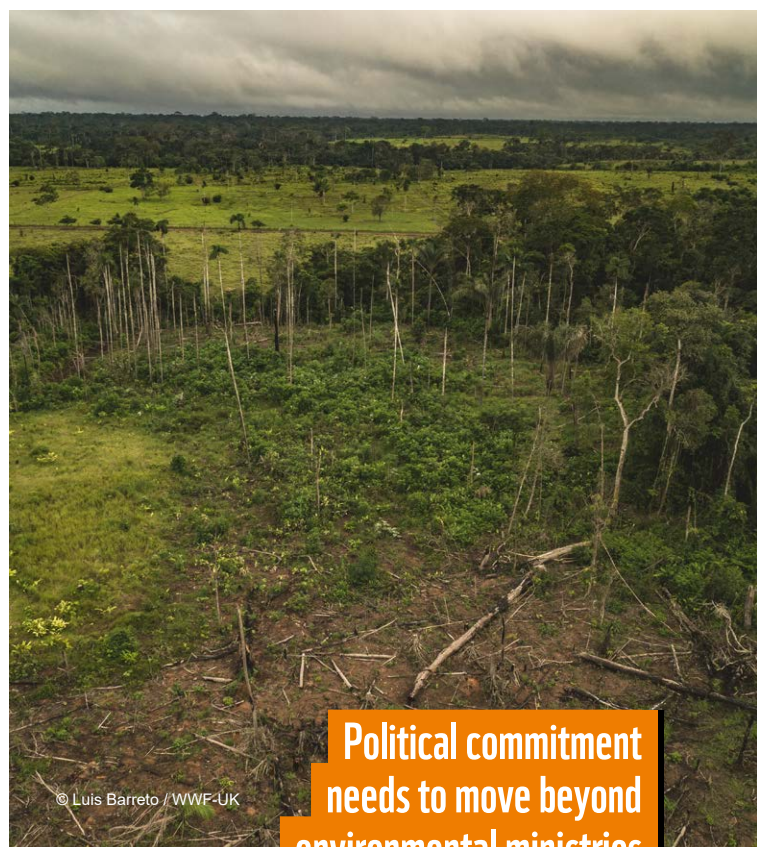
Kenya's constitutional provisions establish a basis for environmental protection and planning while biocultural protocols developed by IPLCs provide community-led mechanisms for recognising and protecting territorial rights and biodiversity-related values (Constitution of Kenya, 2010. Part 2. Environment and natural resources, Section 69). Obligations in respect of the environment Uganda's National Environment Act and biodiversity offset guidelines provide regulatory instruments for incorporating environmental considerations into land-use planning. Madagascar and Ethiopia also reference biodiversity in sectoral and land-use frameworks, reflecting efforts to integrate ecological considerations across ministries and planning levels. However, the degree of coordination between these frameworks and their effectiveness in guiding spatial planning decisions vary and require further assessment.

WEST AFRICA

Ghana provides examples of integrating climate resilience and disaster risk reduction into coastal spatial planning through the Land Use and Spatial Planning Authority. The Ghana Landscape Restoration and Small-Scale Mining Project also support landscape restoration and the integration of biodiversity corridors into district-level planning. In Senegal, the 2021 Orientation Law for Land Use and Sustainable Territorial Development strengthens the framework for territorial planning, with biodiversity priorities and ecological integrity data incorporated into spatial planning instruments at multiple scales, including SDADT, SCOT, SCADT, PRDI and PUD. These initiatives demonstrate the potential to integrate biodiversity considerations into development planning, climate resilience and landscape restoration. Further evidence is needed on the extent of implementation and the resulting changes in land-use practices and ecosystem condition.

SOUTHERN AFRICA

The region illustrates how national legislation and policy frameworks can be complemented by community-based conservation and biodiversity stewardship mechanisms. South Africa has institutionalised biodiversity stewardship programmes and ecosystem assessments that inform conservation and spatial planning decisions. Its policy and legislative frameworks also provide a basis for integrating terrestrial land-use management and marine spatial planning. Namibia's Community-Based Natural Resource Management (CBNRM) policy offers an established model for incorporating community governance into natural-resource management and conservation. Botswana and Zambia also reference biodiversity in their national development strategies. Collectively, these approaches demonstrate the potential to connect national biodiversity priorities with local land-use decisions, although their contribution depends on implementation, coordination and measurable ecological outcomes.



**Political commitment
needs to move beyond
environmental ministries
to the highest levels
of government.**

Participatory Approaches Used in Spatial Planning

Participation is a key component of biodiversity-inclusive spatial planning across Africa. The NR7s highlight approaches that involve communities in territorial governance, conservation, ecosystem restoration and natural-resource management. Such approaches can improve the legitimacy and effectiveness of spatial planning by incorporating local knowledge, recognising customary land and resource rights, and enabling communities to influence decisions affecting their territories.

However, participation varies in scope and depth. The existence of community-based initiatives does not demonstrate that participation is inclusive, that communities have meaningful decision-making authority, or that their rights and priorities are reflected in final planning decisions. Assessing progress therefore requires attention to representation, decision-making influence, recognition of customary rights and evidence of outcomes.

NR7 examples

CENTRAL AFRICA

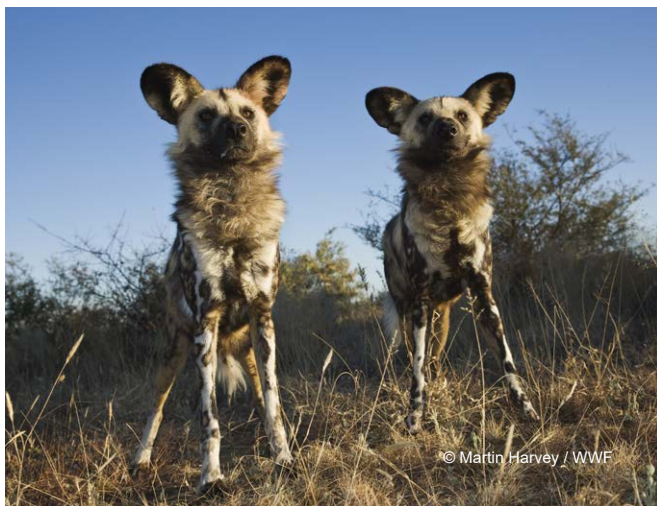
The DRC's national territorial planning policy emphasises the rights and participation of Indigenous Peoples, local communities, women and youth in planning processes. This provides an important basis for inclusive territorial governance. The effectiveness of this approach will depend on how these commitments are translated into decision-making procedures, safeguards and implementation at provincial and local levels.

EAST AFRICA

In Kenya, community empowerment initiatives involving the Endorois and Ogiek communities have supported the development of biocultural protocols through which communities articulate their territorial rights, cultural values and priorities for the management of natural resources (see the Endorois Peoples Biocultural Protocol 2019). The reported ability of these protocols to challenge unauthorised research illustrates their potential to strengthen community agency and protect community-defined interests. Uganda involves communities in wetland restoration and catchment management, while Madagascar incorporates IPLCs into provincial planning processes. Ethiopia also recognises participation as a core principle of its National Biodiversity Strategy and Action Plan (NBSAP). Together, these examples demonstrate different approaches to incorporating community knowledge and participation into planning and biodiversity management, although the level of influence communities exercise over formal planning decisions varies.

SOUTHERN AFRICA

South Africa's biodiversity stewardship programmes and Namibia's CBNRM model illustrate how community participation can be institutionalised within conservation and natural-resource governance. These approaches can connect local land management with broader biodiversity objectives while creating opportunities for communities to participate in conservation decisions and benefit from natural resources. Botswana and Zambia also report community involvement in conservation and planning initiatives. The extent to which these approaches contribute to equitable decision-making, ecological connectivity and the effective implementation of spatial plans requires continued monitoring.





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RESTORATION

Countries report a wide range of restoration commitments and projects, but their targets and indicators are not consistently aligned with GBF Target 2. Reporting often combines hectares pledged, placed under restoration and successfully restored, making progress difficult to compare.

The alignment of national targets with GBF Target 2, significantly varies in the coverage of key elements defined for effective restoration of degraded land. These include the key requirements of 30% target for the restoration of land, inland waters and marine ecosystems by 2030, the enhanced flow of ecosystem functions and services, the connectivity established and maintenance, and the use of climate resilient/economically beneficial species used for restoration.

However, most national reports do not present a structured account framed against these key requirements, while in some cases, the elements are dispersed coverage across several national targets thus limiting an effective assessment on restoration policy coherence and implementation progress

30% of land, inland waters and marine ecosystem restoration

Africa has demonstrated robust restoration efforts with major outcomes that are ecosystem-specific, community-driven and have been driven by major regional-wide initiatives such as AFR100 and the Green Great Wall. High level political will in restoration activities in some countries have been driven by Presidential or nation-wide campaigns for example the 15 billion Trees in Kenya. DRC Presidential Campaign in the “School Garden – 1 billion Trees by 2023” recorded 870 million trees planted on 1100 hectares, across 11 provinces, out of the target of 5 million hectares planned for reforestation across 26 provinces.

NR7 Examples

CENTRAL AFRICA

DRC in aligning with this target provides for expanded indicators including list of key species used for restoration or restored and existence of management plans, but provides no evidence on progress, while Cameroon’s overall objective 5 is aligned with GBF T2, but priorities under the objective are not aligned. Consolidated data on restoration not available, however between 2020 and 2025, around 221,864 hectares were restored as part of Green Sahel and Great Green Wall initiatives, etc.

THE SOUTHERN REGION

South Africa has a defined national target to restore 17 million hectares by 2030, with 2.9 million hectares already rehabilitated. Wetland restoration and invasive species clearance are systematically reported, supported by comprehensive institutional frameworks such as the National Adaptation Strategy and LandCare Programme. Madagascar with restoration goals for 7 million hectares, including 2,147,911 ha of restored wetlands. Has ecosystem-specific initiatives under the Great Green Wall and watershed rehabilitation projects. The restoration of over 4,000 hectares in Alaotra and extensive seedling planting campaigns highlight measurable progress. Zambia’s restoration efforts are equally robust, with 11 million hectares under Community Forest Management and 80,000 hectares restored through Assisted Natural Regeneration.

EAST AFRICA

Uganda has mainstreamed restoration into national development planning, with measurable gains in forest cover and wetlands. Over 52,000 hectares restored by mid-2023. Kenya has articulated ambitious restoration commitments, including the 15 billion Tree Programme and AFR100 pledges, which conceptually aligns with GBF Target 2.



WEST AFRICA

Senegal reported on its committed to restoring 2 million hectares of degraded land, of which by 2023, the target had been met with approximately 2.3 million hectares under restoration, including reforestation, assisted natural regeneration, and agroforestry restoration. Nigeria accounts for the Nigerian Conservation Foundation (NCF) with 184, 000 trees planted in 2024 across different ecosystems to advance its goal of restoring Nigeria's forest cover to 25 per cent by 2047, while the Agro-Climatic Resilience in Semi-Arid Landscapes (ACReSAL) project has restored approximately 178 hectares of degraded land across 19 northern states as of mid-2025

NORTH AFRICA

Tunisia provides evidence of a 55% restoration performance from 2020-23 with approx. 31,515 ha restored out of 55,084 ha planned for the period. 15% of terrestrial, inland water, marine, and coastal ecosystems are restored and effectively managed.

Extent of enhanced ecosystem functions and services

The extent to which restoration has been directly linked to enhanced ecosystem functions and services has equally varied significantly, with country evidence linked to various outcomes of carbon sequestration, water regulation, soil stabilization, coastal protection and recovery of species.

Many NR7 do not provide quantified evidence and again lack structured monitoring across terrestrial, inland water, and marine ecosystems thus limiting knowledge on the actual outcomes of restoration in achieving enhanced ecosystem functions and flow of services in contribution to the GBF restoration target.

NR7 Example

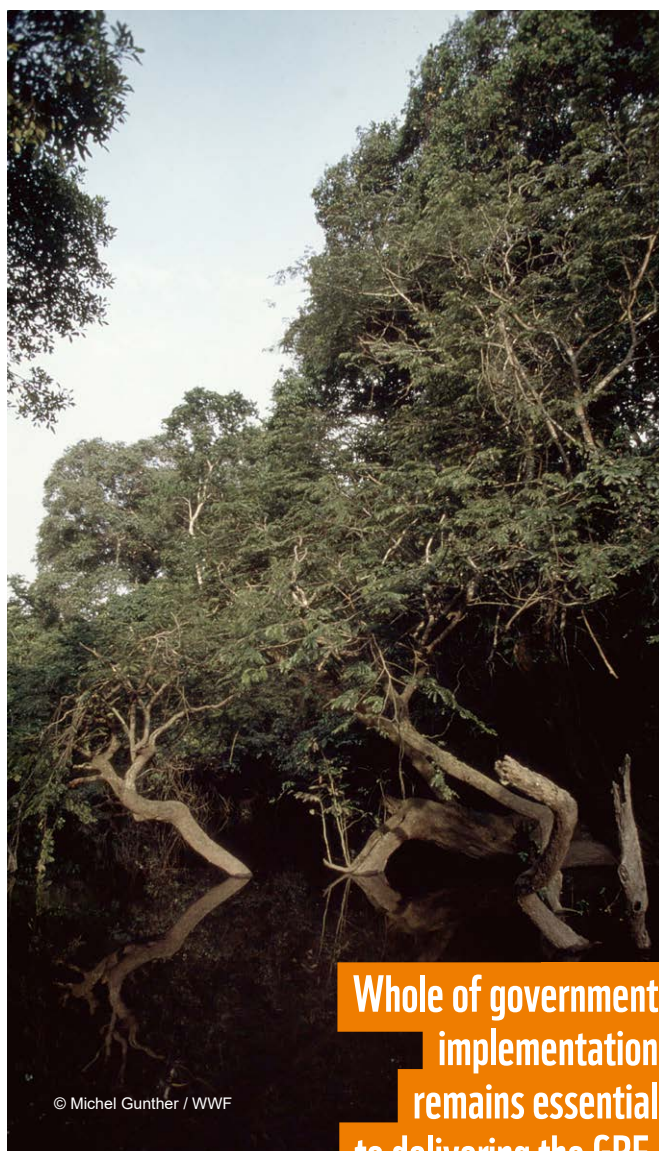
UGANDA

Uganda provides clearer evidence of ecological gains. Wetland restoration has led to a modest increase in wetland cover, which directly supports water regulation, flood mitigation, and biodiversity habitat. Similarly, forest cover gains contribute to carbon storage and soil stabilization. Evidence under the Regeneration and Carbon Absorption (FRFCA) initiative with 1,126 ha of degraded forest restored, alongside 480 ha of community woodlots, highlight benefits for households, jobs generated, and Community-led saving schemes to reducing forest dependency and strengthening livelihoods. While Uganda's reporting does not fully quantify ecosystem service improvements, the structured integration of restoration into national development planning indicates a stronger alignment with functional outcomes.



Connectivity established and maintenance

Evidence of NR7 on ecological corridors, integrated landscapes, and aquatic-terrestrial linkages required to determine progress of restoration efforts in establishing and maintaining ecosystem connectivity and recovery is highly limited to a few African countries. NR evidence demonstrating direct links of restoration to ecological connectivity outcomes is largely unsubstantiated and remains implied based on the scale of restoration across Africa.



**Whole of government
implementation
remains essential
to delivering the GBF.**

NR7 Examples

CENTRAL AFRICA

The trend in connectivity established/area is evidenced in the creation of community reserve in Kivu-Kinshasa as a Green Corridor (544,270 km²) for connectivity, this has enabled the expansion of DRCs PA cover to increase from 13 to 17%.

EAST AFRICA

Uganda's strategic objective 1 indicates a clear commitment to ensure connectivity, integrity and resilience of ecosystems. NR7 explicitly recognises connectivity indicator data are not yet fully available and assessments are ongoing.

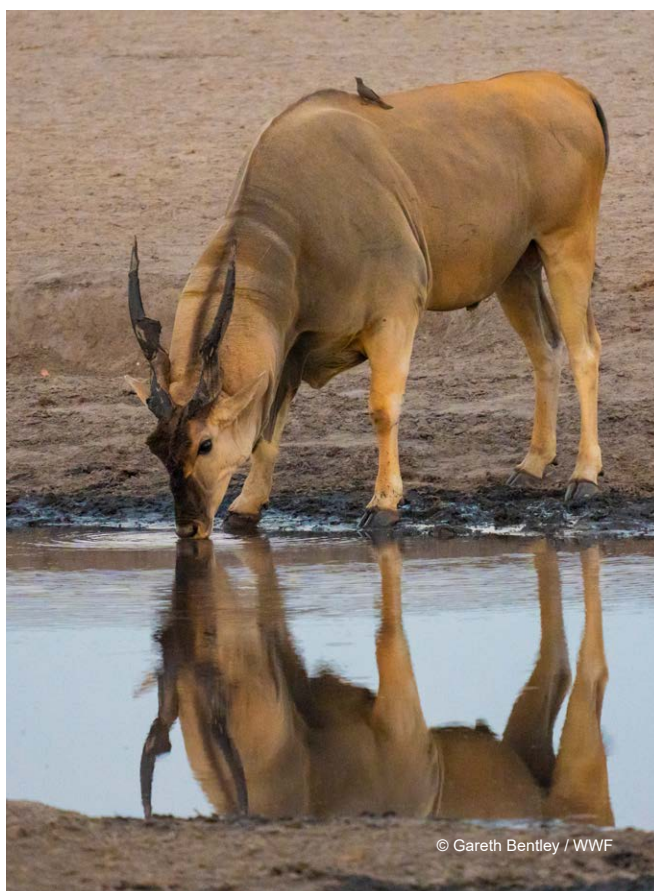
SOUTHERN AFRICA

South Africa's National Protected Area Expansion Strategy (NPAES) is the primary policy guiding spatial prioritisation and expansion of protected areas, with a focus on underrepresented ecosystems, ecological connectivity, and climate resilience. Transboundary Conservation Areas and approaches are being used to enhance ecological connectivity across national boundaries. Madagascar On Connectivity and species highlights the implementation of the Great Green Wall Initiative based on restoring at least 100 contiguous hectares at the landscape scale and prioritizing the rehabilitation of high biodiversity value areas; and promotion of species listed under CITES. On terrestrial protected areas (PAs) and Other Effective Area-Based Conservation Measures (OECMs), Madagascar further established ecological corridors to maintain biological flows between forest landscapes, strengthening connectivity.

Extent of Enhanced Ecosystem Functions and Services

The NR7s provide varying levels of evidence on the extent to which ecosystem restoration has enhanced ecosystem functions and services. Reported outcomes include carbon sequestration, improved water regulation, flood mitigation, soil stabilisation, coastal protection, habitat recovery and livelihood benefits. However, the strength of evidence varies considerably, with many countries reporting restoration activities without quantifying the resulting improvements in ecosystem functions or the flow of services to people.

The limited use of standardised indicators and structured monitoring across terrestrial, inland-water and marine ecosystems constrain the assessment of restoration effectiveness. In many cases, reported outcomes are inferred from increases in restored area or vegetation cover rather than demonstrated through direct measurements of ecosystem condition, functioning and service delivery. This limits the ability to determine the extent to which restoration is delivering ecological and socioeconomic benefits and contributing to GBF Target 2.



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NR7 example

UGANDA

Uganda provides comparatively clearer evidence of links between restoration and ecosystem functions. Wetland restoration has reportedly contributed to a modest increase in wetland cover, supporting water regulation, flood mitigation and biodiversity habitats. Gains in forest cover also have potential benefits for carbon storage and soil stabilisation. Under the Forest Restoration and Carbon Absorption initiative (FRFCA), the restoration of 1,126 hectares of degraded forest, alongside the establishment of 480 hectares of community woodlots, illustrates the potential to combine ecological recovery with livelihood improvements. Reported benefits include employment opportunities and community-led savings schemes that reduce dependence on natural forests and strengthen local livelihoods.

Although Uganda's reporting does not fully quantify changes in ecosystem service provision, the integration of restoration into national development planning provides a basis for linking ecological recovery with wider development outcomes. Further monitoring of indicators such as water quality, flood regulation, soil condition, carbon stocks and household benefits would help establish the scale and durability of these impacts.

Overall, the evidence suggests that restoration is generating multiple potential benefits across African ecosystems, but the extent of improvement in ecosystem functions and services remains insufficiently quantified. Strengthening baseline assessments, outcome indicators and long-term monitoring would help distinguish restoration outputs from actual ecological gains and demonstrate the contribution of restoration to biodiversity, climate resilience and human well-being.

Connectivity Established and Maintained Through Restoration

Evidence in the NR7s on the extent to which restoration has established or maintained ecological connectivity remains limited. Few reports provide quantified information on ecological corridors, integrated landscapes or aquatic-terrestrial linkages, or demonstrate direct causal relationships between restoration interventions and improvements in connectivity. In many cases, connectivity benefits are implied by the scale of restoration, the expansion of protected areas or the establishment of conservation corridors rather than demonstrated through ecological monitoring.

Connectivity is a critical dimension of restoration because it enables species movement, supports ecological processes, maintains gene flow and strengthens ecosystem resilience to climate change. Assessing progress therefore requires evidence not only of the area restored or designated for conservation, but also of the functionality of ecological corridors, the continuity of habitats and the movement of species across landscapes and ecosystems.

NR7 examples

CENTRAL AFRICA

Democratic Republic of the Congo (DRC): The NR7 reports the establishment of a community reserve in the Kivu–Kinshasa area as a green corridor covering 544,270 km², alongside an increase in protected-area coverage from 13% to 17%. These developments suggest progress in expanding the landscape available for conservation and potentially strengthening connectivity. However, the reported area and change in protected-area coverage require verification, including clarification of the corridor's boundaries, designation and relationship to existing protected areas. Further evidence is also needed to establish whether the corridor maintains functional connections between habitats and supports species movement.

EAST AFRICA — UGANDA

Uganda's Strategic Objective 1 explicitly commits to maintaining ecosystem connectivity, integrity and resilience. However, the NR7 acknowledges that data for connectivity indicators are not yet fully available and that assessments are ongoing. This demonstrates policy recognition of connectivity as a restoration objective, while highlighting the gap between strategic commitments and measurable evidence of outcomes.

SOUTHERN AFRICA — SOUTH AFRICA

The National Protected Area Expansion Strategy (NPAES) provides the principal policy framework for prioritising and expanding protected areas, with emphasis on underrepresented ecosystems, ecological connectivity and climate resilience. Transboundary Conservation Areas also provide a mechanism for maintaining or improving connectivity across national borders. Nevertheless, protected-area expansion and transboundary designations do not necessarily demonstrate functional connectivity unless supported by evidence on habitat continuity, ecological processes and species movement.

MADAGASCAR

The NR7 reports initiatives to restore high-biodiversity-value areas, establish ecological corridors and maintain biological flows between forest landscapes. Restoration approaches associated with the Great Green Wall Initiative reportedly include restoring contiguous areas of at least 100 hectares at the landscape scale. The report also highlights species-related measures, including the promotion of species listed under the Convention on International Trade in Endangered Species of Wild Fauna and Flora (CITES). These initiatives provide potential opportunities to strengthen habitat connectivity and species conservation. However, the contribution of individual restoration interventions to connectivity requires clearer spatial and ecological evidence.

Use of climate resilient and economically beneficial species for restoration

The Seventh National Reports (NR7s) indicate growing efforts across Africa to incorporate climate-resilient, indigenous and economically valuable species into ecosystem restoration. Reported initiatives span forests, wetlands, coastal ecosystems, drylands, mangroves and rangelands, including community-led restoration and agroforestry. Several countries also report investments in gene banks, community seed banks and other ex situ conservation measures to safeguard plant, crop and livestock genetic resources. These approaches can support ecosystem recovery, climate resilience, biodiversity conservation, food security and local livelihoods.

The evidence highlights two complementary approaches: the use of locally adapted species to restore degraded ecosystems and the conservation of genetic resources to sustain the availability and diversity of restoration material. However, reported progress is often measured through the number of seedlings planted, hectares targeted, conservation sites established and jobs generated, rather than through seedling survival, ecosystem recovery or long-term resilience. The contribution of these initiatives to GBF Target 2 therefore depends on their demonstrated effectiveness in restoring degraded ecosystems. Related measures can also contribute to Target 4, particularly where they support species recovery and the conservation of genetic diversity, including through ex situ conservation.



NR7 examples

EAST AFRICA — ETHIOPIA

Ethiopia's Green Legacy Initiative demonstrates the scale at which climate-resilient and indigenous species can be mobilised for restoration. The NR7 reports that more than 48 billion seedlings have been planted, including drought-resistant indigenous trees and fruit trees, alongside the creation of approximately 1.4 million green jobs. These figures illustrate the scale of planting and its reported employment benefits, although information on seedling survival, species composition and the area successfully restored would help establish the initiative's longer-term ecological impact.

Ethiopia has also made progress in conserving agricultural biodiversity and strengthening community-based seed systems. By 2025, a total of 178 in situ agrobiodiversity conservation sites had been documented, including 53 community seed banks (CSBs) and 29 animal-breed conservation sites. Between 2021 and 2025, 22 community seed banks and 10 breed associations were reportedly established. These mechanisms help conserve locally adapted crop varieties and livestock genetic resources, supporting agricultural resilience and food security.

Crop conservation priorities include economically important crops such as coffee, enset, teff and noug, alongside staple crops such as durum wheat, barley, sorghum and finger millet. These priorities reflect considerations including endemism and economic importance. Capacity-building initiatives have sought to improve the management of existing conservation sites and strengthen the professional operation of community seed banks.

The Ethiopian Biodiversity Institute (EBI) has developed and implemented standard operating procedures for seed characterisation, regeneration, multiplication, distribution and other genebank processes. Initiatives such as Seeds for Resilience, supported by the Crop Trust, have also contributed to improving ex situ conservation collections. Together, these measures demonstrate how restoration programmes can be complemented by investments in genetic-resource conservation and the availability of locally adapted planting material. However, the extent to which conserved genetic resources are being deployed in ecosystem restoration, and their contribution to improved ecosystem resilience, requires further evidence.

SOUTHERN AFRICA — MADAGASCAR AND SOUTH AFRICA

Madagascar provides examples of community-led restoration that combine landscape rehabilitation with potential climate and livelihood benefits. In the Ankeniheny–Zahamena Corridor (CAZ), restoration campaigns undertaken between 2020 and 2025 reportedly resulted in the planting of 656,825 seedlings across 572 hectares, with an additional 135 hectares planned for 2026. The NR7 also reports that deforestation declined from 30.71% in 2018 to 1.33% in 2023, alongside an estimated reduction of more than 9 million tonnes of CO₂ over 2018–2025, based on BNCCREDD calculations and Green Climate Fund reports. These figures suggest potentially significant conservation and climate benefits, although the geographical scope, calculation methodology and attribution of the reported emissions reduction require clarification.

In the Alaotra Lake watershed, the PPC-Alaotra project (2023–2025) reportedly established 105 nursery sites and planted 8,280,618 plants across 4,048 hectares. Rural communes in the same watershed also established 12 nurseries and planted 39,348 seedlings across 26 hectares. The initiatives reportedly strengthened community engagement through improved security of restored plots and contributed to local income generation for labourers, traders, farmers and herders. The economic valuation of locally available materials, including sand, manure and herbs, further illustrates the potential to connect restoration activities with local economic opportunities. Nevertheless, information on the species planted, seedling survival and recovery of ecosystem functions would help establish the ecological effectiveness of these interventions.

South Africa provides another example through its thicket restoration initiatives, which were recognised in 2025 as one of the United Nations' World Restoration Flagships. The programme brings together approximately 60 organisations working towards the rehabilitation of 800,000 hectares of degraded land by 2030, including through the planting of *Portulacaria afra* (spekboom). This drought-resilient indigenous succulent shrub or small tree is valued for its ecological role in thicket ecosystems, carbon sequestration potential and contribution to food resources for wildlife.

The initiative illustrates how the restoration of indigenous vegetation can support biodiversity recovery, climate mitigation and landscape rehabilitation. However, the 800,000-hectare figure represents a target for 2030 rather than an area already restored. Assessing progress will require evidence of the area successfully rehabilitated, species establishment and survival, changes in ecosystem condition and verified carbon outcomes.



Whole of society approach must become a reality, not simply a principle in policy documents.

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A Focus on Gene Banks and Genetic Resource Conservation

The NR7s indicate that several African countries are investing in gene banks and related mechanisms to conserve plant, crop and livestock genetic resources. These initiatives play an important role in safeguarding genetic diversity, maintaining locally adapted varieties and breeds, and ensuring the availability of suitable genetic material for ecosystem restoration, agricultural resilience and food security. National gene banks, community seed banks, botanical gardens and participatory conservation programmes provide complementary approaches to conserving and making genetic resources available for future use.

The evidence, however, varies across countries in the level of detail provided on conservation infrastructure, the diversity of resources maintained, access to genetic material and its application in restoration and climate adaptation. It is also important to distinguish formal gene banks, which conserve genetic resources under managed conditions, from community seed banks and in situ conservation initiatives that maintain diversity within farming systems and local landscapes. Together, these approaches can contribute to GBF Target 4 on species conservation and the maintenance of genetic diversity, while supporting Target 2 where conserved resources are used in effective ecosystem restoration.

NR7 examples

CAMEROON — STRENGTHENING GUIDANCE AND THE AVAILABILITY OF SUITABLE PLANTING MATERIAL

Cameroon's NR7 highlights measures to strengthen seed conservation and improve the availability of suitable planting material through technical guidance, including manuals and best-practice resources. The National Plan for Forest Plantations identifies plant species suited to different agroecological zones, with the aim of improving production and planting-material quality. These measures provide a basis for selecting appropriate species for forest plantations and restoration interventions. However, the available reporting provides limited detail on the country's gene-bank infrastructure, the genetic resources conserved, or the extent to which these resources are used in restoration. Further information on conservation collections, seed sourcing and distribution would help clarify the contribution of these measures to genetic-resource conservation and restoration effectiveness.



SOUTH AFRICA — NATIONAL GENE-BANK CONSERVATION AND THE RETURN OF LOCALLY ADAPTED SEEDS

South Africa reports established national gene-bank capacity and participation in international frameworks for plant genetic-resource conservation. As a Contracting Party to the International Treaty on Plant Genetic Resources for Food and Agriculture (ITPGRFA), the country maintains a National Gene Bank reported to hold more than 6,000 accessions of traditional crop varieties.

In 2025, the National Genebank collaborated with eThekweni Municipality to return 113 accessions of locally adapted seeds to communities in KwaZulu-Natal affected by severe flooding. The initiative illustrates how conserved genetic resources can be returned to farming communities to support agricultural recovery, safeguard local crop diversity and strengthen food security and livelihoods following climate-related disasters. It also demonstrates the importance of connecting ex situ conservation with community access and use.

This example highlights the potential of gene banks to support climate resilience beyond the preservation of genetic material alone. The longer-term contribution will depend on the establishment and performance of the returned varieties, their suitability to local growing conditions and the extent to which they support the recovery of agricultural production.

UGANDA — LINKING GENE BANKS, COMMUNITY SEED BANKS AND RESTORATION

Uganda's NR7 describes a combination of genetic-resource conservation, community-based seed systems and restoration initiatives. The National Forestry Resources Research Institute (NaFORRI) and the National Environment Management Authority (NEMA) supported community-led seed collection, propagation, nursery management and cultivation during 2023–2025. The National Agricultural Research Organisation's Plant Genetic Resources Centre (NARO-PGRC) also manages a platform supporting community seed banks and access to diverse, quality seeds.

Reported capacity-building activities include training on seed quality for community seed-bank managers and farmers. These initiatives can strengthen the availability of appropriate planting material, improve seed management and support the conservation and use of locally adapted genetic resources.

Uganda's broader restoration efforts are supported by the National Strategy for Forest Landscape Restoration, the Mangrove Protection Strategy and participation in the AFR100 and Bonn Challenge restoration initiatives. The NR7 reports that approximately 221,864 hectares were restored between 2020 and 2025. Gene banks and botanical gardens provide complementary mechanisms for conserving species and maintaining genetic resources that may support restoration. However, the reporting does not fully establish how much of the reported restoration area directly benefited from material sourced through gene banks or community seed banks. Clearer links between conserved resources, restoration programmes and ecological outcomes would strengthen the evidence of their contribution to GBF implementation.

Summary of Country Reporting on Gene Banks

The NR7s identify several countries reporting gene banks or related mechanisms for conserving genetic resources. The reported scope includes national seed banks, crop genetic diversity collections, livestock genetic resources and ex situ conservation initiatives.

COUNTRY OR COUNTRIES	REPORTED FOCUS
Cameroon	Ex situ conservation and guidance on suitable plant species and planting material
Democratic Republic of the Congo and Zambia	Gene banks for crop diversity
Angola and South Africa	Conservation of crop genetic diversity
Botswana, Namibia and Ethiopia	Crop and livestock genetic resources
Rwanda, Senegal, Gabon and Mozambique	National seed banks and plant genetic-resource conservation
Equatorial Guinea	Ex situ conservation through gene banks
Uganda	Plant genetic resources, community seed banks and participatory conservation

Note: This summary reflects the country examples identified in the reviewed NR7 material. It does not independently verify the operational status, holdings or coverage of each country's gene banks.



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CONSERVATION

GBF Target 3 calls for at least 30% of terrestrial and inland-water areas, and of marine and coastal areas, to be effectively conserved and managed by 2030 through ecologically representative, well-connected and equitably governed systems of protected areas and other effective area-based conservation measures (OECMs).

The NR7s demonstrate progress in expanding protected and conserved areas across Africa, including through national protected-area networks, community conservancies, stewardship programmes and locally managed conservation initiatives. However, progress varies considerably across countries and ecosystems. The analysis therefore distinguishes increases in conservation coverage from evidence of ecological representation, connectivity, governance and effective management.

The alignment of national biodiversity targets with GBF Target 3 varies across the continent. Some countries have adopted national conservation ambitions that meet or exceed the global 30% target, while others retain less ambitious targets or report progress through multiple national targets that do not clearly correspond to all the elements of Target 3. Alignment is also uneven across terrestrial, inland-water and marine/coastal ecosystems, with freshwater and marine conservation frequently receiving less attention or being reported with limited quantitative detail.

Several countries are still developing or revising legal and policy instruments intended to strengthen protected-area management, recognise OECMs and integrate ecological representation, connectivity and equitable governance into conservation frameworks. Consequently, the existence of ambitious national targets does not always translate into comprehensive coverage or demonstrable conservation effectiveness.

SOUTHERN AFRICA

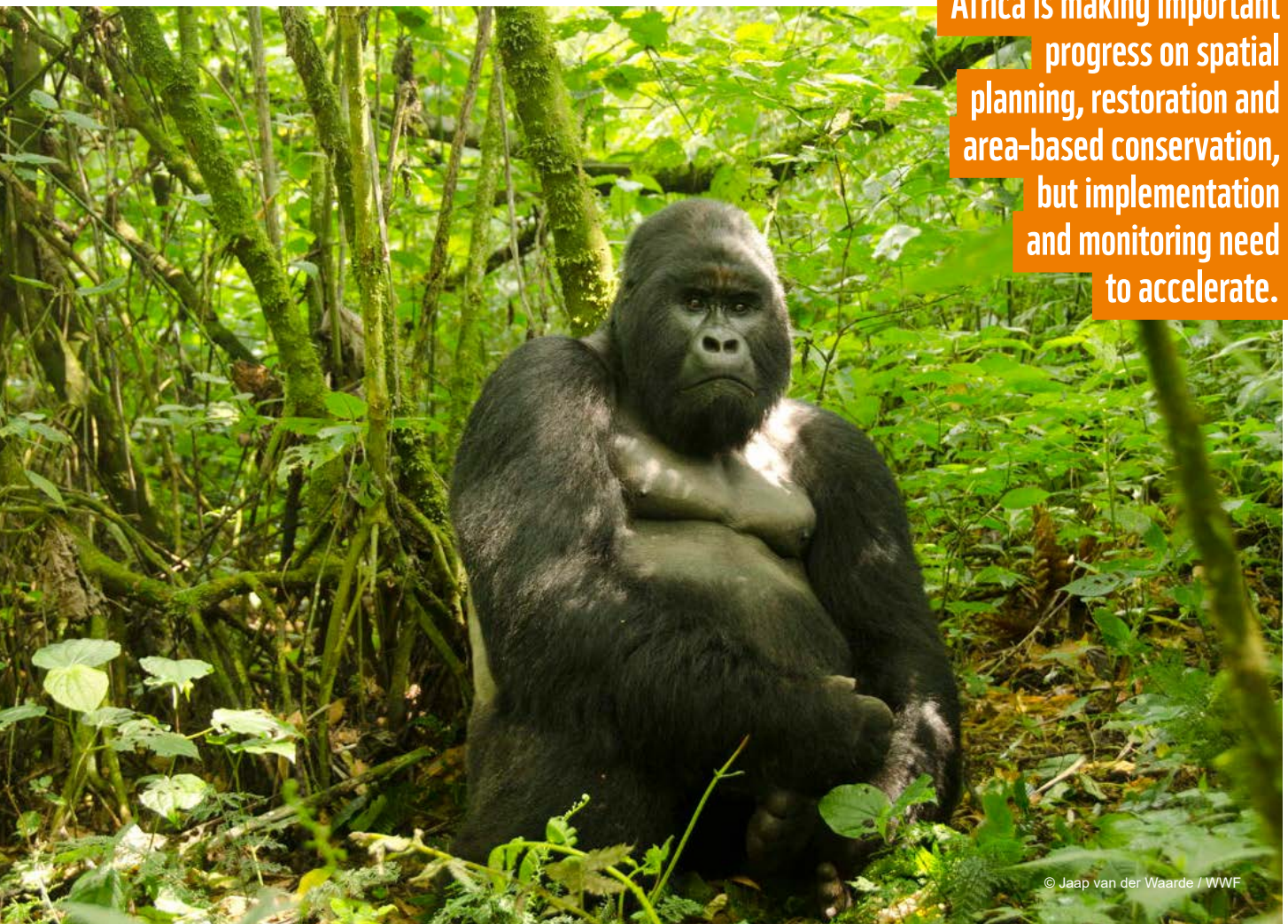
Namibia stands out for its ambitious approach to land conservation. Its NR7 reports a national commitment to conserving 50% of its land through conservancies and stewardship arrangements. This approach illustrates how community-based conservation and participatory governance can complement formally protected areas and support national ambitions beyond the global 30% target. The extent to which this commitment has been achieved should, however, be distinguished from the reported area already under effective conservation.

30% of Terrestrial, Inland-Water and Marine/ Coastal Areas Under Protected Areas and OECMs

The NR7s report progress in expanding protected and conserved areas across several African countries, with particularly notable achievements in parts of Southern Africa. Some countries have met or exceeded the global 30% ambition for certain ecosystems, while others report increases in coverage towards the target. Nevertheless, the evidence remains uneven across ecosystem types, with freshwater and marine environments often less comprehensively represented in protected-area networks and OECM reporting.

In addition, differences in national definitions, reporting periods and accounting methods complicate cross-country comparisons. Some reports combine terrestrial and marine areas, include multiple conservation designations or refer to areas awaiting formal recognition. The reported percentages should therefore be interpreted in light of their definitions and geographical scope. Coverage alone also does not establish that areas are effectively managed, ecologically representative or equitably governed.

Africa is making important progress on spatial planning, restoration and area-based conservation, but implementation and monitoring need to accelerate.



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CENTRAL AFRICA

Countries in Central Africa report progress in expanding protected-area networks, although accelerated action is needed to improve coverage and demonstrate effective conservation outcomes.

- Cameroon:** The NR7 reports a national network of 109 protected areas, comprising 22 national parks, five wildlife reserves, six sanctuaries, three zoos, one botanical garden, 45 Hunting Interest Zones and 27 Community-Managed Hunting Interest Zones. The reported network covers 20.7% of the relevant area, with terrestrial coverage at 20.45% and marine protected-area coverage at 14.5%. In addition, eight community mangrove forests have been established, and classification procedures have begun for nine potential new protected areas. These measures demonstrate progress in expanding conservation instruments across terrestrial and coastal environments. However, the reported marine coverage remains below the 30% target, while further information is needed on inland-water coverage, the contribution of OECMs and the effectiveness of management.
- Democratic Republic of the Congo (DRC):** Protected-area coverage reportedly increased from 13% to 17%, alongside the recognition or reporting of 784,854 hectares of Indigenous and Community Heritage Areas and Territories (APACs). This suggests progress in broadening conservation beyond conventional protected areas. The NR7 evidence also highlights uneven coverage of Key Biodiversity Areas (KBAs) across the region. The reported APAC area and its relationship to the increase in protected-area coverage should be clarified to distinguish formally protected areas from other conservation arrangements.
- Equatorial Guinea:** More than 90% of identified KBAs are reportedly covered by legal protection frameworks. This indicates substantial overlap between recognised sites of biodiversity importance and conservation designations. However, the proportion of KBAs under legal protection does not establish the proportion of the country's total land or marine area conserved, nor does it demonstrate management effectiveness.
- Republic of the Congo:** A KBA initiative launched in October 2022 reportedly identified and mapped more than 92,403 km² of KBAs, equivalent to approximately 27% of the country's national land area. This provides an important spatial evidence base for conservation prioritisation. However, identifying KBAs does not mean that the entire area is formally protected or effectively conserved; further information is needed on the proportion subsequently included in protected areas or recognised OECMs.

EAST AFRICA

Uganda: The NR7 reports that protected and conserved areas cover approximately 30% of the country, with gazetted wildlife conservation areas accounting for 10% of the national surface area, gazetted forest reserves for 24% and gazetted wetlands for 13%. These figures indicate a broad range of conservation designations but should not be added together without accounting for possible spatial overlap and differences in definitions.

Between 2021 and 2023, reported increases included plantation forest cover from 12.3% to 12.6%, forest cover gains and a reported 0.9% increase in wetland coverage. The report also records 8,613 gazetted wetlands, 132 mapped and gazetted fish-breeding areas, 36 KBAs (including nine aquatic sites), 34 Important Bird Areas and 42 Important Plant Areas. These measures demonstrate progress in identifying and safeguarding areas important for biodiversity. Nevertheless, further clarification is required on the baseline and meaning of the reported wetland increase, and on the extent to which the different designations contribute to the separate terrestrial, inland-water and marine/coastal components of Target 3.

SOUTHERN AFRICA

Several Southern African countries report substantial conservation coverage or national ambitions that exceed the global 30% target. Community conservancies, stewardship arrangements and broader conservation landscapes feature prominently, although the extent of formal recognition, ecosystem representation and management effectiveness varies.

- Botswana:** The NR7 reports that approximately 40.4% of the country's land has been set aside as Green Preserve. This includes national parks, state and private game reserves, forest reserves, wildlife management areas, community conservation zones and other OECMs. The report also indicates that 5.11% represents freshwater ecosystems within the Green Preserve, while 35.3% of terrestrial ecological regions are conserved through protected areas or OECMs. These figures suggest a substantial conservation footprint. However, the precise definitions and denominators used for the freshwater and terrestrial percentages should be verified before drawing conclusions about progress towards the separate 30% targets.
- Namibia:** Namibia's conservancy model provides a prominent example of community-based conservation at scale. The NR7 reports that land conservation exceeds 40%, supported by conservancies and stewardship arrangements. This illustrates the contribution of community governance to expanding conservation beyond conventional protected areas. Further clarification on the proportion formally recognised as OECMs, the overlap with existing protected areas and the ecological effectiveness of these arrangements would strengthen the assessment.
- South Africa:** South Africa's reported terrestrial conservation coverage is approximately 17%, although the NR7 evidence is not sufficiently consolidated to establish a definitive national percentage. Some reported coverage includes OECMs that are pending formal recognition. This complicates comparison with countries reporting only formally designated areas. South Africa's stewardship model nevertheless provides an important mechanism for extending conservation across privately and communally managed land. More consistent accounting of protected areas and qualifying OECMs would clarify progress towards Target 3.
- Zambia** — reported protected-area coverage requiring clarification: The NR7 material also cites protected-area coverage of approximately 41% of national territory, including 20 national parks, 34 game management areas and 463 protected forest reserves, comprising national and local forest reserves as well as bird and wildlife sanctuaries. The reported figure excludes a substantial area under community forests. The country attribution and the methodology underlying the 41% figure should be verified before publication, particularly because the original reporting groups these figures alongside Botswana's conservation coverage.
- Madagascar:** The NR7 reports that terrestrial protected areas covered 4,388,047 hectares by 2025, with a further 2,044,652 hectares included within mixed terrestrial/marine sites. In February 2026, 15 additional terrestrial protected areas were placed under temporary protection, contributing nearly 1.82 million hectares of new coverage. The area reported as transferred to communities reached 2,179,615 hectares, predominantly terrestrial. For marine conservation, the report cites 207 hectares under marine protected areas, in addition to 807,285 hectares within mixed terrestrial/marine sites. Locally Managed Marine Areas (LMMAs) expanded to 1,024,352 hectares. In February 2026, five additional marine protected areas and one mixed terrestrial/marine site were also placed under temporary protection. These figures suggest continued expansion of formal and community-based conservation. However, the reported marine protected-area figure of 207 hectares requires verification, as does the distinction between temporary protection and fully established protected-area status. The extent to which these areas improve marine representation, connectivity and management effectiveness also requires assessment.
- Mozambique:** Mozambique is reported to have adopted a more ambitious approach than the global 30% target for marine protected areas. However, the available material does not provide sufficient quantitative detail to establish the current level of marine coverage or the extent to which the national ambition has been achieved. A clearer breakdown of designated marine areas, recognised OECMs and implementation status would strengthen the assessment.

WEST AFRICA

West African countries generally report lower protected-area coverage or less comprehensive evidence of progress towards the 30% target, although several have expanded conservation designations and community-based mechanisms.

- **Senegal:** Marine protected-area coverage reportedly increased from 0.72% in 2012 to approximately 4.9% in 2024, while terrestrial protected areas covered 26.3% of the country in 2024. These figures indicate progress in both marine and terrestrial conservation, although marine coverage remains well below the 30% target. The reporting does not comprehensively account for inland-water conservation or OECMs. The classification of 84,726 hectares of new forest areas and the recognition of APACs also indicate progress in broadening conservation arrangements. More comprehensive accounting would help establish the combined contribution of formal protected areas and other conservation mechanisms.
- **Nigeria:** The NR7 presents baseline protected-area coverage of 13.93% of terrestrial areas and 0.02% of marine areas. These figures indicate a substantial gap relative to the 30% target, particularly for marine ecosystems. Expanding coverage will need to be accompanied by improvements in ecological representation, management effectiveness and the recognition of qualifying OECMs.
- **Ghana:** The NR7 reports combined terrestrial and inland-water coverage of 14.84%, alongside marine and coastal coverage of 0.1%. These figures indicate a significant gap towards Target 3, especially in marine and coastal environments. Ghana also reports the establishment of 51 Community Resource Management Areas (CREMAs), 50 of which hold devolution certificates covering a reported 2,295,759.54 hectares. In October 2025, the Greater Cape Three Points Marine Protected Area was approved, covering 703.86 km². These initiatives illustrate efforts to expand community-based and marine conservation. However, the extent to which CREMAs qualify as OECMs under the GBF criteria, and whether their areas overlap with other conservation designations, should be established before incorporating them into national coverage estimates.

NORTH AFRICA

Tunisia: Tunisia reports a protected-area network comprising 17 national parks, 27 nature reserves, four wildlife reserves and four marine and coastal protected areas. These designations demonstrate an established institutional basis for conservation. However, the NR7 does not provide a consolidated figure for the total area covered, limiting assessment of progress towards the 30% target. Separate estimates for terrestrial, inland-water and marine/coastal areas, together with information on management effectiveness and ecological representation, would be needed to determine the extent of alignment with Target 3.

The NR7s indicate that African countries are expanding protected and conserved areas through a combination of national protected-area networks, community conservancies, stewardship programmes, locally managed marine areas and other conservation arrangements. Namibia and Botswana report particularly ambitious terrestrial conservation coverage, while Uganda, Madagascar, Cameroon, Senegal and Ghana illustrate progress through different combinations of formal protection and community-based mechanisms.

Nevertheless, continental progress towards Target 3 remains difficult to assess consistently. Three principal gaps emerge:

1. **Uneven coverage across ecosystems:** Terrestrial conservation is generally better documented than inland-water and marine/coastal conservation. Several countries remain substantially below the 30% target for marine ecosystems, while freshwater coverage is often unclear.
2. **Inconsistent accounting and recognition:** National reports use different definitions, baselines and reporting periods. Some combine protected areas with OECMs, community conservation arrangements or areas under temporary protection, while others report only formally designated protected areas. Overlap between categories can also affect the accuracy of aggregate figures.
3. **Limited evidence of effectiveness and equity:** Reported coverage does not necessarily demonstrate that conservation areas are ecologically representative, connected, effectively managed or equitably governed. Evidence on management effectiveness, ecosystem condition, community participation and the long-term protection of biodiversity remains uneven.

Strengthening common indicators and national reporting systems would improve comparability across countries and allow clearer assessment of progress towards the separate terrestrial, inland-water and marine/coastal components of Target 3. Greater attention to OECM recognition, ecological connectivity, equitable governance and management effectiveness would also help distinguish nominal coverage from conservation that delivers sustained biodiversity outcomes.

Representative Nature of Protected Areas and OECMs Across Ecological Diversity

Alongside the expansion of protected areas (PAs) and the recognition of community-managed territories, National Reports (NR7s) provide evidence of efforts to improve the representation of diverse ecosystems within conservation networks. However, progress remains uneven across countries and ecosystem types. While some countries report initiatives to include a broader range of terrestrial, marine and coastal ecosystems, evidence on the representation of freshwater ecosystems, peatlands, ecological corridors and buffer zones remains limited. Furthermore, the designation of protected areas does not demonstrate that ecosystems are adequately represented, connected or effectively conserved.



Regional Evidence from NR7s

CENTRAL AFRICA

Evidence on ecological representativeness remains limited. Conservation coverage appears weighted towards forest ecosystems, while peatlands, buffer zones and ecological corridors are less consistently accounted for. Cameroon reports the development of a thematic map covering six ecosystems and identifies seven existing and six new Ramsar sites. However, quantitative data showing the proportion of each ecosystem type represented within PAs and OECMs are not provided.

EAST AFRICA

Country reports indicate conservation coverage across terrestrial forest and marine ecosystems, but the extent to which protected-area networks adequately represent the full range of ecological diversity is difficult to establish. Evidence on the representation of freshwater and inland-water ecosystems remains particularly limited, highlighting the need for more systematic ecosystem-level assessments.

SOUTHERN AFRICA

Reports indicate a comparatively inclusive approach to conservation, incorporating community-managed areas, private land and different categories of protected areas. South Africa reports on the representation of terrestrial, marine and coastal ecosystem types within its conservation network, alongside ongoing work to identify and recognise marine OECMs. Botswana highlights the Okavango Delta and Tsodilo Hills as UNESCO World Heritage Sites and reports Kasane–Kazungula and Shakawe as Ramsar Wetland Cities in 2025. The combined area of approximately 2,356,630 hectares should be verified, particularly to clarify which designated sites and geographical boundaries are included in the calculation. Madagascar reports that recent expansions of terrestrial PAs have included previously underrepresented ecosystems, including western dry forests, xerophilous thickets and rainforests.

WEST AND NORTH AFRICA

Evidence on ecosystem representativeness remains limited in the reports reviewed. More disaggregated information is needed to assess whether protected areas and OECMs collectively represent the diversity of terrestrial, freshwater, marine and coastal ecosystems, including ecosystems that remain underrepresented in national conservation networks.

Mechanisms Established to Manage Protected Areas and OECMs

Participatory governance, management planning, collaborative partnerships and management-effectiveness assessments are important mechanisms for improving the governance and management of PAs and OECMs. These approaches can strengthen community participation, clarify management responsibilities, reduce pressures on ecosystems and support the continued provision of ecosystem services, including carbon sequestration and benefits to local communities. The NR7 examples demonstrate that countries are applying a range of these mechanisms, although evidence of their effectiveness and resulting ecological and social outcomes varies.

Regional Evidence from NR7s

CENTRAL AFRICA

Community forestry is an important mechanism for expanding local participation in forest management. Cameroon reports the establishment of more than 51 community forests covering approximately 296,393 hectares. It also reports 398 simplified management plans for community forests, covering approximately 1.4 million hectares, alongside guidelines intended to strengthen participatory and watershed management. These figures suggest substantial investment in community-based management planning, although the relationship between the number of plans and the number of operational community forests should be clarified to avoid double counting.

Cameroon also reports that 18 protected areas were assessed between 2016 and 2025 using tools including IMET, METT and RAPPAM. These assessments covered approximately 31% of the national terrestrial protected-area network by area. This provides evidence of efforts to assess management effectiveness, but the extent to which the assessments have informed management improvements or resulted in measurable conservation outcomes is not specified.

SOUTHERN AFRICA

Botswana reports that management plans have been developed for most key biodiversity areas, with approximately 90% of protected areas covered by management plans. This indicates progress in establishing a planning framework for conservation management, although the proportion of plans implemented and their effectiveness would need to be assessed separately.

Zambia reports collaborative management arrangements involving government and conservation partners across several protected and conservation areas. These include African Parks in Kafue National Park, the International Crane Foundation and WWF in the Kafue Flats, and the International Fund for Animal Welfare in Lukusuzi and Luambe national parks, Lumimba Game Management Areas and North Swaka. Such partnerships can bring additional technical expertise, resources and implementation capacity to conservation management. Their contribution to effective and equitable conservation depends, however, on clear institutional responsibilities, sustained financing, community participation and monitoring of results.

South Africa reports that 30.4% of marine and coastal ecosystem types, 29.7% of terrestrial ecosystem types and 10.7% of freshwater ecosystem types are classified as “Well Protected” in its 2023 country reporting. It also reports ongoing development and implementation of marine protected-area management plans, with two new plans developed annually. These figures highlight differences in the reported protection status of ecosystem types, particularly the comparatively low proportion of freshwater ecosystems classified as well protected. The “Well Protected” classification should be distinguished from the broader area-based coverage of PAs and OECMs, as the indicators measure different aspects of conservation progress.

EAST AFRICA

Uganda reports the development of 14 community-based wetland management plans, four catchment management plans for wetland systems and four micro-catchment management plans. These instruments provide a framework for coordinating wetland and catchment management and engaging communities in addressing pressures on freshwater ecosystems.

Uganda also reports 15 Collaborative Forest Management agreements and 33 partnerships or memoranda of understanding covering financial and implementation support, research, policy, capacity-building and planning. These arrangements demonstrate the use of collaborative approaches to support conservation management. Further information on implementation, community participation, management effectiveness and changes in ecosystem condition would help establish their contribution to Target 3.

WEST AFRICA

Ghana reports support for management plans in 22 forest reserves, of which nine have been completed. This indicates progress in formalising management arrangements, although the status of the remaining plans and the extent of implementation are not specified.

Nigeria provides the example of the Lekki Conservation Centre in Lagos, which receives support from Chevron Corporation and is operated by the Nigerian Conservation Foundation. The centre combines wildlife and habitat conservation with environmental education, interpretation and monitoring, illustrating a conservation model supported by a partnership between the private sector and a non-governmental organisation. Its relevance to Target 3 should be assessed in relation to its formal conservation status, the ecosystems and area it conserves, and whether it meets the applicable criteria for a PA or OECM. Its management model may nevertheless offer useful lessons on partnership-based conservation and public engagement.



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Connectivity of Protected Areas and OECMs

Ecological connectivity is increasingly recognised as an important component of effective conservation across Africa, with countries reporting initiatives to establish ecological corridors, wildlife movement routes and community-managed conservation areas. These approaches can help reduce habitat fragmentation, facilitate species movement and gene flow, and strengthen ecosystem resilience. However, progress remains uneven, and quantitative evidence on the extent, condition and effectiveness of ecological connectivity is limited across the NR7s reviewed. This constrains the assessment of progress towards ensuring that protected areas and OECMs form connected and ecologically functional conservation networks.

Regional Evidence from NR7s

CENTRAL AFRICA

The Democratic Republic of the Congo (DRC) highlights the Kivu–Kinshasa Green Corridor as a major landscape-scale conservation initiative. The report associates this initiative with an increase in protected-area coverage from 13% to 17% of the country's territory. While this indicates an expansion of the national conservation network, increased protected-area coverage does not, on its own, demonstrate improved ecological connectivity. Further evidence is needed on the corridor's spatial configuration, the ecosystems and habitats it links, and its contribution to wildlife movement and ecosystem functioning.

SOUTHERN AFRICA

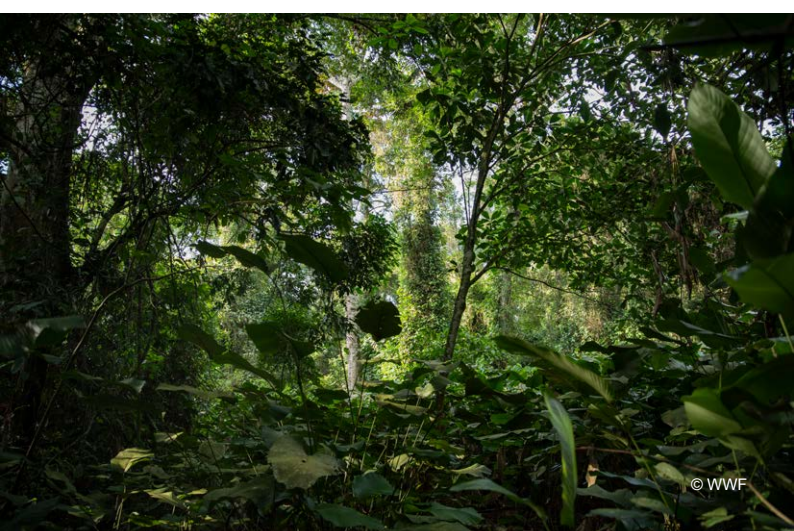
Zambia reports that 15 of 29 identified wildlife corridors have been delineated to facilitate wildlife movement between protected areas. This represents progress towards identifying and securing ecological linkages, although information on the legal recognition, management status and ecological effectiveness of these corridors remains limited. A complementary example is the Lower Zambezi–Mana Pools (LOZAMAP) Transfrontier Conservation Area, a bilateral initiative involving Zambia and Zimbabwe. It aims to strengthen ecological connectivity, conserve shared biodiversity and coordinate landscape management in the mid-Zambezi Valley. The initiative provides a framework for maintaining cross-border ecological linkages, including those important for wide-ranging and migratory species. Evidence on its effectiveness would be strengthened by monitoring habitat continuity, species movement and other ecological indicators.

EAST AND NORTH AFRICA

The NR7 evidence reviewed provides limited information on specific connectivity measures, their spatial extent or their ecological outcomes. This does not necessarily indicate an absence of connectivity initiatives; rather, it highlights a reporting gap that makes it difficult to assess how far protected areas and OECMs are connected within and across national boundaries.

WEST AFRICA

Ghana reports three wildlife protected areas, including the Digya–Kogyae Wildlife Corridor. This provides an example of efforts to maintain ecological linkages within the national conservation landscape. Further clarification is needed on the formal status, boundaries and management arrangements of the corridor, as well as evidence of its role in connecting habitats and supporting wildlife movement.



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Community-led conservation is emerging as a critical pathway for both biodiversity and people.

ECOSYSTEM AND COMMUNITY RESILIENCE

Africa's progress towards the 2030 biodiversity goals is also reflected in the alignment of national biodiversity strategies and action plans (NBSAPs) with GBF Target 8 on climate change and ocean acidification, and Target 13 on access to and the fair and equitable sharing of benefits arising from genetic resources and associated traditional knowledge. These targets have important implications for ecosystem resilience, climate adaptation, community livelihoods and the equitable distribution of conservation benefits.

The Seventh National Reports (NR7s) indicate growing recognition of the links between biodiversity conservation, climate resilience and community well-being. Countries report a range of policy commitments and interventions, including ecosystem-based approaches, nature-based solutions, climate mitigation and adaptation measures, and frameworks for access and benefit-sharing. However, progress remains uneven across countries and target elements. In particular, evidence of measurable outcomes is limited, while responses to ocean acidification appear insufficiently documented, especially in coastal and marine contexts.

The following analysis examines the extent to which national targets and reported actions align with the relevant elements of these global targets, while distinguishing policy alignment from implementation and demonstrated outcomes.

Alignment is strongest where national biodiversity targets explicitly recognise the relationship between biodiversity conservation, climate mitigation and adaptation, ecosystem-based approaches, nature-based solutions, and policy frameworks for access and benefit-sharing.

This reflects broad recognition across the continent that healthy ecosystems and the rights and participation of communities are important to achieving biodiversity objectives, strengthening resilience and supporting sustainable livelihoods.

Nevertheless, the degree of alignment varies substantially across countries and target elements. The inclusion of these priorities in national strategies provides an important foundation, but does not necessarily demonstrate that the corresponding measures have been implemented or have delivered measurable benefits. A robust assessment therefore needs to distinguish between the formal alignment of national targets, the implementation of supporting policies and actions, and evidence of outcomes for ecosystems and communities.

Attention is needed to determine whether national frameworks address the full scope of the relevant GBF targets. For Target 8, this includes climate-change mitigation and adaptation, resilience-building and minimising biodiversity impacts, including those associated with ocean acidification. For Target 13, the assessment should focus on measures that enable fair and equitable benefit-sharing from the utilisation of genetic resources and associated traditional knowledge, including appropriate access and benefit-sharing arrangements. Evidence of progress should therefore extend beyond general policy commitments to include implementation, participation, institutional capacity and documented results.



COMBAT CLIMATE CHANGE

African countries have made progress towards integrating biodiversity and climate action into national policies and programmes, although few appear to address all elements of GBF Target 8 comprehensively. The NR7s indicate that adaptation to climate-change impacts on biodiversity and the application of ecosystem-based approaches (EbA) are among the most established areas of action. These approaches are increasingly reflected in national strategies and implemented through interventions aimed at strengthening the resilience of ecosystems and communities.

Reported initiatives include large-scale forest restoration, REDD+ programmes, wetland and coastal ecosystem rehabilitation, and climate-resilient agriculture. These interventions can deliver multiple benefits by supporting biodiversity, strengthening ecosystem functions, reducing climate-related risks and sustaining community livelihoods. Some countries also report progress in domestic climate mitigation, including emissions reductions relative to projected business-as-usual scenarios, supported by interventions in sectors such as forestry and agriculture. However, the strength of evidence varies, and reported emissions outcomes should be distinguished from the contribution of individual biodiversity-related interventions.

Two important gaps emerge from the reporting. First, ocean acidification receives little dedicated attention, with only two countries reportedly addressing it explicitly. Second, nature-based solutions (NbS) are explicitly referenced in only two NR7s, despite evidence of related interventions in practice. This suggests a gap between terminology used in national reporting and the approaches being implemented on the ground. Overall, the findings point to growing recognition of the links between climate action and biodiversity conservation, but uneven alignment with the full scope of Target 8.

The regional evidence illustrates different levels and forms of alignment:

CENTRAL AFRICA

The DRC's reporting is not structured around the four elements of Target 8, making alignment difficult to assess systematically. Cameroon does not explicitly identify its national priority as Target 8; instead, climate adaptation measures are distributed across several national targets. Its reporting therefore indicates partial alignment, particularly around adaptation, but does not provide a consolidated account of progress across all target elements.

WEST AFRICA

Nigeria explicitly addresses climate change and ocean acidification through dedicated national targets or policy frameworks, including commitments to nature-based solutions. Ghana's climate-related actions are also considered aligned in substance, although they are not structured as a standalone Target 8. As in Uganda, climate-related measures are integrated with restoration commitments.

SOUTHERN AFRICA

South Africa demonstrates partial to substantial alignment through the integration of ecosystem-based adaptation into national climate, biodiversity and disaster-risk-management strategies. Nevertheless, the extent to which the full scope of Target 8—including mitigation, resilience-building and ocean acidification—is addressed should be assessed separately.

NORTH AFRICA

Tunisia's reporting focuses primarily on adaptation, including measures relating to desert ecosystems and water management. This indicates alignment with an important component of Target 8, although evidence on the other elements is more limited.

These findings highlight the importance of assessing alignment by substance as well as by reporting structure. The absence of a dedicated Target 8 heading does not necessarily indicate that a country has taken no relevant action. Conversely, the inclusion of climate priorities in national strategies does not, by itself, demonstrate implementation or measurable outcomes across all elements of the target.

EAST AFRICA

Alignment remains uneven. Kenya reports an ambitious national approach that links emissions reduction with nature-based solutions and ecosystem-based adaptation to strengthen community resilience. Uganda's climate-change actions are not organised under a dedicated Target 8 heading, but the reported measures are considered broadly aligned in substance. These actions are incorporated alongside restoration-related commitments, illustrating how countries may address climate and biodiversity objectives through integrated national targets rather than through a one-to-one correspondence with the GBF.



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Climate Change Mitigation

Progress on climate mitigation is reflected in national planning and interventions that seek to reduce emissions while supporting biodiversity and ecosystem resilience. Reported measures include REDD+ initiatives, renewable energy expansion, forest and landscape restoration, industrial decarbonisation, climate-smart agriculture and the development of carbon-market frameworks. These approaches can contribute to climate objectives while generating biodiversity and livelihood benefits, provided that their design and implementation safeguard ecosystem integrity and community rights.

Regional Evidence from NR7s

CENTRAL AFRICA

The DRC and Cameroon report REDD+ programmes intended to reduce deforestation and promote sustainable forest management. These initiatives provide a pathway for linking forest conservation with emissions reduction, although their contribution should be assessed using verified emissions data, forest-condition indicators and evidence of safeguards and community benefits.

Cameroon also reports 51 community forests covering approximately 296,000 hectares. Community forestry can contribute to mitigation by supporting sustainable forest use, reducing pressure on forest resources and maintaining carbon stocks, while also providing livelihood opportunities. The extent of these benefits depends on management practices, forest condition and the degree to which community forestry reduces unsustainable resource use.

Cameroon further reports that access to clean and modern energy among rural households increased from 3.6% in 2018 to approximately 7% in 2022, supported by the distribution of solar kits, solar lamps and other renewable-energy solutions. This represents progress in expanding access to cleaner energy and may help reduce reliance on traditional biomass fuels. However, the extent to which this has reduced deforestation or greenhouse-gas emissions would require additional evidence.

EAST AFRICA

Kenya reports progress in establishing a regulatory framework for carbon markets, including carbon-market regulations, a national carbon registry and institutional arrangements for carbon-market governance and REDD+. These mechanisms can help structure emissions-reduction activities, improve transparency and support the tracking of carbon transactions. Their contribution to biodiversity-related mitigation will depend on the integrity of carbon accounting, the environmental quality of supported projects and the protection of community rights and benefit-sharing arrangements.

SOUTHERN AFRICA

South Africa reports several initiatives linking climate mitigation with ecosystem management. These include wind and solar energy development, thicket restoration with carbon-sequestration potential, wetland rehabilitation, and the removal of invasive alien species through programmes such as Working for Water and Working for Wetlands. Forest restoration and reforestation also contribute to maintaining or enhancing carbon stocks, although their climate and biodiversity benefits depend on the species used, restoration methods and long-term ecosystem outcomes.

Madagascar and Namibia report agroforestry and climate-smart agricultural approaches that can contribute to carbon storage, soil protection and resilience to climate variability. These interventions can provide multiple benefits where they are appropriate to local ecosystems and farming systems.

WEST AFRICA

Nigeria reports the launch of the Net-Zero Nature-Positive Project, which links climate action with biodiversity restoration and supports the country's stated ambition to achieve net-zero emissions by 2060. The project illustrates an integrated approach to climate and biodiversity planning; evidence on implementation and quantified emissions and biodiversity outcomes would help establish its contribution.

Ghana reports restoration initiatives, including the Shea Landscape Emission Reductions Project, which links landscape rehabilitation with emissions reduction. Such projects can support carbon storage and sustainable land management while generating benefits for local communities, depending on their design and delivery.

Senegal's mangrove restoration efforts in Casamance and Saloum provide another example of mitigation measures with adaptation co-benefits. Mangroves can store carbon while helping protect coastal communities from erosion, storm surges and saltwater intrusion. The scale of these benefits depends on restored habitat condition, long-term survival and the extent of protection afforded to surrounding communities.

Climate Change Adaptation

Climate adaptation is one of the more prominent areas of alignment reported under Target 8. African countries describe a range of measures, including the integration of biodiversity into adaptation policy, ecosystem-based approaches, climate-resilient agriculture, watershed restoration, water-security initiatives and community-led conservation. These interventions seek to reduce vulnerability to climate-related hazards while maintaining ecosystem functions and supporting livelihoods.

Many countries report National Adaptation Plans and measures linked to their Nationally Determined Contributions (NDCs). This provides an important policy foundation for coordinating climate and biodiversity objectives. Nevertheless, the extent to which these frameworks explicitly integrate biodiversity considerations, and the degree to which adaptation interventions have delivered measurable resilience outcomes, varies across countries.

Regional Evidence from NR7s

CENTRAL AFRICA

The DRC, Cameroon and Gabon report forest-based adaptation approaches that link climate resilience with forest conservation and sustainable management. Community forests offer opportunities to incorporate Indigenous and local knowledge into adaptation planning and implementation, while supporting local participation in managing natural resources.

These approaches can contribute to adaptation by maintaining ecosystem functions, reducing pressure on forests and supporting livelihoods that depend on forest resources. Their effectiveness depends on the quality of forest management, the extent of community involvement and evidence that the interventions reduce vulnerability to climate impacts.



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The 30x30 ambition must be about quality, representation and connectivity, not only increasing the number of hectares under conservation.

EAST AFRICA

Kenya and Uganda report approaches that connect agriculture and food security with climate-smart agriculture and watershed restoration. These measures can improve resilience to variable rainfall, drought and other climate-related pressures while supporting soil conservation and water availability.

Integrating watershed management with agricultural adaptation is particularly relevant where communities depend on rain-fed farming and freshwater resources. However, further information on adoption rates, agricultural productivity, water availability and the resilience of participating households would help demonstrate the outcomes of these interventions.

SOUTHERN AFRICA

South Africa has institutionalised adaptation through a range of policy instruments, including the Climate Change Act, the National Climate Change Response Strategy and Adaptation Strategy-related measures, coastal adaptation response plans and disaster-risk-reduction frameworks. It has also established biome-level adaptation targets for terrestrial and freshwater ecosystems, providing a basis for tailoring responses to different ecological conditions.

South Africa reports nearly 6,000 adaptation projects since 1998 and an average of approximately 130 operational adaptation projects annually between 2015 and 2024. These figures indicate a substantial adaptation portfolio, although the number of projects alone does not establish their effectiveness, geographical coverage or contribution to ecosystem and community resilience.

Community conservancies in Namibia and South Africa offer additional opportunities to combine natural-resource management with climate adaptation. In Madagascar, coastal ecosystem-based adaptation projects provide examples of efforts to strengthen coastal resilience through ecosystem management. Their contribution would be clearer with evidence on changes in ecosystem condition, exposure to coastal hazards and benefits to local communities.

WEST AFRICA

Climate-resilient agriculture and food-security measures feature prominently in the reported adaptation approaches. Nigeria's National Centre for Genetic Resources and Biotechnology (NACGRAB) conserves drought-tolerant crops, including sorghum, millet and cowpea, and supports their distribution to dryland farmers. These measures can help maintain crop diversity and provide farmers with planting materials suited to challenging climatic conditions.

Ghana reports the integration of adaptation into its Community Resource Management Area (CREMA) model, which enables communities to manage natural resources and ecosystems outside formal protected areas. CREMAs are reported to cover more than two million hectares. By combining biodiversity conservation with community-based natural-resource management, the model can support ecosystem resilience and local adaptation. The extent of its contribution to climate resilience should, however, be assessed using evidence on implementation, ecosystem condition and community-level outcomes.

Senegal's participation in the Great Green Wall Initiative links land restoration with climate adaptation and sustainable livelihoods. Restoration can help address land degradation, support soil and water conservation and strengthen resilience in dryland landscapes. Long-term effectiveness depends on the suitability of restoration methods, the survival of planted vegetation and the sustainability of local land-management practices.

NORTH AFRICA

Tunisia's reporting focuses on integrating desert ecosystems and water management into adaptation and disaster-risk-management frameworks, alongside the promotion of drought-resistant crops. These measures respond to key regional vulnerabilities, including water scarcity, drought and land degradation. More detailed evidence on implementation and outcomes would help assess the contribution of these actions to biodiversity and community resilience.

Key Gaps and Implications for Target 8

Three gaps stand out across the regional evidence:

- **Uneven coverage of the target's elements.** Adaptation and ecosystem-based approaches receive comparatively greater attention, while mitigation outcomes and ocean acidification are less consistently documented. Countries should assess all elements of Target 8 explicitly, even where actions are integrated into broader national targets.
- **Limited measurement of outcomes.** Many reports describe policies, projects and interventions but provide limited evidence of their attributable contributions to emissions reduction, ecosystem resilience or reduced climate vulnerability. More consistent indicators and monitoring frameworks are needed to distinguish policy alignment from implementation and measurable impact.
- **Underreporting of nature-based solutions and ocean acidification.** The limited explicit reference to NbS may reflect differences in terminology as well as gaps in implementation or reporting. Countries could map existing ecosystem-based interventions against the relevant concepts and clarify where they qualify as NbS. Coastal and marine countries should also improve reporting on ocean acidification, including monitoring, vulnerability assessment and measures to address its impacts on marine biodiversity.

Minimising Impacts on Ocean Acidification

Ocean acidification is weakly addressed across the NR7s, with limited evidence of dedicated national targets, monitoring systems or targeted interventions. Nigeria stands out for explicitly including ocean acidification in its national targets, while Ghana reports targeted capacity-building and monitoring initiatives. Elsewhere, coastal restoration provides indirect benefits by strengthening marine and coastal ecosystem resilience, although these measures do not directly address the causes of acidification.

Regional evidence from NR7s

CENTRAL AFRICA

Ocean acidification is not explicitly identified as a major threat in the reports reviewed.



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EAST AFRICA

Kenya's Go Blue and Mikoko Pamoja initiatives support mangrove and coastal ecosystem restoration, potentially strengthening ecosystem resilience, but are not direct measures to address acidification.

SOUTHERN AFRICA

Madagascar and South Africa report mangrove, coral reef and seagrass restoration, which can support marine biodiversity and ecosystem resilience but do not directly mitigate ocean acidification.

WEST AFRICA

Nigeria explicitly addresses ocean acidification in its national targets. Ghana's BIOTTA project (2022–2024) strengthened capacity for ocean-acidification monitoring in the Gulf of Guinea, including training more than 20 young scientists. Senegal's mangrove restoration supports coastal resilience, although acidification is not identified as a dedicated priority.

Adopting Nature-Based Solutions (NbS)

Although NbS are implemented through restoration and natural-resource management across Africa, they are rarely explicitly identified in national targets, with Nigeria and Kenya providing notable examples. Central and West African initiatives often focus on forests and watersheds, while East and Southern African countries report applications spanning catchment restoration, coastal protection and community-based conservation. More explicit recognition in national strategies and stronger outcome monitoring could improve reporting and support wider implementation.

**Climate and biodiversity
action are increasingly
converging across
Africa, but important
gaps remain.**



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Applying Ecosystem-Based Approaches (EbA)

EbA is among the more established approaches to climate adaptation reported across Africa. Interventions in forests, wetlands, watersheds, agricultural landscapes and coastal ecosystems seek to strengthen ecosystem resilience, conserve biodiversity and sustain community livelihoods. However, evidence of measurable outcomes and implementation effectiveness remains uneven.

Regional evidence from NR7s

CENTRAL AFRICA

Forest conservation, sustainable forest management and water-governance initiatives provide opportunities to integrate EbA into climate adaptation and strengthen ecosystem and community resilience.

SOUTHERN AFRICA

South Africa reports institutionalising EbA through biodiversity and climate-adaptation policy frameworks, alongside a substantial portfolio of restoration and adaptation projects. Madagascar reports coastal EbA initiatives involving mangrove restoration and community-based fisheries management to strengthen coastal protection and sustain fish stocks. Zimbabwe also integrates EbA principles into reforestation and land-restoration programmes.

WEST AFRICA

Ghana's land-restoration initiatives, including those linked to the Great Green Wall and coastal mangrove restoration in eastern Ghana, demonstrate the application of ecosystem-based approaches to land degradation and coastal hazards.

EAST AFRICA

Kenya's Lake Naivasha Basin Project links catchment restoration with reduced vulnerability to droughts and floods. Uganda reports a GCF/UNDP-supported wetland and catchment restoration project targeting more than 64,000 hectares of wetlands and 11,000 hectares of catchments, alongside initiatives in the Albertine Graben involving wetland, riverbank and ecological-connectivity restoration.

NORTH AFRICA

Reported priorities include water management and urban resilience, although further country-level evidence is needed to assess the scale and outcomes of EbA implementation.

Benefit sharing and recognition of IPs&LCs rights are advancing, but implementation must catch up with policy commitments.

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ACCESS AND BENEFIT SHARING

The NR7s demonstrate strong recognition across Africa of fair and equitable benefit-sharing as a foundation for biodiversity conservation and the sustainable use of biological resources. With more than 90% of African countries reported as Parties to the Nagoya Protocol, countries have undertaken efforts to establish and operationalise access and benefit-sharing (ABS) frameworks covering genetic resources and associated traditional knowledge. However, the extent to which national systems address digital sequence information (DSI) remains less evident.

Alignment with GBF Target 13 is reflected primarily in legal, policy and administrative measures, institutional arrangements and capacity-building initiatives. While many countries report progress on genetic resources and associated traditional knowledge, implementation is uneven, and evidence relating to DSI remains limited. Community-based governance and benefit-sharing arrangements also provide opportunities to strengthen equity, although their contribution to Target 13 depends on whether they support fair and equitable sharing of benefits arising from the utilisation of genetic resources and associated traditional knowledge.

Cameroon and Uganda address relevant elements across multiple national targets rather than through a single dedicated Target 13 framework, complicating assessment of alignment. In South Africa, community-based conservation initiatives offer opportunities to connect conservation benefits with ABS objectives.

Legal, Policy and Administrative Frameworks

African countries are progressively establishing institutional arrangements for ABS, including national focal points, competent national authorities and procedures for research permits and the transfer or utilisation of genetic resources. Some have adopted dedicated legislation and regulatory systems, while others remain at earlier stages of policy development. Recognition of Indigenous Peoples' and local communities' rights is also increasing, including through provisions for prior informed consent (PIC) and mutually agreed terms (MAT). Nevertheless, enforcement gaps and weak operationalisation continue to constrain effective and equitable benefit-sharing.



Regional evidence from NR7s

CENTRAL AFRICA

The DRC reports progress towards a comprehensive law on genetic resources, although supporting ABS regulatory instruments remain subject to political approval. Cameroon reports negotiating 54 MATs formalising conditions for the use of genetic resources, while Gabon established institutional arrangements in 2020 and is developing ABS contract templates. These examples indicate progress at different stages, from legal development to the establishment of operational procedures.

EAST AFRICA

Kenya and Uganda report ABS legislation aligned with the Nagoya Protocol. Kenya's community protocols, including those developed by the Endorois and Ogiek communities, demonstrate how biocultural frameworks can help protect traditional knowledge and challenge unauthorised research. These approaches strengthen community agency, although their effectiveness depends on recognition by relevant institutions and their integration into formal ABS procedures.

SOUTHERN AFRICA

South Africa reports a relatively developed ABS framework supported by its bioprospecting and ABS regulations, Indigenous Knowledge Act and relevant biodiversity policies. By 2024, its permit system recorded 38 active bioprospecting permits, 28 biotrade permits and 41 integrated permits. The transition from manual to digital systems is intended to improve transparency and monitoring. Namibia and Botswana report incorporating ABS principles into community conservancy approaches, although their legal frameworks remain incomplete. Madagascar has drafted ABS legislation but continues to face implementation and enforcement challenges.

WEST AFRICA

Nigeria, Ghana and Senegal report ABS legislation, policy commitments or administrative measures. Nigeria identifies an ABS trust or benefit-sharing fund intended to pool a proportion of monetary benefits for community development, although evidence of its operational status is lacking. Senegal reports 77 research-access authorisations in 2025, while Ghana reports administrative responses to 45 requests for information concerning ABS implementation. These figures demonstrate administrative activity but do not, on their own, establish that benefits have been realised or distributed equitably.

Capacity-Building Measures at All Levels

Capacity-building initiatives across Africa include training, awareness-raising, stakeholder dialogue and technical support to improve understanding of ABS requirements, strengthen permit administration and compliance, and enable communities to negotiate fair benefits. GEF- and GIZ/ABS Initiative-supported activities have also supported work on research and development, traditional knowledge protection, sample traceability, laboratory capacity and the negotiation of monetary and non-monetary benefits.

However, capacity-building remains uneven and is weighted towards genetic resources and traditional knowledge, with considerably less attention to DSI. The NR7s reviewed identify DSI-related capacity-building in Nigeria, Ghana, South Africa and Kenya, underscoring the need for broader technical and institutional support.

Regional evidence from NR7s

CENTRAL AFRICA

The DRC reports ethnobotanical studies, ABS permitting work, stakeholder mapping and training modules for Indigenous Peoples and local communities (IPLCs), researchers and legal experts. Cameroon's NR7 does not identify a specific ABS capacity-building initiative.

EAST AFRICA

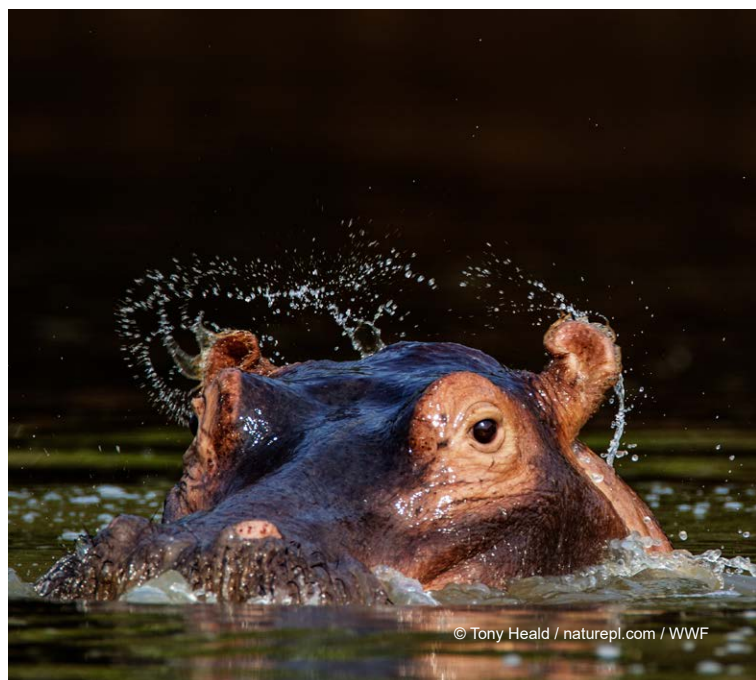
Kenya acknowledges that capacity-building measures are only partially in place and highlights the need for a comprehensive assessment of needs among IPLCs, women, youth and persons with disabilities. Uganda reports an ABS training plan and toolkit, 13 capacity-building events involving 27 institutions and 11 local governments and non-state actors, and training for 200 herbalists over four years.

SOUTHERN AFRICA

South Africa reports monetary and non-monetary benefits channelled through a Bioprospecting Suspense Account, alongside the development of tools to monitor and report benefits. It recognises that capacity-building has been largely ad hoc and reports steps towards more structured training, including through the Technical and Scientific Cooperation Centre. Madagascar reports training and awareness activities across 121 local community sites in 45 communes and 12 regions. Namibia reports IPLC engagement and capacity-building across all 14 regions, including support for community advisory bodies and women's participation in value chains such as marula-based enterprises.

WEST AFRICA

Senegal reports participation in a Pan-African ABS and Biotrade Workshop and six national awareness-raising meetings. Nigeria reports partial progress in capacity-building, including trained personnel, a public registry and ABS Clearing-House-related awareness activities.



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COORDINATION ACROSS ENVIRONMENTAL AGREEMENTS

A key finding of this study is that CBD COP decisions and national reporting requirements provide a mandate for coordination among National Focal Points (NFPs) and for strengthening synergies across the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) and multilateral environmental agreements (MEAs). African countries have made progress in documenting linkages between NBSAP targets, the SDGs, the Rio Conventions and other relevant international and regional environmental agreements. This knowledge provides a foundation for strengthening policy coherence and coordinating implementation towards shared GBF, NBSAP, SDG and MEA objectives.



Review of Mandates for MEA Synergies and Coordination

Synergies among MEAs are central to strengthening policy coherence and mainstreaming biodiversity priorities under the GBF. Several CBD COP decisions provide guidance on coordination across environmental agreements, including calls for national reporting processes to be aligned and undertaken collaboratively, with the involvement of relevant National Focal Points. The guidance also identifies relevant SDGs, the Rio Conventions, and other biodiversity-related conventions at international and regional levels.

Key findings from the review of these mandates are summarised in Table 1.

Table 1. Review of COP Decisions on Mandates for MEA Synergies

COP DECISION	THE MANDATE
COP Decision 16/32 Section 8 of NR7 revised template	As an optional requirement, calls for a brief description on the links of the target implementation to progress in achieving the related Sustainable Development Goals and associated targets, and the implementation of other related agreements
Annex II of COP 15/6	Recognizes the value of this linkage through the use of national reports, reviews or communications submitted under relevant Conventions and in connection with the SDGs, as important information for assessing progress in the implementation of the Framework.
COP decision 14/27	<p>Of importance in the process of ensuring synergies, this Decision calls upon parties to</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> involve the National focal points for the Cartagena and Nagoya Protocols in the preparation of their 7th National Reports to the CBD. involve NFPs for SDGs and other relevant international and regional conventions, involve the NFP of biodiversity-related conventions and the Rio Conventions. collaborate with the reporting processes of the relevant MEAs.

National MEA Coordination Mechanisms

Seventh National Reports (NR7s) indicate that coordination between CBD National Focal Points (NFPs) and focal points for other multilateral environmental agreements (MEAs) occurs through NBSAP updating, national reporting and monitoring processes. However, coordination mechanisms vary across countries, and collaboration is not consistently institutionalised across all MEAs.

Reported approaches include National Biodiversity Committees, inter-ministerial committees and specialised units responsible for coordinating MEA implementation and reporting. Coordination is also evident in processes involving the CBD's Nagoya and Cartagena Protocols, which relate to GBF Target 13 on access and benefit-sharing (ABS) and Target 17 on biosafety, respectively. Countries also report joint consultations, data sharing across MEA reporting processes and capacity-building for focal points and other reporting personnel.

Country examples illustrate these approaches

NAMIBIA – INSTITUTIONAL COORDINATION

The Multilateral Environmental Agreement Monitoring Unit provides an inter-institutional mechanism intended to improve coordination and reporting across multiple MEAs, including the CBD.

DEMOCRATIC REPUBLIC OF THE CONGO (DRC) – CBD PROTOCOL REPORTING

The country reports alignment with the preparation and submission of the interim national report on the Nagoya Protocol.

UGANDA – ABS IMPLEMENTATION EVIDENCE

Uganda draws on information from its August 2025 CBD Protocol ABS Technical Progress Report, including reported work by the Batwa community, the National Chemotherapeutics Research Institute (NCRI) and the United Organisation for Batwa Development in Uganda (UOBDU) to develop seven herbal remedies for malaria, wounds and coughs.

SOUTH AFRICA – COORDINATION ACROSS THE RIO CONVENTIONS

South Africa used its 2023 report to the United Nations Convention to Combat Desertification (UNCCD) to report on progress in ecosystem restoration.

CAMEROON – JOINT CAPACITY-BUILDING

Cameroon reports training biodiversity and other MEA focal points in the use of online communication and reporting tools, including the Clearing-House Mechanism (CHM), Data Reporting Tool (DaRT) and Online Reporting Tool (ORT). It also reports training personnel involved in monitoring and collecting data in the required formats.

Overall, the evidence points to progress in cross-agreement coordination, information sharing and reporting capacity. However, the variation in institutional arrangements suggests that further efforts are needed to make coordination more systematic and consistent across MEAs.



Compliance and Documentation of Linkages Between NBSAP/GBF Targets and MEAs

Integrating biodiversity priorities into national development plans (NDPs) and the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) provides an important foundation for policy coherence and mainstreaming across national, sectoral and local levels.

Compliance with NR7 reporting requirements

Section III.8 of the Seventh National Report (NR7) template enabled African countries to document linkages between biodiversity targets and relevant SDGs, with some also demonstrating alignment with national development priorities. These linkages highlight the contribution of biodiversity, resilient ecosystems and ecosystem services to poverty reduction, food and water security, climate resilience and the conservation of terrestrial ecosystems. The SDGs identified by countries are summarised in Box 1.

Some countries also documented connections between biodiversity targets and other multilateral environmental agreements (MEAs), highlighting the potential for synergies in implementing the Kunming–Montreal Global Biodiversity Framework (GBF) and aligned National Biodiversity Strategies and Action Plans (NBSAPs). Progress towards biodiversity targets can contribute to the objectives of multiple MEAs to which African countries are committed.

The relevant agreements identified in the reports are summarised in Table 2.

Table 2. MEAs recognized as linked to GBF/NBSAP Targets for Ecological Integrity and resilience of ecosystems and communities

CBD PROTOCOLS	GLOBAL LEVEL MEAS	REGIONAL LEVEL MEAS
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Cartagena Protocol Nagoya Protocol Nagoya Protocol/Cali Fund 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> UNFCCC/Paris Agreement UNCCD CITES ITPGRFA CMS and Samarkand Strategic Plan for Migratory Species (2024–2032) Target 2.2, 3.4 Ramsar and 4th Ramsar Strategic Plan (2016–2024), Objectives 1, 8 and 12 UNESCO World Heritage Basel, Stockholm (POPs), Rotterdam, and Minamata Strategic Framework of the International Plant Protection Convention (IPPC) 2020–2030, notably Key Result B3 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> AU Agenda 2063 Greater Virunga Treaty Lusaka Agreement, AEWA

Overall, the evidence points to progress in cross-agreement coordination, information sharing and reporting capacity. However, the variation in institutional arrangements suggests that further efforts are needed to make coordination more systematic and consistent across MEAs.

Linkages Between GBF Targets, Development Priorities and Other MEAs

Despite the linkages established between GBF targets, the SDGs, National Development Strategies and multilateral environmental agreements (MEAs), the depth and quality of information reported vary across countries and regions. The NR7s demonstrate broad recognition of these connections, although evidence of their operationalisation in implementation remains uneven.

Linkages across selected GBF targets

- **Spatial planning (Target 1):** Countries identify connections between Targets 1, 2 and 3, the SDGs, the UNFCCC, the Ramsar Convention and the World Heritage Convention. These frameworks provide complementary legal and institutional foundations for integrating biodiversity into land- and seascape planning, although the extent of integration varies across countries.
- **Ecosystem restoration (Target 2) and climate resilience (Target 8):** African countries reference the African Forest Landscape Restoration Initiative (AFR100), which aims to restore 100 million hectares of degraded land by 2030, and the African Union's Great Green Wall as key restoration frameworks. These initiatives support alignment between national restoration priorities, global climate objectives and the Ramsar Convention's focus on wetland conservation and restoration.
- **Conservation (Target 3):** Conservation priorities are linked primarily to the UNFCCC, the Ramsar Convention and the World Heritage Convention, reflecting the connections between biodiversity conservation, climate resilience, wetland protection and natural heritage. However, evidence demonstrating how these synergies translate into coordinated implementation remains limited.
- **Access and benefit-sharing (Target 13):** Reported linkages focus mainly on the Nagoya Protocol and the International Treaty on Plant Genetic Resources for Food and Agriculture (ITPGRFA). These instruments support benefit-sharing relating to genetic resources and plant genetic resources for food and agriculture. Although digital sequence information (DSI) is covered by Target 13, countries' reporting on its operationalisation remains limited. A few countries also reference the Cali Fund as an emerging mechanism for channelling benefits from the use of DSI towards biodiversity conservation and community development.

Country examples and additional MEA linkages

CROSS-COUNTRY REPORTING

Countries that addressed the relevant NR7 template requirement generally demonstrated linkages between biodiversity targets, the SDGs and the Rio Conventions. Other agreements—including the Basel, Rotterdam and Stockholm Conventions, the Minamata Convention and the International Plant Protection Convention—were mentioned less frequently. The BBNJ Agreement was also cited as an action relating to marine conservation, although it was not discussed in the NR7 synergies section.

Financing is one of the biggest barriers standing between Africa's biodiversity ambition and implementation. Greater coherence between biodiversity, climate, land and other environmental commitments can help Africa achieve more with existing resources.



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CAMEROON

The country reported institutional linkages supporting GBF Target 3 through the Ministry of Economy, Planning and Regional Development (MINEPAT) and the Ministry of Forests and Wildlife (MINFOF). Its NR7 also provides detailed links between NBSAP targets, the Rio Conventions and other biodiversity-related MEAs.

GHANA

The Coastal Communities Resilience to Climate Change and Diarrhoea project (2020–2025) illustrates the connection between ecosystem and climate resilience and human health. The initiative sought to strengthen coastal communities' resilience to climate change while improving diarrhoeal disease management.

Overall, the NR7s demonstrate growing recognition of the contribution that coordinated implementation across biodiversity, climate, wetlands, heritage and development frameworks can make towards achieving GBF targets. However, more consistent reporting is needed to assess whether these recognised linkages are translating into coordinated action and measurable outcomes.

Continental and Regional Frameworks

NR7s indicate growing recognition of the role of continental and regional frameworks in supporting biodiversity policy coherence and implementation. However, while many countries refer broadly to regional cooperation, fewer identify specific instruments or mechanisms linking regional commitments to GBF implementation.

Country examples include:

CAMEROON

Recognises regional coordination through the Central African Forest Commission (COMIFAC).

NIGERIA

References the African Union Biodiversity Action Plan 2023–2030, the West African Regional Action Plan for Biodiversity, cooperation within the Mano River Union and other regional agreements.

UGANDA

Highlights the importance of synergies with the Greater Virunga Treaty, Lusaka Agreement, Agreement on the Conservation of African-Eurasian Migratory Waterbirds (AEWA) and African Union Agenda 2063.

These examples demonstrate awareness of regional frameworks, although the extent to which they are systematically integrated into national biodiversity planning and implementation remains unclear.



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FINANCING AND OTHER MEANS OF IMPLEMENTATION

Adequate financing and other means of implementation are essential to translating GBF-aligned policies into action. This study assesses progress in biodiversity financing and commitments by non-state actors, drawing on evidence reported in the NR7s.

Overall, African countries report efforts to mobilise support across GBF targets, but progress varies considerably across countries, targets and implementation mechanisms. Financing constraints remain a recurring challenge. Nevertheless, the reports identify promising approaches that could be strengthened or scaled up to address implementation gaps. The following sections examine these mechanisms and the evidence of progress.

Biodiversity Financing

Biodiversity financing remains a major implementation challenge across Africa. However, NR7s highlight growing efforts to strengthen biodiversity finance planning, assess funding needs and explore mechanisms for mobilising domestic and innovative sources of finance.

Biodiversity Finance Planning

The Biodiversity Finance Initiative (BIOFIN) has supported efforts in participating African countries to assess biodiversity expenditure and financing needs, develop finance plans, strengthen institutional capacity and identify opportunities to mobilise additional resources.

Reported progress includes the development of Biodiversity Finance Plans, Biodiversity Expenditure Reviews and Biodiversity Finance Needs Assessments. These processes help identify financing gaps, estimate the costs of implementing revised or updated National Biodiversity Strategies and Action Plans (NBSAPs), and identify potential sources of finance. Proposed approaches include increasing domestic budget allocations, mobilising private-sector investment and developing innovative financing mechanisms, including ecotourism-linked funds and green investments.

Some countries also report efforts to integrate biodiversity financing into national budget processes and Medium-Term Expenditure Frameworks, creating opportunities to better align public expenditure with biodiversity priorities.

However, NR7s provide limited information on the institutional arrangements and coordination processes underpinning these initiatives. This constrains assessment of the extent to which finance planning is inclusive and reflects the priorities and financing needs of non-government actors.

Key reported outcomes of biodiversity finance planning include:

- Biodiversity Expenditure Reviews to assess existing financial flows.
- Biodiversity Finance Needs Assessments to estimate implementation costs and funding gaps.
- Development of National Biodiversity Finance Plans.
- Identification of financing needs, gaps and potential funding sources.
- Integration of biodiversity financing into Medium-Term Expenditure Frameworks and national budget processes.

Pilot Initiatives to Mobilise Additional Biodiversity Finance

NR7s highlight diverse efforts to mobilise domestic and international public and private finance for biodiversity. These initiatives demonstrate progress towards GBF Target 19, although their scale remains insufficient to close existing financing gaps.

Country examples

INTERNATIONAL PUBLIC FINANCE

The Global Environment Facility (GEF) is recognised as an important source of international biodiversity finance. However, the NR7s provide limited comparable information on funding volumes and outcomes.

UGANDA

The country's Seventh National Report records a decline in the biodiversity financing gap from 81.4% in 2005/06–2014/15 to 34.9% in 2015/16–2023/24, with the remaining gap estimated at UGX 432.4 billion annually. The report attributes this progress to increased biodiversity financing, including government prioritisation through programme-based budgeting (Government of Uganda, 2026).

BOTSWANA

Botswana's protected-area fee reforms generated US\$7.8 million, exceeding the original forecast of US\$1.8 million. Separately, the country developed a Protected Area Resource Mobilisation Strategy and Partnership Plan in 2025. These initiatives illustrate the potential of improved revenue collection and strategic planning to strengthen domestic conservation finance.

KENYA

Seatrees' Marereni initiative offered 300,000 marine biodiversity blocks at US\$3 each, with each block intended to fund the planting of one mangrove and ten years of protection and monitoring. The initial offering represented a potential value of US\$900,000; this should not be interpreted as confirmed revenue received. Seatrees subsequently reported that more than 300,000 mangroves had been planted through community-led restoration (Seatrees, 2024, 2025, 2026).



MADAGASCAR

The World Bank confirmed that Madagascar received US\$8.8 million for verified emission reductions totalling 1.76 million tonnes of CO₂ in 2020 under its agreement with the Forest Carbon Partnership Facility (FCPF). The agreement provided for payments of up to US\$50 million for reductions of up to 10 million tonnes of CO₂ equivalent (World Bank, 2023).

NIGERIA

The National Business Advisory Group on Biodiversity provides a platform for engaging businesses in implementing Nigeria's NBSAP. The initiative is supported by the Nigerian Conservation Foundation, Natural Eco-Capital and Business for Nature, and seeks to strengthen private-sector contributions to national biodiversity priorities (Business for Nature, 2025; Nigerian Conservation Foundation, 2026).

ETHIOPIA

Ethiopia's Ministry of Justice records the Payment for Ecosystem Services Proclamation No. 1401/2026, dated 19 June 2026. The proclamation establishes a legal basis for promoting payments for ecosystem services. Its implementation and financing outcomes will need to be assessed as evidence becomes available (Ministry of Justice, Ethiopia, 2026).

Collectively, these examples demonstrate diversification of biodiversity finance through public funding, protected-area fees, carbon transactions, biodiversity credits, payments for ecosystem services, offsets and private-sector engagement. However, their contribution to closing financing gaps will depend on the scale and continuity of funding, transparent reporting and evidence of measurable biodiversity outcomes.

SOUTH AFRICA

In May 2025, South Africa launched the National Biodiversity Offset Web Portal and the SANParks Biodiversity Offset Bank initiative. These mechanisms are intended to improve the tracking of offset projects and create opportunities to finance protected-area expansion and management (Department of Forestry, Fisheries and the Environment, 2025; SANParks, 2025). The Development Bank of Southern Africa also advanced a draft Integrated Biodiversity Framework aimed at aligning development finance with biodiversity objectives and community rights.

Africa needs to diversify biodiversity finance while embedding biodiversity into national budgets and fiscal planning.

COMMITMENTS BY ACTORS OTHER THAN GOVERNMENT



Landscape of Voluntary Commitments in Africa

The NR7s and associated commitment records indicate an emerging practice of documenting voluntary contributions by non-state actors towards national biodiversity priorities. However, the reported landscape remains uneven, with international organisations prominent in several countries and domestic participation more visible in a smaller number of cases. The CBD's Seventh National Report guidance confirms the importance of national reporting in assessing progress towards the GBF (CBD, 2025–2026).

Recurring contributors in the study's records include international conservation organisations, including IUCN-associated Reverse the Red initiatives and WWF, alongside private-sector actors such as TotalEnergies. Domestic engagement is evident through city and municipal authorities, national civil society organisations and initiatives supporting Indigenous Peoples and local communities (IPLCs).

Reported commitments cover a range of GBF priorities, particularly ecosystem conservation and restoration, biodiversity finance and community engagement. Municipal authorities provide examples of subnational leadership, while international organisations contribute through thematic programmes. Nevertheless, the number of recorded commitments alone does not establish their implementation status or contribution to biodiversity outcomes.

Country examples

The following figures reflect commitment records reported in the study for the dates indicated. They should be treated as database snapshots rather than independently verified measures of implementation.

DEMOCRATIC REPUBLIC OF THE CONGO (DRC) AND CAMEROON

As of 30 August 2026, the study recorded 24 commitments for the DRC and 22 for Cameroon. The reported entries included commitments associated with TotalEnergies, Reverse the Red/ IUCN and WWF. The DRC also recorded a GIZ project commitment, while Cameroon included commitments associated with the Douala IV Sub-Divisional Council and Green Cameroon.

KENYA AND UGANDA

As of 25 June 2026, Kenya recorded 59 commitments from six organisations, including 36 associated with the City of Kisumu and one from the Economic and Social Rights Centre supporting rights-based biodiversity and climate action for IPLCs. Uganda recorded 38 commitments from seven organisations, including nine associated with Entebbe Council and four with Makindye Ssabagabo Municipality.

SOUTH AFRICA

By 25 June 2026, recorded 102 commitments were recorded, with substantial representation from cities and other local authorities, alongside commitments associated with Reverse the Red/IUCN and WWF. The reported commitments span a range of GBF priorities, including those related to Goal A.

GHANA, SENEGAL AND NIGERIA

As of 25 June 2026, 20 commitments were recorded for Ghana, 22 for Senegal and 32 for Nigeria. Nigeria's records included a national commitment from the Entrepreneurship Development and Support Initiative.

TUNISIA

The study recorded 17 commitments, comprising entries associated with TotalEnergies, Reverse the Red/IUCN, WWF and a Hammam-Lif city project.

Tracking and Integration of Voluntary Commitments

The NR7s provide limited evidence of systematic tracking of voluntary commitments by actors other than government. Although they highlight non-state contributions across several GBF targets, they do not consistently clarify implementation status or establish whether reported achievements correspond to commitments registered in the CBD Online Reporting Tool.

For example, many reports reference NGO initiatives, particularly the Reverse the Red Initiative and the use of IUCN Red List indices, without identifying these activities as formal voluntary commitments under the CBD framework. Similarly, Kenya's NR7 reports a framework agreement between WWF and the Banking and Financial Council to promote environmentally responsible financing, but presents it as a sectoral achievement rather than a commitment systematically tracked through the CBD reporting mechanism.

These findings highlight a gap between recognising non-state contributions and systematically documenting, tracking and assessing voluntary commitments. Strengthening the links between national reporting and the CBD Online Reporting Tool would improve transparency, reduce potential duplication and support assessment of non-state actors' contributions to GBF implementation.



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An aerial photograph of a river winding through a savanna landscape. The river is dark and reflects the surrounding greenery. On the left bank, there is a dense forest of green trees. On the right bank, there is a mix of green trees and dry, brownish ground. Three giraffes are visible: one is standing on the left bank, and two are wading in the river. The overall scene is a natural, undisturbed habitat.

KEY CHALLENGES AND OPPORTUNITIES FOR IMPLEMENTATION

The review of Seventh National Reports (NR7s) from 16 African countries identifies five key challenges to implementing the Kunming–Montreal Global Biodiversity Framework (GBF): gaps in political leadership and inclusive engagement, weak coordination across multilateral environmental agreements (MEAs), persistent biodiversity financing gaps, limited tracking of commitments by actors other than government, and methodological and reporting limitations.

These findings reflect the evidence documented in the countries reviewed and should not be generalised to all African countries. Limited reporting does not necessarily indicate that action has not occurred, but it can constrain assessment of implementation and results.

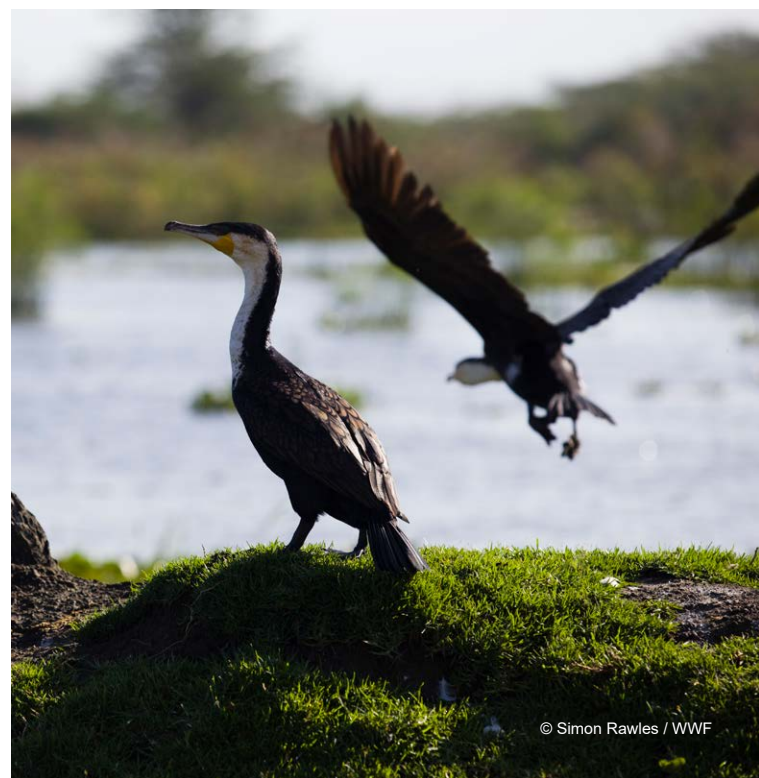
1. POLITICAL LEADERSHIP AND INCLUSIVE ENGAGEMENT

The NR7s reveal uneven implementation of whole-of-government (WoG) and whole-of-society (WoS) approaches. While coordination mechanisms and relevant policy frameworks exist, their effectiveness in securing cross-sectoral collaboration and meaningful stakeholder participation is not consistently demonstrated.

Government actors feature prominently in documented consultations, while evidence of meaningful participation by Indigenous Peoples and Local Communities (IPLCs), women, youth and other potentially marginalised groups remains limited.

The reports also provide insufficient evidence of how these groups influence spatial planning, ecosystem restoration and benefit-sharing. Similarly, limited reporting on dedicated capacity-building suggests that support for informed participation may not be systematically integrated into national strategies.

Addressing these gaps requires stronger political ownership, clearer institutional responsibilities, sustained capacity-building and more inclusive decision-making. Countries should also document how stakeholder contributions influence policies, plans and implementation outcomes.



2. WEAK COORDINATION ACROSS ENVIRONMENTAL AGREEMENTS

Although countries recognise links between biodiversity objectives and other MEAs, practical alignment of policies, targets, indicators and reporting remains uneven. This can contribute to fragmented implementation, duplication and missed opportunities for joint action.

Stronger institutional coordination, aligned national plans and shared monitoring systems would improve policy coherence, reduce reporting burdens and support more efficient use of resources.

3. MEANS OF IMPLEMENTATION

PERSISTENT FINANCING GAPS

Insufficient financing remains a significant barrier to NBSAP implementation. Although countries report financing needs and resource-mobilisation initiatives, the links between costed priorities, domestic budget allocations, actual expenditure and remaining financing gaps are not consistently documented.

Countries need to strengthen biodiversity finance planning, integrate priorities into public budgets, track expenditure and mobilise additional domestic, international and private-sector resources, supported by appropriate safeguards and transparent reporting.

LIMITED TRACKING OF NON-GOVERNMENT COMMITMENTS

The CBD provides an online platform for registering commitments by actors other than national governments. However, the NR7s provide limited evidence of systematic national processes for identifying, recording and monitoring these commitments. Their implementation status and results are therefore difficult to assess consistently.

The commitments documented are unevenly distributed across countries, with substantial involvement by international actors. Greater support is needed to capture contributions from national civil society organisations, IPLCs, businesses and other domestic stakeholders.

Stronger links between national reporting and the CBD's online commitment platform would improve visibility and accountability, helping countries distinguish registered commitments from activities underway and verified results.

4. METHODOLOGICAL AND REPORTING LIMITATIONS

The review's 16-country sample, variations in NR7 detail and inconsistent indicators limit cross-country comparability and the generalisability of findings. Moreover, the absence of reported evidence does not necessarily mean that an activity has not occurred, while policy commitments alone do not demonstrate implementation or impact.

Future reviews should use transparent selection criteria, consistent assessment methods and comparable indicators, while triangulating NR7 findings with additional national and regional sources where available. Clearer distinctions between commitments, implementation activities and measurable outcomes would strengthen the evidence base.



The contribution of actors beyond government remains under recognized and poorly tracked.



5. OPPORTUNITIES TO ADDRESS IMPLEMENTATION GAPS

The review highlights several opportunities to accelerate GBF implementation across Africa:

- **Strengthen political ownership and coordination** by clarifying institutional responsibilities, integrating biodiversity into national development planning and budgets, and improving alignment across environmental agreements.
- **Expand meaningful participation** by providing IPLCs, women, youth and other stakeholders with accessible information, capacity-building support and opportunities to influence decisions.
- **Align financing with priorities** through costed NBSAPs, improved budget integration, expenditure tracking and mobilisation of additional resources.
- **Improve accountability** by linking national reporting with the CBD's online commitment platform and tracking both implementation and results.
- **Enhance regional cooperation** through knowledge exchange, technical support, improved data systems and joint responses to transboundary biodiversity challenges.

COP17 provides an opportunity to assess collective progress under the GBF and highlight Africa's priorities for implementation support, financing and capacity development. Subsequent efforts should translate relevant outcomes into funded national actions, measurable milestones and transparent reporting.

Country examples documented in the review can inform peer learning, but their transferability should be assessed against national priorities, institutional capacities, financing conditions and ecological contexts. Ultimately, accelerating GBF implementation will require stronger alignment between commitments and delivery, supported by inclusive governance, effective coordination, adequate resources and credible evidence of results.



CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

CONCLUSION

The review finds progress across the 16 African countries assessed in aligning national biodiversity strategies and reporting with the Kunming–Montreal Global Biodiversity Framework (GBF). Their Seventh National Reports (NR7s) describe initiatives in spatial planning, ecosystem restoration, conservation and community participation. However, policy alignment and reporting alone do not demonstrate measurable improvements in biodiversity.

Implementation remains uneven across the countries and GBF targets reviewed. Key challenges include inadequate financing, weak institutional coordination, inconsistent data, limited tracking of non-government commitments and unequal stakeholder participation. Addressing these gaps requires stronger political ownership, better-resourced institutions, inclusive governance and greater accountability for implementation and results.



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RECOMMENDATIONS

To accelerate GBF implementation by 2030, the review recommends that governments, regional institutions, civil society and development partners prioritise the following actions:

1

Strengthen political ownership by engaging senior political and parliamentary leadership, as appropriate, and translating GBF commitments into clear government-wide priorities.

2

Improve institutional coordination by equipping cross-sectoral mechanisms with the authority, technical capacity and resources to integrate biodiversity into sectoral policies, plans and budgets.

3

Advance inclusive implementation and reporting by meaningfully engaging Indigenous Peoples and Local Communities, women, youth and other relevant stakeholders, while strengthening the capacity of national reporting teams.

4

Align targets and indicators across NBSAPs, the Sustainable Development Goals and relevant environmental agreements to improve coherence, reduce duplication and track shared outcomes.

5

Close biodiversity financing gaps by developing costed NBSAP implementation plans, integrating priorities into national budgets and mobilising additional public, private and international finance.

6

Strengthen accountability by systematically recording commitments made by actors other than government and monitoring their implementation and results.

7

Promote evidence-based learning by identifying effective country approaches that could be adapted elsewhere, subject to national contexts, stakeholder rights, appropriate safeguards and demonstrated results.

8

Improve future assessments through broader country coverage, consistent indicators and assessment methods, and evidence from national data systems, independent assessments and community perspectives. Reviews should begin early enough to inform national reporting and international negotiations.

This review provides a basis for prioritising action ahead of COP17 and beyond. Its central message is that achieving the GBF's 2030 targets requires moving beyond policy commitments towards adequately financed implementation, inclusive decision-making and measurable, equitable biodiversity outcomes.

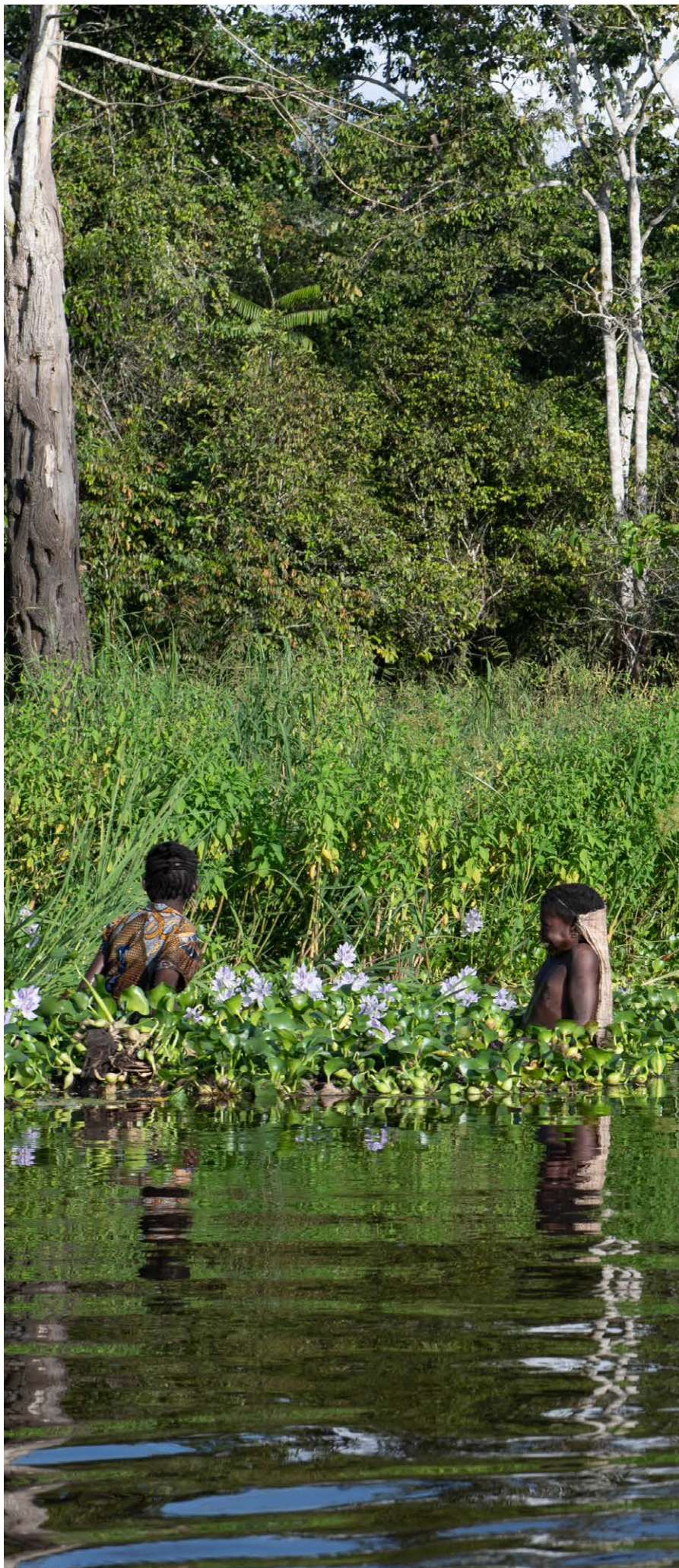
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